

Exploring the Path

Draft Syllabus

Purpose: To provide a concise overview of the entire path to enlightenment as it is traditionally presented in texts belonging to the stages of the path genre, and impart the importance of and method for meditating on the entire teachings of Buddha in this practice-oriented way. This module encompasses the following topics:

Three Capable Beings and Relying on a Guru - To provide an overview of the entire lamrim in terms of the progressive motivations and goals of the three capable beings and the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment. To examine the need for a guru, the requisites of a guru, and how to correctly rely on and relate to a guru.

Precious Human Rebirth and Impermanence/Death - To understand and appreciate the unique opportunity afforded by a perfect human rebirth for Dharma practice and the need to make use of it right now because we don't know how long we will have this opportunity.

Lower Realms, Refuge, and Karma - To understand that after death we may not be reborn as a human being and therefore that we need to seek and find a qualified source of refuge, and then we need refrain from creating negative karma and engage as much as possible in creating good karma.

Renunciation - To understand and be inspired to generate the first of the three principal aspects of the path, renunciation—the wish to achieve liberation from samsara.

Bodhichitta and the Six Perfections - To understand and be inspired to generate the second of the three principal aspects of the path, bodhichitta—the wish to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings – and to engage in the main practices of the bodhisattva, the six perfections.

Concentration and Wisdom - To understand and be inspired to generate the third of the three principal aspects of the path, the wisdom realizing emptiness, based on achieving calm abiding, perfect single-pointed concentration.