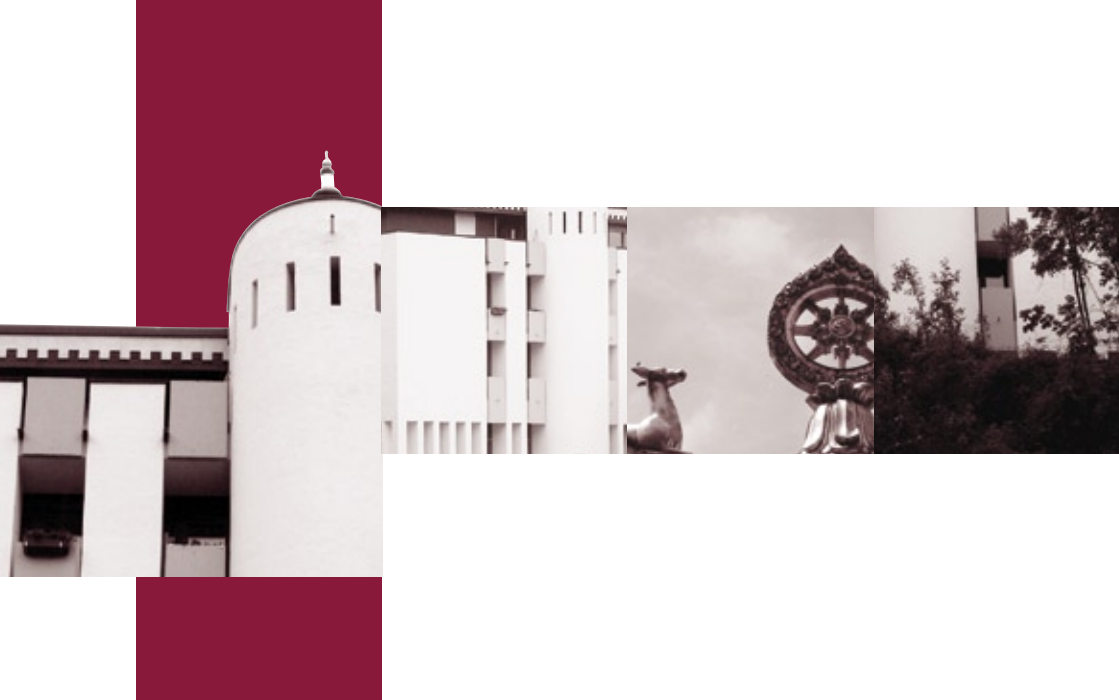




Tibet Institute Rikon
8486 Rikon
Switzerland
www.tibet-institut.ch





The Tibet Institute Rikon in its role as Tibetan Monastery and cultural institution

The monastic Tibet Institute in Rikon was founded in the 1960s according to the wish and under the patronage of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Today the Buddhist monastery and its Tibetan monastic community constitute a vital part of the cultural and religious life of Tibetans in Switzerland. The large variety of cultural activities of the Tibet Institute also provide an important forum for the constantly growing numbers of western people interested in Buddhism and Tibet. In general, the Tibet Institute contributes to the exchange of culture and knowledge between East and West.

Aims

The Tibet Institute Rikon is a non-profit foundation with the following aims:

- To provide for the spiritual and cultural needs of Tibetans in Switzerland
- The preservation of Tibetan culture and religion for the benefit of future generations of Tibetans
- To make Tibetan culture accessible to interested western and other non-Tibetan people
- To support scientific research in the field of Tibetology
- Promoting dialogue between Buddhist philosophy and western science



The foundation of the Tibet Institute

In 1961, Switzerland was the first European country to grant asylum to Tibetan refugees. The brothers Henri and Jacques Kuhn, who owned a metal manufacturing company in Rikon, offered work and accommodation to a group of refugees. In their effort to help the families come to terms with the loss of their homeland and the totally alien culture they were now confronted with, the Kuhn brothers and Peter Lindegger, then director of the home for Tibetan people in Rikon, turned to H.H. the Dalai Lama for advice. H.H. emphasized the importance of monasteries for Tibetan people and sent an abbot and four learned monks from India to Rikon in 1967. Their work soon came to be regarded as a blessing among the community of Tibetan refugees in Switzerland, which had, in the meantime, grown significantly. Recognizing this, the Kuhn brothers decided to construct a Tibetan monastery in Switzerland, an idea already voiced by Tony Hagen, a delegate of the ICRC, in the early 1960s. The "Tibet Institute Rikon" foundation was thus established. The monastic Tibet Institute was consecrated on the 9th of November 1968 by the two leading teachers of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Trijang Rinpoche and Ling Rinpoche. The solemn ceremony was attended and followed with great interest by the Tibetan community in Switzerland.

The "Tibet Institute Rikon" foundation

The Tibet Institute is supported by the "Tibet Institute Rikon" foundation, which was established in 1967. The aims of the foundation correspond to those of the Tibet Institute given above. The foundation is responsible for providing the monastic community with the necessary infrastructure, as well as the financial means for running and maintaining the monastery. At present, the foundation committee includes a representative of H.H. the Dalai Lama, a member of the community of monks, a representative of the founding family, as well as scientific and legal advisors.



The monastic community and its activities

At present the monastic community at the Tibet Institute comprises nine Tibetan monks. The monastery is presided over by the ven. Geshe Phuntsok Tashi, the fourth abbot in the monastery's 30 years of existence, appointed by H.H. the Dalai Lama in 1995.

The monks' duties are defined by the religious and cultural traditions of monastic life, such as communal daily prayers held in the prayer hall or personal meditation and study in their cells. In addition the monks perform duties arising from the religious and cultural needs of the Tibetans in Switzerland, and the aims of the Tibet Institute.

Administering to the spiritual and cultural needs of the Tibetans

The monks administer to the needs of their fellow countrymen in many ways:

- Providing spiritual guidance during sickness and death, as well as advice in other difficult circumstances
- Performing religious ceremonies during the Tibetan festivities
- Teaching Buddhist philosophy and the Tibetan language to Tibetans, also to youth and children
- Maintaining close contacts with Tibetan organizations in Switzerland

Imparting knowledge of Tibetan culture

The monks convey their knowledge of Tibetan culture and religion also to interested western and other non-Tibetan people. This is achieved mainly through teaching activities organized by the Tibet Institute as well as by lectures at external institutions and dialogue with students and scholars.



The Tibet Institute as a cultural institution

There is a large and growing interest in Tibet and Buddhism in the West. The Tibet Institute promotes the understanding of Tibetan culture, both in the general public and at a scientific level, in a variety of ways. These comprise the organisation of public events, the maintenance of a library, issuing its own publications, supporting students and scientists, maintaining contacts with related institutions and public relations. Moreover, the Tibet Institute exposes Tibetan monks and nuns to western scientific culture within its project "Science meets Dharma".

To attend to these and related tasks, the Tibet Institute currently employs four staff members on a part time basis: a curator, a librarian, a secretary and the project manager of "Science meets Dharma".

Public events

Public events are usually held either in the prayer hall or in the lecture hall of the Tibet Institute. The programmes include:

- Teachings, lectures and classes held by monks of the Tibet Institute
- Tibetan religious festivities celebrated with the monastic community
- Lectures by invited speakers on various Tibetan themes
- Teachings by Buddhist scholars from abroad
- Guided tours of the Tibet Institute
- Private tuitions, e.g. in Tibetan language and meditation

For more information regarding the current calendar of events please contact +41 52 383 20 72 or refer to www.tibet-institut.ch



The library

The library of the Tibet Institute occupies a separate building. With over 12,000 titles, it is the second largest library of Tibetan works, preceded only by the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives in Dharamsala.

Peter Lindegger, the first curator, started the collection with a founding stock of about 700 volumes. Today the library comprises 6,000 books and includes rare items such as the original edition of Giuseppe Tucci's *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (1949). There are 6,000 separate prints mainly documenting the foundation and construction of the monastery and the life and activities of the Tibetan people in Switzerland. The library subscribes to 80 journals and newspapers including some in the Tibetan language. It also has a collection of 50 films, in particular documenting the Tibetan expeditions by Williamson, Schäfer and others, 300 video cassettes on subjects concerning Buddhism, the Dalai Lama, teachings of members of the monastic community, Tibetans in Switzerland and travel in Tibet, 200 audio recordings, a collection of maps, a press documentation, and a photographic documentation of the Tibet Institute and of the Tibetan people in Switzerland.

For information regarding user regulations please contact +41 52 383 17 29 or consult www.tibet-institut.ch

Publications

The Tibet Institute has until now published more than 70 titles dealing with Tibetan history, religion, language, culture and society. The works comprise scientific texts published in the series "Opuscula Tibetana", edited by Peter Lindegger, as well as teachings and lectures given at the Tibet Institute, published within the series "Schriften".

The publications can be purchased at the Tibet Institute or via www.tibet-institut.ch. Further titles from other publishing houses can also be obtained through the Tibet Institute.



The project "Science meets Dharma"

The Dalai Lama's initiative

In 1998, H.H. the Dalai Lama asked the Tibet institute Rikon to help him implement a new idea: to provide monks and nuns in Tibetan exile monasteries in India with access to scientific education. This led to the foundation of the project "Science meets Dharma".

The project is based on H.H. the Dalai Lama's desire to bring about a dynamic inter-action between the spiritual tradition of his people and the modern world. In the west, a similar desire arises from the belief that western scientific culture is in need of intellectual challenges to be able to develop further.

Aims of the project

- To enable monks and nuns to gain insight into western scientific thought and thus broaden the intellectual basis for their discussions with lay Tibetans on matters of modern life
- To enable some monks and nuns to take part in the international dialogue between Buddhist philosophy and western science
- Providing insight into this dialogue to western people through public events

Current state of the project

Six Europeans are currently teaching in four monasteries in South India. The topics of the lessons are drawn from daily life in the monastery and cover the subjects physics, chemistry, biology, geography and English.

At the Tibet Institute four young monks from India, who were invited to Rikon for the first four-year program, will be completing their scientific education in 2005.



Ensuring the future of the Tibet Institute

The Tibet Institute was founded with a long-term perspective and is today visited by the fourth generation of Tibetans in Switzerland. The aims of the institute require a long-term commitment, with regard to both Tibetan and western needs. It is thus of vital importance to ensure a secure and sustainable future for the Tibet Institute on a long-term basis, not least in financial terms.

Being a non-profit foundation, the Tibet Institute does not receive any public funding towards its running and maintenance. Since the funds generated by its activities, consisting mainly of the income from the events organised by the institute, and investments, are far from sufficient to sustain it, the Tibet Institute will continue to rely on sponsors and donations.

The monastic community and the foundation committee therefore appeal to all friends of Tibet and Tibetan culture to make a financial commitment to the Tibet Institute.

Would you like to become a donor of the Tibet Institute? By making a yearly contribution you can support the Tibet Institute on a long-term basis. You will receive news from the Tibet Institute at least once a year.

Please send the attached reply card back to us or ask us for a card.

Donations: Single donations or donorship contributions may be transferred either to the bank or postal account of the Tibet Institute Rikon:

Postal account: 84-5934-9

Bank details: UBS Winterthur, Account No. 257-920198.01D

Thank you very much for your support!

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