



Buddha Jewel Monastery

Zen Meditation & Buddhism Level I Class

Syllabus

Course: Zen Meditation and Buddhism Level I Class

Semester: Fall 2023

Instructor: Dharma Master Jian Yan | Abbess of Buddha Jewel Monastery

Meeting Time:

Sep 12, 2023 to Mar 12, 2024 (no classes from Nov 21, 2023 to Jan 2, 2024)

Material: The Essential of Buddhadharma – A textbook for Chung Tai Meditation Classes Chan Buddhism Level 1 (will be provided at the Monastery)

Course policies:

1. **Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions. Students are allowed up to three absences for the semester. Any additional absences will result in not being able to advance to a higher-level class. Being more than 40 minutes late will be considered an absence.
2. **Make-up Classes:** Students can make up for a maximum of seven classes. Make-up classes must be completed within Four weeks after the end of the missed class. Failure to make up for the missed classes will be counted as absences. If students are unable to complete the make-up classes within the specified time due to special circumstances, they should inform the instructor in advance.

Meditation Techniques: Breath Counting /Mindfulness of Breathing /
Middle Way Reality

Dharma Course Description:

The content of this course is divided into two main parts: The first ten weeks will cover Fundamental Buddhism, where students will establish a strong understanding of what it is and how to practice meditation and mindfulness. They will also learn how to connect awareness, causality, and fundamental Buddhist principles to the practice of mindfulness and meditation. The second ten weeks will focus on the Four Noble Truths. By the end of the course, students will have a basic understanding of these important Mahayana teachings and their significance.

Dharma Course Schedule

MEDITATION: Breath Counting / Mindfulness of Breathing / Middle Way Reality			
Week	Date	Subject	Main Content
1	Sep 12 (Tue)	Introduction & Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome/Introductions ▪ Meditation: Breath Counting ▪ Benefits of meditation ▪ What is mindfulness/meditation? ▪ Clarify misconceptions about meditation
2	Sep 19 (Tue)	Mindfulness & Meditation I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meditation Methods: Breath-counting and Mindfulness of Breathing ▪ Two Types of Meditation ▪ Four common problems encountered in meditation ▪ The Eight Sensation
3	Sep 26 (Tue)	Karma and Causality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definition of karma and causality ▪ Keep things in perspective ▪ Awaken to a brighter future ▪ Story: Liao-Fan's Four Lessons
4	Oct 3 (Tue)	The Buddha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Life of the Buddha ▪ The meaning of "Buddha" ▪ Who can be a Buddha?
5	Oct 10 (Tue)	Group Discussion/Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share meditation experience of the past weeks, including any difficulties encountered and effects, or changes in oneself. ▪ Share ideas or experiences on how we can better remember and act according to this law in our daily life to help us produce positive results for our future. ▪ Share understanding on who or what is the buddha.

6	Oct 17 (Tue)	Three Jewels/Three Refuges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What can we learn from the Buddha's awakening and wisdom? ▪ Meaning of the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha ▪ Meaning of taking "refuge"
7	Oct 24 (Tue)	Four Tenets of Chung Tai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To our elders be respectful ▪ To our juniors be kind ▪ With all humanity be harmonious ▪ In all endeavors be true
8	Oct 31 (Tue)	Five Precepts & Ten Wholesome Deeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to live in peace, harmony, and joy? ▪ What are the Five Precepts? ▪ The spirit of precepts ▪ The Ten Wholesome Deeds
9	Nov 7 (Tue)	Vegetarianism & Buddhism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why do we practice vegetarianism in Buddhism? ▪ Benefits of vegetarianism ▪ Buddhist vegetarian practices
10	Nov 14 (Tue)	Group Discussion/Q&A	How Buddhist practices can help us achieve this goal and the benefits they bring to our life, based on the teachings we learned in the past weeks: Four Tenets of Chung Tai, Three Jewels / Three Refuges, Five precepts, Ten wholesome deeds, and Buddhism and vegetarianism.
<p style="text-align: center;">❀ Holiday Breaks ❀</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No classes from Nov 21, 2023 to Jan 2, 2024</p>			
11	Jan 9 (Tue)	Mindfulness & Meditation (Reminder) The 1st Noble Truth I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits of meditation ▪ What is mindfulness? What is meditation? ▪ Four Noble Truths overview
12	Jan 16 (Tue)	The 1st Noble Truth II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definition of dissatisfaction / dukkha / Suffering ▪ Eight Kinds of Suffering ▪ Three Kinds of Suffering

13	Jan 23 (Tue)	The 2nd Noble Truth I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Causes of Suffering ▪ False Views
14	Jan 30 (Tue)	The 2nd Noble Truth II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Causes of Suffering ▪ False Thoughts ▪ Recognize the causes of our sufferings
15	Feb 6 (Tue)	Group Discussion / Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share your meditation experience of the past weeks, including any difficulties encountered and effects or changes in yourself you have observed. ▪ Discuss how we can use the First and Second Noble Truths to help us understand life's experiences and to resolve difficulties?
16	Feb 13 (Tue)	The 3rd Noble Truth I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two Kinds of Nirvana ▪ Nirvana is an attainable goal
17	Feb 20 (Tue)	The 3rd Noble Truth II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two Kinds of Nirvana ▪ Nirvana is an attainable goal
18	Feb 27 (Tue)	The 4th Noble Truth I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Noble Eightfold Path – Right Understanding and Right Thoughts
19	Mar 5 (Tue)	The 4th Noble Truth II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Noble Eightfold Path – Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Samadhi
20	Mar 12 (Tue)	Group Discussion/Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share your understanding of the principle of causality as applied to the Four Noble Truths. ▪ The Dharma helps us see and understand reality truthfully. Share your understanding and experience of how the Four Noble Truths help us understand ourselves better. ▪ Share your experience in practicing right mindfulness at home and in the workplace. How has the practice made a difference in your life and outlook?