

KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES
AT RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE

Master of Arts (MA)
Translation, Textual Interpretation and Philology

Program Course Description
Approved 2013



Kathmandu, Nepal

As approved by the School of Arts' Faculty Board on 17th July 2013
and to be implemented by
Kathmandu University's Centre for Buddhist Studies
at Rangjung Yeshe Institute.

About Kathmandu University

Kathmandu University was established by an Act of Parliament in November 1991. The University began functioning from December 11, 1991, and was formally inaugurated on August 2, 1995.

Kathmandu University is an autonomous, non-profit, non-governmental public institution of higher learning.

The mission of the university is to:

- ◆ Promote all-round development of students' abilities and personalities.
- ◆ Develop an awareness of the role of science and its application in understanding problems of society.
- ◆ Extend and disseminate knowledge and encourage its application.
- ◆ Develop a community of scholars, students and staff.

The University site is located at Dhulikhel, Kavre, in Kathmandu, Nepal and covers an area of 17 hectares of land. The University offers its academic and short-term programs through six schools:

- ◆ School of Management
- ◆ School of Science
- ◆ School of Engineering
- ◆ School of Arts
- ◆ School of Education
- ◆ School of Medical Sciences

MASTER OF ARTS IN TRANSLATION, TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION AND PHILOLOGY

The School of Arts provides a Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies at Kathmandu University – Centre for Buddhist Studies (KU-CBS), which is located at Rangjung Yeshe Institute (RYI), Boudhanath, Kathmandu. The program has a yearly enrollment capacity of 10 students.

KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES AT RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE

Master of Arts (MA) in Translation, Textual Interpretation and Philology

INTRODUCTION

The MA program at Kathmandu University - Centre for Buddhist Studies is a 2-year (4 semester, 60 credit) program that combines graduate-level seminars with practicums in which students work with the original primary source literature and languages of the Buddhist tradition. The aim of the program is to introduce students to the methods and skills involved in translation, textual interpretation, and philology and to develop their ability to undertake independent translation projects and translation research within the field of Buddhist Studies. Emphasis will be on translating texts from Tibetan into English. After the first year of the program, each student is assigned a Thesis Supervisor who works with the student on developing the thesis proposal and the thesis itself.

APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

To be admitted to the MA Program, a student should have a Baccalaureate degree from an accredited academic institution and should have received the following academic credits:

- ◆ Four courses (12 credits) in Asian Religion or Buddhist Studies
- ◆ Six courses (18 credits) in Classical Tibetan (or equivalent)
- ◆ Two courses (6 credits) in Sanskrit
- ◆ Two courses (6 credits) in colloquial Tibetan

Meeting the minimum entrance requirements does not automatically guarantee admission. All qualified applications are subject to final approval by the Graduate Committee at CBS. Applicants holding an appropriate degree without all required elements may still qualify to enter the MA program by completing preparatory course work as prescribed by the Graduate Committee at CBS.

For information regarding the application process as well as for applying to the program, please go to our website at www.ryi.org/admissions.

EVALUATION, ADMISSION AND NOTIFICATION

Once all components of the application have been completed the admissions committee will review the application.

Normally a decision on admission will be made within one month of the close of applications and students will be notified of the outcome via email.

Successful applicants must accept or decline the admissions offer within two weeks in an email reply and secure their places in the MA Program by submitting the full tuition payment for either one or two semesters, or a deposit of US \$500. The remainder of the tuition is due on the first day of classes.

COURSES

To complete the MA in Translation, Textual Interpretation and Philology, 60 credits of the following course elements must be completed. (See below for Course Descriptions.)

- TSTD 701 Buddhist Philosophical Traditions I**
- TSTD 702 Buddhist Philosophical Traditions II**
- TSTD 703 Advanced Buddhist Readings I: Sanskrit (with permission)**
- TSTD 704 Advanced Buddhist Readings II: Sanskrit (with permission)**
- BSTD 705 Methodology Seminar I (mandatory)**
- BSTD 706 Methodology Seminar II (mandatory)**
- BSTD 803 Methodology Seminar III (mandatory)**
- BSTD 707 Translation Workshop I (mandatory)**
- BSTD 708 Translation Workshop II (mandatory)**
- BSTD 801 Independent Reading (mandatory)**
- BSTD 802 Guided Studies (mandatory)**
- BSTD 810 MA Thesis (mandatory)**

OUTLINE OF COURSES

During Semesters 1 and 2, students choose between Buddhist Philosophical Traditions and Advanced Buddhist Readings.

Semester 1	Credits
Buddhist Philosophical Traditions I - (TSTD 701)	6
Advanced Buddhist Readings I : Sanskrit - (TSTD 703)	6
Translation Workshop I - (BSTD 707)	6
Methodology Seminar I - (BSTD 705)	3

Semester 2	Credits
Buddhist Philosophical Traditions II - (TSTD 702)	6
Advanced Buddhist Readings II : Sanskrit - (TSTD 704)	6
Translation Workshop II - (BSTD 708)	6
Methodology Seminar II - (BSTD 706)	3

Semester 3	Credits
Independent Reading - (BSTD 801)	6
Guided Studies - (BSTD 802)	6
Methodology Seminar III - (BSTD 803)	3

Semester 4	Credits
MA Thesis (BSTD 810)	15

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

TSTD 701	Buddhist Philosophical Traditions I	6 credits
TSTD 702	Buddhist Philosophical Traditions II	6 credits

This is a series of specialized courses in Buddhist philosophy and scriptural interpretation taught by Khenpos and Lopons (monastic professors). The aim of this series is to deepen the knowledge of complex Buddhist philosophical topics and their relations to the broader field of Buddhist studies and apply more nuanced analyses of the primary source texts studied. Course readings are primarily classical Sanskrit treatises and their Tibetan commentaries in areas such as Abhidharma, Madhyamaka, and Yogācāra thought. In addition to taking exams in which the students will practice some of the traditional Tibetan arts of textual study, such as memorization and commentarial exegesis, students will write papers in which they will be required to reflect on the methodology of interpretation and translation as practiced within the living Tibetan Buddhist tradition and in light of modern disciplines and arts of philology and interpretation.

Prerequisites: TSTD 701, None. For TSTD 702, successful completion of TSTD 701.

TSTD 703	Advanced Buddhist Readings I - Sanskrit`	6 credits
TSTD 704	Advanced Buddhist Readings II - Sanskrit	6 credits

These courses are readings undertaken by students individually with the help of a Sanskrit Instructor. The texts read in this course are normally classical texts from the Sanskrit literary traditions but may include other traditions and genres of Sanskrit literature relevant for understanding Buddhist texts in their South Asian context. The courses are designed to help students develop the ability to read, interpret and translate complex Buddhist material in Sanskrit. Students write papers in which they reflect on the methodology of interpretation and translation as it relates to the Buddhist tradition and in light of modern disciplines of philology and interpretation. This course option is recommended only for students who are already reading classical Tibetan at an advanced level.

Prerequisites: TSTD 703: Prior Sanskrit study. For TSTD 704: Successful completion of TSTD 703.

BSTD 705	Methodology Seminar I	3 credits
BSTD 706	Methodology Seminar II	3 credits
BSTD 803	Methodology Seminar III	3 credits

The Methodology Seminars are courses on translation method and include discussion of issues such as target language style, audience, translation policy, cultural context, variant meanings, consistency in usage, issues in translation studies and handling translation problems. Also discussed in these courses are the methodological issues involved in translating religious texts in general and Buddhist texts in particular. The courses introduce the student to the field of Translation Studies while making

use of specific case studies to analyze translation methods of particular relevance to the translation of Buddhist texts, with an emphasis on texts written in Sanskrit and Tibetan. The courses develop the ability of the graduate student to engage in critical scholarship and research in the field of Translation Studies.

Prerequisites: BSTD 705, None. For BSTD 706 and 803, the previous course in the series.

BSTD 707 Translation Workshop I 6 credits

BSTD 708 Translation Workshop II 6 credits

This course is a translation workshop where students bring their translations for critique and comment from the faculty member (an experienced translator) and their fellow students. Issues of accuracy, clarity, concision, readability, and suitability are considered and discussed. A suitable text is selected and translated by the entire class. In addition to sessions where students' translations are analyzed and critiqued, the history of the text and its place in the overall cultural and religious history of the tradition are discussed and analyzed in plenum with the faculty member and other students.

Prerequisites: BSTD 707, None. For BSTD 708, successful completion of BSTD 707.

BSTD 801 Independent Reading 6 credits

This course involves independent reading in the genre of the text chosen for the thesis to familiarize students with the vocabulary, idioms and conventions of that genre. Students also do secondary reading on such topics as history, philosophy, philology, anthropology, and textual criticism as it relates to their chosen texts. Student are guided in their reading by the Thesis Supervisor and, during bi-weekly meetings, they discuss key points of the texts being read as it relates to translation issues and examine the student's understanding of the content of the texts.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of the first year of the MA.

BSTD 802 Guided Studies 6 credits

This course is a bi-weekly workshop in which students will exchange translations of the texts they are working on for their thesis and discuss other translations of related material when relevant. By the beginning of the fall semester, students should have draft translations of a significant portion of their thesis texts to share with the class. The aims of this workshop are to: 1) provide structure and accountability at the early stages of the thesis project, 2) give students an opportunity to discuss their own texts/genres and the specific challenges of translating these, 3) create an opportunity for students to learn from each other's work and understanding, 4) identify and articulate specific solutions and strategies for themselves and future translators, and 5) polish the grammar, style and clarity of their translations. Discussions will focus primarily on the specifics of translation

while also keeping in view larger concerns of method and theory. Students will be responsible for distributing and presenting their own translations and other relevant material, reading and commenting on classmates' translations in advance of seminar meetings, and compiling a digest of key translation problems and solutions related to their texts.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of the first year of the MA.

BSTD 810 MA Thesis 15 credits

The thesis will be a translation of a previously untranslated text and should have an appropriate introduction that puts the text and its translation into the appropriate historical, doctrinal, and literary context. By April 30th of the first year of study in the MA program, the student must submit a Thesis Proposal (approx. 1,500 - 1,800 words), developed in collaboration with the Thesis Supervisor, for approval by the Graduate Committee at CBS. In order to proceed to the third semester of study it is a requirement that this committee approves the thesis proposal. The length of the thesis is restricted to a maximum of 25,000 words. The defense of the thesis is carried out in examination by the Thesis Supervisor and an External Examiner appointed by the Graduate Committee at CBS as per KU policy.

MA THESIS GUIDELINES**PROPOSAL**

To advance to the third semester of the MA program, a thesis proposal must be submitted to and approved by the Graduate Committee at CBS. The proposal should be approximately 1,500 to 1,800 words in length (excluding bibliography). Pages should be double-spaced (approx. 250 words per page) and contain the following elements:

1. Personal Details and Thesis Title.

On the first page of the proposal, the name and year of enrollment into the MA program should be listed together with a tentative descriptive title for the thesis. The title may be changed but if the topic is changed considerably, a revised thesis proposal may be necessary.

2. Introduction.

An introduction to the dissertation that specifies the text or texts to be translated and addresses the significance of the text(s) within the context of Buddhist history and thought, genre, related works, cultural context, and so forth. (Maximum 2 pages)

3. Outline.

A tentative outline of the individual sections in the thesis.

4. Overview of Existing Translations and Research.

A brief overview of previous translations and research within the area of the thesis topic, mentioning how the thesis is positioned in relation to existing scholarship.

5. Methodological Approach.

A methodological discussion of the thesis explaining the planned approach to the research and translation.

8. Bibliography.

A preliminary bibliography of relevant primary and secondary literature.

GRADUATE COMMITTEE

The Graduate Committee is the central body responsible for the implementation of all graduate study programs at CBS. The committee consists of five members. Three of these members are appointed yearly by the Head of Academic Programs at CBS.

The committee consists of the following posts:

1. Graduate Committee Head:

This post is filled by the Dean of Arts, Kathmandu University.

2. Secretary:

This post is filled by the Head of Academic Programs, CBS.

3. Members:

This consists of three members elected yearly by the management committee at CBS.

The Graduate Committee convenes as necessary to review applications and to implement the graduate program.

SUPERVISION

During the first year of their program, each student is assigned a Thesis Supervisor (TS) who works with the student on developing the thesis proposal and the thesis itself. Once the thesis proposal has been approved by the Graduate Committee, the student and the TS work together during the final year of the program to develop a bibliography, discuss issues of method and style, and analyze the historical, literary, and philosophical setting for the thesis topic. Student and supervisor should stay in regular contact during the final year; in particular, during the fourth semester. During the fourth semester, the student is entitled to six 1-hour meetings with the TS to cover the following:

- ◆ Further general discussion of the topic, literature, and thesis outline, based on the Introduction written earlier.
- ◆ A follow-up meeting to finalize and elaborate on the working method and the outline of the thesis.
- ◆ Additional meetings to discuss the individual chapters of the thesis.
- ◆ A final meeting in which the supervisor approves submission of the thesis.

STRUCTURE AND STYLE

The thesis should contain the following elements:

- ◆ Title page listing the title, name of student, date and supervisor's name.
- ◆ Table of contents
- ◆ Abstract (1page)
- ◆ The thesis itself

- ◆ Bibliography
- ◆ Appendices (if relevant).

The thesis should be written in Times Extended Roman - 12 point font with double spacing between lines. All notes should be in footnotes rather than endnotes, and be written in Times Extended Roman - 10 point font. The style in the thesis should follow the general outlines given in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (available in the MA Program library).

LENGTH OF THE THESIS

The length of the thesis is restricted to a maximum of 25,000 words, including title page and table of contents, but excluding bibliography.

SUBMISSION

The submitted thesis should be ring or spiral-bound and submitted to the CBS office as three hard copies, plus one text or .pdf file saved onto a CD or DVD.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

The final thesis should be submitted by April 1st of the second year of the student's enrollment in the program. If a student is unable to submit the thesis by this deadline, he or she may send a written appeal to the Graduate Committee before the expiry of the deadline to apply for an extension. If the Graduate Committee grants this extension, the deadline can be extended up to a maximum of 15 months. For extensions of deadlines, the student must continue registration in the MA program as a thesis-based student.

ASSESSMENT AND DEFENSE

The thesis should demonstrate a thorough knowledge of translation practices and methodology within the Buddhist tradition along with the ability to engage with primary source material for research purposes. To this effect, the thesis will be assessed by the TS and an External Examiner appointed by the Graduate Committee at CBS as per KU policy to determine if it is ready for an oral defense. The assessment must be completed within one month following the submission of the thesis at the CBS office.

Assuming the thesis is ready for defense, an oral defense will be arranged within six weeks of the thesis submission date. Exception to this rule occurs when a thesis is submitted after April 1st. In such cases, the oral defense will be scheduled for the beginning of the Fall Semester or during the summer at the convenience of the TS and outside reader.

At the end of the thesis defense, the student will receive a pass/fail grade for the thesis.

The oral defense is not open to the public unless the student gives written approval to open the defense to the public.

APPEALS

If the student wishes to appeal the assessment of the thesis, he or she may do so by following the regular appeals policy at CBS.

EVALUATION SCHEME

The academic performance of the students is judged through:

- ◆ Continuous in-semester assessment
- ◆ End-semester examination

The continuous in-semester assessment of the student is made by the concerned faculty member using any or a combination of the following:

- ◆ Written tests
- ◆ Oral tests
- ◆ Assignment
- ◆ Seminars
- ◆ Term papers

The end-semester examination will normally be conducted according to the examination schedule notified by the concerned office.

The mode of evaluation in a given course is decided by the concerned faculty member who may assign varying weights to one or more of the evaluation modes. The faculty member will announce such weights at the beginning of the course.

GRADING MODE:

In each course, the student will be evaluated on a 4-point scale as follows:

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Letter Grade									
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.0	0.0
Grade Value									

The grades used to indicate the quality of a student's performance are as follows:

- A = Outstanding
- B = Good
- C = Fair
- D = Poor
- F = Failure

Apart from the letter grades mentioned above, the following letter grade may also be awarded:

- W = Withdrawn
- INC= Incomplete
- NC = Non-credit course
- S = Satisfactory
- U = Unsatisfactory
- AU = Audit

GRADUATION

To graduate, students must complete the minimum number of required course credits with not less than a C grade in each course.

Additionally, a minimum grade point average (GPA) of at least 2 in every semester and a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 3.0 is required for graduation.

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