

FULL SCHOLARSHIP FOR THREE TIBETANS TO STUDY CHINESE

Three Tibetans, including a Lama, from Dharamasla of India have arrived at the Chinese Program offered by the TKU Division of Continuing Education. They are all on Chang Horng-jinh Scholarship to study Chinese in Taiwan for a year, wishing to bridge Tibetan Buddhism with Chinese culture.

Lobsang Gyaltzen has been to Taiwan for over a month and is grateful to have this opportunity to study Chinese in Taiwan. He became a monk when he was 13 years old and has lived in exile in India for nearly 16 years. When he learned from the Dala Lamas office in India that there was such a scholarship available for Tibetans, he knew it would be great for him should he wish to fulfill his dream of becoming the “translator” of Tibetan Buddhism and Chinese culture.

The other two Tibetans are Pema Wangyal and Kalsang Lodeo. The former finished his high school education prior to his escape from Tibet. In India, his adopted country, he worked as tutors teaching Tibetan and Chinese. During this time, he had heard a lot of good things regarding Taiwan, knowing that it was a free, democratic society. Being here is like a dream's come true for him. His dream is pretty much shared by Kalsang Lodeo, who escaped to India when he was 17 years old. He was impressed by what he has seen so far.

All three of them are taking a course entitled “Chinese Folktales” at the Chinese Language Center for two hours per day, and they also work five hours per week at the Center for General Education and Core Curriculum Section in charging of setting up blogs that address Tibetan language and

culture. This project is expected to complete next year. As their scholarship covers their tuition, the money they earn on the project will pay towards their living expenses, which may not be sufficient. The rest comes from other donations. According to Prof. Wu Kuan, the Director of TKU Center for Tibetan Studies, there are no worries of not having enough donations as people in Taiwan are kind and generous. With this good will, she believes that Dala Lamas wish on bridging the gap between Tibetan and Chinese cultures will be fulfilled soon in the near future.

Dr. Chang Horng-jinh, the founder of the scholarship explained why he set up his foundation when he returned from a meeting with Dala Lama, his Holiness, back in December, 2004. During which, he promised his Holiness that he would dedicate resources promoting Chinese language and cultures to Tibetans. The next year after his return to Taiwan, he set up first of all the Center for Tibetan Studies and provided studying places for Tibetans. He was hoping to have 10 for undergraduate studies, and 2 for graduate studies, yet as MOE does not recognize Chinese degrees, he could only have three Tibetans for the Chinese Program.

Of course, promoting the ties between Tibetan and Chinese cultures is not a one way street. There are courses for Tibetan language offered at the university, and international conferences on Tibetan culture has been and will be held regularly at TKU. Furthermore, Prof. Wu is hoping the MOE will relax its regulation so that more Tibetans can come to Taiwan to study at the universities. For the time being, she points out, the Chinese Language Program of TKU will continue to support their arrival. (~ Ying-hsueh Hu)

2010/09/27

Prof. Wu-kuan, the Director of the Center for Tibetan Studies and three Tibetan students. From left to right, Pema Wangyal, Lobsang Gyaltzen, Kalsang Lodeo.

