

A Gift of Liberation

Course Three—What You Were Always Meant to Be
Homework, Class One: The Beauty of the Teachings

1) How does a commentary to *The Lamp on the Path*, the classic work on the steps of the path by Lord Atisha, define the Dharma, or teachings of the Buddha? What famous instruction is contained within this definition, and how might it apply to finding our true passion in life?

2) Pabongka Rinpoche lists four ways in which the teachings of the Buddha are extraordinary, because he wants us to be excited to delve into these teachings. What is the first of these four, and what are some parts of the teaching that it applies to?

3) What everyday example does Pabongka Rinpoche give for understanding apparent contradictions in the teachings?

A Gift of Liberation
Course Three: What You Were Always Meant to Be
Homework, Class One

4) How does Pabongka Rinpoche recommend that we, as teachers, view the almost contradictory levels of the teachings on the steps of the path?

5) What description of his Lama did Dromton Je, the great disciple of Lord Atisha, give that is used to illustrate the internal consistency of all Buddhist teachings? What are three different ways of interpreting this description?

6) What example does Pabongka Rinpoche give to illustrate the need to apply what we learn to our own personal situation?

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, meditating on three different points made in today's teaching that you can apply to some problem or goal in your own personal life, immediately. Please write here the two times that you started these meditations:

A Gift of Liberation
Course Three—What You Were Always Meant to Be
Homework, Class Two:
Every Word Advice for Ourselves

- 1) The second wondrous quality of the lam-rim teachings is reflected in the word “Kadampa”; explain why. How might we apply this idea in our search for a life with passion in it?

- 2) How is it that, following Pabongka Rinpoche’s thinking, we might see a typical day at work as an exercise in three different steps of the lam-rim?

- 3) People often notice that, during a Buddhist teaching in a sizable group, it seems to them that the Lama is addressing their own personal life, or even criticizing them personally. How can we view this phenomenon when it happens to us?

A Gift of Liberation
Course Three: What You Were Always Meant to Be
Homework, Class Two

4) What is the third great quality of the teachings on the steps of the path, and from where does its power derive?

5) What is the one great idea of all of Buddhism, and what other two ideas does it always imply?

6) What is the fourth great quality of the teachings on the steps to the path; what does it *not* refer to; and how does it relate to the other three qualities?

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, again meditating on three different points made in today's teaching that you can apply to some problem or goal in your own personal life, immediately. Please write here the two times that you started these meditations:

A Gift of Liberation
Course Three—What You Were Always Meant to Be
Homework, Class Three: The Benefits of Learning

1) What, according to Pabongka Rinpoche, is the one thing that determines whether or not our practice of this path will have the effect on us that we hope it will?

2) Thinking about *why* we want to do something helps us do it: “What will this do for me?” What are the three effects that we can expect from studying the three great groups of the Buddhist teachings?

3) Explain the benefits of studying the Dharma, in terms of the metaphors of darkness and of wealth.

A Gift of Liberation
Course Three: What You Were Always Meant to Be
Homework, Class Three

4) Pabongka Rinpoche notes that learning makes a huge difference even just in how we understand the Three Jewels, in the most basic practice of Buddhism: taking refuge. Explain, in the context of seeking more passion in our work and our relationship.

5) Describe the metaphor of the beds and the clothes, and explain how it might apply to ourselves.

6) What are the three “problems of the pot” for a student, and what is one way each that we can avoid these three?

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, meditating on the three different problems of the pot; which of the three you might need to work on; and how you plan to work on it. Please write here the two times that you started these meditations: