

FPMT INTERPRETER AGREEMENT FOR LRZTP GRADUATES

N.B. We are defining the Interpreter as someone who orally interprets into the target language, while a Translator is someone who translates written material into the target language.

FPMT MISSION STATEMENT

The FPMT is an organization devoted to the transmission of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and values worldwide through teaching, meditation and community service. We provide integrated education through which people's minds and hearts can be transformed into their highest potential for the benefit of others, inspired by an attitude of universal responsibility. We are committed to creating harmonious environments and helping all beings develop their full potential of infinite wisdom and compassion.

Our organization is based on the Buddhist tradition of Lama Tsong Khapa of Tibet as taught to us by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche.

The FPMT was founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche.

FPMT STRUCTURE

The FPMT is composed of monasteries, nunneries, city centers, country and retreat centers, publishing houses, social service projects and health and healing centers, all functioning as means to achieve our purpose.

One of the greatest sources of inspiration for the FPMT is His Holiness the Dalai Lama: all those who offer service in FPMT centers are committed to follow all the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The ultimate responsibility for the ecclesiastical direction of the organization lies with its Spiritual Director, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. A Board of Directors is responsible for directing and administering the organization.

The FPMT International Office is the executive arm of the Board of Directors. The Center Services department at International Office is the primary coordinator for resident interpreters, geshe and centers hosting or wishing to host a geshe and interpreter, and should be the first point of contact for any queries or procedures mentioned below.

The various centers are each managed by a center director who is appointed by the Board of the center with the approval of the Board of FPMT Inc., with advice from the Spiritual Director of the Foundation. The center director has the final responsibility for the management of the center.

The center director is assisted by a spiritual program coordinator (SPC) who is responsible for the coordination of the center's various educational and spiritual programs.

Every twelve to eighteen months all center directors and spiritual program coordinators are encouraged to participate in a meeting held at an FPMT center. This meeting and the group of invited participants is known as the Council for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (CPMT). The main functions of this council are to share ideas, problems and successes and any proposals which arise from the meeting are sent to the Board of Directors of FPMT Inc. for approval.

The FPMT also organizes occasional Education Conferences and Geshe Conferences, which FPMT geshe and interpreters are encouraged to attend. Centers hosting a resident geshe and interpreter are recommended to include this expense in their budget.

When a center has developed to the point where it has a group of students wishing to study the Dharma in more depth, the Spiritual Director appoints a highly qualified and experienced geshe to go to the center as the resident teacher. International Office arranges for this to happen.

In order to protect the teachers and students in FPMT centers, any person working within the FPMT is required to follow the principles established by the Spiritual Director, and to sign the FPMT Ethical Policy.

What to expect from an LRZTP-qualified interpreter

LRZTP is a four year training program, two years of which the student completes in India before coming to your center. The following two years working as an interpreter are considered as further training. Thus it will not be the case that the interpreter will be able to interpret every subject immediately.

An LRZTP-qualified interpreter when she/he arrives at your center will have the ability to interpret for the preparatory subjects for Basic Program (du.dra, lo.rig, drub.tha), basic Lam Rim, lo.jong and basic initiations, and to interpret personal questions to the Tibetan teacher. Over the course of the two years in your center, an LRZTP graduate who has time to further their studies and do proper preparation will be able to interpret for Basic Program subjects (this is also dependent on how much dharma study the graduate has done).

Additionally, the LRZTP's emphasis has been on interpreting rather than translation, so it should not be assumed that the interpreter has the ability or wish to translate texts. Translation is a very specialized skill, and it is helpful to note that while the interpreter is furthering his/her skills in the two year period he/she may not be able to work on their written translation skills as well. However, an LRZTP graduate who has already worked for two years may very well like to begin developing their translation skills.

Interpreting is a skilled profession, and the interpreter should not be regarded necessarily as part of the community, with all the expectations that that entails. The extent to which the interpreter gets involved with the community activities should be the interpreter's choice.

The advantages to the center on employing an LRZTP-qualified interpreter are that:

- s/he has been trained specifically as an interpreter with an awareness of the conceptual differences between Tibetan and the target language.
- s/he is already familiar with current ideas, events and trends within the country, and is abreast with what is available on the Dharma in translation.
- s/he is already familiar with the FPMT and life of the centers

- s/he is an experienced traveler, so is both responsible and capable.

Important Principles

The Director of the LRZTP together with the Center Services department at International Office is responsible for arranging a contract between a center and the interpreter within six months of the end of the LRZTP. Should a contract not be arranged within this time period, it is up to the interpreter to choose whether to be available for work for the FPMT or not.

The interpreter will begin work no later than six months from the end of the LRZTP, unless specifically agreed with the center.

The center is required to confirm that it is possible for the interpreter to get the relevant visa for that country.

The interpreter will make the necessary visa arrangements in order to be able to report for work on the date agreed between the interpreter and the center.

If required for medical insurance purposes, the interpreter will undergo a medical examination at the expense of the center.

The period of the interpreter's appointment is two years, and may be extended by agreement between the interpreter, the center director and the International Office Center Services Director. If at any time circumstances change such that the appointment is no longer seen as beneficial by either the interpreter, the center or International Office, the agreement may be terminated. Four months' notice in writing of such a decision should be given to the center director or interpreter respectively, although the actual period of notice may vary in accordance with the written agreement between the interpreter and the center director.

If the interpreter's initial placement does not work out, then the FPMT will try to place the interpreter at another center, which would assume financial responsibility for the interpreter (see what the center provides). If at any time there is a gap in placement the interpreter still has the right to conclude their work agreement with the FPMT twenty four months after the beginning of the original placement, but would then forego the repayment of the course fee for the time period in which they were not working. Should the interpreter wish to extend their work agreement with another center to such a time as they have worked for twenty months and thus repaid the LRZTP course fee, the center for which they are working shall agree to such.

If the contract is terminated by the center more than twelve months after its inception the center is responsible for the interpreter's airfare home.

If for any reason the interpreter wishes to leave the center within the first twelve months, the interpreter must refund the center for their travel expenses.

If the interpreter is sick for more than two or three weeks they should get medical advice and a prognosis. If the illness is a short term one they should be able to stay on with their normal remuneration, but if they will be unable to work for the long term (two months or more), the contract will no longer be valid (unless a separate agreement is made between the interpreter and the center director). If the interpreter needs to go back to his/her country due to long-term sickness, the center will provide him/her with an air ticket home. If the contract is terminated due to sickness, the FPMT would then be responsible for finding a new placement for the interpreter within six months of the interpreter's recovery. If this is not possible, the interpreter can choose whether or not to still be available for work within the FPMT. Similar conditions apply should the interpreter need to be absent on compassionate leave (eg: close family crisis) for more than three weeks.

If the interpreter has finished his/her term at a center and does not wish to renew his/her agreement with that center, s/he is encouraged to contact the International Office in order that another appointment can be arranged within the Foundation.

To acquire permission for an interpreter to enter the hosting country, the center director usually has to sign legally binding documents with their Government's Immigration Department. The center director must explain any relevant requirements to the interpreter, and the interpreter from their side must advise the center director of any communication they have with Government departments.

Should the interpreter wish to take a position of responsibility in any other organization outside the FPMT, they cannot proceed with such a plan during the period of this agreement without the written permission of the center director and the International Office Center Services Director.

On a day to day basis the interpreter is responsible to the spiritual program coordinator and ultimately to the center director.

The Interpreter's Role

We recognize that it is a very unsatisfactory situation when the geshe and interpreter are considered permanently on call, and that a clear working time structure acts to the advantage of both the center and the interpreter.

The work of the interpreter at the center is considered to be a full-time position of 35 hours per week. This should be made clear to the geshe and to other center residents and members. This 35 hours includes the interpreter's preparation time. Preparation time must be communicated to the spiritual program coordinator by the interpreter and will necessarily be longer at the beginning of the contract than at the end. This need for quiet and concentrated preparation time should be honored by the center and honestly recorded by the interpreter. A reasonable standard for preparation time is as follows:

- Months 1-6: 23 hours preparation, 12 hours interpretation.
- Months 7-18: 18 hours preparation, 17 hours interpretation.
- Months 19-24: 8 hours preparation, 27 hours interpretation

(This is of course a general guide and is dependent upon the individual as well as the program being taught, but is included here for your reference).

If the center does not have enough interpreting work, this time should not be made up with activities other than those specified in the interpreter's role without agreement from the interpreter.

We recommend that the interpreter regularly keeps a timesheet to account for preparation time, interpreting hours in the teaching hall and interpreting hours for other activities.

The spiritual program coordinator or center director should work out with the geshe and interpreter what the working hours will be.

It should be clear that evening or weekend interpretation work falls with the 35 hours per week period. If a commute is necessary to get to the teaching site, this travel time is not considered work time.

The interpreter's job is to interpret from and to Tibetan for the geshe at center related activities, as listed below, all this work is to be structured within the 35 hour working week.

The geshe is invited and welcome to attend the center committee meetings if he so wishes. Should the geshe decide to attend, the interpreter must also attend the meeting in order to interpret for the geshe.

The spiritual program coordinator is responsible for formulating the annual teaching program together with the geshe and center director - it is advised that centers with geshe adopt one of the FPMT standard education programs. The geshe will then need to work with the SPC on an ongoing basis to ensure successful implementation of the program. It would obviously be beneficial for the interpreter to be regarded as an integral part of these discussions. The basic educational structure was formulated by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche and this should be followed in all FPMT centers when planning the program.

The teaching program includes some combination of teaching courses on a daily lecture basis, teaching intensive courses for up to one month's duration, teaching at seminars, public lectures both in the center and at outside venues, and teaching on tour. If the geshe goes on tour, sufficient time should be allowed for the geshe and interpreter to rest and recover.

The geshe will be asked to give private interviews, guidance for retreats, grant ordination, and give private tutoring for individual students at the center and to those who can only visit or write.

If the interpreter is a lay person they may be unable to interpret for ordination ceremonies.

It is up to the interpreter as to whether they will interpret for an empowerment they do not wish to receive, if the lama giving the empowerment says that by interpreting the empowerment any commitments will be received.

The interpreter commits to check with the SPC any teaching requests made privately to the geshe .

As Dharma students are often unfamiliar with many of the regular practices done in the centers, eg: pujas, it will give great inspiration if the geshe attends and sometimes give instruction in these practices. If this is seen as a teaching period it should be considered to be within working hours, if not, attendance will be at the discretion of the interpreter.

The center director may request the geshe and interpreter to attend social functions connected with their roles when it is seen that this will be of benefit. If this is an official requirement, it should be within working hours or at the geshe and interpreter's discretion.

At no time is the interpreter to be regarded or used as the geshe's attendant or cook, unless this is the expressed wish of the interpreter.

If unexpected work comes up, or the work takes longer than the stipulated 35 hours per week, then the interpreter should be able either to take the equivalent time off in lieu, or to be paid on an hourly basis, this to be decided between the interpreter and the SPC/center director.

We hope that the interpreter will become familiar with the culture and philosophy of the country in which he/she will be residing in order to facilitate transmission of the Dharma and in order to further the aims of the FPMT. Because of the greater wisdom of the geshe and the respect that he automatically gains in the center, we ask that he take a definite responsibility for the successful development and harmony of the students within the Foundation as an international whole as well as in the particular center where they are residing. To do this, the geshe and interpreter are both encouraged to gain an understanding of the different views of the people at the center, of the Foundation as a whole and of the general public.

Copyright

The center and the FPMT Education Department at International Office have free access to and use of any material (tapes or written) developed by the geshe and interpreter while under contract with the center. Centers are asked to inform the Education Department of their existing and new material, so that if suitable it can be made available to other FPMT centers who need that material.

Copyright is held by the center for any work done by the interpreter for which they are paid by the center.

[The geshe and the center have joint copyright for third party use of any teachings given by the geshe. (Third party use' means a publisher outside the center or International Office).]

Before making any interpretation/translation material more widely available within the FPMT or via publication, the center director or SPC will ensure that the interpreter has time to check/translate this material within a deadline agreed upon by the center and the interpreter.

Translations.

Translation is a specialized and time-consuming skill.

If the interpreter does translation work that is unrelated to the center's program and on his/her own time, then the interpreter reserves the right to charge for this work and to publish it with a publisher of the interpreter's choice.

As some FPMT centers have set up Basic and Masters Programs there is a great need for transcripts of certain courses as well as additional support material such as examinations, discussion group topics, homework assignments, and meditation topics. It would be a great contribution to future Dharma students, and to the transmission and preservation of the Dharma, if these could be prepared by the present resident geshe, their interpreters and SPCs, and made available for use in other centers.

What Centers Provide

Centers are asked to provide the interpreter with a private bedroom, food and a minimum monthly allowance of US\$150. If the interpreter has a partner or family they may need accommodation outside the center in which case the center must consider whether this is possible. Additionally a clothing allowance of US\$500 per year will be provided. The center will also cover necessary medical and dental expenses or will arrange the necessary insurance to cover these costs. We realise that different financial arrangements are made in certain parts of Asia, such as Taiwan, India and Nepal - in these cases the center and interpreter must come to a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

Additionally, unless specifically agreed between the interpreter and the center director, the center will reimburse the interpreter for the LRZTP course fee, less the course deposit. This may be done in one lump sum payment, or as monthly repayments (we suggest twenty monthly repayments). For the benefit of the interpreter the center shall put in writing the actual fees paid to him/her when accommodation, food, insurance, course fee, travel expenses and allowance are all accounted for. The total value of this package foris

Other than the above commitments the center is only responsible for paying the interpreter's postage, phone and travel costs relating to her/his work and will not be responsible for covering personal expenses.

It is the center's responsibility to produce an itemised account of the total expenses the center incurs in supporting the interpreter should she/he so request.

In cases where there is a double translation, the interpreter is expected to learn, with the help of the center (eg: sponsoring classes or tutors) the language of the hosting country for the purposes of communication, not for teaching.

The center has to take the initiative to provide language training for the interpreter.

In order to help the interpreter to learn about and be comfortable in a foreign environment, the center director will provide reading material, a radio or television, arrange suitable social outings and visits to student's homes.

In order to facilitate the interpreter's passage to and from the center, all necessary visas, sponsorship documents, guarantees etc. will be arranged by the center. The center will provide travel expenses such as visa and passport fees, airport tax, air ticket and transport to the center at the beginning of the agreement and away when the agreement ends. The center will also offer reasonable living expenses if the interpreter has to wait for the visa to be issued.

If at the end of this agreement the interpreter, center director and International Office Center Services Director agree to renew the contract for a further two years, the center will provide the interpreter with a return airfare to their home country for holiday purposes. If the new contract is for less than two years, then it is up to the center director whether to provide a return airfare or not.

Each year the center will provide the interpreter with two months' free time for retreat or holiday, with at least the same remuneration as the rest of the year.

Signed

Director

Interpreter

..... Center

Date

Center Services, FPMT International Office, May 2002