

Pali as a Living Language?

Sinhalese monks in Sri Lanka first recorded the Buddha's teachings in Pali. But save in the Buddhist scriptures, it is now, like Latin, a dead language. Nalanda, however, is planning to give it some life! Beginning in the upcoming school year, through the use of sutta chanting and the like that have an unbroken tradition of 2,500 years in Buddhist communities, it is expected the learner will be able to identify Pali phonemes and morphemes, and its grammar, and will be able to read discourse in Pali. Terms used in the classroom (such as *dukkha*, *anatta*) will be more readily understood and appreciated, and students will have direct access to the original teachings for research papers and term work.

If the experiment is successful, will Pali be heard in the classrooms and corridors of Nalanda? “*Kintu Bhante!*” (But, Sir!), “*Kinnu kho?*” (Why in the world?), “*Kismin vivādo?*” (What's the disagreement about?), “*Kim pana tvam maññasi*” (What do you think, then?).

Are you ready for the challenge?

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