

Good Reception of David Curtis's Tibetan Language Intensives in Rochester April 2002

This past March, David Curtis taught a fourth and highly successful course in Classical Tibetan at the Amitabha Foundation in Rochester, NY. David began coming to the Amitabha Foundation in early 1999 to give one-week intensives in Tibetan language. Although the first three courses were a struggle for many of us--learning a new alphabet, how to spell and read, and basic rules of grammar--the most recent one proved the success of persistent effort. Seventeen students graduated from Level I and seventeen more from Level II. Seven of these students were practitioners from sanghas outside the Rochester area.



Tibetan Language Intensive, Amitabha Foundation

The Level II group translated, with help from David, the "Introduction" to the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* by Gampopa. Two weeks later, a Khenpo from the Drikung Kagyu lineage--Khenpo Sherab Odzer--came to teach on the *Jewel Ornament*. We were able to follow along in our translation workbooks as he read from the root text!

Not only is it exciting to be able to actually read the Tibetan with some understanding but one comes to see that studying Tibetan is Dharma practice. A greater appreciation arises for the Dharma vocabulary as one learns the subtler meanings often lost in our English translations.



Looking at the electronic *Illuminator Dictionary* with students at the Amitabha Foundation

"Study, reflect, and meditate"--how often have we heard our Lamas encourage us? The study of the Tibetan language immerses one's mind in the study of Buddha Dharma, strengthening one's intellectual understanding and becoming an actual meditation as well. By the end of the week, the group is transformed--just as with Lama teachings--from a harried, resistant bunch of practitioners to a calmer, more confident sangha deeply moved by the beauty and richness of a language used to express the profound truths of the Buddha Dharma.

Those in our sangha who have been working with David these last few years are deeply grateful for his skillful teaching, his delightful Dharma stories and his sense of humor, his warmth and compassion--all of which come out of his clear understanding of the Buddhist path.

--Gretchen Howard
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For more information about the content of this or other programs and learning materials, please contact TLI at 406- 961-5131 or info@tibetanlanguage.org.