



# SHERIG NEWS

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CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION

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## About us...

Sherig News is the official newsletter of the Department of Education, one of the seven departments of the Central Tibetan Administration based in Dharamsala since 1960. DoE is the apex body responsible for providing support for the educational and welfare needs of over 22,000 Tibetan refugee children in India and Nepal.

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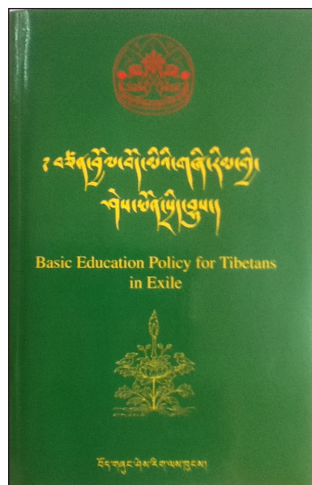
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## EDITORIAL:



(Starting from this edition, Sherig News will feature an Editorial Column)

Perhaps the most common myth pervading our society on the Basic Education Policy (BEP) of CTA is that BEP is all about vernacularization of the medium of

instruction. Whenever and wherever there is a discussion on BEP, the debate on vernacularization of medium of instruction invariably takes the center stage.

There is definitely a clause in the BEP document which underscored the need for full conversion of medium of instruction to Tibetan in our schools. However, we must understand that neither is BEP just about this clause nor is this clause the most important aspect of BEP.

While people may debate on the legitimacy of mother-tongue based classroom instruction (*although scientific research in this field has proven beyond any ambiguity that mother-tongue based classroom instruction leads to better conceptual understanding, and developing a strong foundation of mother-tongue language in children, rather than impeding, actually helps in acquisition of second language later in school*), taking one's impressionistic reservations about this vernacularization aspect of BEP as the sole basis for discrediting the policy as a whole grossly overlooks the significance of the key features of BEP- most of which have universal appeal.

The essence of BEP lies in the four aims of giving education viz., enabling to fully awaken the students' discriminative faculty of mind to be able to distinguish right from wrong which constitutes the principle of "freedom"; students embracing other beings as more precious than

the self and sacrificing the self for the service and welfare of others which constitutes the principle of "altruism"; enabling in students the ability to preserve Tibetan culture and natural environment constitutes the principle of "upholding the heritage"; and finally the principle of "innovation" stresses that students should be able to introduce new principles, systems, movements and so forth in accordance with the needs of time and place.

Besides these four aims of providing education, BEP endorses: student-centered teaching methodology, abolishment of 3 hour examination system, inculcation of higher order thinking skills, Inclusive Education, teaching of traditional subjects (such as Valid Cognition) and so forth.

In short BEP envisages a 'paradigm shift' in our education that would not only address the existing issues plaguing our society (such as lack of professionals, unemployment problem and cultural uprooting of youngsters), but also meet the ultimate needs of Tibetan people.

Going back to the debate on legitimacy of mother-tongue based education, people assume that below-par competency in English Language will be an obvious side effect of the switch in medium of instruction to Tibetan, and introduction of second language only after III grade as per BEP. What appears to be logical is not always right, and common sense can be tyrannical at times.

Retrospectively, for about 40 years since the first Tibetan school was established in India, all the Tibetan schools followed a system wherein medium of instruction was English right from I to XII grade. Going by the (commonsensical yet unscientific) logic behind the argument that switching the medium of instruction to Tibetan will adversely affect English Language proficiency, the students who graduated from the Tibetan schools under the previous system must be *really* good in English! Are they? If majority of the readers objectively respond to this question in affirmative, my argument would stop here. However, if the general response to this question is negative, I won't hesitate to voice my argument that 'just as following an English Medium System doesn't guarantee good English Language proficiency in

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children, switching the medium of instruction to Tibetan will not necessarily hamper the standard of English in schools'.

For me this question of language proficiency (be it in Tibetan or English) has less to do with medium of instruction and more to do with the quality of language pedagogy. Emphasis on 'Comprehensive Language Inputs' such as creative writing, speaking, developing reading habit and so forth which are absolutely crucial for developing language skills have been seriously lacking in most of our schools. How then can we expect our children to possess good proficiency in languages?

### Conclusion:

Thus, there is a need to move beyond the current debate on instructional medium and understand BEP in terms of its core essences and underlying philosophies.

- Gyaltsen

## ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS:

### Mr. Topgyal Tsering Appointed the (Administrative) Secretary of DoE



Mr. Topgyal Tsering, formerly the Additional Secretary of the Department of Education has been promoted to the post of Secretary by the Public Service Commission of the Central Tibetan Administration. The Kashag has formally sanctioned one additional post of Secretary for the Department of Education to look after the overall administrative related issues; Mr. Topgyal Tsering has been appointed for the same with effect from February 8, 2013.

### CTSA Chairman Apurva Chandra Visits Dharamshala



On Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay's invitation, CTSA Chairman Shri Apurva Chandra accompanied by his wife and son visited Dharamshala on January 26 & 27, 2013. A cultural performance followed by dinner in honor of the visiting guest was organized at Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) in the evening of January 26. Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, in his address thanked Mr. Apurva Chandra for the whole-hearted support the latter extended in the process of transfer of CTSA schools to CTA. The dignitaries of Central Tibetan

Administration and other institutes in Dharamshala were also invited for the event. On January 27, Shri Apurva Chandra and his family, along with Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay watched India vs England cricket match at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Stadium, Dharamshala.

## ACADEMIC NEWS

### Workshop on Safety and Security

From January 8 to 14, the DoE organized Safety and Security Workshop at College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarah. The training was attended by 5 rectors, 4 staff nurses, and 7 wardens/matrons of CST schools. The seven-day workshop covered topics related to safety and security of students including *Corporal Punishment and Ethical Disciplining, Contagious Diseases, Women's Reproductive Health, Identification of Drug Addiction and Preventive Measures, Conflict Resolution, Inclusive Education, Prevention of Bullying in School, Disaster Management, and Holistic Education*. Besides, a thorough discussion amongst the participants on means to improve the overall discipline and health of children in CST schools was held during the workshop. The workshop was funded by Central Tibetan Schools Administration.

### Cultural and Spiritual Teachers' Workshop

The DoE organized a five-day workshop for the Cultural and Spiritual Teachers of the Tibetan schools in north-eastern and southern parts of India. 18 Cultural and Spiritual Teachers participated in the workshop. The primary aim of organizing the workshop was to brief the participants on the upcoming Symposium on Dialectics in which Tibetan schools from north-eastern and southern parts of India will participate. Ex Kalon Tripa, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, Geshe Jamphel Dakpa, Principal of College for Higher Tibetan Studies (CHTS), Sarah, Mr. Dorji Gyaltsen, Teacher of CHTS, Ms. Donkar Wangmo Chief Counselor DoE, Mr Nyima Tsering, Science Teacher, TCV Suja, and Mr. Tenzin Ngodup, Science Teacher, TCV Upper were invited as resource persons for the workshop. The resource persons covered topics such as *Teaching of Buddhism, The Importance of Teaching Dialectics in School, Ill Effects of Corporal Punishment, Child Psychology, Teaching Science through Dialectics* and so forth. The workshop was funded by Gaden Phodrang Trust.

### Follow-up Workshop on Research Methodologies

On March 4 & 5, a follow-up workshop for the recipients of the DoE's Non-formal Research Scholarship was organized at College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarah. The workshop was organized as a follow-up program to the previously conducted training at Central University of Tibetan Studies, Varanasi on Research Methodologies. A total of 14 non-formal research scholars attended the workshop. During the two-day workshop, Mr. Sonam Gyaltsen, History Teacher of CHTS presented a lecture on Historical Research; Mr. Lodoe

Palsang, Literature Teacher of CHTS elaborated on Research in Tibetan Literature; Mr. Tashi Tsering, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche and Naga Sangay Tendhar individually illuminated the participants on general research methodologies. The Librarian of Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA), Dharamsala, Mr. Sonam Topgyal took a one-hour session in briefing the participants on the use of the library's archives for research. The workshop was funded by PRM.

### Third BEP Workshop for Trained Graduate Teachers



The DoE organized the Third BEP Workshop for Trained Graduate Teachers from March 12-18 at College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarah. 27 teachers from Tibetan Children's Village, Tibetan Homes Foundation, Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society and Snow Lion Foundation attended the workshop. The chief resource persons for the workshop were Ex Kalon Tripa Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche and Dr. Ramu Manivannan from Madras University. While Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche elaborated on the key aspects of the BEP, Dr. Ramu expounded on Holistic Education, General Pedagogy, Educational Philosophy and Lesson Planning. Other resource persons include Geshe Jamphel Dakpa, Principal of College for Higher TS, Sarah, Mr. Karma Chungdak, Director of Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society, Mr. Kalsang Wangdu, Education Officer, DoE, Ms. Tenzin Paldon, Education Officer, DoE, Mr. Gyaltsen, Education Officer, DoE, Ms. Donkar Wangmo, Chief Counselor, DoE and Mr Dorji Gyaltsen, Teacher, College for Higher Tibetan Studies. They covered the topics *Moral Ethics, Educational Evaluation, Education in Mother Tongue, Inclusive Education, Teachers Collaborative Learning, Child Development, and Ill effects of Corporal Punishment and Alternative Means of Handling Student Indiscipline* respectively. The participants of the workshop also visited Mewon Petoen Tsuglak School- a model school for implementation of BEP. The workshop was funded by DANIDA.

### Third BEP Workshop on Teaching of Middle School Subjects in Tibetan Medium

From March 21 to 26, the DoE organized the third BEP workshop on Teaching of Middle School Subjects in Tibetan Medium at College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarah. 18 middle



school Science, Social Science and Mathematics teachers from Sambhota Tibetan Schools attended the training. During the inaugural function of the training, Education Officer Mr. Tsering Samdup, Deputy Secretary Mr. Sonam Sangpo, and the Textbook Editors of the DoE, Mr. Buddha Kyab and Mr Choephel Lungtok briefed the participants on the aims of the workshop and the challenges that teachers might face in actual implementation of the Tibetanization program in schools. The DoE Education Officer Mr. Gyaltsen, Science Textbook Editor Mr. Choephel Lungtok and Mr. Tenzin Dorji, Principal of Mewon Petoen Tsuglak School were the resource persons for the teaching of Science and Mathematics in Tibetan Medium. Mr. Sonam Sangpo and Mr Buddha Kyab were the resource persons for the teaching of Social Science in Tibetan medium. The Education Officer of the DoE Mr. Kalsang Wangdu made a research-based presentation on Education in Mother Tongue during the workshop. The workshop was funded by PRM.

### DoE Education Officers Visit Science Schools

The DoE Education Officer Mr. Kalsang Wangdu, visited Tibetan schools with science stream in Southern India (viz., CST Mundgod and TCV Bylakuppe) from February 22 to 26 to hold information-session on B.Sc. B.Ed. integrated course offered at Center for Teacher Education, Bhuntar. He also conducted a pre-test to class XI/XII science students of the schools which would help Avanti Fellows (a New Delhi based NGO) later organize Technology-based After-school Coaching Program for the science students in Tibetan schools. Education Officer Mr. Gyaltsen visited Tibetan schools with science stream in Dehardun region (namely, TCV Selakui, THF Mussoorie, CST Mussoorie) from March 4 to 9 for the same purpose.

### Summer Internship Program

With the kind support from Dr. Ronald Vale, Professor of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology at the University of California, and National Center for Biological Science (NCBS), Bangalore, three class XI science students of CST Mundgod will be interning this summer at NCBS, Bangalore. The students Ms. Tenzin Tsetan, Ms. Tenzin Phentok and Ms. Tenzin Zomkey were selected for the internship on the basis of their academic performances and oral interview conducted by the

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DoE. The three students will start their 45-day summer in-



ternship from May 5.

## COUNSELING NEWS

The Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in exile has a clause that highlights the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools for their education. Accordingly, the DoE has been organizing various 'Inclusive Education' programs. With a goal towards the restructuring of mainstream provision so that schools welcome and respect all the diverse learners, a year round pilot project was started by the DoE; STS Chauntra was selected as a pilot school. Series of workshops related to inclusive education was conducted at STS Chauntra School for its staff in year 2012 - 2013. The workshop topics include Introduction to Inclusive Education, Collaborative Learning, Children with Special Needs, Child Development, and Children with Attention Problem, Conflict Resolution, and Corporal Punishment. The teachers of the school also made a field visit to Amar Jyoti (inclusive) School. The pilot project was funded by Tibet Friend, Swiss.

## PUBLICATION NEWS:

- 1) DoE Publication Cell has published 3 pictorial books including an introduction to fresco paintings of Mulagandha Kutu Vihar, Sarnath. The books were distributed to all the Tibetan Schools in India. DoE thank ARTIC, Japan for financing these publications.
- 2) Biographic novel of Mahatma Gandhi in Tibetan language was published with the financial support from the Charitable Trust of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
- 3) The 5th volume of the 'Glossary of Standardized Terms' under the Tibetan Terminology Project published by the publication cell of DoE is available free of cost at the DoE. The project was financed by DANIDA.

## EDUCATION COUNCIL NEWS:

From February 23 to March 4 2013, Education Council's Co-coordinator, Mr. Penpa Tsering visited Calorx Teachers' College Ahmedabad and two Indian schools in New Delhi

to study the implementation of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and Montessori Education System. He also visited a few B.Ed and an M.Ed colleges in Ahmedabad to gather ideas and supplementary materials for organizing the upcoming Education Council's Conference which is due to be held in the month of July-August 2013.

## SCHOLARSHIP NEWS:

### Scholarship Announcements

1) The Department of Education has made public announcement on annual DoE Scholarships and Songsten Scholarship for the year 2013. The last date of submission of application for both the scholarships is May 31, 2013.

Application form and announcement copy can be obtained from Settlement/Welfare Officers and Principals of Secondary & Senior Secondary Schools. It can also be easily downloaded from the DoE's official website [www.tcewf.org/www.sherig.org/tb](http://www.tcewf.org/www.sherig.org/tb)

2) The Department of Education has made public announcement on MBBS coaching and Engineering Reserve Seats Entrance Test 2013. The entrance test for Engineering Reserved Seats was conducted on March 25, 2013 at two centers simultaneously viz. Tibetan Homes Foundation, Mussoorie and Chief Representative's Office, Bangalore.

4) The Department of Education has made announcement on partial scholarship from DC School of Management & Technology, Kerala and APG University, Shimla.

5) The Department of Education has made announcement on Common Admission Test (CAT) coaching for graduated students.

### Medical and Non-Medical Coachings Underway

The Department of Education, CTA started a month long medical (NEET) & non-medical (CET) crash course from March 27, 2013 at Vidhya Peeth Coaching Centre, Shimla and Eudite Coaching Centre, Bangalore respectively. The coaching classes were specially designed to prepare the students for the medical/non medical competitive examinations. There are total of 50 outgoing class XII students from CST Mussoorie, CST Kalimpong, CST Mundgod, TCV Selakui, TCV Bylakuppe and THF Mussoorie attending the coaching classes.

Students were selected from the respective schools on the basis of academic merit.

Mr. Phuntsok Tsering, Officiating Rector, CST Shimla and Mr. Karma Singey, Chief Representative, Bangalore coordinated the whole of the program at their respective places.