

NITARTHA INSTITUTE

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*2024 Shedra Course Catalog*



*[www.nitarthainstitute.org](http://www.nitarthainstitute.org)*

NITARTHA INSTITUTE

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2023 SHEDRA  
COURSE CATALOG





## OUR GOAL

The primary goal of NITARTHA INSTITUTE is to provide students with a systematic foundation in the central teachings of the Buddhist tradition. The Institute upholds the importance of non-sectarianism and appreciation of the many forms of Buddhism, and thus, students of any background are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The shedra curriculum is devoted to the in-depth study of the Buddhist view and to the contemplative practices through which students can engage these teachings and apply them to their experience. The curriculum is delivered by Nitartha Institute's Office of Academic Affairs

through its four academic departments, which are based on the five traditional sciences (*pañcavidyā*) that are taught at Nālandā University in India:



The curriculum is offered through a number of formats, including residential and online, intensive and semester courses, as well as Self-Paced Online Courses. The Summer Institute is a month-long intensive program that joins Mahamudra meditation and study. This varied, flexible approach to the course scheduling allows students to proceed through the foundation and intermediate levels at a pace that is suitable for them.

For the current offerings, check the Nitartha Institute website ([nitarthainstitute.org](http://nitarthainstitute.org)). For more information about Nitartha Institute:

Nitartha Institute

[nitarthainstitute.org](http://nitarthainstitute.org)

Shedra Courses

[courses.nitarthainstitute.org](http://courses.nitarthainstitute.org)

Email

[info@nitarthainstitute.org](mailto:info@nitarthainstitute.org)

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SECTION I.

# BUDDHIST STUDIES

## SCIENCE OF VALID COGNITION AND THE INNER SCIENCE OF MIND

Of the five traditional sciences taught at Nālandā, the DEPARTMENT OF BUDDHIST STUDIES (BUD) teaches the Inner Science of Mind (*adhyātma vidyā*) and the Science of Valid Cognition (*hetu vidyā*).

# BUDDHIST STUDIES CURRICULUM OUTLINE

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The Buddhist studies curricula at Nitartha Institute consists of the foundation, intermediate and advanced levels.

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THE FOUNDATION CURRICULUM presents the views of the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika philosophical systems of foundational Buddhism.

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THE INTERMEDIATE CURRICULUM trains in the Mahāyana philosophical systems of Cittamātra and Madhyamaka as well as the Tathāgatagarbha tradition and the exposition of the path to enlightenment.

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THE ADVANCED CURRICULUM features the in-depth study of primary texts selected from the Eight Great Treatises of Sūtra and Tantra in the Kagyü school and the Thirteen Core Indian Buddhist Treaties in the Nyingma school. The Advanced Curriculum is classified according to the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma. By coupling courses on the view with debate training, the entire scope of the sūtra-based Buddhist Studies is covered at Nitartha Institute. This consists of the following curricular levels:



- » Foundation Curriculum—Core
- » Foundation Curriculum—Debate
- » Intermediate Curriculum—Core
- » Intermediate Curriculum—Debate
- » Advanced Curriculum—First Turning
- » Advanced Curriculum—Second Turning
- » Advanced Curriculum—Third Turning

The comprehensive, graduated nature of the curriculum is combined with an experiential approach in both traditional and western styles of instruction, which includes analytical meditation, debate, discussion groups and active interaction with the faculty and students. This type of engagement with the living lineage of scholarship makes Nitartha Institute unique among the institutions that offer studies in Buddhist philosophy.

## LECTURES, ANALYTICAL MEDITATION AND DEBATE

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Nitartha Institute delivers its curriculum through methods unique to the tradition of shedra education: lectures, analytical meditation and debate.

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LECTURES consist of presentations and discussion groups, which are methods for cultivating the wisdom that arises from hearing—the first of the three *prajñās*. Students are trained in the art of listening, that is, the ability to receive the lecture content from the instructor in its entirety and impartially, without interference by judgmental mind. In this way, students allow for a new opening to emerge on their journey of learning, for an opportunity to genuinely learn something new. The function of discussion groups at Nitartha is to allow for formulating questions that further clarify the lectures and deepen comprehension on the level of the first *prajñā*.

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ANALYTICAL MEDITATION is a method for cultivating the second *prajñā*—the wisdom arising from contemplation. Once the teaching is received through hearing, Nitartha students are trained to examine the validity of the view

in the lab of analytical meditation: exploring the assertions, gaining confidence in the view and making it part of one's own inner being, and integrating it into life. The result of the training in analytical meditation is to gain unshakable certainty in the view of definitive meaning—*nitartha*.

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DEBATE is another method for cultivating the wisdom that arises from contemplation. Nitartha debate uses a strict logical form that is practiced in the Buddhist universities of India and Tibet, and translated into English and other languages. This form allows for cultivating clarity in the debaters' verbal expression while utilizing a minimal number of words, thereby limiting discursive speech. Once the students acquire the intricacies of the debate form, they are amazed to possess a tool that allows them to explore the diverse aspects of the Buddhist view with clarity and precision not experienced before.

## CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION

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In order to complete a Nitartha course for Institute credit, the student must register for the particular course, attend and actively participate in the lectures and class discussions and submit the final written exam or perform the final debate presentation. Once a certain sequence of courses is completed, Nitartha credit students are awarded a certificate of completion. Nitartha Institute issues seven certificates of completion.

- » Foundation Curriculum Certificate of Completion
- » Foundation Debate Certificate of Completion
- » Intermediate Curriculum Certificate of Completion
- » Intermediate Debate Certificate of Completion
- » Advanced Curriculum First Turning Certificate of Completion
- » Advanced Curriculum Second Turning Certificate of Completion
- » Advanced Curriculum Third Turning Certificate of Completion

Nitartha Institute issues certificates of completion for the foundation shedra and debate curricula, the intermediate shedra and debate curricula, and each of the seven treatises in the core advanced curriculum.

The courses in the foundation, intermediate, and advanced curricula are to be taken in sequence as detailed below. Non-credit students who wish to take Nitartha courses may contact the instructor of a specific course to inquire about a waiver of prerequisites.

## FOUNDATION CURRICULUM

The Foundation Curriculum serves as the entryway to the study of Buddhist philosophy. It consists of the *core* and *debate curricula* as well as training in *analytical meditation*.

### *Foundation Curriculum—Core*

The core of the Foundation Curriculum consists of the series of four Mind and Its World courses. As indicated by the title, the Mind and Its World series explores the inquiring mind and its world and formulates a contemplative worldview based on introspection. It is based on three introductory shedra textbooks—*Collected Topics*, *Classifications of Mind* and the *Gateway for Fresh Minds*—which, in due order, present phenomenology, epistemology and

ontology of foundational Buddhism, and serve as primers for the Buddhist philosophical training.

The Nitartha Institute Foundation Curriculum Certificate of Completion is awarded upon completion of these four core foundation courses and the Clear Thinking course:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| BUD 501 | Mind and Its World I:<br>Valid Cognition   |
| BUD 502 | Clear Thinking   |
| BUD 510 | Mind and Its World II:<br>Modes of Engagement                                    |
| BUD 520 | Mind and Its World III:<br>Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika<br>Philosophical Tradition |
| BUD 530 | Mind and Its World IV:<br>Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika Path                        |

Students should first take BUD 501. After that, we recommend that students take the remaining courses in sequential order, but they may request to take them in another order if that is better for their schedules, especially if they are combining in-person and online courses.

## *Foundation Curriculum—Debate*

The Foundation Debate Curriculum offers a gradual training in the skills needed for the performance of the art of formal debate. It consists of the Clear Thinking course followed by three foundation debate courses. The Clear Thinking course provides the content for performing debates (the definienda and definitions) based on the *Collected Topics* root text. The three subsequent foundation debate courses gradually teach the debate form. Upon completion of these four foundation debate courses, the Nitartha Institute Foundation Debate Certificate of Completion is awarded:

BUD 502	Clear Thinking
BUD 553	Collected Topics Debate I
BUD 554	Collected Topics Debate II
BUD 555	Collected Topics Debate III

## INTERMEDIATE CURRICULUM

Nitartha's Intermediate Curriculum continues to lay the ground for the in-depth study of the great Indian treatises and their commentaries by the Kagyü and Nyingma masters. It consists of four core curriculum courses and four intermediate debate courses.

## *Intermediate Curriculum—Core*

The core of the Intermediate Curriculum consists of four courses summarizing the ground, path and fruition of the Mahāyāna: Cittamātra, Madhyamaka, Paths and Bhūmis and Buddha Nature.

Upon completion of these four intermediate core courses, the Nitartha Institute Intermediate Curriculum Certificate of Completion is awarded:

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|---------|--|
| BUD 601 | Cittamātra Philosophical Tradition:<br>Appearances Are Mere Mind |
| BUD 610 | Madhyamaka Philosophical Tradition:<br>Not Even a Middle         |
| BUD 620 | Paths and Bhūmis:<br>The Path to Enlightenment                   |
| BUD 630 | Buddha Nature:<br>Luminous Heart of the Tathāgata                |

It is recommended that students take all four intermediate courses in the order listed above, although Buddha Nature is often taken before Paths and Bhūmis. Moreover, it is permissible to take the other courses out of order to meet individual scheduling needs.



## *Intermediate Curriculum—Debate*

The four courses of intermediate debate consist of debating the views of the four Buddhist philosophical traditions—Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Cittamātra and Madhyamaka—within the boundaries of individual systems as well as between them, and enacting the great debates that the tradition has preserved. Upon completion of these four intermediate debate courses, the Nitartha Institute Intermediate Debate Certificate of Completion is awarded:

BUD 653	Vaibhāṣika Debate
BUD 654	Sautrāntika Debate
BUD 655	Cittamātra Debate
BUD 656	Madhyamaka Debate

## ADVANCED CURRICULUM

With a firm basis in the Buddhist philosophical views acquired in the foundation and intermediate levels, Nitartha's Advanced Curriculum represents the actual study of the principal Indian śāstras, with authoritative commentaries by leading Kagyü and Nyingma masters. It consists of the Core Advanced Curriculum and the Extended Advanced Curriculum.

The Core Advanced Curriculum is aligned with each of the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma. The advanced courses do not need to be taken in sequential order.

### *Advanced Curriculum—First Turning*

The four first-turning courses in Nitartha's Advanced Curriculum present an in-depth study of two treatises: *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu and *Pramānavārttika* by Dharmakīrti, which constitute the cornerstone of the shedra studies. Upon completion of these four courses, the Nitartha Institute Advanced Curriculum First Turning Certificate of Completion is awarded:

BUD 681	Abhidharmakośa I: Treasury of Abhidharma
BUD 682	Abhidharmakośa II: Treasury of Abhidharma
BUD 690	Pramānavārttika I: Commentary on Valid Cognition
BUD 691	Pramānavārttika II: Commentary on Valid Cognition

## *Advanced Curriculum—Second Turning*

The eight second-turning courses in Advanced Curriculum present an in-depth study of two seminal Mahāyāna treatises of the shedra studies: *Madhyamakāvatāra* by Candrakīrti and *Abhisamayālamkāra* by Maitreya. Upon completion of these eight courses, the Nitartha Institute Advanced Curriculum Second Turning Certificate of Completion is awarded:

BUD 700	Madhyamakāvatāra I: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 701	Madhyamakāvatāra II: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 702	Madhyamakāvatāra III: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 703	Madhyamakāvatāra IV: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 710	Abhisamayālamkāra I: Ornament of Clear Realization
BUD 711	Abhisamayālamkāra II: Ornament of Clear Realization
BUD 712	Abhisamayālamkāra III: Ornament of Clear Realization

BUD 713            Abhisamayālamkāra IV:  
Ornament of Clear Realization

### *Advanced Curriculum—Third Turning*

The three third-turning courses in Nitartha’s Advanced Curriculum consist of the in-depth study of three treatises by Maitreya: *Madhyāntavibhāga*, *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* and the *Uttaratantra*, as well as sūtras of the third turning. Upon completion of these three courses, the Nitartha Institute Advanced Curriculum Third Turning Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 760            Madhyāntavibhāga:  
Distinction between the  
Middle and Extremes
- BUD 770            Dharmadharmatāvibhāga:  
Distinction between Phenomena and  
the Nature of Phenomena
- BUD 780            Uttaratantra & Sūtras of the  
Third Turning: The Highest Continuum

### *Extended Advanced Curriculum*

Nitartha Institute is committed to the transmission of the entire breadth of the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of scholarship. The Institute will continually teach new advanced

texts of the Indian tradition related to all three turnings, with their Tibetan commentaries.

The Extended Advanced Curriculum courses are not required for earning any of the advanced curriculum certificates of completion, but are part of the training for students who aspire to be authorized as Nitartha Institute faculty.

# BUDDHIST STUDIES DEPARTMENT COURSE LISTING

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## FOUNDATION CURRICULUM—CORE

- BUD 501      Mind and Its World I:  
Valid Cognition
- BUD 510      Mind and Its World II:  
Modes of Engagement
- BUD 520      Mind and Its World III:  
Vaibhāśika and Sautrāntika  
Philosophical Traditions
- BUD 530      Mind and Its World IV:  
Vaibhāśika and Sautrāntika Path

## FOUNDATION CURRICULUM—ELECTIVES

- BUD 500      Analytical Meditation I
- BUD 540      Classifications of Reasons

## FOUNDATION CURRICULUM—DEBATE

- BUD 502      Clear Thinking
- BUD 553      Collected Topics Debate I

BUD 554 Collected Topics Debate II

BUD 555 Collected Topics Debate III

## INTERMEDIATE CURRICULUM—CORE

BUD 601 Cittamātra Philosophical Tradition:  
Appearances Are Mere Mind

BUD 610 Madhyamaka Philosophical Tradition:  
Not Even a Middle

BUD 620 Paths and Bhūmis:  
The Path to Enlightenment

BUD 630 Buddha Nature:  
Luminous Heart of the Tathāgata

## INTERMEDIATE CURRICULUM—ELECTIVES

BUD 600 Analytical Meditation II

## INTERMEDIATE CURRICULUM—DEBATE

BUD 653 Vaibhāṣika Debate

BUD 654 Sautrāntika Debate

BUD 655 Cittamātra Debate

BUD 656 Madhyamaka Debate

## ADVANCED CURRICULUM—FIRST TURNING

- BUD 681      Abhidharmakośa I:  
Treasury of Abhidharma
- BUD 682      Abhidharmakośa II:  
Treasury of Abhidharma
- BUD 690      Pramānavārttika I:  
Commentary on Valid Cognition
- BUD 691      Pramānavārttika II:  
Commentary on Valid Cognition

## ADVANCED CURRICULUM— SECOND TURNING

- BUD 700      Madhyamakāvatāra I:  
Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 701      Madhyamakāvatāra II:  
Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 702      Madhyamakāvatāra III:  
Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 703      Madhyamakāvatāra IV:  
Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 710      Abhisamayālamkāra I:  
Ornament of Clear Realization



- BUD 711      Abhisamayālamkāra II:  
Ornament of Clear Realization
- BUD 712      Abhisamayālamkāra III:  
Ornament of Clear Realization
- BUD 713      Abhisamayālamkāra IV:  
Ornament of Clear Realization

## ADVANCED CURRICULUM—THIRD TURNING

- BUD 760      Madhyāntavibhāga:  
Distinction between the Middle  
and Extremes
- BUD 770      Dharmadharmatāvibhāga:  
Distinction between Phenomena and  
the Nature of Phenomena
- BUD 780      Uttarantra & Sūtras of the Third  
Turning: The Highest Continuum

## EXTENDED ADVANCED CURRICULUM

- BUD 692      Treasury on Valid Cognition  
and Reasoning
- BUD 704      Catuhśataka:  
Four Hundred Verses

BUD 705	Madhyamakālamkāra: Ornament to the Middle Way
BUD 706	Bodhicāryāvatāra: Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life
BUD 707	Madhyamaka Śāstra: The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way
BUD 714	Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra: Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sutras
BUD 761	Samḍhinirmocana Sūtra
BUD 771	Treatise on the Distinction between Consciousness and Wisdom
BUD 781	Dharmadhātustava: In Praise of Dharmadhātu
BUD 796	Beacon of Certainty
BUD 797	Distinguishing the Views and Philosophies: A Lamp of Essential Points
BUD 798	Entering the Way of the Great Vehicle

# BUDDHIST STUDIES DEPARTMENT COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

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## BUD 500      ANALYTICAL MEDITATION I

This course is a systematic training in the meditation of special insight following the approach of the Abhidharma tradition. Students learn the skills to gain certainty in the view of selflessness through the practice of the Four Applications of Mindfulness, cultivating inferential wisdom and bringing it to personal experience.

Prerequisite:                      BUD 501

Required texts:                None

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## BUD 501      MIND AND ITS WORLD I: VALID COGNITION

This course is an introductory exposition of topics drawn from the Pramāna tradition, based on the *Classifications of Mind* root text. Students explore the criteria for the validity of cognition, the fourfold classification of direct valid cognition, seeming direct cognition and non-valid cognition.

Prerequisites:                    None

Required texts:

- » Root text: *Classifications of Mind (Lorik)*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
  - » *Mind & Its World 1 Sourcebook*, Nitartha Institute Publications
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BUD 502

## CLEAR THINKING

This course is an introductory exposition of knowable objects drawn from the Abhidhama tradition, based on *Collected Topics* root text. Students learn methods for thinking clearly by formulating definitions, examples, equivalents and classifications, and by exploring the four types of logical relationships between two phenomena.

Prerequisites:           None

Required texts:

- » Root text: *Collected Topics (Düdra)*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Clear Thinking Workbook*, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 510

## MIND AND ITS WORLD II: MODES OF ENGAGEMENT

This course completes the introductory exposition of topics drawn from the Pramāna and Abhidhama traditions, based on the *Classifications of Mind* and *Collected Topics* root text. It provides students with the tools for delineating conceptual and non-conceptual mind in meditation, known as the essential modes of engagement of mind.

Prerequisite: BUD 501

Required texts:

- » Root text: *Classifications of Mind (Lorik)*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » Root text: *Collected Topics (Düdra)*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Mind & Its World 2 Sourcebook*, Nitartha Institute Publications

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BUD 520

## MIND AND ITS WORLD III: VAIBHĀŚIKA AND SAUTRĀNTIKA PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

This course is an exposition view of foundational Buddhism from the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika philosophical

traditions, based on the *The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds* root text. Students explore foundational classifications of knowable objects: the five bases, five aggregates, twelve sources, eighteen constituents, and the presentation of causation from the Vaiśhāṣika philosophical system followed by the Sautrantika presentation classifying all knowable objects into specifically and generally characterized phenomena, based on our experience and then a comparison of the two views.

Prerequisite: BUD 501

Required texts:

- » Root text: *The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds (Truptha)*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Acharya Kelsang Wangdi, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » Root text: *Collected Topics (Düdra)*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » Root text: *Classifications of Mind (Lorik)*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Mind & Its World 3 Sourcebook*, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 530

MIND AND ITS WORLD IV:  
VAIBHĀŚIKA AND  
SAUTRĀNTIKA PATH

This course is a presentation of the path and result of foundational Buddhism as found in the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika philosophical traditions, based on *The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds* root text. The path consists of calm abiding and superior insight. Key topics such as the 4 Realities, the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness, the 12 links of dependent origination, and the 37 branches of enlightenment will be discussed. Each topic will have an experiential component of analytical meditation.

Prerequisite: BUD 501

Required texts:

- » Root text: *The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds (Truptha)*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Acharya Kelsang Wangdi, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Mind & Its World 4 Sourcebook*, Nitartha Institute Publications

This course presents an overview of the theory of Buddhist logic that underlies the practice of Buddhist debate, based on *The Presentation of the Classifications of Reasons* root text. Students study definitions and classifications of correct and seeming reasons and formulate example reasonings for each of their types. The course concludes with the exposition of genuine reality that transcends negations and proofs.

Prerequisites: BUD 501, BUD 502

Required texts:

- » Root Text: *The Presentation of the Classifications of Reasons (Tarik)*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtsö Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Commentary on The Presentation of the Classifications of Reasons*, by Acharya Sherab Gyaltsen, Nitartha Institute Publications

This course offers a methodical training in elementary debate skills on the basis of the Clear Thinking course. Students train in formulating reasonings with correct and



seeming reasons and utilize them in debate by learning how to challenge the first mode. The debate content consists of the classification of objects in terms of entity from *Collected Topics*.

Prerequisites: BUD 502

Required texts: None

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BUD 554

## COLLECTED TOPICS DEBATE II

This course continues the methodical training in elementary debate skills on the basis of the Collected Topics Debate I course. Students learn how to challenge the second mode, study the debate strategies of the challenger and the defender and how to bring a debate to completion. The debate content consists of the classification of objects in terms of entity and the classification of mind into primary minds and mental events.

Prerequisite: BUD 553

Required texts: None

BUD 555

### COLLECTED TOPICS DEBATE III

This course trains in enhancing debate skills on the basis of the skills acquired in the Collected Topics Debate I and II courses. This includes bringing absurd consequences into debate as a technique and mastering the shorter form of formulating reasoning and modes challenge. The debate content consists of classification of objects in terms of entity, the methods that lead to cognition of objects, classification of things in terms of function and classification of objects the way they are taken as objects.

Prerequisite: BUD 554

Required texts: None

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BUD 600

### ANALYTICAL MEDITATION II

This course is a systematic training in the meditation of special insight in the tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The students learn the skills to gain certainty in the view of emptiness through the practice of the Four Mahāyāna Yogas, cultivating inferential wisdom and bringing it to personal experience.

Prerequisite: BUD 601

Required texts: None

BUD 601

CITTAMĀTRA PHILOSOPHICAL  
TRADITION: APPEARANCES ARE  
MERE MIND

This course is an exposition of the Cittamātra philosophical tradition, based on *The Mind Only Tenet System* root text. Students engage in the philosophical reformulation of experience arising from meditation practice, declaring reasonings that establish objects as not separate from mind. This is followed by the presentation of the true and false aspectarians and the classification of knowable objects into the three natures, as well as the theory of the eight-fold collection of consciousness.

Prerequisites:           BUD 501, BUD 510,  
                                  BUD 520, BUD 530

Required texts:

- » Root text: *The Mind Only Tenet System* (*Semtsam*), by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Mind Only Tenet System Sourcebook*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 610

## MADHYAMAKA PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION: NOT EVEN A MIDDLE

This course is an exposition of the Middle Way philosophical tradition based on Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé's presentation of Madhyamaka in his *Treasury of Knowledge* root text. Students explore the presentation of the two realities and cultivate certainty in the view of the emptiness of all phenomena by examining the five great Madhyamaka reasonings, which are set forth in terms of the commonalities and differences between the Consequentialist and Autonomist systems. The course is completed by the exposition of the basis, path and result of Madhyamaka.

Prerequisites: BUD 501, BUD 510,  
BUD 520, BUD 530

Required text:

- » *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2004, Snow Lion Publications

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BUD 620

## PATHS AND BHŪMIS: THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT

This course is an exposition of the Buddhist path based on *The Presentation of Bhumis, Paths & Results* in the *Treasury*

of *Knowledge* root text. Students learn what is necessary for entering and progressing on the path and what the goal of spiritual journey is, through exploring the five paths, the ten bodhisattva bhūmis, as well as the result: nirvana, kāyas, wisdoms and enlightened activity.

Prerequisites:            BUD 501, BUD 510,  
                                  BUD 520, BUD 530,  
                                  BUD 601, BUD 610,  
                                  BUD 630

Required texts:

- » Root text: *The Presentation of Bhūmis, Paths & Results in the Treasury of Knowledge (Salam)*, by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Commentary on The Presentation of Paths Bhūmis, & Results in the Causal Vehicle of Characteristics from the Treasury of Knowledge* by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications

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BUD 630

## BUDDHA NATURE: LUMINOUS HEART OF THE TATHĀGATA

This course is an exposition of the Tathāgatagarbha philosophical tradition, based on the *The Mahayana Uttaratantra*

*Shastra: Fourth Vajra Point* root text. Students cultivate certainty in the view of Buddha nature—the essence of awakening present in all beings. The *Fourth Vajra Point* of the *Uttaratantra* establishes Buddha nature through three reasonings, its ten aspects, nine analogies and five reasons why it is necessary to teach it.

Prerequisites: BUD 501, BUD 510,  
BUD 520, BUD 530

Required texts:

- » *Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra* by Arya Maitreya, Translated by Rosemarie Fuchs, Snow Lion Publications.
- » *Commentary on the Fourth Vajra Point in the Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra* by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications

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BUD 653      VAIBHĀṢIKA DEBATE

This intermediate debate course trains in formally debating the tenets of the Vaibhāṣika philosophical tradition. Debate topics in this class consist of the refutation of the creator god as well as the refutation of personal identity using the seven-fold analysis of the chariot.

Prerequisite: BUD 555

Required texts: None

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## BUD 654 SAUTRĀNTIKA DEBATE

This intermediate debate course trains in formally debating the tenets of the Sautrāntika philosophical tradition. Debate topics in this class center around the proof of subtle impermanence—the reason of non-dependency that proves that entities do not rely on another cause for their momentary cessation other than their own dependently arisen appearance.

Prerequisite: BUD 653

Required texts: None

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## BUD 655 CITTAMĀTRA DEBATE

This intermediate debate course trains in formally debating the tenets of Cittamātra—the Mind Only Mahāyāna philosophical school. From the true aspectarian view, students ascertain non-separation through the reason of definitive simultaneous observation, reason refuting arising of something similar, the reason of no connection and the reason refuting partless particles. From the false aspectarian

view, debaters formulate reasonings refuting the existence of aspects.

Prerequisite: BUD 654

Required texts: None

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## BUD 656 MADHYAMAKA DEBATE

This intermediate course is the introduction to Madhyamaka debate. Students enact the historical debates of the Middle Way masters with other philosophical schools—Buddhist and non-Buddhist—using the five great reasonings that analyze the cause, the result, both cause and result, the essence and mere appearance. Students train in utilizing different types of reasons of non-observation and work with the four uncommon reasonings of the Madhyamikas as presented in the *Treasury of Knowledge*: inference within the common consensus of others, consequences that expose contradictions, analogous applicability of the opponent’s reason and non-application of the means of proof due to its sameness with the probandum.

Prerequisite: BUD 655

Required texts: None



## ABHIDHARMAKOŚA I: TREASURY OF ABHIDHARMA

This course is an in-depth study of *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu (ca. 4th century)—the seminal work of the Buddhist Abhidharma tradition—based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students explore the first four chapters, covering topics of phenomenology—the skandhas, āyatanas, dhātus, and faculties; the truth of suffering—the outer vessel (the world) and its inner content (sentient beings); and karma—from which the world and its beings arise.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *Overview of the Abhidharmakosha*, by Acharya Kelsang Wangdi, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Ornament of Abhidharma: A Commentary on Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa* by Chim Jampalyang, translated by Ian James Coghlan, 2019, Wisdom Publications
- » *Jewels from the Treasury: Vasubandhu's Verses on the Treasury of Abhidharma and Its Commentary Youthful Play* by the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, translated by David Karma Choephel, 2012, KTD Publications

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu (ca. 4th century)—a seminal work of the Buddhist Abhidharma tradition based on the commentary by the Eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students explore the last four chapters, covering topics of mental afflictions, the path of relinquishing afflictions, wisdoms gained on the path and absorptions—from which the wisdoms arise.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *Ornament of Abhidharma: A Commentary on Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa* by Chim Jampalyang, translated by Ian James Coghlan, 2019, Wisdom Publications
- » *Jewels from the Treasury: Vasubandhu's Verses on the Treasury of Abhidharma and Its Commentary Youthful Play* by the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, translated by David Karma Choephel, 2012, KTD Publications

PRAMĀNAVĀRTTIKA I:  
COMMENTARY ON  
VALID COGNITION

This course is an in-depth study of *Pramānavārttika* by Dharmakīrti (ca. 7th century)—the influential work of the Buddhist Pramāna tradition—based on commentaries by the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyamtso (1454–1506) and Sakya Pandita (1182–1251). Students explore the first two chapters: establishing the Buddha as a source of valid cognition and the exposition of direct perception.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required Texts:

- » *Essential Selections from The Ocean of Texts on Reasoning*, by the Seventh Karmapa, Chodrak Gyamtso, translated by Tyler Dewar, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Commentary on The Ocean of Texts on Reasoning, Chapters One & Two*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Establishing Validity: The First Chapter of Karmapa Chodrak Gyatso's Ocean of Literature on Logic & the Corresponding Chapter from Dharmakirti's Commentary on Validity*, by Dharmakirti and

Seventh Karmapa Chodrak Gyatso, translated by  
David Karma Choephel, 2016, KTD Publications

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BUD 691      PRAMĀNAVĀRTTIKA II:  
COMMENTARY ON  
VALID COGNITION

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of *Pramānavārttika* by Dharmakīrti (ca. 7th century)—the influential work of the Buddhist Pramāna tradition—based on commentaries by the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyamtso (1454–1506) and Sakya Pandita (1182–1251). Students continue the exploration of the second chapter on direct perception and conclude with chapters three and four, which present inference for oneself and inference of others.

Prerequisite:                      BUD 620

Required Texts:

- » *Essential Selections from The Ocean of Texts on Reasoning*, by the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyamtso, translated by Tyler Dewar, Nitartha Institute Publications

An in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). It begins with the presentation of the Madhyamaka of the model texts, followed by a close examination of the first five *Madhyamakāvatāra* chapters correlated with the first five bodhisattva bhūmis. Several difficult points are covered, such as the three reasons that prove that arhats realize selflessness of person.

Prerequisite:

BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakirti's Madhyamakāvatāra* by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on Feast for the Fortunate, Grounds One-Five & Part I of Ground Six*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche. Volume 1, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Advanced Madhyamaka I*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's *Madhyamakvatāra* based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students study the first part of the sixth chapter on the pāramitā of prajñā, which primarily deals with the reasoning refuting arising from the four extremes. The difficult points covered include the prāsangika-svātantrika distinction as well as the presentation of the two truths.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra* by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on Feast for the Fortunate, Ground Six*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche & Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Advanced Madhyamaka II & III The Sixth Chapter*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

- » *Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche.  
Volume 2, Nitartha Institute Publications
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BUD 702

MADHYAMAKĀVATĀRA III:  
ENTRANCE TO THE MIDDLE WAY

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students complete the bulk of the sixth chapter on the pāramitā of prajñā. The topics covered include a detailed refutation of the proponents of consciousness and an extensive presentation of personal selflessness.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakirti's Madhyamakāvatāra* by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on Feast for the Fortunate, Ground Six*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche & Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

- » *Advanced Madhyamaka II & III The Sixth Chapter*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
  - » *Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche. Volume 3, Nitartha Institute Publications
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BUD 703

MADHYAMAKĀVATĀRA IV:  
ENTRANCE TO THE MIDDLE WAY

This course is the completion of the in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students conclude the sixth chapter, followed by the presentation of the remaining bodhisattva grounds of realization and the resultant bhūmi of Buddhahood. The topics covered include the sixteen emptinesses and the discussion about the nature of buddhahood: Does the Buddha's wisdom exist and what do Buddhas see?

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra* by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications



- » *Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche.  
Volume 4, Nitartha Institute Publications
- 

BUD 704

CATUHŚATAKA:  
FOUR HUNDRED VERSES

This course is a study of *Catuhśataka* by Āryadeva (ca. 2nd century)—a direct student of Nāgārjuna. This influential Madhyamaka treatise is renowned for balancing the presentation of the seeming and ultimate realities, emphasizing both the view and meditation. Students approach this treatise through the lenses of its Tibetan commentators.

Prerequisite: Not applicable

Required texts:

- » *Rendawa Shonnu Lodro's commentary on Aryadeva's "Four hundred verses"*, translated by Ven. Dr. Tashi Tsering and Mr. Jürgen Stöter Tillmann, 2004, Manjushri Press, Cambridge, MA
- » *Aryadeva's Four Hundred Stanzas on the Middle Way: With Commentary by Gyeltsap*, by Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam, 2008, Snow Lion Publications

This course is a study of the unique view of Indian master Śāntarakṣita (8th century) who harmonized the Madhyamaka view of Nāgārjuna with the Yogācāra and Pramāna traditions. The exposition of *Madhyamakālamkāra* is based on an extensive commentary by Ju Mipham (1846– 1912), frequently taught in Nyingma colleges.

Prerequisite: Not applicable

Required texts:

- » *Speech of Delight: Mipham's Commentary on Santarakṣita's Ornament of the Middle Way*, by Ju Mipham, translated by Thomas Doctor, 2004, Snow Lion Publications
- » *The Adornment of the Middle Way: Shantarakṣita's Madhyamakalankara with Commentary* by Jamgön Mipham, translated by Padmakara Translation Group, 2005, Shambhala Publications
- » *Commentary on the Adornment of the Middle Way*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, 2009, Nitartha Institute Publications

BODHICĀRYĀVATĀRA:  
ENTRANCE TO THE  
BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE

This course is a study of the Madhyamaka view of Indian master Śāntideva (8th century) in the 9th chapter of his famous *Bodhicāryāvatāra*, together with a commentary by Pawo Tsugla Trengwa (1504-1566), one of the two most important students of the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje. Pawo Rinpoche's presentation is an essential source for the Kagyü view of the Middle Way philosophical tradition.

Prerequisite:                      Not applicable

Required texts:

- » *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyu Tradition*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2004, Snow Lion Publications
- » *The Wisdom Chapter: Jamgön Mipham's Commentary on the Ninth Chapter of The Way of the Bodhisattva*, by Jamgon Mipham, translated by The Padmakara Translation Group, 2017, Shambhala Publications
- » *A Commentary on The Ninth Chapter of the Bodhicaryavatara on Supreme Knowledge*, based on the commentary by Pawo Rinpoche Tsugla Trengwa, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, 2 volumes, 2000—2001, Nitartha Institute Publications

MADHYAMAKA ŚĀSTRA:  
THE FUNDAMENTAL WISDOM OF  
THE MIDDLE WAY

This course offers an in-depth study of the renowned *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the root treatise of the Madhyamaka philosophical system, composed by Ārya Nāgārjuna in the 2nd century, together with *Ornament of Reason*, a commentary by Machawa Jangchub Tsöndrū (died 1185), an early Tibetan commentator on Candrakīrti's view. Machawa's account of the Middle Way exercised lasting influence on the development of Madhyamaka philosophy in all four schools of Buddhism in Tibet. *Ornament of Reason* has been frequently taught in Nyingma colleges.

Prerequisite: Not applicable

Required text:

- » *Ornament of Reason: The Great Commentary to Nagarjuna's Root of the Middle Way*, by Mabja Jangchub Tsondrü, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, Snow Lion Publications, 2011

ABHISAMAYĀLAMKĀRA I:  
ORNAMENT OF  
CLEAR REALIZATION

This course is an in-depth study of *Abhisamayālamkāra* by Maitreya (ca. 4th century)—the decisive elucidation of the hidden meaning of *prajñāpāramitā* related to the path of the Mahāyāna—based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students study the first of the eight abhisamayas, or clear realizations in chapter one: “The Knowledge of All Aspects,” which is the direct realization that all aspects are primordial peace.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *Gone Beyond, Volume One: The Prajnaparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Kagyü Tradition*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2011, Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Introduction*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topic One*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications

ABHISAMAYĀLAMKĀRA II:  
ORNAMENT OF  
CLEAR REALIZATION

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of *Abhisamayālamkāra* by Maitreya (ca. 4th century), based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students study the second and the third abhisamaya in chapters two and three. Chapter two is “The Knowledge of the Path,” which is the direct realizations that the three paths are primordial peace, and chapter three is “The All-knowledge,” which is the direct realization that all bases are primordial peace without abiding in existence or peace.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *Gone Beyond, Volume One: The Prajnaparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Kagyü Tradition*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2011, Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topics Two and Three*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications

ABHISAMAYĀLAMKĀRA III:  
ORNAMENT OF  
CLEAR REALIZATION

This course is the completion of the in-depth study of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* by Maitreya (ca. 4th century), based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). Students study the remaining five abhisamayas in chapters four through eight: “The Training in All Aspects,” “The Culminating Training,” “The Serial Training,” “The Instantaneous Training,” and “The Dharmakāya.”

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *Gone Beyond, Volume Two: The Prajnaparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Kagyü Tradition*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2012, Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topic Four*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topics Five-Eight* by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 713      ABHISAMAYĀLAMKĀRA IV:  
ORNAMENT OF  
CLEAR REALIZATION

This course is based on the *Abhisamayālamkāra* by Maitreya (ca. 4th century) and its commentaries in the Tibetan Nyingma Tradition. Students study the commentary by Dza Patrul Rinpoche (1808-1887), a prominent master of Rime—the 19th century non-sectarian movement in Tibet.

Prerequisite:    BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *Groundless Paths: The Prajñāparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Nyingma Tradition*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2012, Snow Lion Publications
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BUD 714      MAHĀYĀNASŪTRĀLAMKĀRA:  
ORNAMENT OF THE GREAT  
VEHICLE SŪTRAS

An in-depth exploration of the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, the last of the five works of Maitreya to be taught at Nitartha Institute. The text presents materials on the view and path of Bodhisattvas from a yogacāra point of view. It thus gives a synopsis of all the mahāyāna sūtras that are not



contained among the prajñāpāramitā sūtras or the sūtras on buddha nature.

Prerequisite: Not applicable

Required text:

- » *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sutras: Maitreya's Mahayanasutralamkara with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham*, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, 2014, Snow Lion Publications
- 

BUD 760

MADHYĀNTAVIBHĀGA:  
DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE  
MIDDLE AND EXTREMES

This course is an in-depth study of *Madhyāntavibhāga* by Maitreya (ca. 4th century)—a key work of Yogācāra Buddhist philosophy—based on the commentaries by Vasubandhu and Ju Mipham (1846–1912). It delineates the distinctions and relationship (*vibhāga*) between the middle view (*madhya*) and extremes (*anta*). Students systematically proceed through its five chapters: Characteristics, Obscurations, True Reality, Path of Practice and Unsurpassable Vehicle.

Prerequisite:

BUD 620

Required text:

- » *Middle Beyond Extremes: Maitreya's Madhyantavibhaga with Commentaries* by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, 2006, Snow Lion Publications
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BUD 761

## SAMDHINIRMOCANA SŪTRA

The *Sutra Unraveling the Intention* [of the Buddha] is a crucial sutra for the Yogacara tradition of the third turning of the wheel of dharma. It is the classic source from the Buddha's teachings for unraveling his intent behind teaching three different turnings of the wheel, as well as for his teachings on the eight consciousnesses, three natures, the ultimate and the path of meditation that leads to nondual realization of the ultimate.

Prerequisites:                      None

Required Text:

- » Required Text: *Unraveling the Intent: Saṃdhanirmocana*, available at the [84000.co](http://84000.co)

DHARMADHARMATĀVIBHĀGA:  
DISTINCTION BETWEEN  
PHENOMENA AND THE  
NATURE OF PHENOMENA

This is an in-depth study of the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* by Maitreya (ca. 4th century)—a short Yogācāra work of the pith instructions class—based on commentaries by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339) and Ju Mipham (1846–1912). Students study the distinction and correlation (*vibhāga*) between phenomena (*dharma*) and the nature of phenomena (*dharmatā*) and discover the key instructions on how to proceed in accessing this nature.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *Mining for Wisdom within Delusion: Maitreya's Distinction between Phenomena and the Nature of Phenomena and Its Indian and Tibetan Commentaries*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2013, Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on The Distinction between Phenomena & the Nature of Phenomena*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications
- » *Distinguishing Phenomena from Their Intrinsic Nature: Maitreya's Dharmadharmatavibhanga*

*with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham*, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, 2013, Snow Lion Publications

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BUD 771      TREATISE ON THE DISTINCTION  
BETWEEN CONSCIOUSNESS  
AND WISDOM

This course is based on the *Treatise on the Distinction between Consciousness and Wisdom*, by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), who was a great commentator on Yogacara, and the *Treatise on the Distinction between Consciousness and Wisdom* is one of his most renowned texts. This course looks at how our mind is both the cause of delusion as well as the basis for freedom from delusion, and also offers instruction on how to discover the wisdom within.

Prerequisite:                      not applicable

Required Text:

- » *Luminous Heart. Essential Writings of Rangjung Dorje, the Third Karmapa*, by the Third Karmapa and Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye, translated by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2021, Snow Lion Publications

UTTARATANTRA & SŪTRAS OF  
THE THIRD TURNING:  
THE HIGHEST CONTINUUM

This course is an in-depth study of the *Uttaratantra* by Maitreya (ca. 4th century)—the influential work of the Tathāgagarbha tradition—based on the commentary by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye (1813-1899) and Gö Lotsawa Shönnu Pal (1392-1481). Students first look at the selection of sūtras of the third turning, followed by the exposition of the *Uttaratantra*'s seven vajra points: the three jewels, buddha nature, enlightenment, its qualities and enlightened activity.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- » *When the Clouds Part: The Uttaratantra and Its Meditative Tradition as a Bridge between Sutra and Tantra*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2015, Snow Lion Publications
- » *Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra with Commentary*, by Arya Maitreya, Jamgon Kongtrul, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, translated by Rosemarie Fuchs, 2018, Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on the Fourth Vajra Point in the Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra* by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

- » *Commentary on Vajra Points One-Three & Five-Eight in the Mahayana Uttarantra Shastra* by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
  - » *Sūtras of the Third Turning and the Uttarantra: The Lion's Roar of Irreversibility* Volume 1, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications
  - » *Sūtras of the Third Turning and the Uttarantra: The Lion's Roar of Irreversibility* Volume 2, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications
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BUD 781

**DHARMADHĀTUSTAVA:  
IN PRAISE OF DHARMADHĀTU**

This course is a study of *Dharmadhātustava*, attributed to Nāgārjuna. It is the early śāstra commenting on the tathāgatagarbha sūtras, as elucidated by the Third Karma-pa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339) in his commentary.

Prerequisite:                      Not applicable

Required texts:

- » *In Praise of Dharmadhātu*, by Mitra Karl Brunnhölzl, 2007, Snow Lion Publications
- » *Commentary on In Praise of Dharmadhātu*, by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, 2010, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 796

## BEACON OF CERTAINTY

The *Beacon of Certainty* is a commentary composed by the great Nyingma master and scholar Lama Mipham (1846-1912). It is structured around seven questions that address the foundations of the Nyingma tradition, from Madhyamika philosophy to the view of Dzogchen. This key text is studied in virtually all Nyingma shedras. Students study its commentary by Khenpo Kunpal (c.1872-1943), a close disciple of Lama Mipham.

Prerequisite: Not applicable

Required text:

- » *Mipham's Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*, by John W. Pettit, 1999, Wisdom Publications

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BUD 797

## DISTINGUISHING THE VIEWS AND PHILOSOPHIES: A LAMP OF ESSENTIAL POINTS

This course is a systematic overview of Mipham's teachings on the Middle Way as presented by Bötrül (1898-1959) of the Nyingma tradition, the influential scholar of the twentieth century. Bötrül's root text, *Distinguishing the Views*

*and Philosophies*, and his auto-commentary, *Ornament of Mañjuḥo's Viewpoint*, provide a meaning commentary on Mipham's *Beacon of Certainty*.

Prerequisite: Not applicable

Required text:

- » *Distinguishing the Views and Philosophies: Illuminating Emptiness in a Twentieth-Century Tibetan Buddhist Classic*, by Bötrül and Douglas Samuel Duckworth, SUNY Press, 2012

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BUD 798      ENTERING THE WAY OF THE  
GREAT VEHICLE

This course is a commentary on *Entering the Way of the Great Vehicle* by Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (1040-1159), one of the most important masters of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. Rongzompa composed this work in order to articulate how Dzogchen agrees with the sutric and tantric teachings espoused by other schools. Using philosophic and linguistic analyses favored by them, he demonstrates that the Great Perfection is the culmination and maturation of the Mahāyāna—the Great Vehicle.

Prerequisite: Not applicable



Required text:

- » *Entering the Way of the Great Vehicle: Dzogchen as the Culmination of the Mahayana* by Rongzom Chok Zangpo and Dominic Sur, Snow Lion, 2017



## SECTION II.

# CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS (SCA) at Nitārtha Institute is one of the five traditional sciences (*śilpa-karma-sthāna vidyā*) taught at Nālandā University, and is traditionally categorized by body, speech, and mind, or the Physical, Vocal, and Mental Arts. The Physical Arts includes what is more currently referred to as the Visual Arts. It also includes meditation and its attendant ritual arts.

# DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS COURSE LISTING

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## 1. PHYSICAL ARTS

SCA 500      Lüjong

## 2. VISUAL ARTS

### *Buddhist Visual Literacy*

SCA 510      Symbolizing the Awakened Heart:  
Buddhist Visual Literacy

SCA 520      Lineage Essence and Expression:  
The Golden Rosary

SCA 530      The Bodhisattva Ideal Throughout  
Asian Art

### *Drawing the Awakened Heart*

SCA 540      Studio 1

SCA 550      Studio 2

## 3. VOCAL ARTS

# DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

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## 1. PHYSICAL ARTS

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### SCA 500      LÜJONG

Lüjong, or body training, is a series of fifteen physical exercises developed by the Tibetan Buddhist meditation master Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche to help students enhance their health and synchronize their body and mind. They serve to increase energy and pliancy. The wakefulness developed by the exercises can bring a quality of meditation to ordinary activities throughout the day.

Prerequisites:              None

Required texts:            None

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## 2. VISUAL ARTS

The Visual Arts curriculum currently offers two tracks. One focuses on symbolism and iconography, or the reading of thangka paintings. This track is called Buddhist Visual Literacy and includes three courses. The other track focuses

on the Karma Gadri tradition of iconometrics (*thikse*) and the beauty of thangka drawing (*thikchö*). This track is called Drawing the Awakened Heart and includes two courses.

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## 2.1 BUDDHIST VISUAL LITERACY

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### SCA 510      SYMBOLIZING THE AWAKENED HEART: BUDDHIST VISUAL LITERACY

This course develops a basis for exploring and understanding Buddhist symbolism and iconography through the use of classic Buddhist teachings on seeming and ultimate realities, as well as understanding the roles of conception and perception. Students enhance their learning with experiential exercises and explore how meaning is made and communicated when producing and viewing representations. Part of the course involves researching Buddhist symbols—the basis of Buddhist iconography—and applying visual literacy skills when reading a Buddhist thangka.

Prerequisites:            None

Required texts:        Course pack of readings

SCA 520

## LINEAGE ESSENCE AND EXPRESSION: THE GOLDEN ROSARY

This course uses an ancient iconographic set of thangkas to explore Tibetan Buddhist art and history, and the role of lineage and transmission in the Karma Kagyü. It relies on an understanding of Buddhist Visual Literacy and puts it into use. Class topics include: history and styles of thangka painting with a focus on the Karma Gadri (Encampment) style, applying Buddhist visual literacy to reading a thangka painting, symbolism, iconography, lineage, transmission and specifically the Kagyü Lineage.

Prerequisite: SCA 510 preferred

Required texts: Course Sourcebook

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SCA 530

## THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL THROUGHOUT ASIAN ART

An overview and exploration of bodhisattva in terms of the meaning and ideal, followed by the who and the what. Using the Eight Great Bodhisattvas and particularly the three main ones, the course explores their representations across different Asian cultures and periods, tracking the characteristics that are iconographic and those that are non-iconographic. Coursework includes slide presen-

tations, lectures, discussion and a final art project. This course relies on an understanding of Buddhist visual literacy and puts it into use. Class topics include: history of bodhisattvas and their styles of representation in paintings and statues with a focus on bodhisattvas throughout Asian culture, applying Buddhist visual literacy to reading their symbolism, iconography and seeming iconography and the bodhisattva ideal.

Prerequisite: SCA 510 preferred

Required texts: Course Sourcebook

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## 2.2 DRAWING THE AWAKENED HEART

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### SCA 540 STUDIO 1

Students learn the classic measurement system (*thikse*) of the Karma Gadri system and apply it to draw a Buddha head, a seated Buddha, and a Tara head. Materials are provided in class. Students are also welcome to bring their own materials. A materials list is provided to registrants. Class topics include: thikse, drawing materials, process of drawing male and female buddhas, development of good drawing skills and drawing as meditation.

Prerequisites: None

Required texts: None

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## SCA 550      STUDIO 2

Students focus on one particular Buddhist figure in an actual thangka composition, starting with the thikse, moving on to the drawing and then the painting. It includes shading and coloring. Materials are provided in class. Students are also welcome to bring their own materials. A materials list is provided to registrants.

Prerequisite: SCA 540 Beginning drawing or the equivalent experience

Required texts: None

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### 3. VOCAL ARTS

Nitartha Institute students also train in the art of singing *dohas*, or songs of realization of the accomplished masters of the practice lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Renowned for their poetic qualities and the ability to convey the pith instructions on view, meditation and conduct, singing dohas is regarded as an effective means for spiritual transformation.





SECTION III.

# LANGUAGES

THE DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES (LAN) at Nitartha University is representing the Science of Language (*śabda vidyā*) among the five traditional sciences taught at Nālandā University.

## DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES COURSE LISTING

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LAN 500	Introduction to Colloquial Tibetan
LAN 510	Intermediate Colloquial Tibetan
LAN 530	Reading Tibetan Buddhist Literature

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### LAN 500      INTRODUCTION TO COLLOQUIAL TIBETAN

This course is oriented toward beginners who have little knowledge of Tibetan but would like to gain some familiarity with the language and how it is translated into English. It covers the alphabet and pronunciation. Students learn to chant a few of the songs of Milarepa and at the same time investigate their meaning in both Tibetan and in English. By looking into the Tibetan behind the English, students can expect to gain a richer understanding of the songs composed by one of Tibet's great masters.

Prerequisites:              None

This course is a continuation of our Colloquial Tibetan series and is oriented toward continuing students who have had training in the Tibetan alphabet, spelling, and beginning dialogs. The emphasis of the classes is on developing further fluency with spoken Tibetan both in listening and in speaking. Students focus on training in successively more complex Tibetan colloquial dialogs. Spoken Tibetan is emphasized in class and students are encouraged to use Tibetan when asking questions as opposed to resorting to English. The course covers the material in chapters 6, 7, 8 of *The Heart of Tibetan Language (HOTL)* by Franziska Oertle. Homework is assigned.

Required Text:

- » *The Heart of Tibetan Language*, Franziska Oertle and associated exercise book

Students should know:

- » The equivalent of the first five chapters of *HOTL*
- » How to pronounce in the Central Tibetan dialect all the letters and vowels in the Tibetan alphabet
- » How to identify the main letter of a Tibetan word

- » What prefixes, superfixes, subfixes, suffixes, and second suffixes are, and how they affect pronunciation
- » How to spell a Tibetan word aloud
- » What the essential and existential verbs are and how they are used (yin, min, red, ma red, yod, med, 'dug, mi 'dug, yod red, yod ma red)
- » Demonstrative pronouns ('di, de, pha gi, etc.)
- » Personal pronouns (khong, khyed rang, etc.)
- » Volitional and non-volitional verbs
- » Transitive and intransitive verbs
- » Verb tenses (past, present, and future) and auxiliary verbs
- » Basics of locative, genitive, and instrumental cases
- » Some understanding of the difference between honorific and non-honorific terms and when to use them
- » How to read somewhat more complex Tibetan sentences aloud (but not necessarily understand their entire meaning)

This course is oriented towards reading Tibetan Buddhist texts and literature. We will use Tokmé Zangbo’s famous *Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva* (རྒྱལ་སྤྱུ་ལག་ལེན་སོ་བདུན་མ།) as the basis for developing familiarity with Tibetan grammar and developing reading skills. Interesting and important grammatical points will be explained in the context of specific passages. In addition, we will study grammar from an annotated commentarial translation of Kelsang Gyurme’s རབ་གསལ་མེ་ལོང་།, *The Clear Mirror*. Opening and closing chants are done in Tibetan. Students are encouraged to practice reading aloud to learn the rhythms and feel of the phrasing of the language and train in the traditional discipline of jor-lo (*sbyor klog*)—“reading the connections.”

#### Prerequisites:

- » One year of college/university or immersion study either at a known institution or working closely with a native speaker. Students are asked to translate a short passage from Tibetan to English to help the instructor determine their proficiency. Instructor’s permission is required.



SECTION IV.

# HEALING

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALING (HEA) at Nitārtha University is representing the Science of Healing (*cikitsā vidyā*) among the five traditional sciences taught at Nālandā University.

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALING COURSE LISTING

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HEA 500      Science of Healing

HEA 510      Mudra Space Awareness

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### HEA 500      SCIENCE OF HEALING

This course is based on the ancient healing tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, a comprehensive cognitive training system stemming from a personal realization of the wisdom of intrinsic healthiness. Students study an overview of the basic science of healing as presented in the four Medical Tantras as well as complementary topics from the Nitartha Institute foundational curriculum, such as valid and non-valid cognition and it relates to our health.

Prerequisites:      None

Required Texts:      None

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### HEA 510      MUDRA SPACE AWARENESS

Mudra Space Awareness is a series of physical and vocal exercises derived from the Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen

traditions of Tibetan Buddhism as presented in the West by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. They utilize the body as a means to clarify mental confusion and tame the mind so that the practitioner has access to a greater awareness of outer and inner space. The course is in a workshop format, students are offered experiential ground to investigate Buddhist approaches to concepts such as “space” or “ego” while discovering how they can correct physical and mental imbalances. Class exercises help students develop a sense of well-being and an appreciation of themselves and others in the context of alive, ever-changing space.

Prerequisites:           None

Required texts:       None





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