

# FPMT Online Learning

## Summary Plan for Light of the Path



**FPMT'S NEW ESSENTIAL LAM-RIM PROGRAM**  
A complete experiential commentary by Lama Zopa Rinpoche on  
***Atisha's Light of the Path***

over the next five years hosted by Kadampa Center, USA. The first teaching will be held  
**Sept 8-22, 2009**

Gelong Thubten Gyatso will provide follow-up sessions during the course,  
with time for discussion and guided meditations.

**Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity!**

The event will also be available via live webcast. In addition, a Light of the Path Online Learning Center will be  
launched in 2010 to make further available the rich content Rinpoche's teachings.

**[www.fpmt.org/education/lop](http://www.fpmt.org/education/lop)**

**Last Update:**

**16 February 2009**

# Light of the Path – a new wave of Buddhist Education in FPMT

## Vision, Implementation Plan & Budget

**History:** In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Lama Atisha (Shri Dipamkara) was invited from India to Tibet for the purpose of transmitting the complete teachings of Lord Buddha to the Tibetan people, and presenting them in a way that was clear, precise, and easy to practice. To that purpose, Lord Atisha wrote and taught the *Light of the Path to Enlightenment (jangchhub lam gyi drönma)*, which became the cornerstone of teaching and practice for thousands of Tibetans and provided a foundation for understanding and realizing Lord Buddha's teachings which has flourished to the present time.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has now offered to give a modern day commentary on this profound and ancient text over a number of years, beginning in September of 2009. We consider this event to be the ultimate teaching and practice lineage transmission available for FPMT teachers and students and strongly encourage everyone to attend in person. We will also make full use of the spectrum of information technology to make this new program available to a worldwide audience via webcasting and an Online Learning Center.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche is a unique teacher in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He is well-known for teaching long hours into the night and for rarely teaching in a linear fashion according to a text, but rather for teaching according to what is most karmically beneficial for each member of the audience. For over 45 years, Rinpoche has been gathering modern day examples of the truth of Dharma and perfecting his ability to discern what practices and teachings are most appropriate for modern day practitioners. It is our belief that Rinpoche's offer to give a commentary on Atisha's *Light of the Path*, which had a tremendous impact on how Buddhism was subsequently understood and practiced in Tibet, is an indication of how transformative this teaching event will be for the way Buddhism is practiced and understood in our time. We expect this teaching event to be a unique presentation of how we can make the most of this precious opportunity that is our life.

**Program Mission:** To make the "Light of the Path" commentary a masterpiece of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's lifelong offering of teaching and to make it available to a worldwide audience in an experiential and meaningful way that includes all aspects of FPMT integrated education: study, practice, service, and ethical behavior.

**Vision for Implementation:** Each year, Lama Zopa Rinpoche will teach "Light of the Path" during a two-week retreat during which Rinpoche's commentary will be supplemented by practice and review sessions, discussion, and guided meditations lead by designated senior FPMT teachers. Course participants will be assigned karma yoga for the duration of the retreat. In addition, these events will be made available via webcast, and, subsequently, via audio/visual files which can be streamed, downloaded, or purchased as DVDs and/or CDs from the FPMT website.

Subsequent to the retreat, a small group of senior FPMT teachers will meet to review what Rinpoche taught and organize it into short courses that can be facilitated by FPMT teachers both at FPMT centers and online through a Light of the Path Online Learning Center. Supplemental material that will enhance both the student and facilitators' experience will then be developed by FPMT Education Services. Short courses will be organized around edited video of Rinpoche's teachings and will include the following components:

### Components of each short course for Light of the Path (live or via IT media)

- Overview of entire program to provide context, history, and vision for Light of the Path
- Introduction to short course by facilitator
- 15-30 minute video of LZR teaching a particular topic

- Opportunity for discussion and Q & A, with students to deepen their understanding of the material
- Guided meditation making use of video/audio of meditations guided directly by LZR/LTY wherever possible.
- Quizzes to help students measure their understanding of the topic.
- Karma yoga or suggested service (written suggestion or followed up with facilitator). Encourage students to share their service experience.
- Opportunity to take 8 Mahayana Precepts
- Additional suggested reading (books, relevant transcripts, particularly of LZR and LTY). Note: There is an HHDL commentary on Atisha's text for video/audio download: <http://www.dalailama.com/page.235.htm>
- Optional: establish social networking site for students of LoP or opportunity for students to have "live" discussions via computer chatting
- Optional: Mini retreats associated with each module

The online learning center will serve as a virtual "Light of the Path" Dharma community for those without easy access to FPMT centers or study groups. All materials developed for the online learning center can also be utilized by FPMT centers and study groups to facilitate similar courses in person. It is recommended that course facilitators be selected from those FPMT teachers who attended the live event with Lama Zopa Rinpoche. As such, we are strongly encouraging centers to consider who their Light of the Path facilitator may be and assure that they attend the annual teaching retreat.

**Type and number of courses:** One annual two-week retreat teaching event lead by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and a retreat assistant; the number of short courses resulting from Rinpoche's teachings will be determined by a work retreat following each annual event. Short courses will be facilitated by approved FPMT Light of the Path facilitators at centers, study groups, and online and will be developed in such a way that the primary teaching of each course is given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche via edited video; facilitators will then assist students to understand and integrate the material into their daily lives. It is our wish to make Light of the Path short courses available in as many languages and countries as possible.

**Type of content:** Live attendance and webcast of two-week intensive teaching event of Lama Zopa Rinpoche and retreat assistant sessions; live and online short courses as described above. Eventually, we will provide a compilation of written material to complement "Light of the Path" courses, which will include edited transcripts of Rinpoche's commentary supplemented by additional material from Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive, retreat assistants, and course teachers. This material will be complemented by select audio/video of Light of the Path teaching events.

**Administration:** Course creation and distribution will be managed by Education Services of FPMT International Office. Education Services will assemble and facilitate a core team of senior FPMT teachers to create and develop course materials via work retreats immediately following each event with Lama Zopa Rinpoche and subsequent communications. The core team of FPMT teachers will then act as a mentorship and support network for approved Light of the Path facilitators. Education Services will also directly manage webcasting, video archiving, editing, and subsequent updating of online materials using an education website such as Moodle. In addition, Education Services will actively support FPMT centers to participate in the entire program as completely as possible, including making qualified facilitators available for centers and study groups to host Light of the Path short courses.

**Estimated Development Budget for Light of the Path, 2009: \$37,700**