

**Syllabus for Postgraduate Diploma Course in Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology  
& Ethics**

**(A course applicable to students of the University Department)**

**From the Academic Year 2020–2021**

**Approved by the Ad-hoc Board of Studies in Pali Literature and Culture**

**Savitribai Phule Pune University**

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### **Postgraduate Diploma Course in Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics**

#### **General Instructions about the Course, the Pattern of Examination and the Syllabus**

##### **I. General Instructions**

**I.1 General Structure:** Postgraduate Diploma Course in Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics is a two-semester course of eight credits offered by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Savitribai Phule Pune University. The course is to be completed within one year. It contains two courses of four credits each. Both the courses are also available as elective courses for students doing any Master degree course in the university.

Students will be introduced to the Mahāyāna Buddhist psychological ideas, ethics, and their application in Buddhism ideas, through lectures, group discussions, art sessions, practice sessions, and project work. Teaching of semesters, I and II will be sequential. Syllabus of each course will be discussed in sixty clock hours (approximately) during each semester. Students are expected to design and carry out a small project on any chosen theme concerning Buddhist Psychology.

Students' understanding will be assessed on the basis of their performance on things, such as assignments, debate on conceptual issues, group discussion, essay writing, seminar presentation, tutorial writing, written and oral examination, project, etc.

Students are expected to maintain 100% attendance and to ensure their active participation in the class.

**I.2 Introduction:** 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 Nālandā 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 and 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 Nālandā 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.

**I.3 Objectives:** The objectives of the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics are:

- To gain an introductory level understanding of Buddhist Psychology and its applications for balanced mental health
- To understand concepts in the study of mind from Buddhists perspective supported by advances in modern Psychology & Neuroscience [The course does not aim to provide a formal pedagogy of western psychology.]
- To study the ethical framework of Bodhicitta (Enlightened Mind), Pāramitās (Perfection of Virtues), and Smṛti (Mindfulness)
- To develop a context for ethics in daily life thereby, improving inter-personal skills, social skills, and achieve purpose of life
- To elaborate and contemplate on a secular system of ethics as proposed by H.H. the Dalai Lama in his book “Ethics for New Millennium”

**I.4 Eligibility:** Graduation in any faculty from any recognized university

**I.5 Duration:** The duration of the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics will be one academic year consisting of two semesters of fifteen weeks each.

**I.6 Course Fee:** The Admission Fee for the course, Annual Tuition Fee, Examination Fee, Record Fee, Statement of Marks, and other essential fees will be as per the rules and regulations of the Savitribai Phule Pune University.

**I.7 Teaching:**

- Medium of instruction - English
- Lectures - Four lectures and one tutorial/practical per week, i.e., 5 hours per week for fifteen weeks in a semester
- Lectures of course I.1 and its evaluation will be done in the first semester.
- Lectures of course II.1, the project work, and their evaluation will be done in the second semester.
- Students will have to carry out individual/group project and submit a report based on it by the end of semester II.

## **II. Pattern of Examination**

**II.1 Assessment and Evaluation:**

- A Postgraduate Diploma student will be assessed for his/her performance at a written test of 200 marks, i.e., two courses of 100 marks each
- For each semester there will be an external examination of 50 marks and an internal examination of 50 marks per course.
- The external examination will be held at the end of each semester.
- The internal assessment will be carried out throughout the semester.
- The nature of the internal assessment will be varied. It will include at least three components out of written test, essay writing, group discussion, seminar presentation, tutorial writing, book review, movie review, art work, field work, research project, meditation retreat, debate on conceptual issues, attendance in weekly practice session, and oral exam.
- In addition to this, a project report is to be submitted at the end of the second semester.

## **II.2 Passing:**

- To pass the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics examination a candidate must obtain 40% of the total marks in each of the external and internal examination (i.e., separate passing: 20 in external and 20 in internal examination)
- Or, aggregate 40% marks with at least 30% marks in either external or internal examination (i.e., 15 marks out of 50)
- Those of the successful candidates will be given appropriate grades in accordance with the grading pattern accepted by the university.

## **III. Syllabus**

### **III.1 Outline:**

#### **Semester I**

Course I.1: Applied Buddhist Psychology

#### **Semester II**

Course II.1: Applied Ethics in Buddhism

### **III.2 Detailed Syllabus:**

#### **Semester I**

#### **Course I.1: Applied Buddhist Psychology**

Credit 1: Overview of Buddhist thought (Lineages and Vehicles), and its relevance to mental health; introduction to Four Noble Truths - Defining suffering and contemplating the source

of mental problems, benefits of applying Buddhist view, meditation and action; advances in Cognitive Neuropsychology supporting the Buddhist perspective - Neurological studies corroborating Buddhist perspectives, dialogues between psychologists, scientists, and Buddhist thinkers - agreements and disagreements

Credit 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 and relationships, affect and mood; Dependent Origination - What is compounded phenomenon? cause-condition-effect; Beyond Suffering - Duality and Non-Duality, Relative Truth and Ultimate Truth

Credit 3: Mind and Cognition (awareness and knowing) - Psychology and Epistemology of mind in Buddhism - What is mind? Seven Levels of Cognition; Five Aggregates; Fifty-one Mental Factors

Credit 4: Textual study - Madhyamakāvātāra by Ācārya Candrakīrti

**Text books:**

1. Khyentse, Dzongsar Jamyang. 2007. *What Makes You Not a Buddhist*. New Delhi: Timeless Books.
2. Pillai, Asha, ed. 2017. *Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics: Practice Guide for Semester 1 & Semester 2*. Pune: Department of Pali, Savitribai Phule Pune University.
3. Pillai, Asha, ed. 2017. *Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics: Semester 1- Revised Educational Course Pack*. Pune: Department of Pali, Savitribai Phule Pune University.
4. Rinbochay, Lati, and Elizabeth Napper. 1980. *Mind in Tibetan Buddhism*. New York: Snow Lion Publications.
5. Swanson, Eric, and Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche. *The joy of living: Unlocking the secret and science of happiness*. Random House, 2010.

**Reference books:**

1. Boin-Webb, Sara, trans. 2001. *Abhidharmasamuccaya : The Compendium of the Higher Teaching (Philosophy) by Asāṅga*. California: Asian Humanities Press.
2. McTaggart, Lynne. 2008. *The Field: The Quest for The Secret Force of The Universe*. New York: Harper Collins Publications.
3. Palmo, Tenzin. 2011. *Into the Heart of Life*. New York: Snow Lion Publications.
4. Pradhan, Pralhad, ed. 1950. *Abhidharma Samuccya of Asanga*. Santiniketan: Visva-bharati.

5. Schwartz, Jeffrey, and Sharon Begley. 2003. *The Mind & The Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*. New York: Regan Books.
6. Side, Dominique, ed. 1997. *The Four Noble Truths: Fundamentals of the Buddhist Teachings His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama*. Translated by Geshe Thupten Jinpa. London: Thorsons.

## Semester II

### Course II.1: Applied Ethics in Buddhism

Credit 1: Bodhicitta - The foundation of ethics; Six Pāramitās; Case Studies - the biological basis of compassion, Motivation and Altruism, empathy and mirror neurons

Credit 2: The Ethic of Restraint - Cultivating a habit of inner discipline, ordinary vs. negative emotions, recognizing afflictive emotions and their triggers, gain insight and act with ethical restraint; The Ethic of Virtue - Cultivating and reinforcing our positive qualities, cultivating antidotes to afflictive emotions; The Ethic of Compassion - Practicing equanimity, compassion towards self and others, compassion as a fundamental evolutionary tool for survival

Credit 3: The Need for Discernment - Ethical discipline, conduct, and discernment, basic ethical precepts, responding to the conduct of others, ethical dilemmas of science and technology; Universal Responsibility - Cultivating contentment, honesty and justice, working together; Levels of Commitment - True help, start where we are, voluntary help and help in moderation; Mindfulness - Developing skills/practices required for ethical living

Credit 4: Textual study - Bodhicaryāvatāra by Ācārya Śāntideva

#### Text books:

1. Batchelor, Stephen. 1979. *A Guide to The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives
2. Lama, Dalai. 1999. *Ethics for The New Millennium*. New York: Riverhead Books.
3. Pelden, Kunzang. 2010. *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech: A Detailed Commentary on Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattva*. Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, Inc.
4. Pillai, Asha, ed. 2017. *Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics: Practice Guide for Semester 1 & Semester 2*. Pune: Department of Pali, Savitribai Phule Pune University.
5. Pillai, Asha, ed. 2017. *Applied Mahayana Buddhist Psychology & Ethics: Semester 2 - Revised Educational Course Pack*. Pune: Department of Pali, Savitribai Phule Pune University.

6. Shāntideva. 2012. *The Way of the Bodhisattva: A Translation of the Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Translated by Padmakara Translation Group. Colorado: Shambhala South Asia Editions.

**Reference books:**

1. Goleman, Daniel. 2003. *Destructive Emotions: How Can We Overcome Them? A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. New York: Bantam Dell.
2. Goleman, Daniel. 2007. *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*. New Delhi: Random House Publishers.
3. Lama, Dalai, and Paul Ekman. 2008. *Emotional Awareness: Overcoming the Obstacles to Psychological Balance and Compassion*. New York: Holt Paperbacks.
4. LeDoux, Joseph. 2003. *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life*. London: Phoenix.