

Undergraduate Course offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2023–24  
ELECTIVE COURSE  
(OPEN TO ALL FACULTIES)

**BSTC2016 Pāli language I**

Lecturer	Dr. Dipen Barua
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Offering Semester	Semester I
Schedule	Every Monday from 12:30–14:20
Class Venue	CPD 1.24

**Course Description**

Pāli is the language of Theravāda Buddhist canon used by the Theravāda Buddhist tradition commonly practiced in South and Southeast Asia. This canon is the only complete Buddhist canon dating back to the 3rd century B.C. This course is meant for those students who have no prior knowledge of Pāli and who wish to become familiar with Pāli expressions and idioms so as to understand simple passages of Pāli Buddhist texts. The main focus of the course is to introduce the basics of the Pāli language including its grammar phonetics, parts of speech, nouns of different genders and their declensions, verbs and their conjugations, participles and their functions, syntax and classification of sentences. By the end of the course the students are expected to be able to read simple Pāli sentences and understand their religious and philosophical significance.

**Course Content**

This course is for the absolute beginners. The content of this course deals with an introduction to Pāli and Pāli grammar that includes Pāli alphabet and sound system, nouns and their declensions, verbs and their conjugations, participles and their functions, secondary and primary derivatives, particles, join and disjoin Pāli words. Examples and exercises will be done from the Pāli *sutta*-s which will help students understand basic Buddhist teachings.

**Learning Outcome**

By the end of this course, students are expected to be able to understand basic Pāli grammar. Grammatical studies include nouns, verbs, declensions with different vowel and consonant endings, conjugations of the verb classes, tenses, and other grammatical forms. Students are also expected to read, write and understand Pāli sentences and explain the content of the Pāli discourses with the help of glossaries and dictionaries.

## Teaching and Learning Method

Lectures, class discussions and tutorials

## Assessment

50% coursework and 50% examination

## Assessment Method

- Coursework (50%):
  - Class participation (15%)
  - Homework (15%)
  - Quiz (20%)
- Final examination (50%) will be held at the end of the semester. It is an open-textbook exam. Glossaries and dictionaries can also be used during exam.

## Lecture Schedule for Semester I

Lesson	Date	Contents
Lesson 1	4 Sept 2023	(a) Introduction to the Pāli language and its alphabet <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phonological remarks</li><li>• Vowels short and long</li><li>• The letter classified</li></ul> (b) Nouns: Masculine (m), Neuter (n) and Feminine (f) (c) Cases: (1) Declension of masculine noun ending in– <i>a: Dhamma</i> (2) Declension of neuter noun ending in– <i>a: rūpa</i> (3) Declension of feminine noun ending in– <i>ā: paññā</i> (d) Verbs: Present tense (e) Example of Pāli sentences
Lesson 2	11 Sept 2023	(a) Adjectives (b) Indeclinable (c) Genitive case (d) Conjugation of verbs (e) Classes of verbs I and X <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conjugation of <i>coreti/corayati</i> (<math>\sqrt{cur}</math> ‘steal’) ‘steals’</li></ul> (f) Exercises
Lesson 3	18 Sept 2023	(a) Usage of the instrumental case (b) Ablative of reason (c) Declension of feminine noun ending in– <i>ā: saddhā</i> (d) Declension of masculine noun ending in– <i>i: pati</i> (e) Exercises
Lesson 4	25 Sept 2023	(a) Accusative used as adverb (b) Ablative used as adverb

		<p>(c) Suffixes  (d) Prefixes  (e) Classes of verbs VI and I  (f) Declension of masculine noun ending in-<i>u</i> (m):  <i>bhikkhu</i>  (g) Exercises</p>
Lesson 5	9 Oct 2023	<p>(a) Declension of neuter noun ending in-<i>u</i>: <i>cakkhu</i>  (b) Declension of feminine nouns ending in-<i>u</i>: <i>dhenu</i> and <i>jāti</i>  (c) Declension of neuter noun ending in-<i>i</i>: <i>akkhi</i>  (d) Declension of feminine noun ending in-<i>ī</i>: <i>nadī</i>  (e) Exercises</p>
Lesson 6	30 Oct 2023	<p>(a) Causatives and causative sentences  (b) Denominatives  (c) Class II verb  (d) Conjugation of <i>atthi</i> (exist/is)  (e) Exercises</p>
Lesson 7	6 Nov 2023	<p>(a) Declension of consonant-ending nouns: masculine nouns - <i>bhagavant</i> and <i>bhavant</i>  (b) Possessive suffixes-<i>vant</i> and-<i>mant</i>  (c) Two types of adjectives  (d) Gerund  <b>Quiz</b></p>
Lesson 8	13 Nov 2023	<p>(a) Possessive suffix -<i>in</i>, -<i>vin</i>  (b) Declension of masculine and neuter noun <i>rūpin</i>  (c) Past Participle Passive (PPP)  (d) Exercises</p>
Lesson 9	20 Nov 2023	<p>(a) Declension of masculine noun ending in-<i>an</i>: <i>attan</i>, <i>rājan</i>, <i>brahman</i>, <i>san</i>, <i>kamman</i>  (b) Declension of demonstrative pronouns: masculine and feminine - <i>ayaṃ</i>, neuter - <i>idaṃ/imaṃ</i>  (c) Declension of personal pronouns: masculine - <i>ahaṃ</i>, <i>tvam</i>, so; neuter - <i>taṃ</i>; feminine - <i>sā</i>  (d) Exercises</p>
Lesson 10	27 Nov 2023	<p>(a) Declension of demonstrative pronoun: <i>etad</i> ‘this’, <i>asau</i> ‘that’  (b) Pronominal adjectives  (c) Declension of <i>sabba</i> “all”  (d) Class V verbs  (e) Exercises</p>

**Note:** The above contents may be modified based on students' feedback during class. Although the textbooks are prescribed, we may not exactly take materials from textbooks. So, class notes and supplementary materials will be given in class throughout the semester.

### **Textbooks**

Dhammajoti, KL. *Reading Buddhist Pāli Texts: An Elementary Grammatical Guide*. Hong Kong: The Buddha–Dharma Centre of Hong Kong, 2018 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

### **Recommended Readings**

Anuruddha, Kakkapalliye. *A Guide to the Study of Pali: The Language of Theravada Buddhism*.

Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhism Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 2010.

Buddhadatta, A.P. *The New Pali Course* (Parts I & II). Sri Lanka: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 1997.

Gair, James W. and W.S. Karunatilake. *A New Course in Reading Pāli: Entering the Word of the Buddha*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1998.

Geiger, Wilhelm. *A Pāli Grammar*. Translated by Batakrishna Ghosh. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1994.

Nyanatiloka. *Buddhist Dictionary, Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1988.

Rhys Davids, T.W. and W. Stede (eds). *Pali-English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1993.

Warder, A.K. *Introduction to Pali*. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2001.

### **Pali Dictionaries (online)**

Rhys Davids, T.W. and W. Stede (eds). *Pali-English Dictionary*. Oxford: The Pāli Text Society.

Available on Digital Dictionaries of South Asia. Updated in Feb 2017.

<https://dsalsrv04.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/pali/>

Pāli Dictionary. Available on Buddhistdoor Global.

<https://www.buddhistdoor.net/dictionary/search/?k=Buddha&l=3>

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