

CULTIVATING LASTING HAPPINESS

What Buddhism and Science Have to Say about It

Introduction

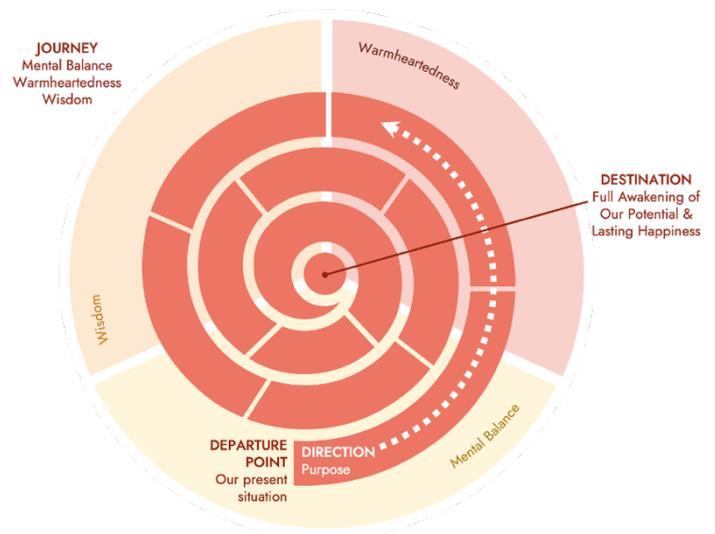
What is it that we all are pursuing? Do we succeed in it? Should we explore more carefully and wisely how to fulfill our deepest yearnings? How could we contribute to others' happiness as well?

We will explore such questions from an experiential point of view, using both scientific and Buddhist knowledge of the mind and meditation, in a journey that may translate into increasing lasting happiness and a positive impact on oneself, others, and the world.

The Journey

“Cultivating Lasting Happiness” gradually unfolds within its sessions as a journey:

1. A universal need: Exploring the common ground that we all want to find happiness and overcome suffering, and initial techniques to balance body and mind.
2. Are we pursuing happiness in the best way? An exploration from the Buddhist Four Truths and probing into common ways to pursue happiness—are we succeeding?
3. Following the scent of lasting happiness: Establishing meaningful directions and ways to cultivate lasting happiness and activate our potential.
4. Meditation and mind training: Presenting the tools.
5. Balancing the mind: Using the tools to cultivate the fundamental qualities of equanimity, a caring attitude towards oneself and others, compassion and wisdom.
6. Warmheartedness and wisdom as a source of lasting happiness: Applying the tools to activate our potential for the benefit of oneself and others.



A Part of the “Buddhist Mind Science: Activating our Potential” Course

As interest in meditation in the modern world grows, the FPMT Wisdom Culture offers the introductory course “Cultivating Lasting Happiness”, the first of a series of modules under the name “Buddhist Mind Science: Activating our Potential”, that focuses on meditation and the mind to provide insight and practical techniques on meditation, the mechanisms of suffering and happiness, finding mental balance, and how to discover and develop our potential for compassion and wisdom. The presentation is in harmony with a comparative modern scientific perspective, and includes references to current scientific understanding.

The entire course follows a gradual approach, in which topics are introduced in sequence to be explored, each subsequently embedded in the wider framework of the understanding of mind as presented in Buddhism, and it is intended to suit both new and experienced students alike. It has a strong component of practice, with a strong experiential approach and emphasis of transforming daily life in meaningful ways.

It consists of seven 9-hour modules:

1. Cultivating lasting happiness: What Buddhism and Science have to say about it, focuses on an exploration of what leads to dissatisfaction and suffering, and what to happiness for oneself and others. It gives a general foundation that is further developed in the following modules.

2. Transforming the mind to cultivate lasting happiness, focuses on meditation and emotions.
3. Getting to know your mind, focuses on the mind.
4. Gradual paths to lasting happiness, focuses on presenting the Buddhist paths.
5. Wise paths to the heart, focuses on warmheartedness.
6. The nature of perception, focuses on wisdom.
7. Embodying the gradual path, focuses on engaged warmheartedness and wisdom.

There are multiple entry points to the course: all modules can be engaged as stand-alone courses, so that students can engage at any point, and conclude each one with a sense of completion. Modules 1 to 3 have a broad approach that aims to gradually accompany students to develop an interest in the Buddhist path and techniques, which are further developed in Modules 4 to 7. Each module consists of six 1.5 hour sessions (9 hours) that include check-ins, explanations, group and individual exercises, reflection, debate, and meditational practices. They are designed to be hosted in the centers either on a weekly basis or as weekend courses, onsite or online.

Details include:

- Intended to address the needs of modern students, with a fact-based approach to the study of the mind and meditation
- Develops in a gradual approach with emphasis on practical integration in daily life
- Focuses on both Buddhist and scientific perspectives of the mind and meditation, in dialogue in the fields of meditation, the mind, compassion, or well-being, amongst others
- Intended to provide meditation techniques to help people have more meaningful, beneficial, and happier lives
- It develops in spirals, in which the same topics are revisited at different points along the journey that allow for a gradual deepening, understanding and integration
- Designed for people who may or may not have experience with secular or other forms of meditation
- Provides useful perspectives and tools for both new and experienced students alike
- Intended to stimulate the interest of people who may not initially have interest in Buddhism
- Designed to inspire to continue to study and practice through Discovering Buddhism (if they haven't already), Exploring Buddhism, and perhaps eventually BP and MP
- It provides a Course Manual for students and facilitators with readings, exercises and meditations, and a Facilitator Guide with tips and training materials
- It is very versatile, including optional and alternative activities so that the teacher can choose depending on the audience
- Some of the activities can be put together to offer short introductory workshops in settings other than the centers, so that a broader community can be benefited from them (for instance, professionals, families, specific groups in need, corporations, etc.)
- The course will benefit from input from experienced teachers, as the pilots develop

At the moment, we are offering Module 1 "Cultivating Lasting Happiness" as a pilot run. The other modules will become available at a later date.

May it be beneficial for as many sentient beings as possible.