

Sakyadhita

7th International Conference on Buddhist Women

Taipei, Taiwan
July 11-17, 2002

"Bridging Worlds"

Sakyadhita: Daughters of the Buddha

Sakyadhita aims to empower women and transform their lives, their communities, and their worlds. Continuing this mission, the 7th International Conference on Buddhist Women will focus on how women can fulfill this potential by joining their efforts.

In our increasingly complex world, we are presented each day with new challenges and opportunities. Buddhists around the world are meeting frequently to discuss how Buddhist ideas and practices, such as compassion, skillful means, and uncompromising integrity, can help people maximize their potential to meet these challenges. More than ever before in history, women are playing leading roles in these crosscultural, interreligious exchanges. The next phase of these valuable exchanges will be the 7th International Conference on Buddhist Women to be held in Taiwan in July 2002.

Background of the Conference

Since 1987, representatives of the world's estimated 300,000,000 Buddhist women have been meeting to discuss the ways that Buddhist women can constructively approach humanity's enormous problems. Since 1987, Sakyadhita has organized national and international conferences in India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Ladakh, Cambodia, Nepal, and the U.S. to discuss issues of vital importance to Buddhist women around the world: meditation, social activism, gender equity, and ways to achieve peace and harmony in the world. Publications such as *Sakyadhita: Daughters of the Buddha*; *Buddhist Women Across Cultures: Realizations*; *Innovative Buddhist Women: Swimming Against the Stream*; and *Women as Peacemakers* and videos such as "Compassion in the Himalayas" and "Women in Buddhism: Unity and Diversity" that document the conferences have served to heighten an awareness of these topics among thousands of people globally.

Conference Sponsors

The 7th International Conference on Buddhist Women is jointly sponsored by Sakyadhita: International Association of Buddhist Women, National Taiwan University's Buddhist Studies Center, and the Bodhi Foundation. Huafan University is also an associate sponsor. Sakyadhita is the world's leading international association of Buddhist women. It was established in Bodhgaya, India, in 1987, as an alliance of Buddhist women dedicated to nurturing women's potential for compassionate social action through networking, education, publications, and

practical training.

Conference Objectives

This conference is a unique example of cooperation among representatives of diverse cultures, religions, and social backgrounds. The aims of the conference include:

- * To advance global communications among Buddhist women
- * To promote harmony and understanding among the world religious traditions
- * To further the spiritual and temporal welfare of women around the world
- * To foster dialogue on ways to achieve gender equity in religions around the world
- * To encourage compassionate social action
- * To support world peace through the Buddha's teachings

Taiwan - A Buddhist Pure Land

Buddhism is flourishing in Taiwan perhaps more than anywhere in the world and Taiwanese Buddhist nuns and laywomen are taking leading roles. The Chinese Buddhist tradition practiced in Taiwan is one of only three traditions (with Korea and Vietnam) that offer women full monastic ordination. The Buddhist women of Taiwan are among the most progressive and active in the world, contributing their energies to spiritual and social growth.

Taiwan is a country steeped in Buddhist and Taoist thought. In the last few decades, it has emerged from single-party rule to a flourishing multi-party democracy and prosperity. With economic prosperity has come a renaissance of interest in Buddhism among the people of Taiwan in all age groups. By 1999, Taiwan was home to almost 30,000 ordained monks and nuns, 4,000 Buddhist temples, 35 Buddhist seminaries, 5 universities, and 3 colleges, as well as Buddhist high schools, orphanages, retirement homes, hospitals, libraries, and publishing houses. Chinese Buddhists traditionally practice the Pure Land and Zen traditions. In addition, interest in Tibetan Buddhism has grown since the Dalai Lama's first visit in 1997. A strong focus for many Taiwanese is "Buddhism for the World," harmonizing educational advances, technology, and spiritual practice. The development of Buddhism in Taiwan parallels the country's social development and economic well-being.

Huafan University

The Conference site, Huafan University, was established by Ven. Shig Hiu Wan in 1990 to promote enlightened education in technology and the humanities. The university, located 45-minutes outside of Taipei, offers a quiet, natural environment in which to explore issues that are of critical importance to humanity's future.

Conference Program

Leading Buddhist scholars, practitioners, and social activists from around the world will express their ideas and offer insights on the critical issues facing contemporary society. Small group discussions and interdisciplinary panels will facilitate an exchange of ideas among participants.

The overall conference theme is "Bridging Worlds." Presentations and small group discussions will focus on the following topics:

- * Understanding Buddhist Women in Taiwan
- * Understanding Buddhist Women around the World

- * Bridging the Buddhist Traditions
- * Bridging the World's Religions
- * Bridging the Vinaya Traditions
- * Bridging Monastic Ideals & Everyday Life
- * Bridging Study & Practice
- * Bridging Generations
- * Bridging Contemplation & Social Action
- * Bridging Value Systems: Ancient & Modern
- * Bridging the Gender Gap, Transforming Institutions

Conference Schedule

July 10 Arrival in Taipei - Travel to Huafan University's Accommodations
 July 11 Registration & Opening Ceremony at National Taiwan University
 July 12-17 Conference Sessions at Huafan: Meditation, talks, discussions, and workshops
 July 18-19 Temple Tour

Weather

Taiwan is a subtropical island, so expect the weather to be hot and humid, with the possibility of rain in the afternoons. Out of respect for our host culture, please dress modestly. Summer clothing is appropriate, but shorts and revealing tops are not.

Conference Costs - What to Expect

Conference Registration Fee

The conference fee is US\$60, payable upon registration. Space is limited to 235 participants, so be sure to register early.

Meals and Accommodations

US\$30 per day includes 3 vegetarian meals and double room accommodations. Please bring any snacks, herbal teas, or other extras that you require. The conference site is located outside the city, away from restaurants and shopping areas. Boiled water, hot drinks, and bottled soft drinks will be available and are safe to drink.

Transportation

Transportation from Chiang Kai Shek International Airport to Huafan University will be available on July 10. Return transportation from Huafan to the airport will be provided on July 20. Transportation on these two days will be provided at a special fare of \$20 each way, payable upon registration. Participants who arrive late or depart early will be responsible for their own airport transportation.

Deadline for Payments

Payments for registration, bus, meals, and accommodations **must** be received by June 1, 2002.

Travel Information

U.S., Canadian, and some European citizens do not need visas to visit Taiwan for less than 14 days (provided they have a return ticket and passport valid for more than six months).

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