

Syllabus for Foundation in Buddhist Classical Tibetan
(A course applicable to students of the University Department)
From the Academic Year 2024–2025
Approved by the Ad-hoc Board of Studies in Pali and Buddhist Studies
Savitribai Phule Pune University

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Foundation Course in Buddhist Classical Tibetan

General Instructions about the Course, the Pattern of Examination and the Syllabus

I. General Instructions

I.1 General Structure: Foundation Course in Buddhist Classical Tibetan is a three-semester course of ten credits offered by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Savitribai Phule Pune University. The course is to be completed within one year. It contains two courses of four credits each and a third course in the form of a project of two credits.

Students will be introduced to the reading, understanding, and translating Buddhist classical Tibetan texts into any other language through lectures, group discussions, practice sessions, and project work. Teaching of semesters, I and II will be sequential. Syllabus of each course will be discussed in sixty clock hours (approximately) during each semester. Students are expected to carry out a small translation project on any chosen text as a part of course III in the third semester.

Students' understanding will be assessed on the basis of their performance on things, such as assignments, group discussion, seminar presentation, tutorial writing, written and oral examination, project work, etc.

Students are expected to maintain at least 75% attendance and to ensure their active participation in the class.

I.2 Introduction: Buddhism reached Tibet in the seventh century CE during the reign of king Srongbrtsansgam po (r. 614?–649/650 CE). During the reign of king Khrisrongldebrtsan (755–797 CE), Buddhism was accepted as one of the religions of Tibet. The king decreed that the Indian Buddhist texts be translated into Tibetan. From that time onwards, Tibetan scholars started translating Indian Buddhist texts into Tibetan. This activity of translating Buddhist (and later even non-Buddhist) texts into Tibetan continued till the 12th century CE. The translation activity continued at least till 18th century even after Buddhism disappeared from India. Since Sanskrit and other Indian languages are syntactically different from the Tibetan, and since there are cultural differences between India and Tibet, the translation committee set up by the king Khrisrongldebrtsan led down rules regarding the methods of translation. As a result of these rules, many Tibetan translations are literal translations of the original texts. After Buddhism disappeared from India, Indian Buddhists fled to Nepal and Tibet carrying with them a treasure of several thousand manuscripts. Thousands of

manuscripts in India got destroyed due to various reasons and many others have become inaccessible due to a number of reasons. In such a situation, the Tibetan translations are the only available source to access and understand the lost original text. At present, institutes such as the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath is trying to regain the lost Buddhist heritage through the Sanskrit restoration of the Tibetan texts and Hindi and English translations of the Tibetan works. The Khyentse Foundation, through its megaproject called '84000: Translating the Word of the Buddha' is making freely available the English translations of the Tibetan texts in an electronic media. The volume of the translated texts is so huge that despite these efforts, there is always a scarcity of trained translators. In view of this scarcity, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies has started the Foundation Course in Buddhist Classical Tibetan with the prime aim of training translators in the field.

The Foundation Course of Buddhist Classical Tibetan would offer an opportunity to students, particularly those of Buddhism and Sanskrit, to read and understand the Buddhist literature translated into Tibetan. It is in the scope of this course to introduce students to the Tibetan script, the basic grammar of Classical Tibetan and particular characteristics of the literature translated from Indian languages such as Sanskrit and Pali and the methodology used for these translations. The scope of this course is limited to reading and understanding classical Tibetan Buddhist texts translated from their Indian originals. It does not aim at teaching spoken Tibetan. The course will focus on the translations of Buddhist canonical texts, philosophical and literary works and scientific treatises.

I.3 Learning Outcome: After completing this Foundation Course the students are expected to:

- Understand the Buddhist Tibetan texts and the methodology used for translating texts from Indian languages into Tibetan
- Gain capacity of translating the Buddhist classical Tibetan texts into any modern language
- Acquire ability to read and understand the texts originally written in classical Tibetan
- Develop ability in students having good knowledge of Sanskrit to back-translate the lost Buddhist Sanskrit texts into their original language
- Become trained translators who can meet the demand of ongoing translation projects

I.4 Eligibility: H.S.C. or its equivalent examination of any recognized board

I.5 Duration: The duration of the Foundation Course in Buddhist Classical Tibetan will be

one and a half academic year consisting of three semesters of fifteen weeks each.

I.6 Course Fee: The Admission Fee for the course, the Annual Tuition Fee, Examination Fee, Record Fee, Statement of Marks and other essential fees will be as per the rules and regulations of the Savitribai Phule Pune University.

I.7 Teaching:

- Medium of instruction - English or Marathi
- Lectures - Four lectures and one tutorial/practical per course per week, i.e., five hours per week for fifteen weeks in a semester.
- Lectures of course I and its evaluation will be done in the first semester whereas lectures of course II and its evaluation will be done in the second semester.
- By the end of the first semester students will decide the topic of their project.
- Students will have to carry out individual/group project and submit a project report in the form of a translation by the end of semester III.

II. Pattern of Examination

II.1 Assessment and Evaluation:

- A Foundation Course student will be assessed for his/her performance at a written test of 250 marks, i.e., two courses of 100 marks each and project work of 50 marks.
- For each semester there will be an external examination of 50 marks and an internal examination of 50 marks for first two courses and 40 marks for external and 10 marks for internal for the third course.
- The external examination will be held at the end of each semester.
- The internal assessment will be carried out throughout the semester.
- The nature of the internal assessment will be varied. It will include at least three components out of written test, group discussion, seminar presentation, tutorial writing, and oral exam.
- In addition to this, a translation project is to be submitted at the end of the third semester.
- There will be a pre-submission seminar on the translation project, which will be considered as an internal exam.
- As an external examination of course III there will be an evaluation of the project by referees.

II.2 Passing:

- To pass the Foundation Course in Buddhist Classical Tibetan examination a candidate must obtain 40% of the total marks in each of the external and internal examination (i.e., separate passing: 20 in external and 20 in internal examination)
- Or, aggregate 40% marks with at least 30% marks in either external or internal examination (i.e., 15 marks out of 50)
- In the case of course III Project, aggregate 50% marks in project and internal assessment are necessary.
- Those of the successful candidates will be given appropriate grades in accordance with the grading pattern accepted by the university.

II.3 Question Pattern:

Semester I

Course I: Basic Structure of Buddhist Classical Tibetan (100 marks)

- External written examination (50 marks): Long answer (20 marks), short answer (10 marks), vocabulary (10 marks), and translation (10 marks)
- Internal examination (50 marks): Any three components out of Written test, Seminar presentation, Tutorial writing, and Oral exam.

Semester II

Course II: Translating Buddhist Classical Tibetan Texts (100 marks)

- External written examination (50 marks): Long answer (10 marks), short answer (10 marks), vocabulary (10 marks), and translation (20 marks)
- Internal examination (50 marks): Any three components out of Written test, Seminar presentation, Tutorial writing, and Oral exam.

Course III: Translation Project

- External written examination (40 marks): Translation project (40 marks)
- Internal examination (10 marks): Pre-submission seminar (10 marks)

III. Syllabus

III.1 Outline:

Semester I

Course I: Basic Structure of Buddhist Classical Tibetan

Semester II

Course II: Advanced Structure of Buddhist Classical Tibetan and Translation Techniques

Semester III

Course III: Translation Project

III.2 Detailed Syllabus:

Semester I

Course I: Basic Structure of Buddhist Classical Tibetan

Credit 1: A brief introduction to the spread of Buddhism in Tibet, the role of royal dynasties in the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet, beginnings of the translation activity, the establishment and the role of the translation committee, structure of the Tibetan canon; introduction to the Tibetan script: vowels and consonants, Prescripts, postscripts, postpostscripts, superscripts, subscripts; a brief guide to the pronunciation; nominal particles, indefinite particles, demonstrative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, plural particles

Credit 2: Grammatical Cases: Instrumental, Genitive, Locative; possessive particles; grammatical Cases: Accusative, Dative, Ablative; sentence patterns, interrogative pronouns, isolation particle

Credit 3: Sociative particle, concessive particle, adverbs of negation; stem form of Verbs; case particles in connection with verbal stems

Credit 4: Elegant and honorific modes of speech, personal pronouns, possessive pronouns; semifinal particles, coordination particles, relative pronouns; reading the select portions of Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra in its Tibetan translation together with the Sanskrit original

Textbooks:

1. Beyer, Stephan V. 1993. *The Classical Tibetan Language*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.
2. Hahn, Michael. 1996. *Lehrbuch der klassischen tibetischen Schriftsprache*. Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.
3. Hodge, Stephen. 1993. *An Introduction to Classical Tibetan*. Wiltshire: Aris and Phillips Ltd.

Reference books:

1. Grenard, F. 1904. *Tibet. The Country and Its Inhabitants*. London: Paternoster Row.
2. Kapstein, Matthew T., and Brandon Dotson. 2007. *Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet*. Leiden: Brill.
3. McKay, Alex, ed. 2003. *The History of Tibet. Vol. I. The Early Period: to c. AD 850. The Yarlung Dynasty*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
4. McKay, Alex, ed. 2003. *The History of Tibet. Vol. II. The Medieval Period: c. 850-1895. The Development of Buddhist Paramountcy*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
5. Snellgrove, David, and Hugh Richardson. 2003. *A Cultural History of Tibet*. Bangkok: Orchid Press.

6. van Schaik, Sam. 2011. *Tibet. A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
7. Waddell, L. Austine. 1895. *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Limited.

E-sources:

1. The Precious Key: An Introduction to Literary Tibetan for Dharma Students - Mccomas Taylor and Lama ChoedakYuthok:
http://chl-old.anu.edu.au/languages/tibetan/precious_key.pdf
2. <https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/eastasian/tibetan/links1.html>
3. <https://treasuryoflives.org>
4. <https://library.columbia.edu/indiv/eastasian/tibetan/guide.html>
5. <http://www.aibs.columbia.edu/databases/login/login-form.php>
6. <http://bmc.lib.umich.edu/bas>
7. <http://latse.org/byara>
8. <http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?AUS5589>
9. <http://www.tibetbook.net>
10. <http://www.thlib.org/>
11. <http://www.asianclassics.org/>
12. <http://www.tbrc.org>
13. <http://web1.otani.ac.jp/crj/twrpe/peking/>
14. <http://www.dtab.uni-bonn.de/>
15. <http://otdo.aa-ken.jp/>
16. <http://idp.bl.uk/>
17. <http://www.himalayanart.org/>
18. <http://interactive.rma2.org>
19. <http://www.digitalhimalaya.com/>
20. www.tibetmap.com
21. <http://thlib.org/reference/>
22. <http://nitartha.org/>
23. <http://www.thlib.org/collections/texts/jiats/>
24. <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog>
25. <http://www.tibetology.ac.cn/>
26. <https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/forschung/ngmcp>

Semester II

Course II: Advanced Structure of Buddhist Classical Tibetan and Translation Techniques

Credit 1: Periphrastic constructions, Auxilliary verbs, Causatives, desideratives, duratives

Credit 2: Reflexive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, diminutive particles; Adverbial particles, intensification, collective particles; Cardinal and ordinal numbers

Credit 3: Reading the select portions of the Tibetan translation of the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā in its Tibetan translation together with the Sanskrit original; Reading the select portions of the Tibetan translation of the Maitrakanyakāvadāna of the Avadānaśataka in its Tibetan translation together with the Sanskrit original

Credit 4: Reading the select portions of the Tibetan translation of the Adhyardhaśataka of Māṭrceṭa in its Tibetan translation together with the Sanskrit original; Reading the select portions of Subhūticandra's Kavikāmadhenu in its Tibetan translation together with the Sanskrit original

Text books:

1. Bailey, D. R. Shackleton, ed. 1951. *The Śatapañcāśataka of Māṭrceṭa: Sanskrit Text Tibetan Translation, Commentary and Chinese Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Beyer, Stephan V. 1993. *The Classical Tibetan Language*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.
3. Deokar, Lata Mahesh, ed. 2014. *Subhūticandra's Kavikāmadhenu on the Amarakośa 1.1.1 – 1.4.8: Together with Si tu Pañchen's Tibetan Translation*. Marburg: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.
4. Hahn, Michael. 1996. *Lehrbuch der klassischen tibetischen Schriftsprache*. Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.
5. Hodge, Stephen. 1993. *An Introduction to Classical Tibetan*. Wiltshire: Aris and Phillips Ltd.
6. Tripathi, Shridhar, ed. 1987. *Madhyamakaśāstra of Nāgārjuna with the Commentary: Prasannapadā by Candrakīrti*. Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning.
7. Vaidya, P. L., ed. 2000. *Avadāna-śataka*. second. Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning.

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1. Grenard, F. 1904. *Tibet. The Country and Its Inhabitants*. London: Paternoster Row.
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6. van Schaik, Sam. 2011. *Tibet. A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
7. Waddell, L. Austine. 1895. *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Limited.

E-sources

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2. <https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/eastasian/tibetan/links1.html>
3. <https://treasuryoflives.org>
4. <https://library.columbia.edu/indiv/eastasian/tibetan/guide.html>
5. <http://www.aibs.columbia.edu/databases/login/login-form.php>
6. <http://bmc.lib.umich.edu/bas>
7. <http://latse.org/byara>
8. <http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?AUS5589>
9. <http://www.tibetbook.net>
10. <http://www.thlib.org/>
11. <http://www.asianclassics.org/>
12. <http://www.tbrc.org>
13. <http://web1.otani.ac.jp/cri/twrpe/peking/>
14. <http://www.dtab.uni-bonn.de/>
15. <http://otdo.aa-ken.jp/>
16. <http://idp.bl.uk/>

17. <http://www.himalayanart.org/>
18. <http://interactive.rma2.org>
19. <http://www.digitalhimalaya.com/>
20. www.tibetmap.com
21. <http://thlib.org/reference/>
22. <http://nitartha.org/>
23. <http://www.thlib.org/collections/texts/jiats/>
24. <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog>
25. <http://www.tibetology.ac.cn/>
26. <https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/forschung/ngmcp>
27. <http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html>

Semester III

Course III: Translation Project

Translation project based on the selected portions of a particular Buddhist Classical Tibetan text