

Buddhism and Tibetan Studies: The Legacy of Ancient Nalanda Tradition

Nalanda Tradition reaches Tibet in entirety:

The transmission of Buddhism from India to Tibet in 7th Century AD took place in an unprecedented manner that a huge literature, over five thousand treatises were translated along with transmission of knowledge and spiritual system from Nalanda, Vikramshila, Takshashila and others, the capital of knowledge in ancient India. The entire legacy was not only preserved, nurtured but advanced further in Tibet.

Nalanda Tradition Back to India:

After the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, followed by many masters and thousands of Tibetans sought refuge in India in 1959. Right away, His Holiness re-established major traditional monastic Institutions in India so that the study and practice of Tibetan Buddhism and allied studies could go unimpeded. These monastic Institutions, where erudite Tibetan masters taught, became a source of attraction for scholars and students from around the world.

Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies was established as a result of discussion between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with specific objectives to preserve the Tibetan knowledge system and culture, to restore the lost Sanskrit treatises from Tibetan sources and to provide educational opportunity to Tibetan and Himalaya students who lost the opportunity to go to Tibet for higher education and conduct researches on traditional subjects.

Incorporation of the Nalanda Tradition into the Teaching Faculties is based on the objectives of preservation of Tibetan knowledge system. Accordingly, the academic programs of teaching and research at CIHTS are designed. CIHTS has not only incorporated modern subjects and languages but also has programs and projects incorporating other Indian philosophical schools of thought, Western philosophy and modern sciences.

The five Teaching Faculties of CIHTS were established primarily based on the classical treatises of the masters of Nalanda, Vikramshila and others. The Departments of Mool Shastra and the Sampradhyayas Shastra focus on the treatises of Indian masters and Tibetan masters of different traditions covering a wide range of areas: *philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, logic, psychology,*

cognitive science, mind training and spiritual system, which itself is a huge domain.

The Departments of Tibetan Fine Arts, Tibetan Jyotish and Tibetan medicine have substantial contents on ethics and Departments of social sciences, ancient and modern Languages also cover topics like universal responsibility, non-violence and altruism. The Teacher's education syllabus has incorporated contents on compassion, logic, epistemology, and regulation of emotions which are highly appreciated by the NCTE for making the course transformative for the first time in India. The Sowa-Rigpa Department with its rich unique tradition has units of teaching, hospital, pharmacy and research. The Department attracts patients from neighboring states and even from foreign countries for the treatment.

Five Research Departments dedicated to the works of Nalanda tradition are engaged in various nature of researches related to the preservation and dissemination of the Tibetan studies rooted to Nalanda tradition: (1) Restoration, (2) Translation, (3) Rare Buddhist Text Research, 4) Dictionary, and 5) Centre for Tibetan Literature. These departments are committed to research works on restoration of the lost original Sanskrit treatises from Tibetan into Sanskrit; translation of Tibetan treatises into Hindi, Sanskrit and English; critical editing of rare manuscripts of Buddhist texts; compilation of general and technical dictionaries; research and study of Tibetan literature. The works from these departments are applauded all over the world owing to the unique nature of the researches and significant contribution.

Publication of the works of the Research Departments, teaching departments and scholar from outside are brought out by the Publication Department. So far 320 books are published under 12 different series.

Some selected activities besides regular teaching and research:

Revival of the Ancient Indian tradition of interaction between various philosophical schools was initiated with the intention to restart the rich practice in the modern context organizing dialogues and seminars with the scholars of Sankhya, Vedanta, Mimansaka, Vaisheshika, Nyayayika, Jain and Buddhism as well as Western philosophy and modern sciences.

National and International Conferences, Seminars, and workshops are regularly organized inviting eminent scholars from around the world, occasionally, in collaboration with prestigious international universities. The high standard maintained here at CIHTS has become an identity of its academic deliberation.

Exchange programs of CIHTS with many universities of Indian and foreign countries are not confined to exchange of students and scholars but also research projects of different nature. The visiting students find these programs life changing. Some of the programs have been going on for 30 years.

Collaboration Programs include two major and ambitious collaboration programs with Bihar Government i.e. (1) Translation of the entire teachings of Buddha and the works of the Indian and Tibetan masters—running over 20 thousand titles--into Hindi from Tibetan language. (2) Critical editing of Sanskrit MMSs lying in Patna museum, brought from Tibet by Pt. Rahul Sankrityayana. There are also other collaborative research projects with other prestigious universities around the world.

Guidance and help provided to state govts and institutions to establish Buddhist institutions, develop courses, projects and programs includes Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim and Bihar government and various institutions. No fee is charged for such services rendered on their request.

Education in Nalanda Tradition: Embodiment of the Values and their Manifestation into Behavior and Action-the Priority and thrust:

In the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, education is pursued with rigorous study based on analytical approach coupled with comprehensive contemplation followed by transformative process of meditation i.e. *Shravana, Chintana and Bhavana*. This process of education yields deeper intellectual understanding and morally sound personality that makes the students responsible members of society. The impact of our education can be seen in the lives and personalities of the students. We regard this as a great success as commended by many visiting scholars, eminent persons, specially the Vice Chancellors who attended the 2018 AIU annual meeting formally applauded the students of CIHTS for their distinct behavior, competency and intelligence. They participate in social works of different nature regularly and particularly during natural calamities at various parts of the country.
