

Tibetan Nuns Project

Tantric Studies Housing for Geshemas



TIBETAN NUNS PROJECT

Tibetan Nuns Project
815 Seattle Boulevard South #216
Seattle, WA 98134 USA
Tel: 1-206-652-8901
Email: info@tnp.org
www.tnp.org

Tibetan Nuns Project
Dolma Ling, P.O. Sidhpur 176057
Dist Kangra, H.P INDIA
Tel: 9805783104/9418034641
Email: mailto:infoindia@tnp.org



Empowering the Geshemas to Become Teachers

For the first time in history, Tibetan Buddhist nuns have the opportunity to study Tantric Buddhism and become fully qualified teachers of their tradition.

In 2017, the Tibetan Nuns Project, on the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, set up a program for Geshemas to study the Tantric treatises. To date, 23 nuns have completed the historic Tantric Studies Program graduating in February 2019. Now some of them are making history once again as they begin to teach at nunneries.

The Geshema nuns taking the Buddhist Tantric Studies Program live at Dolma Ling Nunnery and Institute with their own teacher as a guide, but they attend classes at nearby Gyuto Tantric University where they also must receive the necessary empowerments and transmissions from the senior monks.

The Problem: Housing the Geshemas

The problem is now one of housing the Geshemas as they complete this final stage of their studies lasting one to two years. Currently, the Geshemas from all over India and Nepal are being housed and fed at Dolma Ling Nunnery and Institute, but there is not enough space to accommodate them. Housing the Geshemas puts a strain on the nunnery and means less space and opportunity for new nuns who wish to study.

The Solution: Building a Geshema Housing Block

The Tibetan Nuns Project would like to build a housing block for the Geshemas with 16 rooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, dining facilities, and a purpose-built hall to be used for recreation and study.

The proposed 16 rooms will allow for a growing number of Geshema nuns who wish to study Tantric Buddhism and fully qualify as teachers of Tibetan Buddhism. The rooms will be built to accommodate one or two nuns, to allow for the potential growth of the ground-breaking Tantric Studies Program for women. There were 23 Geshemas in the first group and this year, 10 nuns are pursuing Tantric studies.

Although it is difficult to predict how many Geshemas will graduate over time, we are expecting the numbers to increase. Nuns from nunneries all over India and Nepal realize that this historic achievement for women is possible and more and more nuns are studying hard to achieve the highest degree.

Timing

The architect's basic plans for the Geshema housing block are now complete. Our application to the Town Planning Authority is being prepared and is expected to be cleared by the end of 2019. Therefore, funding permitting, we will be ready to start construction in less than one year, by March 1st 2020. The project is expected to take two to three years to complete.

Background: The Geshemas

December 22, 2016 marked an important day in the history of Tibet when 20 nuns became the first Tibetan women to receive their Geshema degrees. The Geshema degree is equivalent to a Doctorate in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. This degree was only opened to nuns in 2012. The first batch of graduating nuns came from five nunneries: Kopan Nunnery in Nepal, Jangchup Choeling Nunnery in South India, and Jamyang Choeling Nunnery, Geden Choeling Nunnery, and Dolma Ling Nunnery in and around Dharamsala. Geshema candidates take the exams over a four-year period. Representatives from each participating nunnery, from the Department of Religion and Culture of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and from the Tibetan Nuns Project oversee the rigorous written and oral (debate) exams.

The Geshemas' success fulfills a longstanding wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and marks a new chapter in the development of education for ordained Buddhist women. It is a major accomplishment for Tibetan women. This occasion is also a milestone for the Tibetan Nuns Project, which was founded in 1987 to provide education and humanitarian aid to Tibetan Buddhist nuns living in India.

BUDGET

The budget for the Geshema Housing Project is US \$245,000

Help support the Tantric Studies Housing for Geshemas!

To help you can:

1. Make a gift online at www.tnp.org
2. Call our office in Seattle, US at 1-206-652-8901
3. Mail a check to: The Tibetan Nuns Project (for Tantric Studies Housing for Geshemas)
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PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THE GESHEMAS TO BECOME FULLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS
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