



Geshe Lobsang Yonten was born in Zanskar, a remote part of northern India that is historically and ethnically Tibetan. At the age of ten his father presented him with a choice—become betrothed to a girl in the neighboring village or become a monk. He chose to become a monk joining the local monastery and studying there for five years. Upon completing the exams at his local monastery he travelled to South India to begin the twenty-six year program of scholarly study to become a Lharampa Geshe at Drepung Gomang Monastery. This degree is the highest monastic degree in the Gelug School of Buddhism. During these 26 years he was tested on his knowledge of Buddhist philosophy in front of His Holiness the Dalai Lama a number of times.

Upon becoming a Geshe and taking the Bodhisattva vows of compassion, the Dalai Lama asked Geshe Yonten what he would do as his service to others. Geshe Yonten, knowing the importance of the Himalayan region to the survival of the Tibetan Buddhism and its Tibetan Culture, chose to take on the responsibility of educating the children of Zanskar and the surrounding regions of Ladakh. Zanskar is one of the last places on earth where the original Tibetan Buddhist way of life still exists.

In 2003, Geshe Yonten brought the first group of children from Zanskar to Tibetan schools in India to receive an education. These schools provide a modern education, while preserving the language, values, and inner learning that mark the traditional Tibetan education. Geshe-la believes that the heritage of Zanskar can be preserved only if the children of the region receive an “inner and outer education.” This meant the children would leave their families and make the very treacherous journey through the Himalayas to reach these schools. The 2010 film “Journey from Zanskar: a Monks Vow to Children” produced and directed by Academy and Emmy nominated filmmaker Frederick Marx (Hoop Dreams) and narrated by Richard Gere chronicles one of these yearly journeys that Geshe Yonten makes with the children.

Geshe Yonten to date has brought twenty-two children to Tibetan schools to receive an education. His foundation, Save Zanskar, pays for the student’s school fees and care while they are away from their families. His hope is to continue helping the children of the region get an education and plans to support them through college. Many of the students have made a commitment to return to the Zanskar region to support the education of the children still living there. The Dalai Lama has said that Zanskar is vital to the survival of Tibetan Buddhism. Because of this Geshe Yonten has vowed to continue to work to educate the children and preserve the culture of this region. In addition to his work with Save Zanskar, Geshe Yonten is a member of a small group of monks selected by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to study English, western philosophy, and science so that he may teach, collaborate and study with scientists, philosophers, educators and others across the world.

To learn more about Geshe Yonten, Journey from Zanskar or Save Zanskar, visit www.savezanskar.org



Save Zanskar.
Save the World.

