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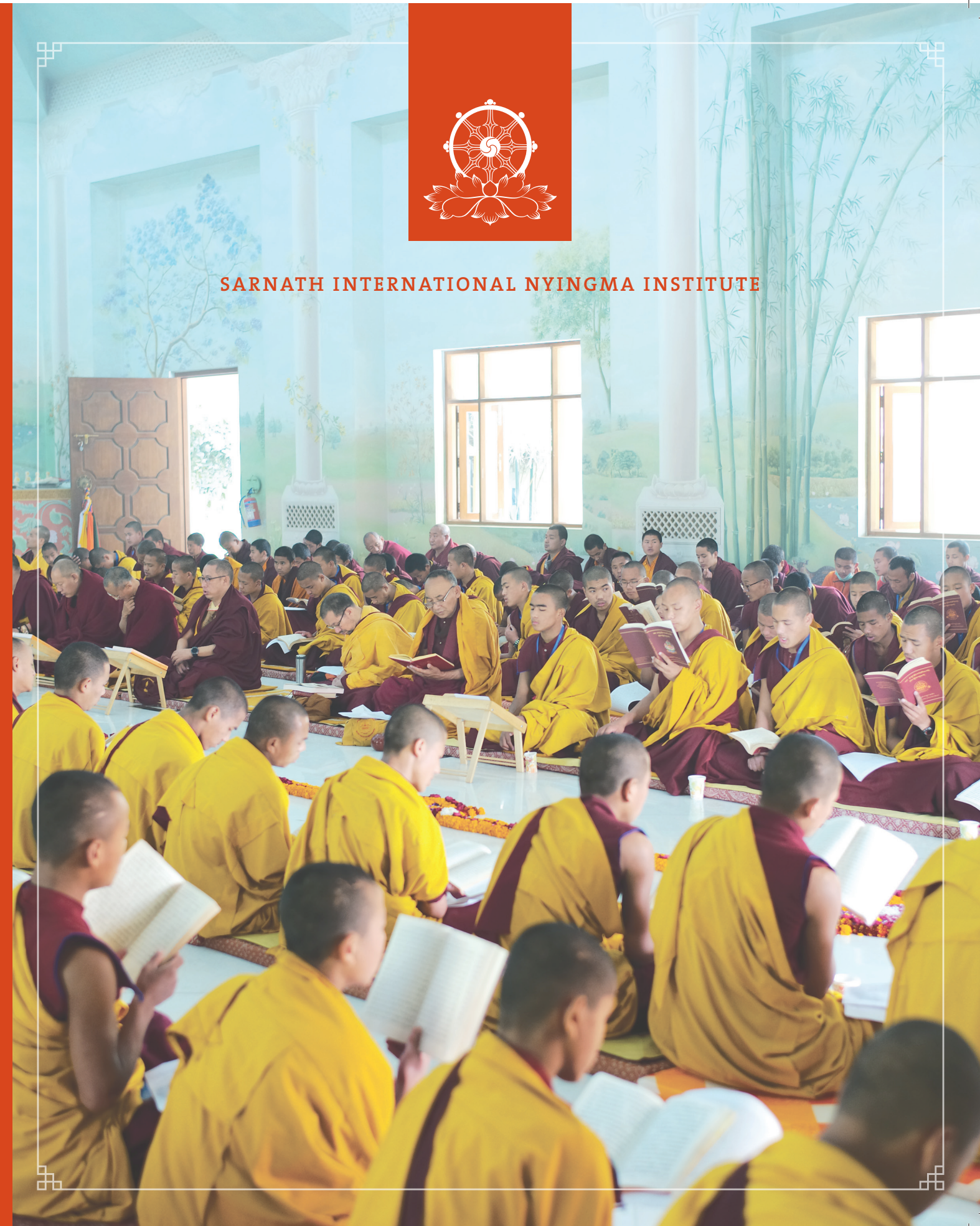
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SARNATH INTERNATIONAL NYINGMA INSTITUTE





Message from the Director

Perhaps it is because I am the daughter of a refugee who lost his country and heritage. Or perhaps it is because for as long as I can remember I have been surrounded by sacred texts and printing presses. It could be that now that I am living in an era of unbridled expansion of the spoken and written word that I must question what real knowledge is. Perhaps this proliferation of words and texts has led me to believe that an *illuminated simplicity* may be the most radical act of knowing.

How does this conundrum reveal itself in both secular and non-secular education today? How can the work of preserving ancient texts connect to the forces of mass production in information and knowledge without compromising its sacred value?

In preparing this brochure, I had the opportunity to reflect on SINI's unfolding journey and consider it in the larger constellation of preservation work, which ultimately is the work of transmission. The preservation of ancient texts, though essential, is not enough to safeguard its future. We also need to find ways to transmit these texts with reverence for and relevance to the modern world;

the wisdom of the past also needs to learn the language of the present.

With the exponential growth in artificial intelligence, it's clear that there's no turning back for us in education. I ask myself nearly every day *what and why we are learning if so much*

can be quickly answered by a machine. Will the availability of more texts and information make us more knowledgeable? The litmus test of true knowledge, I believe, is greater peace, greater cooperation, and greater love. If it takes another 100 volumes to describe the truth of suffering and the path of liberation, I believe it is worth the effort.



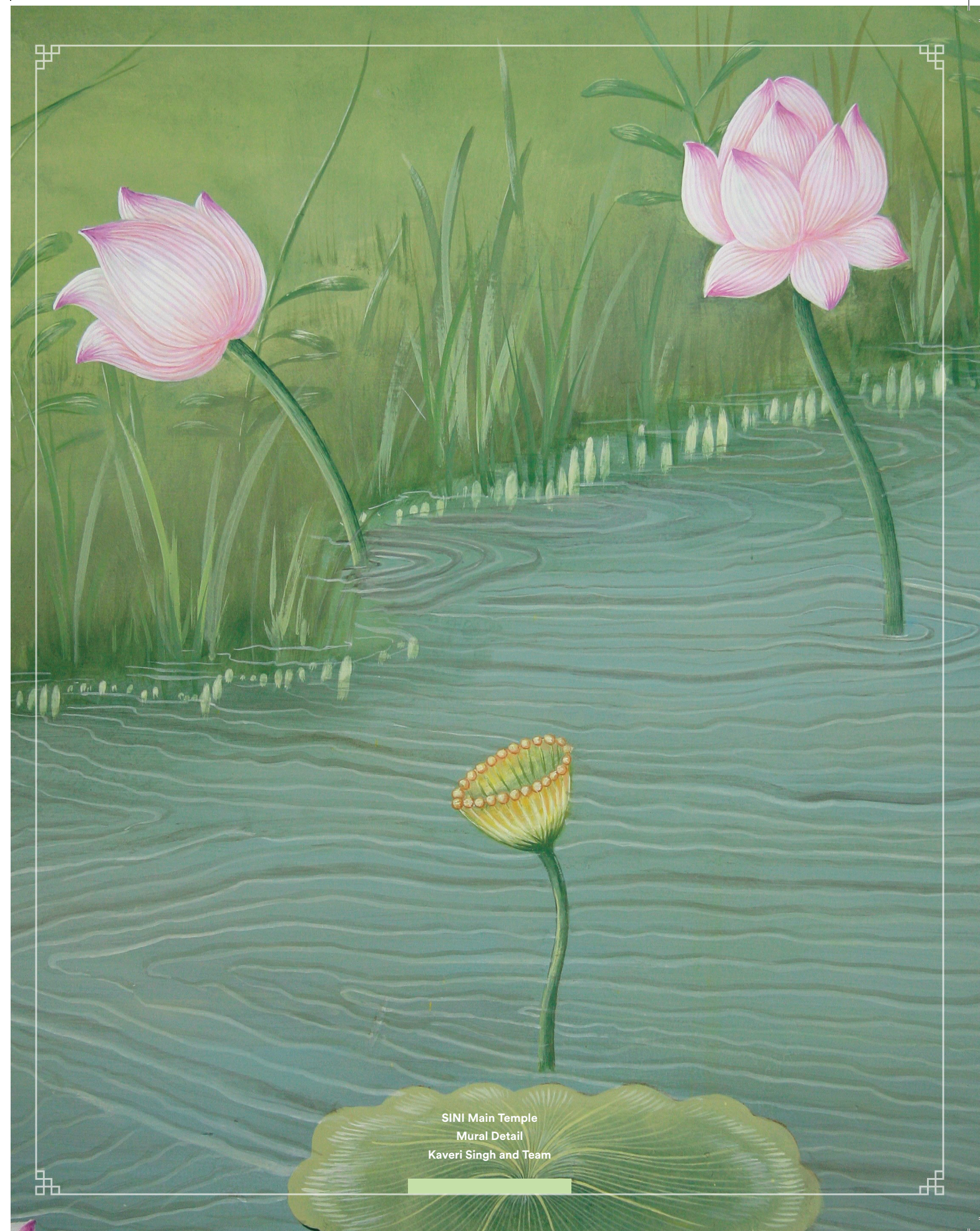
On behalf of our monastics, teachers, volunteers, and staff, I thank you for your kindness, support, and love over the years. Your interest in our work speaks volumes.

Love,

Tsering Palmo Gellek
Founding Director

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SINI Main Temple
Mural Detail
Kaveri Singh and Team



SINI's FOUR Pillars

We create and promote dynamic bridges of goodness that are based on timeless Buddhist principles and teachings for the benefit of humanity. We accomplish this bridge building by supporting four main pillars for growth: Roots, Study, Transmission, and Collaboration.

▼
BUDDHIST PRACTICES
PRAYERS & RETREATS
PUBLIC CEREMONIES

▼
LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
SANSKRIT & PALI
TIBETAN / ENGLISH

▼
MODERN METHODS
DHARMA TALKS
ARTS & SCIENCE

▼
INTERDISCIPLINARY
SEMINARS
RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Highlights

So much good and inspired work has been underway in the many facets of SINI's world that it is a challenge to highlight just a few. We are a small but dedicated team committed to swiftly transforming your contributions into Dharma activity.

SINI's students collaborate with Harvard Divinity and Brandeis University peers, fostering diverse perspectives and cultural exchange. Including Harvard Ph.D. students in the EDP Summer Program enhances collaborative learning and mutual growth.

SINI has successfully published "The Heart of Tibetan Language" Volumes 1 and 2, serving as foundational resources for colloquial Tibetan language learners worldwide. These volumes mark a significant contribution to Tibetan language preservation.

An integral part of the Kagyur Karchag Encyclopedia's design is creating new depictions of chosen sutras. These visuals, inspired by detailed descriptions, heighten accessibility and understanding.

The Applied Studies Program pilot has supported 10 diverse student projects so far, fostering individual aspirations and creativity. It nurtures leadership and managerial skills, empowering students to excel in driving future dharma-centered initiatives independently.

The accomplishment of the first draft of the Kagyur Karchag in 7 volumes was a momentous achievement. After blessed preparations, the work was presented to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama by the editorial team.

Embracing a creative and pioneering approach, puppets are joining as fellow students in the Colloquial Tibetan Intermediate course, engaging and immersing learners through pre-recorded webinars and key-point videos.

The EDP program is expanding to emphasize the significance of science education. Its curriculum now spans subjects from biology and ecology to physics and geometry, fostering comprehensive knowledge.

The English for Dharma Purposes project has made strides using our EDP textbooks for monastics. Drafts for the first two textbooks in SINI's EDP series are complete, with ongoing work on the third volume.

Amid the pandemic, the Manjushri Namasangiti Sanskrit Chanting Ceremony engaged a global audience with 400 online participants in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the ceremony returned in person and was live-streamed from Bodhgaya.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the annual Tibet Peace Ceremony at SINI continued in person with a limited gathering of lamas. Encouragingly, in 2023, the event resumed with active participation of 700 attendees.



ROOTS



STUDY



TRANSMISSION



COLLABORATION

Kagyur Karchag Project

The Kagyur Karchag project was launched in 2019 by Tarthang Tulku. Our vision has been to spark an educational renaissance for Tibetan speakers by crafting a reader-friendly compendium of the Buddha’s teachings. It summarizes the 368 sutras contained in the Kagyur, the collection of texts regarded as buddhavachana, or “Buddha-word,” that have been translated into Tibetan.

After four years of wholehearted dedication with over 50 editors, researchers, and writers, summaries of all 368 sutras contained in the Tibetan Buddhist Canon are now available in eight precious volumes. Each volume is approximately 500 pages in length and contains original writing, research, artwork, and charts.

The sutras have initially been summarized in Tibetan for the benefit of monasteries, shedras

The Kagyur Karchag Encyclopedia Project: A Global Initiative to Support the Study and Preservation of the Words of the Buddha.

(monastic learning centers), and Buddhist scholars. A condensed version of the karchag (roughly translated as “index” or “catalogue”) will be made available to lay people and will form a basis for the development of curriculum materials for Tibetan schools. There are also plans to render the summaries in English and Chinese and to make them available online.

Part of the appeal of this encyclopedia is the creation of unique illustrations of the sutras, depicting the key points of the sutra for the reader. Much like scientific articles that are written by experts and then circulated to the general public, the editorial team has sought ways to summarize the sutras in a way that is understandable to the common reader and also respected by the scholar. We believe that removing the barriers to studying the words of the Buddha is a gift for all of humanity.

From left to right: Coordinator Khenpo Tsering Nyima, Khenpo Thubten Gyatso, Khenpo Thubten Lobsang and Khenpo Ju Tenkyon.



First Draft of the Kagyur Karchag Presented to and Blessed by His Holiness in Bodhgaya, 2023.

“Tibetans have cared for these texts for more than a millennium, yet nothing like this has ever been done before.”

— Khenpo Ju Tenkyon, Chief Editor of the Kagyur Karchag Project

Kagyur Karchag Encyclopedia

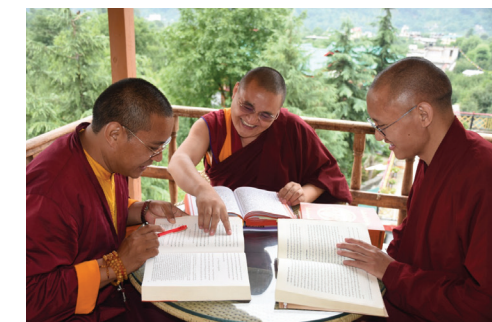
Advancing steadily: Developing the Encyclopedia’s design, website, and Kagyur Karchag database as well as training translators in SINI’s own Sutra and Translation Class, and creating a Kagyur Studies Curriculum.

These summary-introductions provide the history of the sutra, an introduction to its path, and finally an introduction to its philosophical school. This is all within the narrative portion of our work. The other component of our work is bringing out the meaning and importance of each sutra. We try to draw out the main instruction from each particular sutra, the heart-essence that readers should

take away after reading. In particular, we consider how these sutras can most benefit people in the modern world.

Many Tibetans, particularly lay Tibetans, think that the Kagyur is very difficult; that the language is too complex and the meaning too profound for them to understand. In our introductions, we avoid the demanding, archaic language of the sutras themselves and write in a way that’s easily understandable to absolute beginners. Our work will be of great benefit to Buddhist researchers and scholars too, but we strive to show all people, no matter their background, how relevant these sutras are to their own lives.

“Your work will act to preserve and express the heart of the Buddha Vacana for generations to come, both in the monasteries and communities of Tibet and India and in the refugee community worldwide.” — Tarthang Rinpoche



From left to right: Khenpo Tsering Nyima with Khenpo Thubten Gyatso and Khenpo Thubten Lobsang.

English for Dharma Purposes (EDP)

The English for Dharma Purposes (EDP) Program is a keystone program at SINI. The program supports Buddhist monastics to become educators, translators, and cultural envoys to a Western audience.

Initiated in 2013, SINI has developed a unique English immersion program to meet the specific linguistic and cultural needs of Buddhist monastics. The EDP program is a three-year residential program that provides monastics with English language education and skills for Dharma service in the world. The program is designed to meet the specific needs of the monastic community, and includes courses in English language, translation studies, Dharma vocabulary, English literature, Dharma reading and translation, advanced academic English seminars, and Sanskrit.

Over time, a body of teaching and learning experiences led to the development of a specific curriculum and textbook series. SINI's unique English curriculum consists of three textbooks, authored by Eden Merritt, and is tailored to different skill levels:

- **EDP 1:** Beginner-Elementary
- **EDP 2:** Pre-Intermediate-Intermediate
- **EDP 3:** Upper Intermediate-Advanced

While maintaining the core EDP curriculum, SINI has expanded the program to include supplementary classes that further enhance students' language skills and learning.

In particular, a Dharma Reading class was introduced, which enables students to study important

Dharma texts in English. SINI has also run a series of science classes designed and taught both remotely and in-person.

Each three-year cohort of the EDP program has approximately 35 students. Classes are small, ranging from 10 to 15 students, and focus on the needs of the students.

Students also participate in field trips to historical Buddhist sites, make Dharma presentations, and experience innovative teaching methods. The program is assessed on an ongoing basis, and students have consistently progressed in their language skills. Over 75 khenpos and lopons have graduated from the EDP program since its inception. The program is open to mature students, primarily monastics over 25 years old. Classes run year-round.



EDP Program Director Eden Merritt and students in Manali.

A Photography Class
at SINI

International & Academic Programs

SINI enjoys partnerships with universities and other academic institutions around the world. These partnerships allow students to participate in exchange programs, research projects, and other academic activities.

SINI continues to develop a network of academic connections, both informal and formal. SINI hosts visiting scholars and teachers each year, and its faculty members are actively involved in research and publishing. SINI also engages in community outreach activities, such as hosting public talks and workshops, and providing scholarships to students. SINI's network of academic connections helps to foster a spirit of collaboration and cross-cultural understanding.

IELTS Preparation

Driven by a growing interest in studying at English-speaking universities, SINI now offers an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) prep class to help monastics transition into academic English. The class is designed to help students improve their English language skills and knowledge of the IELTS exam.

Four Noble Truths Program

The Four Noble Truths Seminar and Pilgrimage is an annual two-week intensive program taught by SINI's senior monastics at the most sacred sites in the Buddhist world. International participants delve deeply into the foundational Buddhist teachings, meeting traditional practitioners and learning informally between sessions. The program is based on the exploration of Buddha's four main questions: What is suffering? What is its cause? What is its end? What is the path that leads to its end? The answers to these questions are drawn from both traditional sutra and commentary source material, and help to deepen our appreciation of their profound and timeless truths. The program culminates in the Nyingma Monlam Chenmo in Bodhgaya, where participants are invited into a devotional atmosphere.

Applied Studies

The Applied Studies Program is an innovative approach to monastic education that provides students with small grants and mentorship to help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to run projects.

The program is based on the benefits of project-based learning and mentorship, and it emphasizes creativity and critical thinking.

Under the program, students are encouraged to propose and apply for a seed grant to fund their projects. This gives them the agency and flexibility to pursue their own interests, ideas, and networks. The program also provides students



Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche initiates a teacher-training program at SINI.

with mentorship from experienced professionals who can help them to develop their leadership and management skills. The program encourages awardees to set achievable goals and track



Khenpo Yeshe, Lopon Thinley Wangchuk, and Khenpo Gyaltzen.

“Rinpoche often reminds me that time cannot be squandered when so much is at stake.”

— Tsering Gellek

their progress, so that students can witness the results (and challenges) of their efforts within a specified time frame.

The Applied Studies Program is aligned with another initiative at SINI, which is the development of teacher-training programs. These programs are designed to help bridge the gap between monastic training and the challenges of the modern world.

Ceremonies

The Power of Prayers



“Prayer is deeply nourishing to the human heart and mind; it awakens aspiration for beauty and truth, and opens inner pathways through which knowledge can manifest in our lives.” — Tarthang Rinpoche

For many of us, prayer does not always come easily. One day at a Dharma teaching, a lama said, “**Though it seemed as if I could not pray directly to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, I decided that I would pray to one day have enough faith to pray sincerely.**” This simple declaration may help us to unlock a reservoir of shyness or doubt around the practice of prayer: we can truly begin anywhere. Once cultivated, prayer helps to create a heart connection to a field of blessing.

Tibet Peace Ceremony

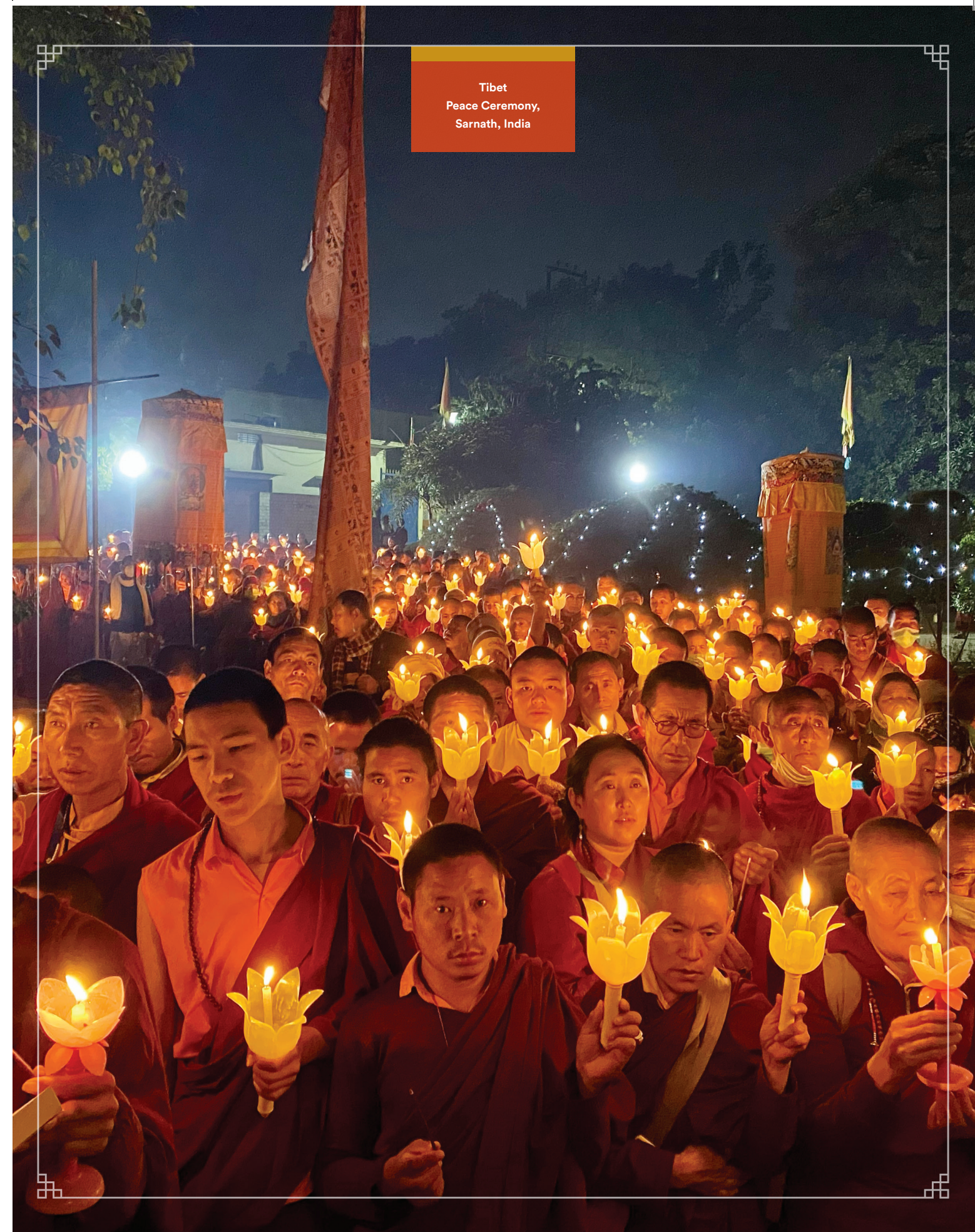
Tarthang Rinpoche established the annual Tibet Peace Ceremony in 2015. It brings together nearly 1000 lamas, monks, nuns, laypeople, and international participants to pray for peace in Tibet and around the world. SINI hosts the entire ceremony, offering food, transportation, and accommodations for five days. The ceremony concludes on the anniversary of Longchenpa, a great Nyingma luminary. The assembly hails from all Tibetan Buddhist schools and represents a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds. They join together to pray for a world free from suffering and conflict. The Tibet Peace Ceremony is a powerful reminder of the importance of compassion and peace.



Manjushri Sanskrit Chant (Bodhgaya)

Since 2015, the International Manjushri Namasanghiti Chanting Program embodies Tarthang Rinpoche’s vision to revive the sacred text and its sublime blessings throughout India and the world. Inspired by Manjushri’s boundless wisdom and tireless activities, SINI is honored to help the revitalization of this most sacred Buddhist text by hosting this special program in Sanskrit at the start of the World Peace Ceremony in Bodhgaya.

For more information on how to join, or sponsor a prayer request, please contact us at info@sinibridge.org.



Tibet
Peace Ceremony,
Sarnath, India



Steps Along an Unfolding Journey

1958

Tarhang Rinpoche leaves Tibet for India, residing in Varanasi for six years.

During this time, he studies English and Hindi, conducts research, teaches, and interacts with Western scholars.

His publishing journey begins in Varanasi, laying the foundation for the largest Buddhist preservation project in the world.

1968

Tarhang Rinpoche and his wife Nazli Nour move to the West, seeking the supportive environment of religious freedom.

In California they establish their family, and Rinpoche continues with Tibetan text and cultural preservation efforts.

1994

Rinpoche acquires approximately three acres of land in Sarnath to host Longchenpa anniversary ceremonies. This purpose is later broadened in 2006 to build an institute that would "bridge the East and West." Reflecting its deep mission, Rinpoche considers calling the Institute the Upaya, or Skillful Means, Institute.

Later in 2007, SINI is registered as the Sarnath International Nyingma Institute.

2008-2011

Half a century after Rinpoche's arrival in India, on May 30, 2008, Tsering Gellek, SINI's founding director, oversees the groundbreaking ceremony.

This marks the beginning of constructing SINI's temple, along with residential, academic, and library buildings.

2012-2013

Over 35 artists and art apprentices from Bhutan, Nepal, India, and other countries help complete the Sacred Murals Project.

On December 3, 2013, SINI is inaugurated. During the ceremony, a sapling from the Anuradhapura Temple in Sri Lanka, descended from the original Bodhi Tree, is offered. The Khen Lop Chos Sum Foundation is established.

2014-2015

SINI hosts the annual Tibet Peace Ceremony, following the Bodhgaya World Peace Ceremony. This event culminates on Longchenpa's anniversary.

The three-year residential English for Dharma Purposes Program provides a comprehensive English language learning program that meets the specific needs of monastic students.

SINI takes a pivotal step by organizing a ten-day seminar, gathering 30 monastic teachers from all Tibetan Buddhist traditions. The seminar's focal point is the future of monastic education within the context of modern society.

2016

The annual chant hosted by SINI in Bodhgaya during the World Peace Ceremony is dedicated to revitalizing the recitation of the sacred Manjushri Namasanghiti in Sanskrit.

The yearly Four Noble Truths Program adopts a new format, merging into a week-long seminar at SINI with a guided pilgrimage.

SINI expands its facilities with a new residential building providing ten rooms for monastic students.

SINI solidifies its mission--"building bridges of goodness"--with four pillars of activity.

Agreements are signed with OP Jindal University and other institutions to build on collaborations.

2017-2018

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche leads first-ever film workshop for monastics.

Receiving an audience with H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama, Tsering Gellek and Chief Editor Khenpo Ju Tenkyong propose Tibet's first-ever encyclopedia of the Buddha's teachings.

2019

Rinpoche begins to describe in greater detail a vision that would help set in motion the creation of Tibet's first-ever encyclopedia of sutras.

SINI offers its first two-month intensive residential Colloquial Tibetan course.

2020

In response to the pandemic, the English for Dharma Purposes Program shifts to an online format, accommodating students from both SINI and other monasteries.

SINI initiates an Emergency Food Distribution program in Sarnath, targeting the most vulnerable. This initiative evolves into a recurring food offering, benefiting 200 families every Full Moon Day over the subsequent 18 months.

2021-2022

SINI is awarded a three-year Vision Grant by the Khyentse Foundation.

SINI introduces its first Colloquial Tibetan Online Course, developed over a year of dedicated effort. Volume 1 of The Heart of Tibetan Language is now published.

A new classical Tibetan language program commences, featuring two thoughtfully crafted courses.

Following a span of 2.5 years, SINI's director and international staff return to Sarnath.

2023

The Global Encyclopedia Project team has summarized all sutras of the Kagyur. The first edition of the 7 volume Kagyur Karchag Encyclopedia is presented to his Holiness The Dalai Lama.

Volume 2 of The Heart of Tibetan Language is published.

During the summer months, the English for Dharma Purposes Program shifts to Manali. SINI resumes its in-person programs while also expanding its offerings to include online options.

Tibetan Language Studies

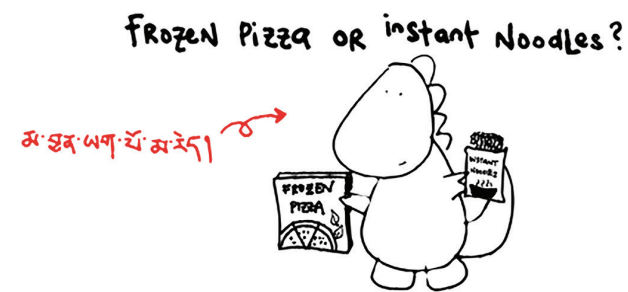
The Tibetan language programs at SINI and online have grown into a hub for both the classic and colloquial Tibetan language, and a home for an international community of Tibetan language learners.

Colloquial Tibetan

Today the number of Tibetan speakers is rapidly declining both within and outside Tibet. While there are a handful of classical Tibetan classes taught in universities worldwide, there are far fewer institutions offering instruction in colloquial Tibetan. Native-speaking Tibetan scholars have pointed out that there has been an artificial division between “classical” and “colloquial” Tibetan. To them, these distinctions are mere constructs. Spoken Tibetan has long served as a living bridge between the past and the present

holding within it the essence of wisdom and cultural continuity. This point underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that embraces the entirety of the language, spoken and written.

To preserve this invaluable tradition, the Tibetan language faculty at SINI—online and where the Buddha spoke his first words in Sarnath, India—has grown into a hub of Tibetan language instruction and a home for an international community of Tibetan language learners.



SINI's puppets include: the relaxed Mr. Sloth, the polyglot Ms. Giraffe, a devoted Ms. Ostrich, and Mr. Black Sheep—each with their own distinct personality and learning style.



What makes SINI's Colloquial Tibet Language program so groundbreaking, pioneering, and radically different from other Colloquial Tibetan language programs?

“Those of us who feel there is value in the Tibetan language and Tibet's distinctive Buddhist heritage must do whatever we can to help Tibetan survive as a living language.”
— Tarthang Rinpoche

This learning experience goes beyond just studying Tibetan. It helps students discover their potential through language immersion.

While other courses usually teach colloquial Tibetan using Western grammar, this course employs indigenous grammar.

It teaches you how to learn effectively by encouraging understanding your own thought processes, boosting different aspects of your intelligence, and helping you with your learning journey.

This course offers a blend of independent and guided learning. It's a hybrid approach, providing original materials for learning at one's own pace. This well-structured course ensures a high-level of engagement and motivation throughout the learning journey.

All colloquial online and in-person Tibetan courses, from beginner to intermediate level, are based on *The Heart of Tibetan Language Volumes 1 & 2: A Synthesis of Indigenous Grammar and Contemporary Learning Methodology* authored by Franziska Oertle, and published by SINI.



A visitor looks through one of SINI's sets of the Kagyur and Tengyur.

We work with a remarkable team of Tibetan teachers, tutors, videographers, artists, and education experts. Their passion, determination, and enthusiasm have been the driving force behind the development of a dynamic repository of interactive learning materials. These resources are designed to enrich and elevate the experience of Tibetan language learners around the world.

SINI has built a learning community of more than 100 students on five continents, connecting through Moodle and Zoom platforms. Each course follows a consistent format, encompassing live classes, interactive tutor sessions, pre-recorded webinars, engaging assignments, ePortfolios, and a vibrant small-learning community.

Graduates of our courses provide us with feedback to help us refine our courses, enhance their effectiveness, and boost enjoyment.

Tibetan Language Studies

Our dedication to new learning methods has inspired several exciting developments: professionally produced webinars, as well as captivating key-point videos featuring endearing puppets. Additionally, a dedicated group of students is working on providing translated subtitles for our webinars.

Expanding our repertoire of learning materials, we've introduced engaging content for students. This includes podcasts, immersive virtual "drilling" exercises, Anki decks (an electronic flashcard program) and interactive exercises that cater to different learning preferences.



Gen Nawang Choegyial and Cinthia Font, Tibetan teachers at Rangjung Yeshe Institute, Kathmandu.



Lamas reading sacred texts in a traditional library.

“May this work support the longevity and vitality of the Dharma for many generations to come.”

— Tarthang Rinpoche

A popular feature of this program includes live weekly one-on-one tutor sessions with native Tibetan speakers in India. Underscoring our holistic approach to learning, White Wednesday Talks introduce students to Tibetan culture. Another unique feature of our courses is the weekly Small Learning Community meetings that students organize independently. Supporting our program's international student body, multiple live sessions are offered so students across time zones can attend.

Classical Tibetan

SINI has established a Classical Tibetan studies program to support the translation of vital Tibetan Buddhist texts. This endeavor underscores the pressing need for an increased number of aspiring translators to study classical Tibetan.

This program is developing a comprehensive path for acquiring proficiency in the Tibetan language and practicing translation skills. The Classical Tibetan Language Program offers an array of courses designed to cater to different skill levels and interests:

- Introduction to Classical Tibetan
- Tibetan Reading and Pronunciation Practice
- Intermediate Level
- Advanced Level

Similar to our Colloquial Tibetan Program, all course materials are developed in house. They draw upon the wealth of experience of our instructors, who include both traditionally trained monks and native Tibetan speakers, alongside Western colleagues who co-teach these courses. This collaborative approach offers students the unique opportunity to engage with the language and culture from multiple perspectives and amplifies the benefits of a cross-cultural exchange in language learning.

SINI's library contains the largest collection of Yeshe De's publications, including the Nyingma Treasures, a set of over 700 volumes.



How to Connect and Engage

For the past fifty years, our mandala of Nyingma organizations has relied on the generosity of friends and donors to support our Dharma projects around the world. SINI, as one of its newest branches, also gathers strength from these roots.

The Sarnath International Nyingma Institute is premised on the belief that all individuals are happiest when they are giving freely from their hearts. We believe that volunteering, providing technical services, and offering financial support and good wishes build a foundation for creating a more balanced and harmonious environment. We invite you to participate in ways you see most suitable.

At SINI, we have been fortunate to be on both sides of the action of giving: as grateful recipients and as

active participants. SINI's activities aspire to the ideal of giving without attachment to the giver, the receiver, and the gift—from engaging in prayer to facilitating prayer requests, from teaching to learning, and from giving to receiving. This is our practice and we invite you to join.

Thank you for reading about and supporting SINI's unusual work of bridging millennial-old promises of transmitting and upholding the dharma for future generations.



SINI's annual retreat at Ratna Ling, Sonoma County, California.



The Knot of Infinity represents knowledge that knows no borders. It is an expression of the perfect wisdom of enlightenment.

Please contact us for more information on how you, your school, or your family can be involved.



Thank you for your support. May your heart be filled with love and joy!