

Dharma Realm Buddhist University
International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts
Certificate Program in Buddhist Translation
TRNC 51 – Buddhist Chinese
Fall 2024

Time: 8: 45 to 10: 45 am, Thursday

Units: 2 units

Classroom: #128

Instructor: Yang Liu

Course Description:

Buddhist Chinese (佛教漢語) refers to the language of early Chinese Buddhist literature, including all Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, Chinese Buddhist Shastra writings, and literary works containing or diffusing Buddhist teachings. Buddhist Chinese is also known as Buddhist Hybrid Chinese (*fójiào hùnhé Hànyǔ* 佛教混合漢語) because the Buddhist Chinese (language) is influenced by Sanskrit language, Indian culture, Buddhist scriptures and classical Chinese linguistic components.

Therefore, the manifestation of Buddhist Chinese basically has threefolds: First is the syntactic features imitation of literary form (or stylistic pattern) of Sanskrit Sutra, such as the mixture of verse and prose components in the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures. Second, there are a large number of transliteration words and loan words (claque). For example, 佛 Buddha, 比丘 monk (bhikkhu), 比丘尼 nun (bhikkhuni), 剎那 an instant (Skt. kṣaṇa), 玻璃 crystal (Skt. sphatika), 塔 pagoda (Skt. stūpa), 彌勒 Maitreya, 方便 expedient means (Skt. upaya), 茉莉 Jasmine flower (Skt. mallikā) and 蘋果 apple (Skt. bimbā). Second, Buddhist scriptures that led to the development of Chinese vocabulary. That is to say, the spreading of Buddhist scriptures not only adds new words, new idioms, new thoughts, new aesthetics to the Chinese language but also profoundly enriches Chinese literature and culture. The third manifestation is the mixture of classical Chinese and the use of colloquial vernacular language in the Buddhist Sutra, shastra writings and literary works. This expression can be found particularly in the Chan school's texts and Gong'an (公案).

For those who want to study and translate Buddhist Chinese, it is necessary to supplement the knowledge of Indian studies and Buddhism. It is also necessary to have a basic foundation for classical Chinese language as its initial step. Therefore, this course attempts to solidify learners' foundation for classical Chinese. We begin with a series of lessons that introduce principal rules behind Chinese characters, basic grammars and commonly seen structures in Chinese Buddhist scriptures. Basic Buddhist technical vocabularies, Chinese Buddhist Idioms will be investigated as means of accessing texts and to lay basic foundations for reading texts easily. A variety of Buddhist texts including Indian traditional texts that were translated in China will be introduced. Each lesson has translation exercises involving translating those texts from classical Chinese into English. Through reading and translating texts in their original Chinese, students experience a

more direct voicing of the ideas of Buddhist Chinese.

The impact of Buddhism or Buddhist sacred texts on Chinese culture is exemplified through Buddhist art, Buddhist material culture, Buddhist music and Buddhist cuisine...etc. Therefore, the artistic and cultural elements of Chinese Buddhism will be introduced as a means of embracing the language and nourishing the language learners' cultural sentiments too.

Program Learning Outcomes

TRNC PLO 1 - Exercise ethical sensibility

TRNC PLO 3 - Create clear, accurate, nuanced translations adapted to various audiences

Course Learning Outcomes

Language Proficiency

- Students will acquire practical understanding of the basic syntax, grammatical relationships among words and particles of Classical Chinese.
- Students will apply theoretical knowledge of grammar and syntax to real examples through translation practices.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to explain Chinese characters' etymology and widen their range of vocabulary.
- Students will improve their pronunciation and reading ability in Chinese both in terms of fluency and comprehensibility.
- Students will acquire competence in writing traditional Chinese characters.
- Students will memorize and identify Buddhist technical terms in Chinese and will be able to heighten their awareness of correct usage/translation of Buddhist technical terms.
- Students will develop skills in the use of language tools and the craft of translation from Classical Chinese to English.

Cultural Competence

- Students will attain knowledge of the historical and cultural contexts necessary to understanding texts.

Course Requirements:

Course Materials:

- 1) Buddhist Chinese Fall 2024 Course Folder ([Online](#))
- 2) *Du's Handbook of Classical Chinese Grammar* (DRBU library & Amazon)
- 3) *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* by Paul W. Kroll
- 4) Supplemental handouts and lab practice sheets will be given out in class

Online dictionary:

- <https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en> provides the whole text of Kangxi dictionary definition in a digitized format
- MDBG (<https://www.mdbg.net/chinese/dictionary>) is good for beginners. It lets you search for words in Chinese, English, or Pinyin. For instance, if you want to know how to say “football” in Chinese, just type “football” in the search bar. The site has a digital pen tool that lets you write in a writing grid.
- YellowBridge (<https://www.yellowbridge.com/chinese/dictionary.php>) Like MDBG, you can search for words in Chinese, English, or Pinyin. If you know how to write a character but can’t remember how to say it or what it means, you can use their digital pen tool to draw it in. The site’s interface is a bit more complex than MDBG’s, but it does a good job of separating the main word you’re looking for from related words. For example, if you type “football” in the search bar, it gives you the most common Chinese word for “football,” 足球, and lets you listen to how it’s *pronounced*. Then, on the same page, it shows you lists of words that share the same beginning (“head word”) or ending (“tail word”) as 足球.
- ArchChinese (https://www.archchinese.com/chinese_english_dictionary.html): This dictionary helps you understand Chinese characters deeply. In its dictionary, you can search using Pinyin, Chinese, or English. It breaks the character down, showing which parts come together and their meanings. Plus, there’s a writing animation. It guides you on how to write the character step by step, so you’ll know the right stroke order.
- HanziCraft (<https://www.hanzicraft.com/>) is all about the depth and beauty of [Chinese characters](#), or **Hanzi** (汉字/汉字; hàn zi). This online tool is a treasure for anyone wanting a deeper grasp of individual Chinese characters. With its search function, you can explore both individual characters and multi-character words. When you enter a word with several characters, each character gets its own detailed section.

Course Grading:

Final grade consists of the following components:

1. Attendance: **30%**
2. Class participation & Preparation: **30%**

Participation

Listening and Attention: Closely read class materials and listen respectfully and actively to instructors and peers.

Quality of Contribution: Thoughtful, relevant comments and questions.

Impact on Class: Student’s conduct and comments enhance everyone’s experiences of the class and have a positive influence on the class learning.

Frequency of Participation: Actively remains engaged in class and contributes in a timely and appropriate manner.

Preparation

- The success of language class mainly depends on the conscientious and timely preparation of all students. To be fully prepared, students are expected to have completed the tasks or homeworks before each class.

3.Homework, quizzes(or midterm exam) **20 %**

4.Final Project Presentation **20%**

*The instructor will evaluate a student's work holistically, taking into account the student's effort and improvement over the course of the semester.

☐ Tentative Weekly Schedule: This schedule is tentative and subject to revise .

Week	Topics
Wk 1- 8/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Course introduction● Greetings/Self-Introduction● Syllabus● Chinese Four Tones/Pinyin/Typing● Chinese Writing System (Radical/Stroke order/Calligraphy)● Online dictionary Words: 般若波羅蜜多心經 and other words stemmed from these
Wk 2- 8/30	Words: 觀自在菩薩，行深般若波羅蜜多時 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk 3- 9/6	Words: 照見五蘊皆空，度一切苦厄 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk 4- 9/13	Words: 舍利子，色不異空，空不異色。色即是空，空即是色 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk5- 9/19	Words: 受想行識，亦復如是 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk6- 9/25	Words: 舍利子，是諸法空相，不生不滅，不垢不淨，不增不減 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk7- 10/3	CEI WEEK

Wk8 - 10/10	Words: 是故空中無色，無受想行識，無眼耳鼻舌身意，無色聲香味觸法 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk9 - 10/17	Words: 無眼界，乃至無意識界。無無明，亦無無明盡 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk10- 10/24	Words: 乃至無老死，亦無老死盡。無苦集滅道，無智亦無得 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk11- 10/31	Words: 以無所得故，菩提薩埵，依般若波羅蜜多故，心無罣礙 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk12- 11/7	Words: 無罣礙故，無有恐怖，遠離顛倒夢想，究竟涅槃 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk13- 11/14	Words: 三世諸佛，依般若波羅蜜多故，得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk14- 11/21	Words: 故知般若波羅蜜多，是大神咒，是大明咒，是無上咒，是無等等咒，能除一切苦，真實不虛 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk15- 11/28	Thanksgiving Break
Wk16- 12/5	Words: 故說般若波羅蜜多咒，即說咒曰：揭諦揭諦，波羅揭諦，波羅僧揭諦，菩提薩婆訶 and other words stemmed from these words
Wk17- 12/12	Final project: Translation from passages of other Sutras

Electronics policy

While technology (computers, cell phones, tablets) use is generally not allowed in DRBU classes, students in this course will be allowed to use devices in the lab section and in class for research and communication only for the purposes of translation-related activities. Please respect guest lecturers and those speaking in class discussions by paying full attention and not misusing technology.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes copying passages from someone else's work, using someone else's insights without acknowledgement, or paraphrasing another's original phrases without

acknowledgement. Using someone else's words or ideas without proper citations will affect your grade or result in failing the course. Be sure that you provide complete citations for any material that helps shape your translations, even if you are paraphrasing another person's text in your own words. Papers that do not meet academic standards for citation may not be credited for the course and, if plagiarism is a concern, may be reported to the Program Director.

Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you already receive services through the Office of Disability Services and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Please bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. Your professors will hold any information you share with them in the strictest confidence unless you give them permission to do otherwise. If you have not contacted the Office of Disability Services and need accommodations, your professors will be happy to refer you.