

# Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies

## Scope and Content of the Course

This course which is an introduction to Buddhist studies is meant for students who have no basic knowledge of Buddhism. It requires no knowledge of the Pali language nor prior acquaintance with Buddhist texts. Familiarity with Indian history and Indian religious thought would be useful. The course provides an insight into the main teachings of Buddhism, including the specific Indian setting in which it had its origin. Its relationship to other religious systems of India is explored. The culture of Buddhism, with its impact on humanity during the last twenty-five centuries, is analyzed. The course also introduces both modern and ancient studies based on Buddhism. The course consists of the following four units:

DE 01: The Indian Religious Background and the Emergence of Buddhism

DE 02: Basic Doctrines of Early Buddhism

DE 03: Buddhist Social Philosophy

DE 04: Buddhist Culture: An Outline Study

The candidate is required to submit an essay of 2500 to 3000 words on a theme related to the course and selected with the guidance of the lecturers concerned. All candidates are required to inform their essay titles before the end of the second term. The essay should be submitted within 30 days from the date of the last paper the candidate sat in the Final Examination.

## Eligibility for Admission

Candidates seeking admission for this course should have one of the following qualifications:

i. A degree from a recognized university

or

ii. A pass at the Final Examination of the Oriental Studies Society (Sri Lanka)

or

iii. Any other qualification deemed by the Faculty Board of the Institute as equivalent to the above.

### **Course Structure**

The course is of one year's duration, with three terms of ten weeks each. Each course unit will have a minimum of one hour a week in the form of a lecture, followed by tutorial guidance and seminar discussions.

### **Evaluation**

Two assignments for each course unit: 10 marks per assignment

ii. A Three-hour Final Year examination for each course unit: 80 marks per course unit

Essay: 100 marks

### **Grades**

70 - 100 - A - Distinction

60 – 69 - B - Credit

40 - 59 - C - Pass

00 - 39 - W - Weak

### **Merit Pass**

An overall average of 70 for all units with not less than 40 marks for any unit.

### **Pass**

40 Marks for each unit, or

Marks between 35-39 for one unit with an overall average of 40 for all units considered pass.

# Syllabus for the Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies

**Course Code: DE 01**

**Course Title: The Indian Religious Background and the Emergence of Buddhism**

**Aim:**

Identification of origin and evolution of pre-Buddhist religious and philosophical systems and their influence on the emergence of Buddhism

**Content**

This unit explores the religious and intellectual background against which Buddhism emerged, with a focus on the following aspects: Vedic religion and its evolution from polytheism *via* henotheism to monotheism, the emergence of the *Upaniṣads* and their central teachings: the search for the ultimate reality and the identity of *ātman* and *Brahman*; the doctrine of reincarnation, karma and salvation through knowledge; religious practices and social institutions associated with the *Brāhmaṇic* culture; the rise of the *Samaṇa* movement and its heterodox views and radical tendencies; the Six Teachers and their doctrines; the *paribbājakas* as wandering religious mendicants; ascetic practices and their religious assumptions; conflict between externalist (*sassatavāda*) and nihilist (*ucchedavāda*) views of life and the birth of skepticism; emergence of Buddhism and its relation to the contemporary Indian religions and philosophies.

**Method of Teaching**

Lectures, discussions and assignments

**Method of Evaluation**

Two assignments

Final Examination

**Expected Learning Outcomes**

Ability to explain the special characteristics of pre-Buddhist religious and philosophical traditions and their influence on Buddhism.

**Recommended References**

Basham, A. L., ed. (1975). *A Cultural History of India*, Oxford.

Barua, M. B., (1921). *Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, Calcutta.

Bronkhorst, Johannes, (2000). "The Riddle of the Jainas and Ājīvakas in Early Buddhist Literature", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Cluwer Academic Publishers. (511-529)

Dutt, Sukumar, (1996). *Early Buddhist Monachism*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Debes, Paul, (1977). *A Discourse to the Knowers of Veda*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

Glasesnapp, H.V., (1978). *Vedanta and Buddhism*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

Hazra, Kanai Lal, (1988). *Constitution of Buddhist Sangha*, Delhi: D.K. Publishers and Distributors.

Jayatileke, K. N., (1963). *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Joshi, Lal Mani, (1987). *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

Radhakrishnan, S., (1958). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, London: London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

**Course Code: DE 02**

**Course Title: Basic Doctrines of Early Buddhism**

**Aim**

A Comprehensive understanding of fundamental teachings of Early Buddhism

**Content**

This course is designed to provide an insight into the main teachings of early Buddhism through a study of the following themes: the Buddhist view of sentient existence as shown by the three signata (*tilakkhaṇa*) and the doctrine of dependent co-origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*); the analysis of empiric individuality into *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhatu* and the rejection of the physical and metaphysical views of the self; the Buddhist diagnosis of the human condition and the ideal of man's perfection and deliverance as set forth in the Four Noble Truths; analysis of mind and its relevance to mental culture; ethical teachings and social religious ideals; the epistemological standpoint and the empiricist predilection; the critique of metaphysical speculations (*ditṭhi*) and

the category of the undetermined (*avyākata*); the distinctive characteristics of Buddhism as a religion and a philosophy

### **Method of Teaching**

Lectures, discussions and assignments

### **Method of Evaluation**

Two assignments

Final Examination

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

The ability to describe Buddhist fundamental concepts.

### **Recommended References**

Boisvert, Mathieu, (1963). *The Five Aggregates: Understanding Theravada Psychology and Soteriology*, Ontario: Canadian Cooperation for Studies in Religion.

Conze, Edward, (2003). *Buddhism, its Essence and Development*, Dover Publications Ins.: Mineola, New York.

Fuller, Paul, (2005). *Notion of Diṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhism*, London: Routledge Curzon.

Hamilton, Sue, (2000). *Early Buddhism: A New Approach, The Eye of the Beholder*, Curzon Press: Surrey.

Kalupahana, D.J., (2007). *A Source Book of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre.

\_\_\_\_\_, (2006). *Karma and Rebirth: Foundations of Buddhist Moral Philosophy*, Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre.

\_\_\_\_\_, (1977). *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii.

\_\_\_\_\_, (1975). *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii.

Karunadasa, Y., (2013). *Early Buddhist Teachings: The Middle Position in Theory and Practice*, Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies.

Karunaratne, W.S., (1988). *The Theory of Causality*, Nugegoda: Indumati Karunaratne.

Nyantiloka Maha Thera, Ven., (1982). *Path to Deliverance* (Reprint), Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

Piyadassi Thera, Ven., (1964). *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, London.

Rahula, Ven. Walpola, (1959) . *What the Buddha Taught*, Bedford.

Sangharakshita, (1976). *A Survey of Buddhism*, Bangalore.

Tachibana, S. (1961). *The Ethics of Buddhism*, Colombo.

**Course Code: DE 03**

**Course Title: Buddhist Social Philosophy**

**Aim**

An analytical and evaluative study of the social philosophy of Buddhism based on the discourses of the Pali canon

**Content**

While the Buddhist concept of man and its implications will serve as a background to this study, it will focus attention on the following topics: Buddhist critique of the social and religious institutions based on the *Brāhmaṇic* theory of *varṇa* and *svadharma*; Buddhist view of the origin and evolution of society; biological, historical and ethical arguments on the oneness of the human species; emphasis on man's superiority as against his supremacy; ethical criteria of human ends and social ideals; individual, society and inter-personal relations; *dhmmacariyā and samacariyā*; the *Bodhisatta* ideal and practice; the role of the *Sangha* in relation to the lay community; Buddhist observations on economy and polity; qualities of leadership, *rāja-dhamma* and the *Cakkavatti* ideal; *aparīhānīya-dhamma* and *saṅgaha-vatthu*; Buddhist perspective of law, justice and punishment

**Method of Teaching**

Lectures, discussions and assignments

**Method of Evaluation**

Two assignments

Final Examination

**Expected Learning Outcomess**

Ability to analyze fundamental concepts of Buddhist social philosophy in relation to Pali suttas

## **Recommended References**

Aronson, Harvey B., (1980). *Love and Sympathy in Theravada Buddhism*, Delhi.

Dharmasiri, G., (1986). *Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics*, Singapore.

Diana Y. Paul, (1979). *Women in Buddhism*, California.

Gnanarama, Ven. Pategama, (1998). *Aspects of Early Buddhist Social Thought*, Singapore: Tisarana Buddhist Association.

Gokuldas, D., (1955). *Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha*, Calcutta.

Jayatileke, K. N., (2000). *The Message of the Buddha*, ed. Ninian Smart, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

\_\_\_\_\_, (1969). *Aspects of Buddhist Social Philosophy*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society

Jones, Ken, (1981). *Buddhism and Social Action*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

Katz, Nathan, (1979). *Buddhist Image of Human perfection*, Delhi.

Ling, Trevor, (1966). *Buddha, Marx and God*, New York.

\_\_\_\_\_, (1951). *The Buddha*, London.

Malalasekera, G.P., and Jayatileka K. N., (1981). *Buddhism and the Race Question*, Unesco.

Wijesekera, O.H. de A., (1972). *Buddhism and Society*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

## **Course Code: DE 04**

### **Course Title: Buddhist Culture: An Outline Study**

#### **Aim**

A comprehensive understanding of Buddhism's impact on society through its teachings and institutional framework from a socio-cultural angle.

#### **Content**

This course is not confined to a particular geographical area but appropriate situations will be reviewed from countries which came under the influence of Buddhism. This will involve an evaluative study of the role played by the Buddhist monks and laity in the dissemination of the new faith and its consequent adaptation and assimilation by the indigenous people. A general

acquaintance with the religion and culture of each country prior to the introduction of Buddhism provides a background to this part of the study. This will be followed by an evaluation of Buddhism's contribution to the life and thought of the people in shaping their material and spiritual progress and the impetus it gave to creative works in arts and literature during its long history in various countries.

### **Method of Teaching**

Lectures, discussions and assignments

### **Method of Evaluation**

Two assignments

Final Examination

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Ability to analyze the impact of Buddhism on Indian and other country cultures.

### **Recommended References**

Banerjee, A. C., (1973). *Buddhism in India and Abroad*, Calcutta.

Bechert, Heinz, and Richard Gombrich, ed. (1987). *The World of Buddhism*, London.

Conze, Edward, (1981). *A Short History of Buddhism*, London.

Dhammaratana, Ven. H., Thera, (1968). *Buddhism in South India*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

Dutt, Sukumar, (2004). *Buddhism in East Asia*, Delhi: Originals.

Dutt, R.C., (1983). *Buddhism and Buddhist Civilization in India*, Delhi.

Hazra, K. L., (1982). *History of Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia*, New Delhi.

Joshi, Lalmani, (1977). *Studies in Buddhist Culture of India*, Delhi.

Rahula, Ven. Walpola, (1966). *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo.

Seckel, D., (1964). *The Art of Buddhism*, London.

Singhal, D. F.,( 1984). *Buddhism in East Asia*, New Delhi.

Vogel, J. Ph., (1936). *Buddhist Art in India, Ceylon and Java*, Oxford.