

Advanced Tibetan Language Summer Intensive

June 10 to August 6, 2020

Includes 8 weeks of classes plus 4 days of Orientation

The Centre for Buddhist Studies at Rangjung Yeshe Institute is pleased to offer a summer of intensive colloquial Tibetan language training. The program provides a full immersion into Tibetan language and culture. An integral part of the program is student accommodation with Tibetan families where the training of the formal classes is reinforced and internalized.

Weekends are generally left for students to explore the Kathmandu Valley and mingle with the local Tibetan community of Boudhanath. However, several times throughout the program, the Centre for Buddhist Studies will arrange guided tours of major cultural sites of the Valley. Instructors at the program are native Tibetan speakers and international faculty from the Centre for Buddhist Studies.

The Academic Program

This summer intensive is offered for advanced students of colloquial Tibetan who are interested in improving both their colloquial and Dharma Tibetan fluency. The course is designed for students who have already completed four semesters, or the equivalent, of formal colloquial Tibetan study, at least one year of Classical Tibetan, and who have a familiarity with Tibetan Buddhist topics and vocabulary. The majority of the course is taught in the Tibetan language. Building on a solid understanding of colloquial Tibetan grammar and vocabulary, as well as Buddhist vocabulary, the program is designed to expand the students' facility with more complex sentence structures and more extensive vocabulary, while refining and improving fluency in their spoken language skills. The course will cover increasingly more complex sentence structures and advanced vocabulary, while emphasizing practical language use and application so that students increase the comfort level and fluency of their spoken Tibetan, as well as their facility to discuss Buddhist topics in Tibetan. The course thus combines colloquial vocabulary and grammar with Buddhist topics and vocabulary. It includes a modern Tibetan class, a conversation class with assistant language instructors, a Buddhist philosophy class taught in Tibetan by a Khenpo or a Lopon, and a Dharma conversation class with native speakers who have studied the Dharma.

In addition to satisfactory grades, students must maintain an attendance rate of 80% throughout the course in order to pass. The level of intensity of the program is high and the students are expected to invest considerable time and effort in order to meet class requirements and academic expectations. That said, any student who successfully completes this course should expect to achieve a high degree of proficiency in speaking about both ordinary and Buddhist topics.

Students who complete the course receive academic credit at the Centre for Buddhist Studies for Colloquial Tibetan V and VI (6 credits total).

This course covers two full semesters of material and therefore earns six credits. Students spend four hours each day in class and the expected work time outside of class ranges between two and four hours per day depending on student interest and ability.

Home-stay and Meals

CBS arranges home-stays for students with Tibetan host families in the Boudhanath area. This provides students with the opportunity for a full exposure language situation as well as the chance to get to know people in the local community and to become familiar with the Tibetan culture. All families have been carefully selected by the Centre for Buddhist Studies. Families provide breakfast and dinner to the students. Lunch time conversations at the restaurant offer further opportunities for Tibetan conversation. Please note that CBS cannot guarantee accommodation with a host family and host-family assignments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis.

Additional Features and Services

- Orientation program with introduction to Nepal
- All classes held in a traditional monastic setting near the Boudhanath Stupa
- Opportunities to meet and receive teachings from resident Buddhist teachers
- Cultural visits to ancient sites of the Kathmandu Valley
- Efficient medical referral system
- Access to full facilities of CBS campus including wireless internet access at selected campus locations, assistance from our full-time Student Services Coordinator, and on-site library facilities.
- Good links to local trekking, rafting and sight-seeing companies

Price

Price includes tuition, accommodation, breakfast and dinner with Tibetan families, and tours. Students may choose to opt out of the Tibetan home stay program, and thereby pay a reduced course fee. These students must also arrange for lodging, breakfast and dinner on their own.

Admission Criteria

Students must show documentation of successful completion of four semesters of Colloquial Tibetan, or the equivalent thereof, and two semesters of Classical Tibetan. This program has a maximum intake of 20 students and all applications are subject to approval by the Centre for Buddhist Studies.

Application

To apply for the course please click on the "Apply to RYI" link on the website's Admissions tab. Scroll down to click on the "Apply Now!" button. Then choose the course that you wish to study from the drop down menu, where you will find general information and an application form for the course.

Course Description

Colloquial Tibetan Master Class

The course introduces students to complex sentence structures and an increasing breadth of colloquial Tibetan vocabulary. It will focus on refining the students' ability to communicate clearly and correctly in colloquial Tibetan and to augment their understanding of the language by drawing links between colloquial usages and classical grammar. This course further emphasizes the correct and natural use of honorific language. The instructors will teach grammar and vocabulary that will be internalized through practice in the conversation classes with assistant language instructors. Students will be required to memorize vocabulary and sentence structures, as well as doing written homework assignments, and will be quizzed regularly on the material covered in class.

Assistant Language Instructors

Through working one-on-one with Tibetan assistant language instructors, students make practical use of the Tibetan language. The specific vocabulary and grammatical structures introduced in the Master class will be emphasized in these conversations so that students gain more familiarity and practice with what they learn in that class, as well as becoming more comfortable speaking with native Tibetan speakers.

Buddhist Philosophy

This class is a traditional-style Buddhist philosophy class taught by a Khenpo or Lopon from the monastery. The Khenpo or Lopon will teach in Tibetan from a basic Buddhist philosophy text and will engage the students in question-and-answer regarding the topics taught. This exposes students to the unique blend of colloquial Tibetan grammatical structures and classical Tibetan vocabulary used in the context of oral teachings in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The teaching style in this class is more slow-paced than in the traditional monastic setting, to adjust for the language-learning needs of the students, and the Khenpo or Lopon will thus explain difficult words, and attempt to ensure that students are following along with the teachings. In past years texts such as *The Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*, *A Brilliant Sun: Stages of Practice of the Bodhicaryavatara*, and a text on general Buddhist topics composed by one of our Khenpos specifically for the class have been taught. There will be weekly vocabulary quizzes, as well as a mid-term and a final exam to be written in Tibetan, administered and graded by the Khenpo or Lopon.

Dharma Conversation

In this class, students will work in small groups with Tibetans trained in the Dharma to discuss the material that has been covered in the Buddhist philosophy class. This allows students to gain more facility and comfort while discussing Buddhist topics in Tibetan. Students speak about

Buddhism in Tibetan, and so learn to be active participants in the language, not just passive listeners to the Khenpo or Lopon and other Buddhist teachers.

Course Materials

The colloquial Tibetan class will include materials compiled from various sources by the instructor. The course assumes knowledge equivalent to that taught in Vols. 1–4 of the *Tibetan Textbook, bod skad slob deb*, by Franziska Oertle.

The Buddhist philosophy text taught by a Khenpo or Lopon will be *A Brilliant Sun: Stages of Practice of the Bodhicaryavatara* (*byang chub sems dpa'i sbyod pa la 'jug pa'i sgom rim rab gsal nyi ma zhes bya ba bzhugs so*) by Paltrul Rinpoche.

All texts are available for purchase at the CBS office.