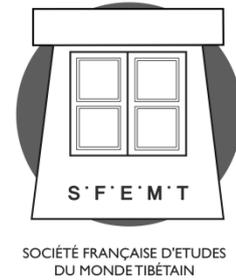


**Chairman of the Board of the University**  
**Director Nils Strandberg Pedersen**  
Copenhagen University  
Nørregade 10, PO Box 2177  
DK-1017 Copenhagen K  
Denmark



French Society for the Study of the Tibetan World  
(SFEMT)  
Maison de l'Asie  
22 avenue du Président Wilson  
75016 Paris

16 February 2016

Dear Mr Pedersen,

We are the French Society for the Study of the Tibetan World (SFEMT), an association of French Tibetan studies specialists, made up mainly of academics (professors, associate professors, senior researchers and junior researchers) from various national and government-operated French research bodies, in a variety of scientific fields (history, anthropology, religious studies and linguistics, among others). We are writing to you today after receiving the unbelievable news of the dismissal of our distinguished colleague Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, as well as that of the closure of the Tibetan studies program, at Copenhagen University.

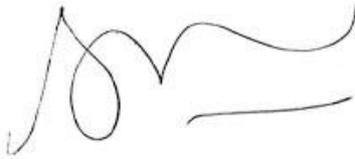
This double announcement came as a shock to all of us, given the vibrant state of Tibetan studies in the world today. Not only is it vibrant, but it is growing in size and excellence, with young and bright specialists graduating from an increasing number of universities over the last two decades. France aside, where Tibetan studies is represented in three universities and four academic research centres, such prestigious academic institutions as Berkeley, Harvard, Columbia and Princeton, to name but the most famous in the USA, as well such world-acclaimed centres of knowledge like Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, are part of the worldwide network of Tibetan studies. Most European countries host Tibetan studies academic centres that all contribute to developing knowledge about Tibet, and we are proud of the strength of this field in Europe, which has a much longer history in our discipline than any academic institution in the USA. European universities are attracting ever-increasing numbers of students from Asia, including China, to pursue advanced degrees in Tibetan studies. Scandinavian countries have played a substantial part in the richness of Tibetan studies in Europe, for since many decades, and to us specialists, Denmark has played an important part in the landscape of Tibetan studies on an international level, due to its well-established interest and academic excellence in the field, and its world-famous Royal Library of Denmark and its highly valuable Tibetan collection.

Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, as the head of the Tibetan studies department at the University of Copenhagen, has earned a well-deserved reputation as a fine scholar, specialising in Tibetan Buddhism. His research on manuscripts also deserves high praise, and we were able to appreciate the breadth of his knowledge when he was recently in Paris for a conference on Tibetan manuscripts. His list of publications is very impressive indeed in terms of both quantity of output and scholarly excellence, and he embodies the century-long academic interest in Tibetan studies that has given Denmark such a high international profile in terms of research in our field, following such eminent specialists as Erik Haarh, as well as Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, and Prof. Per Sørensen, to name but a few.

Choosing to sacrifice a person and a department that have brought worldwide attention to Copenhagen University, for the sake of making extremely insignificant budgetary cuts, is simply incomprehensible, and can only be the result of a hasty decision, based on a partial view of what is surely a complex situation.

We, as members of the board of the French Society for the Study of the Tibetan World (SFEMT), as well as in the name of our academic members and PhD students in France, and send this appeal in the hope that you will reconsider this most unfortunate decision before it is too late – before we lose one valuable colleague, before Copenhagen University loses a visible and praiseworthy research center and staff, and before Denmark loses the magnificent heritage of scholarship in Tibetan civilisation that it has rightly earned through the painstaking dedication of remarkable individuals over more than a hundred years.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Françoise Robin

President

French Society for the Study of the Tibetan World (SFEMT)

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