

Intermediate 1-3 Tibetan

Course Syllabus

Objectives and Learning Outcome

This course is designed to function as an intermediate forum where students are given the opportunity to develop and refine their understanding of Classical Tibetan through the lens of Buddhist sources. In the early stages, it draws on Buddhist narrative literature for orientation and then proceeds to Mahāyāna literature.

Mahāyāna sources represent an extensive component in Classical Tibetan literature and hence constitute a good platform from which to launch the further study of classical Tibetan. Since they were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan, they also constitute a good area of application of grammatical principles mapped in Hahn's Textbook of Classical Tibetan which served as textbook for Classical Beginners 1 to 3.

At the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the linguistic features and doctrinal positions of the texts that have been read in class. They should also be capable of independently reading and interpreting texts from related genres of Mahāyāna literature. Since the sources are read in classical Tibetan, they will have acquired competence in the linguistic peculiarities of Mahāyāna and Buddhist narrative materials.

The class builds on the grammatical descriptions included of in Michael Hahn's *Textbook of Classical Tibetan*, and the derivative publication by Joanna Bialek, *A Textbook in Classical Tibetan* (2022).

Scope and Syllabus

This course is designed to equip students with an intermediate knowledge of classical Tibetan, obtained through reading Mahāyāna sūtras. Since the texts selected for this course are read in the original languages in which have been preserved (mainly Tibetan, but also in Sanskrit), sound elementary competence of Tibetan is required. The content of this course falls into two categories. About two thirds of the contact hours will be spent on reading and interpreting the texts selected for this class. This will take place in seminar settings where students are expected to contribute actively to the linguistic and doctrinal interpretation of the reading material. For this to proceed at an acceptable pace, it is essential that students have prepared the relevant passages at home and are broadly familiar with their contents. The texts read for this course will be taken from the large corpus of Mahāyāna sūtras or, on occasion, from Buddhist narrative literature. Second, by integrating contextual enquiry and text-specific findings, the lectures aim to impart key-principles pertaining to textual analysis and to evaluate the role of text-based research in the study of Buddhism.

Reading Lists

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