

## Tibetan students in Soviet Russia

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This paper is intended to shed light on the hitherto unknown story of Tibetan students, who were educated in the USSR in the 1920s–1930s, in the wake of Soviet-Tibetan rapprochement. According to Russian sources, in early February 1924, a group of four Tibetan teenage boys, accompanied by the Dalai Lama's "diplomatic courier", one Champa Thogmed, arrived in Urga (Outer Mongolia), apparently on the initiative of Tibet's ruler. They were met by the Dalai's representative in Russia, Agvan Dorjiev, who then arranged for their coming to Verkhneudinsk (Ulan-Ude), the capital of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Soviet Republic. There the young Tibetans spent about a year attending the city technical college before they finally moved to Leningrad to be enrolled in the Institute of Living Oriental Languages (LIJVIa), as was arranged by Dorjiev with the Soviet Foreign Ministry (Narkomindel). More Tibetan boys came to the USSR in the latter half of the 1920s. There is evidence that these newcomers were all admitted to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) in Moscow. The Tibetan students pursued their education in the old and new Russian capitals well into the 1930s, according to the LIJVIa and KUTV official records. The paper discusses their curriculum, the life conditions and leisure as well as various mishaps they met with, based on the available information in the extant Russian sources.