

BSTC3041 Sanskrit IV

Course Description

Sanskrit, being one of the most ancient languages, is studied by scholars of language, religion, literature, history, and anthropology, and anyone interested in Indian and Buddhist cultural heritage. It is one of the three languages in which Buddhist teachings are preserved. Indian Buddhist schools, such as Sarvāstivāda, Yogācāra, Mādhyamikā, and the various schools of Indian Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, composed their texts in Sanskrit. Therefore, for students who intend to specialize in different aspects of Buddhism, a reading knowledge of Sanskrit is essential. Students of Buddhist philosophy and history will discover that knowledge of the Sanskrit language greatly enriches their studies. This course is designed for students who wish to read and comprehend Buddhist Sanskrit texts and employ Sanskrit Buddhist resources for their future research.

Prerequisite: BSTC3040 Sanskrit language III or teacher's approval

Course Content

The course is designed to equip you with the skills to read and understand Sanskrit Buddhist commentarial literature. We will delve into selected passages from key texts, such as Prajñākaramati's *commentary on the Bodhicaryāvatara*, Sthiramati's *commentary on Triṃśikārikā of Vasubandhu (Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣyaṃ)*, and selected passages from *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ* (Commentary on the Abhidharmakośa). As we progress, we will systematically introduce advanced grammatical structures, empowering you to navigate the complexities of these texts with confidence.

The pedagogy behind this selection of readings is to immerse you in the rich tradition of Sanskrit Buddhist commentarial literature. These texts, each with its unique style, are not just academic exercises but windows into the historical and philosophical development of Buddhism. For instance, the commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatara* is a religious text that guides us on the path to the bodhisattva ideal. The *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣyaṃ*, a key text of Yogācāra Buddhism, elucidates the three natures of realities. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ*, often described as a compendium of Buddhist philosophy, has left an indelible mark on the development of many Buddhist schools of thought.

Expected Learning Outcome

1. At the end of this course, students are expected to be able to read and comprehend classical Sanskrit Buddhist literature.
2. Students learn to examine and investigate Buddhist teachings from different perspectives.
3. Understand the development of Buddhist thoughts.
4. Students are enabled to present and utilize Sanskrit Buddhist sources for their future research.

Teaching and Learning Method

Lectures and class discussions

Offering Semester	Second Semester
Lecturer	Dr. Amrita Nanda
Office	Rm 4.09, 4/F Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus
Tel:	39175077/ 92850204
Email	nanda@hku.hk
Schedule	TBC
Class Venue	TBC

Assessment

50% coursework and 50% examination

- **50% - Coursework**
 - 10 %-Class-participation
 - 25 %- Mid-term Quiz (open-book).
 - 15 % a short essay (It is either a comprehensive essay on a selected Sanskrit passage or a translation of a selected Sanskrit passage).
- **50% - Final examination at the end of the semester. (Open-book examination)**

Reading Materials for this course:

Selected passages from the following Buddhist Sanskrit Texts will be studied:

1. *Abhidharmakośabhaṣyam* of Vasubandhu (chapter 3 lokanirdeśa)
2. *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā* of the Vasubandhu
3. Sthiramati's *Triṃśikā-vijñaptibhāṣyam* (commentary on the *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā*)

Detailed Lecture outlines:

Lectures 1

Selected passages from the **AKB**

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 2

Selected passages from the **AKB**

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 3

Selected passages from the **AKB**

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 4

Selected passages from the *AKB*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 5

Selected passages from the **Sthiramati's** *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣyam*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 6

Selected passages from the **Sthiramati's** *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣyam*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 7 (23/03/2026)

Selected passages from the **Sthiramati's** *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣyam*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 8

Selected passages from the **Sthiramati's** *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣyam*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 9

Selected passages from *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 10

Selected passages from *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 11

Selected passages from *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā*

Guide to the text and translation of the passages chosen with grammatical analysis.

Note: This schedule is both approximate and flexible. We may deviate from it depending on the pace of students' comprehension.

Reading materials will be provided by the course instructor before the class through Moodle.

Textbooks (only selected chapters).

Buescher, Hartmut (2007) *Sthimamati's Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya: Critical Edition of the Sanskrit Texts and its Tibetan Translation*. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ÖAW,

Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva with the Commentary Panjika of Prajnakaramati (ed.). Vaidya, P. L. The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, Darbhanga:1960.

Vasubandhu: Abhidharmakosa-bhāṣya (rev. 2nd ed.) Pradhan P. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Center, 1975.

Reference books

Bucknell, R.S. (1994). *Sanskrit Manual: A quick-reference guide to the phonology and grammar of Classical Sanskrit*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Dhammajoti, Kuala Lumpur (2015). *Reading Buddhist Sanskrit Texts: An Elementary Grammatical Guide* (3rd edition). Hong Kong: The Buddha-Dharma Centre of Hong Kong.

Edgertonm Franklin. (1953). *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. Vol. I & II. Indian Reprint, 2004.

Kale, Moreshwar R. (1884). *A Higher Sanskrit Grammar*. Indian Reprint 1977.

Monier, Williams (1979). *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers.

Speijer, J.S. (1998). *Sanskrit Syntax*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Whitney, William D. (1885). *The Roots, Verb-forms and Primary Derivatives of Sanskrit Language*. Reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass, 1973.