

Pali Summer School with Prof Richard Gombrich

14-26 August 2010 - Pali Summer School with Prof Richard Gombrich

Cost £475

The Society for the Wider Understanding of the Buddhist Tradition (So-Wide) offers an intensive Pali course this summer, 14-26 August inclusive.

Aim.

At the end of the course you should be able, using the normal aids available, i.e. dictionaries, grammars and translations, slowly to read a Pali canonical text and understand it for yourself.

Is this really possible? I devised the course and have already given it five times with great success. Pali can be learnt in twelve days because the aim is only to read it, not to write or speak it û though you do learn to pronounce it and recite a few chants. There is also much less emphasis on memorisation than in a traditional course: why memorise things you can easily look up?

Method.

Accordingly, the course is built on learning how to use the Pali-English Dictionary published by the Pali Text Society (www.palitext.com). The course begins with learning Pali alphabetical order (it is a good idea to start on this before arriving) and throughout the course each pupil is constantly using the Dictionary. Tables of the main grammatical forms are supplied and, again, students constantly consult them for themselves, until they become familiar.

You are strongly encouraged to buy your own copy of the Dictionary. If you live overseas and do not want to carry it to Oxford, you may ask the Pali Text Society, when you buy it, to post it to you at the OCBS Office (address below). Students and teachers sit round a table together throughout the course. Students are urged to keep asking questions, and to work in cooperation.

Organisation.

The first day, 14 August, is in a sense preliminary. Mr. Geoffrey Bamford will explain the grammatical terms and principles you need to understand for the course. Experience has shown us that unless you have already studied Latin, Greek or Sanskrit you definitely should attend.

The rest of the course is extremely intensive. It is cumulative, so that to miss an early lesson is disastrous. The one rigid rule is that no one may miss a class in the first week. We shall work out the precise timetable when we meet, but the general pattern will be that there will be classes each day from 9.30 to 5.30, with a long lunch break. There will be homework every evening. The course will end at mid-day on Thursday 26th; I hope we can then all lunch together.

Content.

We shall start to read original texts from the first Monday. I shall be open to suggestions about texts to read. Besides the Pali language, the course will discuss the Pali canon and many questions concerning the Buddha's teaching and our evidence for it.

Practical Arrangements.

The course will take place at the main (Headington) campus of Oxford Brookes University. Students who do not live locally will be housed in single rooms in Clive Booth Hall (formerly Morrell Hall), which is ten minutes easy walk from the main campus on the Gipsy Lane site, where the classes will be held (<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/accommodation/halls/clivebooth>). I am afraid that normally there is no parking available.

There are cooking facilities at Clive Booth Hall, at no extra charge. There are bar and cafeteria facilities, including breakfast, on the Gipsy Lane site, except on Sundays, and we shall ourselves maintain a supply of tea and coffee in the lecture room. The charge for the bedroom is ú25.00 per night, payable in advance for the whole course.

My tuition and course materials are provided free, but we have to pay for some teaching assistance, the lecture room and some other expenses. We are therefore charging each student ú150.00. Since this sum will not entirely cover our expenses, any further donation will be very welcome.

Booking.

Please apply to me, Richard Gombrich, at rgombrich@ocbs.org. This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it, asap. When applying, please supply full contact details, including telephone, and let me know your highest educational qualification. We also need to know whether you require accommodation, and if so whether you want it for the night of Friday 13 August. The closing date for applications is 14 July and by that date we require payment in advance. Normally that would be ú325 for accommodation (if you are staying the first Friday night) + ú150 fee, total: ú475.00. If you feel you can afford to make that up to or towards ú1,000, so much the better. Please send a sterling cheque payable to the Society for the Wider Understanding of the Buddhist Tradition. I am afraid it is too expensive for us to accept payment in a foreign currency. Please address your payment to OCBS Office attention Hazel Benyon, Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford OX2 6UD.

Admittance will be first come, first served. No more than 14 will be admitted, so hurry to book a place.

Richard Gombrich