

ཐུའུ་ཕུན་འགྲོ་ལོ་མཆོག་གི་མཛུགས་སྐྱོང་བའི་ལས་ཁུངས་ལྷན་ཁྲིམས་ལྷན་ཁྲིམས་

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# TRANSLATION & TRANSMISSION

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OCTOBER 2-5, 2014

KEYSTONE, COLORADO, USA

Plenary Session | ROOM: CASTLE PEAK | 11:00am, October 3, 2014

## Translation

with Sarah Harding, Thupten Jinpa, Roger Jackson, Elijah Ary



**Thupten Jinpa**  
*(Institute of Tibetan Classics)*

Thupten Jinpa, PhD, received his early education as a monk and obtained the Geshe Lharam degree from the Shartse College of Ganden Monastic University, South India. In addition, Jinpa holds a B.A. Honors in philosophy and a PhD in religious studies, both from Cambridge University. He taught at Ganden monastery and worked also as a research fellow in Eastern religions at Girton College, Cambridge University. Jinpa is an adjunct professor at the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University, Montreal. Associated with the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) at the School of Medicine, Stanford University, he is the main author of CCARE's Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) program. Currently the board chair, Jinpa has been a core member of the Mind and Life Institute, the founder and president of the Institute of Tibetan Classics and the general editor for The Library of Tibetan Classics. Since 1985 he has been the principal English translator to H.H.the Dalai Lama. Jinpa's published works include, in addition to translations of numerous books by the Dalai Lama, *Songs of Spiritual Experience* (co-authored), *Self, Reality and Reason in Tibetan Philosophy: Tsongkhapa's Quest for the Middle View*, as well as *Mind Training: The Great Collection*, and *The Book of Kadam: The Core Texts*, the last two being part of The Library of Tibetan Classics. His Tibetan publications include *Chos kyi snang ba gsar pa* (A New Light on Dharma), a first ever introduction to Buddhism in vernacular Tibetan, a comprehensive modern Tibetan grammar entitled *bod skad kyi brda sprod gsar bsgrigs smra sgo'i lde mig* (A Modern Tibetan Grammar, Key Opening the Door of Speech), as well as a series of essays as introductions to the critical Tibetan editions of The Library of Tibetan Classics (*bod kyi gtsug lag gces btus pod phreng*). Most recently he translated (with Donald Lopez, Jr.) *Grains of Gold: Tales of a Cosmopolitan Traveler* by Gendun Chopel (University of Chicago Press).

## Thupten Jinpa's Presentation

“What is best in any book is  
translatable – any real insight or  
human sentiment.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

སྐྱེའུ་བམ་པོ་གཉིས་པ། (Early 9<sup>th</sup> century)

“With respect to the approach to translating the sublime dharma, undertake this in a way that *does not violate the meaning* and, at the same time, is *appealing to [sensibilities of] the Tibetan language.*”

- Word order and syntax – Unless resulting in error, sensibilities of Tibetan priority
- Integrity of verse must be preserved
- Words with multiple meanings e.g. གོ་ལུ་ཏམ་ གོ་ལུ་ཉི་ཀ་ should not be reduced to one Tibetan translation
- Names of places, animals and flora – where creating neologisms causes more confusions retain the original
- Grammatical particles, e.g. prepositions, intensifiers
- Synonyms

Ngok Loden Sherap (1059-1109)

Development of indigenous study aids:

- Summary Points - བསྟུགས་དོན།
- Scholarly commentaries - འགྲེལ་པ།

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Invention of ས་བཅད་ “outline” or text-template system

## Sakya Pandita (1182-1251)

- Idiosyncratic approach to translation – using distinct local vernaculars, excessive literal approach, lack of harmonization of old and new terminologies
- Misunderstanding literal meaning of synonyms, mistakes in word divisions, and blind guesswork
- Ignorance of mythologies, especially of *the Puranas* – e.g. Sarasvati should be མཚོ་བུང་ལྷ་མོ་ not དབྱུངས་ཅན་མ་ (which is Svarasita)
- Reverse reading of etymology ཡེ་ཤེས་ “primordial wisdom” ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ “hand seal”

## Two poles, three conflicting allegiances

- Faithfulness to the source (rigor, literalness)
  - Accessibility in the target language (flexibility, creative appropriation)
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- Allegiance to the reader
  - to the cultural context of the text
  - being true to the translator himself