

Exploring the Truths

Draft Syllabus

Purpose: To provide students with a basic understanding of the core truths the Buddha taught in the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma, including the two truths, the four noble truths, and buddha nature. To establish the relationship between the two truths, the four noble truths, the Wheel of Life, and the Three Rare Sublime Ones on the basis of logic as set out by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This module encompasses the following topics:

The Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma - To show how an understanding of the Three Turnings of the Wheel serves several important purposes for gaining a well-rounded understanding of Buddhism, including: deepening an appreciation for the Buddha's ability to teach according to diverse needs: giving insight into the sutra sources of the tenet systems; revealing how the Buddha taught on the ignorance at the root of samsara, and demonstrating the similarities and differences in sutra teachings among various Buddhist traditions.

The Truths and Refuge - To investigate how the Buddhist path can be established as valid through logic and without appeal to blind faith in scripture by gaining a clear understanding of the relationship between the two truths, the four noble truths, and the Three Rare Sublime Ones.

The Two Truths - To explore the difference between the way things ordinarily appear to us, how they are found to exist when closely analyzed, and what this means for generating the wisdom that leads to lasting happiness.

The Four Truths - To gain a deeper understanding of the core teaching on the four noble truths and how it relates to other aspects of the Buddha's teachings and to the teachings on the stages of the path to enlightenment (*lamrim*).

The Wheel of Life - To gain a comprehensive understanding of how samsara is created and can be ceased through reflecting on the Wheel of Life and especially the twelve links of dependent arising depicted therein.

The Three Rare Sublime Ones - To identify the Three Rare Sublime Ones and understand the rationale establishing them as valid refuges having the ability to protect us from the suffering of samsara and lead us to full enlightenment.

Buddha Nature - To clearly identify the different aspects of buddha nature and what this entails in terms of what it is possible for us to become, and, therefore, how we should strive to see ourselves, other sentient beings, and the world at large in more positive ways.