



**Dharmakirti.org**

**Dharmakirti College™ (Tucson)**

**And**

**Dharmakirti eCollege™ (Internet)**

**Catalog**

**2009 - 2011**

Welcome to Dharmakirti, named after the famous Indian Buddhist philosopher. We are a Vajrayana Buddhist organization striving to help ordinary beings attain enlightenment in this lifetime. To help achieve this, we offer comprehensive and systematic programs of study and practice guided by qualified masters in the tradition and facilitated by ordained Western practitioners. We are committed to the householder tradition that goes back to Shakyamuni Buddha in India and Padmasambhava in Tibet, sometimes referred to as the “white” tradition due to the robes worn by the yogis in this tradition. Many of the great Mahasiddhas of India and Tibet practiced as householders. This is particularly appropriate today in the West, where most of us work for a living and may have families and other life commitments.

Our offerings are selected from the best texts and teachings of the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, Gelugpa, and Rim\_ traditions, as well as scholarly and scientific sources. Recent teachers and guides include Tulku Khenchen Prachhimba Dorjee Rinpoche and Venerable Drikung Ontul Rinpoche and notable Western scholar/practitioner and author Dr. B. Alan Wallace.

While we are located in Tucson, Arizona, we also offer programs of study and practice via the Internet that are available globally. Programs are offered through Dharmakirti College™ locally and Dharmakirti eCollege™ on the Internet. There is a complete two-year curriculum available for those who wish to learn, but have limited time to study and practice. For those who wish to pursue further studies, more detailed courses are being made available with additional guided study and thesis projects cap the program for those seeking to become dharma teachers.

All of us who work diligently to bring this exciting program to you are strictly volunteers to keep our costs and your fees as low as possible, with a long-range goal of making them available for free! Your support through regular donations or contributions made specifically for special programs or teachings are deeply appreciated.

Please take the time to look over our website and what we have to offer, locally or on the web. We hope you will find this opportunity as exciting as we do and look forward to your participation and/or support!

Warm regards in the Dharma,

Khenpo Drimed Dawa  
(Dr. Dean Pielstick)  
President



**OM AH HUNG HRI**



## Dharmakirti College™ (Tucson) and Dharmakirti eCollege™ (Internet) Curriculum Overview

**Basic curriculum**—complete essential practices for most householders

- *Survey of Tibetan Buddhism*—an overview and introduction to key Vajrayana principles and practices
- *Chenrezig and White Tara practices*—deity practice based on the male and female Buddhas of Compassion
- *Natural Liberation*—a 9-month program in the complete path from the preliminary practices through Dzogchen based on the teachings of Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava

**Advanced curriculum**—thorough examination of Buddhist philosophy and practice for serious practitioners and those who may be interested in learning to teach the dharma to benefit others

- *Ngondro*—the common and uncommon preliminary or foundation practices
- *The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*—a key text and practice focused on the Six Perfections
- *Buddhanature*—the essence of our true nature, the goal of all practices
- *Improving Your Practice*—examination of Buddhist and Western scientific findings
- *Generation Stage Practice*—introduction to Highest Yoga Tantra practices
- *Chakrasamvara*—a core generation stage practice in the Mahamudra path
- *Three Roots*—a core generation stage practice in the Dzogchen path
- *Five-Path Mahamudra*—the actual Mahamudra practice
- *Madhyamaka*—essential study of the Middle Way philosophy underlying advanced practices
- *Vajrayogini*—key tantric practices that form the basis for completion stage practices
- *The Six Yogas of Naropa*—completion stage practices in the Mahamudra path
- *Kalachakra*—the most advanced non-dual tantra
- *Dzogchen*—the Great Perfection, the most advanced of all Buddhist teachings



**Dharmakirti College™ (Tucson) and Dharmakirti eCollege™ (Internet)  
Curriculum**

**Level 1:**

Course 101/102 - Survey of Tibetan  
Buddhism I/II  
Course 103 - Chenrezig  
Course 104 - White Tara

**Level 2:**

Course 201/202 - Natural Liberation I/II  
Course 203/204 - Natural Liberation III/IV

**Level 3:**

Course 301/302 - Ngondro Parts I/II  
Course 303/304 - Bodhisattva's Way of Life  
I/II  
Course 305 - Buddha Nature

**Level 4 (choose M - Mahamudra or D -  
Dzogchen):**

Course 401/402 - Generation Stage I/II  
Course 403/404M - Chakrasamvara I/II  
Course 403/404D - Three Roots Parts I/II  
Course 405 - Improving Your Practice

**Level 5:**

Course 501/502M - Five-Path Mahamudra  
I/II  
Course 501/502D - Introduction to  
Dzogchen I/II  
Course 503/504 - Madhyamaka I/II  
Course 505 - Leading Practice

**Level 6:**

Course 601/602M - Vajrayogini I/II  
Course 603/604M - Six Yogas of Naropa  
I/II  
Course 601/602D - Trekcho I/II  
Course 603/604D - Guided Practice (may  
be repeated)  
Course 605 - Teaching Dharma

**Level 7:**

Course 701/702M - Kalachakra I/II  
Course 701/702D - Toga I/II  
Course 798 - Guided Study and Thesis  
(may be repeated)  
Course 799 - Guided Retreat  
(may be repeated)

**Tentative Course Schedule 2009-2011**

- Level 1 and 2 will be offered each year through the eCollege and alternate years in Tucson.
- Level 3 and 4 will alternate years both the eCollege and in Tucson.
- Level 5-7 will depend on demand and may be individual guided study.

**Summer 09:**

Kalachakra Mantra & Practice (Tucson)  
Buddha Nature (eCollege)  
Leading Practice (Tucson)

**Fall 2009:**

Survey (eCollege)  
Natural Liberation (Tucson & eCollege)  
Ngondro (eCollege)

Generation Stage w/ 3 Roots (eCollege)  
Toga (Tucson)

**Spring 2010:**

Chenrezig (eCollege)  
White Tara (eCollege)  
Natural Liberation (Tucson & eCollege)

Chakrasamvara (eCollege) or  
Introduction to Dzogchen (eCollege)

**Summer 2010:**

37 Practices of a Bodhisattva (eCollege)  
Buddha Nature (Tucson & eCollege)  
Leading Practice (eCollege)

**Fall 2010:**

Survey (Tucson & eCollege)  
Natural Liberation (eCollege)  
Ngondro (Tucson & eCollege)  
Generation Stage w/ 3 Roots (eCollege)  
Five-Path Mahamudra (eCollege –  
Tentative)  
Trekcho (eCollege - tentative)

**Spring 2011:**

Chenrezig (Tucson &amp; eCollege)

White Tara (Tucson &amp; eCollege)

Natural Liberation (eCollege)

Bodhisattva's Way of Life (Tucson &amp; eCollege)

Chakrasamvara (eCollege - tentative)

Madhyamaka (eCollege - tentative)

Togal (eCollege - tentative)

**Dharmakirti College Course Descriptions****Level 1 Courses – An introduction to Tibetan Buddhism and basic practices and rituals****101/102 – Survey of Tibetan Buddhism I/II**

This course is designed to provide newcomers a survey of the entire path of Tibetan Buddhism. The course includes daily meditation practice, the different lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, and the practices of the complete path that are usually done in a three-year retreat, including Five-Path Mahamudra and the Six Yogas of Naropa. This course is a prerequisite for many of the other courses at Dharmakirti College. Prerequisites: None.

**103 – Chenrezig**

Chenrezig (Tib.) or Avalokiteshvara (Skt.) is the Buddha of Compassion. This course is an introduction to Chenrezig practice, one of the most beloved of the Tibetan Buddhist practices, as well as Buddhist deity meditation practice generally. Students wanting to know more about Tibetan Buddhist meditation practices will find this course to provide a solid introduction. There are no prerequisites for this course. However, the Survey of Tibetan Buddhism or some background with Buddhism is highly recommended. Prerequisites: None.

**104 – White Tara**

Tara is the female Buddha of Compassion and the most popular among the female deities in Buddhist practice. Her color represents purity and truth. Her practice is also connected with longevity. This course teaches the practice as well as expanding on the deity practices introduced in the Chenrezig course. Prerequisites: None, though 103 is recommended.

**Level 2 Courses – Complete practices for householders****201/202/203/204 – Natural Liberation**

A very complete cycle of teachings from preliminary practices through Highest Yoga Tantra and Dzogchen Trekcho and Togal based on the root text of Padmasambhava on the six bardos of (1) this life, (2) dreams, (3) meditation, (4) dying, (5) Dharmata, and (6) becoming. This series of courses prepares practitioners with a solid background in practice to advance to the highest levels of practice in this lifetime. No other practices are needed. Prerequisites: 101/102, 103 and 104, or instructor permission.

**Level 3 Courses – Detailed courses in core preliminaries and advanced practices for those who seek deeper understanding and practice.****301/302 – Ngondro I/II**

These are the incomparable foundational or preliminary practices upon which all others are based. Essential to establishing our attitude and motivation are the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind. Our mental obscurations, afflictive emotions and other mental fixations are systematically addressed through refuge, bodhicitta, Vajrasattva purification, mandala offerings, and guru yoga. In addition, these practices provide a solid understanding for advanced Vajrayana practices.

### **303/304 – Bodhisattva’s Way of Life I/II**

Bodhichitta, the altruistic wish to help all sentient beings attain enlightenment, is at the heart of all Buddhist practices. The most highly regarded and popular text for these is *The Bodhisattva’s Way of Life* by Shantideva, which is supplemented by the practice text “The Sun of Brilliant Clarity: A Step-by-Step Guide to Meditating on the Bodhicharyavatara” by Patrul Rinpoche. These include the core practices of the Six Perfections: generosity, ethical discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration and wisdom. Prerequisites: 301/302 or instructor permission.

### **305 – Buddha Nature**

In the Third Turning of the Wheel, the Buddha taught Buddha Nature—our innate, Buddha essence. While this is among The Buddha’s most advanced teachings, Gampopa said that when it is taught early in one’s development one will advance more quickly. The 8-week course examines Maitreya’s *Uttaratantra*, the classic Buddhist text on Buddha Nature, as well as meditation practices. Prerequisites: 301/302 (303/304 recommended) or instructor permission.

**Level 4 Courses – The advanced curriculum is divided between the Mahamudra and Dzogchen paths. This level examines the generation stage of Highest Yoga Tantra and core generation stage practices for each path.**

### **401/402 – Generation Stage I/II**

In the generation stage practices of highest yoga tantra, one mentally generates oneself as the deity and one’s surroundings as the mandala of the deity. Although all deity practices include generating the deity, this class of practices includes those with very complex visualizations as the principle focus. Chakrasamvara and Hayagriva are examples. This course provides a detailed understanding for these visualizations applicable to all generation stage deity practices. (May be combined with either 403/404.) Prerequisites: 301-305 or instructor permission.

### **403M/404M – Chakrasamvara I/II**

Chakrasamvara is a comprehensive father tantra practice that leads into the Five-Path Mahamudra. The practice further develops one’s skills in visualization, contemplation and meditation, as well as more detailed symbolism and significance of the generation stage of practice. Yidam practice is a very special tantric practice in which one transforms one’s normal, samsaric experience of reality into an extraordinary experience of the true state of all phenomena. The practice of Yidam is a special and profound method to quickly transform ordinary appearances into enlightened appearances. Prerequisites: 401/402 or instructor permission and Chakrasamvara or Five-Path Mahamudra empowerment.

### **403D/404D – Three Roots I/II**

The Three Roots practice from the Yangzab Dzochon cycle of teachings is a comprehensive generation stage practice. The practice further develops one’s skills in visualization, contemplation and meditation, as well as more detailed symbolism and significance of the generation stage of practice. The course prepares students to transition into the nonconceptual advanced practices of Ati Yoga or Dzogchen. Prerequisites: 401/402 or instructor permission and Three Roots empowerment.

### **405 – Improving Your Practice**

This course draws from traditional Buddhist views of mind and Western scientific research, reflecting recent interest in the exchanges and collaborative research between Western scientists and Buddhist scholars. The class will address the difficulty of staying focused and other common obstacles to successful meditation and ways to deal with them through the theory and practice of

attention, emotion and consciousness from Western scientific and traditional Vajrayana Buddhist points of view. Prerequisites: Either 403/404 or instructor permission.

**Level 5 Courses – These courses continue the advanced study of the Mahamudra or Dzogchen paths to enlightenment, as well as the opportunity to learn how to lead practice**

**501M/502M – Five-Path Mahamudra I/II**

Five-Path Mahamudra is a comprehensive practice that includes (1) the common and uncommon preliminary practices, (2) Chakrasamvara practice, (3) Four-Kaya Guru Yoga, (4) Mahamudra itself, and (5) dedication of merit. The four kayas are the nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, dharmakaya, and svabhavikakaya. In this context, the first three are considered relative truth and the fourth is ultimate truth. In the practice the guru is visualized in the form of Shakyamuni Buddha, then as Vairochana, followed by Vajradhara. Finally, the guru is meditated on without any form, color, name or shape. Mahamudra is the uncontrived, natural state completely devoid of fabrication of meditation and meditator, non-attached and non-separated, free from hope and fear, grasping and letting-go, rejection and acceptance, meditation and post-meditation.

Prerequisites: Completion of level 4 Mahamudra path courses or instructor permission and Five-Path Mahamudra empowerment.

**501D/502D – Introduction to Dzogchen I/II**

Dzogchen or the Great Perfection is the highest level of the Vajrayana teachings. It deals directly with self-liberation into our innate Buddha Nature, abiding in the state of *rigpa*. This overview describes the three branches of Dzogchen teachings—the mind series, the space series, and the special instructions (including *trekcho* and *togal*) and begins the Dzogchen Preliminary Practices of *Khorde Rushen*. Prerequisites: Completion of the level 4 Dzogchen path courses or instructor permission and Pointing Out Instructions.

**503/504 – Madhyamaka I/II**

The highly influential Madhyamaka or Middle Way school of Indian Buddhism was based on the teachings of the great Nagajuna, and were further elaborated upon by Dharmakirti and Chandrakirti. This philosophical approach emphasizes the negation of independent phenomenal reality through logical reductionism in order to arrive at a true understanding of emptiness. This approach is comparable to that of Mahamudra and Dzogchen for understanding the ultimate nature of reality, void of all particular characteristics. Prerequisites: Either 501/502 or instructor permission.

**505 – Leading Practice**

Students will receive instruction in how to set up and lead meditation practices based upon use of a sadhana. Practical guidance will be provided in working with groups, effective communication, chanting, and answering questions. Students will gain practical experience leading practice groups with feedback from the instructor. Prerequisite: Completion of level 5 courses or instructor permission.

**Level 6 Courses – Very advanced study of the Mahamudra or Dzogchen paths to enlightenment, as well as the opportunity to learn how to teach the dharma**

**601M/602M – Vajrayogini I/II**

Vajrayogini is a principle mother tantra practice leading into the completion stage practices of channels, winds and drops and the Six Yogas of Naropa. Students will examine the important role of the dakini in the development of the tantric yoga practices as well as the specific application of completions stage practices. Prerequisites: Completion of level 5 Mahamudra

### **601D/602D – Trekcho I/II**

The *trekcho* instructions are part of the special instruction series. This course will examine these instructions, particularly through the writings of the highly regarded master Longchenpa. Students will also further develop their actual practice. Prerequisites: 503/504 or instructor permission.

### **603M/604M – Six Yogas of Naropa I/II**

The Six Yogas of Naropa are tummo, illusory body, dream yoga, clear light, bardo, and phowa. These advanced completion-stage practices enable one to transform one's body into the actual body of a buddha. Students will develop skill and understanding in each of these practices. Prerequisites: 601/602M or instructor permission.

### **603/604D – Guided Practice I/II**

Upon completing the *khorde rushen* practices and *trekcho* instructions, the student continues the practice under the guidance of a qualified instructor until certainty is attained. (May be repeated) Prerequisites: 601/602D or instructor permission.

### **605 – Teaching Dharma**

Students interested in or requested by their lama to teach the dharma will examine the theoretical constructs of adult learning theory and practical applications from the best of Western research and practice. These will then be applied to traditional approaches used to teaching the dharma. Students will practice teaching under the supervision of a teaching professional and dharma faculty member. Prerequisites: Completion of other level 6 courses or instructor permission.

### **Level 7 Courses – The most advanced level of study of the Mahamudra or Dzogchen paths to enlightenment, as well as opportunities for guided study, thesis and guided retreat**

#### **701M/702M – Kalachakra I/II**

Kalachakra is the most complex of all the tantric traditions. Made popular in the West by the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, this course examines the complexities and symbolism of this nondual tantra and its practices. Students will apply these concepts to the actual practice. Prerequisites: Completion of level 6 Mahamudra courses or instructor permission and Kalachakra initiation.

#### **701D/702D – Tegal I/II**

*Tegal* is the advanced and often secret teaching of the special instructions of Dzogchen. This practice leads to attaining the Rainbow Body, enabling one to help other beings achieve enlightenment. Students will learn the practices of *tegal* and how to apply them. Prerequisites: Completion of level 6 Dzogchen courses or instructor permission.

#### **798 – Guided Study and Thesis (may be repeated)**

Students in this course study a specific area of Buddhist philosophy or practice under the guidance of one of the faculty. This is an opportunity to go into greater depth in an area in the curriculum or to investigate areas not included in the curriculum that are particularly meaningful to the student. It may be an area suggested by one's own lama. Students should contact a faculty member about writing a proposal that must be approved by the faculty as a whole prior to beginning this study. The study will culminate in a master's level thesis. Prerequisites: Completing the full Mahamudra or Dzogchen path of study and faculty approval of the proposal. The proposal for guided study and thesis may be developed during the last semester of prescribed study.

### **799 – Guided Retreat (may be repeated)**

Students may participate in an extended retreat under the guidance of one of the faculty or another lama acceptable to the faculty. Extended retreats are an important part of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and may extend 3 years or longer. Most Western students may not be able to complete a retreat of this length, so the retreat plan is flexible to meet the needs of advanced students for longer guided practice in the tradition. Prerequisite: Faculty approval of a retreat plan.

## **Application & Registration**

Anyone interested in taking classes at Dharmakirti College may do so. There is no separate application process. Fall courses normally begin in August or September. Spring courses begin in January. Summer courses begin in May or June. To register for courses, simply go to our website at [www.dharmakirti.org](http://www.dharmakirti.org) to sign up for available courses. Be sure to check the prerequisite requirements for level 2 and above. Requests for prerequisite overrides should be made to [admin@dharmakirti.org](mailto:admin@dharmakirti.org) and are subject to instructor permission. Please explain the reason you are requesting the override. Payment is made by credit card online. Most books may be purchased at Snow Lion or Amazon.com.

The cost is currently \$60 per course. A limited number of scholarships are available. We normally approve up to 50% of the tuition. To apply for a scholarship, please send an email describing your financial situation to [admin@dharmakirti.org](mailto:admin@dharmakirti.org).

For any other questions or information, please contact us at the above email address.



**OM AH HUNG HRI**

