

Undergraduate Course offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2025–26
ELECTIVE COURSE
(OPEN TO ALL FACULTIES)

BSTC3044 Pāli language III

Academic Year 2025–2026

Lecturer	Dr. Dipen Barua
Office	Rm 4.12, 4/F, Centre of Buddhist Studies, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus
Mob./ Office Tel.	
E-mail address	dipen@hku.hk
Offering Semester	Semester I
Schedule	Every Sunday from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Class Venue	To be confirmed

Course Description

Pāli is the language of a large body of Theravāda canonical and non-canonical Buddhist literature. Here we find a rich variety of texts that contain valuable information on the religious, social, political, literary and linguistic history of South Asia. Important contributions are made in Pāli to philosophy and psychology through the analysis of the nature of *dharmas*, the classification of various kinds of mind and mental states, phenomenal processes and their causal relations. All of these topics can be understood through a careful study of Pāli literature. The course is devoted to the understating and translating of selected Pāli passages, as well as explaining the content of the Pāli canon and its commentaries and gradually building sufficient vocabularies for the purpose of reading the Pāli texts independently.

Course Content

This course helps students to practice translating selected texts from Pāli to English. It introduces sentences, passages, and sections chosen from a variety of Pāli canonical texts, such as the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, for students to learn grammar and practice translation skills with a focus given to analyzing Pāli passages meaningfully. Students will get the opportunity to develop their skills in understanding and translating the texts, while also acquainting themselves with the vast Pāli canonical literature.

Learning Outcome

By the end of this course, students are expected to read the Buddhist texts in Pāli with doctrinal value of early Buddhist teachings and culture. Students will also understand the nature of the Buddhist teachings within the context of the religion-philosophical system of ancient Indian thought.

Teaching and Learning Method

Lectures, class discussions and tutorials

Prerequisite

BSTC7007 Pāli II or teacher's approval

Assessment

50% coursework and 50% examination

- Coursework (50%):
 - Class participation (10%)
 - Mid-term test (20%)
 - Short essay (20%) (In the essay, students are required to provide full grammatical analysis, including the meaning, of selected Pāli *sutta* or passages)
- The final examination (50%) will be held at the end of the semester. It is an open-book exam. Students can use lecture notes, glossary and dictionary during the exam.

Lecture Outline for Semester 1

Lesson	Date	Contents
Lesson 1	7 Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the course• <i>Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta</i> (The Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion) [SN V 420 – 421]<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
Lesson 2	14 Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta</i> (The Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion) [SN V 421– 422]<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
Lesson 3	21 Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta</i> (The Discourse on Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion) [SN V 422– 424]<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.

Lesson 4	28 Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta</i> (The Establishing of Mindfulness Discourse) [MN I 55 – 56] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
Lesson 5	5 Oct 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta</i> (The Establishing of Mindfulness Discourse) [MN I 57 – 58] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
Lesson 6	12 Oct 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta</i> (The Establishing of Mindfulness Discourse) [MN I 61 – 63] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
No Class	19 Oct 2025	Reading Week
Lesson 7	26 Oct 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nidānasamyutta</i> (Connected Discourses on Causation): Chapter 1 – <i>Buddha Vagga</i> [SN II 1–4] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
Lesson 8	2 Nov 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maggasamyutta</i> (Connected Discourses on the Path): <i>Vibhaṅga Sutta</i> [SN V 8 – 9] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis. <p>Essay submission due</p>
Lesson 9	9 Nov 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gahapati Vagga</i> (Householders) [AN IV 208–212] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
Lesson 10	16 Nov 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bāla Vagga</i> (Fools) [AN I 61] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis. <p>Mid-term test</p>
Lesson 11	23 Nov 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mettānisaṃsa Sutta</i> (The Discourse on Advantages of Loving-kindness) [AN V 342] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis. • <i>Dhammapada–Yamaka Vagga</i> (The Path of the Dhamma–Pairs) [Dhp 1–2]

		○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis.
--	--	---

Notes: Lecture notes and supplementary materials will be provided in class throughout the semester.

Textbooks

The Dīgha Nikāya Vol I-III, edited by T.W. Rhys Davids and J.E. Carpenter. Oxford: PTS, 1889-2007.

The Majjhima Nikāya Vol I-III, edited by V. Trenckner, T.W. Rhys Davids, J. Estlin Carpenter, Robert Chalmers. Oxford: PTS, 1888-2001.

The Saṃyutta Nikāya Vol I-IV, edited by Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Leon Feer, and G.A. Somaratne. Oxford: PTS, 1884-2000.

The Aṅguttara Nikāya, Vol I-V, edited by A.K. Warder, Rev. Richard Morris, E. Hardy. Oxford: PTS, 1855-1999.

The Dhammapada, edited by Oskar von Hinüber and K.R. Norman. Oxford: PTS, 1994-1995.

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

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

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.

Pāli 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://dsalrv04.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/pali/>

Pāli Dictionary. Available on Buddhistdoor Global.

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