



## The Heart Essence of Tibetan Buddhism

**The Heart Essence of Tibetan Buddhism** is an update of the “Essentials of Tibetan Buddhism” classes. It provides a core program of study and practices for those who wish to learn, but have limited time. The classes will be available in-person, broadcast on Zoom, and recorded in a convenient online video format, supplemented by a text and occasional other handouts by Khenchen Drimed Dawa (Dr. Dean Pielstick).

This program is organized around a series of very concise practices given by Padmasambhava in a text translated as *Natural Liberation* and is supplemented by similar concise practices from other masters. These practices are particularly appropriate for householders as most take little time to learn or master and were taught specifically for such practitioners. Together they form a carefully crafted set of incremental steps leading to the deep inner peace of innate happiness or liberation.

More specifically, the teachings are divided into an introduction and four main paths of practice that are sequential within Tibetan Buddhism: (1) the Path of Individual Liberation, (2) the Path of Altruism, (3) the Path of Tantra, and (4) the Path of Great Perfection. Within each path, the courses follow a teaching by the Buddha called the Three Trainings: (1) ethics, (2) meditation, and (3) wisdom. The text for this course is *Innate Happiness* (now in a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Khenpo (now Khenchen) Drimed Dawa, available as an eBook or paperback from Amazon.com and other outlets. This text was written specifically for this course, as well as to benefit others who might read it.

**Text:** *Innate Happiness* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition\*), Khenpo Drimed Dawa (2024, eBook or paperback - Amazon.com). This book was written to support this class.

**Practice:** This is a "practice" oriented course. Each student is expected to do the practices daily. There are print and video instructions to help guide your practice, as well as add to or explain some of the material in the readings.

**Daily Journal:** Students are encouraged to keep a daily journal. The daily journal is a way to keep track of how your practice is going. It includes what you did and how it went. It need not be lengthy, but should provide enough detail to reflect back in the future on what you actually did and how it went in retrospect.

**Part 1:** A survey of Buddhism in India and Tibet, an overview and introduction to key Vajrayana principles such as the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, and the first part of the Path of Individual Liberation: ethics and shamata meditation – single-pointed calm abiding.

**Part 2:** Continues the Path of Individual Liberation with vipassana meditation (special insight) regarding self and other and the early view of wisdom; followed by the Path of Altruism (*Bodhisattva*): ethics, practices such as the Six Perfections, *Tonglen* (giving and taking) and *Metta*

(lovingkindness) meditations, and the Bodhisattva view of wisdom – the Perfection of Wisdom literature, Buddhanature, and the Middle Way.

**Part 3:** The Path of Tantra begins with the ethical view of tantra and the “common” preliminary practices: precious human birth, impermanence, suffering of samsara, and karma; followed by the “uncommon” preliminary practices: refuge and bodhicitta, Vajrasattva purification, mandala offerings, and Guru Yoga.

**Part 4:** Continues the Path of Tantra with the generation stage practices of “deity yoga” – generating yourself as the “yidam” (a buddha).

**Part 5:** Continues the Path of Tantra with the completion stage practices: inner heat, channels-winds-drops, illusory body, and dream yoga to become a buddha in this lifetime.

**Part 6:** Continues the completion stage practices of the Path of Tantra with clear light, the bardos of dying, dharmata, and becoming, and the transference of consciousness; followed by the tantric view of wisdom.

**Part 7:** Begins the Path of Great Perfection with the ethical perspective, the preliminary practices for separating samsara from nirvana called *khorda rushen*, and the practice of *trekcho*.

**Part 8:** Concludes the Path of Great Perfection with additional training in the practices of *trekcho* and *togal*, as well as the view of wisdom of the Great Perfection and a summary of the Buddhist views of enlightenment.

### Weekly Readings & Practices:

Session	Readings	Pages	Practices
1	<b>Preface &amp; Part 1 – Introduction</b> Preface & Introduction <b>Background</b> Ch 2 - Historical background	vii-13 15-44	Mindfulness
2	Ch 3 – Trainings & Paths Ch 4 – Teacher & Devotion	45-55 57-61	Mindfulness
3	<b>Part 3 – The Path of Individual Liberation</b> Ch 5 – The First Training: Ethics Ch 6 – The Second Training: Meditation Ch 7 – The Third Training: Wisdom/Insight	63-72 73-88 89-104	#1-2 - Shamata #3-4 - Vipassana
4	<b>Part 4 – The Path of Altruism</b> Ch 8 – The First Training: <b>Ethics</b> Ch 9 – The Second Training: <b>Meditation: 6 Perfections</b>	105-115 117-120	#5 - Generosity & Ethics
5	Ch 9 Cont.	120-121	#6 - Patience
6	Ch 9 Cont.	121-123	#7 – Persistence

7	Ch 9 Cont: <b>Meditation: Four Immeasurables</b>	123-124	#8 – Loving-kindness
8	Ch 9 Cont.	124-126	#9 – Compassion ( <i>Tonglen</i> )
9	Ch 9 Cont.	126-127	#10 – Joy
10	Ch 9 Cont.	127-129	#11 – Equanimity
11	Ch 10 – The Third Training: <b>Wisdom</b>	131-140	#12 – Vipassana
12	<b>Part 5 – The Path of Tantra</b>	141-145	
13	Ch 11 – The First Training: <b>Ethics</b> (3 <sup>rd</sup> vow) Ch 12 – The Second Training: <b>Meditation - Preliminary Practices: Ngondro</b>	147-148 149-150	#13 – Suffering of samsara
14	Ch 12 Cont. - <b>Common Preliminaries: Four Thoughts that Train the Mind</b>	151-154	#14 – Precious Human Life
15	Ch 12 Cont.	154-156	#15 – Impermanence & Death
16	Ch 12 Cont.	156-161	#16 – Karma and Reincarnation
17	Ch 12 Cont. - <b>Uncommon Preliminaries</b>	161-168	#17 – Refuge & Bodhicitta
18	Ch 12 Cont.	168-175	#18 – Vajrasattva
19	Ch 12 Cont.	175-177	#19 – Mandala Offering
20	Ch 12 Cont.	177-183	#20 – Guru Yoga
21	Ch 13 – <b>Meditation: The “Outer” Yidam Yogas</b>	185-187	#21 – Bindu Shamata
22	Ch 13 Cont.	187-188	#22 – Hollow Body Shamata
23	Ch 13 Cont.	188-194	#23abcd – <b>Yidam</b> Shamata (4 options)
24	Ch 14 – <b>Meditation: The “Inner” Highest Yoga Tantra: Generation Stage Practices</b>	195-218	#24ab – 2 options; extensive practice (Appendix C)
25	Ch 15 – <b>Meditation: Highest Yoga Tantra: Completion Stage Practices</b>	219-223	#25 – Purification & Vase Breathing; #26 – Vajra Recitation
26	Ch 15 Cont.	223-227	#27 – Channels, winds & drops ( <i>Tsalung</i> )
27	Ch 15 Cont.	228-229	#28 – Inner Heat ( <i>Tummo</i> )
28	Ch 15 Cont.	229-231	#29 – Four Blissess
29	Ch 15 Cont.	231-232	#30 – Impure Illusory Body
30	Ch 15 Cont.	233-238	# 31 – Apprehending the Dream State, #32 – Emanation & Transformation, #33 - Seeing Through and Dispelling Obstacles
31	Ch 15 Cont. – Pure Illusory Body	238-240	#34 – 4 Empties
32	Ch 15 Cont.	240-244	#35 – Dissolution into Clear Light

33	Ch 15 Cont.	244-259	#36 – Transference of Consciousness ( <i>Phowa</i> )
34	Ch 15 – The third training: <b>Wisdom/Insight</b>	261-264	#37 – Madhyamaka
35	<b>Part 6 – The Path of Great Perfection (Dzogchen) – Ch 16</b>	265-267	
36	Ch 17 – The First Training: <b>Ethics</b> Ch 18 – The Second Training: <b>Meditation</b>	269-273 275-285	#38 – Outer Rushen (5 skandas)
37	Ch 18 Cont.	285-287	#39 – Inner Rushen (Vajra Recitation)
38	Ch 18 Cont.	287-292	#40 – Secret Rushen (Body, Speech, Mind)
39	Ch 18 Cont.	292-300	#41 – Advanced Shamata w/o Signs
40	Ch 18 Cont.	300-302	#42 – Meditative Stabilization
41	Ch 18 Cont.	302-307	#43 – Nature of Awareness; #44 – Identifying Awareness
42	Ch 18 Cont.	307-313	#45 – Rigpa Guru Yoga, #46 – Non-meditation
43	Ch 18 Cont.	313-320	#46 – Seeing Dharma
44	Ch 18 Cont.	320-327	#47 – Reality Itself
45	Ch 18 Cont.	327-328	#48 – Progressing Visions
46	Ch 18 Cont.	328-328	#49 – Consummate Awareness
47	Ch 18 Cont.	328-334	#50 – Reality Itself
48	Ch 19 – The Third Training: <b>Wisdom/Insight</b>	335-341	#51 – Shentong
49	<b>Part 7 – Ch 20: Innate Happiness</b>	343-370	#52 – Pure Love & Great Compassion
50	<b>Part 8 – Appendices:</b> 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva, Tibetan Transliteration Pronunciation, Sadhanas of the White, Red, and Blue Dakinis, Long Life, and Karmamudra	371-449	