

Exploring Buddhism

AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
EDUCATION PROGRAM

COMMENCING FEBRUARY 2024



Vajrayana
INSTITUTE

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in studying Exploring Buddhism at Vajrayana Institute, Sydney. This prospectus has been designed to provide you with useful information about the program content and structure.

Exploring Buddhism (EB) is a Foundational level education program by FPMT Educational Services. It is intended to follow our Discovering Buddhism (DB) program and complement the DB contents by exploring in greater detail various topics related to Buddhist philosophy and practice.

The EB program helps to familiarize students with the concept of text-based explanations in the study of Buddhist classical texts featured in our in-depth programs. The program's syllabus covers a range of important ideas related to Buddhist philosophy, psychology and meditation. It also provides an explanation of prayers and practices commonly done in the FPMT, as well as the preliminary practices (ngondro) performed in the tradition.

The program is fully revised and is being offered at various FPMT centers. It is ideally suited for both experienced and intermediate students of Buddhism. We hope this guide will be a helpful point of departure on your journey.



About the Teacher

The study and practice of Buddhist philosophy in a way that is highly relevant to our daily life depends entirely on a skilled teacher to bring it to life.

Vajrayana Institute has the privilege of having a uniquely qualified Teacher who is capable of doing just that.



Wai Cheong Kok is from Singapore. He has been teaching meditation and Buddhism since 1996, with a special interest in making available the benefits of meditation to a wider audience.

From 2006-2015 and starting from 2020, he has served as a senior teacher at Vajrayana Institute, a Tibetan Buddhist Centre affiliated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). After studying Dharma for several years, Wai Cheong set out to deepen his understanding of spiritual practice by completing the first 7-year Masters program in Advanced Buddhist Studies of Sutra and Tantra at Istituto Lama Tsong Khapa in Italy from 1998-2004. This was followed by a four month solitary retreat in New Zealand.

Program Structure

Our Exploring Buddhism Program aims to provide a balance between study and practice, and between the growing understanding of the theory and the deepening of personal experience of the Buddha's teachings.

Over two sections, with four modules in each section, we explore the important Buddhist topics related to the mind and Buddhist philosophy as well as meditation and practice in Buddhism.

Special attention will be given to relate these concepts to our daily experiences to facilitate the integration of the Buddha's teaching to help us find genuine joy and peace in our life. Students are advised to supplement their study with regular meditation to create the conditions for integrating the intellectual knowledge with personal experience to ensure the study of Buddhism is grounded in practical application.

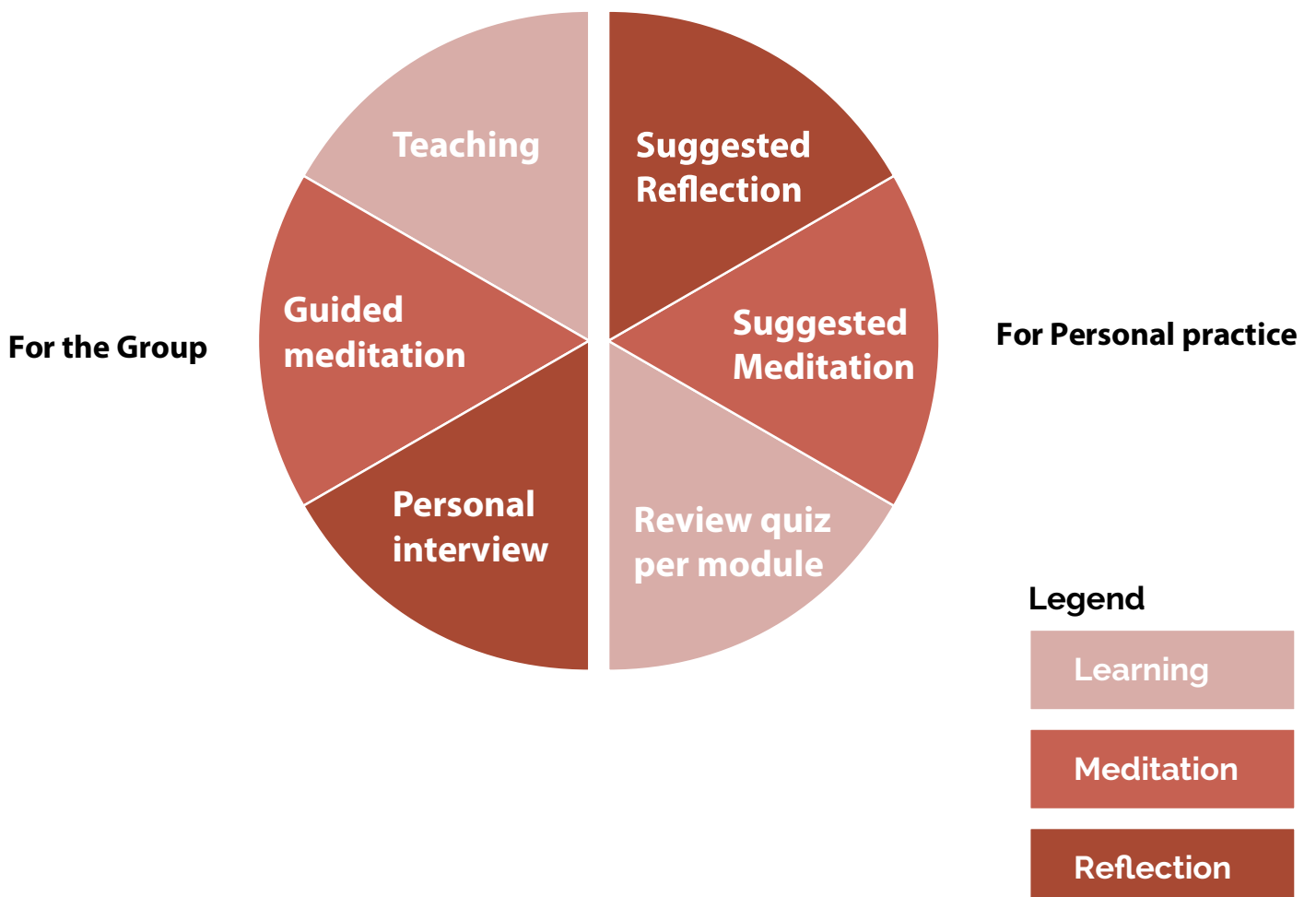
We also encourage our students who identify as Buddhists to consider joining, where possible in Vajrayana Institute's schedule of pujas or volunteering opportunities, as a way of purifying negative karma and accumulating merit, two factors that are vital on the path to Enlightenment. Similarly, for those students who do not identify as Buddhists, we encourage volunteering, as a way of embodying the teachings on wisdom and compassion.



Study and Practice

In accordance with the traditional teaching for generating spiritual realisations and transformations through the threefold activities of learning, reflection and meditation, the EB program incorporates these three activities to support students in developing a better understanding of the materials and offer opportunities to generate their personal experiences in relation to the concepts covered.

There will be weekly teaching and guided meditation for the group, and personal interview slots for individuals needing further consultation. Students are encouraged to develop a personal practice to complement the teaching by completing the review quiz at the end of the module, and engage in personal reflection and meditation during the week.



The Syllabus

Section One: Exploring the Mind and Philosophy

1.1 Exploring the Mind

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What the Mind Is and How It Works

Destructive and Constructive Emotions

Seven Types of Awarenesses

Conceptual and Non-Conceptual Consciousnesses

Main Minds and Mental Factors

1.2 Exploring Exploring the View, Tenets and the Middle Way

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The two truths, four truths and dependent origination

Introduction to the four Buddhist tenet schools

Introduction to the Middle Way school

The way to generate the correct view of selflessness

1.3 Exploring the Fundamentals of Reasoning and Debate

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Understanding the three-fold structure of a classic text

How to debate

Introduction to basic Buddhist concepts drawn from Collected Topics

Introduction to Signs and Reasoning (Tarig)

How one progresses from a wrong view to valid inference

1.4 Exploring the Sutra Grounds and Paths

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The Three Vehicles of Hearer, Solitary Realizer and Bodhisattva

Causes to enter the path of each vehicle

Results of the paths of the different vehicles

Progression on the five paths

The ten grounds

Section Two: Exploring Meditation and Practice

2.1 Exploring Meditation

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How to Organize a Meditation Session
Basic Types and Components of Meditation
How to Train in Calm Abiding
The Stages in which Mental States Are Developed
The Four Close Placements of Mindfulness

2.2. Exploring the Path

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(based on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment)
Three Capable Beings and Relying on a Guru
Precious Human Rebirth and Impermanence-Death
Lower Realms, Refuge, and Karma
Renunciation
Bodhichitta
Concentration and Wisdom

2.3 Exploring Mind Training

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(based on Atisha's Bodhisattva's Garland of Jewels and Langri Tangpa's Eight Verses of Mind Training)
Explanation of the Bodhisattva's Garland of Jewels
Explanation of the Eight Verses of Mind Training

2.4 Exploring the Conditions for Realizations

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The Threefold Activities of Learning, Reflecting and Meditating for generating Realizations
The Favorable Conditions for Realizations
Support and Motivation for Realizations
Purification of Obstacles to Realizations
Accumulation of Positive Momentum for Realizations
Receiving Blessings that Ripen Realizations

Recordings



All past modules and class recordings the Exploring Buddhism program are available for access via subscription to our [Vajrayana.tv](https://www.vajrayana.tv) portal.

We would suggest you consider subscribing to our [Vajrayana.tv](https://www.vajrayana.tv) for future access to these teachings and as a way of supporting us. We appreciate your generosity and hope to be able to run more courses and events like this in the future!

Donations

Vajrayana Institute is a non-profit organisation that relies on the generous donations given by students and benefactors.

We recognise that there are those whose financial circumstances preclude them from being able to donate to the centre, and we wish to assure all our students that this will never be a barrier to attending Dharma teachings at Vajrayana Institute. The Dharma is freely offered to all who seek it.

Of course, running an in-depth study programme incurs costs to the centre and a suggested donation is \$15 per class. We appreciate your support and hope to be able to run more courses and events like this in the future!

We offer the following ways to make a donation for this course:

When Registering

When you register for the course you can make a donation.

Recurring or One-Off Donation via the Website

You can set up a recurring donation [via our donation form on the website](#).

At the Centre

You can make a donation at each class when attending at the centre.

Become a Benefactor

You may also wish to financially sponsor a student who is unable to financially donate at this time. You can make this donation through any of the above methods.