

2023

Jamyang Leeds Online Educational Event Guide for Teachers



**Founders: Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama
Zopa Rinpoche**

**Patron: David Lascelles, 8th Earl of
Harewood**

FPMT

2023



Online Educational Event Guide

We are delighted that you have chosen an Online session for your class with Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds. In this information pack you will find some general information about Jamyang Leeds and about Buddhism itself, some details of the session and lists of questions which have been asked by other schools.

Aims of the Jamyang Education Offer

Visits to our centre and educational events online provide an excellent stimulus for:

- Increasing awareness of philosophical questions around concepts of Religion and Meaning, Science Mind and Nature, Thinking and Knowing, Identity, Living a Good Life and Justice and Responsibility in relation to Buddhism.
- Building empathy by experiencing the situation of real people, places and events, and so encourage an understanding of different religious perspectives.
- Gaining an understanding of the lived experience of Buddhists in the local community and how this ties into a broader framework.
- Reinforcing skills in the areas of asking meaningful questions, understanding others and evaluating information.

Links to RE in schools

Visits or online sessions offer valuable cross-curricular dimensions but have particular relevance to the development of an understanding of believing, expressing and living in the RE framework and across the key stages. We offer activities in Discovery for Foundation Stage, in Exploring for KS1, in Connecting for both lower and upper KS2 and in Applying and Interpreting for KS3 and above. We can also offer bespoke workshops or online sessions in particular project areas.

Cross Curricular Links

In addition, we can speak to you about arranging a visit or online session around a cross- curricular area or project. For instance, this may be as part of a project on Tibet in topic work, or on values and community in PSHE, perhaps it might be on local history and community or on Buddhist stories and fables in English, we have lots of links available within our tradition to discussions on where Buddhism meets science, or maybe you would like to learn about mandalas in fine art. Our sessions are scaled up or down according to age and ability from 4 to post graduate. Some of our members of our community are retired University lecturers.

Before the Session

Before your event you will have had a conversation with our Education Visits Co-Ordinator or another member of the community where we will have discussed your requirements. You will then have booked a date and time. At least one week prior to the session you will email your list of questions.

Available Days

Sessions are generally arranged for Tuesday but please ask as we can be flexible on days for online events.

Times

Online sessions generally last around 45 minutes to one hour, depending on questions, and we can be flexible on the time throughout the school day.

Recording

We ask that permission is obtained before any recording of the session takes place. This is in line with GDPR regulations. We do not record any sessions from our side.

Risk Assessments/ Safeguarding/ DBS

We assume that the session will be risk assessed from your side. Our Education Visits Co-ordinator is fully DBS checked. Any member of the community with whom you speak will have had safeguarding training. We will be speaking to you either from the centre or from home, in both cases this will be in front of a Buddhist altar in an area without interruption and in confidence. No other person has access to the IT devices used for communication and they are all virus checked. Please also refer to the section above on recording.

Conduct and Behaviour

Teachers are responsible at all times for the conduct and behaviour of their groups. It is not the responsibility of the Education Visits Co-ordinator or other member of our community who may be presenting. If a member of the group is disrupting the session, then we kindly request that the teacher addresses this.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE SESSION

Introduction

The session will begin with a short talk where the presenter introduces themselves and speaks a little about who they are, how long they have been a Buddhist, their chosen Buddhist community, why they chose it and what Buddhism means to them. The presenter may ask the group some questions, for instance what they already know about Buddhism or if they can name any famous Buddhists.

Virtual Tour of the Centre

Students will be shown a video which offers a short virtual tour of Jamyang Buddhist Centre in Leeds.

Q&A session

Students will have chosen up to ten questions that they may ask which have been pre-arranged with the centre before the visit. The teacher will choose the ten students who will ask each question in advance, and they will ask the question out loud.

When the pre-arranged questions have been answered we will have the wild card round when two students will be chosen with their hands up to ask any question they like!

Altar

The session takes place in front of a Buddhist altar either or at home. The presenter will then show you each of the objects on the altar and explain their significance.

Have a go at Meditation

Meditation has been scientifically proven to produce feelings of calm and clarity. It has also been shown to improve concentration and focus, a good thing in the classroom!

To end the event we finish with a guided meditation session. As with all the content and activities offered, the level of this is dialled up or down depending on the age and abilities of the students attending. KS1/Early KS2 will be taught about "Sitting still like a Frog" whereas KS3 will be taught mindfulness awareness meditation (samatha vipassana). The meditations are entirely secular and suitable for all. It is a nice way to calm the students before the session ends.

Optional Extra

Listen to a Buddhist Story

If you have a little more time and would like to extend the event then we can offer to read a Buddhist story. For early key stages this could be a simple tale involving an animal. For later key stages or adults it could be the story of Angulimala the murderer who became a monk with a discussion about morality, or the story of the mustard seed with a discussion about suffering. This would take place before the meditation session at the end.

Follow Up Activities

We can provide a sheet of suggested follow up activities to have a go at in class. These are based on the most popular activities provided on school visits to the Centre and cover all the key stages.

Questions Commonly Asked

Primary

- Do you have any special objects or words that help you in your religious practice?
- What might you have in your home to indicate that you are a Buddhist?
- In what way is the Buddhist Centre important to you?
- Do you have any daily/regular practices? Are these essential, or are they a matter of personal choice?
- Who was Buddha and why is he important to Buddhists?
- What do Buddhists understand about the afterlife?
- What do you believe about how the world began?
- Do Buddhists celebrate festivals?
- Is it easy for you to practice your faith in Britain?

Secondary

- What are your daily routines?
- What types of meditation are practised?
- What occurs during a puja?
- How important is the temple for Buddhists?
- What is the importance of chanting and mantras in worship?
- Can you show us some different Buddha rupas and talk about their meaning?

Information about Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds

Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds was founded in 1996 under the spiritual direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Our core aims are to promote wellbeing and meditation, in line with Buddhist principles, and to preserve the Buddhist Mahayana tradition, throughout the North of England and further afield.

As well as being an active community wellbeing hub, our centre in Holbeck, South Leeds, provides a peaceful place for meditation and a community of support for the study and practice of Buddhism and Wellbeing. We work with a number of local partners to promote wellbeing and mindfulness.

We offer weekly meditation classes, suitable for both beginners and people with meditation experience, and we run a dynamic programme of courses, talks and events. We run residential retreats three times a year and regular weekend group practice sessions, where we try to work more deeply on meditation techniques. Everyone's welcome to attend the classes and courses in our spiritual and wellbeing programmes.

We honour the work of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and we are affiliated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) which is part of the Gelugpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

We regularly host highly respected Buddhist teachers, both lay and ordained, from the FPMT network. As a registered charity, our aim is to make events available to anyone. While the majority of our students live in Leeds, Yorkshire and the North of England, we have students who travel to us from all over the UK. We also live stream and record events that we share on our YouTube channel.

About Buddhism

The Buddhist Yanas

There are three yanas or vehicles within Buddhism. The Hinayana which is Theravadan Buddhism which focusses on the very early works of the Buddha and places emphasis on self- liberation. This is mainly found in the far East. Then Mahayana Buddhism which is mainly found in Tibet and the West and expands the emphasis on liberating oneself to include all others too, it focusses on wisdom and compassion. Finally Vajrayana Buddhism which is also known as Tantric Buddhism and focusses on using direct experiences to liberation. Teachers within the latter two traditions advocate familiarity with all three yanas.

Jamyang is a Mahayana organisation and is part of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition. Within the Mahayana Tibetan tradition you also have 4 schools or lineages with unbroken chains of teachings having been passed down.. These are Nyingma (founded in 8th century), Kagyu (founded in the early 11th century) Sakya (founded in 1073) and Gelug (founded in 1409). Jamyang is part of the Gelug lineage of which the Dalai Lama is the head.

There is also Zen Buddhism and Nembutsu or Pure Land Buddhism and these derive from the expansion of the Buddhas teachings into Japan and the Far East.

What all of the teachings have in common is a belief in the four noble truths, the eightfold path, karma and the possibility of liberation from karma.

Who was the Buddha?

The founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, lived from approximately 566 to 480 BCE. The son of an Indian warrior-king, Gautama enjoyed all the privileges of his wealthy caste – but it did not bring him contentment. As a young man he searched for meaning in life. After encountering the 4 sights- an old man, an ill man, a corpse and an ascetic, Gautama understood that suffering underpinned life. He left his wife and son, renounced his princely title and became a monk, exchanging worldly possessions for a spiritual search for truth.

The culmination of his search came while meditating under a tree in Bodhgaya. He finally understood how to be free from suffering and to achieve liberation and enlightenment. Following this, Gautama was known as the Buddha, meaning the “Enlightened One.” He spent the next 50 years journeying about India, helping and teaching others.

What is the essence of Buddha’s teaching?

The **Four Noble Truths** are the essence of Buddha’s teachings. They are:

- the truth of suffering,
- the truth of the cause of suffering,
- the truth of the end of suffering, and
- the truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering.

Simply put, suffering exists; it has a cause; it has an end; and it has a cause to bring about its end. This emphasis on suffering does not mean that Buddhism dwells on a negative world view – it has a pragmatic perspective about the reality of what humanity faces. The concept of pleasure is accepted but needs to be recognised as fleeting and temporary. The pursuit of worldly happiness is unquenchable yet ultimately, only ageing, sickness, and death are certain.

The First Noble Truth identifies the presence of suffering.

The Second Noble Truth identifies the cause of suffering – desire and ignorance. By desire, Buddhists mean the craving for pleasure, material goods, and immortality, all of which are wants that can never be satisfied. As a result, desiring them brings suffering. By ignorance, Buddhists mean the way we don't understand the world as it actually is. Out of ignorance, we don't develop our capacity for concentration so our mind is left undeveloped, unable to grasp the true nature of things so greed, envy, hatred and anger develop.

The Third Noble Truth, the truth of the end of suffering, explains that there can be an end to suffering through achieving Enlightenment. Enlightenment is a transcendent state free from suffering and the worldly cycle of birth and rebirth.

The Fourth Noble truth explains the method for attaining the end of suffering which is the Noble Eightfold Path.

How can we end suffering?

Through perfecting the eightfold path which is:

1. Right Understanding,
2. Right Thought,
3. Right Speech,
4. Right Action,
5. Right Livelihood,
6. Right Effort,
7. Right Mindfulness and
8. Right Concentration.

What is karma?

Karma refers to the actions of body, speech and mind that a person does during his or her lifetime. Positive actions, such as generosity, righteousness, and meditation, bring about happiness in the long run. Negative actions, such as lying, stealing or killing, bring about unhappiness in the long term. The Buddhist interpretation of karma does not refer to preordained fate.

What is the cycle of rebirth?

The role of karma can be seen in the Buddhist explanation of the cycle of rebirth. Buddhist cosmology suggests that there are six realms into which any being can be reborn – three fortunate realms, and three unfortunate realms.

The inhabitants of the three unfortunate realms – the animal realm, the hungry ghost realm and the hell realm – suffer untold suffering. Those who create favourable, positive karma will take rebirth in one of the fortunate realms: the realm of demigods, the realm of gods, and the realm of humans. Although the demigods and gods enjoy pleasures, they suffer unceasing jealousy and envy.

Despite all the many difficulties involved in being born a human, the human realm is considered the most fortunate realm of rebirth. This is because it is only with a human rebirth that Enlightenment can be achieved. Given the number of living things, to be born human is, to Buddhists, a precious and rare opportunity.

Check List Prior to Online Event

I have emailed the students' questions to the centre one week in advance.

I have notified the Centre of any optional extras.

I have chosen specific students to ask specific questions.

I have the number of the Centre in case of delay/cancellation.

I have taken note of the rules on videoing permissions.

Checklist after the event

I have completed the feedback form

I have sent a donation

If you have any further questions, or you would like to arrange a visit to our centre, or an outreach visit to your school then please email eduvisits@jamyangleeds.co.uk and we would be happy to help.



Clyde Works, Ingram Road, Leeds, LS11 9RQ Tel: 0113 345 2626 Email:

eduvisits@jamyangleeds.co.uk/smile@jamyangleeds.co.uk Website: www.jamyangleeds.co.uk

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