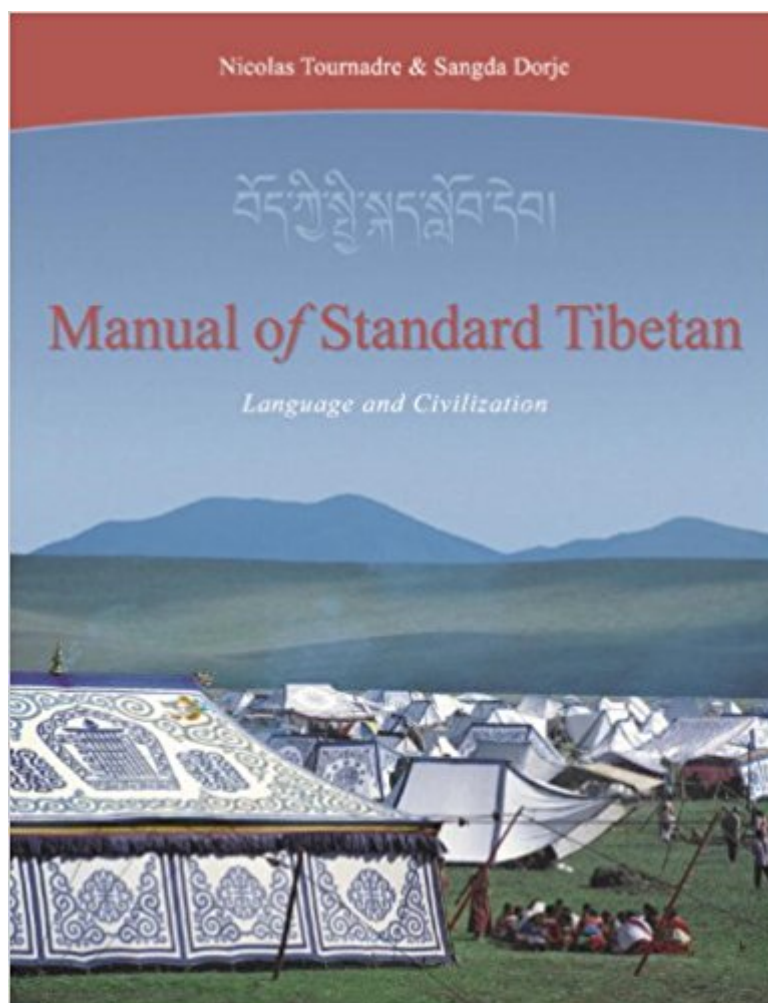


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Manual Of Standard Tibetan: Language And Civilization



Synopsis

The Manual of Standard Tibetan presents the everyday speech of Lhasa as it is currently used in Tibet and among the Tibetan diaspora. It not only places the language in its natural context but also highlights along the way key aspects of Tibetan civilization and Vajrayana Buddhism. The Manual, which consists of forty-one lessons, is illustrated with many drawings and photographs and also includes two informative political and linguistic maps of Tibet. Two CDs provide an essential oral complement to the manual. A detailed introduction presents a linguistic overview of spoken and written Tibetan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Manual of Standard Tibetan is the best resource available for teaching modern spoken Tibetan bar none. Its grammatical explanations are precise, detailed, and clear while its dialogues and surrounding text are rich with authentic cultural information on the social contexts in which Tibetan has meaning. It should quickly become the standard textbook in the area." — David Germano, University of Virginia "The Manual of Standard Tibetan, with its wealth of insights into the language, is a delight to read. In offering such a breadth and depth of coverage for an introductory text of modern Tibetan as used in Central Tibet and among the diaspora community, it brings the field to a new level particularly in the area of spoken Tibetan." — Phil Stanley, Naropa University "I do not hesitate to recommend Nicolas Tournadre and Sangda Dorje's excellent Manual of Standard Tibetan. Their collaboration represents the confluence of linguistic analysis of the first order with the

stylistic sensibilities of a leading contemporary master of Tibetan composition. Both share a keen appreciation of an approach in which the learning of language and of culture must inform one another with the result that this is one of those rare language textbooks that is a pleasure to read." — Matthew Kapstein, University of Chicago

When I began to study the Tibetan language, during a visit to Nepal in 1970, suitable texts for beginners were few and far between. At first I located a tattered copy of the Rev. Bruce Hannah's ancient Tibetan grammar in a used bookstand, and found to my dismay that the good pastor's illustrations of the language were entirely drawn from missionary translations of Bible stories. Not exactly the thing for a late-sixties dharma-bum! A local shopkeeper, no doubt very much amused by my efforts to communicate on this basis, took pity and provided me with a small textbook published in the Panjab, that taught me how to order tea using a level of speech suitable only for small children, household domestics, and Khampa hillbillies. This proved to be quite adequate for the chang-stalls of BodhiNath, but little more. Finally, I had the good fortune to borrow a copy of George Roerich's Textbook of Colloquial Tibetan and, given the general absence of technology in Kathmandu at the time, eagerly set about transcribing the entire book by hand. Though by no means ideal, the exercise proved to be a useful apprenticeship. It was only after I returned to the United States the following year that I was able to avail myself of the texts by Chang and Shefts, and by Goldstein and Norngang, works that marked the first efforts to adapt modern methods of language pedagogy to the requirements of Tibetan language instruction. In the three decades that have passed since, a substantial number of contributions both to Tibetan linguistics and to Tibetan language teaching have thoroughly transformed the lay of the land, and the would-be learner of Tibetan, far from having to struggle to gain access to the merest crumb, is now more likely to suffer from an embarrassment of riches. For those who are finding it difficult to make up their minds about which course to follow, I do not hesitate to recommend Nicolas Tournadre and Sangda Dorje's excellent Manual of Standard Tibetan. Their collaboration represents the confluence of linguistic analysis of the first order with the stylistic sensibilities of a leading contemporary master of Tibetan composition. Both share a keen appreciation of an approach in which the learning of language and of culture must inform one another, with the result that this is one of those rare language textbooks that is a pleasure to read. A Manual of Standard Tibetan emphasizes modern colloquial Tibetan as spoken in and around Lhasa, but adhering to a register that is widely used and understood. The student who masters it should have little difficulty communicating in most communities where Tibetan is spoken. The rudiments of the literary language are also thoroughly introduced, making it

possible to make rapid progress in either Classical Tibetan or Modern Literary Tibetan during the second year of study. The cultural background incorporated in the entertaining dialogues and texts given throughout the book will prove invaluable to all who wish to enter the rich and endlessly fascinating sphere of Tibetan civilization, whether they do so as scholars, casual visitors, or in connection with work in development or in commerce. It is often said that learning a language begins one's exploration of an entire new world. Rare, however, is the language course that succeeds in conveying the sense of excitement and discovery thus promised. In *A Manual of Standard Tibetan* you will find yourself transported to monastery courtyards and to nomad camps; and, though Tibetan remains always a challenging language requiring discipline and effort to learn, the rough journey in this case turns out to be a genuine delight. - Matthew T. Kapstein The University of Chicago June 2002

I found this book very confusing and intimidating at first, and initially didn't think it was very good. At first i found it poorly organized and confusing. Now that i have continued working through it, i am finding that it is making more and more sense, and is becoming clear. I think i was just initially intimidated by the Tibetan language itself, rather than the book. I have looked at many other titles available for learning Tibetan, and i find this one to be one of the most in depth and comprehensive and easy to understand. But no book have i found to be completely clear, and so this book too has its flaws.. For me, i feel frustrated when terms are introduced for example in the introduction with only the wylie transliteration, and no tibetan script or even the book's own transcription system. Though i do feel that working through the book eventually i will feel confident enough to understand what those terms are in all three tibetan script/wylie/and transcription(pronunciation). I also wish that the part showing how to write the characters was improved with stroke direction, as i find it highly important to begin learning to write properly at the beginning in order to best learn the language. But i do not expect any book to be the /only/ book that i will need on the subject, so with that in mind, i find this book the best i have come across so far. On a final note, i would recommend still listening to a native speaker or highly practiced teacher however you can, either through a class or recordings (as actually the book provides with cds--i have not yet listened to them, as i am taking a class with the book online, so i suppose my review is somewhat incomplete at this time), so that you can match correct pronunciation. Also, another reviewer here complained that the authors have invented their own system of transliteration, and that it is pointless because one must eventually learn Wylie in other textbooks. I actually disagree. The system employed in this book is actually a system of transcription, meaning it is a clue to the pronunciation more directly than transliteration is.

ĀfĀ Ā Ā Ā â ĀfĀ Ā Ā Ā â “ĀfĀ Ā Ā Ā Ā ĀfĀ Ā Ā Ā ĀĉĀfĀ Ā Ā Ā â ĀfĀ Ā Ā Ā Ā•Āf
 Ā Ā Ā Ā â would be transliterated in Wylie as "dbyar kha" which for me, until i learned the system
 of pronunciation based on prefixes and so forth, gives no clue as to the word's real pronunciation,
 which the book gives as /yarka/. So while learning the Wylie system of transliteration can be useful, i
 find the book's system of transcription very helpful as a beginner, and it is very well designed. Over
 all, this book is highly recommended!

I have been trying to learn Tibetan from books and CDs for quite some time and after some unsuccessful attempts with other Language Packs I finally decided to try The Manual of Standard Tibetan and I am more than happy! Within two weeks I have learnt more than what I had learnt in one year! I highly recommend it to anyone who wishes to learn more than the usual everyday expressions found in all Tibetan phrasebooks!

Love it. CDs are great. slow speed conversations then the same ones at normal speed. Lots of context and description and comparisons to other languages - as a beginning Tibetan student and long time Dharma practitioner, I highly recommend!

This is the best Tibetan language resource on the market - the CDs which are included are fantastic.

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