

## Buddhist Education

Published on: July 31, 2026 | By: Dzongkar Choede Monastery

**Summary:** At the heart of Dzongkar Choede is a deep commitment to education. What began as an open-air calligraphy class has grown into a residential monastic school where young monks receive both traditional Buddhist training and modern learning. Students are formed through Buddhist philosophy, logic, debate, meditation, ritual practice, memorisation, chanting and the traditional ritual arts, following the Sera Jey monastic university texts for logic and debate. Education here is monastic formation: the making of future custodians of Tibetan Buddhist learning, language, culture and spiritual practice.

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## Educating Young Monks for Tradition, Wisdom, and the Modern World

At the heart of Dzongkar Choede Monastery is a deep commitment to education. The monastery's school was founded to nurture young monks not only as students, but as future custodians of Tibetan Buddhist learning, culture, language, and spiritual practice.

What began humbly as an open-air calligraphy class has grown into a residential monastic school where young monks receive both traditional Buddhist training and modern education. Today, the school continues the monastery's historic responsibility: to preserve the Dharma, Tibetan language, cultural heritage, and monastic discipline while preparing students to meet the needs of the contemporary world.

The school reflects the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who has repeatedly emphasized the importance of educating young monks so that Tibetan spiritual and cultural traditions can continue with confidence, intelligence, and compassion.

## A School Born from Vision and Dedication

The origins of Dzongkar Choede's school were simple but meaningful. In its earliest form, students gathered in the open air to learn calligraphy and basic studies. This modest beginning carried within it a much larger purpose: the preservation of Tibetan learning and the formation of young monks who could serve their tradition and society.

By 1984, the school had developed beyond its open-air beginnings. A proper building and classrooms were established through the initiative of Ven. Geshe Jampa Norbu lak, with the support of the governing body of Dzongkar Choede Monastery.

The school's development continued in 1997, when a more systematic basic curriculum was introduced, associated with the dedicated efforts of Ven. Jampa Gyaltzen lak, then principal, and Ven. Thupten Lodoe lak, vice principal.

## **Education as Monastic Formation**

Dzongkar Choede's school is more than a classroom institution. It is part of a living monastery. Students are educated within an environment shaped by prayer, study, memorization, debate, discipline, and community life. The aim is not only academic progress, but the formation of the whole person.

## **A Daily Rhythm of Prayer, Study, and Discipline**

The daily life of the students follows the rhythm of the monastery. Each day combines spiritual practice, memorization, classroom learning, self-study, dialectics, and debate. Learning is not separated from spiritual practice.

## **Traditional Buddhist Studies**

Within the wider monastery, students are formed through Buddhist philosophy, logic, debate, meditation, ritual practice, memorization, chanting, and traditional ritual arts. Dzongkar Choede follows the Sera Jey monastic university texts for Buddhist logic and debate, linking the education of young monks to one of the great scholarly traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

## **Residential Care and Guardian Teachers**

The school is residential. Students live within monastic residential houses and are supervised by guardian teachers, who are responsible not only for academic support, but also for student well-being, monastic studies, homework, and daily discipline.

## **Preserving Culture Through Education**

Students are trained not only in academic subjects, but also in the spiritual and cultural practices that have shaped Dzongkar Choede for generations: Buddhist philosophy, logic and debate, meditation, ritual practice, memorization of texts, chanting, tantric ritual arts, ritual mask dance, butter sculpture, sand mandala, thangka painting, and incense-making.

## **Supporting the School**

The school has always depended on dedication, sacrifice, and generosity. Many students come from vulnerable backgrounds, and the monastery's resources are limited. Sponsoring a student or supporting the school is a contribution to the preservation of a spiritual and cultural tradition.