

Undergraduate Courses offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2023-2024

ELECTIVE COURSE

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 who is 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 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 enrich 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 possess equivalent knowledge (For UG curriculum)

Non-permissible combination: BSTC2041

Prerequisite:

BSTC3040 Sanskrit language III or teacher's approval (For Master of Buddhist Studies)

Non-permissible combination: BSTC7116

Course Content

The course mainly concentrates on the selected passages from the *Sthiramati's commentary on Triṃśīkārikā of Vasubandhu (Triṃśīkāvijñaptibhāṣyaṃ)*, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ* (Commentary on the Abhidharmakośa) the *Buddhacarita* by Aśvaghōṣa and the *Mahāvastu*. As the course proceeds, gradually and systematically, advanced grammatical structures employed in Sanskrit Buddhist commentarial literature and poetry literature will be introduced.

The pedagogy behind this selection of these readings is that these four texts represent three different genres of Buddhist Sanskrit literature. The two first is a commentarial literature that demonstrates style and techniques of the Buddhist Sanskrit commentarial literature, and in terms the doctrine, it is one of important text of the Yogācāra Buddhism elucidating the three natures of realities. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ* is often described as a compendium Buddhist philosophy, and its influence is visible in development of many Buddhist schools of thoughts. The *Buddhacarita* is an epic poem in the Sanskrit *mahākāvya* style on the life of Gautama Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa composed in the early second century CE. It elucidates the style of Sanskrit poetry, and the last, the *Mahāvastu* represents Sanskrit Avadāna literature. The Mahāvastu contains prose and verse written in mixed Sanskrit, Pāli and Prakrit. It is believed to have been compiled between the

2nd century BCE and 4th century CE. Doctrinally, The *Mahāvastu* is considered a primary source for the notion of a transcendent Buddha, common to all Mahāsāṃghika schools.

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 development of Buddhist thoughts.
4. Students are enabled to present 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	Every Sunday from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm
Class Venue	CPD-G.01

Assessment

50% coursework and 50% examination

- **50%** - Coursework
 - 15 %-Class-participation
 - 20 %- Mid-term Quiz (open-book).
 - 15 % a short essay (1500 words).
- **50%** - Final examination at the end of the semester. (Open-book examination)

Detailed Lecture outlines:

Lectures 1 – 2: Selected passages from the *Sthiramati's Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣyam*

Lecture 1:(21/01/2024)

- Introduction to the course
- **The Sanskrit text paragraphs 1-5:** dealing with non-self of person and non-self of Dharma (*pudgadharmānairātman*): Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 2:(28/01/2024)

- **The Sanskrit text transformation of consciousness (*vijñānapariṇāma*):** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 3-4 selected passages from **the first chapter of *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ***

Lecture 3: (04/02/2024)

- **section dealing with the definition of Abhidhidharma:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

(No class on Feb 11, 2024)

Lecture 4: (18/02/2024)

- **Section dealing with definition of conditioned and unconditioned dharmas:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 5-8 Selected passages from the *Mahāvastu Avadāna part*

Lecture 5: (25/02/2024)

- **chapter I: Story of Maugalyāyana's visit to hell, Sanskrit text 4-6:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 6: (03/03/2024)

- **chapter I: Story of Maugalyāyana's visit to hell, Story of Maugalyāyana's visit to hell, Sanskrit text 7-9:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

(No class on Mar 10, 2024)

Lecture 6:(17/03/2024)

- **chapter I: Story of Maugalyāyana's visit to hell, Sanskrit text 10-15:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 7: (24/03/2024)

- **chapter I: Story of Maugalyāyana's visit to hell, Sanskrit text 16-20:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 8: (31/03/2024)

- **chapter I: Story of Maugalyāyana's visit to hell, Sanskrit text 20-25:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lectures 9-2: the first chapter of *Buddhacarita*

Lecture 9: (7/04/2024)

- **Story of the birth of the Buddha, Sanskrit Verses 1-6:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 10: (14/04/2024)

- **Story of the birth of the Buddha, Sanskrit Verses 7-14:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 11: (21/04/2024)

- **Story of the birth of the Buddha, Sanskrit Verses 7-14:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lecture 12: (28/04/2024)

- **Story of the birth of the Buddha, Sanskrit Verses 15-20:** Guide to the text and translation of the selected passages 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).

Buddhacarita (ed.), Schotsman, Irma. Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies. 1995. (first chapter only).

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

Mahāvastu Avadāna (Vol, I). (ed.). Par É. Senart. Paris Imprimerie Nationale. 1882 (The first chapter only).

Vasubandhu: Abhidharmakosa-bhasya (rev. 2nd ed.) Pradhan P. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Center, 1975. (*prathamam kośasthānam* only).

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.