In *Door to Satisfaction* Lama Zopa Rinpoche reveals a text he discovered in a cave in the Himalayas that captures the essential point of Buddhist training. Rinpoche says, “Only when I read this text did I come to know what the practice of Dharma really means.”

Without proper motivation, it does not matter what we do. Whether reciting prayers, meditating, or enduring great hardships, if our actions are devoid of good intention they will not become Dharma practice. Proper motivation transcends our ordinary, ephemeral desires and ultimately seeks the happiness of all living beings. “In your life,” says Rinpoche, “there is nothing to do other than to work for others, to cherish others. There is nothing more important in your life than this.”

This powerful, simple message applies to Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike—we all have the power to unlock our greatest potential. Open this book and open the door to a timeless path leading to wisdom and joy.

“A wise and inspiring teacher.”—*Ume Reader*

Lama Zopa Rinpoche is one of the most internationally renowned masters of Tibetan Buddhism, working and teaching ceaselessly on almost every continent. He is the spiritual director and co-founder of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), an international network of Buddhist projects, including monasteries in six countries and meditation centers in over thirty; health and nutrition clinics, and clinics specializing in the treatment of leprosy and polio; as well as hospices, schools, publishing activities, and prison outreach projects worldwide. He is the author of *How to Be Happy* and *Dear Lama Zopa*. 
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The Door to Satisfaction
The Door to Satisfaction

The Heart Advice of a Tibetan Buddhist Master

by

Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche

Given in the holy place of Bodhgaya, India, and based on Opening the Door of Dharma: The Initial Stage of Training the Mind in the Graduated Path to Enlightenment, a collection of advice of the great Kadampas, compiled by Lodrö Gyaltsen, a fifteenth-century Tibetan yogi

Foreword by
KIRTI TSENSHAB RINPOCHE

Edited by
AILSA CAMERON & ROBINA COURTIN

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Contents

Foreword vii
Editors’ Preface ix

1 Prologue 1

2 Knowing How to Practice Dharma 13

3 Giving Up This Life 31

4 Transforming Nonvirtue into Virtue 39

5 Cutting Off Desire 53

6 Subduing the Mind 75

7 Remembering Immanence and Death 85

8 Finding No Self to Cherish 99

9 Cherishing Others 121

10 Having No Choice but to Practice Dharma 137

11 Dedicating the Merits 147

Glossary 153

Bibliography of Works Cited 163

Suggested Further Reading 167

Index 171
Foreword

About a thousand years ago in Tibet, the incomparable Atisha, author of the text Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment, founded the precious Kadampa tradition. His closest disciple was Dromtön Gyalwai Jungne, whose coming was foretold by the goddess Tara. Dromtönpa’s three foremost followers, one of whom was Potowa Rinchen Sel, were renowned as the three Kadam brothers. Geshe Langri Tangpa Dorje Seng-ge was a direct disciple of Geshe Potowa.

It was through these masters that the essence of this experiential tradition—the subduing of the eight worldly dharmas, the spurning of the concerns of this present existence and the training in the mind of enlightenment by way of cherishing others above self—came to be revered as the most precious practice of the early Kadam tradition.

The New Kadam tradition was handed down by the great Lama Tsongkhapa and his main spiritual son, Khedrub Rinpoche. One of their direct followers was Chen-nga Lodrō Gyaltser, and it was he who composed the present text, Opening the Door of Dharma: The Initial Stage of Training the Mind in the Graduated Path to Enlightenment.

This work is akin to a key that opens the entrance to that class of instructions that encourages beginning practitioners to turn their thoughts toward Dharma. As such it will prove highly beneficial to those who are interested. In the case of Lama Zopa Rinpoche it has acted as the basis of some very genuine Dharma experience.
The Door to Satisfaction

I therefore wholeheartedly welcome and rejoice at the appearance of these teachings on the text. I would also like to offer a sincere prayer that this book will contribute to the turning of the thoughts of all beings toward the Dharma and lead them swiftly to the joy and peace of enlightenment.

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche

Dharamsala, India
Editors’ Preface

In February 1990 more than a hundred students of Buddhism from all over the world gathered in a large multicolored tent on the grounds of Root Institute, a Buddhist center in the ancient Indian town of Bodhgaya, where two and a half thousand years ago the Buddha himself achieved enlightenment.

The event was a series of teachings given as part of the Third Enlightened Experience Celebration, a periodic festival of Buddhist teachings and initiations organized by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition.

From February 16 to 25, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, the Spiritual Director of the FPMT, gave “The Kadampa Teachings,” a series of ten discourses based on the fifteenth-century text of the Tibetan yogi Lodrö GyaltSEN, Opening the Door of Dharma.

Lama Zopa startled his audience by declaring that it was only after reading this text in his late twenties that he understood the real meaning of practicing Dharma. This was startling because everyone present knew from their years of experience as Rinpoche’s students, or from his reputation, that in fact every moment of his life had been devoted to Dharma, to spiritual practice; that he was a perfect example of a Dharma practitioner. Clearly, there was something meaningful to be listened to here.

As Rinpoche himself recounts in the Prologue to this book, he was born in 1946 in the Solu Khumbu region of Nepal, near Mount
Everest. According to his mother, from the time he could speak, he would often declare, “I am the Lawudo Lama.” This lama, Kunyang Yeshe, who had died in 1945, was famous in the area as a highly realized ascetic practitioner. For the last twenty years of his life he had lived and meditated in a nearby cave at Lawudo and had been the spiritual mentor of the local people. It was said that his energy to serve others was inexhaustible, and that, like all great yogis, he had passed beyond the need for sleep.

Indeed, the young boy was recognized as the reincarnation. The Lawudo Lama’s main disciple, Ngawang Chöpel, had, in the traditional manner, consulted various high lamas in Tibet, who had all agreed on the finding. In addition, Rinpoche correctly identified articles belonging to the Lawudo Lama.

In the Prologue Rinpoche tells us about his early life, first in Nepal, at Thami monastery, and later in Rolwaling, and eventually in Tibet, at the monastery of Domo Geshe Rinpoche in Pagri. The Lawudo Lama had been a Nyingma yogi, a layman, but it was at Domo Geshe’s monastery that Lama Zopa Rinpoche first met the Gelug teachings of Tibetan Buddhism and where he became a monk. The Dharma Protector associated with the monastery also confirmed that Rinpoche was a reincarnate lama and offered advice concerning his care.

After three years in Pagri, Lama Zopa decided to go to Sera Monastery, one of the great Gelug monastic universities near Lhasa, to continue his studies. However, the Dharma Protector fortuitously advised Rinpoche not to go, but instead to do a meditation retreat. It was at this time, in 1959, when Rinpoche was thirteen, that the Chinese communists suppressed the Tibetan uprising in Lhasa against their continued presence in Tibet and took over the government of the country.
As Rinpoche explains, when the arrival of the Chinese at Pagri was imminent, he escaped through Bhutan to India, to Buxa Duar in West Bengal. Here he remained for eight years, continuing his studies with hundreds of other refugee lamas, monks, and nuns in what had been a concentration camp at the time of the British.

It was here that Rinpoche came under the care of a Sera Monastery monk, Lama Thubten Yeshe, with whom he would remain as his heart disciple until 1984, when Lama Yeshe passed away. “Lama Yeshe was more than a father, more than a mother,” Rinpoche says. “Like a mother hen feeding her chick from her own mouth, Lama took care of me.”

During the following twenty years, these two lamas would have an immense impact on the Western world, attracting thousands of students through the power of their teachings and the tireless compassion of their extensive activities to benefit others.

They met their first Western student in Darjeeling in 1965, while Rinpoche was recuperating from tuberculosis. An American citizen, Zina Rachevsky was the daughter of a Romanov prince who had escaped to France during the Russian Revolution. She began receiving teachings from Lama Yeshe, with Rinpoche translating for her in his newly learned English. Both lamas would later teach exclusively in English to their Western students.

In 1968, with Zina now ordained as a nun, they moved together to Nepal. It was here that the lamas’ powerful connection with Westerners was to develop in earnest. At first they lived in Baudhanath just outside Kathmandu, the site of an ancient Buddhist stupa. From their house, according to Rinpoche, “every day Lama would look out through the window at a particular hill” in the distance, to the north.
across the terraced fields of the valley. “He seemed very attracted to it, and one day we went out to check that hill. It was the Kopan hill.”

Kopan had been the home of the astrologer to the King of Nepal, and the lamas moved there in 1969. The following year, Rinpoche accepted the request of his relatives to return to Solu Khumbu, and during his visit there, Lawudo Cave and all the belongings of the Lawudo Lama were returned to him by the previous lama’s son. It was also during this visit that Rinpoche fulfilled a promise made by the Lawudo Lama to start a monastic school for the young boys of the region. Rinpoche called it Mount Everest Centre.

In 1971, Rinpoche gave his first public teachings, at Kopan, to a group of twelve Westerners—an intensive introduction to Buddhist philosophy and meditation. This was the first of what has become an annual event that attracts hundreds of participants from around the world.

Westerners, tired of their materialism and hungry for something to activate their inner aspirations, were deeply moved by the clear-sighted, practical, and compassionate methods of Mahayana Buddhism. These were not empty words but a living tradition of teachings and meditation practices that stretched back in an unbroken line of master and disciple to the Buddha himself. And the methods clearly worked: this was evident from being with the lamas, from hearing their teachings, listening to their personal advice, observing them with others. They were literally full of the human qualities of patience, kindness, humor, wisdom, and contentment.

The lamas accepted the invitations of their growing number of students and visited the West for the first time in 1974. The first stop on their teaching tour of the United States, Australia, and New Zealand was New York. “But it wasn’t a big shock,” relates Rinpoche, “because I was familiar with it through studying English from *Time* magazines
Editors’ Preface

and through meeting so many Westerners, young and old, and hearing their life experiences.”

After the lamas’ visits, students in various countries began to open up centers for Dharma teachings and meditation, and in 1975 Lama Yeshe named this fledgling network the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). Kopan was the wellspring of this activity. Each year Rinpoche would give what had become known as the “November Course.” And each year the lamas would travel from Kopan to an ever-growing number of places in response to more and more invitations to teach.

By now Mount Everest Centre had moved down from the mountains to Kopan in the Kathmandu valley, and this facility for the monastic education of Sherpas, Manangpas, Tumpas, and others from Nepal, as well as Tibetans, continued to expand.

In 1973, while in meditation retreat in the mountains of Nepal, Zina Rachevsky died as a result of an illness. According to Rinpoche, there were many signs at her death to indicate that she had achieved spiritual realizations.

The following year, during a visit to Lawudo Cave, Rinpoche discovered the text that is the basis of this book, the one that convinced him that only after reading it did he find out “how to practice Dharma.”

So, what is it about this text that moved this great spiritual practitioner to say that? As Rinpoche explains, Opening the Door of Dharma “is the first thing to practice if you want to practice Dharma.”

The essential point, which Rinpoche states right at the beginning and clarifies throughout the book, is that whether or not something is a spiritual practice is not determined by the type of activity, such as
meditating or praying or reciting scriptures; it is determined by the reason, the motivation, for doing it. He points out that a so-called spiritual activity is not a Dharma activity—in other words, does not bring a positive result—if it is motivated by desire, by attachment to some mundane result here and now. And conversely, even a so-called worldly activity is a Dharma activity if it is done with a more expansive, long-term motivation.

As far as Mahayana Buddhism is concerned, the most expansive motivation for doing anything is the wish to achieve enlightenment so that one can lead others to this state of peerless wisdom and compassion. This approach is unique to the Mahayana, the path of the bodhisattvas—those who possess effortless bodhichitta, the mind of enlightenment, in other words, a spontaneous and continuous Mahayana motivation. Various methods for achieving bodhichitta are precisely outlined in the graduated path to enlightenment (in Tibetan, lam-rim), a step-by-step presentation of Buddha’s teachings first taught in Tibet by the great Lama Atisha in the eleventh century.

Another powerful approach to developing bodhichitta is the set of teachings and meditations known as thought transformation or mind training (in Tibetan, lo-jong). The special emphasis here is on the practice of exchanging oneself for others, in other words, cherishing others instead of cherishing oneself. In general, one learns to use every moment of life, whether happy or unhappy, to destroy self-cherishing, the greatest obstacle to bodhichitta.

Pabongka Rinpoche explains in Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand:

[Thought transformation] is able to dispel the darkness of self-cherishing, just as even a fraction of the
rays of the sun can dispel darkness. It can dispel the disease of self-cherishing just as even a part of the medicine tree can dispel illness. In these times when the five types of degeneration are commonplace and other Dharma may not be effective, this mind training will help you, and you will not be bothered by unfortunate circumstances. This Dharma has so many greatnesses. (pp. 588–89)

These teachings derive from the eighth-century Indian Mahayana master Shantideva, who exhorted yogis to practice them in secret, because, as Pabongka Rinpoche says, they would not be “to the liking of an unfit vessel.”

It was Lama Atisha who also brought these teachings to Tibet, and passed them on, in secret, to his heart disciple Dromtönpa. Thus began the lineage of the great Kadampas, yogis famous for their practice of thought transformation. And these practices remain today the essential meditations of all Mahayana yogis.

*Opening the Door of Dharma* is in the tradition of these Kadampas. It emphasizes mainly the shortcomings of desire, and impermanence and death. These are “the first things to practice if you want to practice Dharma,” because by recognizing that following desire is in fact the cause of suffering, not the cause of pleasure, and by meditating on death, one is able to begin to practice Dharma, and eventually to exchange oneself for others, to develop bodhichitta.

Here in *The Door to Satisfaction*, Lama Zopa Rinpoche shows, with clear and powerful reasoning, that by practicing these methods and by recognizing that there is no self to cherish, we can discover our deepest
level of satisfaction and happiness, enlightenment, and perfectly lead others to this enlightened state.

This is Lama Zopa’s heart advice and has been the essence of his teachings since he gave his first meditation course in 1971. Rinpoche is a modern-day Kadampa; he is an impeccable example of the teachings he gives and constantly cherishes others more than himself.

Since his beloved Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Lama Zopa has been the sole spiritual director of the FPMT, which has grown to include, in seventeen countries, more than seventy centers for meditation, retreat, and healing, as well as monasteries, publishing houses, and other activities.

Kopan thrives. The Mount Everest Centre is now home to more than two hundred and fifty monks and nuns, who study Buddhist philosophy in the traditional monastic way.

Rinpoche travels constantly between the various parts of his mandala, teaching and guiding his thousands of disciples. Special among those under Rinpoche’s care is Lama Tenzin Ösel Rinpoche, a Spanish child born in 1985 who has been formally acknowledged by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of Lama Thubten Yeshe. It is now Lama Zopa’s turn to be “more than a father, more than a mother.” Taking care of every moment of this young lama’s upbringing and education, Lama Zopa is preparing him to carry on the immeasurable Dharma activities that he started as Lama Yeshe.

FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS to this book, we sincerely thank Merry Colony, Alfred Leyens, Connie Miller, Paula Chichester, and Roger Munro. May everyone who reads The Door to Satisfaction realize as quickly as possible their innate potential for the highest happiness.
Like molding dough in your hand, you can definitely turn your mind whichever way you want.
Opening the Door of Dharma

In 1974, while I was staying in the cave of the previous Lawudo Lama in the Solu Khumbu region of Nepal, I decided to check through all the texts that had belonged to him. They were mostly Nyingma texts relating to the practices of various deities, but there was one text that is a fundamental practice of all four Tibetan sects. The text I found was Opening the Door of Dharma: The Initial Stage of Training the Mind in the Graduated Path to Enlightenment.

A collection of the advice of many Kadampa gishes, Opening the Door of Dharma is by Lodrō Gyaltsen, a disciple of both Lama Tsongkhapa and Khedrub Rinpoche, one of Lama Tsongkhapa’s two spiritual sons. This text describes the initial stage of thought transformation, or mind training—in other words, the first thing to practice if you want to practice Dharma.

Only when I read this text did I come to know what the practice of Dharma really means. During all the years of my life up until then I had not known. Practicing Dharma is usually regarded as reading scriptures, studying, memorizing, debating, saying prayers, performing rituals, and so forth. It was only when I read this text that I found out how to practice Dharma. I was very shocked that all my past actions had not been Dharma. When I checked back, all those past years of memorizing and saying prayers were not Dharma. From all those years, nothing was Dharma.
I was born near Lawudo, in Thami, in 1946. When I was quite young, three or four years old, my mother sent me to a monastery near my home to learn the alphabet from my uncle, who was a monk in the Nyingma tradition. But this didn’t last long. Because I was very naughty, I escaped from the monastery many times and ran back to my mother’s home. So my mother decided to send me away to a much more isolated place, called Rolwaling. Rolwaling is a secret holy place of Padmasambhava where there are many wonderful, blessed caves.

Another uncle, Ngawang Gendun, took me from my home to Rolwaling. We had to cross very dangerous rocky mountains, with rocks falling down and water rushing past, then cross over snow for one or two days. While crossing the snow, we could see many deep crevasses going down hundreds of feet, with what looked like a sea at the bottom. It was a very, very hard journey.

I lived at Rolwaling for seven years, learning the alphabet again and then learning to read. My teacher was Ngawang Gendun, who at that time was also a monk. After learning to read the Tibetan letters, I spent the rest of the time memorizing prayers, as well as reading the Kangyur and Tengyur and doing pujas for people in their homes.

In Solu Khumbu, many lay people cannot even read the alphabet. The lamas usually allow them to come to initiations, but they can’t take retreat commitments. The monks who are able to read and can understand the texts are given retreats to do, and the lay people are given a commitment to recite many millions of om mani padme hungs or some other mantra. Since these people cannot understand the texts, the lama gives them something that they can do.

These lay people are supposed to recite the mantras themselves, but often they go to the monks living nearby and ask them to help with
the commitment. Offering a basket of potatoes, which is what they grow and eat, they come and say, “I received a commitment from this lama to do this many million mantras. Please do this many for me.” Some people recite a few themselves, then ask other people to do the rest.

So, I spent those seven years reading texts such as the Kangyur, Tengyur, and Prajnaparamita in people’s homes, when my uncle was asked to do pujas. Sometimes we would do a puja for someone who had died. In that region, the custom when someone dies is to have a special puja done and make large money offerings to the lamas and other people.

When I was about ten, I went to Tibet, to Domo Geshe Rinpoche’s monastery near Pagri. I stayed there for three years. I spent the mornings memorizing texts and the rest of the day doing pujas in people’s houses. I did my first examination there, with my manager making offerings to the monks. Pagri was a very active business center, where many traders came from Lhasa, Tsang, India—everywhere.

In March 1959, the Chinese took over Tibet, but because that area is close to India, there was no immediate danger. Later that year I was instructed to do my first retreat, on Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga, at a nearby monastery called Pema Chöling, a branch of Domo Geshe’s monastery. I didn’t know anything about the meditation; I just recited the prayer and some migtsemas. I think I finished the retreat, but I don’t know how I did it or how many mantras I counted.

At the end of 1959, when the threat of torture was imminent, we decided to escape to India. One day we heard that the Chinese would come to Pema Chöling in two days. That same night we secretly left. We had to cross only one mountain to reach Bhutan. One night, because it
was very wet and we could not see the road clearly, we had a little trouble, sinking into the mud and slipping over. There were nomads at the border. If they had seen us, it would have been difficult to escape, because we had heard that some of them were spies, but even though their dogs were barking, the nomads did not come out of their tents.

Eventually we reached India. We went to Buxa Duar, in West Bengal, where the Indian government housed the monks from Sera, Ganden, and Drepung monasteries who wanted to continue their studies. During the time of the British, Buxa was used as a concentration camp, with both Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru imprisoned there. Where Mahatma Gandhi had been imprisoned became the nunnery, and where Nehru had been imprisoned became Sera Monastery’s prayer hall.

My study of Buddhist philosophy began with Geshe Rabten Rinpoche teaching me Collected Topics (Dura), the first debating subject. But Geshe Rabten had many disciples and was very busy, so one of his disciples, Gen Yeshe, who has since passed away, taught me. After that, I received teachings from Lama Yeshe.

While I was living at Buxa, because the conditions there were very poor, I caught TB. (Of course, that was not the only reason—there was karma as well!) Lama Yeshe and I then went to Darjeeling for nine months so that I could have medical treatment. It was at that time, in 1965, while we were staying at Domo Geshe’s monastery in Darjeeling, that we met our first Western student, Zina Rachevsky. Zina’s father had been a prince in Russia, but the family had escaped to France at the time of the Russian Revolution. Zina was born in France and later moved to America.

Zina asked us to move to Sri Lanka and start a Dharma center there. We obtained permission to do this from His Holiness the Dalai
Lama and from the Tibetan Government, but Zina had some problem that prevented us from going. Instead, since I was born in Nepal, we decided to visit Nepal.

We stayed in the Gelug monastery near Baudhanath Stupa, just outside Kathmandu. Every day Lama would look out through the window at a particular hill. He seemed very attracted to it, and one day we went out to check that hill. It was the Kopan hill.

During this time my mother and all my relatives came down from Solu Khumbu to Kathmandu on pilgrimage. Every twelve years there is a special occasion when all the Himalayan people come down from the mountains to go on pilgrimage to the holy places in the Kathmandu valley. They asked me to come back to Solu Khumbu, so I returned there.

It was at that time that Lawudo Cave was returned to me, and I began to build Lawudo Monastery. And Lama was gradually building Kopan Monastery then also. The two monasteries were being built at the same time. And it was then that I discovered Lodrō Gyaltsen’s text.

Transforming the Mind

Opening the Door of Dharma describes mainly impermanence and death, and the shortcomings of desire, the obstacles created by the eight worldly dharmas. These eight worldly concerns are:

1. being happy when acquiring material things,
2. being unhappy when not acquiring material things,
3. wanting to be happy,
4. not wanting to be unhappy,
5. wanting to hear interesting sounds,
6. not wanting to hear uninteresting sounds,
7. wanting praise,
8. not wanting criticism.

I don’t know whether this text has been translated into English; it is not difficult to understand intellectually, but there are many old terms that need commentary.

Reading this text was very helpful. It showed me that, like molding dough in your hand, you can definitely turn your mind whichever way you want. It can be trained to turn this way, that way. Now my mind is completely degenerate, but at that time, having thought a little about the meaning of this text, I hated it when people came to make offerings to me.

After finding *Opening the Door of Dharma*, I did a deity retreat. I think because I understood from this text how to practice Dharma, even the very first day of retreat was unbelievably peaceful and joyful. Because of a slight weakening of the eight worldly dharmas, my mind was more tranquil and slightly purer. Like having fewer rocks blocking a road, there were fewer obstacles in my mind, which means less interference from the eight worldly dharmas. This is what makes a retreat successful. Even though I hadn’t read carefully the commentaries of this tantric practice, the deity’s blessing was received because of fewer problems in my mind.

Trying to control your mind clears away obstacles, and the pure Dharma that is in your mind brings you closer to the deity. Even though you may not be very familiar with the meditations, the blessings of the
deity come. Experiencing good signs in the daytime during sessions and at night during dreams shows that the deity is pleased with you and is bestowing blessings. The success of a retreat seems basically to depend on this. It seems that receiving the blessings of a deity does not depend solely on knowing the meditations of the generation and completion stages of the tantric path.

(Of course, you may be unable to continue your retreat if the more you do retreat, the more lung, or wind, disease you develop. After meeting Tibetan Buddhism, you know all about lung! Before that, lung was not so famous. The main cause of lung, by the way, is the inability to practice the essence of this text, the real meaning of Dharma.)

As KIRTI TSENSHAB RINPOCHE, holder of the entire holy Buddhadharma, has said, “All the teachings of the Buddha [Tibetan, Kangyur] and the commentaries by the pandits [Tengyur] are to subdue the mind.” All of these teachings are mind training, thought transformation. All the teachings of Buddha are to transform the mind, to subdue the mind.

*Opening the Door of Dharma* is a thought-transformation text, as I mentioned. Why is it called “thought transformation”? What is it that interferes with and renders ineffective our practice of listening to these teachings, reflecting on their meaning, and meditating on the path they reveal? The eight worldly dharmas, desire clinging to this life. The particular aim of this text is to control the eight worldly dharmas—this is thought transformation.

The whole teaching of the lam-rim, the graduated path to enlightenment, is thought transformation. Its main purpose is to subdue the mind. This is why listening to and reflecting and meditating on lam-rim teachings are so beneficial. When other teachings have no
effect, hearing or reading the lam-rim can subdue your mind. The graduated path to enlightenment has a special arrangement that subdues the mind.

The lam-rim, as set out originally by Lama Atisha in his text, *Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment*, begins with the meditation on perfect human rebirth—the eight freedoms and ten richnesses. Lama Tsongkhapa, however, begins the lam-rim meditations with guru devotion, the root of the path.

Now, what blocks the generation of the graduated path to enlightenment within our mind? What doesn’t allow us to have realizations, beginning with guru devotion or perfect human rebirth? Again, it is the eight worldly dharmas. Worldly concern does not allow the practice of lam-rim to become Dharma. What doesn’t allow our everyday actions to become Dharma? From morning until night, what doesn’t allow the actions we do to become holy Dharma? The eight worldly dharmas, desire clinging to this life. This is the obstacle that prevents the generation within our mind of the lam-rim from the very beginning up to enlightenment, that doesn’t allow us to have realizations such as guru devotion or perfect human rebirth.

We need to train our mind by reflecting on the shortcomings of worldly concern and the infinite benefits of renouncing it. Especially we need to train our mind by meditating on impermanence and death. If this initial thought training is done, you open the door of Dharma. Then, without difficulty, you are able to practice Dharma. Every action you wish to do, whether retreat or other Dharma practices, you are able to do. And generally all your actions become Dharma. Not only that, you are able to begin to generate within your own mind the realizations of the path, from guru devotion or perfect human rebirth up
to enlightenment. You are able to begin to generate the path to enlightenment within your mind, and to continue and complete it.

All these results come from this very first thought training, *Opening the Door of Dharma*. If you practice the meaning of this text, you will control the eight worldly dharmas instead of allowing yourself to be controlled by them. Instead of giving yourself no freedom, you will give yourself freedom. Otherwise you have no freedom, no independence.