

On the Tibetan Alphabet

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Upon seeing some students studying Tibetan, Rinpoche became very pleased and excited and said:

The 30 syllables of the Tibetan alphabet carry a much greater blessing than the ABC's of English. Why? Because they are blessed by Buddha. They are the life force of Buddha and his teachings. They are Buddha's life, his speech, his consciousness, and his entire being. If you want to rely on 1,000 buddhas, rely on the 30 consonants! If you want to relate to a million buddhas and a million dakinis, learn the 30 consonants. Wrathful, peaceful, male, and female wisdom deities are all available there. And without the written word, we cannot connect to any of them.

The Tibetan alphabet is special because it was developed directly from the Sanskrit alphabet, which is the "language of the gods." In India, they make a very big deal about Sanskrit. Sanskrit is special because all the 1,000 buddhas of this aeon will teach in that language. Its syllables are supremely blessed by all the buddhas. The Tibetan letters are not anything different from the Sanskrit letters, so they, too, carry THAT kind of blessing!

The Tibetan thirty consonants that begin with KA, KHA, GA, and NGA are Buddha's speech. If you have faith in Buddha, you will purify your obscurations just by studying them. In fact, the 30 letters are 30 buddhas. You can read about it, stage by stage. Even just in the first letter, KA—the life forces of millions of buddhas are there. KHA, the second letter, is the same. Everything is there. As you learn the alphabet, you are connecting, connecting, connecting to each one. And then, slowly as you get too smart, with KA, KHA, GA, NGA, CHA, CHA, JA, NYA, TA, THA, DA, and NA, you are becoming the 30 buddhas. You are connecting with the energy of those buddhas in billions and billions of lifetimes. So, you can see this is not at all like learning the ABC's.

This country has been so complicated for me. I'll tell you about it. I don't speak the language and the people don't speak my language, but still lots of ego trips are there. So difficult! Sometimes people have such bad attitudes or wrong motivations. Therefore, when you are studying Tibetan you must understand that this is not ordinary. Don't be a smart aleck or treat it like an intellectual pursuit, trying to become a scholar. If you really have faith, trust, and respect for what you are learning, then that will be good; but if you are just playing games with the 30 buddhas, then you're gonna go straight to hell. These kinds of small things we need to "Oh!" understand. We can't jump over the

30 letters or jump over the basics. We are not doggies, not animals. Therefore, we should look carefully at our motives for learning and be honest about what we don't know.

The thirty consonants are enlightened speech. Buddha's body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities are all there, if you know them. If you know how to know them, then you are speaking 30 buddhas' speech. That purifies obscurations—what could NOT be purified by 30 buddhas' speech? In the future, this can be your way of gathering merit and cleansing obscurations.

Learning the alphabet clears away the obscurations of not knowing it and not knowing the buddhas that are the letters. Actually, the alphabet holds the power to clear the obscurations of not knowing a MILLION letters and words, a million buddhas. Beyond the alphabet, there are also the vowels of gigu, naro, zhabkyu, and drengbu, and the prefixes, superscripts, subscripts, and suffixes. Study that whole thing, stage by stage. If you want to purify your obscurations, this is the way to do it. Or at least, they say it's like that. Do I know? Nothing.

They say Guru Rinpoche buried treasures which the 108 treasure revealers revealed. What were they? Thousands of millions of books. Without the Tibetan letters, none of those treasures would exist. They are nothing other than the alphabet. They might be written with Sanskrit or terma letters, and those connect to the Tibetan alphabet, too. The Chinese language also connects to the dharma, it looks like, but I can't say if it connects purely. But, I know for sure that the Tibetan language, Tibetan alphabet, and Tibetan treasures definitely 100% connect to a thousand million buddhas. Therefore, if you need to gather merit and cleanse obscurations, you need the alphabet!

The treasure scripts were written by Guru Rinpoche and the dakinis, so when you recite or read those words you are reading their letters, their writing, their mind, and their enlightened qualities. Treasure script is called "ter yig" and it looks like Sanskrit. There are many different kinds. Each of the tertons had his own kind of ter yig, and they were hidden and revealed as earth treasures, water treasures, space treasures, and mind treasures. How do we connect to those extraordinary texts? By reading them.

When I was young, I spent a lot of time with Tulku Theglo's brother, Lhundrub Dorje, my naughty friend. We were supposed to be studying Tibetan, but we didn't want to learn so we would play in the creek. Then his mother would yell at us, "You baby ghosts! You guys are killing the fish!" Actually we were not killing anything, just playing beside the water. We were looking at the salamanders, maybe bugging them a little, but we didn't kill them. Not because we believed that killing was a nonvirtue, but

just because we didn't have the guts. We were wimps! His mother wanted to kill us, though. We were so naughty, ignoring our chance to connect to the syllables. In fact, sometimes we Tibetans are so naughty that we write the alphabet on a piece of paper and then wipe our butts with it. Really.

Don't ignore any Tibetan letter or any vowel sign, whatever you see. That is a piece of Kuntuzangpo and Kuntuzangmo and the ten directions buddhas' minds. Oh, not something small! One way, you guys have great merit to be connecting to this. But one way, your merit is not so great because you have goddamn me as your teacher. We need real, qualified teachers like H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, H.H. Penor Rinpoche, Yangthang Tulku Rinpoche, and Dodrubchen Rinpoche. These high beings are emanations of accomplished masters. Theglo Rinpoche also—his father was an emanation of Guru Rinpoche.

Who wants to go up and not down? If you need to go up, you need faith. Faith in whom? Joe Shmoe? No. One way, why not? He has the buddha nature, buddha essence. But we don't have that kind of pure faith. We don't know enough about buddha qualities to have that kind of faith. Faith depends on understanding. If we have more understanding, then we have more faith. Not a scholar's erudition, but honest understanding from our hearts. We can measure our faith by understanding's blessing. And understanding comes from paying attention to the little things. Don't jump over things you don't know. Don't play with the buddha, dharma, and sangha.

Today I am here, tomorrow there, the next day dead under the ground, and then where am I gonna go? In the septic. If we need to know where we are going tomorrow, then today we must have Buddhism. What's the big deal about Buddhism? Buddhism is buddha nature. Whether we are male or female, we have buddha nature.

In fact, we are just lucky that we can SEE the buddha. We can hear a thousand million buddhas' speech, in the KA, KHA, GA, NGA of Tibetan and especially of Sanskrit. OM MANI PEME HUNG is Sanskrit, and we can learn to read those letters. Then there are the many different letters of the treasures, which are blessed by Guru Rinpoche, the dakas and dakinis, and the gurus, devas, and dakinis, who are not funky guys and funky ladies. They are emanations of the buddhas of the 10 directions: body emanations, speech emanations, and mind emanations. All of them are there in the letters, because all of them are here in this moment or in the tiniest end of a hair. If we understand that nature, then we can say "I am meditating."

The Tertön Kunzang Nyima, Dudjom Lingpa's speech emanation, was my guru back in Tibet and he had a daughter. She was younger and smaller than me, and very naughty.

She was my friend and we would fight. Sometimes she would go outside in the rain and mud, then she would run in and jump on my lap with her dirty boots on my robes. I would get mad, but she would say, "Please, please don't tell Mommy; she will spank me!" Afterwards, my guru told me that she was some kind of amazing dakini. Who would believe it of that naughty one?

It just goes to show that WE don't know about other people's qualities. If someone is handsome, does that mean he is high? No. Handsome means nothing much, pretty means nothing much. The real handsome or pretty is inside, the buddha nature. If we cleanse our obscurations, then our five poisons become five wisdoms, five dhyani buddhas, five Guru Rinpoches, or countless dakinis. But who has done this? How can you tell? We can't tell who is a real tertön or a high being because we don't have that kind of merit.

On the other hand, we do have SOME merit. Look at all the amazing empowerments we received from Yangthang Tulku Rinpoche. When he gave them, he gave them freely and joyfully. He didn't say, "we can't give these to Americans" or "it's not time yet for these." So, have confidence that we do have merit and connection to these teachings and lineages.

Although we can't know other people's qualities, we can know the qualities of the Tibetan language, which are not simple, small, or limited. So, please, everybody, try to learn these tiniest things.

Tashi Deleg,

-Gyatral