

**A Post-Graduate Certificate Course in Mahayana Buddhist  
Psychology and Ethics (PGDM)**

SEMESTER & CREDIT SYSTEM

SYLLABUS TO BE OPERATIVE FROM JUNE 2013

DEPARTMENT OF PALI  
UNIVERSITY OF PUNE  
PUNE 411 007

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This is a one-year Post Graduate Diploma
2. It consists of Two Semesters: 120 hours (60 + 60)
3. MA students of Pali/Buddhist Studies Department, MA students of Philosophy/Psychology Department can opt for this based on credit system.
4. Also Open for Persons who work in mental health & Persons who need to make ethical decisions at various leadership levels can appear for this as a diploma. e.g. Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Psychiatric nurses, MSWs, Healthcare workers, Counselors, and other such allied service providers, Future Business Leaders, Entrepreneurs, Artists, Scientists, Economists, Political Scientists, Educators, Administrative Officers, Environmentalists, and other key personnel whose choices can impact many people
5. **Course Description:**

It is said that “Buddhism is a medicine for mental health and modern science for physical health and comfort” (Geshe Dorji Damdul, 2011).

Teachers and scholars of Nalanda Tradition not only strove to understand philosophy and psychology; but they strove to implement their theories in the perfect laboratory – their own mind. A beautiful system of contemplative sciences emerged from their perseverance and hard work. This Country and its other Buddhist neighbors have produced a lineage of enlightened beings, which proves that it is possible to achieve a Mind which reaches its Ultimate Capacity.

Thanks to H.H. Dalai Lama and Eminent Scholars & Researchers like Dr. Daniel Goleman (Psychologist), Dr. Paul Ekman (Scientist) and Dr. Francesco Varela (Neurologist), we have begun to recognize stunning parallels between modern scientific research findings and the Buddhist Tradition.

This course aims to introduce the Nalanda Tradition of mind study, in the format of - “Intellectual Understanding, Contemplation, and Action.”

Students will be encouraged to apply Buddhist Philosophy, Psychology and Analytical approaches to problems of daily modern life.

## Semester I: Applied Buddhist Psychology

### Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Gain an introductory level understanding of Buddhist Psychology & its applications for balanced mental health
- Understand concepts in the study of Mind from Eastern perspective supported by advances in modern psychology & neuroscience.

*Note: The course does not aim to provide a formal pedagogy of western psychology.*

#### **Unit 1:**

- Overview of Buddhist thought (Lineages & Vehicles) & its relevance to mental health
- Introduction to 4 Noble Truths - Defining suffering & Contemplating the source of mental problems, Benefits of applying Buddhist View, Meditation & Action.
- Advances in Cognitive Neuropsychology supporting the Buddhist Perspective: Neurological studies corroborating Buddhist Perspectives, Dialogues between Psychologists, Scientists & Buddhist Thinkers - agreements & disagreements

#### **Unit 2:**

- Impermanence: change as inevitable and useful, and seeing this in daily life thereby looking at what we hold on to.
- Mental afflictions: Understanding Emotions & Relationships, Affect & Mood.
- Dependent origination: what is compounded phenomenon? Cause-condition-effect.
- Beyond Suffering: Duality & Non-Duality, Relative Truth & Ultimate Truth

#### **Unit 3:**

- Mind & Cognition (Awareness & Knowing) - Psychology & Epistemology of Mind in Buddhism
  - What is mind?
  - Seven levels of cognition
  - Five aggregates
  - 51 mental factors

#### **Unit 4: Guest Seminar & Term Assignments**

The Seven day lecture series on the text: Madhyamakavatara by Acharya Chandrakirti

## **Semester II: Applied Ethics in Buddhism**

### **Objectives:**

- Studying the ethical framework of Bodhichitta, Paramitas & Mindfulness

- Developing a context for ethics in daily life thereby, improving inter-personal skills, social skills & achieve purpose of life.
- To elaborate & contemplate on a secular system of Ethics as proposed by H.H. Dalai Lama in his book “Ethics for new Millennium”.

### **Unit 5:**

- a. Bodhichitta - the foundation of ethics
- b. The Six Paramitas
- c. Case studies- the biological basis of compassion, Motivation & Altruism, Empathy & mirror Neurons

### **Unit 6:**

- a. The ethic of restraint - Cultivating a habit of inner discipline, Ordinary Vs. Negative Emotions, Recognizing afflictive emotions and their triggers, gain insight & act with ethical restraint.
- b. The ethic of virtue - Cultivating and reinforcing our positive qualities, cultivating antidotes to afflictive emotions.
- c. The ethic of compassion - Practicing equanimity, compassion towards self & others, compassion as a fundamental evolutionary tool for survival.

### **Unit 7:**

- a. The need for discernment - Ethical discipline, conduct, discernment. Basic ethical precepts, responding to the conduct of others, Ethical dilemmas of science & technology
- b. Universal responsibility - Cultivating contentment, Honesty & Justice, Working Together.
- c. Levels of commitment - True Help, Start where we are, Voluntary & in moderation
- d. Mindfulness - developing skills/practices required for ethical living

### **Unit 8: Guest Seminar/s & Term Assignments**

- a. Seven day lecture series on text - Bodhicharyavatara composed by Acharya Shantideva

### **Study Texts**

(H.H.) Dalai Lama (1999) Ethics for the New Millennium, New York: Riverhead Books, Berkley Publishing Group

Lati Rinpoche (1980) Mind in Tibetan Buddhism, Snow Lion Publications, New York

Khyentse (Rinpoche), Dzongsar (2007, 2009) What Makes you not a Buddhist, New Delhi: Timeless

Books

Kunzang Pelden, (2008) The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech: a detailed commentary on Shantideva's Way

of the Bodhisattva, New Delhi, Shechen Publications

Shantideva (1979) Way of the Bodhisattva , Dharamshala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche and Eric Swanson (2007) The Joy of Living, New York: Harmony Books

### **Additional Readings**

Abhidharma Samuccya (The Compendium of the Higher Teaching) by Asanga, translated into French by Walpola Rahul. English version by Sara Boin-Webb.

Abhidharma Samuccya of Asanga, Pradhan, P. (ed.) (1950) Shantiniketan: Vishwa Bharati Studies 12

(H.H.) Dalai Lama, Goleman, D. (2003, 2004) Destructive Emotions, New York: Bantam Dell (Random House)

(H.H.) Dalai Lama (1998) The Four Noble Truths, Harper Collins, India

(H.H.) Dalai Lama & Ekman, Paul (2008) Emotional Awareness, Holt Paperbacks

Goleman, D. (2007), Social Intelligence, New Delhi: Random House Publishers

LeDoux, J. (2003) The Emotional Brain, London: Phoenix

McTaggart, L. (2008), The Field, New York: Harper Collins Publications

Schwartz, J., Begley, S. (2003) The Mind & The Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force, New York: ReganBooks

Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo (2011) Into the Heart of Life, New York: Snow Lion Publications

### **Methodology**

Teaching methodology will include the following:

- Theory Classes by Course Faculty, including Lectures, Movies, Discussions, Art & Stories
- Seminars by Visiting Faculty

- Practical Work and Assignments

## Assessment & Evaluation

- 50% Term End Written Examination
- 20% Practical: Project Implementation, Practice Logs
- 20% Assignments: Book Reviews/Movie Reviews, Art Work, Essays
- 10% Attendance

## Coursework and Assignment Details

- Reading of key texts
- Book reviews, Movie Reviews
- Written essays
- Projective art- mandala, Contemplative art - Zen painting  
Practical Project – Contemplation retreats, Cultivating ethics of virtue, Practicing Social & Universal Responsibility
- Project Documentation – Photo Essay, Poetry, Audio-Visual documentation.

## Teaching schedule:

Session Duration: 3 Hours

Frequency: Once a week.

Day of teaching: Tuesday/Thursday/Friday (One of the days)

Timing: Any 3 hours slot from morning 8.00 a.m. to 12.30 a.m. (Afternoons and evenings are not available).

Teaching schedule and timeline:

<b>SEMESTER I</b>		
<b>July</b>	4 weeks	12 hours
<b>Aug</b>	4 weeks	12 hours
<b>Sep</b>	4 weeks	12 hours
<b>Guest Seminar/s</b>	Sep	21 hours
<b>Assignments</b>		3 hours
<b>SEMESTER II</b>		
<b>Dec</b>	2 weeks	06 hours

Jan	2 weeks	06 hours
Feb	4 weeks	12 hours
Mar	4 weeks	12 hours
Guest Seminar/s	Feb	21 hours
Assignments		3 hours
<b>8 Credits, Total</b>	<b>120 hours</b>	

### For Whom (Eligibility)

1. MA students of Pali/Buddhist Studies Department
2. MA students of Philosophy/Psychology Department
3. **Persons who work in mental health, who need to study the mind**, especially those who work in complex scenarios of subjective human experiences – Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Psychiatric nurses, MSWs, Healthcare workers, Counselors, and other such allied service providers.
4. **Persons who need to make ethical decisions at various leadership levels**. Especially those persons who work in dynamic socio-economic environments – Future Business Leaders, Entrepreneurs, Artists, Scientists, Economists, Political Scientists, Educators, Administrative Officers, Environmentalists, and other key personnel whose choices can impact many people.