



Advancing Drikung Kagyü Translations



Drikung Kyobpa Jikten Sumgon Ratna Shri (1143–1217)

Vikramashila Academy



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རིན་ཆེན་དངལ་གྱི་བསྟན་པ་སྲིད་མཐའི་བར། །བཤད་སྒྲུབ་ཐོས་བསམ་སྒྲུལ་པས་འཛིན་གྱུར་ཅིག།
May the teachings of Ratna Shri be upheld until the end of existence
Through teaching, accomplishing, study, reflection, and practice.

The Vikramashila Academy, established in December 2023, emerged from the Garchen Foundation's Vikramashila Research and Translation Project, which has for years produced outstanding translations under Khenchen Nyima Gyaltsen's direction. Several master translators were trained, who are now integrated into the academy.

The ambition of the academy is to further professionalize the process of translation:

- Connecting Drikung translators worldwide
- Upskilling translators and translation projects
- Training new translators
- Creating a dictionary of Drikung terminology
- Building a knowledge network
- Contributing to Dharma study and practice programs
- Translating the Collected Works of Jikten Sumgon – the foundation of the Drikung legacy

The Vikramashila Academy is a project of the Garchen Foundation. In order to realize this great vision and make the Drikung Kagyu translations flourish, we depend on your generosity. All donations of any size are welcome and greatly appreciated. Please send your contribution with a note concerning the allocation to the Academy to the account mentioned on the back. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Elke Bartussek
Chair of the Garchen Foundation
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Dr. Jan-Ulrich Sobisch
Director of the Academy
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"I am very happy to hear this great news and would like to accept the role of spiritual patron for the newly founded Vikramashila Academy. I wholeheartedly support its initiatives. The appointment of Katrin Querl, Sonam Spitz, and Claude Jürgens in their respective roles is a commendable step towards preserving and spreading the teachings of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage. Especially the creation of a Drikung Kagyu dictionary is of crucial importance. I look forward to hearing updates regarding the Academy's progress and send my prayers for its success."
H.H. DRIKUNG KYABGON
THINLEY LHUNDUP



Khenchen Nyima Gyaltzen, Spiritual Advisor

Khenchen Nyima is the acting Head Khenpo of the Drikung Kagyu Tradition in exile. Born in Tibet, he trained at Lho Lungkar monastery and studied Kagyu and Sakya scholarship in India. Since 2004, he has taught at the Kagyu College in Dehradun and tirelessly worldwide. He puts great effort into training translators to establish authentic Dharma in the West.



Dr. Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, Academic Director

Jan is a former professor of Tibetan Studies at Copenhagen University and is currently doing research at the Ruhr University, Bochum. He has published several books on Buddhist tantrism, the *Single Intention*, and other themes of Drikung Kagyupa. As the Academic Director, he transforms Khenchen Nyima's spiritual advice into projects at the academy.



Dr. Katrin Querl, Study and Teaching Programs

Katrin is a former assistant professor at the University of Leipzig, Germany. Between intense studies at Munich and Vienna Universities, leading to a Dr. phil., she trained for six years at the Kagyu College in Dehradun. In addition to her activities as an oral translator and translating and publishing Buddhist texts, she oversees the development of the Dharmadhara Study and Practice Program.



Claude Jürgens, Research and Translation Program

Claude is presently a research assistant at the Ruhr University, Bochum. From 2006 to 2013, she studied at Indian institutions such as the Kagyu College in Dehradun. Since 2008, she has translated several books for the Garchen Foundation under Khenchen Nyima's guidance. Her activities in the academy focus on the foundation's publishing program and training new translators.



Sonam Spitz, Research and Digital Humanities (Dictionary)

Sonam studied Tibetan at the Rangjung Yeshe Shedra in Kathmandu and Classical Indology at the University of Hamburg. He worked as a language instructor at the Universities of Copenhagen and Leipzig. In addition to translating and publishing for the Garchen Foundation, Sonam is an oral translator. In the academy, he supervises the Drikung dictionary and implements digital solutions.

The Name “Vikramashila Academy”



Teamworker: Pandita Shakya Shri and the translator Trophu Lotsawa.

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“panditas and lotsawas” (scholars and translators) that made the Tibetan translations so reliable. This teamwork is the role model for the academy.

Through its name, the academy is linked to the ancient Indian Buddhist Vikramashila University, founded with the generous patronage of King Dharmapala in the 8th century. It soon achieved great fame (alongside Nalanda), with around 3000 students and over 100 teachers, including famous masters such as Maitripa, Atisha, Avadhutipa, and Marpa’s guru Naropa.

Vikramashila became famous for the discovery of the Uttaratantra, a seminal text of the Kagyu Mahamudra tradition. Many Tantra lineages originated here and were later transmitted in the Drikung Kagyu tradition. By adopting the name of this ancient university, we connect with the legacy, spirit, and blessings of these traditions of study and practice.

Many Vikramashila masters became part of the famous “translation teams” of

Translating Tibetan Buddhist Works



Teamworker: Pandita Atisha and the translator Gö Lotsawa.

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dictionary of Drikung terms. Such a specialized dictionary is not merely a tool but a legacy. It is a timeless resource that will enrich the work of present translators and lay a formidable foundation for future generations.

A translation is like a boat carrying us to foreign culture’s shores. It is a nuanced endeavor transcending mechanical processes and a fusion of art and craft. A culture’s concepts and categories have distinctive structures and nuances sculptured by the culture’s unique history. To accomplish the intricate task of translation, a profound understanding of the source and target cultures and their histories and languages is imperative.

This work demands access to dictionaries that cover all Tibetan linguistic periods, literary genres, and dialects. Therefore, it is essential for our mission to produce a



The Workflow

Following the example of the Indo-Tibetan translation teams, we strive for a close connection between excellent Tibetan scholars and excellently trained translators in our translation work. Generally, a team consists of a Tibetan scholar, a primary translator (for each target language), a reviewing secondary translator, an editor with Tibetan language expertise, and a copy editor.

It is an extraordinary blessing that we can work under one of the most outstanding scholars of our tradition and time, Khenchen Nyima Gyaltsen. In past years, he has tirelessly trained several translators and other Khenpos to do translation work in annual three-month training periods.

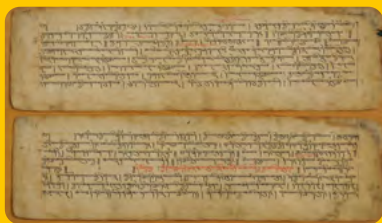
Following his teaching on a given text, primary translators work out a draft translation in their respective native languages. Throughout the year, Khenchen Nyima continues to respond with digital messages to numerous requests for further explanation. A co-translator then checks a second draft, and after possibly further exchanges with Khenchen Nyima, a third draft is created. The input of internal and external lecturers produces a further version of the translation. It often takes several years before a book is finally published.

The “Garchen Foundation Edition” has to date published more than 30 volumes of translations into five languages.

The Vikramashila Academy will continue to produce books with translations and videos with teachings.



Accumulating Merit through Supporting Translations



Supporting the production of Buddhist texts is a highly effective way of accumulating merit on the bodhisattva path. The writing, translating, and printing of Buddhist texts—a manifestation of the Buddha's speech—brings excellent merit for the authors, copyists, printers, and sponsors alike. Even if they die and move to a new existence,

contributors continue accumulating merit for many generations as long as the texts are recited and studied. Nagarjuna explicitly says that our wisdom, too, increases by contributing to the creation of texts through sponsorship.

Sponsoring Opportunities

The Vikramashila Academy organizes the translation of various Tibetan texts of the Drikung Kagyu tradition. The translations will be available as printed books or on the web. For example, you can sponsor digital and conventional books by sponsoring a single or several pages or a whole book. The sponsors are named and thanked in each publication.

We calculate the costs of the projects based on the number of syllables per Tibetan folio, referring to the standard edition of Lord Jikten Sumgon's Collected Works. We offer the following options:

- Translation of one folio page (digital production): 100 euro
- Translation and complete book production of one folio page: 200 euro
- Complete translation of a text, e.g., 25 folio pages: 2500 euro
- Translation and complete book production of a text, e.g., 25 pages: 5000 euro

Example

The cost for the translation and complete book production of the already published book *A Stream of Nectar* was 14,800 euros.

Please visit our website at <https://garchen-stiftung.de/> for further information on the Academy on particular translation projects.

Translating the Collected Works of Lord Jikten Sumgon

A long term plan of the Academy is to translate the complete works of Lord Jikten Sumgon, consisting of 8 books (equalling 14 Tibetan volumes) of instructions. This project needs a worldwide effort for decades. If you want to be part of this project in your country by offering assistance in translating, editing, providing software, graphical design, and long-term financial sponsorship, please contact the academy.

Vision for the Vikramashila Academy: An Interview with Drikung Khenchen Nyima Gyaltsen

Q: What is the most important immediate task of the Academy?

A: Developing the teaching material for German and worldwide study and practice programs is essential. That includes the urgently needed translations and publication of the *Single Intention* and *Essence of the Mahayana Teachings* commentaries and some instruction texts like the *Teachings to the Assembly*.

Q: Do you see any further long-term tasks for the Academy?

A: The most excellent of excellent tasks would be to make the treasury of Kyobpa Jikten Sumgon's teachings accessible to a global community of scholars and practitioners. The most effective way to connect with the awakened activities of the previous masters is through their words, which have been transmitted to us in the form of texts.

Q: What makes the Kyobpa Jikten Sumgon's works so particularly precious?

A: They are the Kanjur in condensed form. I always recommend that my students read the teachings of Jikten Sumgon at least once in their lifetime. I have done so four times, and I believe that his profound instructions greatly benefit practitioners, especially at the time of their death. I'm delighted that the translators of the academy are trying to develop a project to translate all the still-existing words of Jikten Sumgon. As for myself, I will put all of my energy and time into supporting this project in the future.

Q: Were there more teaching available earlier?

A: Drubwang Rinpoche said he saw 120 volumes of Jikten Sumgon's works in a destroyed Stupa. They were all lost to the flames. Now we have just six books and two with very secret teachings left. It makes preservation and translation all the more necessary, even if it will take twenty years.

Q: It is an enormous task. Is there any particular advice that you can provide?

A: You should seek to initiate a joint effort of the worldwide Drikung community involving lineage holders, expert Dharma teachers, translators, practitioners, and sponsors to preserve the extraordinary teachings of Jikten Sumgon for future generations. You will need support in many forms for this ambitious project. You should make it possible for all followers of the Drikungpa to sponsor pages or whole texts of your translations so that everyone can share the great merit of this endeavor.





Together with the video and audio team Addy and Bibi Ipsen, the Vikramashila Academy has produced more than 60 hours of video with Khenchen Nyima Gyaltsen's teachings on the *Single Intention* and the *Essence of the Mahayana Path*.

After translation, the Tibetan language videos will be subtitled in English and German and made available to the worldwide Sangha.

It is possible to become a sponsor of the translation and post-production of individual videos. Please send your contribution to the bank account below or contact vikramashila-academy@garchen-stiftung.de.

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