

**Academic Year 2023-2024**  
**Centre of Buddhist Studies**  
**The University of Hong Kong**  
**BSTC2015 Tibetan Language I**  
**(6 Credits)**

(The course is open to students from all faculties as an elective course)

**Course Description:** This is an introductory course on learning how to read Tibetan Buddhist texts and does not require prior knowledge of literary Tibetan. It is run for the first academic semester. The students will learn to read and write simple Tibetan sentences, while acquiring a practical understanding of grammar and the ability to translate sentences and short passages mainly from Tibetan to English, but also from English to Tibetan. At the end of this course, the students are expected to understand basic Tibetan grammatical functions, and to gain the ability to read simple sentences in Tibetan with the help of a dictionary.

**Course Assessments:**

50% Coursework  
50% Examination

Offering Semester: First Semester

Lecturer: Dr. Phuntsok Wangchuk

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Class Schedule: THU16:30 - 18:20

Classroom: CPD-1.24

**Grade Expectations in Faculty of Arts:**

[http://arts.hku.hk/grade\\_expectations.pdf](http://arts.hku.hk/grade_expectations.pdf)

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. The University upholds the principle that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and any student found plagiarising is liable to disciplinary action in addition to failing the assessment concerned. Please read the following webpage on "plagiarism" for details:

<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism>

**Course outlines** (Weekly lecture materials and lesson plan will be made available on Moodle)

Week 1	30 Alphabets and 4 vowels Romanization (Wylie system) Pronunciation (following Central Tibetan dialect) Punctuation markers
Week 2	Superfixed letters (mgo can yi ge) Suffixes (rjes 'jug) Prefixes (sngon 'jug) Practice pronunciation
Week 3	Subfixed letters ('dogs can yi ge) Post suffixes (yang 'jug) Identification of root letter Practice pronunciation
Week 4	Nominal particles (bdag sgra) Forming nouns (ming tshig sgrub tshul) Forming adjectives (ming tshig gi khyad chos ston pa'i tshig srgub byed) Gender markers (pho dang mo'i khyad par ston pa'i rtags) Forming verbal infinitives and verbal nouns (bya tshig ming tshig tu sgyur tshul)
Week 5	Plural particles (mang tshig) Personal pronouns (ming tshab) Demonstrative pronouns (tha snyad gsal bar ston pa'i ming tshab) Possessive pronoun (bdag sgra'i ming tshab) Possessive particles (dngos po gang la ldan par ston pa'i sgra) Linking verbs/ verb to be (mtsam sbyor byed kyi bya tshig) Possessing expression (dngos po and khyed chos sogs ldan par ston byed) Declarative particles (rdzogs tshigs)
Week 6	Cardinal/ Ordinal number (gzhi grags dang rim pa bstar chags kyi grags) Conjunctive particles (dang sgra) Genitive particle with two nouns (ming tshig gnyis kyi bar gyi 'brel sgra) Genitive particle with an adjective (ming dang khyad tshig bar gyi 'brel sgra) Genitive particle with verbal noun (bya tshig dang ming tshig bar gyi 'brel sgra)
Week 7	Agentive particles (byed sgra) Ablative particles ('byung khungs kyi sgra)
Week 8	Connective particles (lhag bcas kyi sgra) Concessive particles (rgyan sdug kyi sgra) Locative particles (la don gyi phrad)
Week 9	Conditional particles (ni sgra) Interrogative pronouns (dri ba'i tshab tshig) Verb tenses (dus gsum)
Week 10	Relative pronouns ('brel sgra'i tshab tshig) Agentive verbal particles (byed pa ldan pa'i tshig) Clause connectives: (brjod pa mtsham sbyor byed)
Week 11	Reading: Four immensurable prayer (tshad med bzhi) Quotation particles (lung 'dren gyi srga) Review: previous lessons
Week 12	Vocative particles ('bod sgra) Review: previous lessons

## **Textbook List**

1. Hodge, Stephen 2019. *An Introduction to Classical Tibetan*. Bangkok: Orchid Press.
2. Bialek, Joanna. 2021. *A Textbook in Classical Tibetan*. London: Taylor & Francis.
3. Jäschke, H. A. 2003. *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*. Reprint. NY: Dover Press.

## **Reference Sources**

### **I. Dictionaries / Glossaries**

1. Das, Sarat Chandra. 1970. *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Sanskrit Synonyms*. Reprint. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
2. Csoma de Korös, Alexander. 1842. *A Dictionary of Tibetan and English*. Reprint. 1834. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
3. Goldstein, Melvyn. 2001. *The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*. CA: University of California Press.
4. Nagano, Yasuhiko. 1997. *A Morphological Index of Classical Tibetan*. Tokyo: Seishido.
5. Rikey, Thubten and Andrew Ruskin. 1992. *A Manual of Key Buddhist Terms: a Categorization of Buddhist Terminology with Commentary by Lotsawa Kaba Paltseg*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
6. Thubten Nyima (Alak Zenkar Rinpoche) & Dr. Gyurme Dorje. *An Encyclopaedic Tibetan-English Dictionary*. Volume 1. The Nationalities Publishing House & The School of Oriental and African Studies.
7. Tsepa Rigzin. 2008. *Tibetan English Dictionary of Buddhist terminology* (Revised and Enlarged Edition). Reprint. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

### **II. Grammar**

1. Bacot, Jacques. 1946. *Grammaire du Tibétain littéraire*. Paris: Paris Libraire d'Amérique et d'Orient.
2. Beyer, Stephen. 1992. *The Classical Tibetan Language*. NY: State University of New York Press
3. Das, Sarat Chandra. 1972. *An Introduction to the Grammar of the Tibetan Language, with the texts of Situ sum-tag, Dage-je salwai me-long, and Situi shal lung*. Reprint. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
4. Denwood, Philip. 1999. *Tibetan*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

5. Hannah, Herbert Bruce. 1973. *A Grammar of the Tibetan Language, Literary and Colloquial*. Reprint. Delhi: Cosmo Publications.
6. Jäschke, H. A. 1989. *Tibetan Grammar*. Reprint. Delhi: Sri Sat Guru Publications.
7. Lalou, Marcelle. 1950. *Manuel élémentaire de tibétain classique: méthode empirique*. Paris.
8. Miller, Roy Andrew. 1993. *Prolegomena to the first two Tibetan Grammatical treatises*. Vienna: Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 30.
9. Preston, Graig. *How to Read Classical Tibetan*, Vol. I and II. Boston & London: Snow Lion Publications.
10. Sangya Tandar Naga. 2012. *Tibetan: Language, Literature and Grammar*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
11. Tournadre, Nicolas. 2010. "The Classical Tibetan cases and their trans categorially: From sacred grammar to modern linguistics." *Himalayan Linguistics*, Vol. 9(2): pp. 87-125.
12. Tournadre, Nicolas. 2003. *Manual of standard Tibetan*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.
13. Wilson, Joe B. 1992. *Translating Buddhism from Tibetan: An Introduction to the Tibetan Literary Language and the Translation of Buddhist Texts from Tibetan*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

### III. Other Sources

1. Cabezon, José Ignacio and Roger Jackson. *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. New York: Snow Lion Publications.
2. Laufer, Berthold. 1918. "Origin of Tibetan Writing." *Journal of American Oriental Society*, Vol. 38: 34-46.
3. Wylie, Turrell. 1959. "A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 22: 261-267.
4. Van der Kujip, Leonard. 1996. "The Tibetan Script and Derivatives." In *The World's Writing Systems*, eds. P. Daniels and W. Bright, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 431-441.
5. Verhagen, Pieter Cornelis. 2000. *A History of Sanskrit Grammatical Literature in Tibet*. Volume 2: Assimilation into Indigenous Scholarship. Leiden: Brill.

### IV Online Sources

1. Online Tibetan-English Dictionary (The Tibetan and Himalayan Library):  
<http://www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php>
2. Tibetan Consonants and their Sounds (The Hopkins Tibetan Treasures Research Archive Website): <http://haa.ddbc.edu.tw/gakha.php>
3. Tibetan Writing Course (Cornel University):  
<http://www.lrc.cornell.edu/medialib/ti/twc>
4. Research on Tibetan Languages  
[http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Research\\_on\\_Tibetan\\_Languages:\\_A\\_Bibliography](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Research_on_Tibetan_Languages:_A_Bibliography)

5. Rangjung Yeshe Publications on Tibetan Language Material  
[http://www.rangjung.com/rootfiles/tibetan\\_language\\_books.htm](http://www.rangjung.com/rootfiles/tibetan_language_books.htm)
6. Online Tibetan-Phonetics Converter  
<http://www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/phconverter.php>