

Buddhist Classes: Basic Course

Philippine Palyul Chang Chub Dargyeling Dharma Center
(Philippine Buddhist Palyul Temple)

Manila, Philippines
2019

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700 Pina Avenue, Sta Mesa, Manila, Philippines

Center Opening Times: Monday to Sunday 8am - 6pm

To meditate persistently on impermanence is to make offerings to all the Buddhas.

To meditate persistently on impermanence is to be rescued from suffering by all the Buddhas.

To meditate persistently on impermanence is to be guided by all the Buddhas.

To meditate persistently on impermanence is to be blessed by all the Buddhas.

- Buddha Shakyamuni, Words of My Perfect Teacher

Think about death and impermanence for a long time. Once you are certain that you are going to die, you will no longer find it hard to put aside harmful actions, nor difficult to do what is right.

- Geshe Potowa

Aims and Objectives

1. To present a systematic course on the foundation of Buddhism, using a thorough, scholastic knowledge of Buddhism
2. To present in the manner of traditional Buddhist practice

Teaching Style

Due to the pace of urban life, our thinking has become: “mine, fast, and now”. However, we cannot apply this to Buddhism.

Just like learning a language properly, we can only speak and write fluently after a few years of mastering the basics. Learning Buddhism *properly* is the same. If we take time to make our Buddhist foundation strong, then, we can get the **real benefits** of Buddhism in the long run.

The Course Teacher

In 1994, Khenpo Tashi joined the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute. He became certified in Buddhist philosophy and practice, a nine-year course, and received the degree of Lopon (Master of Buddhist philosophy and practice). He then served the monastery and other various monasteries for several years in accordance to monastic rules and discipline.

In view of his scholarship and morality, he received the title of Khenpo (PhD degree in Buddhist Studies). Thereafter, he engaged in propagating the Dharma doctrine, with profound experience in guiding Buddhist practitioners.

He has also received major empowerments and Nyingma teachings from renowned masters such as His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche etc.

Class Information

Day and Time: Every Saturday; Basic Course 2-3pm, Middle Course 330-5pm

Place: Philippine Palyul Buddhist Temple, 700 Pina Ave. Sta Mesa, Manila

Mode of instruction: English

Cost: Free, service of Temple to the public

- Will include suggested take-home practices
- To advance to the next course (eg from Basic to Middle Course, or Middle to Advanced Course), the student must pass the prescribed homework/s of the current course.

Note: 2019 dates are approximate dates only. Occasionally, a class might be postponed due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather. Registered students will be informed through text message and/or email prior to the date.

Course Syllabus

Basic Course

Our foundation in Buddhism must be built *strongly* and *properly*. For many Buddhists, we ignore this. Renunciation is the foundation of the entire Buddhism.

When we see a beautiful 50-storey building, we forget something - the *deep* and *strong foundation* underneath. Buddhism and its “advanced practices” will only work when we have a strong foundation.

We have a taste of renunciation if we want to put an end to our Samsara. In other words, we *sincerely* want to stop all of our sufferings.

Objective: We are considered successful in this course if we think, “Foundation is very, very important for the advanced practices”.

Unit 1 | Misconceptions about Tibetan Buddhism

In this class, we introduce the historical and unbroken connection between the Buddha Shakyamuni up to the Tibetan Buddhism and the Palyul Lineage of today. Tibetan Buddhism is a body that holds the Buddha’s most basic to the most advanced teachings.

Unit 2 | Turning the Mind Towards the Dharma and Away from Samsara*

The *Four Ways of Turning the Mind to the Dharma and away from Samsara* (Tib: *lo dok nampa zhi*) will be discussed here.

1. The Hardship of Finding Precious Human Birth
2. Reality of Impermanence
3. Dangers of Samsara
4. Karma: Cause, Condition and Effect

Then, the eight non-freedoms under the First Way will be explained.

**place and situation of regular suffering where we are in*

Unit 3 | Hell Realms - Eight Hot Hells, Eight Cold Hells, Surrounding Hell, Intermediate Hell

The great, unimaginable sufferings of the lower realms reflect the freedom of a human. Even the Buddha admitted that he had gone through the hell realms in many past lives to experience the results of his actions.

Unit 4 | Hungry Ghost Realms and Animal Realms

The great sufferings in these two realms are “non-freedoms” to the sentient being. Without freedom, a sentient being is unable to practice the Dharma. In this unit, we explain and contemplate the non-freedoms of the two other lower realms.

Unit 5 | The Precious Human Birth of Ours: Ten Advantages

Having learned the eight non-freedoms in detail, we begin to realize that being born as a human has great freedom. In this unit, we learn about the ten advantages, five personal and five situational, of being able to learn the Buddha's teachings.

Unit 6 | Ten Non-virtues

One direct cause of being born as a human being is discipline. The ten non-virtues will be taught. Avoiding the ten non-virtues results in discipline.

Unit 7 | Ten Virtues and Their Results

One direct cause of being born as a human is discipline. Now, the ten virtues and their results will be taught. This is a continuation of the previous unit.

Unit 8 | Generosity

The second direct cause of becoming human is generosity. For many humans, even if they have the human body, the sheer lack of material resources is a problem. Also, this lack prevents them from practicing the Dharma.

Unit 9 | The Metaphor and The Numbers

The metaphor to be discussed here is that of the blind turtle. Also, "the numbers" will be discussed here to compare the limited number of humans to other sentient beings.

Unit 10 | Impermanence of this Human Life

This unit discusses the *urgency* to make good use of this human opportunity. The seven kinds of Impermanence will be taught.

Unit 11 | The Dangers of Samsara: Human, Demi-Gods and God Realms

In fact, Samsara is the main reason why a Buddha has appeared to sentient beings like us. Samsara is endless and repeating sufferings. His teachings are the way out of Samsara.

The dangers of Samsara, including the sufferings of the two higher realms, will be taught.

Unit 12 | Karma, Cause, Condition and Effect

"Without the proper causes, any effect or result cannot happen." All of Samsara is in the nature of Karma.

In this unit, we discuss causes and conditions, or Karma.

Registration Requirements

- Sign up at the office or send an email.
- If you need to cancel your registration, kindly personally inform the Khenpo or the administrator of the temple.

Class Etiquette

In every Buddhist class, the two foundations are the proper motivation and proper attitude. These two will determine how much we will derive from the class that we attend.

Proper Motivation

When this set of teachings were taught in Tibet and India, the receivers generated the Bodhi-mind, or the aspiration to liberate all sentient beings from Samsara.

At present, most of us will not understand the Bodhi-mind. So, before coming to class, we can just think for a while, "What is my purpose coming here and wanting to learn?"

In short, attitude decides what the effects of receiving the teachings will be for us.

Proper Attitude

We are too bound to the sticky qualities of Samsara. This Samsaric outlook influences our attitude towards Buddhism.

There are three ways to improve our attitude: the four metaphors, the six perfections and others. (from the Words of My Perfect Teacher)

The four metaphors: Noble one, you should think of yourself as someone who is sick, Of the Dharma as the remedy, Of your spiritual friend as a skilful doctor, And of diligent practice as the way to recovery. - Buddha Shakyamuni

Make excellent offerings such as flowers and cushions, Put the place in order and control your behaviour, Do not harm any living being, Have genuine faith in your teacher, Listen to his instructions without distraction And question him in order to dispel your doubts; These are the six transcendent perfections of a listener.

Others: Take the lowest seat. Cultivate the dignified bearing of thorough discipline, With your eyes brimming with joy, Drink the words like nectar, And be completely concentrated. That is the way to listen to the teaching.

Before the Class

1. Bow three times toward the shrine
2. Recite the Refuge and Generating the Bodhi-mind prayers with the teacher

During the Class

1. Avoid texting or using your mobile phone unless for class purpose
2. Refrain from chanting mantras and counting your mala beads during class
3. Avoid actions that will disturb your seatmates. It is alright to talk softly.

4. Avoid putting Buddhist books or materials on your feet or on the ground

After the Class

1. Only ask questions relevant to the class or the course. Refrain from asking questions from your own self-study of Buddhism as this may lead the topic elsewhere.
2. Thank the teacher or thank the Buddha statue.
3. Keep your notes and books on a high area of your room when not in use.
4. Refrain from walking over your Buddhist materials.

Others:

1. Inform the teacher in advance if you cannot come or will arrive late.
2. To attend the Middle or Advanced Course, one must have completed the Basic Course first.
3. If you want to cancel your seat in the middle of the course, please inform the Khenpo or the office administrator.
4. Kindly be punctual in attending classes. Please be aware of Manila's traffic situation.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is Buddhism?
2. What is the difference between Tibetan Buddhism and other Buddhist traditions?
3. What is the main goal of Buddhism?
4. If I am going to be late for a class, who do I contact?
5. Can I meet the Khenpo outside class to discuss my concerns? Can I meet the Khenpo even if I do not attend the class or I have stopped attending the class?
6. What will happen inside the class? What materials do I bring?
7. Can I attend the class without becoming a member? Do I become a member of the temple when I attend the class?
8. What can I do to repay the temple's efforts?
9. What are the other regular activities of the temple?
10. If a friend wants to attend after the course has started, can I still invite him/her to attend?
11. Do you have any reading materials available?

1. What is Buddhism?

The Buddha taught four metaphors on how an individual should *properly* see Buddhism. The four metaphors are to:

- see ourselves as a very sick patient

- see the Buddha as the doctor
- see the Buddhadharmā, his teachings, as the medicine
- see practicing his teachings as taking the medicine to end our sickness

What is our sickness? Pride, self-centeredness and desire. These are the root causes of our endless sufferings.

“Do not engage in any harmful actions;
 Perform only those that are good;
 Subdue your own mind
 — This is the teaching of the Buddha”

2. What is the difference between Tibetan Buddhism and other Buddhist traditions?

Tibetan Buddhism is one of the many Buddhist traditions. Buddha Shakyamuni is said to have taught 84,000 methods to liberate sentient beings from Samsara.

For instance, he taught the Hinayana teachings, the Mahayana teachings and the Vajrayana teachings. In Buddhist Traditions like the Thai or Chinese Zen, they teach the Hinayana or the Mahayana. The Three Sets of Teachings are all found in the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism.

Having said that Tibetan Buddhism contains all the three teachings, everyone has to master the Hinayana first. All the centers and monasteries in Tibet study and practice the Hinayana teachings *first*.

3. What is the main goal of Buddhism?

The goal of Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism is to remove our pride, self-centeredness and desire. To remove them completely, we must *learn* the theory and we must *practice* with dedication. When learning, there are numerous reminders. Some good reminders for the learner are the three pots, the six stains and the five ways of wrong remembering (from the Words of My Perfect Teacher).

4. If I am going to be late for a class, who do I contact?

You may contact Khenpo, the office administrator or your fellow classmate.

5. Can I meet the Khenpo outside class to discuss my concerns? Can I meet the Khenpo even if I do not attend the class or I have stopped attending the class?

Yes.

6. What will happen inside the class? What materials do I bring?

The Class is 1 hour. Then the rest is break and discussion. Bring a notebook. The class is free of charge. You need to register before the start of the course. To register, please email philpalyul@yahoo.com.

7. Can I attend the class without becoming a member/being a Buddhist? Do I become a member of the temple when I attend the class?

Yes, you can attend even if you are not a temple member or a Buddhist. You will not become a member once you attend. To become a member, you may attend prayers regularly or support the temple through monetary or other means. However, you need to register at the start of the course to progress to the next courses.

8. What can I do to repay the temple's efforts?

Kindly discuss your desire to help the temple with the Khenpo. Other than that, this is a public service of the temple.

9. What are the other regular activities of the temple?

Kindly see below.

10. If a friend wants to attend after the course has started, can I still invite him/her to attend?

Yes. Anybody may attend the Basic Course anytime. However, only those who have completed the Basic Course can attend the Middle and Advanced Classes.

11. Do you have any reading materials available?

Yes. The *Merit-Making: A Tibetan Buddhist Temple Guidebook* is a free book published by the center.

The Philippine Palyul Buddhist Temple (Manila, Philippines)

Officially known as the "Philippine Palyul Chang Chub Dhargyeling Dharma Center", this temple is the Manila branch of the Namdroling Monastery in Bylakupe, South India. It operates under the overall guidance of His Holiness Pema Norbu Rinpoche (1932 - 2009) and at present, His Holiness Karma Kuchen Rinpoche. Starting from Biak-na-Bato Street, the temple moved to its present home in 700 Pina Avenue, Sta Mesa, Manila in 2008.

Since then, it has hosted weekly prayer ceremonies, monthly special prayers, Chinese New Year and Ghost Month activities, bi-annual special Smoke offering prayers, empowerment and Refuge ceremonies and other charitable activities. Annually or when opportunity presents itself, members also travel to the mother monastery of Namdroling and other Buddhist holy sites for pilgrimage purposes.

Regular Temple Activities

Saturday evening prayers at the Temple

Green Tara, Medicine Buddha, 35 Confessional Buddhas, Chenrezig, Manjushri (rotates on Saturdays @ 6pm), Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva (Sunday @ 930am)

Monthly Sunday Ceremonies at the Temple

Black Dzambhala Prayer @930am, Smoke Puja (Sang) @ 6pm

Quarterly Ceremonies - Smoke Puja (Riwo Sangchoe) and Lungta in Tagaytay

Annual

Nyungne Buddhist Fasting (1000-armed Chenrezig 2-day retreat)

Buddhist Refuge Ceremony

Special Empowerments by our Buddhist Masters

Universal Smoke Prayer and Lungta

Chinese New Year

2-day Vajrakilaya Ritual and 1-day, Amitayus Long Life and Lü Ritual (Life Ransom) and Guru Rinpoche Rinzin Düpa ceremony, 21 Dzambhala

Ghost Month - Amitayus Long Life, Lü Ritual (Life Ransom) and 100 Buddhas (Shi Thro) Prayer Ceremony

Ching Ming Chinese Festival - 100 Buddhas (Shi Thro) Prayer Ceremony

Specially Arranged

Animal Life Release/Ransom

Tibetan Buddhist Holidays and Special Days

(based on Lunar calendar)

1st Month (1st to 15th Day) - Fifteen Days of Buddha's Miracles

1st Month (whole month) - Bumgyur (Multiplication of Virtues and Non-virtues 100,000-fold)

4th Month - Vesak Day (Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Parinirvana)

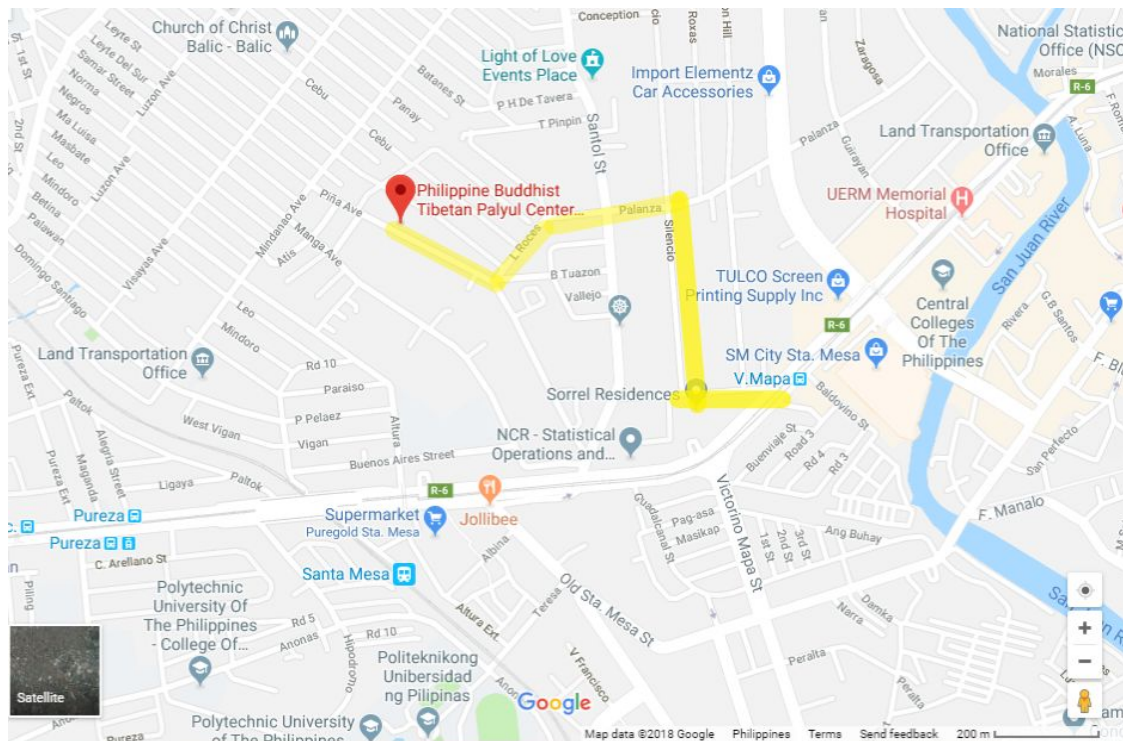
- 7th day Buddha's Birth

- 15th day Buddha's Enlightenment and Parinirvana

6th Month (4th day) - Turning of the Dharma Wheel (First teaching of the Buddha)

6th Month (10th day) - Guru Rinpoche's Birthday, special prayer
9th Month (22nd day) - Buddha's Descent from the Heavens

Map to the Temple



By MRT then Tricycle:

Alight at V. Mapa Station. Walk to the station exit opposite SM Sta Mesa. Find the Tricycle Stand. Tell the driver, "Pina Temple".

By Car:

From Magsaysay Blvd going to Nagtahan, cross V. Mapa St, then turn right at Santol St., then turn left at Pina Ave (at Wilcon Essentials). Drive Straight up to the end.

By Walking: (20-25 minutes)

Alight at V. Mapa Station. Walk to the station exit opposite SM Sta Mesa. Walk to Silencio St, turn left at Palanza, cross Santol St to Roces St. Walk straight until Pina Ave. Turn right at Pina.