KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES AT
RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE

Web Syllabus

Course Code	TSTD 101
Course Title	Buddhist Philosophy and Hermeneutics I
Course Topic	*The Way of the Bodhisattva* (*Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*)
Credits	6
Semester, Year	Fall 2027
Schedule: class day & time	Please consult F27 course schedule
Class Location	Please consult F27 course schedule
Course Delivery Mode	Concurrent (on campus and live streamed for NC students)
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 is dedicated to the study of the renowned text, *The Way of the Bodhisattva* (Skt. *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, Tib. b*yang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*) composed by Śāntideva (c.685-763) — a great Indian scholar, bodhisattva and *mahāsiddha*. The text teaches the complete Mahāyāna path to enlightenment, including all necessary preliminary, main and concluding practices. Students will learn how Buddhists develop the motivation of *bodhicitta*, as well as how they carry out the application of the six *pāramitās*: generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration and wisdom. This Buddhist treatise is not so much a dry outline of the spiritual path but is considered one of the most powerful teachings to engender genuine transformation within the student and practitioner of Santideva's instructions. Moreover, the study of this treatise is considered foundational for all further philosophical study at Rangjung Yeshe Institute, and for Buddhist studies in general.

The in-depth study of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* provides a unique opportunity for the application of traditional Buddhist mind training practices (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 components: (1) daily lectures taught by a monastic instructor (khenpo or lopon) from Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling monastery, translated into English, and (2) one or two weekly review classes led by the course translator.

In the daily lecture class, the khenpo or lopon will provide an 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 review classes led by the translator, where the content is reviewed and discussed. These review classes are a required part of the course and are intended to clarify and support the material covered in lecture classes. They provide 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 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 to expand and deepen their understanding.

Course Requirements	
How do I succeed in the course?	Course requirements are aimed at helping students to develop vital academic skills. During the semester, there will be two oral memorization quizzes. Students will be given ahead of time ten verses of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* to memorize for each oral quiz, either in English, Tibetan, Sanskrit, or Chinese. Each student will be prompted to recite one verse during each quiz session. To encourage active learning, students will be asked to submit daily class notes once a week in the form of assignments. The submission can be either in jpg. format from your hand written notes (you only need one photo per daily class) or a Word file. Please include a title and a date for each day in English. Additionally, students will be assigned one short reflection papers (~3-4 pages) and one final paper (~5-6 pages). Academic paper writing is an extremely important skill that will be reinforced in the review classes and course assignments: students will practice writing academic papers, acquiring 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. At the end of the semester, students' final assessment will include a written final exam and the final paper. Late assignments may have points deducted from the total.

Assessments	**Weight**
1. Class notetaking with weekly submission	10%
2. Oral Memorization quizzes(2)	10% (5% each)
3. Short Papers (1)	10%
4. Midterm Exam (1)	20%
5. Final Assessment (2)	50% (final paper 25% and written final exam 25%)