

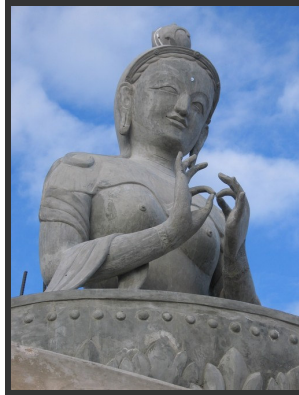
Tibetan in the Wild



Jens (in brown pants, in front) points out the double rainbow--probably a sign that everyone is going to pass (just kidding).

Jens T, a KCC Kids' Program graduate who will turn 17 in October of this year [2005], just returned from two weeks of retreat-style Tibetan language study in Arlee, Montana.

Tibetan Language study in Montana? Bet you didn't know that Lama David Curtis, nationally recognized senior teacher at the Tibetan Language Institute, heads a three-week summer program for all levels of Tibetan study at Ewam Sang-ngag Ling, a retreat center in Arlee, just outside of Missoula. David was joined in teaching in week three by Lama Tulku Thubten Rinpoche, a Tibetan native speaker.



The Prajnaparamita statue at the Ewam Retreat Center.

Jens learned elementary reading and writing from David in Portland, Oregon, years back, and then polished his skills during a three month stint at Venerable Bokar Rinpoche's monastery in Mirik, India. Rinpoche recommended that Jens continue his Tibetan studies when and if he was able. Like many teens, Jens has a busy school schedule, so the summer seminars were a great condensed option for study.

Jens said the participants, all adults, were one of the most interesting groups of people he's met. He enjoyed the time in class and the trips the group members took on weekends.



A weekend trip to the local waterfall. Learning Tibetan in Montana feels good!

On one weekend break, Jens went with fellow students into Missoula and had breakfast and lunch and visited the Missoula Saturday Market. He said, "I think I got in touch with my country roots, drinking creme soda and riding in a truck."

One of the interesting features of the retreat center is a Prajnaparamita "Garden of a Thousand Buddhas."

The day after he returned, Jens completed the translation of the Heart Sutra. David's approach to teaching Tibetan deepens people's practice and understanding of the dharma in general. His generous, humorous style, along with good scholarship, combines to make every class a success.

So check your calendars in early summer, 2006, for this institute and ongoing classes nationwide at TLI. Classes fill early, so register as far in advance as you can.

Excerpted from an article in *Nyingje: Tibetan Buddhist Resources for Kids*

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