SOME USEFUL PHRASES IN TIBETAN

བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས།
/tʃɑ ʃi tɛ lɛ/
/tra shi dé lek./
Hello.

ཁྱེད་རང་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན་པས།
/kʰerɑŋ kusu tɛpo jin pɛ/
/khyé rang kusu dé po yin pé?/
How are you?

ཡོད།
[ŋa tɛpo jin]
/nga dé po yin./
I'm fine.

ཁྱེད་རང་གི་མཚན་ལ་ག་རེ་ཞུ་གི་ཡོད།
/kʰɛrɑŋ ki tsɛn la kʰɑɾɛ ʒu ki jø/
/khyé rang gi tsen la ga ré zhu gi yö?/
What is your name?

འོག་མིང་ལ་ ཇ
[ŋɛ miŋ la ʤɑn rɛ ki jø]
/ngé ming la John zer gi yö./
My name is John.

ཁྱེད་རང་ག་ནས་ཡིན།
/kʰɛrɑŋ kʰɑnɛ jin/
/khyé rang ga né yin?/
Where are you from?

I'm from ...

ཁྱེད་རང་ག་ནས་དུས་གྱུར།
/kʰɛrɑŋ kʰɑnɛ dʒu rɛ ki jø/
/khyé rang ga né yin?/
I'm from ...

ཁྱེད་རང་ག་ནས་དུས་གྱུར།
/kʰɛrɑŋ kʰɑnɛ dʒu rɛ ki jø/
/khyé rang ga né yin?/
I'm from ...

Thank you.

TIBETAN

FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN MORE ABOUT TIBETAN AND THEIR LANGUAGE

1. The Tibetan population is estimated to be about 6.5 million, and can be found mostly in China, India, and Nepal.

2. A member of the Tibeto-Burman language group, Standard Tibetan shares many structural similarities to other Tibeto-Burman languages, including Burmese.

3. The whole of Tibet, including the U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo provinces, spans over 976,000 square miles across Asia and has an average altitude of 13,000 feet above sea level.

4. Commonly called the “Roof of the World,” Tibet is home to the Himalayan mountain range featuring Mount Everest which at 29,029 feet above sea level is the highest mountain in the world.

5. Tibet is the source of many of Asia’s largest rivers (including the Yangtze, Yellow, Mekong, Salween, and Tsangpo) and provides water for over one billion people.

ABOUT US

The Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University develops materials for learning and teaching a wide variety of Central Asian languages.

For more information, go to celcar.indiana.edu.

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and the Tibetic languages. Tibetan languages are typically broken down into seven major dialects: Central Tibetan (basis of Standard Tibetan), Northern Tibetan, Southern Tibetan, Western Archaic Tibetan, Western Innovative Tibetans, Amdo Tibetan, and Khams Tibetan.

Tibetan nouns and verbs tend to be monosyllabic and many dialects, including Standard Tibetan, use two tones (high and low) to differentiate in lexical and grammatical meaning between the sounds. Tibetan is an ergative language (meaning the direct object of transitive verbs use the same form as the subject of intransitive verbs) and uses a subject-object-verb word order.

Another linguistic feature that Tibetan languages shares with other Sino-Tibetan languages is the lack of articles, definite or indefinite.

WHAT ALPHABET DO THE TIBETAN USE?

Since the 7th century, Tibetan has been written using the Uchen script, a block style script modeled on the Devanāgarī alphabet, which is most commonly used to write Indian languages. The Tibetan alphabet is made up of thirty basic letters and is written left to right in horizontal lines, similar to Romanized alphabets. However, unlike Roman alphabets, each letter in the Tibetan alphabet represents a consonant-vowel sound unit.

Similar to Arabic, the Tibetan alphabet also uses diacritics in order to change the sound value of the letters.