

Introduction to Pāli Chanting Course for Chaplaincy - Part I

Ten - 2-Hour Classes (via Zoom)

Ten Thursdays, September 28, 2023 to November 30, 2023, 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm with chanting practice group meetings to be scheduled after class begins.

Instructors:

Ven. Bhante Kusala, MA and PhD (Candidate) in Pāli Studies, and assisted by Ven. Bhante Suneetha.

The Purpose of Pāli Chanting in Chaplaincy:

Chanting is soothing to the listeners, and helps them calm their minds. As in mantras, Pāli chanting also has protective benefits. It is an integral part of Buddhist ceremonies in the community. In hospitals, patients like to hear the Pāli chanting of such suttas as *Mettā Sutta* (The Discourse on Loving Kindness), and *Bojjanga Sutta* (The Discourse on the Seven Factors of Enlightenment). They can be chanted for the sick and dying to help them have peace in their minds. English translations of these chants can also be recited for Buddhist patients who do not understand Pāli.

Some Benefits of Learning Pāli Chanting:

Chanting is a form of meditation if we reflect on the meaning of what is being chanted. If we chant rhythmically, it is like music therapy, relaxing the listeners' mind. Chanting by Buddhist monks and nuns is a way to give blessings, reminding the listeners the qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Generally, the *Mettā Sutta* is very popular among lay practitioners of Theravāda Buddhism and Buddhists of other traditions. It also resonates with people from other religions as well as those who practise no religion.

Pāli is the ancient language spoken by the Buddha. Listening to Pāli chanting brings us closer to the Buddha because we chant and reflect on the great qualities of the Buddha and his disciples, and to feel the confidence (*saddhā*) in the Dhamma.

Course Description:

Pāli chanting is practised in South and South East Asian Buddhist communities (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, India and Vietnam). This introductory Pāli chanting course is designed for chaplains giving spiritual support to these Buddhist communities and care seekers in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition. This course introduces impor-

tant stanzas and the *Mettā Sutta* that affirm Dharma practices and offer blessings and protection. No prior knowledge of Pāli is required.

The 10 well-structured 2-hour classes will involve reading selected Pāli stanzas and the *Mettā Sutta*, understanding their meaning, memorizing, and chanting them.

1. The learning goals & objectives
 - a. To gain the ability to read and understand the recommended Pāli Sutta and verses
 - b. To gain the ability to memorize the recommended Pāli Sutta and verses
 - c. To gain the ability to chant the recommended Pāli Sutta and verses

2. Activities
 - a. Reading Pāli stanzas and the *Mettā Sutta*
 - b. Memorizing Pāli stanzas and the *Mettā Sutta*
 - c. Chanting - group / individual
 - d. Understanding the meaning of the recommended stanzas and Sutta

3. Chanting materials (will be provided)
 - i. Three Refuges - *Tisarāṇa*
 - ii. Five Precepts – *Pañca Sīla*
 - iii. Homage to to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sanghe
 - a. *Buddha Vandana gātā*
 - b. *Dhamma Vandana gātā*
 - c. *Sanghe Vandana gātā*
 - iv. Offerings of water, flowers, light, incense, beverages, medicine - *Pūjā gātā*
 - v. The Discourse on Loving-Kindness - *Mettā sutta*
 - vi. Blessing verses – *Sabhiṭṭyō vivajjantū*
 - vii. Reflection on Impermanence – *Aniccāvata sankhāra....*

4. Assessments (assignments)
 - i. Repeat the teachers' chanting in class and at home.
 - ii. Record your own chanting to be assessed by the teachers.

Students are expected to attend 80% of the classes and have attained some level of competence in recitation to obtain a Certificate of Completion.

To Register:

Please visit <http://appliedbuddhism.ca/counselling-education> to download the application form for the course and send it to registration@appliedbuddhism.ca before September 7, 2023.

The registration fee is \$50. In addition, we recommend a suggested donation of \$150 to support Dhamma Schools for Children in Sri Lanka.