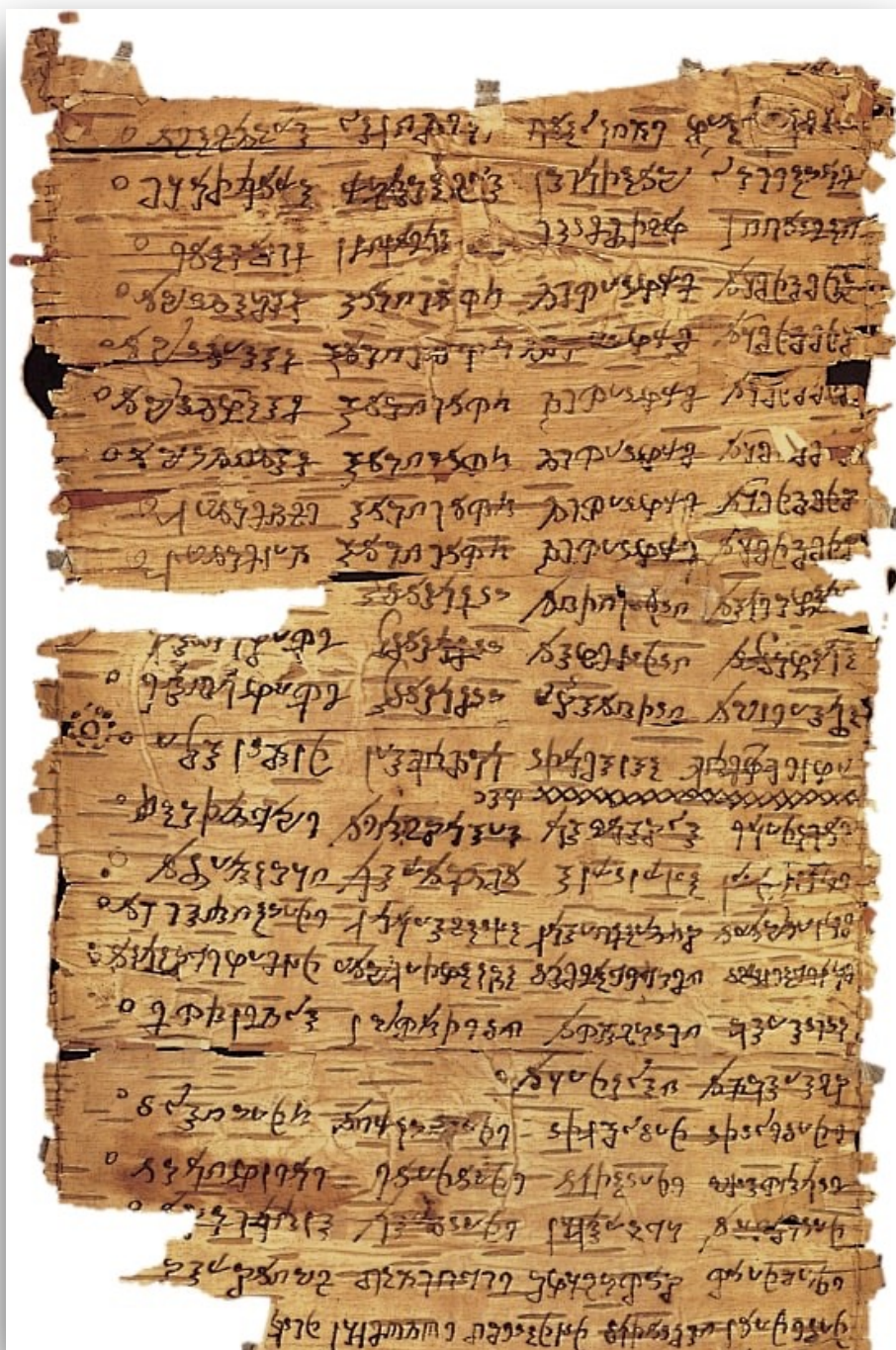


# Challenges of Translating the Dharma

Part II of an article on translation, by Viryabodhi  
(Coordinator for the ITTB)



**This is the second article on translation within Triratna by Viryabodhi, Coordinator of the International Triratna Translations Board (ITTB)**

[image on cover<sup>1</sup>]

In the first article I went into ‘the vital importance of translating the Dharma into people’s mother tongue’. I believe we need to value, prioritise, support and indeed *fund* this work more than we have done in the past. You find that first article [here](#).

In this article I will address some of the difficulties and challenges of translating the Dharma, especially in relation to the teachings of Sangharakshita. First of all I will deal with a few views and objections – maybe they are even resistances – that go contrary to my thesis, which I have heard over the years.

- ‘Most *Swedish* people know English well enough.’ (*replace ‘Swedish’ with your own language, if appropriate!*)
- ‘I prefer to read Bhante in the original.’
- The vast majority of our teaching at our local Buddhist Centres *is in our native language*. The newcomers both receive verbal and written teaching in their native language. A big reason why translation is important.

### **People know English well enough**

When talking about translation, a common objection, or at least mild protest, I have heard and still can hear, is that most Swedish people know English well enough. Which is true, but well enough for what? If we want to find those ‘emotional equivalents to our intellectual understanding’ (which I referred to in part 1) and if we want to take the Dharma deeper, I would argue that we need the Dharma expressed and communicated in our mother tongue; not only for our own sake. And we need to grapple with it and discuss it in our own language and culture.

Sometimes I think that people overestimate their understanding of English. I know I have overestimated mine. When translating and looking up the meaning of words in one or another Dictionary I sometimes realise that I haven’t got the full picture or even the right meaning of a certain word or phrase in English. At times I have even realised that I haven’t properly understood some words in Swedish.

When we listen to the Dharma in English we need to make sure that we really do understand it. Sometimes reading and studying the Dharma in your own language highlights and exposes what understanding you actually have.

### **‘I prefer to read Bhante in the original.’**

Another phrase I have often heard is: ‘I prefer to read Bhante in the original.’ I have no real problem with this, as long as people then read the same book in their own language, if it is translated. Of course the one doesn’t exclude the other. If we can, we should certainly read and listen to Bhante in his own language. But when we teach in

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<sup>1</sup> Incomplete birchbark manuscript of the Dhammapada in Gandhari language acquired by the Dutreuil de Rhins mission (1891-1894) in Central Asia. End of the 1st century to 3rd century, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

our local Buddhist Centres we do so maybe 99% of the time in our own language and then we need to know the Dharma terms and Bhante's expressions in that language.

I have sometimes been embarrassed (maybe I shouldn't have been) when I've heard fellow Swedish Order members teach the Dharma and use English or Swenglish Dharma terms instead of the Swedish terms (for an explanation of *Swenglish*, see below). Or how they have hesitated, can't find the right Swedish term and then present the English word. Having spent more than 25 years translating Bhante's teaching and trying to establish a Swedish Dharmic vocabulary (with others), I can probably be excused for feeling a bit frustrated, apart from feeling embarrassed. This is not true of everybody by far, but it has happened and continues to happen often enough for me to feel a concern and a desire to address it. (It would probably be helpful to have some discussion on this theme in local Triratna situations.)

I wonder if translators in other countries find this as well. I wouldn't be at all surprised. You could of course reflect on why this happens.

### **The teaching at our Buddhist Centres is in our native language**

With few exceptions the teaching at our Buddhist Centres is in the local language. People who attend courses and classes will read, and, more often than not, prefer to read books and teaching material in their own language. I think it's fair to expect that those who teach should be well acquainted with the Dharma in their own language. I would assume that on the whole they reflect and contemplate and think about the Dharma in their own language. There may of course be exceptions, for instance when some people spend their working life in an English-speaking environment or if they have spent a longer time in the UK.

It would be good to discuss this area too, in order to encourage and facilitate the process of translation.

These were just a few reflections and observations about what might get in the way of fully translating the Dharma into your own language. Another factor is of course that people are already so busy with teaching the Dharma and establishing a sangha that they don't have any time for translation.

I will now turn to a few observations, reflections and even recommendations. When one begins to translate the Dharma into a 'new' language there are some things that are good to work on and establish right from the start, such as: establishing a common dharmic vocabulary and starting a Translation Kula or committee.

### **Establishing a common Dharmic vocabulary**

We need to establish a common Dharmic vocabulary in our native language, with considered discussion of variations to translated words and terms. It is important that you work on this right from the start when you begin to translate the Dharma into your own language. This work is probably best done in a small translator's kula, but of course it's good to involve people more broadly, if possible. By doing so you

will save yourself a lot of unnecessary work and discussion in the future. This is not an easy task, but ever so fascinating and also a good sangha project.

You might want to translate and compose your own *Garland of Buddhist Terms*, as used within Triratna. (I can provide you with a copy of the Padmaloka original, by Cittapala and Ashvajit, and also a Swedish version with layout, that can be used as a template.) Ujumani has created a good template for translation into French, with the English, Pali, Sanskrit and French terms. This is also available upon request.

There are several online services with Buddhist dictionaries for Pali and Sanskrit.<sup>2</sup> It's also useful to have contact with someone who knows Pali and Sanskrit. There are several competent scholars in the Triratna movement.

### **All languages are only languages**

We must remember that languages – all languages, even Pali and Sanskrit, *and* English – are only languages. They are not divine, direct or faultless communications. All language is interpretation, or if you like, a translation. Even though they are ancient, and in some ways more precise, Pali and Sanskrit are not capable of communicating direct experience. Sometimes I get the impression that people glorify one or another language, maybe ascribing to it ideal and even 'divine' or magical properties (maybe akin to Plato's Ideal world). Some languages may of course have a better vocabulary for Buddhist terms, maybe having established specific meanings after long and arduous processes. But, we must remember that *all languages are only languages*.

### **Starting a Translation kula**

Apart from establishing a common Dharmic vocabulary a Translation kula or committee, or whatever you call it in your language, is helpful in other ways. In the kula you can discuss priorities, what to translate first, what you may need for teaching purposes, what may work in your country and culture, and so on. You can also discuss tricky Dharmic terms or English words, and how to best translate them in your language. A few of the terms that many translators struggle with are 'awareness', 'mindfulness', 'mind', 'going forth', and even 'going for refuge'. This list will of course vary from country to country, and language to language. In these discussions you will quite naturally begin the work of establishing a Dharmic vocabulary.

You will probably discover that people in the kula (or other people you share the discussion with) have preferences for how certain words or phrases should be translated, and shouldn't be translated. You will probably also discover that people have a definite dislike of some words, or that the words have unwanted associations etc. It's only natural that we have our own individual associations and preferences, and that words are emotionally loaded in different ways for different people.

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<sup>2</sup> For instance: <https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/> or <https://sanskrit.inria.fr/DICO/index.en.html>. In a forthcoming Translator's Handbook we will share more resources like these.



An added complexity is that you will discover that over time your preferences and responses will gradually shift and change. You may discover that some of the words you preferred to use suddenly don't seem so obvious; and that some of the words you felt such a clear dislike towards don't seem so problematic anymore. In other words, you discover how alive and changeable language is, and indeed how changeable you are.

Your understanding also deepens and as it does you may discover some years down the line that how you initially chose to translate wasn't quite correct. True, you did your best at the time according to your understanding – this is of course inevitable – but now you can more clearly see the shortcomings or inaccuracies. It shows the importance of working together with others on a text and to have proper checking of the text in place (see point on Checking below). Having access to more eyes and minds will help to minimise the faults or near misses in the translation. The general understanding and experience of translation in your language may also evolve. Translators and teachers outside of Triratna may find better ways to translate certain Buddhist terms, which we can draw inspiration from and use appropriately in our own context.

Another complexity in translation is when you are translating into a culture and language where Buddhism has been established and practised, maybe for a long period. One example of this is Japanese, into which translations have just started; others are Chinese and Indian languages. In Japan the youth may have negative responses to the traditional Buddhist and religious terms. Some of the terminology that Bhante Sangharakshita developed and we use in Triratna may be more attractive and inspiring to them.

It is quite a different matter when you translate into a language and country which has no history of traditional Buddhism.

### **Feeling the deeper rhythm**

Even though we need and should translate Sangharakshita's teaching, we also need to read his books, as well as listen to his teaching, in his own language – to re-emphasise that point. We should also, in my view, watch videos with Bhante giving key teachings, over and over again, to catch that energy and spirit that enlivens his communication. So when we later come to translate his teaching we will in some measure have that energy with us, *feeling that deeper rhythm*, and sensing that unfathomable place where he is coming from – as much as we are able to. (In a recent talk, Vishvapani referred to this quality of Bhante's communication as a *rhythm*, which I found evocative.)<sup>3</sup>

Of course, we also need to study and discuss Bhante's presentation of the Dharma with others and attend retreats and events where this happens. I will only mention Adhithana here, for which this is a central concern, but there are many other retreat

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<sup>3</sup> *A Deeper Rhythm*, 2022, <https://www.freebuddhistaudio.com/audio/details?num=LOC5570>

centres and retreats where this is done, for instance at Padmaloka, Taraloka and Tiratanaloka.

### **Challenges of translation**

Let us then move on to some of the challenges of translation. Here is a small selection of challenges that you most certainly will come across and be forced to grapple with.

- The danger or tendency of falling into ‘Swenglish’ or ‘Denglish’ or ‘Franglais’ or ‘Norwenglish’ or other variants. (which in some ways is inevitable and very common in our popular culture).
- The tendency to be over-literal in the translation: for instance too closely following or copying the sentence structure of the source language, which is often not the same in the target language.
- The challenge of *poetry*, *English literature* and sometimes particular or even obscure *cultural references*.
- The challenge of *metaphors*, *idioms* and *figures of speech* etc.
- The challenge of ‘language dialects’ or ‘language variations’ (eg. Spanish and Mexican Spanish.)
- The challenge of prioritising how much and what to translate.

### **Danger of falling into ‘Swenglish’ or ‘Denglish’ ...**

This means that you, often unknowingly, import or use English words or expressions in the Swedish text (or German, French, etc.), whereas there really is no such expression in Swedish (or German, French, etc.). This is quite common in many countries, it seems, because we are so influenced by English and American culture and language. It easily happens for those of us non-English who have spent a longer time in an English speaking country.

Sometimes it happens unconsciously, but it’s sheer laziness if we allow it to pass once it has been pointed out. But, it’s not always so easy to spot for oneself. In any case, it means that we haven’t done the work and the text hasn’t been fully translated.

Interestingly, I just ran into the problem I referred to earlier. I thought I knew what something meant and then discovered that I didn’t. ‘Swenglish’ is apparently not the same as the Swedish word ‘svengelska’. It is the latter that I’m after here. To be modern I consulted ChatGPT and asked it to explain the word ‘svengelska’ in a linguistic sense.

Here is what it answered: “‘Svengelska’ is a portmanteau word in Swedish, combining “svenska” (Swedish) and “engelska” (English), and refers to a linguistic phenomenon characterised by the use of a mix of Swedish and English within a single utterance or conversation. This mixture can occur at various levels of the linguistic system, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. “Svengelska” is often used in informal contexts or for comedic effect, and may reflect the influence of English as a global language in Swedish society.’

According to the main Swedish Dictionary, [www.svenska.se](http://www.svenska.se), 'svengelska' is: 'About Swedish, which is characterised by an abundance of loan words and translation loans from English (and American English).'

An even simpler description: "Svengelska" is slang for speaking Swedish with a little too much English mixed in.'

So, to relate this to other languages: Denglish or Franglais means 'German and French with a little too much English mixed in.'

'Svengelska' is related to 'anglicism' which is a directly translated English idiomatic expression. An example of this is when Greta Thunberg said in a speech that 'leaders should be put against the wall' (which in English means '... and shot'). When she was later alerted to this she apologised and said it was 'Swenglish', because in Swedish the expression 'putting someone against the wall' means 'to hold them responsible' for something.

I think one can find many examples of this phenomenon in letters from early Swedish immigrants to America (USA), who would throw in untranslated English words in their sentences when writing to family back home.

Leaving aside these descriptions and definitions, the use of 'Swenglish', 'Denglish', 'Franglais', etc. creates problems and the text doesn't feel fully translated, and some people react to this.

### **The danger of falling into over-literal translation**

Another danger which is all too common, especially for newer translators, is following too closely the sentence structure in the source language, which often isn't the same as in the target language. It can easily happen when you get tired, but also when you don't stop to find the proper expression in your own language. It could also be described as a 'false loyalty' and can happen when you are improperly concerned with being faithful to the original text. The extreme example is a word-by-word translation, which may not make sense, and anyhow feels very laborious and angular.

The experienced translator is able to find the complete translated expression in the target language, although sometimes he or she may have to work through the text several times to 'naturalise' it in its new language dress. Personally, I often have to work through the text in this way, several times, and then I also rely upon the checker or proofreader to point out where I have failed to accomplish a full translation, or where a Swenglish phrase has gone under the radar.

This issue is related to a more general one: the challenge of translating the style. This is what Ujumani, an experienced translator, writes: 'Ideally one should be able to "hear the author's voice" when reading a translated text – especially in the case of Bhante. A number of Bhante's books are edited versions of his spoken voice: talks or seminars. It is a complex issue because his language is sometimes a bit archaic and a bit heavy to read once translated into French.'

(See also the point on *The challenge of Sangharakshita's requests* below.)

## **The challenge of metaphors and figures of speech etc.**

All languages are rich in figures of speech, metaphor and idiom. The beauty and liveliness of a language is often expressed in this creative use of language. There may be common sources to many of the idioms, for instance, the Bible or Shakespeare. However, sometimes there are no direct or clear equivalents of words, metaphors etc. in every language. You often need to dig around, think outside the box and throw the literal mind overboard. You may well find an appropriate translation, but sometimes you will have to make do with an expression which is not quite a perfect fit. All the same it does the job.

Here's a couple of examples that I ran into when translating Paramananda's book *Change Your Mind*. Somewhere Paramananda uses the expression, natural 'like a duck takes to water' – in other words 'naturally, without effort'. It is a very evocative image of a duck effortlessly and easily 'plunging' or 'slipping' into a pond. This expression is not found in Swedish, so what to do? I thought of a Swedish expression: natural 'like a fish in water' ('in its element'), but that obviously provides us with a completely different image and feeling. What to do? Another expression I found tricky to translate into Swedish was 'hitting the ground running'.

Talking of ducks, many idioms are similar or the same in different languages. For instance, we have the expression 'like water off a duck's back', which is literally the same in Swedish and maybe other languages too. Metaphors and figures of speech is a rich and fascinating area in human languages.

On top of this we often mix our metaphors and then we need the likes of Shantavira, who can spot it and 'put the idioms right'.

It's very useful to have a volume of collected idioms easily at hand when you translate. Sometimes they have examples in different languages. I have several such books on my bookshelf. One of them is *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* and the Swedish: *Svenskt Språkbruk* ('Swedish language usage'). The usual Google search may not be very satisfactory, but there are sure to be several good resources in your native language. In English there is: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

Needless to say you also need to have good dictionaries in your own language, sometimes you can find bilingual dictionaries with English and your own language.

## **Poetry, English literature and cultural references**

An area related to idiom is poetry, as well as literary and cultural references. Poetry is of course rich in metaphor and image, and much harder to translate than prose, especially when there is metre and rhyme, and if it's poetry by literary icons such as Shakespeare. I have one friend who shy away from translating Shakespeare altogether, whereas I, maybe foolishly, plunge in and have a go.

We can't always rely on works that have already been translated in our language. For instance, when I investigated a quote (by Bhante) from one of Shakespeare's plays I found that the standard Swedish translation of that play, although fairly literary, was



far from complete. The quoted passage was so simplified and cut back that some of the meaning had got lost.

The translator should of course always check if there is an existing translation of the poem in their own language. This may be a time consuming enterprise. I would however be cautious about completely relying on such translations, having seen rather poor translations of Swedish poems into English; poor in my eyes at least.

If the related phenomena or cultural reference is hard to grasp or out-of-date I often put in a 'translator's footnote' (at the bottom of the page if I consider it needs a direct comment, or in the usual endnotes if it is of lesser importance), giving some explanation of the meaning and context to Bhante's text. People have told me that they have found this to be very helpful and have asked for more. It is also the recommended way of dealing with such issues: translate the passage as it is and write an explanatory footnote.

Sometimes I add a little comment within brackets in the text, eg. updating some details to people's lived experience of things: computer games, mobile phones, etc.

### **The challenges of Sangharakshita's requests**

In his will Bhante left a statement of wishes addressed to his Literary Executors. Below is a quote from the ITTB's vision document.

'The ITTB aims to work with and on behalf of Sangharakshita's Literary Executors, in particular to fulfil his requests:

- "To ensure that translations of my writings into other languages are faithful to the original text."
- "To maintain the integrity of the text as well as the personality of the writer as expressed in the text."

Translating Bhante Sangharakshita is a challenge since his language is sometimes a bit archaic and a bit heavy to read once translated into a European language, for instance French or Swedish. The sentences are sometimes very long, with several subclauses. I believe that you can 'simplify' without losing Bhante's voice and style, too much. It is a balancing act. One has to do one's best to preserve the voice, but remember that the message, the Dharma, must be communicated in a clear and pleasing way.

There is room for discussion here, in fact an ongoing discussion, amongst more experienced translators as well as amongst newer less experienced ones.

What does it in fact mean to be 'faithful'? In a presentation at a meeting of translators of Sangharakshita in November 2021, Sraddhapa shared his thoughts on fidelity: **Thinking about fidelity in translating Sangharakshita**. The full presentation and discussion is found here: <https://youtu.be/KWDiJnmToAc>

## **Checking translations – procedures**

Related to Bhante's requests is checking the translations. In the ITTB we have drawn up recommendations for checking the quality of translations, especially checking the quality and ability of new translators. In parallel to this article I have begun writing a **Translator's Handbook**, which will go into much more detail on many of the points raised here, especially for new translators. Here I will briefly mention a few points on checking translations.

When you have decided to translate a book by Sangharakshita (or another of their published authors) you will contact Windhorse Publications to get the latest version of the text. If you aim to publish a translation of a work by Bhante, you will need to sign a contract with Windhorse which includes a clause about checking. (The actual signing often happens closer to publication.) In this contract you agree to several points on quality:

“The translation of the Work shall be made by a competent translator faithfully and accurately from the original language on the basis of the current edition. The Publisher is allowed to make any adaptations which will enhance the suitability of the Work for the Swedish readership with the written consent of the Proprietor [this should say ‘Copyright Holder i.e. Literary Executors] to each and every change. Such changes must not alter the intention or character of the Work.

b) All translations are to be checked against the original English text by a native speaker of the target language acceptable to the Copyright Holder, such acceptability to be signified in writing.

c) Adaptations to the text to enhance the suitability of translations from the Work for the readership of any given language shall only be made with the written consent of the Copyright Holder.

Requests for permissions from the Copyright Holder should be directed to the secretary of the Literary Executors.”

## **Language variations or language dialects**

Some languages have a wide spread over large geographical areas and cultures, and over time they develop ‘variations’ or ‘dialects’. These variations can include differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and idiomatic expressions. In the specific case of Spanish Spanish and Mexican Spanish, they are considered different dialects of the Spanish language, each with its own unique characteristics shaped by their respective regions and linguistic histories. In Triratna there have been translations within both Spanish dialects and in recent years the Spanish translation coordinators have worked hard on resolving issues around this (as well as checking and improving the quality of old translations).

Other examples of different ‘variations’ are British and American English, Brazilian and European Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese.

## **Translation – a challenging task – just start**

Having read what I have written so far you may feel that translation seems a very difficult, almost impossible task. Yet, we have to translate. As I've described in part 1, when many people hear or read the Dharma they will often feel inspired to render it into their own language. It will be very helpful if we can encourage translation within our local sangha and get used to giving each other kind and considered feedback.

To anyone feeling the impulse to translate or who is already translating I would say: keep going and share it. In time you will learn and gradually get better at it. You will learn to explore the fascinating field of translation, using all available help. You will learn to give it time and you will learn to receive feedback from others. Translation can be an effective practice in dealing with clinging and ego-identification. Anyone who has written a text and received feedback knows this all too well. We can easily fall into feeling it is 'my text', even 'my translation', 'how dare you tread so carelessly on my toes?' Indeed a fertile ground for practice, of letting go and maybe insight.

## **What to translate**

When considering what to translate we very quickly come up against a dilemma. There is so much Dharma material available in English, not to mention Pali and Sanskrit (although translating directly from them of course demands a good command of those languages). Obviously it's a balancing act. There is so much Dharma available, not only historically by Bhante and others, but also currently within Triratna in so many places. There is teaching from retreats, at Buddhist Centres and online, and we can only translate a tiny fraction of it all. Each local 'language situation' needs to have a good review of what to translate and what to prioritise; not only once but recurrently.

## **Subtitling videos – a new venture**

Recently the ITTB received a grant from the FutureDharma Fund for a pilot project, to research and establish routines for subtitling some key lectures by Sangharakshita and other important videos. Jnanacandra headed this project very competently and gradually more and more videos are emerging with subtitling. This is, as Ujmani puts it: 'A great addition indeed – people will manage to see Bhante, understanding what he says as well as feeling his passion for the Dharma, his uncompromising dedication to it.'

For instance: [Remembering Sangharakshita Through His Friendships](#)

or: ['A Taste of Freedom' – Sangharakshita on Vimeo](#)

## **Relevance and appropriateness**

When we consider the need for translation work throughout the movement it's important to be aware of the size, stage of development and available resources of each local or 'language situation' (I variously use the terms 'sangha', 'local situation',

‘Buddhist Centre’ etc. to refer to the whole national ‘situation’. Henceforth I will simply say ‘situation’.)

Below I will provide a guide that we have used in the ITTB. The categories are a bit rough and ready, and certainly not static. A smaller situation may for instance be developing towards a medium sized situation, and a medium sized situation may be evolving into a large situation. It is always vital that one has an ongoing evaluation of the needs of the sangha and therefore an active prioritisation of what one should focus on to translate. A small sangha or group has their needs, first of all to have ritual texts, pujas, and course materials and instructions for meditation. Larger and long established sanghas have very different needs.

Before that let’s state the obvious: it will never be possible to translate all of Bhante’s books and teachings, so what we are encouraging is that each situation translates their own library of *Core books* and relevant texts.

(Maybe AI tools – Artificial Intelligence – in the future will help to remedy this. However, I’m pretty sure that such translations always have to be carefully checked and edited. A lot has happened in this field in the last few years, even months. There is now open access to for instance ChatGPT, that translates shorter pieces of text at a time. Another service is [DeepL Translator](#), which uses AI and in my view translates more accurately than Google translate.)

### **Small situation**

A small situation may only have one or two Order members, or no Order members but a keen mitra (who may have asked for ordination).

The small situation has its needs, often of ritual texts, pujas and short inspirational or introductory or core books (such as *The Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path* and Vadanya’s *Introducing Buddhism* or something similar). In these pioneering situations the first efforts at translating Dharma texts will almost always be a bit rough and ready, and this is ok – it couldn’t really be otherwise (even if you happen to get a professional translator joining the sangha). Materials that are translated in this way are first used ‘in-house’ in simple and cheap formats. The people translating are really enthusiastic but often not very skilled in the art of translation. As time goes and as they hopefully form translation teams their skill and experience grows and matures. (I have already mentioned the need to establish a Dharmic vocabulary and glossary. There are well developed templates that can be re-used for this purpose, available from the ITTB.) Examples of small situations are: Russia, Denmark, Turkey, Brazil, Japan, Albania and Malta.

### **Medium sized situation**

A medium sized situation often has an established presence in a country, with a Buddhist Centre with 5-25 variously active Order members. Often it takes quite a few years to get to this point in a new country, the evolution of a sangha being dependent on many factors, not least effective *kalyana mitrata*. In this medium sized situation there is an established presence in the form of a Buddhist Centre, in a large city if not

the Capital. There can also be several smaller local Triratna groups, often very dependent on a single or two local Order members. There is a mitra sangha evolving with between 10 and 100 mitras, some of whom are training for ordination. Examples of medium sized situations are: The Netherlands, France, Poland, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Estonia.

### **Large ‘well-established’ situation**

In large and well established situations there may be several established Buddhist Centres, a Retreat Centre and maybe communities. Examples of those are Germany, Spain and Mexico, and India of course. These situations often have a sizeable library of translated books and important texts, and again their needs are different. They may have a translation committee or kula, like Dharmamegha in Mexico/Spain that oversee the translation work. They also have their own ordination training processes.

In these situations translation has been going on for many years and there is often a need to return to ‘old translations’ to update and improve the language. Few of the enthusiastic translators in the past were trained in translation, if any were. Their translation skills and command of their own language will have evolved and improved over the years. And the use of one’s language has changed. Sometimes the English source texts have also been edited and improved.

### **Rejoicing**

I would like to finish this article by rejoicing in all that has been done in the field of translation through the years. So many people, in so many countries and languages, have contributed in so many ways.

Here are all the languages that have received funds from the ITTB over the years (although much translation work has happened without any central funding): *Albanian, Dutch/Flemish, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Welsh*. In pie chart 2 on the next page you see how much each language has been awarded in funds; the two newest are Japanese and Welsh.

Books that are typically translated early on are: *Introducing Buddhism* (Vadanya), *The Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path* and *Human Enlightenment* (both by Sangharakshita), as well as ritual texts and instructions in meditation. In another presentation I will give an overview of the translation history of each language and what books have been translated. I would also like to introduce you to some of the translation pioneers in Triratna and what they have accomplished.

Time to conclude. I hope that I have been able to give you some idea of the fascinating world of translation within Triratna in these two articles. I also hope you can better appreciate the challenges and complexities that we face and work with in this vital and important work. Finally, I hope that you more fully realise how important it is to support and fund this work, much of which is really done by enthusiastic volunteers.



Lastly, I would like to thank Kalyanaprabha, who has encouraged and guided me along the way, and to Ujumani who has come in towards the end with some helpful feedback and suggestions, and thank you to FutureDharma and the ECA who give funds for translation projects and fund me to work part time as coordinator for ITTB.

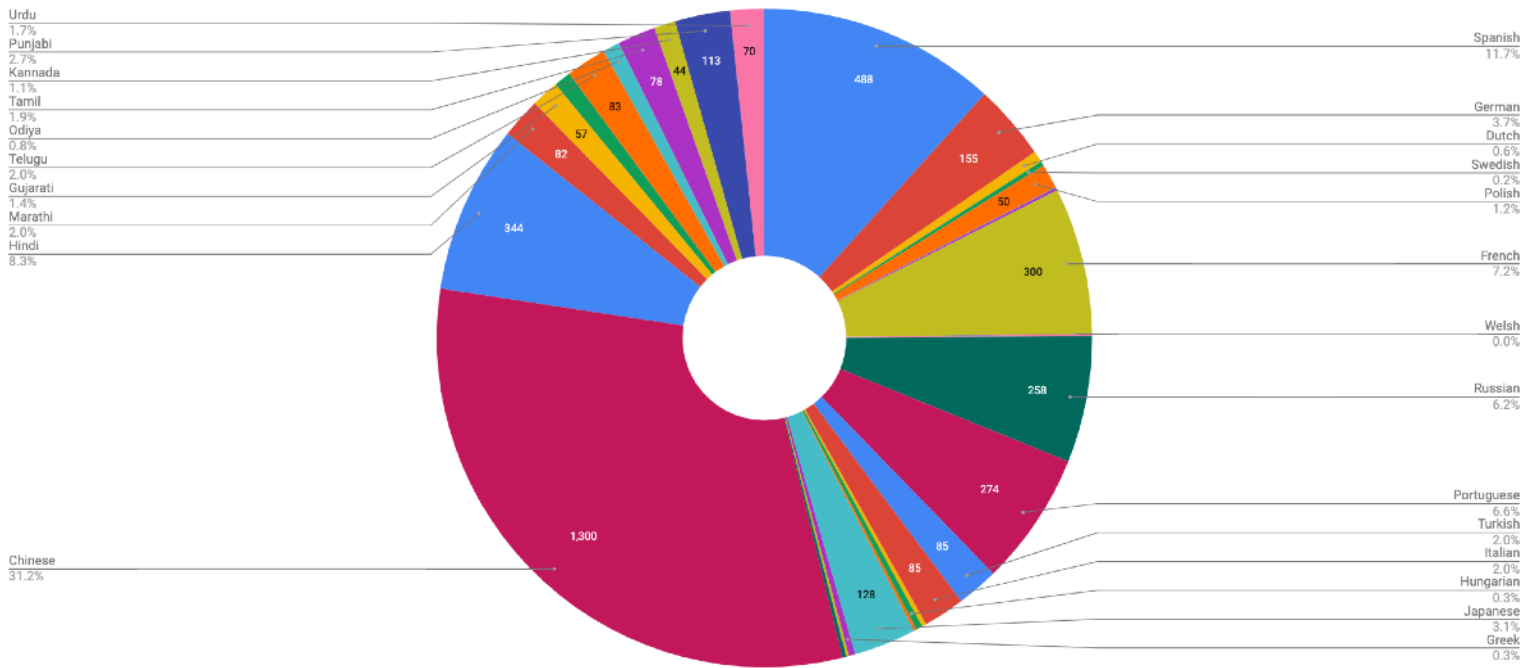
With metta, Viryabodhi  
(viryabodhi@gmail.com)

APPENDIX: See next page, for a *Visual Presentation*.

## Visual presentation

In the first pie chart below you see the world languages where there is some Triratna activity, or mitra, etc. The second chart (Total funding 2012–2023) shows how much ITTB funds have been granted to the same languages, except Indian and Chinese. But I have included Chinese and Indian languages in the first chart to give a sense of sizes.

World Languages in Triratna (mm)



TOTAL FUNDING: 2012-2023

