

THE TIBETAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER

Learning Materials & Instruction



April 24, 2008

In this issue:

- **Word of the Day: Buddha**
- **Upcoming Programs**
- **The Beginnings of the Tibetan Script**
- **New at the TLI Bookstore**
- **Projects in the Works**
- **Donations Update**

Dear Friends,

Greetings again from Montana! The beautiful spring weather had a set-back last weekend--more snow! But we here at TLI (especially the youngest members of the staff: our children Henry and George) remain very optimistic that good weather will soon return.

David and a few students visited Anam Thubten Rinpoche in Sun Valley in early March (Rinpoche was there teaching). David came back glowing with enthusiasm and energy. He subsequently spent many long weekends at the TLI Dharma House in Missoula writing.



Stacks of Tibetan Pechas/ Texts.
Tibet July 2007. Photo courtesy of our Tibetan
long-time student and friend, George Chialtis.

WORD OF THE DAY BUDDHA

The new word for the day is the Tibetan word for Buddha, *sang gyay* (pronounced "song gyay").

When we look at the etymology for this word, we see that it is closely related to the word for enlightenment. *Sang* means "awakened" (as from the sleep of ignorance) or "purified" (as in "purified of all obscurations"). *Gyay* means "expanded, blossomed, fully developed."

So the two syllables combine to mean "one such as Shakyamuni Buddha, who has purified all the obscurations (*sang*) and who has developed fully all the qualities of enlightenment (*gyay*)."

In this newsletter I want to let you know about our current selection of programs and about our new learning materials that are coming out. *Please forward this letter* to anyone who might be interested in TLI's materials or courses--that helps us get the word out.



UPCOMING PROGRAMS. The virtual teleconferencing courses have been quite successful. Students can study Tibetan with David from their homes or wherever they are. To date 124 students have signed up for the various classes: students from Maine to California, from Florida to Hawaii, plus Canada and Australia. A lot of people out there are learning Tibetan! You all inspire our work here, so thank you. We wish you great success and joy in your continued studies.

TLI is now offering its third "round" of virtual courses. Level I started on April 9, Level II starts May 1, and the 37 Practices of Bodhisattva Reading & Translating Course begins July 10. Email or call for more info.

On Thursday May 1, the Level II Virtual Course (a teleconference call) gets underway. This class will meet from 5-6:30 PDT--***it is still possible to register***. The course is 9-weeks long, May 1 through June 26.

If you know how to read the Tibetan script (even haltingly), here is an opportunity to learn the grammar (that is, how the language works) This is the next logical step on the way to being able to read prayers and sadhanas for comprehension, preparing you for our reading/translating seminars and courses.

Last two weekends in June, a Boston group is hosting two weekend seminars with David. We are still in the planning stages, but mark the calendar. ***Learn to read Tibetan in only ONE weekend!*** The following weekend will be a seminar which will read selections from Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*.

In July and August, David will offer a new reading course: *37 Practices of Bodhisattvas*. David will lead students through this core text in a gentle and systematic manner. July 10 - August 28, meeting on Thursdays from 5-6:30 PDT. A great way to enhance your Dharma practice this summer!

In September, TLI will again offer the Level I Virtual Course. This class starts at ground zero and builds up to being able to read the Tibetan script.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE TIBETAN SCRIPT

Legend has it that when Thonmi Sambhota returned to the wild land of his birth--Tibet-- after many years studying the dharma in India, he worked with the King Songsten Gampo to formulate the script and develop what became the vehicle for the promulgation of the Dharma in the Land of Snows. This initiated and made possible one of the greatest cultural achievements we know.

Generations of Tibetans then worked for 600 years to translate all the Sanskrit Buddhist texts into the newly-fashioned literary Tibetan language. Along the way, they continually refined the new language until it became the beautiful and precise tool we have today--Classical Literary Tibetan.

The Tibetan people were able to practice the teachings that had been translated, unmolested by the outside world, for some thirteen hundred years. Now in the 21st century some part of these teachings can be found in many lands and languages of the world. Many texts remain in Tibetan only.



NEW IN THE TLI BOOKSTORE:

- *Heart Sutra Translation Workbook* and Flashcards (TLI publication)
- *TLI Reader Translation Workbook* (available in May)
- *37 Practices of Bodhisattvas Translation Workbook*, 2nd ed. (a TLI Publication, available in June)
- *Arrow to the Heart* by Ken McLeod. A newly published book about the *Heart Sutra*. It's a good read!
- Miscellaneous Bookstore items (available in May): Level I Homework key; laminated sheets for Levels I and II.



PROJECTS IN THE WORKS. We are working on updating our various workbooks, following the model of the new *Heart Sutra Translation Workbook* (so these will include translation sheets, glossaries, and helpful

appendices of Dharma words and lists). With one such workbook we are looking into making an accompanying interactive CD-Rom. David will also be filming more instructional DVDs, for we hear from people all over the world just how useful these are.

We are also going to be putting video clips on You-Tube: clips that introduce interested folks to Tibetan; clips that give you who are already studying brief lessons on specific items of grammar, vocabulary, etc; clips that give a quick teaching on the five *skandhas*, the Four Noble Truths, and so on.



DONATIONS REQUEST. Many, many thanks to all of you friends of TLI who contributed to **TLI's 2007 fundraiser.**

As an update on the financial status of TLI, contributions nevertheless are down this year. Here at TLI we do what we can, 7 days a week, feeling dedicated to the work that remains to be done. Your support not only truly inspires our work but directly makes that work possible.

If you haven't yet sent in a contribution, we would deeply appreciate your help.

If you would like to send in another donation at this time, that would be fantastic.

The vision of TLI is based on our heartfelt wish to bring the wisdom and sanity of the Tibetan traditions to the world via the teaching of the Tibetan language and culture. I have experienced first-hand that learning even a little Tibetan enhances practice and understanding of the Dharma. Although a very different language from English, Tibetan is not only a "do-able" endeavor but also a wonderful, joyous pursuit.

Wishing you all the very best in your studies. Please stay well and be in touch!

Deanna Curtis
TLI Office Manager

Tibetan Language Institute

P.O. Box 2037
Hamilton, MT 59840

info@tibetanlanguage.org
406.961.5131

www.tibetanlanguage.org

Upcoming Events

***Level II Virtual Course (May)**

*** Boston Seminar: Level I & Reading (June)**

***37 Practices Reading & Translating Virtual Course (July -Aug)**

***Level I Virtual Course (Aug)**

