

## Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

**Programme: SYBA**

**Subject: Philosophy**

**Paper Code: PIC 104**

**Paper Title: World Religions: Concepts and Practices II**

**Unit: 2**

**Module Name: Dharma and Sangha**

**Module No: 8**

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### Notes

The learning outcome for this module are as below;

1. Students will be able to illustrate philosophical teaching in the religion of Buddhism.
2. Students will be able to justify the importance of three jewels in Buddhism.
3. Students will be able to create and design an ethically-intellectual and practically rational existential living by interpreting the true concepts of *Dharma* and *Sangha* of Buddhism.
4. Students will be able to articulate the different eight fold paths to lead a contented and satisfactory living.
  - Buddhism as Philosophical School:

As philosophy Buddhism has vast literature in the form of 'Tripitakas' means "three baskets of knowledge". This ethical-intellectual knowledge worldly truths leads to accept the path of liberation and free from sufferings. Buddhists take refuge in three different expressions of awakened mind: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Each of these is a precious and necessary element of the Buddhist path, and so they are called the three jewels. This refers, first, to the historical Buddha,

the original teacher. cause to worldly sufferings. He never discussed metaphysical and epistemological issues.

He wasn't a God but a human being or a teacher whose principles became the examples to follow the path of enlightenment. It also means committing yourself to achieving 'Buddhahood' or Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. It means that you aim to become someone who sees the nature of reality absolutely clearly, just as it is, and lives fully and naturally in accordance with that vision. This is the goal of the Buddhist spiritual life, representing the end of suffering for anyone who attains it.

- Dharma:

The Buddhist dharma starts with the fundamental truths that the Buddha himself taught—the four noble truths, the three marks of existence, the eightfold path, etc.—and includes the vast body of Buddhist teachings that have been developed in the 2,600 years since then. It's worth noting that the Sanskrit word dharma also means a thing or object in the conventional sense. In either case, the word denotes a basic law or truth of reality.

The Buddha's sermons and teachings pointed toward the true nature of the universe, what is known within Buddhism as the Dharma. He gave his first sermon on the outskirts of the city of Varanasi at a deer park called Sarnath. This first sermon presents an overview of suffering and the way out of suffering. It is called the "Four Noble Truths." The Buddha is often described as a physician who first diagnoses an illness and then suggests a medicine to cure the illness. The "Four Noble Truths" follow this pattern:

1. Life involves suffering, *Duhkha*: The "illness" that the Buddha diagnosed as the human condition is *duhkha*, a term often rendered in English as "suffering" or "not satisfactoriness." The Buddha spoke of three types of *duhkha*. First, there is the ordinary suffering of mental and physical pain. Second, there is the suffering produced by change, the simple fact that all things including happy feelings and blissful states are impermanent, as is life itself. Third, there is suffering produced by the failure to recognize that no "I" stands alone, but everything and everyone, including what we call our "self," is conditioned and interdependent.

2. Suffering is caused by desire and grasping: The Buddha saw that the impulse to crave, desire, or grasp something one doesn't have is the principal cause of suffering. Because of the impermanence and continuous change of all that we call "reality," the attempt to hold on to it is as doomed to frustration as the attempt to stake out a piece of a river.

3. There is a way out of suffering: This is the good news of the Dharma. It is possible to put an end to ego-centered desire, to put an end to *dukkha* and thus attain freedom from the perpetual sense of "not satisfactoriness."

4. The way is the "Noble Eightfold Path": To develop this freedom one must practice habits of ethical conduct, thought, and meditation that enable one to move along the path. These eight habits include:

- Right understanding: Truly and deeply knowing, for example, that unwholesome acts and thoughts have consequences, as do wholesome acts and thoughts.
- Right intention: Recognizing that actions are shaped by habits of anger and self-centeredness, or by habits of compassion, understanding, and love.
- Right speech: Recognizing the moral implications of speech; truthfulness.
- Right action: Observing the five precepts at the foundation of all morality: not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct, not lying, and not clouding the mind with intoxicants.
- Right livelihood: Earning a living in ways that are consonant with the basic precepts.
- Right effort: Cultivating this way of living with the attention, the patience, and the perseverance that it takes to cultivate a field.
- Right mindfulness: Developing "presence of mind" through the moment-to-moment awareness of meditation practice, including mindfulness of breathing, mindfulness of walking, and mindfulness of bodily sensations.
- Right concentration: Developing the ability to bring the dispersed and distracted mind and heart to a center, a focus, and to see clearly through that focused mind and heart.

Sangha:

The third of the Three Jewels is the *Sangha* or the spiritual community. The term *Sangha* has traditionally referred to monastics and *arhats* in whom lay practitioners take refuge. This has changed in the West, where *Sangha* has come to mean the community of Buddhist practitioners generally, both monastic and lay. More broadly '*sangha*' also refers to the people with whom we share our spiritual lives.

We need the guidance of personal teachers who are further along the path than we are, and the support and friendship of other practitioners. This is very important because Buddhism is not an abstract philosophy or creed; it is a way of approaching life and therefore it only has any meaning when it is embodied in people. And in the broadest sense the *Sangha* means all of the Buddhists in the world, and all those of the past and of the future. Beyond this, the ideals of Buddhism find their embodiment in archetypal figures known as Bodhisattvas.

For example, *Avalokitesvara* is the embodiment of Compassion, and he is depicted with four, eight, or a thousand arms with which he seeks to help all living beings. *Manjusri* is the embodiment of Wisdom and he is depicted carrying a sword with which he cuts through ignorance. Together the Bodhisattvas and the other enlightened teachers are known as the *Arya Sangha* or community of the Noble Ones.