

TSTD 102: Buddhist Philosophy and Hermeneutics II

Spring 2022

Instructor: Ka-Nying Monastery's Khenpo or Lopön (TBA)

Translator: Maria Vasylieva Email: maria.vasylieva@ryi.org

Credits: 6

Class Time:

Monday–Friday at 11:00am–12:30pm (Kathmandu GMT +5:45)

Review Class Time:

Sec 1: Wednesday 4:45pm – 5:45pm (Kathmandu GMT +5:45)

Sec 2: Wednesday 9:15pm – 10:15pm (Kathmandu GMT +5:45)

Required Root Text:

Śāntideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*. Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. (Boston: Shambhala, 2006).

Required Commentary:

Kunzang Pelden, *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech: A Detailed Commentary on Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattva*. Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. (Boston: Shambhala, 2007).

Course Description:

The course builds upon the TSTD 101: Buddhist Philosophy and Hermeneutics I continuing with the study of the renowned *Way of the Bodhisattva* (Skt. *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, Tib. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*) composed by Śāntideva (c.685-763)—a great Indian scholar, bodhisattva and mahāsiddha. *Bodhicaryāvatāra* teaches the complete Mahāyāna path to enlightenment, including all necessary preliminary, main and concluding practices. Students will learn how to develop the motivation of *bodhicitta*, as well as how to carry out the application of the six *pāramitās*—generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration and wisdom. It is said that the purpose of the Dharma is to transform our minds. Among all Buddhist treatises, *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is one of the most powerful texts that serves this purpose. It is considered extremely important as it lays the Mahāyāna foundation for the rest of Buddhist philosophical studies.

The in-depth study of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* provides a unique opportunity for the application of the traditional Buddhist mind training (Tib. *blo sbyong*). For this method to be effective, students need an on-going transmission of the traditional teachings, serious personal dedication, and continuous active engagement. The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* course is designed to serve this purpose in the most effective way. It consists of two main components: (1) daily lecture class, taught by an experienced Ka-Nying monastery's lopön or khenpo and translated into English, and (2) one weekly review class (per Time Zone Group).

In the daily lecture class, the lopön or khenpo will provide oral commentary on the text, following in the tradition of Indian and Tibetan masters over the centuries since the verses were composed. Additionally, there will be a review & discussion class led by the translator, which will meet once a week for an hour in two different time zones. This review & discussion class is a required part of the course and is intended to clarify and support the material covered in lecture class. The review & discussion provides a forum for students to ask questions and raise topics covered in the lecture that they would prefer to discuss with other students or have clarified by the translator. In the review & discussion class, students will also consider the material covered in lectures from different perspectives, as well as study and discuss additional video, audio and textual materials that will expand and deepen their understanding.

Course Requirements & Grading:

Course requirements are aimed at helping the students to develop vital academic skills. During the semester, there will be two oral memorization quizzes: students will be given a selection of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* verses to memorize either in English, Tibetan or Sanskrit and then tested on it orally during a review class. In addition, there will be two short (~3-4 pages) academic papers assigned. The academic paper writing is an extremely important skill. Thus, in the review classes, students will learn how to write academic papers and then acquire practical experience in the process. In the middle of the semester, there will be a written midterm exam to stimulate integration of the studied material. And, in the end of the semester, final assessment will include a final paper (~5-6 pages) and a written final exam.

To pass this course, students must meet an 80% minimum attendance requirement.

Grades will be assigned according to the following categories:

Memorization Quizzes (2):	10% of final grade
Short Papers (2):	20% of final grade
Midterm Exam (1):	20% of final grade
Active Class Participation:	10% of final grade
Final Assessment (1):	40% of final grade (final paper 20% and final exam 20%)

A numerical mark will be given for each of the course requirements. At the end of the semester, these will be averaged, and a letter grade given according to the following **grading scheme**:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	≥ 93.3%
A-	≥ 90.0%
B+	≥ 86.6%
B	≥ 83.3%
B-	≥ 80.0%
C+	≥ 76.6%
C	≥ 73.3%
C-	≥ 70.0%
D	≥ 60-69%
F	< 60%

Academic Integrity:

Students must be familiar with what academic integrity (or dishonesty) and plagiarism mean and behave accordingly (refer to the Student Guidebook for further details). In case of uncertainty about what academic integrity means, please consult with the translator.

Assignment Schedule:

TBA