

Buddhist Wisdom – symbolic Dharma

A Six-week course exploring the Wheel of Life, the Spiral Path, and the Mandala of the Five Buddhas. Provided by Vajrapriya, Cambridge Buddhist Centre, UK

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Week 1: Karma & Rebirth —

a) Notes for the teacher, including suggestions for:

- Why symbols?
- Overview of the Wheel of Life
- Sources of suffering (the hub) and their opposites
- Skilfulness/unskilfulness (the ring of karma)
- Rebirth (in every moment)

b) Handout summarizing the main points as mentioned above.

Week 2: Knowing your realm

a) Notes for the teacher, including suggestions for:

- Review of previous class and home practice (dharma-vijaya)
- The six realms as karma vipaka
- The realms as objective vs. subjective
- Exercise: Imagining a realm from within

b) Materials/handouts:

- Exercise on the six realms
- Handout on the various realms

Week 3: Cyclic conditionality

a) Notes for the teacher, including suggestions for:

- Review of previous class and home practice (experience of the six realms)
- Nidana chain exercise (in unfolding and reverse order) — three-lives interpretation
- Feeling (vedana) and craving (tanha)

b) Materials/handouts:

- Exercise on the Nidana chain
- Handout on cyclic conditionality and vedana
- Extract from Foundation Year of Mitra Course

Week 4: Progressive conditionality

a) Notes for the teacher, including suggestions for:

Vedana exercise

Review of previous class (cyclic conditionality) and home practice (exploring vedana)

Exercise to work out the order of progressive conditionality

The crucial link; “In dependence of unsatisfactoriness arises faith.”

Concentration, insight, and the transcendental path

b) Materials/handouts:

Exercise to work out the order of progressive conditionality

Exercise to review cyclic conditionality

Handout on progressive conditionality

Week 5: Akshobhya and Amitabha

a) Notes for the teacher, including suggestions for:

Review of previous class (progressive nidanas and point of intersection with wheel) and home practice

Imagination and the archetypal dimension

Exercise around archetypes and superheroes

Introducing Akshobhya and Amitabha

Principles of correlations/correspondences

b) Materials/handouts:

Exercise on progressive nidanas

Exercise on correspondences between Akshobhya and Amitabha

Handout on Akshobhya and Amitabha

Week 6: Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, and Vairocana

a) Notes for the teacher, including suggestions for:

Review of previous class (correspondences Akshobhya and Amitabha) and home practice (visualizing colour in meditation)

Mudras

Qualities of Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Vairocana

The Buddha families and our personal affinities

Symbolism of the Mandala

Personal mandalas

b) Materials/handouts:

Exercise on correspondences between Ratnasambhava and Amoghasiddhi
Handout on the Five Buddha Mandala