

Dharma Realm Buddhist University
International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts
Certificate Program in Buddhist Translation
TRNC 31 – Hermeneutics of Self
Fall 2024

Time: Wed. 8:45 - 10:45 am

Location: S128

Units: 2 units

Lecturers: Yang Liu

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the more subjective dimension of Buddhist translation—how understanding and interpreting is determined by the presuppositions and beliefs of the interpreter. Hermeneutics of Self is concerned with determining the psychological, emotional, and mental *conditions* that make both understanding and misunderstanding possible. Through the study of biographies and autobiographical records of eminent Buddhist translator-practitioners, personal diaries, journals, poetry, and lived-encounters we explore how in their effort to produce accurate translations of texts, they also struggled to uncover and transform the unexamined biases and predispositions that might cloud their work.

As a corollary to translation work and close reading of primary texts, students in the translation certificate program will engage in contemplative practice and self-cultivation exercises embedded and advocated in the texts they are reading and translating. This hermeneutical approach, where intellectual inquiry is enhanced through meditative exercises, aims to give students a holistic appreciation of what it means to be a translator-practitioner as understood and derived from Buddhist sources. The insights acquired through these readings along with direct laboratory experience provide a study-practice hermeneutical dimension that students may reference in their translation work in the program.

Program Learning Outcomes

- TRNC PLO 1 - Exercise ethical sensibility.
- TRNC PLO 2 - Articulate insights gained from major Buddhist methods and practices, close reading, and translation of texts and their implications for the personal, social, and natural worlds.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate the ability to

- Explore the lives and spiritual practices of Buddhist translators
- Reflect on ethical norms that guide translation; in particular, contemplate the spirit of the guidelines for translators established by the Buddhist Text Translation Society
- Reflect on how insights gained in self-cultivation carry over to translation and vice versa

Grading Breakdown

- Class Attendance & Participation (50%)
- Weekly Reading Reflection /Reflective Journal(25%)
- Bio of translator presentation and final project presentation (25%)

Required Work & Grading

Attendance & Participation: Class performance, cumulative understanding, and informed participation in ongoing discussion depend on regular attendance. Students may be asked to take turns facilitating class discussions. More than **2** absences from class will result in a failure for the course. You will be expected to keep current with the weekly reading assignments and engage in class discussion. If you need to miss a class, please contact the course coordinator with the reasons for your absence.

Weekly Reading Reflection and Homework: As part of preparing for class, you are asked to read the assigned readings and post written reflections and discussion questions, or, if inspired, additional research on the topic. Occasional homework assignments may be given for certain readings.

Reflective Journal: In order to more fully explore the theme of this course, which is to “determine the psychological, emotional, and mental *conditions* that make both understanding and misunderstanding possible,” you are asked to keep a journal of your reflections, questions, and experiences while engaging in contemplative exercises and shared inquiry on assigned readings.

Biography of Translation Presentation and Final Project Presentation:

Biography of Translation Presentations are based on the Biographies of translators provided as part of the reading material. Each presentation is about 10-15 min. The final project presentation can be on any topic related to what was discussed during the class and can be in any format of creativity.

Wk/Date	Readings
Week 1 (8/22) Introduction to the Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Olendzsky, Andrew. “What the Buddha Taught.” In <i>Unlimiting Mind: The Radically Experiential Psychology of Buddhism</i>, pp.21-23. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010.● Rev. Heng Sure and Martin Verhoeven. “<i>The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra</i>: Excerpt from the Translator’s Introduction.” Berkeley Buddhist Monastery, 2014.
Week 2 (8/29) The Conditioned Mind and the True Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>The Surangama Sutra: A New Translation</i>. (Ukiah, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2009), pp. 30 - 32; p. 44; pp. 159-161● Ajahn Munindo. “Profoundly Simple” in <i>Unexpected Freedom</i>, pp. 1-13. UK: Aruna Publications 2005.

<p>Week 3 (9/5)</p> <p>Constructed Self-Five Skandhas</p> <p>Skandhas Lab</p>	<p><u>Bio of Translator Presentation 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Five Aggregates Arise from Delusion,” <i>The Surangama Sutra</i>, pp. 457-462. • Ajahn Sucitto, “Contemplation of the Aggregates.” • Gethin, “The Five Khandas,” intro & conclusion <p>* Reference: Buswell Jr., Robert E.; Donald S., Jr. Lopez. “Five Aggregates.” <i>The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism</i>.</p>
<p>Week 4 (9/12)</p> <p>Journey to Translation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porter, Bill and Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder. “Lone Moon Lights Cold Spring: An Interview with Bill Porter.” In <i>Emergence Magazine</i>. https://emergencemagazine.org/story/lone-moon-lights-cold-spring/ • Red Pine. “Dancing with the Dead.” Longhouse, 2006. file:///C:/Users/Heng%20Yi%207/Dropbox%20(DRBA)/DRBU/Translation%20Institute/Academic/Academic/2019%20-%202020%20(pilot)/Database/References%20from%20Ron/USB/Translation%20articles/dancing_with_the_dead.html
<p>Week 5 (9/19)</p> <p>Emptiness of Five Skandhas</p> <p>Debrief Skandhas Lab</p>	<p><u>Bio of Translator Presentation 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Hsuan Hua, <i>The Heart of Prajna Paramita, Verses without A Stand And Prose Commentary</i>. • Garfield, Jay L. Chapter XXIV “Examination of the Four Noble Truths,” <i>The Fundamental Wisdom of The Middle Way: Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> 中論. New York/Oxford University Press 1995. pp. 86-91
<p>Week 6 (9/26)</p> <p>Healing the Self to Get Free of the Self—Spiritual Bypassing</p>	<p>Guest Speaker: DM Jin Chuan & DM Jin Wei</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On Spiritual Bypassing and Relationship,” excerpt from interview with John Welwood https://scienceandnonduality.com/article/on-spiritual-bypassing-and-relationship/ • “Embodying,” article on spiritual bypassing by John Welwood
<p>Week 7 (10/1-10/4)</p>	<p>CEI Week (no class)</p>

<p>Week 8 (10/10)</p> <p>Self-Purification</p>	<p><u>Bio of Translator Presentation 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huineng. “To Repent and Renew.” <i>The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra</i>, pp. 53-63. Ukiah, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2014.
<p>Week 9 (10/17)</p> <p>Klesa (Afflictions)</p> <p>Klesa Lab</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ācariya Mahā Boowa Ñānasampanno. <i>Venerable Ācariya Mun Bhūridatta Thera - A Spiritual Biography</i>. A Forest Dhamma Publication, 2010. pp.145-159, 288-299. <p>Chapter 3: A Heart Released</p> <p>Chapter 5: Unusual Questions, Enlightening Answers</p>
<p>Week 10 (10/24)</p> <p>Karma</p>	<p><u>Bio of Translator Presentation 4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verhoeven, Marty. “Understanding Karma - The Key to Liberation.” <i>Vajra Bodhi Sea</i>, April 2022 • Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “The Buddha’s Baggage - Everything you wanted to know about karma but were afraid to ask.” <i>Tricycle</i>, winter 2016 <p>https://tricycle.org/magazine/thanissaro-bhikkhu-karma/</p>
<p>Week 11 (10/31)</p> <p>Consciousness-Only</p> <p>Debrief Klesha Lab</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gethin, <i>The Foundations of Buddhism</i>, chapter 9 extract pp. 244-250. • Vasubandhu, trans. Cook, “The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only,” pp. 377-383
<p>Week 12 (11/7)</p>	<p>Student Conference</p>
<p>Week 13 (11/13)</p> <p>Places for the Heart</p>	<p><u>Bio of Translator Presentation 5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sublime Abiding Places for the Heart,” <i>Broad View, Boundless Heart</i> by Ajahn Pasanno • Ch. IX “The Divine Abidings,” excerpts from <i>Visuddhimagga: Path of Purification</i>. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010.

<p>Week 14 (11/20)</p> <p>Transparency of Self</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ta Hsueh and Chung Yung</i>, Translated by Andrew Plaks, Penguin Books, 2003. pp. 11-12 • Book 8, <i>Meditations</i> by Marcus Aurelius, Penguin Classics, 2006. pp. 71-82. • Self-Reliance, Essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson. pp. 1-7
<p>Week 15 (11/26)</p> <p>Self-Nurturing</p>	<p><u>Bio of Translator Presentation 6</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zhuang Zi</i> (莊子), translated by Burton Watson, Columbia University Press, 2003. <p>Section 3: <i>The Secret of Caring for Life</i> 養生主, p. 45-46</p> <p>Section 5 : <i>The Sign of Virtue Complete</i> 德充符, p. 63-71</p>
<p>Week 16 (12/5)</p> <p>Translation as a Way of Self-Cultivation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Interview with Bhikkhu Bodhi: Translator for the Buddha.” In <i>Inquiring Mind</i> 22, no. 2 (Spring 2006). https://www.inquiringmind.com/article/2202_w_bodhi-interview-with-bhikkhu-bodhi-translator-for-the-buddha/
<p>Week 17 (12/12)</p>	<p><u>Final project/self-reflection presentation</u></p>

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

You are responsible for submitting your own original work. Plagiarism includes copying passages from someone else’s work, using someone else’s insights without acknowledgment, 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.