

*Joyful Path of
Good Fortune*

Also by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso

Meaningful to Behold
Clear Light of Bliss
Universal Compassion
Guide to Dakini Land
The Bodhisattva Vow
Heart Jewel
Great Treasury of Merit
Introduction to Buddhism
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GESHE KELSANG GYATSO

*Joyful Path of
Good Fortune*

THE COMPLETE
BUDDHIST PATH TO
ENLIGHTENMENT



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We also thank all the dedicated, senior Dharma students who assisted the author with the rendering of the English and who prepared the final manuscript for publication.

Through the merits created in producing this work, may all living beings find the happiness they seek.

*Roy Tyson,
Administrative Director,
Manjushri Kadampa
Meditation Centre,
October 1997.*

Preface

Although there are countless living beings, humans and non-humans, all are included within three kinds: those who seek mainly worldly happiness, those who seek mainly the attainment of liberation from samsara and those who seek mainly the attainment of full enlightenment.

In the scripture known as the *Stages of the Path* (Tib. *Lamrim*) the first kind of being is called 'a person of initial scope' because his or her mental scope or capacity is at the initial stage of development. The second kind of being is called 'a person of intermediate scope' because his or her mental capacity is more extensive than the first being but less developed than the third being. The third kind of being is called 'a person of great scope' because such a person has progressed from the initial scope through the intermediate scope so that his or her mental capacity has become great.

The actual practice of the stages of the path fulfils the wishes of all three kinds of being. The practice of the stages of the path of a person of initial scope, which is explained in the first part of this book, brings us the happiness of humans and gods. The practice of the stages of the path of a person of intermediate scope, which is explained in the second part of this book, brings us the happiness of liberation. The practice of the stages of the path of a person of great scope, which is explained in the third part of this book, brings us the ultimate happiness of full enlightenment. Thus the main function of the Lamrim instructions is to fulfil the needs and wishes of all living beings.

The instructions of Lamrim form the main body of Buddhadharma. They arose from the omniscient wisdom of



Buddha Shakyamuni

Atisha (AD 982-1054), and the tradition has continued to this day. It is wonderful and a sign of great fortune that these precious teachings are now beginning to flourish in western countries. I received these teachings from my Spiritual Guide, Trijang Dorjechang, who was an emanation of Atisha; thus the explanations given in this book, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune*, actually come from him and not from myself. Nevertheless, I have worked with great effort over a long period of time to complete this book.

The practice of Lamrim is very important because everyone needs to cultivate peaceful states of mind. By listening to or reading these teachings we can learn how to control our mind and always keep a good motivation in our heart. This will make all our daily actions pure and meaningful. By controlling our mind we can solve all our daily problems, and by gradually improving our daily practice of Lamrim we can advance from our present stage to the stage of a Bodhisattva. By progressing further we can become a fully enlightened being. This is the essential meaning of our human life. Such a great attainment will be the result of our practice of Lamrim.

*Geshe Kelsang Gyatso,
Tharpaland,
November 1988.*

PART ONE

*Foundations and
the Initial Scope*

The Stages of the Path

The great Buddhist monastic universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila each developed their own discourse style. According to the tradition of Nalanda, whenever a Spiritual Guide teaches Dharma he or she begins by explaining three purities. Whenever we listen to, read or teach Dharma these three purities are necessary: a pure mind on the part of the student, pure speech on the part of the Spiritual Guide, and pure Dharma. The mind of the student is pure if he or she is free from holding wrong views, has faith in the Spiritual Guide and in the Dharma that is taught and has a correct motivation. The speech of the Spiritual Guide is pure if it is unmistakable and clear, if he or she received it from an authentic Spiritual Guide and if the oral transmission and lineage teachings have blessings. The Dharma is pure if it reveals the entire path that leads to enlightenment, presents each point unmistakably, and has been handed down in an unbroken lineage from Buddha Shakyamuni. The Dharma that is explained here, the Lamrim, is pure because it possesses these three necessary conditions. Therefore, our task as readers is to make sure that our own mind is pure while we read, contemplate and meditate on the meanings that are explained. Principally, we need to develop a good motivation by thinking:

Now I have a supreme opportunity to attain Buddhahood and lead others to the same state. To become enlightened I need to practise all the stages of the path. Therefore, I am going to study these instructions and put them into practice.

If we read Lamrim with such a pure intention we shall increase our collection of merit moment by moment. There is nothing

more meaningful that we can do with our lives. For myself, the author, there is no greater meaning in my life than to teach and explain pure Dharma.

According to the tradition of Vikramashila, whenever a Spiritual Guide teaches Dharma he or she begins by explaining three things:

- (1) The pre-eminent qualities of the author of the root texts upon which the teachings are based
- (2) The pre-eminent qualities of the teachings presented in those texts
- (3) How to listen to and teach Dharma

There are great benefits to be derived from receiving these explanations before studying the actual instructions on the stages of the path. From knowing the excellences of the author we shall easily understand that the Dharma he or she teaches must be authentic. From knowing the pre-eminent qualities of Lamrim we shall naturally develop interest, respect and confidence in it. From knowing how to listen to and read the instructions, and how they should be taught, we shall be able to take the greatest advantage of opportunities such as the one we now have; and eventually we shall be able to benefit others greatly by giving the instructions to them.

All the explanations presented in this book are contained within four parts:

- 1 Explanation of the pre-eminent qualities of the author, showing that the instructions of Lamrim are authentic
- 2 Explanation of the pre-eminent qualities of Lamrim to inspire faith and respect for the Lamrim instructions
- 3 Explanation of how to listen to and teach Dharma
- 4 Explanation of the actual instructions of the stages of the path to enlightenment

End of preview

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