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Institutional Distinctiveness

Tibetan Department at Darjeeling Government College

The Tibetan Department, established in Darjeeling Government College, in 1958 aims at promoting the study and preservation of Tibetan language, culture, and history. Since its inception, the Department has been a centre for scholarly research and cultural exchange. Notable scholars who served the Department include Professor Samten Norbu Yalmoo, renowned for his work on Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, Professor Lopsang Gyaltzen Bhutia, renowned for his work on Bon Religion. Since 2021 the department is led by Dr. Lhundup Tsono Bhutia W.B.E.S. who and has been actively involved in Teaching-Learning of Tibetan Language and Culture.

Courses

The Department of Tibetan at Darjeeling Government College is the only department approved by the University of North Bengal providing Under Graduate- Minor, Multi Disciplinary Course, Add on / short course and Career Oriented Program (C.O.P), with students enrolled from different institutes and the wider community outside. Pedagogy adopted is not only classroom based but also includes field study tours. The students are encouraged to interact, have seminars and debate on issues related to Tibetan Language and culture. They are also provided with opportunities to interact with eminent scholars to enable them for future endeavors in the field. The field study includes explanations of


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various paintings, monuments, statues and taste of the Tibetan culture with various cuisines, available during the visit.

The Career Oriented Program (COP) started by the Tibetan Department with the approval of the University of North Bengal in 2022 aims to cater to the vast knowledge of this ancient language derived from Sanskrit works of Nalanda traditions. The ancient Indian knowledge system is preserved in Tibetan Language which can ultimately unravel this ancient wisdom for a holistic knowledge system.

Resources required

The Tibetan Department requires a diverse set of resources to ensure comprehensive and effective teaching-learning - classrooms, books, study rooms, and accommodation facilities for field trips and visiting faculty. Digital resources involving online learning platforms, access to multimedia tools and language learning software are also essential. Funds are essential for field trips, workshops, seminars and guest lectures. High-speed internet, projectors and audio visual facility are also necessary. Community resources involve association with local Tibetan communities, local experts, collaboration with other institutions, and volunteer networks. These resources collectively ensure a rich, immersive, and supportive educational environment for students as well as faculty.

Challenges Faced

The Tibetan Department faces several challenges, including lack of interested students and access to rare Tibetan texts. Funding is required for programs and trips.

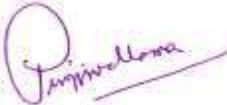
Strategies for overcoming the challenges:

To boost student strength, it promotes the program through brochures, community outreach and various online platforms and engaging information sessions.

Future Planning


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The Tibetan Department aims to expand in future by developing advanced courses and interdisciplinary modules. The department plans to enhance curriculum through continuous updates and field studies. Strengthening community engagement is a priority, with more seminars, and workshops. The department also seeks to integrate more technology into teaching and learning, and build collaborations to broaden educational and research opportunities. These efforts will ensure a robust and evolving educational environment. The students will be exposed to field study and excursions, presentations and seminars on topics related to the syllabus and beyond.

Many tribal communities use the Tibetan script for ages - The Sherpas, the Bhutias, Tamangs and most Lepcha texts. Tibetan Department will cater to a wide section of society and scholars who have keen interest on the customs, traditions and history of these tribal communities.

What makes the Department Distinctive

Tibetan Language and Culture has its roots in the ancient Indian history. The research of scholars like Alexander Cosma De Koros and Sarat Chandra Das have brought out the close bonding of Tibetan Language with Sanskrit original works which were lost in the Indian subcontinent but preserved and still lies untapped in the Tibetan Script in various texts. Tibetan culture and language hold vast reservoirs of knowledge deeply intertwined with Indian traditions. The spread of Buddhism from India to Tibet in the 7th century CE facilitated the exchange of philosophical, scientific, and literary traditions between the two regions. This exchange was significantly marked by the translation of Sanskrit texts into Tibetan, thus preserving many works that might have otherwise been lost over time.

The Department of Tibetan at Darjeeling Government College has been instrumental in continuing this legacy of intellectual and cultural preservation. It has established itself as a centre for the study and research of Tibetan language and literature. The department has


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nurtured generations of scholars devoted to the understanding and dissemination of Tibetan culture and knowledge.

This effort is particularly significant in the context of the Indian Knowledge System. The Tibetan texts often serve as bridge to ancient Indian wisdom, offering perspectives that are deeply rooted in the Indian philosophical tradition. By studying these texts, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of these philosophical schools and their contributions to global thought.

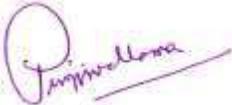
The Department's work extends beyond academics. It actively engages in cultural promotion through various initiatives, including seminars, and visit to Buddhist cultural sites. These events serve as platforms for the ideas and the celebration of Tibetan heritage attracting scholars, students, and practitioners from around the world, fostering a global community dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Tibetan culture.

In addition to its academic and cultural activities, the Department of Tibetan at Darjeeling Government College also plays a vital role in community engagement. It works closely with the Tibetan community in Darjeeling and the surrounding areas, providing educational and cultural support. This engagement helps to keep the traditions alive within the community, ensuring that the younger generations remain connected to their heritage.

The establishment and continued success of the Department of Tibetan at Darjeeling Government College therefore adds to the institutional distinctiveness of the college. It highlights the College's commitment to preserving and promoting cultural heritage and its role as a leader in the field of Tibetan studies. The Department's work not only enriches the academic landscape but also contributes to the broader understanding and appreciation of Tibetan culture and its connections to the Indian Knowledge System.


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