

**A Gift of Liberation
Course Four: Learning to Be Quiet
Homework, Class One**



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Homework, Class One: The Place Molds the Mind

1) During this fourth course of our study of *A Gift of Liberation*, we are continuing our study of the six preliminary practices which come before a meditation session. We are currently learning the first of these six, which is straightening up the place where we intend to meditate. Why is this important enough to be the very first step before our meditation?

2) The sage named Little Path achieved high realizations after Lord Buddha taught him to sweep up the meditation space while reciting a special verse about “cleaning up the dirt.” That is, he understood at some point that the Buddha was telling him to clean up the dirt of his own most negative mental states. Pabongka Rinpoche gives us some suggestions about how to choose the topics for this Straightening Up Meditation. Name some of the possible topics, and describe briefly the process.

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3) The second part of the first step—putting our meditation space in good order—is setting up our altar. What is the Tibetan word for “altar,” and how does it reflect some of the objects which we are encouraged to include upon our altar?

4) When we reach the path of seeing, and see emptiness directly for the first time, we also gain an appreciation for images of holy beings. Explain.

5) Pabongka Rinpoche explains how—at two special levels in our spiritual career—we will encounter the actual bodies of Enlightened Beings. Name these two, and explain how we see what we see.

Coffee shop assignment: Please meet with at least one other person—or better, a group of people—whom you didn’t know well before this teaching; do your homework together and discuss together any questions you have. Please write here where, when, and with whom you did your homework:

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes early in the day, and 15 minutes later in the day, practicing cleaning up the room you are currently in before meditation, and then sitting down for a meditation of your choice. Please write here the two times that you started these meditations.