

**CENTRE FOR INNER ASIAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Course: **PhD**  
Course No.:  
Course Title: **Modern Tibetan Language** རྒྱ་དེང་རབས་ཀྱི་བོད་སྐད་དང་ ཡི་གེ།  
Course Type: **Optional**  
Course Teacher: **Tsetan Namgyal**  
Course No: **SA 671**  
Course Credits: **Two**  
Contact Hours: **Two hrs per week**

**Course Objectives** རྒྱ་དམིགས་ལུལ་།

In a way, this is an introductory course without previous knowledge. Since it is for Phd student for research purposes, it focuses on developing basic abilities to speak, read and write in modern Tibetan style, i.e. the Lhasa dialect. It helps research students gain excellent proficiency in speaking, reading and writing some primary modern Tibetan literature.

One must look deeper into the following aspects to impart a genuine knowledge of the Tibetan language, particularly the modern Tibetan Language. The prime objective of introducing the "Modern Tibetan Language" in the School of International Studies, J.N.U., is to give some steadfast basic ideas about the Language and different dialects that speak all across the Trans Himalayan belt, including Tibet. And it will be more helpful, particularly for those students and researchers who do not have access to the knowledge of the Tibetan language and want to pursue their research on Tibetan studies. This course will be helpful, particularly for those non-Tibetan students and researchers, exclusively during their research and fieldwork programs like interacting with Tibetan people, consulting primary sources, and visiting libraries and Tibetan settlement areas in India and abroad or in the T.A.R. region of the Republic of China. This course exposes students to basic colloquial Tibetan vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures, emphasizing enabling students to gain oral proficiency.

The linguistic significance and relevance of the course རྒྱ་གར་འགག་དང་འབྲེལ་ཡོད་ is enormous in many aspects in the entire Trans Himalayas including Tibet. The Sino -Tibetan language family has around 1.5 billion speakers worldwide, and it's considered the second-largest number of speakers globally after those who speak languages in the Indo-European family is the leading linguistic group. The Sino Tibetan languages are the geographic classification of languages that evolved and originated in northern China around 4000-6000 years ago. It encompasses hundreds of languages, including Chinese, Tibetan, Burmese and many other spoken languages. Tibetan is a Tibeto- Burmese language written in the Indic script as its origin. It is spoken in Tibet with thousands of variant dialects. And also, it is spoken over Bhutan, Nepal, and across the Indian Himalayas belts of Sikkim, Tawang, Mon of Arunachal Pradesh Ladakh, Kinnor and Lahul Spiti and now by various Tibetan immigrant communities in multiple countries and scholars across the world. It has several dialects, but the ones spoken more widely are Lhasa and Shigatse dialects in Central Tibet, Amdo and Kham dialects in Eastern Tibet, and upper region dialects with one written script. As such, Language was used to communicate as a national language long before the formal Tibetan script came about only in the Seventh century during King Songsten Gampo's regime. He deputed his emissary, ThuMi Sam Bhoti, and other young Tibetans to Nalanda University in India, where they learnt several languages. To know about the Tibetan language, one must see the syntax and the proverbial meanings that could help one understand it better.

### **Learning Outcomes** (slob sbyong byas pai grub 'bras)

Since Language is one of the fundamental factors in studying international relations, Language can play an important role in international relations; it's a collective commodity, the more users, the greater the exchange value. It can help understand the basic knowledge of Tibetan language and literature and elementary grammar and its usage, collectively enhancing the broad understanding of modern Tibetan studies and the traditional Tibetan system of study and research.

This course is designed to keep the significance of modern Tibetan studies. It will be beneficial, particularly for those non-Tibetan students interested in pursuing higher studies

on the subject mentioned as research scholars.

**Evaluation Methods:** (Gnad thang/dbye dpyad thabs shes) Periodical Work and Semester examination

## **Course Contents**

### **1. Introduction to Tibetan Language (Scripts or Alphabets)**

- a) Tibetan script (Alphabet)
- b) Tibetan alphabet and their classification with Romanized pronunciation (Sgragdangs) based on the following different Tibetan grammatical systems of sum chu pa and rtags hjug pa, (pho- masculine), (mo- feminine), (ma ning- neuter/no genders) (shin tu mo- very feminine gender,) and (mo gsham- sub feminine/barren)
- c) Usage Conjugation of common Tibetan roots letters while framing from the above roots, particles, syntax like rjes hjug (suffix letters ) Snon hjug - (prefix letters )Yan jug - ( post suffix letters) and min gshi letters applied elementary grammar and composition
- d) Pronunciation of Tibetan Language/words and the basic (500) Tibetan vocabulary in usage/Tibetan phrases

### **2. Formation of Tibetan words**

- a) Usage with words in different tenses and cases according to the grammatical application and English method of transliteration.
- b) Use spoken Tibetan, preferably the Lhasa dialect, with the help of various instruments like audio and video machines and modern and traditional Tibetan songs, religious recitations such as Mantra etc., as suitable for ordination.

### 3. Sentence making and Translations from English to Tibetan and vice versa

#### 4. A brief introduction to the two Tibetan grammar texts

- a) Sum rtags (Sum bcu pa)
- b) rtags kyi 'jug pa ( rtag 'jug pa)

#### 5. **An introduction to Tibetan prose and poetry**

- a) Prose ༼ ཚོགས་སྐྱེས༽ Ngos-Kyi-Yul-Dang Ngos-Kyi-Mi-Mang by Dalai Lama, (chapter -I)
- b) Poetry ༼ སྐྱེས་པའི་རྣམས༽ Sa-skya Legs-bshad by Sakya Pandita Chapter 1( first 15 verses)

#### 6. . Learning through audiovisual aid, films and with language partners:

- a) Radio and Television talks like Radio Asia, Shi tsang T.V.,
- b) Tibetan T.V. news ( Bod kyi brnyan' phrin gsar 'ghyur)
- c) Tibetan this week
- d) Tibet.net (C.T.A. news media network/website)

#### 7. Learning through Tibetan newspapers and Journals:

- a) Tibetan Bulletin (Dharamsala, India)
- b) News from China (China's Embassy, New Delhi)
- c) China's Tibet (A bimonthly of Tibetan news and views in English) Beijing, China)
- d) Kra ung go'bod ljongs (A bimonthly of Tibetan news and views in Tibetan) Beijing, China)
- e) Shes' ca (Dharamsala, India)
- f) Tibetan World, (New Delhi)
- g) Tibetan Review (New Delhi)
- h) Tibet Today (Dharamsala, India)
- i) Tibbat Desh, New Delhi)
- j) Rangzen (Dharamsala, India)
- k) Lung rta (EMI, Dharamsala, India)

#### **Readings**

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- Angrup Lahuli, 'Vimsati' (Sambhota Upsarga Prakriya) Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies. Sarnath 1985
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- Bell CA, (1912) "Grammar of Colloquial Tibetan". H.B Hannah
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- C.A Bell, Grammar of Colloquial Tibetan . H.B Hannah 1912 Jaschke-Tibetan Grammar →
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- Das, S.K.: Basic Buddhist Terminology. Varanasi 2009
- GN Roerich-A textbook of the Colloquial Tibetan
- Goldstein MC. (1984) "English Tibetan Dictionary of Modern Tibetan" Library of Tibetan works and Archives, Dharamsala
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- Jaschke .H, (1881) "A Tibetan English Dictionary" with special reference to the prevailing dialects with English and Tibetan vocabulary. Motilal Banarasidas Pvt Ltd Delhi
- Jaschke-Tibetan Grammar
- Laufer; Bherthhold (1916) Loan works in Tibetan (Toung Pac, pp. 403- 552)
- Lobzang Phuntsog Lhalunpa, Book of Colloquial Tibetan. Manjusri Publishing House, New Delhi 1972
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Tibetan”.(Dialect of Central Tibet) Manjusri Publishing House, New Delhi

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- Sarat Chandra Das: A Tibetan-English Dictionary. Delhi 2002 (Calcutta 1902)
- Sarat Chandra Das: Introduction to the Grammar of the Tibetan Language. Delhi, 1996 (1915)
- Stephan V, Beyer, The classical Tibetan Language, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi 1992 Kun dga rgyal, Saskya legs bshad, Tibetan Cultural printing press. Dharamsala
- Tarchin- The Tibetan Grammar part I, Kalimpong 1938
- Tashi, A Basic Grammar of Modern spoken Tibetan. Library of Tibetan works and Archives. Dharamsala 1990
- Tibetan poetry text (svyan-nag) Bod mkhas pai synan hdrel les sarga gnyis pa dpar brjod Danbches pa) Council for Tibetan Education. Dharamsala — Bhattacharya. V, Bhoti Prakasa, University of Calcutta
- Tibetan Reader part-I, II, III, Council for Tibetan Education, Dharamsala
- Tsepak Rigzen: Tibetan-English Buddhist Terminology, LTWA, 2000
- Tsetan Chonjore & Andrea Abinanti (2003), "Colloquial Tibetan, A textbook on the Lhasa dialect. With reference grammar and exercises" (A contextual approach) LIWA Dharamsala 2003
- Tsetan Chonjore, Colloquial Tibetan, LIWA Dharamsala 2003
- Yu Oawchyuan (1930), Love songs of the sixth Dalai Lama, (Peiping) (Academica Sinica).