

# North American Tibetan Cultural Immersion Camp



at Tibetan Cultural Center in Bloomington, Indiana,  
from July 21-30, 2006

**ORGANIZED BY**

The Office of Tibet

The Tibetan Cultural Center, Bloomington, Indiana

## Why Culture Immersion Camp?

In as much as the Tibetan community in North America is scattered widely, our children get to see, hear and experience very little of our own culture, so much so that the Tibetan culture, language and way of life are increasingly becoming foreign to them.

There is thus a need for special initiatives to instill in our children an interest in making special efforts to learn about their cultural heritage. This proposed culture-immersion camp is a step in this direction. The camp aims to provide our children with an opportunity to immerse themselves in their culture, and thus start a journey which will take them to their roots and identity.

## Objectives

The basic objectives of the Culture Camp are:

- o To expose Tibetan youngsters to their culture and language, and also to the essence of Buddhism.
- o To create an environment for Tibetan youngsters from different parts of North America to develop friendship among them and widen their network
- o To bring Tibetan youngsters closer to the values of Tibetan culture and to create in them a sense of belonging
- o To create conditions for Tibetan youngsters to develop a sense of pride in their Tibetan identity

## The Structure of the programs at the Camp

1. The basic structure of the camp's program *is designed as group-activity-based exploration* with facilitators assisting them whenever there is a need. Each day, the participants will be divided into small teams, each of which will undertake an exploration and make presentation of the findings.
2. In order to provide background information, guest speakers will be invited to speak on important topics and to interact with the participants.
3. The organizers will arrange a wide range of reading materials, internet facilities for research, and video film shows to assist the participants in their camp activities.
4. Participants are will be encouraged to do preliminary research and reading before coming to the camp.
5. Every day, some time will be set aside for participants to learn Tibetan songs or dance or the most popular instrument, *dra-nyen*. *If convenient, participants are encouraged to bring their own dra-nyen.*
6. A typical day schedule (tentative) will look like this:

**Short prayer/meditation** at the temple: 08:30 a.m.

**Main Session:**

- Facilitator's briefing on the day's exploration: 09:00 - 09:15 a.m.
- Group explorations and brain-storming: 09:15 - 10:45 a.m.
- Tea/Coffee Break: 10:45 - 11:00 a.m.,
- Group presentation in the class: 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Facilitator's comments and notes: 12:30 - 01:00 p.m.

**Lunch Break and Rest:** 01:00 - 03:00 p.m.

**Session to learn song/dance/musical instrument:** 03:00 - 04:00 p.m.

**Tea/Coffee Break:** 04:00 - 04:30 p.m.

**Evening Guest Lecture/Video Film Show:** 04:30 - 06:00 p.m.

**Dinner:** 07:00 or 07:30 p.m.

7. Recreation facilities of swimming pool and other sports are also available at the center

**Target group and no. of participants:**

- o High school students in the age group of 14 to 17
- o A total of 20 to 30 participants will be enrolled on first-come, first-served basis

**Organizer, Venue and Duration of the Camp**

The Office of Tibet and the Tibetan Culture Center in Bloomington, Indiana, will jointly undertake the responsibility of organizing the camp. The camp will be held at the Tibetan Culture Center in Bloomington for the duration of *ten days from July 21 to 30, 2006.*

The Tibetan Culture Center was founded in 1979 by Taktser Rinpoche, the eldest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Center, located on a 108-acre site, grew out of an active university and community involvement with Tibetan culture.

Last year, the Center was re-organized and re-vitalized at the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is currently under the supervision of Arja Rinpoche, a renowned scholar from Kumbum Monastery in Tibet and a close disciple of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

**Accommodation**

Participants will be accommodated on the premises of the Tibetan Cultural Center. The organizers will ensure that the participants have a comfortable stay. *Participants are requested to bring their own sleeping bag and toiletries, including personal towels.*

## Local Transport

The Tibetan Cultural Center will take care of transportation within Bloomington, Indiana. Participants accepted for the camp are requested to reach Bloomington, Indiana, either on July 19 or 20. During these two days, the Center will arrange a shuttle van to pick up participants from the Indianapolis International Airport, the nearest airport. The airport is located at a distance of approximately 1.5-hour-drive from Bloomington.

Participants arriving on unscheduled days are requested to make their own transport arrangement from the Indianapolis International Airport to the Center. For the airport shuttle, contact:

Bloomington Shuttle Service, Inc  
3200 Venture Blvd.  
Bloomington, IN 47404  
Tel: 812-332-6004 or 800-589-6004  
web: [www.bloomingtonshuttle.com](http://www.bloomingtonshuttle.com)

## Health Care Insurance:

Participants are requested to provide information about their health insurance in the registration form. This will help the Tibetan Culture Center to arrange suitable health care facilities during the camp, should the need arise.

## Expenses

- o Participants are required to make their own travel arrangement to and from Bloomington, Indiana
- o Each participant is required to pay a registration fee of US\$ 100 for the camp.

## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMS

FRIDAY, JULY 21

### Group activity to explore your parents' birth place

*Tools and references:* 1) Google Earth; 2) Mapping the Tibetan World by Kotan Publications; 3) Internet Research; 4) Interview with your parents and other elders in your neighborhood; 5) *Tibet Outside the TAR: Control, Exploitation and Assimilation; Development with Chinese Characteristics* by Marshall, Steven D., and Susette Ternent Cooke (CD-ROM is available from the International Campaign for Tibet).

*Facilitator's sum-up:* A brief introduction to Tibet's geography and eco-system

**Evening Video Film Show: "Beyond the Land of Snow"** A documentary film on Smithsonian Tibetan Folklore Festival 2000, Washington DC

SATURDAY, JULY 22

**Group activity to explore a family altar and the significances of images and objects on the altar**

Tools and References: 1) Internet Research—check the Snow Lion Publication's website [www.snowlionpub.com/pages/altar.php](http://www.snowlionpub.com/pages/altar.php) and also the Newark Museum's website [http://www.newarkmuseum.org/tibet\\_zone/tour/](http://www.newarkmuseum.org/tibet_zone/tour/) 2) *Tibetan Buddhist Altars: A pop-up gallery of traditional Tibet art and wisdom* by Tad Wise, Robert Beers, David A. Carter. New World Library; pop up edition, August 16, 2004

*Facilitator's sum-up:* A brief introduction to *Kyabdro* (Refuge-taking) and the significance of the daily devotional practice of offerings, circumambulation, prostration, mantras, and rosary.

***Evening with Guest Speaker, Ngawang Chopel on "Inside Tibet"*** Ngawang Chopel, a former political prisoner, has served as a stringer of the Voice of America in Kathmandu for many years. He is now a stringer of the Radio Free Asia based in New York.

SUNDAY, JULY 23

**Learning the essence of Buddhism and Tibetan Culture with Arja Rinpoche**

Arja Rinpoche, Director of the Tibetan Culture Center in Bloomington, Indiana, is a former abbot of Kumbum Monastery. Rinpoche speaks Tibetan, English, and Mongolian languages fluently.

***Evening Video Film Show: "Compassion In Exile":*** The film is an intimate portrait of His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, produced by Lemle Picture Inc, 1992.

MONDAY, JULY 24

**Group activity to explore Tibetan traditional clothes and identify the difference in the clothes worn by Tibetans living in different parts of Tibet**

*Tools and References:* 1) Internet, particularly the site maintained by the Tibetan Association of North California [www.tanc.org/tibetan\\_dress/dress\\_small.html](http://www.tanc.org/tibetan_dress/dress_small.html); David L. Snellgrove's book, "A Cultural History of Tibet" published by Orchid Press, 2004; Rinchen Lhamo's book, "We Tibetans", published by Potala Publications, 1985

*Facilitator's sum-up:* A brief introduction to the various Tibetan traditional clothes from region to region, and the influence of environment on this difference. The facilitator will also highlight how traditional clothes differ from ones that we see in contemporary Tibet.

**Evening Film Show: "Wind Horse"** A remarkable film, directed by Paul Wagner, which present a realistic and scathingly critical depiction of Chinese oppression in Tibet.

TUESDAY, JULY 25

**Group activity to explore Tibetan cuisines and learn to cook one dish with Acha Lhamo-la, who runs Little Tibet Restaurant in Bloomington.**

*Tools and References:* 1) Internet research for recipes, 2) The Lhasa Moon Tibetan Cook Book, by Tsering Wangmo and Zara Houshmand. Snow Lion Publications (November 25, 1998)

*Facilitator's sum-up:* How Tibetan cuisines differ from those of other countries in their taste and style, and how the Tibetan geography and environment has influenced the nation's cuisines.

**Evening with Guest Speaker, Kasur Tashi Wangdi on "Tibetan Community In Exile"** Mr. Tashi Wangdi is Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Americas and a former Cabinet Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

**Excursion and picnic**

*Special feature: Sang-sol* —understanding the significance of *sang-sol* and prayer flags.

THURSDAY, JULY 27

**Exploring the world of iconography and ritual arts/crafts with an expert on the subject**

*Tools and References:* 1) Internet Research, 2) David L. Snellgrove's book, "A Cultural History of Tibet" published by Orchid Press, 2004

**Evening Video Film Show: "Lost Mysteries" and "The Bamboo Curtain Falls"** A two part BBC's documentary on Tibet before the Chinese occupation and the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

FRIDAY, JULY 28

**Exploring the basic structure of the Tibetan language** with a Tibetan language expert; learning the language will become easier once you understand the logic of its structure.

### ***Evening Video Film Show: "Red Star Over Tibet"***

Orville Schell, an author and longtime observer of China, makes a journey to Tibet. Schell vividly chronicles the history and culture of Tibet, explores the Chinese view of Tibet, and looks at why the survival of Tibet's people and culture has become an international issue.

SATURDAY, JULY 29

**Group activity to explore the Tibetan Festivals and understand the significance some of them**

*Tools and References:* 1) Internet Research, check [www.kotan.org/tibet/festivals.html](http://www.kotan.org/tibet/festivals.html) 2) David L. Snellgrove's book, "A Cultural History of Tibet" published by Orchid Press, 2004

**Evening with Guest Speakers Lhadon Tethong and Larry Gerstein on Students' Political Activism**

SUNDAY, JULY 30

**Self evaluation of the success of the program**

***Evening Video Film Show: "Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion"*** It is an extraordinary documentary about the near-destruction of a 1,700-year-old culture, the incredible suffering of a violated people, and the spiritual survival of hope in the hearts of those who believe that one day they will be able to re- taste the joy of freedom.

### **Recommended Books**

- o "A Cultural History of Tibet", by David L. Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson
- o "We Tibetans", by Rinchen Lhamo, Potala Publications (1985)
- o "White Lotus: An Introduction to Tibetan Culture", edited by Carole Elchert, Snow Lion Publications (1990)
- o "The Buddhism of Tibet", by H.H. the Dalai Lama, trans. & ed. by Jeffrey Hopkins.
- o "Mapping the Tibetan World", by Kotan Publishing—an excellent source of travel information on the Himalayas and all of Tibet, not just the "TAR"

**Note:** All the above books are available with the Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, NY <http://www.snowlionpub.com/>

**North American**  
**Tibetan Cultural Immersion Camp**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

*to be submitted by July 15, 2006 to*

**The Office of Tibet, 241 East 32nd Street, New York, NY 10016**

Fax: (212) 779 9245 Email: phuntso@igc.org

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Complete address \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insurance Number and Provider \_\_\_\_\_

Airport Pick-up Required \_\_\_\_\_ Yes/ No

Arrival Date and Flight No. \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee USD 100 (check enclosed) \_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that the Office of Tibet and Tibetan Culture Center will take utmost care of me or my child during the camp. However, if unforeseen tragedy strikes, I will take a full responsibility.*

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

