

## The 'Ten Sciences of traditional Tibetan studies'

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This shall be covered under the following five headings:

- A. A brief introduction to 'gangs ljongs rig bcu'i snyin bcud chen mo'
- B. Analysing the 'Five Major' and 'Five Minor' Sciences of Tibet
- C. A discussion of the relative merits of each of the 'Ten Sciences'
- D. A discussion of the need for protection of the whole set of 'Ten Sciences'
- E. A discussion of the need to make the traditional 'Ten Sciences' as the foundation for building and developing modern Tibetan education system.

A. An explanation and justification for the compilation of 'gangs ljongs rig bcu'i snyin bcud chen mo'. This is followed by a discussion of how surviving Tibetan lamas, scholars and adepts have concurred and contributed to this compilation. Finally, five characteristics of these compilations are presented with five corresponding benefits of the project.

B. Justifying how the 'Ten Sciences' constitute an altruistic cultural heritage that has been developed by the dwellers of the 'Roof of the World' who, despite their lack of sophistication in the material sciences had, nevertheless, developed sciences of the mind that are characterised by the love of truth, compassion, wisdom for bringing peace and happiness to others. Their universal appeal lies due to the fact that they cover existential world of physical nature from the highest mountains to the tiniest atomic particle on the one hand and the systematic and detailed study and analysis of the living world, the laws of birth, growth and decay etc on the other hand. Despite their intrinsic value and potential benefit to humanity, due to a number of circumstances and factors relating to time and place, these 'Ten Sciences' had not filtered across the borders of Tibet into the five continents. However, presented in the language of the western sciences, there is no doubt that the intrinsic value and validity of these sciences will be recognised for their potential.

C. Here, the individual Sciences are focused for their nature and characteristics. For example, the study of 'sgra rig pa' (phonology) as an antidote to proclivities for spelling errors. As an antidote to proclivity to errors in meaning one studies 'Logic' (gtan tshigs rig pa). For satisfying one's desires and needs [practical benefits] one studies the arts and crafts. (bzo rig pa). For protection and cure from diseases and afflictions, one studies medicine. In order to gain an understanding of the true nature of reality, one studies 'metaphysics' (nang don rig pa). To attain mastery of language use one studies poetry. (snta ngag) To enrich one's vocabulary, one studies 'mngon brjod' (synonyms) [?]. And to gain mastery in versification, one studies 'sdeb sbyor' (composition). To expand one's knowledge of languages and to entertain all, one studies 'zlos gar' (arts and theatrics). To

gain mastery of numbers pertaining to the known and unknown aspects of life, one studies 'astrology'. etc.

D. Justifying the need to take speedy action to preserve these sciences. In the modern era of technology and communications that has overtaken the whole world, the place of Tibetan culture has gained some degree of recognition under the rubric of 'Tibetan Studies'. However, a closer examination of the overall situation reveals that, far from being happy one can see a situation of serious concern even within Tibet itself, the origin of these 'Ten Sciences' as there are relatively very few who may qualify as being fully trained and specialised in these sciences. These may be attributed to a number of factors but the main fact is that the future survival of these sciences is as precarious as a patient who is abandoned by his doctor. In particular, among the Tibetan youth there is an alarming and woeful lack of appreciation and desire to study these sciences. As a result there are very few who may be regarded as having studied, internalised, apply and teach these sciences. The contrary is true. As such not only would this precious cultural heritage be lost, but with it, Tibet will lose its very identity because they derive their identity from the continued study and practice of these sciences. That would tantamount to self-inflicted cultural genocide.

E. Here the writer argues that the Ten Sciences be made the foundation to build on a system of modern education for Tibetans. As the saying goes, there can be no new culture without an old culture. Likewise, if the Ten Sciences are adopted as the foundation for building and developing modern Tibetan education, then Tibetan education will become more complete and worthwhile.