

## **What is being taught at FWBO centres?**

By Dhammaloka, Dharma Teaching Coordinator, July 2008

The following pages give a preliminary survey of the topics of Buddhism & Meditation Courses offered at our centres — and aimed to beginners and friends.

The survey is largely based on the material made available to me by various centres. Much of this has been uploaded to the Dharma-teaching section of the fwbo-centre-support website. If you are interested in the details or wish to download handouts, visit <http://fwbo-centre-support.org/lightingtheflame>.

This survey aims to collate the topics presented on beginners' and friends' level. Method of teaching will vary with the presenters, but you will find that some of the course materials on the website are rich in methodical advice.

Part 1 aims to draw out a pattern that — with caution — can be recognized as uniting meditation and Buddhism teaching at our urban centres.

Part 2 presents, in tabulated form, a synopsis each on meditation teaching and Buddhism courses.

**YOU CAN HELP US GAIN A MORE COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW  
BY MAKING MATERIAL FROM YOUR CENTRE AVAILABLE.**

### **Part 1**

#### **Meditation Teaching**

Without too much strain, it seems possible to extract the following overall sequence of meditation topics:

- Body awareness & posture
- Awareness of the breath leading into Mindfulness of Breathing
- Balanced effort / focus and breadth / beginning and ending of practice
- Introduction of Metta Bhavana, often gradually building up
- Just Sitting / walking
- Supporting conditions >>> ethics
- Hindrances and dhyana factors
- Brahma Viharas
- Samatha-vipasyana >>> Reflecting and cultivating insight

Follow up with various level-2 meditation courses / 'Living practice'-course with diaries / day events and urban retreats / Cultivating Insight course and/or >>> Buddhism courses

## Buddhism Courses

As compared to the teaching of meditation, the picture here is much more varied.

- 1) A number of centres offer introduction to Buddhism courses after participation in introductory meditation courses. Other centres offer open classes combining introduction to meditation in conjunction with basic Buddhism (often along a kind of syllabus).
- 2) If at all one can make out an overall syllabus, it would seem to roughly look like this:
  - The Buddha (historical & ideal)
  - (Dharma) Basic Teachings (sub-items vary in their sequence)
    - Principle of the Path (3fold, 8fold: Wheel-Spiral-Mandala)
    - (Wisdom) Conditionality / 4 Noble Truths / 3 laksanas /Wheel of Life
    - Ethics
    - Meditation
  - The Sangha (and the FWBO)
  - Ritual and Devotion
- 3) Level 2- and beyond courses, including:
  - Going deeper with basic doctrines
  - Meditation in a Buddhist context
  - Mahayana, paramitas, Bodhisattva Ideal
  - 3 Yanas and Buddhist schools
  - Teachers of the Past (Refuge Tree)
  - The FWBO (history, context, system of practice)

**Part 2:**

**Synopsis Meditation Courses**

**July 2008**

Week	Holland	Glasgow	Cambridge	LBC	Newcastle	Brighton	Colchester	
1.	MoB/MB hindrances posture	8 week introduction to meditation course	Tuning in/ posture	Types of meditation diary / CD	Foundation Course MoB and body awareness	Introduction to Meditation Course	Alternating practice of Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana integrated into 15 week cycle of Introduction to Buddhism classes (drop in)	
2.	factors of absorption		Body and MoB	Posture & MoB	Broad awareness			
3.			Beginning and ending	MoB/intro kindness	MB			
4.			MB 1-5	MB 1-2	Mature Effort			
5.			Why meditate: samatha/ vipassana	bring people to mind MB1-5	Hindrances & cultivate opposite			
6.			more on metta	review / balancing effort	fruitful attitudes to meditation			
7.			Balanced effort focus & breadth Just sitting	set up & prepare useful emotions values intentions	..... ..... .....	<u>Module 5 of Dharma</u> <u>Class</u> <u>syllabus Meditation</u> Why?		Path of Awareness 1 Basic principles MoB / MB / Walking Focus & Breadth Balanced effort
8.			Supporting conditions Place Ethics Community	Balancing effort		Dhyanas		skilful and unskilful action
9.		Going deeper, follow on from level 1 Four Brahma Viharas Metta Sutta 5 Hindrances 5 dhyana factors vipasyana	Focus & breadness	Hindrances		principle of metta		
10.			hindrances & dhyana factors	Balanced Effort		Interconnectedness & dana		
11.			antidotes to h./ experimentation	Brahma Viharas		Contentment		
12.			Review			Communication & truthfulness		
13.								Mindfulness
14.		Level 2 meditation course		<u>Cultivating Insight</u> laksanas / qualities / gateways of liberation				
15.				clarity & impermanence signless Samadhi				
16.				animmita samadhi				
17.				responding to dukkha - opening the heart				
18.				dukkha and apranihita samadhi				
19.				dukkha and saddha				
20.				insubstantiality, interconnectedness				
21.				openness and metta				
21.				review of course				

Synopsis Buddhism (& Meditation) Classes/Courses

July 2008

WEEK	Colchester	Wellington	Brighton	Cambridge	Holland	Glasgow	Berlin & S Franc.	New York	Newcastle		
1.	Intro Buddhism & FWBO (MoB)	<b>Buddha</b> Approaches	<u>Path of Awareness 1 (Meditation)</u> Basic principles MoB/MB/ Walking	What is Buddhism?	4 week meditation course (see under meditation courses)	posture/ body awaren.	basics and path	Intro/ Buddha & budd Tradition	Buddhism in a nutshell/ 1 <sup>st</sup> Noble Truth	Introduction to meditation course	
2.	Ethics: The precious life (MB)	His life as series of victories	Focus & Breadth Balanced effort	History: Buddha & later developments		body & breath	Buddha: hist & ideal	meditation 3fold path & ethics	Metta/ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Truth		
3.	Ethics: Generosity (MoB)	Stories from his life		Basic teachings: Conditionality, 4 Truth, 8fold Path		MoB	dharma 1: ethics	meditation /ritual/ shine room, etiquette	Mangala Sutta/ 3rd Truth		
4.	Ethics: Contentment (MB)	Texts about the Buddha		Ethics: 5 Precepts		MB	dharma 2: meditation	med/ 4 Noble Truths	4th Truth		
5.	Ethics: Wholesome Speech (MoB)	The Buddha as myth		Sangha: Spiritual Community	3 Refuges: <u>Buddha</u> Biography	MB	dharma 3: wisdom	med/ Wheel of Life/ 3 laksanas	8fold Path overview stages 1-2		
6.	Ethics: Life without Drugs (MB)	The Buddha as symbol	Symbolism & Ritual: Wheel/Spiral/Mandala & Transference Merits	Enlightenment Archetypal Buddhas		working creatively	Sangha & summary	med/quiz /next steps	Stages 3-4		
7.	Meditation: Hindrances (MoB)	<u>Basic teachings</u> Conditionality	<u>Path of Awareness 2 (Ethics)</u> Med as transformation	Traditional Buddhism Faith Enlightenment Approach to Dharma 3fold Path 5 Spiritual faculties 3 Yanas and FWBO Buddhism level 2 (six stand alone modules) Prerequisite attainment of level 1 and introduction to meditation	3 Refuges: <u>Dharma</u> 4 Noble Truths 8fold Path parable of the rain cloud from WLS	intro & 4 noble truths			Stages 5-6	<u>The Buddha</u> Who is the Buddha?	
8.	Meditation: Touching delight (MB)	ethics	skillful and unskillful action			Faith Enlightenment Approach to Dharma 3fold Path 5 Spiritual faculties 3 Yanas and FWBO	perfect vision			Stages 7-8	Archetypal symbolism
9.	Conditionality (MoB)	5 precepts	principle of metta			<u>Bhava</u> akra / <u>Spiral</u> / <u>Man-dala</u> of 5 Buddhas	perfect emotion			<u>Six Perfections</u> overview	the five Buddhas
10.	Karma & Rebirth (MB)	laksanas 1	Interconnectedness & dana				ethics: speech & action & RL			perfections 1-2	Enlightenment
11.	Nature of Reality: 3 lakshanas (MoB)	laksanas 2	Contentment				meditation 1: perfect effort			perfections 3-4	Buddha in Pali Canon
12.	Nature of Reality: 4 Noble Truths (MB)	laksanas 3	Communication & truthfulness				meditation 2: perfect mindfulness			perfections 5-6	What makes you a Buddhist?
13.	Going for Refuge to the 3 Jewels (MoB)	<b>Mahayana</b> origin	Mindfulness			<u>Buddhist Wisdom: doctrinal Dharma</u>	3 Refuges: <u>Dharma</u> 4 Noble Truths	meditation 3: perfect samadhi		<u>Wheel of Life</u> overview	<u>The Dharma</u> 'Core' teachings
14.	Two short talks (MB)	Bidhisattva				<u>Views</u>	8fold Path	sum up & check out		Three poisons	Conditionality
15.	Ritual and Devotion in Buddhism	Madhyamaka				<u>Conditionality 1 &amp; 2</u> <u>4 Noble Truths</u>	parable of the rain cloud from WLS	<u>Wheel &amp; Spiral</u> intro wheel		Six realms	4 Noble Truths
16.		Yogacara/Zen				<u>Niyamas</u>		3 poisons		Twelve links	8fold Path

17.		Pure Land, Hua Yan, Tantra			<u>Wisdom and Compassion</u>		kama			3fold Way
18.		Unity of schools					six worlds= stuck habits			3 lakasas
19.		Buddhist Practices Meditation			Buddhist Wisdom: symbolic Dharma		12 links, reactive mind			The Sangha to be designed
20.		Mindfulness			Wheel of Life 1-3 Spiral Path		spiral path & mandala			to be designed
21.		Positive emotions			Mandala 1&2	Ethics 5 precepts	Going deeper in meditation (see synopsis meditation)			to be designed
22.		Generosity								to be designed
23.		Patience								to be designed
24.		Energy and heroic ideal								to be designed
25.		More practices Confession			Buddhist Ethics Ethics as choice Love Generosity Contentment Honesty Awareness	3 Refuges: Sangha What is Sangha FWBO & other communities Mahasangha/ Aryan Sangha				Ethics the criterion
26.		Spiritual friendship					a variety of subjects chosen by teachers and class - has included the bodhisattva ideal, puja, meditation, the heart sutra and the brahma-viharas			The 5 precepts
27.										non-violence
28.		Buddhist Ritual								non-exploitation
29.										contentment
30.		Self-reliance & other				Wisdom 3 levels Pratya samutpada				levels of communication
31.		Gurus of the Past Aryan Sangha			Ritual & Devotion Worship	3 lakasas/4 viparyasas				awareness
32.		Kukai			Disclosure and Confession	Heart Sutra				Meditation Why?
33.		Shantideva			positive Emotion Receptivity					Dhyanas
34.		Xuan Zang			Bodhicitta					Hindrances
35.		Padmasambhava			Emptiness: Heart Sutra					Balanced Effort
36.		Hakuin							Brahma Viharas	
37.		Reflection & Contemplation 3 Wisdoms			FWBO System of practice				System of meditation	
38.		Six realms			History FWBO					
39.		False views			GfR as commitment					
40.		Communicating Dharma			spiritual friendship/ community					
41.		Similes of spiritual life			system of meditation					
42.		Sacred texts			Whole life practice					
	Colchester		Brighton	Cambridge		Holland	Glasgow	Berlin & S Franc.	New York	Newcastle