



ABIDING HEART
EDUCATION

Experiential Buddhist learning

Kindergarten Teacher Training Diploma

in Abiding Heart Education™

February 2022 to December 2024

Course Content

The **full-time** Kindergarten online teacher-training course consists of six semesters over **three years**. Students taking this training are required to attend all courses in semesters 1 - 6 as outlined below. Please see our Attendance Policy in the **Application Handbook** for more information.

Semester 1 (Winter/Spring) 2022

Experiential Buddhist Foundation Studies

Dates: 8 February 2022 - 10 June 2022

Duration: 15 weeks online classes + 3 reading weeks

- Induction and Introduction to Buddhism
- Buddhist philosophy: The Foundational Vehicle
- Buddhist philosophy: Mahayana
- Buddhist philosophy: Vajrayana
- Karma and Biography work
- Understanding and practising Buddhist meditation: Shamatha meditation
- Understanding and practising Buddhist meditation: Vipassana and preliminary Vajrayana
- Himalayan Buddhist arts
- Handwork and Mindfulness
- Experiential arts related to Buddhist View and Philosophy

Semester 2 (Summer/Autumn) 2022

Child Development from Birth to Rebirth; Observation Skills and Learning Theories

Dates: 22 June 2022 - 9 December 2022

Duration: 11 weeks online classes + 2 weeks child observation placement + 2 reading weeks

- Introduction to observation and awareness meditation and the practice of child observation
- Child Development from Birth to Rebirth:
 - Module 1: The Intersection of Buddhism, Developmental Science and Holistic Perspectives on Human Development
 - Module 2: Early Childhood: Birth to Age 7
 - Module 3: Middle Childhood: Age 7 to 14
- Child Observation Practicum (in student's own country)
- Learning Theories: Buddhist pedagogy, the transformative learning approach of Rudolf Steiner and other contemporary learning theories



Experiential Buddhist learning

- Deepening the understanding and practice of Buddhist meditation (Green Tara in View, Meditation and Pedagogical Application and Manjushri meditation).
- Himalayan Buddhist arts
- Experiential arts related to child development
- Handwork and mindfulness
- Weekly discussion
- Music and singing

Semester 3 (Winter/Spring) 2023

Child Development and Abiding Heart Education Kindergarten Curriculum Studies

Duration: 11 weeks online classes + 2 weeks teaching placement

Dates: 3 January 2023 - 7 April 2023*

- Abiding Heart Education Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Kindergarten Curriculum overview
 - Buddhist aspects of the day
 - Additional languages
- Abiding Heart Education Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - rhythm of the day and week
 - working with the rhythm of nature's seasons
 - understanding each activity of the day: free play, outdoor play, nature walks, crafts, storytelling, circle time
 - the kindergarten environment
- Child development from birth to rebirth: The Intersection of Buddhism, Developmental Science and Holistic Perspectives on Human Development
 - Module 4: Adolescence: Age 14 to 21
 - Module 5: Adult Development: Lifespan phases from 21 to old age
 - Module 6.1: From the Bardos of Death to the moment of conception
 - Module 6.2: Prenatal Development from conception to the moment of birth
 - Module 7: Child Development, Biography Work and the Buddhist View
- The four temperaments and the five Buddha families
- The ecology and physiology of the senses/consciousness in view, meditation and pedagogical practice
- From observation to child study
- Meditation for teachers in relation to pedagogy; teaching and being with children
- Contemplation and meditation on the paramitas in relation to pedagogy and working with children
- Deepening the understanding and practice of Buddhist meditation
- Himalayan Buddhist arts



Experiential Buddhist learning

- Musical instruments and singing for kindergarten
- Handwork and awareness meditation
- Practicum: teaching placement at a kindergarten
- Reading weeks/self study/writing assignments

Semester 4-6: Abiding Heart Education Kindergarten Curriculum Studies

Duration: each semester consists of 10-11 weeks online classes + 2 weeks teaching placement

Dates*:

Semester 4 2023: 3 July 2023 - 25 August 2023 & 20 November 2023 - 8 December 2023

Semester 5 2024: 19 February 2024 - 26 April 2024

Semester 6 2024: 10 June 2024 - 12 July 2024 & 11 November 2024 - 6 December 2024

- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Experiential Buddhism for kindergarten in View
- Inner development of teacher: Meditation for teachers
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - The Buddhist Year: yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily; special occasions.
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - The art of storytelling; age appropriate stories for kindergarten; nature stories, folktales and fairytales- common to the stories- ahimsa, tread lightly on the earth, interdependence, karma, impermanence.
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Experiential Buddhism for kindergarten: meditation with young children
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - The Buddhist Year in each Buddhist tradition
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - The Crafts of the Buddhist Year
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Arts and crafts activities with young children and their relation to holistic child development (watercolour painting, drawing, sewing, wool, finger knitting, paper craft, nature craft)



Experiential Buddhist learning

- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - The arts and crafts of puppetry, nature stories, folktales and fairytales.
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Teaching Spoken English as additional language
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Creating kindergarten learning environment
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - The kindergarten literacy and numeracy curriculum and its creative application
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Making teaching and learning resources (soft toys and wooden toys)
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Musical instruments for the kindergarten and singing
- Himalayan Buddhist arts
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Toymaking
- Abiding Heart Kindergarten Curriculum Studies:
 - Arts and crafts activities with young children and their relation to holistic child development
- Inner development of teacher: Meditation for teachers
- From an Unhealthy Self towards a Healthy Self: Safeguarding and nurturing the wellbeing of children
- The compassionate wholesome practice of school organisation, management and community building
- Meeting local government education requirements
- Child study and child assessment and writing reports
- Remedial education
- Practicum: teaching placement at a Kindergarten

* Please note that the above **dates may be subject to change**. We will make every possible effort to inform of any changes in advance.



Experiential Buddhist learning

Abiding Heart's teacher training is open to teachers and aspiring teachers who wish to bring Buddhist-imbued content and Steinerian pedagogy, combined with insights from developmental neuroscience and psychology, into their teaching practice. Our training is particularly suitable for those who wish to:

- teach in Buddhist monastic schools
- teach in existing Buddhist schools around the world or education programmes associated with Buddhist centres
- set up a Buddhist school or an education programme for a Buddhist centre.

Course Overview

Abiding Heart Education™ is a new approach to education which rests on a Buddhist paradigm. Fusing Buddhist worldview, meditation and application with aspects of Steiner/Waldorf methodology and developmental science we have created a unique children's transformational pedagogy that gives equal weight to the intellectual, affective, and action domains.

The experiential Buddhist lineage fused with developmental science and holistic methodology are necessary to ground students in this new education approach so that they can bring transformational learning into the everyday reality of teaching kindergarten children. Holistic child development and Abiding Heart curriculum studies blended with experiential arts and nature-based activities nurture self-awareness and transformation in trainee teachers. To this end Buddhist Himalayan arts and crafts are integrated in every aspect of the training, and the arts also form an integral part of the Abiding Heart curriculum as a gateway towards children's self-transformation.

Abiding Heart's uniqueness is that it rests on a Buddhist paradigm rather than on prevailing materialistic education systems or worldviews. Abiding Heart Education™ goes beyond transmitting knowledge and facts to create a transformational approach to learning which is grounded in process rather than outcomes. It nurtures the child's changing consciousness and fosters autonomy and ownership in teachers. The Abiding Heart approach to education interlinks all aspects of learning and knowing and advocates for self-transformation by bringing about a shift in how children and teachers learn and experience the world, including internal and external shifts in consciousness and in their connections to selfhood, others and nature.

Abiding Heart's new approach places the emphasis on developing wisdom and compassion that is to be lived in the class and in our personal life. Therefore, this pedagogy is holistic, giving equal weight to engaging head, heart and doing. Trainees will gain a good balance of theory and practical knowledge in teaching that is grounded in experiential Buddhism thus fostering their continuing inner development.

The curriculum draws deeply on the live Buddhist experiential tradition which emphasizes applying the knowledge acquired in everyday experience in order to nurture an ongoing transformation. Students develop practical teaching skills based on child development theory and gain experience of creating teaching and learning resources in preparation for school placements and embarking on



Experiential Buddhist learning

life as a Abiding Heart Education™ teacher. At the core of this three-year course is the practice of letting our minds rest, our hands create, and our hearts rejoice. The sense of wonder that nurtures young children is a capacity we all have, and although it may not always flourish in adulthood, we can reconnect with it and deepen our experience.

Semester 1: Experiential Buddhist Foundation Studies

The Foundation Studies framework is an exploration of the Buddhist worldview and practice through an experiential learning approach. Key philosophical principles are introduced and reinforced through meditation, dialogue and artistic hands-on activities. The emphasis is therefore on the integration and internalisation of the Buddhadharma so that it becomes part of the growth and flourishing of one's whole being.

Philosophy

We explore the three main Buddhist vehicles or yanas: Shravakayana or Foundational Vehicle, Mahayana and Vajrayana. Over four weeks each yana is presented from its own point of view, allowing participants to understand its beauty and integrity. Throughout this course we explore fundamental concepts such as: basic goodness; relative and ultimate truth; interdependence; Buddha nature; skilful means and wisdom; and love and compassion. As we travel from materialist Buddhist philosophy to the Middle-way perspective, we also journey through the history of Buddhism, touching on key texts, cosmology, and learning how to practice key meditations.

In this process, the four main philosophical schools of Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Yogacara and Madhyamaka are presented, explored and discussed. In the fourth month, we deepen our exploration of karma and we revisit, integrate and draw connections between all the topics presented. We encourage participants to digest the material in a personal and holistic way that nurtures confidence, open-mindedness, curiosity and respect for the vastness and profundity of the Buddhadharma.

Arts and crafts

A unique quality of this course is the integration of multiple modes of learning. Lectures are balanced with significant time for meditation, interactive discussions, group processes, and creative and artistic activities. The Himalayan and transformational arts nurture an understanding of: the metamorphosis of form through sculpting with wood and clay; the hidden qualities of colour through painting and drawing; the transcendent qualities of sound through music and singing; language through speech and mantra recitation; and the understanding of space through movement and Charya dance (the dance of the mudras). Such insights go beyond the intellect and touch the realms of deep awareness and intuition.

Meditation

Buddhist philosophy and transformational arts are immersed in meditation. We learn how to meditate using Mingyur Rinpoche's profound, creative, and easily applicable practices. At the end of the four months, participants will have a valuable understanding of how to apply Buddhist



Experiential Buddhist learning

meditation anytime, anywhere. The structure of the practice starts with refuge and bodhicitta, continues with the main meditation that we are learning that day or week, and ends with dedication. This course engages in a path of awakening according to the stages of view, meditation and conduct.

Semester 2-3: Child Observation, Child Development from Birth to Rebirth; Learning Theories

Child Development from Birth to Rebirth

Through seven modules students develop an in-depth understanding of Buddhist human development, developmental science and the holistic Steinerian perspective of the nature of the human being. These modules explore physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, self and spiritual development from conception to birth, through childhood, adult development and the bardos of death. At the heart of this course is the Buddhist view of self and selflessness, and we explore what developmental science and Steinerian psychology have to contribute to this view.

Module 1: The Intersection of Buddhism, Developmental Science and Holistic Perspectives on Human Development

Module 2: Early Childhood: Birth to Age 7

Module 3: Middle Childhood: Age 7 to 14

Module 4: Adolescence: Age 14 to 21

Module 5: Adult Development: Lifespan phases from 21 to old age

Module 6.1: From the Bardos of Death to the moment of conception

Module 6.2: Prenatal Development from conception to the moment of birth

Module 7: Child Development, Biography Work and the Buddhist View

Learning Theories

In this section of the course we explore different learning theories starting with the Buddha's three-fold qualities of wisdom, compassion and action and head, heart and doing; the methodology of Buddhist view, meditation and application; and the three prajnas of hearing, contemplation and meditation. Taken together, they form a way for deepening our experience and making it more direct. Within this we weave contemporary learning theories such as Steiner/Waldorf, Transformative Learning, Howard Gardener's multiple intelligences, progressive education which encompasses experiential, integrated and cooperative learning, and others.

Semesters 3-6: Abiding Heart Education™ Kindergarten Curriculum Studies

The Kindergarten Teacher Training Diploma in Abiding Heart Education brings together Buddhism and Steiner/Waldorf methodology with the aim of offering both inclusive and transformational Buddhist content and learning processes. It emphasises the cultivation and deepening of wisdom



Experiential Buddhist learning

and compassion for personal and professional benefit. In line with Buddhism, Steiner/Waldorf education uses a paradigm centred on inner development towards freedom. Every aspect of this education aims to nurture the development of heightened awareness in children and their connection to spirituality, nature, and other human beings. Steiner Waldorf education recognises intelligence as a multifaceted human gift and quality, and how the mind is motivated, stimulated and awakened through the acquisition of knowledge. It also supports and enhances inspiration in artistic, moral and practical areas, while nurturing the teacher's own development and sense of responsibility.

This transformational teacher training places equal emphasis on engaging the head, heart, and doing in education. It combines emotional literacy (heart education) and a multi-sensory experiential approach to learning. Students also experience nature-based, artistic, contemplative and meditative practices for kindergarten teaching.

A fundamental aspect of teacher training is understanding the purpose and practice of child observation. Students are introduced to observation by exploring the questions, what is observation? why is it necessary? what is the difference between observation and interpretation? Child observation offers students the opportunity to practice and process what they have learned up to this point about child development. After repeated exercises in observation, students move on to child study. Students will join a kindergarten for two weeks as observers to complete their child observation assignment focusing on the following: physical appearance, movement, speech, language, social skills, and the senses (auditory, vestibular, proprioceptive, tactile, visual; and the integration of their input). This forms the basis from which students learn how to design individual plans, conduct child study, and write assessments, evaluations and end of year reports.

The experiential Buddhist kindergarten curriculum is centred around the Buddhist year, nature, seasons and the festivals that celebrate them. Students learn how to create an environment that allows children's natural creative forces to unfold, and cultivates awareness, compassion, wisdom and skillful means. Students learn to teach in a way that nurtures imagination, intuition, creativity and love in children. Their practical training encompasses a range of activities and resources including: morning circles; storytelling; puppet shows; nature studies; free choice play; and arts and crafts. With this grounding, students learn how to teach in a way that enables children to experience rhythm, repetition, and ritual as the foundation for wholesome imitation, all in service of nurturing a healthy sense of self.



Experiential Buddhist learning

Diploma Outcomes

Students taking the Diploma are required to attend all courses in semesters 1-6. The objective of the Diploma is to prepare teachers and aspiring teachers to become experiential Buddhist kindergarten teachers in Abiding Heart Education™. The expected learning outcomes are the following:

- Graduates will have a solid foundation in Buddhist view (philosophy) and experience (meditation) from which to apply kindergarten education within a Buddhist paradigm.
- Graduates will have gained an understanding of child development from Buddhist and other perspectives of human development, including developmental science, and in their work with children.
- Graduates will be able to teach experiential Buddhist kindergarten curriculum in which secular subjects are imbued with the Buddhist view, meditation and everyday application.
- Graduates will be able to teach experiential Buddhist kindergarten curriculum in different settings such as: monasteries; Buddhist and contemplative communities, and schools in the Himalayan region and around the world.
- Graduates will apply knowledge and practice of the Steiner/Waldorf kindergarten approach in a context of Buddhist education.

Assessment

- Students are assessed throughout the course on the basis of: attendance, active class participation, tutorials, written assignments, oral presentations, reflective practice, observation exercises, curriculum planning and preparation of teaching activities.
- Students are required to successfully complete all assignments.
- Students are required to attend 80% of all course classes.
- Practicum /practice teaching:
 - In semesters 3 - 6 students will practice teaching at a kindergarten of their choice. During each teaching placement students will be expected to write a reflective journal, keep a record of class plans and be assessed by a tutor.
 - During semester 6 practicum students are expected to lead a kindergarten class for a day or more and be assessed on their ability to manage all aspects of running a kindergarten day.

Updated: 24 June 2021

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