



Philadelphia Buddhist Association

NEWSLETTER

www.PhilaBuddhist.org

March, 2016

SCHEDULE OF PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

MARCH							APRIL						
	1	R	3	4	5				1	2			
P	7	8	R	10	11	S	P	4	5	R	7	8	S
L	14	15	R	17	18	19	L	11	12	R	14	15	16
P	21	22	D	24	25	26	P	18	19	R	21	22	23
P	28	29	R	31			P	25	26	D	28	29	30

MAY							JUNE						
L	2	3	R	5	6	T			R	2	3	4	
P	9	10	R	12	13	S	P	6	7	R	9	10	S
P	16	17	R	19	20	21	L	13	14	R	16	17	18
P	23	24	D	26	27	28	P	20	21	D	23	24	25
P	30	31					P	27	28	R	30		

Geshe Losang Samten to Create Sand Mandala at Plymouth Meeting Friends and to Lead a One Day Retreat on Saturday, May 7th

Geshe Losang Samten will create a sand mandala from Wednesday, May 4th through Friday, May 6th at Plymouth Meeting Friends. The public is invited to watch Losang between 4pm and 6pm each day.

The public is also invited to witness the dismantling of the mandala at 3:30pm on Saturday, May 7th after the day's retreat.



- L** Buddhism Lecture and Discussion Series at Plymouth Meeting Friends 7:30 to 9:00 pm. Note that the May lecture and discussion will take place on May 1st so as not to conflict with Mother's Day.
- P** Sitting meditation at Plymouth Meeting Friends 7:30 to 9:00 pm
- R** Sitting meditation at Radnor Friends 7:30 to 9:00 pm
- D** Open Discussion group about meditation and other Buddhist topics at Radnor Friends 7:30pm to 9:00 pm.
- S** Sutra Study at Radnor Friends 10am to 12pm. Sitting meditation from 9:30am to 9:50. See p. 4 for details.
- T** Day retreat with Geshe Losang Samten at Plymouth Meeting Friends, 9:30am to 4:00pm

BUDDHISM LECTURE AND DISCUSSION SERIES

Every 2nd Sunday, Plymouth Meeting, 7:30

March 13	<i>Person Reflections on Prayer and My Life as a Religious Person</i> Bob Koller
April 10	<i>A Buddhist View of Depression</i> David Kniffen
May 1	<i>The Bodhisattva Ideal: The Essence of the Diamond Sutra</i> - Julianna Lipschutz
June 12	<i>Exploring No Self: How Science Informs the Teachings</i> Robin Carr

In our PBA retreat on May 7th. Ven. Losang Samten will lead us as we meditate on and discuss the meaning of the Wheel of Life. The Buddha's teachings of the 4 Noble Truths and of the path to liberation are depicted visually in the beautiful mandala, and we will use the images to stimulate our discussions.

The Buddha taught many different kinds of meditations (i.e., many different ways to train the mind) and we will be introduced to some of these methods. We will learn how to meditate on an image and how to use meditations to analyze situations and to better understand the nature of our human life.

The Wheel of Life is 2,500 years old and was a gift from the Buddha. When Losang Samten brought this mandala to the United States he was the first person to ever create it in sand. No two mandalas look the same, yet each is the same in concept. The same symbols, characters and designs are used, yet not in a rigid duplication. The mandala reflects back to us much information about the nature of the human mind, which has a strong tendency toward the illusion of permanence.

Buddhism views life as a cycle of birth, death and rebirth called samsara. Our samsara is our daily creation formed by the choices we make. The Wheel of Life is a visual aid helping us to understand this cyclical existence, while offering clear teachings as to why certain choices will simply continue to perpetuate suffering.

This mandala is called The Wheel of Life or The Wheel of Deluded Existence. We are constantly evolving. We have been on Earth before and will return again; not as punishment but as a way to learn how to improve ourselves as well as to help other people improve the quality of their lives. The central teaching of this Wheel is that our suffering is due to the effects of the **three poisons**—anger, greed and ignorance to which we are dearly attached. For an explanation of the mandala see page 3. For details about the retreat, see page 4.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND ANY OF OUR PROGRAMS OR EVENTS AT NO CHARGE

Local Buddhist Centers and Groups

The following are some of the places in the Philadelphia region where regular Buddhist meditation practice is followed.

Pennsylvania

- * Buddhist Sangha of Bucks County
Yardley 215-431-0882
email: bsbc19067@yahoo.com
- * Clear Light Meditation Group
Devon 610-293-9133
- * Dungkar Ling (Tibetan)
Honeybrook 610-942-2512
- * Media Meditation Group
(Shambhala)
Media 610-566-2525
- * Peaceful City Sangha (Community
of Mindful Living)
Center City 215-852-4375
- * Pebble Hill Mindfulness Sangha
Doylestown 215-230-9899
- * Philadelphia Meditation Center
(Non-Sectarian)
Havertown 610-853-8200
- * Philadelphia Soka Gakkai
International-USA
Center City Philadelphia
215-569-2144
- * Rainbow LGBTQ Buddhist
Meditation Group
Center City Philadelphia
215-732-2220
- * Shambhala Center (Shambhala)
Center City Philadelphia
215-568-6070
- * Shikan (Stop & Observe) Zendo
Center City, Philadelphia, PA
Monthly One-Day Silent Retreat
Email: juliannalipschutz@gmail.com
- * Soji Zen Center
Lansdowne 917-856-5659
- * Springboard Meditation Sangha
W. Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, 19119
info@springboardmeditationsang-
ha.org
- * Tibetan Buddhist Center
of Philadelphia
West Philadelphia 215-701-7018
- * Willow Branch Sangha
West Chester 610-388-1257
- * Won Buddhism Temple
of Philadelphia
Glenside 215-884-8443
- * Zen Center of Philadelphia
West Philadelphia 215-472-2613
- * Zen Meditation Group of Greater
Philadelphia (Center City)
215-381-0398

New Jersey

- * Buddhist Sangha
of Southern New Jersey
Cherry Hill 609-953-9215
- * Pine Wind Zen Center
Shamong, NJ 609-268-9151
- * Seabrook Buddhist Temple
(Jodo Shin Shu Buddhism)
Seabrook 856-451-3422

Delaware

- * Delaware Valley Zen Center
Newark 302-981-6209

How to Contact PBA

- * Send an email to
info@PhilaBuddhist.org
- * Send USPS mail to
P.O. Box 11728
Philadelphia, PA 19101

Guide to Retreat Centers

The following is a listing of some Buddhist centers in the Eastern United States that offer a program of retreats throughout the year. These centers offer a place where scheduled Buddhist teaching from various traditions is given. In addition, many local centers offer day and weekend retreats.

- * Bhavana Society Near Washington, DC & PA border
Rt.1, Box 218-3 High View, WV (304)-856-3241
<http://www.bhavasociety.org>
- * Insight Meditation Society
1230 Pleasant Street, Barre, MA, 01005 (978)-355-4378
<http://www.Dharma.org>
- * Mt. Equity Zendo
280 Mt. Equity Road, Pennsdale, PA, 17756
(717)-546-2784, <http://www.mtequity.org>
- * Zen Mountain Monastery
P.O. Box 197, Mt. Tremper, NY, 12457 (845) 688-2228
<http://www.mro.org>
- * Milarepa Center
P.O. Box 51, Barnet, VT 05821 (802) 633-4136
<http://www.milarepacenter.org>

PBA does not charge for any of its activities (other than residence fees at residential retreats). We do incur expenses for rent, newsletters, website, and various other items. If you have found

participation in our activities valuable, please consider sending PBA a tax-deductible contribution. Make checks payable to PBA and send to P.O. Box 11728, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

The Philadelphia Buddhist Association (PBA) is a non-profit corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It has provided programs since 1986 to the public for making known the principles and practices of the Buddhist way. PBA represents no

one Buddhist tradition and promotes dialogue with all faiths. All programs are without charge and are financed only by freely given donations. Donations are tax-deductible.

The Wheel of Life

Explanation of the Mandala



The center of the Wheel of Life holds the **three poisons** — the snake representing anger, the rooster, greed and the boar, ignorance - on a background of blue, which symbolizes the nature of the human mind. From this stems the yin and yang, dark and light areas surrounding the center. On the light side are representations of those seeking to lessen the effects of the poisons and on the dark side are those figures suffering due to the presence and intensity of the three.

The next circle encases this. This circle is comprised of **six realms** that illustrate life situations and their main conditions which result from the effects of these three poisons in our life. In the realm of human existence we are subject to attachment during the birth, growth, death cycle. Within the animal kingdom, due to their predatory nature, we see the predominance of fear. If not hunted or being hunted they are subject to serving humankind. In the realm of karmic hell one faces the consequences of the presence of the three poisons in their life. In the area of the hungry ghosts the prevailing attitude is greed and stinginess. Never satisfied, they are constantly in pursuit of more. Jealousy permeates the realm of the demi-gods. They are always coveting what their neighbor has and are even willing to go to war to get it. Deluded pride abounds in the heavenly realm. There is a fixation on external beauty and an absence of appreciation for the inner beauty. Each of these sections also has the image of a radiant Buddha offering hope to every person on the journey. No matter how difficult the circumstances of one's life are at any given moment, the possibility of true liberation is always present. Contemplation and reflection on these images as well as ideas can help people in their personal growth because they are a powerful mirror of the human condition.

The Outer Ring of the mandala has 12 illustrations representing the **12 phases of human consciousness**: Beginning at the top we find a spiritually blind man. In his state of ignorance he easily loses his way. Moving clockwise, there is a potter whose daily creations represent our deeds, our actions in life, and the beliefs that we follow. Responsibility for the pots that we throw in life is ours. The monkey in a tree represents the "monkey mind", the constant chatter or the continuously shifting focus of the untrained mind. A boat rocking in the waves symbolizes physical, intellectual, or spiritual instability in our lives. An empty house with six shuttered openings depicts the six senses: taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing, and the conceptual mind. The amorous couple symbolizes desire and the object of desire. Making contact and embracing the perceived object of desire. The man with an arrow in his eye represents "feeling". He has been wounded by emotion and is experiencing the subsequent suffering. Next is the image of a person drinking wine and dreaming of an object not yet attained. His unrealized desires are stimulated by his perceptions and emotions. In the next frame comes the acquisition of the desired object, while dreams of the next acquisition perpetuate further dissatisfaction. Craving does not cease.

Continuing clockwise around the circle is the image of a pregnant woman symbolizing the new life we create by our desires and cravings becoming substantive in time. The subsequent birth depicts the becoming of this new life. This new life is subject to change as is all life. Old age and death are inevitable. Death does not end our suffering. Our friends we leave behind will suffer from our death, and we will begin a new cycle in the Wheel of Life.

The cure for all this suffering is to train the mind to notice and eliminate greed, anger and ignorance, which are the driving forces of this wheel.

Yoga Nidra Meditation Practice, Part II by Heidi Sheer

Yoga Nidra is a type of guided meditation which dissolves tension and deeply relaxes the brain. This helps our sitting meditation practice to go much smoother and to be more pleasant than it would be without a deep relaxation practice like Yoga Nidra as a tool.

Continuing the Body Scan from last Newsletter:

Heavy / Light:

Now, the entire body becomes heavy, very heavy, extremely heavy.

Now, the body becomes light, very light, extremely light.

Now, the body becomes Ice-Cold; 1. Focus on your left nostril, 2. Focus on your neck (Vishuddhi).

Now, the body becomes Hot; 1. Focus on your right nostril, 2. Focus on your navel (Manipura).

Remember a strong Pain – Remember a feeling of Great Joy.

CHAKRA SCAN (Kshetram)

The Kshetram is the field of the Chakra.

Go three times through the Chakras, from bottom to top:

1. Location; soft flower touches location;
2. Color;
3. Symbol.

1. Muladhara: Red

Perineum – a Red Inverted Triangle, i.e., the tip of the triangle facing downward

2. Swadhisthana: Orange

Pubic Bone – the Night Ocean illuminated by the Orange Full Moon

3. Manipura: Golden Yellow

Navel – a Luminous Sunflower

4. Anahata: Green

Center of Chest – a Bright Shining (Blue) Candle

5. Vishuddhi: Blue

Throat – Cooling Rain Drops

6. Ajna or Agniya: Purple

Forehead, between the Eye-Brows – Immense Brightness – like a thousand suns

Bindu: Silver or Golden

Upper Back of the Head – the (Full) Moon

7. Sahasrara: White

Top of the Head – Burning Bon Fire

VISUALIZATION

Imagine walking through a lush green meadow with beautiful golden-yellow flowers in it.

The warmth of the sun is shining on your face.

A cool breezy wind gently strokes your face.

Now, you are coming to a deep well. Bright flowers, blue, purple, orange, red, and yellow flowers growing lavishly in lush green grass, are surrounding the well. Colorful butterflies are playing at the well, soaring high, flying up and down all around the well.

There is an empty bucket on top of the well. The bucket is clean and (of the purest color) white. A long new rope is tied to the bucket.

You take the bucket by the rope and, gently, lower it down into the well. The well is very deep. You lower the bucket deeper and deeper into the well – until it finally reaches the bottom of the well with its pure fresh water.

The white bucket gets filled completely with this pure fresh water of the well.

Now, you draw the bucket back up. It takes a while for the bucket to come up. It was very deep down in the well. You keep pulling the rope for the bucket to come up.

Finally, you can see the pure white bucket and the clean crystal-clear water from the well in it.

You place the bucket on top of the well.

You feel marvelous. Your mind is bright and clear. You are happy and peaceful. Notice what you are thinking now. Don't try to think. Just notice the thoughts that come up. Notice the thoughts without judging them. Allow them to be exactly as they are. Give them your attention unconditionally. See the thoughts arise and cease, arise and cease, without getting involved in them. Just be aware of them, fully – and lovingly.

In the next newsletter, Heidi will conclude the practice by explaining Sankalpa Intention and Coming Back.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Sutra Study with PBA

The next four Sutra Studies will continue to focus on *The Essentials of Buddhist Meditation: The essentials for Practicing Calming-and-Insight & Dhyāna Meditation* written by Chinese eminent monk Zhiyi (aka Chih-I, 538-597 CE), the founder for the Tiantai School in China

Saturday, March 12, 2016:

Chapter 4 & 5: Making Adjustments (p. 77-97) & Utilizing Skillful Means (p. 99-101)
Led by David Carpenter & Zachary Brown

Saturday, April 9, 2016:

Chapter 6: The Actual Cultivation (p. 103-137)
Led by David Carpenter & Zachary Brown

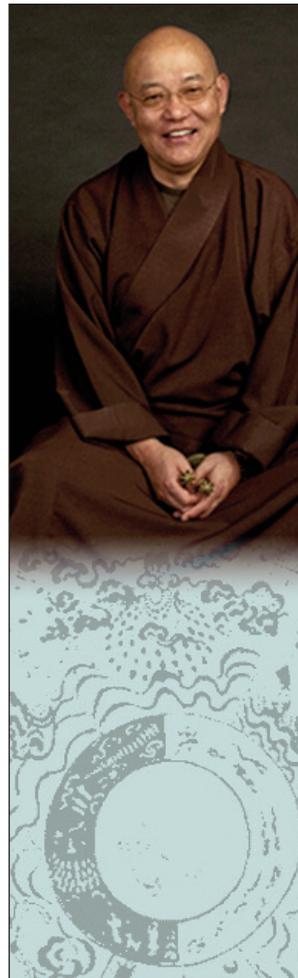
Saturday, May 14, 2016:

Chapter 7: Manifestation of Roots of Goodness (p. 139-153)
Led by David Carpenter & Robin Carr

Saturday, June 11, 2016:

Chapter 9: Treatment of Disorders (p. 169-187)
Led by David Carpenter & Julianna Lipschutz

Day Retreat with Geshe Losang Samten



Saturday, May 7th
9:30am - 4:00pm

While no one will be turned away, please RSVP to retreat@philabuddhist.org by Saturday, April 23

If you would like to attend only the dismantling of the mandala, please arrive at 3:30pm

Please bring a brown bag lunch.

PBA will supply tea, coffee, snacks, meditation cushions and mats. The retreat is without charge and PBA makes no profit, but we urge you to make a free will contribution to the teacher.

Dana is the Pali word for generosity.

We suggest a dana offering to the teacher of \$25.

Where We Meet

Plymouth Meeting Friends

Every Sunday at 7:30 PM
second Sunday: lecture and discussion series
2150 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting PA 19462
(SW Corner of Germantown and Butler Pikes,
just outside Philadelphia)
Wheelchair and handicap access

Radnor Friends

Every Wednesday at 7:30 PM
second Saturday: Sutra study 10AM to 12:00 AM
610 Conestoga Road, Villanova, PA 19087
(Sproul Rd (route 320) and Conestoga Road)
Limited handicap access