



Tibetan Language Institute News

Summer 2006

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Greetings from TLI!

Summer in Montana: bright blue skies, fires in the mountains, hollyhocks in profusion, wild turkeys leading chicks across the yard, deer being cooled by the creek, and sleeping out in the teepee. It's been a busy time inside for us as well. In this past year TLI has seen a lot of growth but is also facing many challenges as we attempt to keep up with its ever-expanding range of activities.



Why Learn Tibetan?

Learning Tibetan--whether classical/textual or colloquial/spoken--can seem a daunting task in the modern world. Time, commitment to the project, and a teacher skilled in more than just speaking and reading Tibetan are necessary. Many of us already have trouble fitting everything into our busy schedules, and to add one more activity might seem crazy. Many might ask why they should bother if their goal is to practice and meditate. For hasn't everything important already been translated into English or some other Western language? What *does* learning a foreign language--Tibetan-- have to do with the spiritual life?

The answers to these questions are complex. The simple answers are that learning even a little Tibetan brings life and light to the beautiful but incomprehensible jumble of sounds that make up a sadhana practice text written and read in Tibetan. It does indeed take commitment and a good teacher, but a lot can be accomplished even in a regular 15-30 minutes per day. Furthermore, only a small portion of the immense Tibetan canon has been translated into Western languages, with only a portion of

that, albeit a large portion, into English.

As to the relation of Tibetan language to the spiritual life of a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner, David Curtis writes in Mandala Magazine that the

...Tibetan language is a finely crafted vehicle fashioned by enlightened beings to bring the mind to awakening...the texts were written and translated by realized masters....Looking into the specialized language they created to convey the innermost essence of the Buddha's teaching can be profoundly inspirational.

What do great masters have to say on this subject? They encourage their students to learn some Tibetan! The **Very Venerable Kalu Rinpoche** said:

...In order to engage in deep commitment to Dharma...knowledge of Tibetan is extremely important because it allows us to understand the practice texts and the traditional Tibetan commentaries....In order for Dharma to be properly understood in the West, there must be Westerners who are willing to master the Tibetan.... For now, anyone wishing to study the Dharma deeply...will reap great benefit from the study of Tibetan. If you study regularly, a little bit every day, you will quickly become knowledgeable."



V.V. Kalu Rinpoche and his writing from his later years

The **V. V. Bokar Rinpoche** (V.V. Kalu Rinpoche's principle disciple) on several occasions emphasized the need for practitioners to learn Tibetan. He wrote that

The vast and profound body of teachings expounded by the Buddha is the ultimate source of benefit and happiness for all

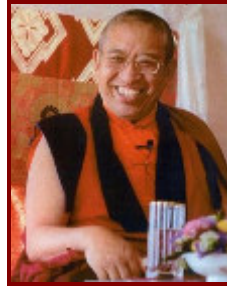


The V.V. Bokar Rinpoche

beings. The majority of the Buddha's teachings of all three yanas [vehicles] is presently preserved only in the Tibetan language. In order for the teachings to become well established and fully assimilated throughout the world, **I strongly feel that people outside the Tibetan-speaking areas must train**

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themselves in the Tibetan language. By this means, they will be able to have direct access to the Dharma, and this will also allow that the teachings become fully and accurately translated into new languages.



V.V. Thrangu Rinpoche

Lastly, **V.V. Thrangu Rinpoche**, a senior teacher and meditation master in the Karma Kagyu tradition, writes :

In general, even knowing a little Tibetan is beneficial in deepening an understanding of the Dharma. For those who know no Tibetan, there is an inherent limit placed on what can be learned about the Dharma. **For those who learn Tibetan, there is no limit to their studies or to what they can learn. Learning even a little Tibetan can deepen students' understanding of the Dharma.**

We at the Tibetan Language Institute take these teachers' statements as words of encouragement and direction. Our goal is to help those interested in Tibetan language and culture in any way we can. May all benefit from efforts to preserve Tibetan!

How to Learn Tibetan



Rochester, NY Intensive



Rigzin Ling Seminars in California

So how does one go about learning some Tibetan?

TLI has several suggestions. First, one can study on one's own. The success of this will depend on one's motivation as well as one's background in English grammar and foreign language studies. The Level I Package from the

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TLI Bookstore, plus the DVD of the Level I Course, is an excellent place to start for beginners. The bookstore also has a Level II Package (DVD now available), reader/translator packages, and a thorough colloquial/spoken package.

Secondly, many students choose to study with David on the telephone. Each student sets up a schedule to fit needs and intensity of the learning experience. David has been teaching for over 13 years--students rave about this method.



Summer Seminar Lev I



Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche, Tulku Thubten Rinpoche and Level III group at the Summer Seminar 2005

Third, David teaches workshops and intensives to groups all over the country. After a three-day workshop, students can read slowly-but-surely in Tibetan. Quite an accomplishment! We also offer an annual Summer Seminar in beautiful Montana where students learn Tibetan in a Dharma setting.

Lastly, we are working at putting in place an online Level I Course, for those of you who prefer this format. Stay tuned!

In the TLI Bookstore: *Buy TLI!*

The *TLI Bookstore* is constantly adding to its stock. Part of our job is to read through the book catalogues and find the jewels that are out there. We have redone the TLI online bookstore and encourage you to bookmark that page for quick reference (www.tibetanlanguage.org). You will find an array of wonderful Tibetan language learning materials (including our various "packages"), as well as books to enhance the understanding of Tibetan culture and Dharma.



Your patronage of the online bookstore directly supports TLI's many efforts to preserve the Tibetan language and culture--thank you!

N.B. Telephone students are offered free shipping/handling on all book orders shipped to an address in the Continental US. Don't see something you would like? Just contact us and we'll look for you.

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Here are just a few of the special items we carry:

- **DVD of the Level I Course** and what David calls **The Bootleg DVD of the Level II Course**. Both are meant to be used with the respective manuals. Can't come to a workshop or need a refresher? This is for you.
- The **Illuminator Dictionary** is easy to use and only \$50. Encyclopedic definitions of dharma terms with hyperlinked lines and many other excellent features. In the next few weeks we should also have the Mac version available. Great gifts for translators and Lama-friends.
- Exclusive distributor for Tendrel Publications: **Tibetan Language Pre-Primer: Learning to Read the Short Chenrezik Sadhana** and the **Tibetan Sadhana Vocabulary: Translated Words of Seven Buddhist Sadhanas**.

IMPORTANT: TLI offers **monthly specials** of both Tibetan language and culture materials. This month we are offering free shipping within the continental US for the book *Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with Commentary by Jamgon Mipham* (\$24.95)

If you would like to be included in our email list to receive these monthly announcements, please write to us:
info@tibetanlanguage.org

Website Update



Have you looked at the TLI website lately? We have been at it again and invite you to look at www.tibetanlanguage.org. Here is a short list of what we have

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done to date:

- **Bookstore:** Complete reorganization, plus pictures, pdf's to show special features, and new books
- **Calendar:** In 2006 David will be teaching in Rochester NY in October, Los Angeles in November, and Montana in September. For information, contact us at info@tibetanlanguage.org or call 406/ 961-5131.
- **Articles and Newsletters:** Read about past events
- **Photo Gallery:** Beautiful picture of V.V. Kalu Rinpoche, maps of Tibet, and photo albums of past events. Fun!
- **Free Study Aids:** Refuge prayer; Meal/Food Prayer; Manjushri Prayer, mantra and seed syllable; 37 Practices quote, Prayer to Be Reborn in Dewachen; HH the Dalai Lama's Long-Life Prayer, and Dedication. Many come in two formats--with Tibetan, English, and phonetics, and in Tibetan only.

TLI Projects

So much we'd like to do! These are a few of the projects "in the works" this summer:

- **New Sadhana Flashcards:** a set that will allow the study of a very important and essential vocabulary.
- **Level I Online Course:** David is filming in August and this should be in place sometime early this fall.
- **Heart Sutra Package:** this will include an updated workbook and glossary, CD's, Dharma books, and DVD of David teaching the course.
- **Library of Congress:** TLI is most fortunate to be part of the Library's Tibetan text program. We cannot order many of the books being published at this time because of lack of funds, but we are steadily adding to the TLI Library a little each quarter. This would be a great program to sponsor.
- **Inmate Project:** TLI offers a course for those incarcerated who would like to study Tibetan in a systematic way. Inmates receive installments of the Level I program, do assignments, and upon completion of the entire Level I course, receive a Certificate of Completion. We really need a sponsor for this.
- **Office/ Classroom in Missoula, MT:** we are setting up an office in town so that David has a place to teach Skypes phone students, as well as conduct a weekly on-going class, Dharma classes, a reading room for the archives....The space is in a beautiful and peaceful private residence.

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GoodSearch: An Easy, Free Way to Help TLI

What if the Tibetan Language Institute earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Well, now we can!

GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it's powered by Yahoo!, so you get great results.

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to **enter TLI as the charity** you want to support. You can find out there how to easily add a GoodSearch toolbar to your browser.



Just 500 of us searching four times a day will raise about \$7300 in a year without anyone spending a dime. **Please spread the word**--to tell friends and family about GoodSearch, go to <http://www.goodsearch.com/TellFriend.aspx>. Thank you!

Other Ways to Help TLI

Many, many thanks to all you friends who have sent in **contributions**. This has been a challenging time for us at TLI, and we appreciate your support and kind words. Lessons, seminars, book sales, etc. only cover a portion of our costs, and your support is both heartening and invaluable for us to continue TLI's work. TLI is an IRS registered 501 (c) (3) educational non-profit organization, and all contributions are tax deductible.

We encourage you to think about **volunteering**. You don't need to live in Montana! We will soon need a new website person, help with writing grants, and people who can input Tibetan.

Another area that you could help is in **sponsoring** a specific project such as

- The **Photocopier Project** (for \$600 we can get a refurbished photocopier/fax machine/scanner). Our photocopy machine and fax machine will soon need to be replaced. The one we have now is about 8 years old. It has done a heroic job, but is now showing its age. We use this a lot and every day;
- The **Library of Congress Text Acquisition Project**: we would love to be able to buy some of the wonders offered for sale to our

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- very select group;
- The **Inmate Project**. TLI is currently underwriting all costs, from printing to preparing to postage. We receive many requests for Tibetan language materials from inmates in the US.

TLI would also like to recognize the hard work and good spirits of our staff: precise and knowledgeable Elizabeth in shipping, wholesale ordering, and event preparation; Erin, our office assistant *par excellence*; and Lizzy, the wonder Web-woman.

With very best wishes to you all for a beautiful summer and fall,

Deanna
TLI Office Manager

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