



TIBETAN NUNS PROJECT

Tibetan Nuns Project  
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## EDUCATE & EMPOWER SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS' SALARIES FOR THE NUNS



### OVERVIEW

Education of Tibetan Buddhist nuns from all traditions is a core component of the work of the Tibetan Nuns Project. One way this is done is through the funding of teachers' salaries.

Each year, the Tibetan Nuns Project seeks to **fund the salaries of 10 to 15 teachers** at different nunneries in India and Nepal. The annual cost of one teacher's salary ranges from \$1500 to \$5000, depending on the location of the nunnery and the skills of the teacher, so the total annual budget for this program is approximately \$40,000.

The ultimate goal is to empower the nuns to become teachers and leaders in their own right and to help preserve the Tibet's unique culture and religion. The Tibetan Nuns Project believes that education is the key to empowerment, and we seek to give nuns the resources to carve out independent, creative identities for themselves.

In addition to providing basic educational requirements, the Tibetan Nuns Project seeks to elevate the educational standards and the position of women within the monastic community. To prepare the nuns for positions of leadership and moral authority in a culture that is going through a very challenging transition, it is essential to combine traditional religious studies with aspects of a modern education. Your support of teachers' salaries is essential for this.

### BACKGROUND

After their takeover of Tibet in 1959, the People's Republic of China attempted to destroy traditional Tibetan culture, particularly its unique religious heritage and rich tradition of spiritual practice and scholarship. In an attempt to eliminate Buddhism in Tibet, more than 6000 nunneries and monasteries were destroyed between 1959 and 1980. Monks and nuns in great numbers were imprisoned, tortured, and forced to give up the ordained way of life. Teaching, study, and prayer were strictly prohibited, and religious texts and objects were demolished.

Before the Chinese takeover in 1959, there were at least 818 nunneries and nearly 28,000 nuns living in Tibet. Traditional education in the nunneries included reading, writing, and lessons in ancient scriptures and prayers taught by the senior nuns or lamas from monasteries.

Most nuns newly arrived in India have been denied basic educational opportunities in Tibet, including education in their own Tibetan language and Tibetan Buddhist religious heritage. The majority of nuns arrived in India illiterate and unable to write their own names.

### HELPING THE NUNS BECOME TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Since the Tibetan Nuns Project was founded in 1987 and basic education programs for nuns initiated, education for nuns is now well underway and nuns have begun to assume leadership roles in their community, such as teachers in Tibetan schools, instructors for other nuns, as health care providers and in other roles serving the Tibetan exile community.



Thanks in part to consistent effort from the Tibetan Nuns Project, for the first time in Tibetan history, **nuns are now receiving educational opportunities previously available only to monks.**

At Dolma Ling Nunnery & Institute, for example, nuns can pursue the 17-year program of philosophical studies required for a Geshema degree, like a PhD in Theology. Courses are also offered in Tibetan language, English, mathematics, and computer skills, as well as in ritual arts such as sand mandalas and butter sculpture. Many smaller nunneries in more remote areas are at much earlier stages in the educational process, and we are providing them with their first full-time teacher.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP EDUCATE & EMPOWER THE NUNS

There are many ways that you can help fund teachers' salaries and empower the nuns:

- By making a multi-year pledge to support one or more teacher
- By giving a one-time gift to fund a full teacher's salary or a portion of a salary
- By calling our TNP office in Seattle at 1-206-652-8901 to talk about your wish to help
- By mailing a check or making an online donation at [www.tnp.org](http://www.tnp.org)

*Thank you for your support!*

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