

KEY TO THE PALI SUTTAS

A basic hands-on course

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28 July & 4, 18, 25 August 2002

[Sundays 3.00-5.00 p.m. with break]

[Blurb]

This course teaches you the basic tools and techniques for the self-study of Buddhism on how to:

- Use the Pali Canon & Pali dictionaries (incl. newly-released Cone's *Dictionary of Pali*)
- Locate suttas in the Pali Canon.
- Look for translations of Buddhist texts in the library and on the Internet.
- Study a sutta effectively.
- Reasonably ascertain that a quoted text is authentic and properly translated.
- Valuable notes will be provided.

This 2-hour course over 4 weeks covers both theory and easy hands-on experience under the guidance of Piya Tan who specializes in Theravāda Buddhist studies.

COURSE GUIDE

LESSON 1

1. The basic Pali alphabet.

Handouts.

- (a) South and Southeast Asian scripts used for Pali (for reference only).
- (b) Basic Pali wordlist (for hands-on exercise).

Exercise. Arrange a list of Pali words and terms in the Indian order.

2. How to use Pali-English dictionaries:

Look up *ekāyāna* in:

- (a) The Critical Pali Dictionary (CPD)
- (b) The PTS Pali-English Dictionary (PED)
- (c) A Dictionary of Pali (DP) (Margaret Cone, 2001)

Handouts. CPD 2:632, PED 159, DP 1:529.

3. How to use:

Malalasekera's *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names* (DPPN).

Assignments. Please include Pali references in all your answers:

Group A: Look up **Bakkula** in the DPPN: What is unique about him?

Group B: Look up **Kesaputtiya Sutta** in the DPPN: What is its more common name?

LESSON 2

4. Text and Commentary: a brief introduction.

Handouts.

- (a) The Pali Canon: editions (Piyasilo 1990f:105)
- (b) The Pali Commentaries (Piyasilo 1990f:115)

5. Editions and translations: what is the difference?
Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya, Khuddaka Nikāya (Piyasilo 1990f:108-113)

Handouts.

- (a) Dīgha Nikāya (PTS Pali edition) D 2:290.
(b) The Long Discourses of the Buddha (translation by M. Walshe), D:W 1995:335.

Hands-on. Abbreviations used for:

- (a) Texts.
(b) Translations.

6. How to locate a Pali text (translation):

- (a) Volume & page.
(b) Sutta number, etc.

Assignment. Locate Dhammapada verses 273-276 (Pali text & English translation).

LESSON 3

7. The Pali Canon and Extra-canonical works: a brief survey.

Handout. The Pali Canon and Extra-canonical works. (Piyasilo 1990f:106-114)

8. Contents and purpose of the Nikāyas: a new discovery? (Summary)

[Optional reading: Joy Manné, “Categories of Sutta in the Pāli Nikāyas and Their Implications for our Appreciation of the Buddhist Teaching and Literature.” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 1990:29-87.]

8. How to use the Pali Tipiṭakam Concordance (PTC).

Handout. Sample page (*ekāyāna*).

9. *Critical Pali Dictionary* (CPD) reference system & textual hierarchy: a brief survey.

Handout. Summary list of titles headings from CPD Epilegomena: updated version in Oskar von Hinuber’s *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (1996).

10. Sources and resources:

- (a) Websites on Pali and Buddhist studies

Online Pali Canons: the Sri Lanka Tipiṭaka Project (SLTP)
Free online dictionaries: *Pali-English Dictionaries*, etc.

- (b) Journals on Pali and Buddhist studies

Articles on Buddhism: Free and good online journals, such as *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*.
How to find and use **Pali fonts**.

LESSON 4

11. Sutra Appreciation.

Handout. John Bullitt, “Befriending the Suttas: Some suggestions for reading for Pali Discourses” (2002) (www.accesstoinsight.org/sutta101.htm).

Suggested Pre-reading: T.W. Rhys Davids’s introduction essay (D:R 3:168-172).

Study text: **Sigāl’ovāda Sutta** (D no. 31):

Handouts

- (a) Phra Prayudh Payutto’s translation (*The Buddha’s Discourses for Beginners*, 2nd ed 1969)
(b) Maurice Walshe’s translation (*The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 1996).