

*Dear STBC Students*

*I would like to express my deep appreciation to both Zopa Herron & Cat Wilson, for teaching and discussing the Lamrim with our students off and on for these past three years. I also want to recognize and thank the group of dedicated STBC students who have come for so long to our Lamrim study class. Many students have told me that they have benefited from these efforts.*

*We know that everyone wishes for a happy, beautiful and meaningful life, and we all want to avoid suffering. As students of the Buddha's teachings, we know that a fulfilling life does not come to us simply by wishful thinking. It comes by training our own minds through study and meditation practice. It comes by cultivating great compassion, and aspiring to develop Bodhicitta mind, when we keep in our hearts the goal of attaining enlightenment for the sake of all beings. Bodhisattvas practice the six perfections—we can practice to be like them right now in our daily lives.*

*As we have been doing at STBC with the Lamrim Dharma study group, the Tonglen meditation group, and the Cittamani Tara practice group before that, we are developing our minds to be clear and resilient, our hearts to be open and compassionate.*

*When we engage in the study & practice of the Dharma, we create a fertile spiritual ground where we can plant the seeds of enlightenment. If we have gained the realization of a profound concentration practice, with the wisdom realizing emptiness, we will be able to dispel our negative emotions, including their base of hatred, attachment, and ignorance, which is the source of all pain and suffering.*

*So in order to accomplish this admirable aspiration, it is both advisable and necessary to continue our journey on the Dharma path, which clearly leads us step by step to spiritual improvement until we reach the state of full enlightenment, free from all faults and completed with all goodness of mind.*

*To achieve such a marvelous and worthwhile goal, it is very helpful to use reliable textbooks as the manuals for our spiritual journey. This time, I recommend that STBC's Dharma Studies students use the text entitled: The Words of My Perfect Teacher, by the Great Master Za Patrul Rinpoche. I have read this text many, many times, and have found it to be very useful in transforming my own mind. I have also received the direct transmission of this text from His Holiness the Dalai Lama.*

*Beginning in September, 2016, STBC's study group should do some reading of this text in each class, discovering this material together, and making sure to cover every topic. All of the members of the group will be encouraged to read aloud each session. However, any group member may decide not to read or speak aloud, and may ask the group to read silently together, as each person has their own style!*

*Your class discussion will be based on these readings—everyone in the group is welcome to offer questions and comments about these topics based on their own personal experience. Everyone is encouraged to relate the ways in which they have improved, to share any struggles or doubts about these concepts, and to talk about how they personally have changed through the practice of the Dharma.*

*I am so very happy to know that these classes and practices are progressing throughout the years. I strongly encourage each of you to continue to engage in the Buddha's teachings!*

*Yours truly,  
Geshe la*