



Course 1: The Principal Teachings of Buddhism  
Level 1 of the Steps to Buddhahood  
ASIAN CLASSICS INSTITUTE

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Course Format

- Ten Classes
- Related Readings
- Ten Homeworks
- Ten Meditation Assignments
- Online Discussions
- Ten Quizzes
- Comprehensive Final

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Monks Debating at Sera Monestary



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### Course Outline

- Introduction to the Three Principal Paths
- The two main causes for Buddhahood
- The qualities of a good teacher
- What is an authentic student and dharma
- Samsara and renunciation
- Stopping desire for future lives
- Bodhichitta and how to develop it
- Correct view

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### Class Objectives

- Background of the book we will study and our lineage.
- Explain the three principal paths
- List the four great sufferings
- Explain the three divisions of the lam rim
- Name the three problems of the pot

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### Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419)

- His monks name is Lobsang Drakpa
- Born in Eastern Tibet
- He received lay ordination as a Kagyu at age three
- He received monk's ordination as a Sakya at age 24
- He founded the Gelupa school (our lineage)




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### Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419)

Had three famous disciples

- Gyaltsab Je (1362-1432)
- Gyalwa Gendun Drup: First Dali Lama (1391-1475)
- Kedrup Je (1385-1438)




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### Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419)

- Wrote 10,000 pages of commentaries (5-10% have been translated)
- Lam Rim Chen Mo – The Great Book of the Steps on the Path – 1000 pages
- 200 page Lam Rim
- 10 page Lam Rim
- 14 Verse Lam Rim




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Why know the names of the book and author you are studying?



Kyabje Ling Rinpoche (1903 – 1983)



Michael Roach

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### The Root Text

lamtso namsum  
path principal type three

#### The Three Principal Paths

- Written by Je Tsongkapa for his student **Ngawang Drakpa Tsako Wongpo** in a letter
- The 14 verses have everything you need to reach enlightenment

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### The Commentary

- **Pabongka Rinpoche (1878-1941)**
  - Dechen Nyingpo (tantric name)
  - Considered a reincarnation of Changkya Rolpay Dorje (1717-1786)
- **Khen Rinpoche (Geshe Lobsang Tharchin) (1921-2004)**
  - English translation and introduction
- **Geshe Michael Roach (1952- )**
  - helped compile and publish the book

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### What does path mean?

- All things can be divided into changing and unchanging things
  - unchanging thing = space
- Changing things are either
  - mental
  - physical
  - ideas/concepts

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### What does path mean?

- The “path” we are talking about here is a mental thing not a physical thing.
- Another word for “path” is tokpa and tokpa means realization.
- So “lam” or path refers to the attitudes or states of mind that will make you a Buddha.

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### The Three Principal Paths

- **ngenjung = renunciation**
  - losing all desire for things in the world
- **semkye = bodhichitta**
  - a specific change in state of mind
- **yangdakpay tawa = correct view**
  - logical
  - Buddha said it

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Three Great Division of the Lam Rim

- 1. **lesser scope**
  - keep out of the lower realms
- 2. **medium scope**
  - avoid the four great sufferings
- 3. **greater**
  - reach buddhahood to end suffering of all beings

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The Four Great Sufferings

- kye - having to take birth (being forced to be reborn)
- ga – getting old (aging starts at conception)
- na – sickness
- chi - death

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“Problems of the Pot”

- lid on pot
  - not paying attention
- dirty pot
  - wrong motivation (like fame and fortune)
- pot with no bottom
  - not retaining

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### Homework #1

- Questions
- Memorization: memorize the refuge and the wish prayer in Tibetan
- Meditation: Fifteen minutes each day contemplate what renunciation is.

*(Remember to record date and time of meditation.)*

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