



新加坡佛學院
Buddhist College of Singapore

Buddhist College of Singapore: A Brief Introduction





Overview

The Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS), located within the premises of the majestic and renowned Kong Meng San Phor Kark See (KMSPKS) Monastery, was initiated by the current abbot of the monastery, Venerable Kwang Sheng. Established formally in 2005, the College welcomed its first batch of students in August the following year. In 2008, BCS completed the formal signing of Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Kelaniya (Sri Lanka) and Mahaculalongkornrajavidyalaya University (Thailand) to offer English and Chinese undergraduate studies in Buddhism respectively. In 2014, the College established the Chinese and English Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies programmes, followed by the Basic Monastic Training Course for laywomen at the Poh Ern Shih Temple. As of 2016, about 70 students have received their Bachelor of Arts while 11 have graduated from the Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies course. Some of our graduates continued on to read their PhDs in other countries while others returned to their own countries as educators or administrators, serving and promulgating Buddhism enthusiastically in their own ways.

About the Rector

A devout Buddhist since he was young, Venerable Kwang Sheng graduated from the well-known Victoria Secondary School. He was ordained by the much-respected Venerable Hong Choon in 1980, after which he spent many years studying and practising in such countries as Taiwan, Myanmar, Thailand and Japan. In the Republic of Korea, he spent a total of 4 years in Songgwangsa, practising Zen meditation. In 1995, Venerable Kwang Sheng became the Superintendent of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery. During his tenure, he generously sponsored many Sangha members for overseas studies. Venerable Kwang Sheng was appointed the sixth Abbot of the Monastery in 2004.



**Venerable
Sik Kwang Sheng**

Rector,
Buddhist College of Singapore.
Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor
Kark See Monastery,
Vice President,
Singapore Buddhist Federation

Concerned with the shortage of learned Buddhist monastics, Venerable Kwang Sheng made preparations to establish a Buddhist College in 2005. Since the inception of BCS, Venerable Kwang Sheng, as the Rector, has worked tirelessly and meticulously, overseeing both internal and external affairs as well as showing care and concern for the students. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Educational Administration on 1 May 2011 by one of BCS' affiliated universities – Thailand's Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University – in recognition of his outstanding contributions towards Buddhism.

Venerable Kwang Sheng is also an avid Buddhist musician and has co-produced several popular albums such as "Reverence", "Buddha Smiles", "Collection of Buddhist Songs" and "Om Mani Padme Hum".



Founding Mission and Philosophy

The mission of the College is to groom Sangha members to be bilingual in English and Chinese as well as grounded in right view and understanding of Buddhism to contribute to the continual development of Buddhism, especially Chinese Buddhism and its spread in the English-speaking world, by providing the necessary human resources through education.

Its teaching philosophy is based on the tenets of Chinese Buddhism and respect for unity in harmony, incorporating the teachings of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

With “Mind abiding in ultimate virtue, Acting according to precepts, Understanding and practising, Benefiting all sentient beings” as the College motto, our graduates will be effectively bilingual, equipped with a solid foundation and professional knowledge, yet grounded in humility and monastic discipline so as to benefit all beings.



Course Structure

Currently, the college offers both Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts programmes in Buddhist Studies in both the English and Chinese medium. The undergraduate course taught in Mandarin is a four-year course consisting of 140 credits, offered in collaboration with the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) of Thailand. Topics are categorized into five broad areas: Mahayana Buddhism; Theravada Buddhism; Comparative and Applied Buddhism; Humanities and Social Sciences; and Meditation.

The English-taught undergraduate syllabus is a six-year programme consisting of a two-year foundation course and a four-year undergraduate course. Students are required to go through the foundation course to develop proficiency in the English Language before embarking on their undergraduate studies. Similar to the Chinese programme, the English programme is a 140-credit course jointly offered by the MCU.

The Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies programme, jointly offered by the MCU, is a two-year course offered in both the English and Chinese medium. It is designed to broaden the students' horizon of Buddhist Studies by introducing the different kinds of methodology used in the discipline, deepening understanding in various areas of interest, developing the ability to think, analyse and express ideas clearly, and imparting the skills needed for thesis research and writing, thereby preparing students better for the role of promoting Buddhism.

In addition, the College also offers enrichment subjects such as Counselling, Buddhist Management and meditation retreats.

Year 1

Subject Title	Credits
Language and Communication	3
English I	2
Classical Chinese I	3
Philosophy and Religion Prior to the Three Kingdom Period	3
Essence of Buddhaddhamma	3
History of Indian Buddhism	3
Semester 1 Credits:	17
Critical Thinking	3
English II	2
Classical Chinese II	3
Buddhist Meditation I	2
History of Chinese Buddhism I	3
Introduction to Buddhist Monastic Rules	3
Abhidharmakosha I	3
Semester 2 Credits:	19
Year 1 Total Credits:	36

Year 3

Subject Title	Credits
Introduction to Management	3
Dhamma Communication	3
Introduction to Buddhist Logic	3
A Short History of Theravada Buddhism	3
Philosophy of the Tiantai School	3
Philosophy of the Three Treatises School	3
Semester 1 Credits:	18
Man and Society	3
Principles of Learning Organization	3
Dhamma in English	3
Buddhist Esoteric Teachings	3
Thought of Chan Buddhism	3
The Pure Land Teaching in India and China	3
Thought of Buddha Nature in India and China	3
Semester 2 Credits:	21
Year 3 Total Credits:	39

Year 2

Subject Title	Credits
Buddhist Meditation II	2
Pali Usage I	3
Pali and Other Indic Buddhist Literature	3
History of Chinese Buddhism II	3
Thoughts of Prajna and Madhyamaka in India	3
Abhidharmakosha II	3
Semester 1 Credits:	17
Introduction to Philosophy	3
Buddhist Meditation III	2
Pali Usage II	3
Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist Literature	3
Philosophy of Yogacara in India and China	3
Philosophy of Lotus Sutra	3
Avatamsaka Philosophy	3
Semester 2 Credits:	20
Year 2 Total Credits:	37

Year 4

Subject Title	Credits
Introduction to Comparative Religion	3
Comparative Study of Theravada and Mahayana Philosophy	3
Buddhist Psychology	3
Buddhist Ethics	3
Readings in Chinese Buddhist Texts	3
Buddhism and Chinese Culture	3
Apologetics of Buddhism	3
Semester 1 Credits:	21
Buddhist Festivals and Traditions	2
Buddhism and Thai Culture	3
Buddhism and Social Work	2
Semester 2 Credits:	7
Year 4 Total Credits:	28

BA in Buddhist Studies Curriculum (English Medium)

Foundation Year 1

English: Beginner & Elementary | Basic Computer Skills

BA Year 1

Subject Title	Credits
Language and Communication	3
Chinese I	2
Indian Philosophical and Religious Ideas Prior to the Buddha	3
Communication, Media and Society	3
Essence of Buddhadhamma	3
History of Indian Buddhism	3
Semester 1 Credits:	17
Critical Thinking	3
Chinese II	2
Language, Culture and Development	3
Buddhist Meditation I	2
Buddhism in South Asia	3
Introduction to Buddhist Monastic Rules	3
Mahayana Buddhism	3
Semester 2 Credits:	19
Year 1 Total Credits:	36

BA Year 3

Subject Title	Credits
Introduction to Management	3
Pali Text I	3
Introduction to Buddhist Logic	3
A Short History of Theravada Buddhism	3
Buddhism in the West	3
Buddhism and Economics	3
Semester 1 Credits:	18
Man and Society	3
Principles of Learning Organization	3
Pali Texts II	3
Buddhist Esoteric Teachings	3
Thought of Chan Buddhism	3
The Pure Land Teaching in India and China	3
Buddhist View of Other Faiths	3
Semester 2 Credits:	21
Year 3 Total Credits:	39

Foundation Year 2

English: Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate & Advanced | A Buddhism Reader

BA Year 2

Subject Title	Credits
Buddhist Meditation II	2
Pali Usage I	3
Introduction to Pali Canon I	3
Buddhism in Southeast Asia	3
Thoughts of Prajna and Madhyamaka in India	3
Abhidharmic Traditions	3
Semester 1 Credits:	17
Introduction to Philosophy	3
Buddhist Meditation III	2
Pali Usage II	3
Introduction to Pali Canon II	3
Philosophy of Yogacara in India and China	3
Buddhist Masters: Life and Teachings	3
Buddhism and Politics	3
Semester 2 Credits:	20
Year 2 Total Credits:	37

BA Year 4

Subject Title	Credits
Introduction to Comparative Religion	3
Comparative Study of Theravada and Mahayana Philosophy	3
Buddhist Psychology	3
Buddhist Ethics	3
Buddhism in East Asia	3
Buddhism in Central Asia and Tibet	3
Pali Commentaries and Chronicles	3
Semester 1 Credits:	21
Buddhist Festivals and Traditions	2
Buddhism and Thai Culture	3
Buddhism and Social Work	2
Semester 2 Credits:	7
Year 4 Total Credits:	28

MA in Buddhist Studies Curriculum (Chinese Medium)

Year 1

Subject Grouping	Subject Title	Credits
Required Subjects	Methodology in Buddhist Studies	3
	History of Buddhism	3
	Research Paper Writing	(2)
	Meditation	(1)
Major Subjects	Chinese Buddhist Historiography	4
Semester 1 Credits:		10
Required Subjects	Critical Reading of Buddhist Scriptures	3
	Academic English	(2)
	Meditation	(1)
Major Subjects	Fundamentals of the Study of Buddhist Literature	4
Semester 2 Credits:		7
Year 1 Total Credits:		17

Year 2

Subject Grouping	Subject Title	Credits
Required Subjects	Meditation	(1)
Elective Subjects (Select any 3)	Topics on the History of Chinese Buddhism	4
	Hagiographies of Eminent Chinese Monastics	4
	Chinese Buddhism Exported	4
	Collation Practice	4
	Studies in Thoughts of Chinese Buddhist Schools	4
	Topics on Buddhist Philosophy	4
Semester 1 Credits:		12
Required Subjects	Thesis	12
Semester 2 Credits:		12
Year 2 Total Credits:		24

MA in Buddhist Studies Curriculum (English Medium)

Year 1

Subject Grouping	Subject Title	Credits
Required Subjects	Methodology of Buddhist Studies	3
	History of Buddhism	3
	Research Paper Writing	(2)
	Meditation	(1)
Major Subjects	Buddhist Psychology and Mental Health	4
Semester 1 Credits:		10
Required Subjects	Critical Reading of Buddhist Scriptures	3
	Academic English	(2)
	Meditation	(1)
Major Subjects	Buddhism and Social Issues	4
Semester 2 Credits:		7
Year 1 Total Credits:		17

Year 2

Subject Grouping	Subject Title	Credits
Required Subjects	Meditation	(1)
Elective Subjects (Select any 3)	Topics on Indian Buddhism	4
	Topics on Chinese Buddhism	4
	Topics on Theravada Buddhism	4
	Topics on Esoteric Buddhism	4
	Topics on Buddhism and Society and Culture	4
	Topics on Buddhism in Asia and the World	4
Semester 1 Credits:		12
Required Subjects	Thesis	12
Semester 2 Credits:		12
Year 2 Total Credits:		24

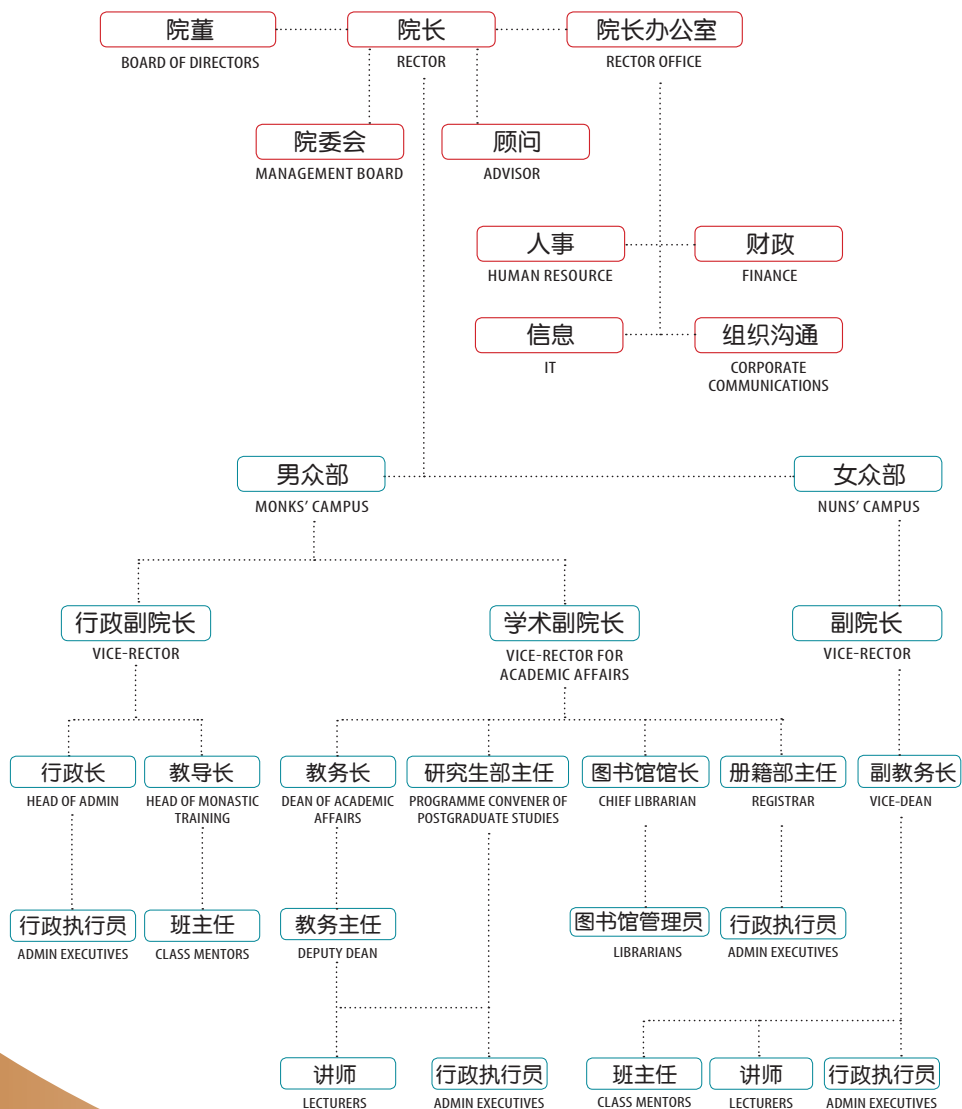
Teaching Methodology

In order to realize its teaching aims, the College engages in bilingual teaching, focusing on providing a holistic and multi-variate education that develops independent and critical thinking. These teaching methodologies include:

- 1) Use of multimedia: The use of computer media during lessons provides a content-rich and lively style of teaching, creating a deeper impression of lesson contents through interactive classroom lectures.
- 2) Thought stimulation: Encouraging students to think and raise questions to develop independent thinking and problem-solving skills.
- 3) Research and Case Studies: Integrating practicum through observation and participation allows students to learn the application of theoretical knowledge in real-life situations.
- 4) Guest Lectures: BCS arranges guest lectures by visiting scholars from other institutions to give students a broader and more in-depth understanding of specific Buddhist fields.
- 5) Assessment: Besides examinations, lecturers make use of presentations and report writing during the course of the semester to evaluate students' performance more effectively. Other methods of assessment are used for such non-academic subjects as meditation.

Teaching methodologies are multi-faceted and constantly evolve to address changing needs. As long as the principles of academic coherence, content diversity and lively teaching styles are adhered to, together with continuous innovation and fostering independence and diligence in the students, a successful education is assured.

Organization Chart



Faculty

As a tertiary institution, the College has high expectations of its teaching faculty. Prospective faculty should be academic scholars with the ability to teach at the tertiary level. Laypeople should possess a PhD in Buddhist Studies; have strong research capabilities and respectable character. Monastics are expected to possess at least a Master of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies, with the potential to excel in Buddhist academia, and have right faith and exemplary personality.

The College currently employs about 20 full-time and part-time lecturers, including PhD and Master degree holders from notable universities. To meet the needs of ongoing research, the faculty will expand to include scholars in Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism and other traditions. In addition, the College arranges special guest lectures by visiting professors to expand students' horizons and promote academic exchanges.



Full-time Lecturers



- **Venerable Dr. Chuan Sheng,
Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs Office**

Holds a PhD in History and East Asian Languages from Harvard University. Teaches such subjects as “Critical Thinking”, “Research Paper Writing”, “Essence of Buddhadhamma” and “Topics on Buddhism and Society and Culture”, and supervises MA students.



- **Venerable Chuan Xiong,
Dean of Academic Affairs Office**

Holds an MPhil from the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Lectures on “Philosophy of Yogacara in India and China”, “Dhamma Communication” and “The Pure Land Teaching in India and China”. In addition, he is the Chief Chinese Editor of Awaken Magazine.



- **Venerable Dr. Chang Qing, Assistant Professor**

Holds a PhD in Buddhist Studies from Bristol University, UK. He is an instructor of subjects including “Thoughts of Prajna and Madhyamaka in India”, “History of Chinese Buddhism”, “Philosophy of the Three Treatises School” and “Studies in Thoughts of Chinese Buddhist Schools”, and supervises MA students as well.

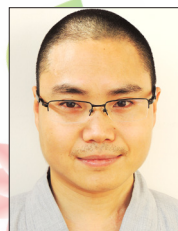


- **Venerable Dr. Rangama Chandawimala Thero,
Assistant Professor**

Holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Hong Kong. He teaches “Indian Religio-Philosophical Ideas Prior to the Buddha”, “Introduction to Pali Canon”, “Methodology of Buddhist Studies”, “Buddhism and Social Issues” and “Topics on Theravada Buddhism”, and also supervises MA students.

- **Venerable Ming Fa, Lecturer**

Holds an MPhil from the Buddhist College of Minnan and teaches subjects such as “Essence of Buddhadhamma”, “Introduction to Monastic Rules”, “Philosophy of the Lotus Sutra”, “Avatamsaka Philosophy”, “Philosophy of the Tiantai School” and “Apologetics of Buddhism”.



- **Venerable Chuan Qing, Lecturer**

PhD student of London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), he lectures on subjects including “Man and Society”, “Buddhist Ethics”, “Introduction to Comparative Religions” and “Comparative Study of Theravada and Mahayana Philosophy”.



- **Dr. Ji Yun, Deputy Dean of Academic Affairs Office**

Holds a PhD in Literature from Fudan University of China. He lectures on “Pali Usage”, “Pali and Other Indic Buddhist Literature”, “Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist Literature”, “Introduction to Buddhist Logic”, “Methodology of Buddhist Studies” and “Fundamentals of the Study of Buddhist Literature”, and supervises MA students.



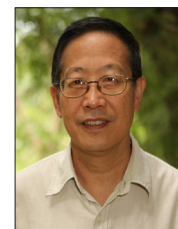
- **Dr. Lee Foong Ming, Assistant Professor**

Holds a PhD in Buddhist Studies from the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. She lectures on subjects such as “A Buddhism Reader”, “Abhidharmakosha”, “Abhidharmic Traditions”, “A Short History of Theravada Buddhism”, “Indian Buddhism”, and “Buddhism in South Asia”.



- **Mr. Gu Weikang, Assistant Professor**

Holds a Master of Philosophy from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. He is the instructor for subjects including “Critical Thinking”, “Introduction to Philosophy”, “History of Chinese Buddhism”, “Thought of Chan Buddhism” and “Buddhism and Chinese Culture”, as well as supervises MA students.





- **Mr. Song Choo Beng, Senior Lecturer**

Holds a Master degree in Buddhist Studies from the University of Hong Kong. Lectures on subjects such as "Introduction to Management", "Principles of Learning Organization", "Mahayana Buddhism", "History of Indian Buddhism" and "Buddhism in Southeast Asia".



- **Mr. Edwin Goh Ser Huat, Senior English Lecturer**

Holds a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics from the University of Sydney and is a trained English teacher from the Ministry of Education, Singapore. He is in charge of teaching various levels of English.

Part-time Lecturers



- **Venerable Ren Xu**

Holds an MA from Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka. Instructor of courses related to Buddhist Psychology.



- **Dr. Tony See**

Holds a PhD in Communication from the European Graduate School, Switzerland. He lectures on "Topics on Esoteric Buddhism" and "Communication, Media and Society".



- **Dr. Wang Hui**

PhD holder from the Faculty of Chinese Studies at Peking University, China. Lecturer of "Classical Chinese" and "Language and Communication".

- **Mr. Adrian Tang**

Holds a Master of Social Sciences from the National University of Singapore and teaches subjects related to Sociology.



- **Mdm. Kendra Ong**

Holds a Bachelor in Mathematics from the former Nanyang University, Singapore. She is in charge of the subject "Basic Computer Skills".



Visiting Professors

- **Venerable Dr. Guang Xing**

Holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and is an associate professor at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, the University of Hong Kong and a visiting professor at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. His main publications include "The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikaya Theory" and "The Historical Buddha". He is currently working on the issue of filial piety in Chinese Buddhism and has already published several papers on the topic.



- **Venerable Dr. Yuan Liu**

Holds a PhD from the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Currently teaching at the Buddhist Academy of China. Previously held teaching positions at the Buddhist College of Minnan, Thailand's International Buddhist College and Buddhist College of Singapore. His research interests are Comparative Abhidharma, Early Buddhism and Buddhist Sects, Sanskrit and Pali.





• **Venerable Dr. Ding Yuan**

Holds a PhD (Literature) from International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies (Tokyo). Currently working in the college's Institute of Old Japanese Buddhist Manuscripts as a researcher. He specializes in Buddhist literature.



• **Venerable Dr. Wei Shan**

Holds a PhD from the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Currently an Associate Professor in the School of Philosophy, Renmin University of China, and a Visiting Scholar (September 2012 to August 2013) at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA. His main publication is a Chinese work titled "Dhyana-samapatti in Sarvastivada Abhidharma".



• **Professor Lewis R. Lancaster**

Holds a PhD from the University of Wisconsin, USA. An esteemed scholar, he had served in various educational institutions in Asia and America, such as Peking University in China, Korea University, the University of Hong Kong and the University of Michigan.



• **Professor Cheng Chen-huang**

Holds a Master degree from National Chengchi University, Taiwan, majoring in journalism. His previous appointments include: President of Torch of Wisdom Publishing House, Publisher of Torch of Wisdom Monthly, Vice President/Secretary-general of Torch of Wisdom Buddhist Association, part-time researcher of Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, Vice President of Buddhist Viriya College, part-time lecturer of Chinese Culture University and World Journalism College and Secretary-general of Taiwan Conference on Religion for Peace.



• **Dr. Kent Lin**

Holds a PhD from National Taiwan University. His main research interests include philosophy of Buddhism, Buddhist psychology, Yin Shun Buddhist philosophy and Taoist Philosophy. He has also published numerous papers in both English and Chinese.



Research and Publications

Besides focusing on teaching, BCS encourages its faculty to engage in original academic research. For this purpose, the College publishes the Singaporean Journal of Buddhist Studies (SJBS), an annual academic journal edited by faculty members and invited scholars from esteemed institutions. The first issue was published in early December 2013.

Facilities

After several years of planning and construction on the original site of the Bright Hill Evergreen Home, the new six-storey College campus has finally started operations. Occupying a land area of 10,272 square metres, it is a multi-purpose building with teaching, research, accommodation and sports facilities. Apart from classrooms, the campus houses a computer room, meditation room, meeting rooms, offices and reception to provide an environment conducive to learning and research as well as administration purposes.

Library

The library is an integral part of an educational and research institute. It plays an important role by providing teaching staff and students with a treasury of reference materials and basic facilities for research.



The original “Bright Hill Library” was renovated and transformed into BCS Library, which serves both the College and the general public. Its collection includes not only the Taisho Tripitaka, Chung Hwa Tripitaka, Fangshan Stone Tripitaka, Goryeo Tripitaka, Pali Tipitaka and Shin Zokuzokyo Tripitaka, but also a vast collection of Buddhist research resources in both the English and Chinese languages. BCS Library is also equipped with the Electronic Library Management System (ELiMS), which uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to identify books, enabling the library to have an automated system to handle its book-borrowing and returning processes.

Student Demographics

BCS conducts global student recruitment once every two years, accepting about 50 students each time. The College welcomes applications from monks aged between 18 and 35 who are proficient in either Mandarin or English and possess high-school or equivalent qualifications. Enrolment criteria also include writing an essay on the applicant's own aspirations, recommendation letters from his associates and passing the entrance examinations. The College assesses applicants based on four components: 1) the applicant's religiosity and commitment to education; 2) personal disposition; 3) results of entrance examinations and 4) outcome of interview.

Future Development

To meet the needs for specially trained monastics for the future development of the Sangha and Buddhism, the College plans to set up and run a research institute specializing in various Buddhist fields. The institute will groom future Buddhist leaders and scholars by enabling students and scholars from local and overseas institutions to undertake multi-disciplinary research in Buddhist Studies.

In addition, the College further hopes to foster healthy cooperative partnerships with other tertiary Buddhist educational and research organizations through the signing of memoranda of understanding (MOU), to jointly conduct research projects, actualize plans for student exchange programmes, and open up postgraduate programmes for the lay community.

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College Motto

Mind Abiding in Ultimate Virtue



Acting According to Precepts



Understanding and Practising



Benefiting all Sentient Beings



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Buddhist College of Singapore

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