

SPECIAL ONLINE COURSE:

Seven Ways to Leave Your Ego: The 7 Branch Prayer

WITH DHARMA TEACHER RACHEL PARRISH

Course description:

This will be an in-depth exploration of the Seven Branch Prayer, based on *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (Gampopa), as well as special instructions from Shamar Rinpoche and Gendun Rinpoche.

The course will be anchored by three lectures, one every four weeks, with required homework and discussion groups in between, and a final exam. This course is designed for participation online or in person at Bodhi Path Chicago.

[Session One \(April 1\): Prostration, Praises, Offerings](#)

We will look at the role of prayer/praises in Buddhism, talk about the qualities of the Three Jewels, and begin to understand what is meant by making offerings, with instructions on how to do this ourselves. (Followed by two required group discussion meetings.)

[Session Two \(April 29\): Confession, Request for Teaching, Request to Not Pass into Nirvana, Dedication](#)

We will examine the meaning of confession means in the Buddhist context, including an explanation of 'The Four Powers' that amplify and complete the practice of confession. There will also be an explanation of the last three branches of the prayer. (Followed by two required group discussion meetings.)

[Session Three \(May 27\): Rejoicing](#)

Rejoicing is the antidote to jealousy, so even though it is the 4th branch, it is so important that we will leave it until the end so that it gets a full session all to itself! Here we will talk about the strong impact of jealousy on our minds, how to recognize it, and what to do about it when it arises. (Followed by two required group discussion meetings.)

[Final Exam \(sent June 17; due June 24\)](#)

Format for the Course:

Lectures: There will be live teachings streamed from Bodhi Path Chicago, from 10:30 – 12:30 CT on the Sundays indicated. Streams will take place using the Zoom platform. Due to the number of participants, each connection (except the teacher's) will be muted with video off. Live participants may ask clarification questions via chat, which will be fielded by a moderator.

Group Discussions: In between each lecture, there will be two required discussion group meetings (6 total), which will be formed online or in person at participating centers. (We will use a doodle survey to determine times that work for everyone.)

Homework Assignments: Each week, on Sunday evening, you will receive your homework questions for the upcoming week via email. You will be asked to reflect individually on these questions and write a thoughtful and honest response for each of them.

Reflect/Share/Discuss: Personal reflections will be shared each week with your online discussion group (via email on online bulletin board), and you will discuss your responses with group-mates.

After each discussion, one person from each group will be responsible for submitting to Rachel (a) feedback on your discussion and (b) any questions that arose.

Teacher Response: After receiving one response from each group, Rachel will then record an audio response and send it to all participants, so that everyone can benefit from each other's questions.

Final Exam: On June 17 you will receive questions for a 'final exam' to check your overall understanding and development. You can respond by email or audio and send it to Rachel no later than June 24. You will each receive a personalized response/feedback to your exam by email or audio.

Requirements for the Course:

Lectures: Ideally you will be able to join in the live streaming on Sunday mornings, but at a minimum you will need internet access and the ability to listen to the audio recording if you're unable to make it to the live stream.

Assignments: Homework, participation in the discussion groups, and final exam are mandatory for this course.

Group Discussions: Groups will be formed based on people's availability and will meet twice within the three weeks that separate each lecture (the extra week is to assist scheduling). Groups can meet online (i.e., Skype or Zoom) or in person (i.e., before/after/during a regularly scheduled center session). Group discussions should last roughly 1 hour.

Practice: As this course combines the three essential aspects of listening to the teachings, reflecting on them, and putting them into practice, you will also be required to recite the 7 Branch Prayer at least once each day for the duration of the course (April 1 – 24 June).

Commitment: When you register, you will be asked to confirm your ability to commit to these different aspects of the course, as well as explain if and why any of them might be a challenge for you.

Course fees (all-inclusive):

Standard level: \$100

Sponsor level (help someone else participate as well!): \$150

All fees go directly to the cost of being able to provide this course (internet fees, center overhead, teacher transit, etc.).

You may also give a separate teacher offering if you'd like.

If you are interested in the course but are not able to pay this amount, please don't hesitate to contact us (chicago@bodhipath.org) with your information and we will find a way to help you.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to help out a little on the administrative side of things for this course (help organize the small groups, help with email lists, etc.) we would love to hear from you! Please contact chicago@bodhipath.org - thank you!

Registration

If you would like to join the course, here are the steps:

By Monday March 26, please copy and paste the attached confirmation of commitment into an email, along with your responses, and send to chicago@bodhipath.org AND to rachel@bodhipath.org.

Once we receive your interest email, we will then send you instructions on how to complete your registration. Please register by Wednesday March 28.

Confirmation of Commitment
Seven Ways to Leave Your Ego:
The 7 Branch Prayer
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Thank you for expressing interest, we are very happy that you are joining us!

As this will be a comprehensive course with different essential and required aspects, we would like a written confirmation of **each** of the following commitments. Please send your replies to chicago@bodhipath.org AND to rachel@bodhipath.org.

Name: _____

Center Affiliation (if any): _____

In committing to this course, I agree that I:

1. Will listen to the three teachings, either by live streaming or by recorded audio.
2. Will take the time to do the homework and write up a thoughtful response.
3. Am able to participate in a small-group discussion, once per week, for at least one hour.
4. Will listen to the teacher's audio responses of the questions that were submitted from the discussion groups.
5. Will participate in the final exam.
6. Will recite the 7 Branch Prayer at least once each day for the duration of the course.

Please write something that says that you agree to all of the above:

In addition, if you already know that any of them will be challenging for you, please describe why and provide suggestions for an alternative, if possible:

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE YOUR INVITATION,
PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY MARCH 26, 2018
via email to chicago@bodhipath.org AND rachel@bodhipath.org