

NEVER-ENDING LAMP OF LIBERATION

A Lam Rim Master Class

Review:
Session 1



SESSION 1 TOPICS:

- **WHAT IS LAM RIM?**
- **WHY STUDY LAM RIM?**
- **HOW DO YOU KNOW LAM RIM IS VALID?**
- **HOW DO YOU KNOW LAM RIM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?**
- **IF THIS ALL MAKES SENSE, THEN WHAT?**

WHAT IS LAM RIM?

- Definition
 - Lam = path
 - Rim = stages
- Path to what?
 - Enlightenment
- What is enlightenment?
 - Free from the obstacle ignorance
 - Free from the obstacle of ignoring the well-being of others
 - Awakened
 - Purified
 - Expanded
- What are the stages?
 - Steps to clear the obstacles

WHY STUDY LAM RIM?

- Lam Rim is always green, always relevant
- It is useful at every stage of spiritual development
 - From simple practice to Vajrayana
- It is the counter to negative emotions
- It overcomes self-cherishing and ego-grasping
 - The sense that I am more important and have a right to ignore the welfare of others
- It leads to unconditional love and compassion for all beings
- It makes your practice perfect
- It is the pathway to enlightenment

WHY STUDY LAM RIM?

- Why should we seek enlightenment?
 - Compassion for self can handle negative emotions
 - But without compassion for others, it is hard to find happiness for oneself
- With the wisdom of enlightenment, you will know how to truly help
- Enlightenment seems far
 - But you can find small enlightenment in being useful and helpful
- Why are we not enlightened?
 - Because of ignorance, we don't really know what we want
 - Instead, we are overshadowed by attachment and anger
 - That give rise to jealousy, envy, stinginess, etc.

HOW DO YOU KNOW LAM RIM IS VALID?

- Lam Rim combines two lineages: wisdom and compassion
 - Nargarjuna – wisdom
 - Asanga - compassion
- Atisha consolidated the teachings in Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment
- Pabongka: Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand - Day 10
 - This is not false, invented Dharma, because it is the pith of authentic oral teachings.
 - This is not foolish talk, because it comes from classical texts by the great champions.
 - This is not a shimmering mirage, because saintly scholars and adepts have experienced it.
 - This is not a perilous cliff, because it is the highway to highest enlightenment.
- Buddha's instructions: Trust but verify for yourself

HOW DO YOU KNOW LAM RIM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

- Lam Rim is a practice for the wise practitioner
 - Someone who can think and analyze
 - Look at your own mind and decide for yourself
- There are many practices
 - If you are intelligent, you will know that praying won't fix these problems
- If you want to rid yourself of negative emotions
- If you look at Buddha's teachings and they sound right
 - Train your self
 - Respect virtuous deeds
 - Avoid non-virtuous deeds
 - Don't cheat yourself and others

IF THIS ALL MAKES SENSE, THEN WHAT?

- If believe in the need for wisdom and compassion, you are taking refuge
 - Refuge in the three jewels: Buddha, dharma and sangha
 - Why is Buddha the right teacher?
 - ◆ Totally compassionate
 - ◆ Helping others without discrimination
 - ◆ All his words were trying to help others
 - Dharma is teaching based on fact
 - ◆ You can test and determine for yourself
 - Sangha are the honest and compassionate people who practice dharma
 - ◆ The right friends
- All problems are solved by Buddha's practice
 - Refuge is mainly in dharma
 - Buddha gives the medicine
 - Sangha helps practice

IF THIS ALL MAKES SENSE, THEN WHAT?

- **The first step in Lam Rim is relying on the guru or teacher**
 - What is guru?
 - Buddha is the source of the teaching / guru is the source of Buddha's teaching
 - If the teachings make sense and you are interested and curious to know more
 - You are ready
 - A teacher is important to help you move forward and improve
 - The right teacher will help you get to the right place
 - The wrong guru will get you to the wrong place
 - No teacher / no place
 - The right teacher will not let you down or leave you behind