

A Course in Happiness

Greetings: we are a group of Buddhist Monks from Tashi Kyil Monastery.

Slide 1: We wish to tell you about Buddhism and how to train your mind to achieve happiness

The Buddhist Religion began in 5th Century BCE in India by Siddhartha Gautama, a royal prince who left his palace and achieved a State of Complete Happiness by training his mind

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Slide 2: Buddha in a State of Meditation

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Slide 3: The Buddha taught his followers the 4 Noble Truths

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Slide 4: The Four Noble Truths

- Life is suffering
- Suffering is caused by attachment
- There is an end to suffering
- Follow the 8-fold Noble Path to Enlightenment

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Buddhism has divided into several main groups that can be classified according to language. The Pali Group (sometimes called Theravadan), the Chinese Group (includes Chan, Zen, and Pure Land), and the Tibetan Group that came from Buddhist teachings in Sanskrit.

Slide 5: The Three Main Buddhist Groups

Tibetan Buddhism is practiced mainly in Tibet & Mongolia

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Slide 6: A Picture of Tibet & Mongolia

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Around 760, King Trisong Detsen, the First Emperor of Tibet invited the Abbot of Nalanda University in India to Tibet. Nalanda was the great Buddhist University in India

Slide 7: King Trisong Detsen and Abbot Santaraksita

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The Abbot started the building of Samye, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, and the Emperor ordered a translation of all Buddhist Texts into Tibetan.

Slide 8: Samye

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At that time, Padmasambhava, a mystic Guru from Nepal, was invited to Tibet to subdue the demonic forces. The demons were not annihilated, but because of his powers, he changed their minds into positive protectors.

Slide 9: Padmasambhava

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In later years, Buddhism suffered a decline in Tibet, but in the 11th century Atisha, a Buddhist scholar from India, came to Tibet and purified the religion. And in the 14th century, Tsong Khapa, a Buddhist philosopher from eastern Tibet founded the Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism. The Dalai Lamas belong to the Gelug School.

Slide 10: Atisha, Tsong Khapa and the 14th Dalai Lama

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The central teachings of the Gelug School are based on the teachings of Atisha and Tsong Khapa. Monks of the Gelug School are known as Yellow Hats.

Slide 11: Tashi Kyil's Yellow Hats

Throughout the next centuries, many great monasteries were built in Tibet. Among these was Labrang Tashi Kyil, a Gelug Monastery in Eastern Tibet. At one time, it had more than 4,000 monks who studied Buddhist Philosophy, Medicine, Meditation, and the Arts.

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Slide 12: Labrang Tashi Kyil in Tibet

In 1949, the Chinese Communists invaded and soon occupied Tibet. During the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, the Communists destroyed more than 6,000 monasteries in Tibet. Among them was Ganden, a large monastery near the capital city of Lhasa. It had been founded by Lama Tsong Khapa in the 14th century.

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Slide 13: Ganden before the invasion

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Slide 14 Ganden after its destruction.

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Labrang Tashi Kyil was also destroyed, but in 1967 a group of its exiled monks came to Dehra Dun, India where they rebuilt a smaller version of their monastery. The monks on this tour are from this refugee monastery.

Slide 15: Tashi Kyil Monastery in Dehra Dun, India

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The monks of this monastery follow the teaching of Buddha and train their minds to eliminate the three poisons.

CLICK

Slide 16: The Three poisons: Ignorance (the pig), Greed (the cock), and Attachment (the snake)

Their studies can be called a Course in Happiness because it is designed to train their minds to be happy and free from suffering.

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Part I of the Course in Happiness: Meditation

Slide 17: Focusing the Mind through Meditation. A focused mind is needed

for happiness

- Single-Pointed Meditation. We may recite mantras (sacred syllables) or count our breath to cause our minds to completely focus. Or we may visualize a holy being (such as Jesus) and identify our mind with its mind

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Slide 18: Visualization of the Buddha of Compassion and saying his mantra Om Mani Padme Hum

CLICK

Slide 19: Little ones meditating

CLICK

- Analytical Meditation: When our mind is calm, we may analyze the meaning of such issues as death & dying, impermanence, and karma

Slide: 20: Analytical Meditation on Karma (Cause & Effect). Your deeds (good and bad) follow you just as your shadow follows you.

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Slide: 21: His Holiness the Dalai Lama Meditating

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- Tantra: We perform rituals and say mantras to achieve a state of awareness in which a person realizes himself as an enlightened being

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Slide 22: In Tantra, a Mandala is a Palace of an Enlightened Being. Monks are creating the Mandala of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion

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Slide 23: Tantric Dance: The Black Hat Dance overcome negativities that harm the mind.

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Part II of the Course in Happiness: The Dharma

Slide 24: We can overcome ignorance by Studying the Dharma (Teachings of the Buddha) & Debating their Meanings

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- Typically a Buddhist monk will study the Dharma for 16 to 22 years

Slide 25: Little Ones listening to their teacher explain the Dharma

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Slide 26: Young Monks Carrying Sacred Texts (Kanjur)

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Slide 27: Little Ones memorizing the Dharma

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- Debate– Older monks test their understanding of the Dharma by debating issues such as, “What is the nature of Compassion?” Debates are very active and sometimes become very heated

Slide 28: Monks Debating

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Slide 29: Debate Examination – Before a monks can obtain a Geshe Degree (PhD in Philosophy) he has to go through an intense debate examinations

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Part III of the Course in Happiness: Compassion

Slide 30: Practicing Compassion -- along with the achieving of Wisdom -- allows you to overcome the 3 poisons and achieve a state of happiness

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- Parents bring their children to the monastery from outlying Tibetan villages in the Himalayas. Their parents want them to receive an education. Often, they arrive mal-nourished. The monks do not charge the families any fees for taking care of their children.

Slide 31: A Monk at Tashi Kyil teaching little monks.

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Slide 32: Little monks learning English

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Slide 33: Little monks receiving awards

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- Monks chant prayers daily to train their minds to accept all sentient beings with total loving kindness or compassion. They recite the Four Immeasurables many times every day.

Slide 34: The Four Immeasurables

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The monks of the 2015-16 Tashi Kyil Tour travel throughout the USA to spread a message of wisdom and compassion and to raise funds to support their monastery and the many little children whom they take care of and educate.

Slide 35: Monks of Tashi Kyil Monastery

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Slide 36: Picture of the Tour Group: Please support the 2015-16 Tour Group

Thank you for listening to our talk about Buddhism and the Course in Happiness at Tashi Kyil Monastery. We hope that you can learn to train your minds so you, too, can be happy all the time.