

Note IV

THE NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY

The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology is a unique contribution to the cause of learning. The word Tibetology means the study of the Chhos (Dharma) and the culture and all arts and sciences associated with Chhos. Chhos has been the energizing force in the spiritual, social and cultural life of the people living in the vast mass of land from the southern slopes of the Himalayas to the northern slopes of the Altai Karakoram and even beyond.

2. The Foundation Stone of the Institute was laid by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the 10th February 1957 and the Institute was declared open by the late Prime Minister of India Shri Jawaharlal Nehru on the 1st October 1958. According to the Royal Charter of Incorporation dated 28th October 1958 granted by the Chogyal XI the Institute enjoys the status of an autonomous body with a Governing Council to administer it. It is financed by the Government of Sikkim and the Government of India on a matching basis. The present Chogyal has been the President of the Governing Council from its inception and as a result of his leadership and interest the Institute has grown to its present standing. It has now been listed in the International publications like the "World of Learning" and the "International Universities Bureau".

3. The building of the Institute is one of the most imposing Monuments in Sikkim. It is a splendid example of Sikkimese architecture by virtue of its pagoda-like tin roofs, painted turquoise. The building was incomplete in so far as the two rear towers consisting of six rooms had yet to be completed. The work of completion of the two rear towers was undertaken in 1971 and completed in the latter half of 1972 and thus this has provided much needed space. Security arrangements have also been installed in the building to prevent fire and theft.

4. The Chogyal has empowered the Institute to cover the study of the doctrines of all associated Sects and Schools of Mahayana Buddhism. Consequently under the powers of the Charter the Institute has been collecting books of all the Sects and has a representative collection of over 30,000 books and treatises on Nyingmapa, Kargyupa, Sakyapa and Gelugpa works. Further some rare Lepcha Manuscripts have been added to the collection. Thus this Institute is a unique

public establishment under Government auspices anywhere in the Tibetan speaking countries where books of different Sects are being stored and preserved in one repository. As such this Institute may be destined to serve the interests of Chhos in a more lasting manner than perhaps any establishment anywhere in the Mahayana world.

5. Over the years the technical and administrative staff of the Institute has grown from 3 in 1959 to its present strength of 17 and during 1972-73 the staff has been placed on a permanent footing.

6. Apart from providing research facilities to scholars interested in the study of Chhos, the learned Lamas and scholars are individually engaged in research activities; imparting instruction in the Holy Dharma and the teaching of Tibetan language. The young scholars are being trained for collecting research material from Sikkimese monasteries. Thus their learning at the Institute will not only be confined to theory, as the Lama scholars will put into practice in the villages, the ideals and instructions they absorb in the Institute.

To help facilitate study, there is a Hostel attached to the Institute where genuine scholars can stay at a small charge.

7. The Institute brings out regular publications of its Bulletin of Tibetology. Articles from learned scholars on religion and philosophy figure conspicuously in the issues of the Bulletin. So also there are contributions on linguistics and philosophy, history and social institutions of Tibet and epigraphy and geography. Apart from the Bulletin of Tibetology some of the other important publications are:—

- (i) Vimsatika Vijnaptimatratā-Siddhi
- (ii) Socha Gyalpo Korzod
- (iii) Melong Del-chen-yang-can-ngag-gi-rol-tshoi Nying-po
- (iv) Rgyan-Drug Mchog-Gynis (reprinted 1972)

8. The Institute has a programme of initiating study along a few lines viz (a) Tibetan Medicine, (b) Translation of Tibetan works and (c) Collection of Tibetan works. Apart from these important developments, the Institute has recently awarded scholarships to young scholars for full time research work, has initiated a project for the establishment of a Museum and introduced a guide-system. During 1972-73 the Institute acquired manuscripts and xylographs totalling 334 from Mr G. Tharchin and also established a programme of lectures. Further

steps are being taken to provide staff quarters for the employees and the programme of microfilming work started few years ago, is making satisfactory progress. The growing number of visitors and scholars is an indication of the ever growing interest in the Institute.

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