



## Geshema Tantric Course & Examination



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DECEMBER 20

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Jangchub choeling nunnery  
Administration

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# Geshema

## About the Geshema Degree and the Geshema Exams

- The Geshema degree is the highest level of training in the Gelugpa tradition and is equivalent to a Ph.D. in Tibetan Buddhism. The Geshema degree is the same as a Geshe degree but is called a Geshema degree because it is awarded to women.
- It was formally conferred in 2012 by the Department of Religion and Culture of the Tibetan Administration, following a meeting of representatives from six major nunneries, Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, and the Tibetan Nuns Project.
- The handling of Geshema degree is one of His Holiness's vision and recommendation that become a reality and made a history in the Buddhist tradition in year 2016 with 20 nuns from different nunneries across India first graduated with Geshema Degree. His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that the conferment of Geshema degree to Tibetan Buddhist nuns is his contribution to the advancement of Buddha dharma. On December 22, 2016, His Holiness awarded first Geshema degree to the 20 Buddhist nuns at Drepung Monastery, South India and witnessed the glory of first 20 Geshema. Twenty Buddhist nuns became the first Buddhist women to earn Geshema degree.

**“The tradition of honoring Geshema degree is a need of the hour as it is purely based on one’s meritorious achievement in the field of Buddhist study.”**

**14<sup>TH</sup> Dalai Lama**

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## Geshema Examination and process

The Geshema examination process is an extremely rigorous examination which takes a total of four years – one round per year. In the 12-days exam period, the nuns must take both oral (debate) and written exams. The nuns are examined on the entirety of their 17-year course of study of the Five Great Canonical Texts. Upon Graduating from the seventeen years of study program from the institution, they are eligible to sit for their final Geshema Examination. After completing their four years intense Geshema examination, they can get a Geshema degree which is equivalent to the doctorate in Buddhist Philosophy.

### First Five Geshema of Jangchub Choeling Nunnery 2016

Jangchub Choeling Nunnery has been honored to see our own first five Geshema among them. It's such an inspiring and honorable event. The nuns now have some role model from their nunnery and have a purpose to pursue higher education with such recognition for their many years of intense Buddhist studies.



From the historic moment in year 2016 where first 20 Buddhist nuns received Geshema Degree from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, more nuns are graduating each year. Tibetan Buddhist philosophy is one of the major subjects for the Geshema candidates, but they are examined on other subjects as well. In philosophy, nuns taking their first- and second-year exams are tested on Perfection of Wisdom (Pharchin) and Middle Way (Madhyamika), while third- and fourth-year examinees are tested on Monastic Discipline (Vinaya) and Treasury of Knowledge (Abhidharma). All exams are followed by debate sessions.

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In addition to their other exams, nuns in years 1-3, are tested on Tibetan grammar and science. Nuns taking their final year exams are tested on science and history.

Each of the final-year candidates also has to write, in advance, a 50-page thesis. They are examined on their thesis papers during the Geshema exams and must give an oral defense to examiners.

## The Number of Geshema graduates from jangchub Choeling Nunnery

Each year, the nuns preparing to sit various levels of the examinations gather together for one month of final exam preparations and then about 12 days of exams. In 2019, the exams were held at Jangchup Choeling Nunnery in South India. Due to covid and unprecedented outbreak of virus situation in world and in India, 2020 Geshema examination has been on halt and couldn't continue for the time being.

86 nuns from jangchub choeling nuns has completed their studies in 18<sup>th</sup> year's five canonical text course until today. Among them, 33 nuns has got the opportunity to sit in the debate of these text. There are still 35 more nuns still preparing for the geshema examination and some of them are already in the first, second, third and fourth year of geshema examination.

## Three years Tantric course and examination in Jangchub Choeling Nunnery

After giving Geshema examination, nuns take three more years to study Tantra and give examination of tantric as well in Dharamsala earlier.

Yet, jangchub choeling nunnery under the guidance of nunnery Abbot Tashi tsering la and direction of nunnery teachers from Ganden and Drepung, jangchub choeling nunnery has started its own Tantric course of three years inside nunnery as three years course through support of generous Omnis Religio Foundation, sponsors, Ven. Jampa Tsedroen la and Mr. Paul Syska as we are able to fund examination and other facility to nuns during tantric examination.

It was two day examination and nuns gave written examination for the first day and second day was the debating examination. It was held on the ninth December, 2021.

26 nuns were able to sit in the examination and everyone did very well by showing their result in first division.



1<sup>st</sup> Day

written examination



2<sup>nd</sup> Day

Debating



Geshema Tenzin dolkar la (topper)

Abbot, Teachers & Geshemas

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**Thank you!**