

Proposed Post Graduate Diploma course in Buddhist Psychology and Psychotherapy

(Pali department, University of Pune, is introducing a 16 credits PG diploma course in Buddhist Psychology Psychotherapy to be completed within 1 year. It will contain 4 papers, with 4 credits in each paper. These papers will also be available as optional papers for students doing Master degree courses in any of the University Departments.)

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychology is a science which aims to understand human behaviour at social, individual and biological level. Psychologists and philosophers have pondered over similar questions *like who we are or what are influences on human behaviour*, though their methods of answering these questions have been different from each other. Psychologists have used empirical research methods for solving these perennial questions. The not so long history of psychology has been made rich due to the unique contributions by many psychologists in understanding the influence on human behaviour of various factors like unconscious motives, reinforcements, brain behaviour relationship, social dynamics, culture and so on. The research methods used by various psychologists so far have been methods of introspection, experimental method, case studies, correlational studies, brain imaging and so on. Present psychological science is an accumulation of empirical research findings about mind, brain and behaviour over the last two centuries.

Psychologists today are getting aware about the contribution of Indian philosophical traditions for psychological science. Indian Psychology is emerging as an interdisciplinary area of study where the contributions of different Indian philosophical systems to psychological issues are discussed. Though Buddhist Psychology in this sense is a part of Indian Psychology, it has some unique features not shared by other systems of Indian Philosophy. The proposed course will highlight these features with their different dimensions. For instance, in other schools of Indian Philosophy, mind or *manas* is regarded as insentient and *Ātman* is regarded as the centre of consciousness. As against this, Buddhism denies the existence of *Ātman* and regards *manas* to be the centre of consciousness. Unlike the eternal *Ātman* of other systems, *manas* of Buddhism is insubstantial and ever-changing. Buddhism has studied mind, states of mind and functions of mind with elaborate details in what is called **Abhidhamma Philosophy**.

Buddhist thinking about mind has continuity with Western Psychology in different ways. Buddhism has provided us a wealth of literature on similar questions as those of psychology like ‘What is human mind?’ or ‘What motivates human behaviour?’ Buddhism is also similar to psychology in its encouragement of the spirit of healthy scepticism. “Do not believe, unless you experience it yourself”, the Buddha has proclaimed. Nonetheless, the uniqueness of Buddhism is in its first person methods of looking within for exploring the nature of mind. The method of introspection or a systematic observation of subjective mental experiences, used by early psychologists had some similarity with the research methods of Buddhism. However Buddhism has provided elaborate details of mind cultivating methods like Samatha (tranquillity) Meditation and Vipassanā (Mindfulness) Meditation which can train mind to observe reality at the subtlest level possible. Buddhist texts provide detail analysis of cognitive process, motivation and perception as an aid for cultivation of mind through meditation techniques along with rational enquiry.

Psychologists today have recognized the therapeutic potential of the mind training methods of mindfulness meditation and started utilizing them for various clinical populations like chronic pain, PTSD and depression through mindfulness based psychotherapies. Motivated by the anecdotal reports of benefits of Vipassanā meditation many psychologists have started exploring the phenomena through empirical methods. These happenings in last three decades suggest that there is a lot of scope for meaningful dialogue between Psychology and Buddhism.

The proposed Buddhist Psychology course would offer an opportunity to students particularly those of Buddhism and Psychology, to enter into dialogues with the other stream. A spirit of scientific enquiry is very much necessary before assimilating the Buddhist contribution in psychology to avoid the danger of considering the traditional theories of mind as the ultimate truth. Strictly speaking any religious spiritual or philosophical work that submits itself to scrutiny through scientific method can be included in Psychology. On one hand first person methods have a lot to offer to psychology which has retained a behavioural focus for a long time; and on the other hand these methods can be rigid and ritualistic and shunning all experimentation.

It is in the scope of this course to introduce students to the basic concepts in Buddhism and Psychology and make a comparison between the two. The Buddhist concepts are limited to the ones from Theravāda or early Buddhist tradition, though later developments in Buddhism will be reviewed briefly. The basic concepts in Psychology would be taken from the entire history for the very reason that as mentioned above, psychological principles are actually accumulation of research findings over the history. The course will help students from psychology background to appreciate the richness of Buddhism in providing naturalistic and analytical approach to subjective experience and also transcendental potential of human mind. It will help students from the background of Buddhist studies to start exploring how the Buddhist knowledge is applied for problems of human behaviour in the present time. It will help students of any discipline to develop insight into psychological concepts and practices in Buddhism and through that enrich the quality of their day-to-day and professional life.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce students to the Psychological attitude/aspects of Theravāda Buddhist tradition
- Compare the perspectives of Buddhism and Psychology on core topics of Psychology and also on research methods
- Enable students of Psychology and Buddhism to do advanced research in this field.
- Explore the application and limitations of Buddhist thoughts and practices for professionals working in the field of mental health

3. COURSE OUTLINE:

The course includes four papers which will be taught during the span of two semesters. The course has three main aspects: 1. Learning of theory; 2. Applying theory for self analysis and 3. Research. Students would be introduced to the theory through lectures and group discussion. Attending at least one Buddhist meditation retreat of minimum 10-days would be necessary part of the paper III. Students are expected to design and carry out a small research project on any chosen theme connecting Buddhism and Psychology as a part of paper IV.

Students' understanding would be assessed on the basis of their performance on things such as:

1. Assignments: Debate on conceptual issues, group discussion, essay, seminar presentation, tutorial writing, or oral exam etc
2. Written examination
3. Dissertation

4. Eligibility:

Minimum Graduation or its equivalent examination of any Institute or University passed.

5. Duration:

The duration of the post-Graduate Diploma Course in Buddhist Psychology and Psychotherapy shall be one academic year consisting of two terms of fourteen weeks each.

6. Fees:

The admission fee for the course, the tuition fee for the entire course of one year duration, Examination fee, Record fee, Statement of marks shall be as per the rules and regulations of the University of Pune.

7. Teaching:

1. The teaching for the Post-Graduate Diploma Course in Buddhist Psychology and Psychotherapy shall be of eight hours per week.
2. Lectures for Paper I & Paper II and their evaluation would be done in the first semester.
3. By the end of the first semester students will decide the topic of their research.
4. Attending a Buddhist meditation retreat of minimum 10 days between the two semesters and writing first person account based on that is necessary for internal assessment for paper III.
5. Lectures for Paper III and its evaluation would be conducted in Semester II.
6. Students will have to carry out the individual research project and submit a dissertation based on that by the end of Semester II.

8. Evaluation:

An examination of post-Graduate Diploma Course in Buddhist Psychology and Psychotherapy shall be held at the end of each semester. Internal assessment would be carried out after the teaching of each of the credits. The nature of the internal

assessment would be varied, which will include at least 3 components such an essay, group discussion, seminar presentation, tutorial writing, debate on conceptual issues or oral exam.

	Internal Assessment		Semester-end examination	
	Nature of assessment	Marks	Nature of assessment	Marks
Paper 1	Assignment on each credit	50	Written examination	50
Paper 2	Assignment on each credit	50	Written examination	50
Paper 3	1. Attending a Buddhist meditation retreat & 2. Writing a first person account based on that	10 +10	Written examination	50
	Assignment on each credit	30		
Paper 4	1. Viva-Voce 2. Library work, field work, related training, pre submission seminar (any two of these 4)	30 20	Written dissertation	50

- The written examination for the Post-Graduate Diploma Course in Buddhist Psychology and Psychotherapy shall consist of a written examination carrying 50 marks and of 3 hours duration.
(General broad question for 20 marks, 15 marks for short notes and 15 marks for critical essays comparing Buddhism and Psychology)
- To pass the post-Graduate Diploma Course examination a candidate must obtain either 40% of the total marks in each of the written and internal assessment (i.e. separate passing ; 20 in written and 20 in internal assessment) or minimum 50% marks out 100 (i.e. aggregate passing).
- For dissertation in Paper IV, aggregate 50% in the dissertation and internal assessment together is necessary.

- Those of the successful candidates who obtain minimum 50% of the total marks shall be placed in the second class and those obtaining minimum 60% of the total marks shall be placed in first class.

9. COURSE CONTENT

PAPER 1: INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY

Credit 1: Historical Review of Psychology

- Questions guiding psychological science
- Major milestones & key ideas in the history of psychology
- Nature of human being, emerged out of psychological studies
- Important conceptual issues in psychology: Nature vs. nurture debate, concept of consciousness, mind-body relationship, brain as abode of mind

Credit 2: Review of Buddhist ideas relevant to Psychology

- The four noble truths as the starting point
 - The truth of suffering
 - The cause of suffering
 - The destruction of suffering
 - The way of liberation
- Nature of human being according to Buddhism:
 - Nāma (Mind)-Rūpa (Body) and their relation to each other,
 - Khandha (aggregates), Āyatana (spheres), Dhātu (elements)
 - Paramattha Dhamma (essential elements of experience): Citta (mind), Cetasika (mental factors), Rūpa (material factors), Nibbāna (liberation)
- Conceptual issues Anicca (impermanence), Dukkha (dissatisfaction), Anattā (insubstantiality), Paṭicca Samuppāda (Dependant Origination), kamma (action), punabbhava (rebirth)
- Development of Buddhist theory of human mind in Buddhist traditions (Theravāda, Vaibhāsika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra, Mādhyamika)

Credit 3: Methods of disciplined enquiry in Buddhism and Psychology

- The paradigm in Buddhist way of enquiry:

The first person method:

 - Non-judgemental awareness & observation
 - method of analysis:
 - four truths as method of enquiry (Dukkha, Samudaya, Nirodha & Mārga), three rounds (Tīparivaṭṭa) and twelve modes (Dwādasākāra)
 - Dependant Origination (Paṭicca samuppāda): inverse (anuloma) and reverse (paṭiloma)
- Threefold cognition (pariññā):
 - Discernment of phenomenon (ñāta pariññā),
 - Investigation (tiraṇa pariññā),
 - Overcoming (pahāna pariññā);

- & associated threefold knowledge:
 - knowledge based on learning (Sutamayā paññā),
 - knowledge based on thinking (Cintāmayā paññā) , and
 - Bhāvanāmayā paññā (wisdom based on mental development)
- Main paradigms used for social scientific enquiry: positivism, social constructionism
- Importance of first person methods for psychological science: introspection, neo-introspection etc.

Credit 4: Approaches of Buddhist scholars and scope of Buddhist Psychology and Psychotherapy

- Approach of Buddhist scholars to Buddhist Psychology
 - Scientific studies of Abhidhamma: CAF Rhys Davids, Anāgārika Govinda, HV Guenther, Sangharakshita, Bhikkhu Anālayo
 - The work of Sri Lankan Buddhist Society and Vipassanā Research Institute
 - Scientific studies of Tibetan Buddhism: initiatives of Dalāi Lāmā
- Para-psychological claims of Buddhism (Abhiññā) and response of scientists to them
- Nature and scope of Buddhist Psychology: concluding remarks

PAPER II: HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND PERSONALITY

Credit I: Citta and Cetasika

- Citta (Mind): levels of mind (Bhūmi), types of mind (kusala, akusala, vipāka and kiriyā)
- Cetasika (Mental states): aññasamāna, akusala, sobhana, association with different types of mind

Credit 2: Matter and mind: inter-relation

- Rūpa - Arūpa khanda:
 - Rūpa (Material aggregates): material categories, origin of material properties (samutthāna), material formation
 - Arūpa (Immaterial aggregates): Vedanā (feeling), Saññā (perception), Saṅkhāra (volitional activity), Viññāṇa (cognition)
- Nāma –Rūpa:
 - Nāma (Mind): Phassa (contact), Vedanā (feeling), Saññā (perception), Cetanā (volition), Manasikāra (mode of attention)
 - Rūpa (corporeality) = Rūpa khanda
- Paṭicca Samuppāda (Law of dependant origination) and Paccaya (causal relation) with special reference to mind-matter relationship

Credit 3: Cognition, Emotion and Behavior & their relation to suffering

- Cognition:
 - Citta-Vīthi: Analysis of thought process

- Three levels of Cognition: Saññā (perception), Viññāṇā (consciousness), Paññā (wisdom).
- Speculative Non-speculative cognitive process with special reference to Sutta literature, Papañca/ Diṭṭhi: erroneous thinking as a source of suffering
- Comparison with different models of cognitive psychology and psychotherapy
- Emotions:
 - Explanatory models of emotion in Buddhism and Psychology:
 - Buddhist model of emotion: Cetasika (mental states): sobhana (wholesome) and akusala (unwholesome)
 - Psychological models of emotion: dimensional, discrete emotions, meaning oriented, componential
 - Emotional intelligence: Buddhist and psychological perspective
 - Buddhist perspective: Manasikāra (mode of attention): Yoniso (proper) & Ayoniso (improper), Sati (Mindfulness), Sampajañña (understanding)
 - Psychological perspective of Emotional intelligence
- Behaviour:
 - kamma (action), Cetanā (volition), kammapath (course of action), kamma-dwāra (door of action) : kāya (bodily), vaci (verbal), mano (mental); Viññatti (communication): kāya & vaci;
 - Kusala (wholesome), akusala (unwholesome) abyākata (undetermined) kamma

Credit 4: Personality

- Buddhist concept of person: Khandha (Aggregates), Pudgala (individual) and Anattā (non-self)
- Personality traits (Carita): Wholesome and unwholesome personality traits
- Review of major approaches to the study of personality in Psychology
- Comparison of Buddhist and psychological concept of personality:
 - Concept of personality
 - Concept of ideal personality :
 - Characteristics of Arhat, Bodhisatta, Buddha & concept of Fully functioning personality
- Bases of individual differences:

According to Buddhism: Habits (Saṅkhara), Result of karma (kamma-vipāka)

According to modern Psychology: Genes, Environment

PAPER III: METHODS OF MIND CULTIVATION: (Meditation & Psychotherapies)

(A Vipassanā retreat and writing of first person account based on that would be a part of the internal assessment for this paper.)

Credit 1: Causes of human distress, defilements and development

- A. Unwholesome roots of behaviour: Lobha (Greed or Passion), Dosa (hatred or malice), Moha (delusion or false belief)

B. Wholesome roots of behaviour: Alobha (Generosity), Adosa (Friendliness), Amoha (Understanding)

- Factors which bemuddle with development of mind: Cankers (Āsava), Hindrances (nīvaraṇa), fetters (saṃyojana), proclivities (anusaya kilesa)
- Factors supporting development of mind: Right exertion (Sammappadhāna), Faculties (Indriya), Powers (Bala), factors of enlightenment (Bojjhaṅga)

Credit 2: Methods of meditation for cultivation of Mind

- Remedy of Tri-shiksha and eight-fold path: Shīla samādāna (undertaking of precepts), Samādhi (concentration); kammaṭṭhāna (object of concentration meditation) Vipassanā ñaṇa: seven fold visuddhi
- Samatha & Vipassanā meditation & scientific research related to them
- Sati meditation: four fold Sati-paṭṭhān-kāyānupassanā-vedanānupassanā-cittānupassanā-dhammānupassanā
- Modern adaptations of Buddhist meditations: SN Goenkā, Mahāsi Sayādāw, Thich Nhāt Hānh, Sanghrakshita
- Cognitive analysis of process during meditation: Buddhist & Psychological perspective

Credit 3: Other techniques of mind cultivation

- Seven-fold techniques of removing defilements (Sabbāsava sutta)
- Techniques for changing thoughts (Vitakka Santhāna Sutta)
- Yoniso manasikāra (right thought)
- Practice of Brahmavihāra etc.
- Application of mind cultivation methods for treating psychopathology and their limitations.

Credit 4: Comparison with Western Psychotherapies

- Psychoanalysis and psychodynamic psychotherapies
- Cognitive and Behaviour modification therapies
- Humanistic and existential therapies
- Mindfulness based psychotherapies

PAPER IV

DISSERTATION

(This paper will be based on the research project undertaken by students to be conducted under the guidance of faculty, subject to the approval by the Departmental Committee. This paper can be chosen by Master degree students as an optional course, only at the fourth semester.)

Under the internal assessment for this course,

1. Students will appear for a test concerning research methodology for which there will be regular lectures. In these lectures following issues will be discussed:
 - The why, when and how of first person methodologies
 - Integration of first person and third person research methods
 - Developing empirical hypotheses from the Buddhist theory of Mind
2. Student will prepare survey of literature and give a pre-submission seminar on the theme of research project

Written dissertation and internal assessment will carry 50-50 weightage. Dissertation will be evaluated by the Guide and a referee appointed by the Departmental Committee, average of whose marks would be calculated.

References:

Buddhist texts:

1. A comprehensive manual of Abhidhamma by Bhikkhu Bodhi (translation of Abhidhammattha saṅgaho)
2. Visuddhimaggo
3. Satipaṭṭhāna sutta
4. Sabbāsava sutta
5. Vitakka santhāna sutta
6. Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Books of Psychology:

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Dreher, H. (1995). Immune power personality: 7 Traits you can develop to stay healthy, Canada: Dutton

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Important Articles about Buddhist Psychology:

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Wallas., A. B. & Shapiro S. L. (2006). Mental balance and well-being; Building bridges between Buddhism and western Psychology. *American Psychologist*, 61 (7), 690-701.

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Yozan Dirk Mosig. (2006). Conceptions of the self in Western and Eastern Psychology. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 26, 39-50.