

## 14th Sakyadhita International Conference

June 23-30, 2015

"Compassion &amp; Social Justice"

[Yogyakarta, Indonesia](#)

14th Sakyadhita International Conference, Summer 2015, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

### Conference Abstracts: "Compassion and Social Justice"

14th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women  
Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
June 23-30, 2015

[A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) | [K](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) | [U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [X](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#)

[Read All Abstracts](#)

[PDF of this page](#)

### A

[Ayya Santini](#)

**Establishing the Bhikkhuni Sangha in Indonesia: Obstacles and Opportunities**

[Back to the Top](#)

### B

[Minal Wankhede Barsagade](#)

**Indian Buddhist Women Followers of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**

[Bhikkhuni Robina Courtin \(Thubten Kunsel\)](#)

**Working with People in Prison**

[Bhikkhu B. D. Dipananda](#)

**Controversies and Prospects: Issues Surrounding the Establishment of the Female Monastic Sangha in Bangladesh**

[Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo](#)

**Buddhist Women of Indonesia: Diversity and Social Justice**

[Bhikkhu Sujato](#)

**The Imaginariums of the Nuns: Days That Are Past and Futures That May Yet Be**

[Bhikkhuni Suniti](#)

**Bhikkhuni Ordination in India: Benefits and Barriers**

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- [English Language Program](#)
- [French Language Program](#)
- [German Language Program](#)

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- [English Language Brochure](#)
- [French Language Brochure](#)
- [German Language Brochure](#)
- [Japanese Language Brochure](#)
- [Korean Language Brochure](#)
- [Russian Language Brochure](#)
- [Spanish Language Brochure](#)
- [Tibetan Language Brochure](#)

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[Bhikkhuni Tathaaloka Theri](#)

**Light of the Killis: Our Javanese Bhikkhuni Foremothers**

[Bhikkhuni Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo](#)

**Some Challenges Facing Non-Himalayan Nuns in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition**

[Latifah and Ary Budiyanto](#)

**Images of Women in Contemporary Indonesian Buddhist Short Stories**

[Back to the Top](#)

## C

[Wei-yi Cheng](#)

**Buddhist and Living with HIV: Two Life Stories from Taiwan**

[SungJa Cho](#)

**The Universality of Buddhism: Proposing a Sakyadhita Sangha**

[Diana Cousens](#)

**A Co-ordinated Policy Response to Child Abuse and Sexual Harassment by the Buddhist Council of Victoria**

[Back to the Top](#)

## E

[Wilis Rengganiasih Endah Ekowati](#)

**Ruwat-Rawat Borobudur: An Annual Cultural Event that Celebrates Diversity and Multiculturalism**

[Back to the Top](#)

## F

[Arahmajani Feisal](#)

**Creative Activism for Social Justice in Java**

[Back to the Top](#)

## G

[Rita Gross](#)

**The Real Problem Regarding Buddhist Women and Gender Justice: Gender-Neutral Models of Humanity**

[Back to the Top](#)

## H

[Anna Halafoff and Emma Tomalin](#)

**Cyber Sisters: Buddhist Women's Online Activism and Practice**

[Chenxing Han](#)

**The Invisible Majority: Conversations with Young Adult Asian American Buddhists**

[Lenny Hidayat](#)

**Linking Compassion to Social Policy** [Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa](#)  
**The Modern Girl as an Upāsikā: Recovering the Women in Buddhist Modernisms**

[Hsiao-Lan Hu](#)

**Avalokiteśvara's Embrace of Diversity: Respect and Empathy**

[Back to the Top](#)

## I

[Tomomi Ito](#)

**Diversity of "Mahayana" Buddhist Bhikkhunis in Thailand: Roots, Affiliation, and Status**

[Back to the Top](#)

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## K

[Hudaya Kandahjaya](#)

**What is Borobudur?**

[Pema Khandro](#)

**Bridging the Lay-Monastic Divide: Women's Religious Leadership in Tibet**

[Lina Koleilat](#)

**Defending the Environment in Courts: Jiyul Sunim's Journey with the Law**

[Seokjoo Kang](#)

**The Uncomfortable Relationship Between the Self-management Boom and Feminism in Korea**

[Kustiani](#)

**The Karmavibhanga Reliefs of Borobudur: Unveiling Their Moral and Social Value**

[Back to the Top](#)

## L

[Karen Lang](#)

**The Healing Power of Compassion in the Stories of the Buddha's First Daughters**

[Amy Paris Langenberg](#)

**Pious Lady, Noble Woman: Relationships between Lay Women and Nuns as Narrated and Prescribed in the Mahasanghika-lokottaravada Bhiksuni Vinaya**

[Medya Silvita Lie](#)

**Bhikkhuni Jinakumari and the Early Indonesian Buddhist Women**

[Heru Suherman Lim](#)

**Ibu Parvati: An Indonesian Buddhist Pioneer**

[Back to the Top](#)

## M

[Dipti Mahanta](#)

**Buddhist Feminism: Its Ecumenical Role and Compassionate Activism**

[Annie McGhee](#)

**Compassionate Legacy: Mahayana Buddhism in Sumatra and its Connections with Tibet**

[Back to the Top](#)

## P

[Dian Pratiwi](#)

**Indonesian Women & Buddhist Social Service**

[Darcie Price-Wallace](#)

**Gendering Nyungne, the Tibetan Buddhist Fasting Ritual**

[Back to the Top](#)

## S

[Vanessa R. Sasson](#)

**Leaving Family Behind: Lessons of Love and Loss from the Buddha's Hagiography**

[Neela Bhattacharya Saxena](#)

**Mahakaruna of Prajnaparamita: The Divine Feminine & Compassionate Activism in the 21st Century**

[Chang Shen Shih](#)

**An Emerging Alliance: The Diverse Family Formation Bill & Buddhist Gender Justice in Taiwan**

[Chih Yin Shih](#)

**A Narrative Analysis of Buddhist Discourse on Gay Marriage in Taiwan: A Case Study of Master Chao Hwei**

[Sheng Ying Shi](#)

**The Significance of Bhiksuni Hiu Wan's Prajna Chan: Compassion and Art for Modern-day Education**

[\*Shiou-Ding Shi \(Wang Hsiu-Fei\)\*](#)

**Vipassana and Pain: A Case Study of Taiwanese Female Buddhists Who Practice Vipassana**

[\*Zhen Yuan Shih\*](#)

**Chin Hui Pitt: An Exemplary Buddhist Woman Educator in Singapore**

[\*Zong Kai Shih\*](#)

**Indonesian Women's Roles in Buddhist Education**

[\*Medya Silvita\*](#)

**Bhikkhuni Jinakumari and the Early Indonesian Buddhist Women**

[\*Teresa J. Sivilli\*](#)

**Compassion: The Path to Resilience**

[\*Hyo Seok Sunim\*](#)

**The Rearranged Roles of Buddhist Nuns in the Modern Korean Sangha: A Case Study of Practicing Compassion**

[\*Jeong Wan Sunim\*](#)

**Literacy and the Education of *Bhikkhunis* in Early Chinese Buddhism**

[\*Soun Sunim\*](#)

**Noblewomen and Monks: Lay-Monastic Relations in the Early Joseon**

[\*Back to the Top\*](#)

## T

[\*Thich Nu Nhu Nguyet\*](#)

**Compassion and Social Engagement: Interdependent Paradigms for Vietnamese Buddhist Women**

[\*Thich Nu Phuoc Uyen\*](#)

**Buddhist Schools in Australia: Buddhist Women's Roles**

[\*Back to the Top\*](#)

## W

[\*Parwatri Wahjono\*](#)

**Bedhaya Ketawang: A Sacred Dance of Mystical Union of The Ruler of the Land and the Ruler of the Sea**

[\*Sonam Wangmo \(Tenzin Dadon\)\*](#)

**Unveiling the Lives of Great Female Masters of Bhutan**

[\*Carol L. Winkelmann\*](#)

**Emergent Buddhist Women's Leadership: Competing Feminist Views at the Intersection of the Sacred and the Profane**

[\*Sr. Malia Dominica Wong\*](#)

**The Pearl in the Bubble Tea: Buddhist Women and Social Change**

[\*Fen-jin Wu\*](#)

**Yuanwu Keqin's Chan Praxis: Teaching for Women**

[\*Rotraut Jampa Wurst\*](#)

**Sexual diversity in Germany**

[\*Back to the Top\*](#)

## Y

[\*Hyangsoon Yi\*](#)

**A Buddhist Nun as Military Hero in "The Tale of Master Chaun"**

[\*Yulisant Yulianti\*](#)

**The New Space for Peranakan Chinese Woman in Late Colonial Indonesia: Mrs. Tjoa Hin Hoaij in the Historiography of Buddhism**

[\*Back to the Top\*](#)

## Abstracts

Ayya Santini

### **Establishing the Bhikkhuni Sangha in Indonesia: Obstacles and Opportunities**

The *bhikkhuni sangha* in the Theravada Buddhist tradition has only recently been revived after many centuries. I have been asked to talk about the *bhikkhuni* ordination process and the advantages and obstacles that I have experienced in my life as an Indonesian Theravada *bhikkhuni*. Surely, I have much to say on the subject!

As is well known, the Buddha established four groups of disciples: the *bhikkhu sangha*, *bhikkhuni sangha*, *upasakas* (male lay followers), and *upasikas* (female lay followers). No doubt, the Buddha had many reasons for establishing all four groups. The Buddha would not have established the *bhikkhuni sangha* or the *bhikkhu sangha* if there were no benefits. The Buddha taught that women have the same potential as men to attain the highest goal in life, which is to get out of *samsara*. He confirmed that women have the same potential to strive toward the goal of attaining *nibbana* and women themselves have proved that they can do so.

We are fortunate that the Dhamma has endured until today, but over the years conditions have changed. There came a time when the *bhikkhuni sangha* in the Theravadin school was no more. This was not because women no longer aspired to become *bhikkhunis*, but because they literally could not survive as *bhikkhunis*. Women continued to live the *Dhamma* way of life, but as *upasikas* rather than as *bhikkhunis*. Some say that the *bhikkhuni sangha* died out and there was no way to establish it again – at least there were no monks who wanted to ordain women as *bhikkhunis*. The *bhikkhuni* order was dead – full stop.

But *Dhamma* works in wonderful ways. I am very fortunate to live in an era when the revival of *bhikkhuni* ordination in the Theravada school is not just a dream. I feel very fortunate to be part of the revival of the Theravada *bhikkhuni* ordination. In Indonesia, I am one of the very first Theravada *bhikkhunis* to be ordained in roughly a thousand year and I feel very grateful for that. In fact, we are all fortunate to live at a time when the Theravada *bhikkhuni* ordination has been revived. Because of this revival, women have many advantages and opportunities to do meritorious deeds – just as *bhikkhus* and laymen do. In this paper, I will examine these advantages and opportunities, as well as the obstacles that may arise in the process of reestablishing the *bhikkhuni sangha*.

[Back to the Top](#)

\*\*\*

Minal Wankhede Barsagade

### **Indian Buddhist Women Followers of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism on October 14, 1956, along with several hundred thousand people. The majority of those who were part of this mass conversion to Buddhism were women. Since that time, the entire culture of these Indian Buddhist women has changed. The journey of these women from 1956 until today is noteworthy. Women have played a vital role in constructing the many Buddhist viharas that have come into existence in Maharashtra State since 1956. Women are also actively involved in the spread of Buddhism. There are two main Buddhist organizations in Maharashtra: The Buddhist Society of India and Triratna Buddha Mahasangh. In addition, there are many local Buddhist organizations that also work to spread the Dhamma and the majority of their members are women. This powerpoint presentation throws light on women who are actively involved in teaching and propagating Buddhism in Maharashtra, with a particular focus on their lives and culture.

[Back to the Top](#)

\*\*\*

Bhikkhu B. D. Dipananda

### **Controversies and Prospects: Issues Surrounding the Establishment of the Female Monastic Sangha in Bangladesh**

In this paper, I will take an historical perspective to examine how the Buddha established spiritual communities that were open to all, regardless of gender. In light of this, I will examine the current situation of Buddhist female monastics in Bangladesh and outline the latest developments from a comparative study of women in Bangladesh. I will also examine great female Buddhist practitioners in the history of Bangladesh and demonstrate how laywomen and nuns can play a positive role in the propagation of Buddhism.

The recent rejection of female monastics by the Supreme Sangha Council of Bangladesh has sparked widespread debate over the establishment of an order of nuns in the country. The debate has exposed fault lines in the Buddhist community, with divergent arguments in favor and against such developments. Opponents of the movement strongly dismiss the legality of female monastics. I will argue that, while opponents endeavor to quash the idea, their rhetoric is sometimes tinged with unwarranted biases and a lack of historical and theoretical awareness. These monks, represented by the Supreme Sangha Council of Bangladesh, strongly oppose reforms and advocate the outlawing of ordained female monastics. Others, however, adopt a more open attitude and defend the religious rights of women, provided that they are in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha and the provisions stipulated in the *vinaya*. Interestingly, such debates have also drawn the attention of some women's rights activists who have supported the introduction of ordination for women. Globally, the *sangha* community in some countries welcomes the order of ordained nuns. Perhaps Buddhists in Bangladesh will develop a more open attitude toward the spiritual needs and aspirations of Buddhist women.

[Back to the Top](#)

\*\*\*

*Bhikkhuni Dhammananda*

### **Loving Speech and Right Speech in Relation to Nonviolent Communications**

For many years, I was closely in touch with people who were affected by domestic violence. Most of the victims were women and children. As a nun and a Dharma teacher, I listened to many painful stories around the world that involved violence at different levels. As a result, I was moved to find some means to help people to become free from these problems. Violence, whether in thought, word, or action, leads to much stress and pain in the minds and lives of the people involved.

After listening compassionate, my job is to advise those affected about how to avoid situations that trigger violence in future. I found some very helpful sources of guidance in the ancient teachings of the Buddha. Loving speech (*metta-vācī kamma*) is one of the six principles to create harmony in groups. Right speech (*sammā-vācī*) is one aspect of the noble eightfold path that leads to freedom from all sufferings. In practice, however, following these noble teachings and avoiding the habitual tendencies that tempt one to violent responses requires a lot of training and commitment. In this paper, I will go present a step-by-step method for practicing non-violent communications in dealing with domestic violence, using Buddhist principles pertaining to relationships.

[Back to the Top](#)

\*\*\*

*Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo*

### **Buddhist Women of Indonesia: Diversity and Social Justice**

Buddhists in Indonesia have continued to practice their faith quietly, largely unnoticed, from ancient times up to the present day. After an abortive coup in 1965, all residents of Indonesia were required to register by religion or risk being suspected of communist leanings. In response, the numbers of self-identified Buddhists increased significantly. Of these, some identified themselves as Mahayana (1%), others as Theravada (.5%), while the remainder affiliated themselves with a variety of other Buddhist schools. To satisfy a government regulation that all religions be monotheistic, a Chinese Indonesian bhikkhu named Ashin Jinarakkhita devised the theory of a supreme being, Sang Hyang Adi Buddha, which qualified Buddhism as an officially recognized faith. Despite the fact that all Indonesian Buddhist adherents agree on certain fundamental Buddhist teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, their distinctive forms of practice vary considerably.

In this paper, I will investigate women's roles in the complex fabric of Buddhism as practiced in Indonesia in recent history. The paper begins with an ethnographic overview, based on narratives that document women's religious lives in the diverse Buddhist communities of Java, Sumatra, Lombok, and Bali. Next, I will discuss the diverse roles that women play in the Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, and Buddhayana traditions in Indonesia, focusing especially on patterns of acculturation, assimilation, and religious identity, beginning from the early 20th century until the present day. Finally, I will examine social interrelationships among women from Buddhist and other religious backgrounds, especially Islam, to better understand the ways in which race, religion, politics, and gender intersect in their everyday experience. The objective is to gain an understanding of religious identity formation and preservation among the diverse Buddhist ethnic minorities of Indonesia.

[Back to the Top](#)

\*\*\*

*Bhikkhuni Sarani*

### **Feminism and Ordination as Compassionate Action**

When I think of compassion and social justice, nothing springs to mind faster than the Buddha and the way that he formulated his teaching. The Four Noble Truths are as relevant today as they have ever been. Certainly, they are very much needed in today's world, which is suffering under a heavy burden of social systems gone wrong. We, as the Buddha's disciples and as women, have an opportunity and perhaps an obligation, to address one such system – Buddhism.

As a woman who has been in robes for eight years – three as a novice and five as a *bhikkhuni*, in both North America and Asia – it has become clear to me that "temple Buddhism" is not making much headway in reaching many who could benefit greatly from the Buddha's teachings. I have a high regard for the monastic tradition, insofar as it has been instrumental in writing and preserving the canons. But I believe that it is time to not only question some of the practices that have evolved in the last 2,557 years, but also to make changes in the tradition. Temple Buddhism simply does not attract many in the West today and it is also faltering in its ability to hold those who are Buddhist by birth in Asia.

I would like to propose that we need to add a third type of ordination for those who are disciples of the Buddha and who are dedicated to bringing the Four Noble Truths to the peoples of the world. This ordination would be for individuals who have been educated and trained in the principles and practices that are so clearly outlined in the Buddhist canons. In addition, practices that are not in line with the canons or are not understood or respected by many in the general population, or are not viable options, would be adapted to fit modern society's needs. This would enable those interested in the Dhamma and the discipline to practice without performing outdated rites and rituals. It would also allow those with the new type of ordination to live in the world without having to follow the many precepts that they are impractical to follow outside of established monastic settings.

This is not such a shocking idea when we compare the differences in the ways that renunciants have been understood and accommodated both during the Buddha's time and in our own. If we remember that the Buddha sent his disciples out into the world for the benefit of many, we can and should devise a way that "the many" can come into contact with authentic teachings through educated and practicing teachers who are ordained and living in a way that reflects the teachings. This ordination, like any degree, should be obtained after the ordainee has been able to demonstrate both an understanding of the doctrine and the practice, and a desire and ability to

live virtuously. We need not ask permission to create and institute this ordination; as compassionate feminists concerned with both social justice and the Buddha's teachings, we need only see that there is a need and meet it.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Bhikkhuni Suniti*

#### **Bhikkhuni Ordination in India: Benefits and Barriers**

In discussing *bhikkhuni* ordination, it is said that the entry of women to the *sangha* was not accepted by the Tathagata Buddha when Mahaprajapati, his foster mother, initially requested it. Entry was given on the condition that she accept the eight special rules (*garudhammas*). However, other women were ordained as *bhikkhunis* by *bhikkhus*, as advised by the Buddha. Nowhere in the *Vinaya Pitaka* it is mentioned that the *bhikkhus* should ask the *bhikkhuni* candidates to accept the eight special rules given to Mahaprajapati by the Tathagata. Reports that this incident is mentioned in the *Vinaya Pitaka* has had an adverse effect on the existence of the *bhikkhuni sangha* up to the present day, even though it is not accepted a factual by learned *bhikkhunis*. Thus, today the *bhikkhuni sanghas* in India and other Buddhist countries are still struggling for their very existence.

In the history of India after the Buddha, the *bhikkhuni* order started spreading its branches up to the 20th century. In India, the lineage was restored at the International Full Ordination Ceremony that was held in Bodhaya in February 1998. At that ordination ceremony, *bhikkhunis* from 23 different countries benefitted. About 30 Indian *samaneris* (all from Maharashtra, as there are no *samaneris* from other states of India) were ordained as *bhikkhunis*. The fact that Indian *bhikkhunis* got the opportunity to receive the higher ordination after a long struggle was a great breakthrough. Prior to this time, many Indian women thought that they would never get the chance to be ordained as *bhikkhunis*, because the circumstances were not in their favor. At the same time, outside of India the *bhikkhuni* lineage was spreading from one country to another. Just as the lineage had been transmitted in earlier centuries from India to Sri Lanka and from Sri Lanka to China, due to requests from the latter countries, in the 20th century *bhikkhuni* ordinations were being held and accepted in many countries. But it was presumed that this could never happen in India, because Indian *bhikkhus* who hold gender-biased attitudes did not want *samaneris* to be get equal opportunities as *bhikkhunis*. The *samaneris* were also not sure to whom they should turn with their request for full ordination.

The *samaneris* of India learned about the historical full ordination for *bhikkhunis* in Bodhgaya rather late. They got the news from Bhikkhu Sangharakshita, who went to Bodhgaya to attend the *kathina* ceremony and heard about it there. Even though the deadline for accepting applications had passed, he requested that the Indian *bhikkhunis* get a chance to register. It is thanks to him that the *bhikkhuni* lineage was revived in India after a gap of almost 1,500 years. It is sad to mention that, until then, no Indian *bhikkhunis* had been registered for the ordination and the opportunity to benefit from it had almost slipped away from them, even though it was held in their own country. At last, fortunately 30 Indian nuns became fully ordained as *bhikkhunis* in 1998 and the second pillar of the Buddha's fourfold community was restored in the country of its birth. Unfortunately, there was a hue and cry when these fully ordained *bhikkhunis* returned to their home state of Maharashtra. There the *bhikkhunis* had to face many unwanted situations. For example, some *bhikkhus* declared in the local newspapers that the nuns were not *bhikkhunis* and could not be accepted as *bhikkhunis* because Buddha did not want women in the *sangha*. This paper will present more details related to these historical events.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Bhikkhuni Tathaaloka Theri*

#### **Light of the Killis: Our Javanese Bhikkhuni Foremothers**

Today, virtually all traces of the ancient Buddhist *bhikkhuni sangha* of Indonesia have vanished – or have they? A quick Google search of "ancient Indonesian *bhikkhunis*" reveals the names of quasi-mythical women of legendary fame like the 13th-14th-century Lady Gayatri Rajapatni and Rakri Mahamantri Sanggramawijaya Dharmaprasadottunggadewi. Travel documentuers and histories, such as those of the generally reliable 15th-16th-century Portuguese explorer Tome' Pires, record that there were a hundred thousand virgin and widowed almswomen hermits (*beguines*) living lives of chastity as recluses in the mountainsides outside the towns and cities. Javanese traditional ritual dances and dramas dating from antiquity still celebrate these ancient princesses and queens, founders of empires, who retired to become Buddhist women ascetics: *bhikkhunis* (*bhiksunis*).

Who were these ancient women luminaries? Does the sacred cave of ascetics called Gua Selomangleng associated with the crown princess and *bhikkhuni* Sangramawijaya (also known as Dewi Kilisuci and Putri Kediri), which is featured in poetry and the legendary horse dance dramas, still exist in Kediri? Did Old Java have eminent royal female Buddhist priestesses? Is there any relationship between the Christian women's monastic beguine movement in Europe and the ancient *bhikkhuni sanghas*? Is one of the world's most famous and well-loved Buddhist images, the Javanese Prajnaparamita, truly a crematory image of the *bhikkhuni* Gayatri Rajapatni, as eminent scholars and ambassadors now claim? If so, that would make it the only true likeness of an ancient *bhikkhuni* in existence.

To answer these questions, this paper mines the Old Javanese historical court verses of the Desawarna (also known as the Nagarakrtagama). It also delves into travelers' accounts of the region, such as the Suma Oriental, and speaks directly to ambassadors, writers, and scholars, such as Earl Drake, Slametmuljana, and Stuart Robson, who, inspired by these ancient daughters of the Sugata, have spent years researching and illuminating their lives. The presentation of this paper and the 14th Sakyadhita Conference in Yogyakarta will coincide with the publication of Earl Drake's new book, which was two decades in the making, about the life of Gayatri Rajapatni, the Javanese *bhikkhuni* and mother of the ancient Mahapajit Dynasty.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Bhikshuni Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo***Some Challenges Facing Non-Himalayan Nuns in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition**

Non-Himalayan nuns (NHN) encounter many problems. First, they usually have few nunneries to join where they can live together as a *sangha*. Second, they rarely get financial support. Often NHN have to work in order to support themselves, in addition to carrying on their studies and practice. Sadly, many have had to adopt lay dress in the process. Due to these problems, many disrobe in the end. Further, nuns are often sent to run lay centers, without adequate support. Many suffer stress from overwork in their efforts to support centers or lamas. Often these nuns are offered no formal monastic or religious training after ordination. It is easy to become ordained, but then what? These nuns generally have difficulty receiving precise guidance and instruction. Many of them are mature women who have received a good education, worked in professions, and have lived in relationships; some have been married and have children. These nuns have many skills to offer, but are often disregarded and unappreciated. They experience loneliness, due to having no sangha members to talk with. Non-Himalayan nuns often feel isolated and uncared for, neglected and overlooked. They experience spiritual suffering from discouragement and disillusionment. Those non-Himalayan nuns who live in Himalayan nunneries often face huge cultural and social gaps (age, maturity, language, education levels, life experiences, type of pedagogy, etc.) in relation to their co-residents. No psychological support or appreciation are offered when they run into cultural differences and difficulties.

The causes of these problems are multiple. In Tibetan Buddhism, there is little interest in NHN, who may even be regarded as "less meritorious" than Tibetans. Traditional Buddhism is male-orientated and patriarchal. Females tend to be disregarded, undervalued, disempowered, and exploited. Tibetan/Himalayan cultures are also parochial. Non-Himalayan and non-Buddhist cultures are rarely appreciated. Tibetans assume that all NHN are wealthy, even after ordination. It is presumed that NHN receive support from their families, which is rarely the case. Many Western families are even anti-clerical and disapprove of a monastic vocation. Tibetan Lamas usually fundraise for their monasteries and projects in Tibet, India, and Nepal. Westerner and Asian sponsors are not encouraged to support NHN. Perhaps for the first time in Buddhist history, Western members of the *sangha* are not even morally supported by their own people. Buddhism as practiced in Western countries is lay orientated and focused on Dharma centers for lay people. Lay Buddhists in the West may misunderstand the motivation of NHN in becoming ordained and underestimate their qualities. There is no psychological support or appreciation of the difficulties they face, yet even without receiving sufficient training, NHN may be expected to act like high-level bodhisattvas. The pedagogy of Tibetan religious education is difficult and culturally inappropriate for most non-Himalayan nuns, with its traditional emphasis on memorization and ritual. Traditionally, most Tibetan nuns begin their monastic training at a very young age, even as children. Character training occurs along with monastic upbringing in nunneries. But because NHN ordain as adults, after their characters are already formed, it is not easy for them to change without dedicated skilled guidance.

The aims of this discussion are also multiple. One is to create networks among isolated NHN, encouraging them to respect and support each other. Another is to encourage the non-Himalayan lay public to appreciate, respect, and support NHN. There is a great need to develop more monastic communities in non-Himalayan areas, and to create and develop appropriate long-term training programs. At the same time, it is important to gain recognition for NHN from Tibetan Buddhist teachers and to ensure their long-term financial support, insofar as possible, perhaps through collective networks of support. To do this requires disregarding traditional sectarian divisions, instead discussing common NHN issues and creating a strong and genuine alliance.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Latifah and Ary Budiyanto***Images of Women in Contemporary Indonesian Buddhist Short Stories**

The view that rebirth as a woman is the result of bad karma has caused problems for the realization of gender equality in Buddhist families and societies. Differences of interpretation of doctrine and practice exist in Asian Buddhist communities, but a "gender imbalance" in social praxis remains very strong. The roots of this view can be traced to elements of patriarchal culture that have been assimilated in Buddhist societies and the ambiguities regarding women that appear in numerous texts in the Buddhist canon. For instance, in the *Saddharmapundarika Sutta* and the *Bahudhatuka Sutta* in the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha states that a woman cannot become a Buddha without first taking rebirth as a man. In the *Sagatha Vaggas* and the *Soma Sutta*, woman is portrayed as the personification of Mara's children. Even in the Vinaya, the Buddha is quoted as saying that the entry of women into the *sangha* will reduce the duration of the Dhamma to five hundred years. On the other hand, the Buddha is also quoted as saying that a daughter can become an even better offspring than a son. In the *Saddharmapundarikasutra*, he says that all beings can become Buddhas.

Short stories are a reflection of the worldview of a given society. Through an analysis of the content of short stories written in Bahasa Indonesia, this paper will investigate the image, status, and characterization of women in contemporary Indonesian Buddhist society. The aim of this exploration is to gain insight into the world of Indonesian Buddhist women.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Wei-yi Cheng***Buddhist and Living with HIV: Two Life Stories from Taiwan**

This paper presents the life stories of two Taiwanese Buddhist men who are living with HIV. The paper is

intended to be an addendum to the current debate in Taiwan over the legalization of same-sex marriage. When Bhikkhuni Chao Hwei performed the wedding of two lesbians in Taiwan in August 2012, she created an image of Buddhist amity towards the same-sex marriage. But reality can be more complicated. Some Buddhist leaders are among those who oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage and some even strongly condemn homosexuality in Chinese-language social media.

In this paper, by using the life stories of two Buddhist men living with HIV, I wish to investigate the question: In the case of Buddhists, how and why does religious legitimacy for same-sex marriage matter? The reasons for choosing the life-stories of two Buddhist men rather than two women are many. The simple reason is that I happen to know these two men and they are eager to share their stories. A more important reason is that sexism comes in many forms. In Chinese societies, under the influence of Confucianism, sons are expected to marry, produce at least one male heir, and pass on the family name. When a son fails to produce a male heir, the pressure on him to do so is strong. As I have suggested elsewhere, such pressure to marry may account for the scarcity of Buddhist monks in contemporary Taiwan. Since the two men presented in this paper have failed to marry and produce male heirs for their families, their life stories illustrate how Buddhist beliefs help them to cope with the pressures of Confucian social mores that are placed on them.

An additional dimension of the question about living with HIV that I wish to explore is: In a society where bias against people with HIV/AIDS is strong, how do Buddhist beliefs and practices help the afflicted in living with HIV? By sharing the life stories of two gay Buddhists living with HIV, I wish to add the voices of people who are personally involved in the current debate over the legalization of same-sex marriage.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*SungJa Cho*

#### **The Universality of Buddhism: Proposing a Sakyadhita Sangha**

Sakyamuni Buddha taught that enlightenment is possible for all human beings. For the past 2,500 years, Buddhism has spread and developed mostly in Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, Korea, and so on. In each country, a unique Buddhist tradition has developed, distinctively different from that of other countries.

From the beginning of the 20th century, more and more westerners have become interested in Buddhism and have attempted to become Buddhist practitioners. However, compared with the number of people in Buddhist countries who entered the *sangha* to practice, not many westerners have received ordination as a Buddhist monk or a nun. Moreover, many of those who received ordination are no longer in robes. There are certainly a variety of reasons to explain the small number of Western monastics and the large number of Western monastics who have disrobed, but one likely reason is a sense of alienation. Generally speaking, each of the unique Asian Buddhist traditions includes many social customs and cultural values that may feel strange or unacceptable to outsiders, especially those from countries that have no historical Buddhist connections.

Nevertheless, if Buddhism truly is a universal religion, as Albert Einstein, one of the most brilliant minds of the 20th century, asserted, then Buddhism in the 21st century should be a meeting place where diverse peoples and cultures embrace – a path that is open to everybody in the world, collectively and individually. In my view, Sakyadhita could be the best vehicle for establishing a new global Buddhist *sangha*, one that is truly universal. Establishing a new *sangha* like this would have several important practical implications for the contemporary world.

First, this new type of Buddhist *sangha* could develop an ideal that is broad enough to include all Buddhist traditions. Although Asian Buddhist societies have developed their own unique styles, their traditions include some features that may be unacceptable from a modern perspective. Some of these features are very difficult for most westerners or even many young Asians to accept. Even those who are deeply respectful and committed to Buddhist practice may step back or give up if they feel that certain aspects of Buddhism are unreasonable. Second, this new Buddhist *sangha* can provide a refuge or an alternative for Asian Buddhists who find that they cannot accommodate or cannot find a reasonable solution within their own Buddhist traditions. This type of *sangha* may also be a refuge for many Westerners who have had difficulty finding a suitable tradition for training in the Buddha's teachings and practices.

Third, establishing a new Buddhist *sangha* that is open to all Buddhists in the world may send a powerful message to Buddhist *sanghas* in traditional Asian countries where women are discriminated against and nuns are treated as inferior to monks. This type of *sangha* can also provide an alternative for dedicated Buddhists in those countries that do not offer a full range of ordination opportunities to women practitioners. If we agree that establishing a new model of *sangha* would be useful and can help unite the world's Buddhists, then now is the right time and Sakyadhita would be the best vehicle for accomplishing that goal.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Willis Rengganiasih Endah Ekowati*

#### **Ruwat-Rawat Borobudur: An Annual Cultural Event that Celebrates Diversity and Multiculturalism**

Ruwat-Rawat Borobudur is an annual cultural event that was pioneered by Warung Info Jagad Cleguk, an information center established in 2003. The event has been held once a year ever since, with the number of participants and different activities growing each year. Sucoro, the founder of the information center and the architect of the event, has faced challenges, critiques, as well as support from different parties in regard to the importance of the event. These challenges, critiques, and support have come from various institutions, groups, and individuals with different interests related to the magnificent temple of Borobudur.

I began conducting field research on this event in April 2013. Based on my participant observation and the

interviews and documentation that I have gathered, my paper will focus on the contributions of the event to issues of diversity and multiculturalism in Indonesia. My study focuses particularly on the impact of the event on people living in areas surrounding the Borobudur temple compound.

Borobudur, the largest Buddhist temple in the world, is listed as a world heritage that must be preserved as an international monument. A preservation project, undertaken by a work team consisting of Indonesian and foreign experts and with funding from the Indonesia government and international organization, is dedicated to preserving the temple. Since the project began, Borobudur has been transformed from a living Buddhist temple where Buddhists and non-Buddhists (followers of indigenous religions) performed their rituals, into a dead monument. In the name of tourism, the project has entailed the exploitation of this sacred temple, one of the most important of Indonesia's national treasures. In the process, the project has sacrificed the temple's sacrality and its intimate relationship with neighboring villagers and shut down the multicultural activities that took place in the past.

Ruwat-Rawat Borobudur is an effort to rebuild the relationship between the people who live in areas surrounding the temple compound, the living culture of today, and the ancient sacrality of the temple. The people of Borobudur call the temple Mbah Budur (Budur Ancestor). The personalization of the temple in this way reflects the intimacy the villagers feel when they see the temple as their living ancestor. But the secularization of the temple by the government and the profit orientation of the government-owned corporation involved in the preservation project have created an ever-increasing gap between this internationally acclaimed Buddhist temple and the poverty of the people who live in the surrounding vicinity.

In an attempt to address this gap, the Ruwat-Rawat Borobudur event includes seminars, workshops, cultural performances (rituals, performing arts), dialogues, and more. On the final day of the event, which lasts for more than one month, a cultural parade involving approximately a hundred performing art groups of the Magelang Regency culminates at the grounds of Borobudur Temple. Everyone who participates in the parade observes silence for about five minutes, during which time they contemplate or pray according to their own religion or belief system, expressing their care for the temple and their hopes that the temple will be respected as a religious or spiritual sanctuary, as it was in earlier times. Ruwat-Rawat Borobudur is a powerful movement of the people, held without any support from the Indonesian government, to help transform the temple from its current status as a dead monument into a priceless living monument for future generations.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Arahmaiani Feisal*

#### **Creative Activism for Social Justice in Java**

After working as a political activist for more than a decade, I realized that Indonesian politics is full of deceit and manipulation. The fact that the legal system is not working and is so unjust gave me a serious sense of desperation. I became aware that the struggle for social justice would become pointless if we did not find an alternative, creative strategy to deal with all the difficulties that people face. So beginning in early 1989, I changed directions and began to focus more on community-based art projects. I began working with a community of street artists and musicians in poor urban areas.

As we interacted, I learned that the people I was working with were originally from rural areas and had migrated to urban areas because they had been unable to survive the farmer's life. I started to divide my time between villages on the slopes of Mount Merapi and the city of Yogyakarta. As a volunteer, I began to teach the young people art in general and performance art in particular. This work led to a greater understanding of the problems that people in these communities have to deal with – how they are not being served by the government, but instead have to serve the government. In the process, I developed a vision for the potential empowerment of the community.

Since then until today, I have continued working with various communities (artists, women, farmers, religious groups, social and political organizations, and cultural and environmental activists) to deal with a variety of issues affecting people in Yogyakarta and Central Java, including the Borobudur temple area, both in urban and rural settings. Through a process of dialogue, participants are currently engaged in a variety of social, political, cultural, and environmental projects to benefit their communities. This paper will present the community work that I have been doing, illustrated by images.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Rita Gross*

#### **The Real Problem Regarding Buddhist Women and Gender Justice: Gender-Neutral Models of Humanity**

There has been a significant international Buddhist women's movement for about thirty-five years. During that time, many advances have been made and people have put forward many proposals about what would improve the situation for Buddhist women. Among the issues most discussed are women's monastic ordinations, women as Buddhist leaders and teachers, and bringing lesser known Buddhist women into the light of history.

As one of the earliest commentators on Buddhism and gender issues, I have begun to feel strongly that we are overlooking the underlying issue – the pre-verbal, pre-reflective, but deeply imbedded impression that men are the normal, ideal human beings against whom women are measured. This problem was located long ago by Simone de Beauvoir in her monumental book *The Second Sex* and was highlighted in early second-wave feminism, but it has been largely forgotten in recent discussions about women in Buddhism.

I will argue that we should regard androcentric versus gender-neutral and inclusive models of humanity as the

real issue for Buddhist women. I will also argue that if Buddhists, both men and women, understood more clearly that men are not more normal or ideal human beings than are women, many of the specific institutional problems women face would fall away. They would fall away because such practices only make sense if the view that men are more normal representatives of the human species than are women is deeply held. But a view that is held largely unconsciously is much more powerful than a view that is held clearly in the light of awareness and many people are unaware of the depth of their androcentrism, especially in more traditional Buddhist contexts.

I will argue that we need to focus on ways in which androcentrism manifests and always take steps to correct it. First, androcentrism manifests in the continued use of generic masculine language, i.e., using words such as "mankind" rather than "humanity" in Buddhist liturgical contexts. In some liturgies, the term "son," a clearly masculine word, is used to stand for all practitioners, even in especially crucial contexts. This practice clearly reveals many unconscious presuppositions about who are real and worthy human beings, and intensifies discrimination against women in Buddhist institutions. Second, much Buddhist visual imagery conveys the impression that men are the real human beings while women are merely accessories or accomplices. Such impressions are especially evident in Tibetan and Vajrayana images commonly called the "yab-yum" icon, in which couples are portrayed in ways that make the female partner melt into the male partner, often becoming almost invisible or unnoticeable to the viewer. Finally, even in Buddhist women's circles, talk of an essentialist "feminine principle" is becoming more common. But such essentialist discourse is limiting rather than freeing to women and intensifies androcentrism rather than undercutting it.

While I do not suggesting diminishing our efforts regarding more superficial problems that limit Buddhist women institutionally, I strongly suggest that we do everything we can to make Buddhists much more aware of their unconscious androcentrism if we hope to truly overcome institutional limitations. I make this suggestion because the institutional limitations are the effect of androcentric views of humanity and probably cannot be overcome so long as many Buddhists continue to view male humans as the norm and ideal of humanity.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Anna Halafoff and Emma Tomalin*

#### **Cyber Sisters: Buddhist Women's Online Activism and Practice**

Buddhist (feminist) scholars, nuns, and practitioners have been at the forefront of a global Buddhist social movement initiated by Sakyadhita ("Daughters of the Buddha") International Association of Buddhist Women, which challenges gender disparities and strives for equity for women in all Buddhist traditions. Formed in 1987, after the first International Conference on Buddhist Nuns held in Bodhgaya, India, the place where, it is believed, the Buddha reached enlightenment, Sakyadhita promotes research and publications on Buddhist women's history and contemporary issues and organizes international conferences every two years, in addition to national conferences. Today Sakyadhita is primarily an international advocacy and communications network, which has a central website, national branch websites, and a significant online presence on social media sites such as Facebook and a popular blog ("Awakening Buddhist Women") that collates the writings of members in 45 countries. Many of those attending the biennial conferences, which take place mainly in Asian locations, write live blogs and produce webcasts from the conference for those back in their own countries who cannot attend, as well as for the benefit and interest of the broader global "cyber sangha." However, Sakyadhita is not the only forum within which Buddhist women across the globe engage in activism and spiritual practice. Today there are also many others, including the Alliance for Bhikkhunis website and the Yogini Project facebook page.

The aim of this paper will be to provide an overview of the number and types of online forums for Buddhist women today. Following this, we will present a media analysis of a selection of these sites, identifying who participates and why, as well as the aims and outcomes of such engagement. Bringing together existing literature on women's online activism with literature on religion and the internet, and placing these within a "glocal" (global-local) framework, our aim is to generate new knowledge regarding the role of the internet within global Buddhism in countering gender inequality.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Chenxing Han*

#### **The Invisible Majority: Conversations with Young Adult Asian American Buddhists**

Despite comprising more than two-thirds of American Buddhists, Asian American Buddhists are underrepresented – and all too often misrepresented – in academic and popular literature. The "two Buddhisms" typology contrasts white, convert, meditating Buddhists (the more visible face of American Buddhism) with Asian, immigrant, devotional Buddhists (who are relegated to "ethnic enclaves"). Young adult Asian American Buddhists, whose experiences do not fit neatly into these categories, offer a challenge to the "two Buddhisms" model. In this paper, I draw on in-depth interviews with twenty-six young adult Asian Americans from a wide range of ethnicities and Buddhist backgrounds to explore how they answer the questions: "Why is American Buddhism so white?" and "Why are Asian American Buddhists so invisible?"

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa*

#### **The Modern Girl as an Upāsikā: Recovering the Women in Buddhist Modernisms**

This paper aims to trace the entangled trajectories of social movements with feminist and Buddhist revival goals in twentieth century Asia in order to explore why women have been conspicuously absent from the

historiographies of Buddhist modernist movements. The early twentieth century was a period of efflorescence for the creation of trans-traditional and occasionally anti-colonial Buddhist movements and institutions including the Mahabodhi Society and the Young Men's Buddhist Association. These movements aimed to re-assert Buddhism's place in Asian societies and to conceptualize it as a global religion, but women were rarely included in their goals. However, during the same period of time, women activists and discourses about women rose to new prominence as part of broader demands for social change throughout the globe. These projects of modernity are represented as having separate genealogies in most histories of the twentieth century, but in this paper I will explore how different actors moved between them.

These actors were not all formally educated, socially mobile, elite urban males such as Dharmapala (1864-1933) and Taixu (1890-1947), however, and beyond looking at their institutions, I will also acknowledge the debts these projects owed to pre-revival, pre-colonial institutions that contributed to the creation of the utopian visions of modern Buddhism in different societies throughout Asia. In other rural contexts there were also older indigenous discussions present about opportunities for women. In different parts of Southeast Asia, there were movements in support of specific feminist goals, including suffrage and reproductive rights. Other areas of Asia also had complex traditional structures of female hierarchy that were actually disrupted by the entrance of Victorian ideals about female authority. For example, in parts of the Tibetan-Himalayan Buddhist world, women held a great deal of secular and religious authority, and it was only ironically with the introduction of Western education and Buddhist reform movements that their positions in their communities were questioned. This paper will explore these different local communities, as well as transnational movements which represented feminist ideals of gender equality and allowing for increased opportunities for women, in order to understand influences in their development and to assess critically claims both for and against the role of Buddhism in providing a source for feminist thought and action. In doing so, I aim to develop tools for developing a critical history of Buddhist feminisms and the involvement of women in modern Buddhist movements across borders and into the present by questioning available source materials and considering alternative archives for understanding women's agency.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Hsiao-Lan Hu

#### **Avalokiteśvara's Embrace of Diversity: Respect and Empathy**

Every Mahāyāna Buddhist knows Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Whether known by the name Quanyin, Kannon, Kwan Um, Quan Am, or Chenrezig, the "Perceiver of the Cries of the World" is the most popular bodhisattva in the Buddhist world. Many Mahāyāna Buddhists are also familiar with the concept that Avalokiteśvara takes different forms. The Chinese translation rendered by Kumārajīva in 406 CE listed 33 forms. Chün-Fang Yü comments that "the number thirty-three is meaningful only in the Vedic and Hindu context."<sup>1</sup> However, the number was not meaningful enough for all Indian Buddhist writers to adopt, nor did the various forms of Avalokiteśvara become a standardized repertoire. An earlier version of the Lotus Sūtra translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 286 CE listed only 17 forms. Hendrik Kern's English translation from a Nepalese manuscript, which dates to 1039 CE but was probably compiled much earlier, lists only 16 forms. Both of the shorter lists contain mostly non-human forms, and neither contains explicitly female forms. The author or authors of the version Kumārajīva translated are likely to have been male elites (considering their ability to read and write). The fact that they added more human forms and female forms indicated that they no longer saw male elites to be representative of the whole of humanity.

Why is there such a large number of non-human beings? It is worth repeating that the mythical non-human forms clearly did not become a standardized repertoire – the non-human forms in the three lists vary. Some of the mythical beings are believed to be divine and lofty, and others are semi-divine and powerful and need to be propitiated because they exist on the peripheries of the human environment and may cause trouble in day-to-day life. The inclusion of at least some such mythical non-human beings can be read as the authors' way of signifying the gender, sexual, and ethnic "others" that are so far from the norm of the dominant male elites that they have to be conceptualized as different species.

The textbook interpretation of Avalokiteśvara's taking different forms focuses on the *bodhisattva's* skillful means. This paper will argue that there is significance in the forms taken and in the intentionality behind the transformations. The fact that Avalokiteśvara takes the form of all kinds of beings signals that the *bodhisattva's* infinite wisdom and boundless compassion can be found in people with all kinds of identities. Avalokiteśvara's various manifestations thus teach us to respect diversity, whether the non-normative one is the self or an "other." Avalokiteśvara recognizes various sufferings caused by human differences and so takes multiple forms in order to help different people trapped in different realities, which teaches us to empathize with the suffering of "others" and take action to change their situation.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Hudaya Kandahjaya

#### **What is Borobudur?**

The question "What is Borobudur?" has been asked ever since Borobudur was rediscovered two centuries ago. But answers given in previous studies are unsatisfactory and conflicting. De Casparis summed it up by saying that, despite knowing many details, we still lack a holistic comprehension of Borobudur. However, by first examining the evidence and identifying relevant sources, we can determine the underlying rationale and design that the architects deployed to construct Borobudur. This approach helps us read the symbolism and function laid out by the architects.

This study confirms a number of significant facts. First, the *Sa Hya Kamahāyānikan* provided the ultimate inspiration. Second, King Samaratunga and his daughter Princess Prāmodavarddhanī perfected the architecture.

Third, the Kayumwungan inscription documents that Borobudur was consecrated on May 26, 824 CE. As can be seen today, Borobudur is architecturally a stupa on an altar (*stūpa-prāsāda*) and memorializes the eight miraculous events in the life of Śākyamuni. This sanctum of the Vajradhara school (*kaḥajradharan*) represents a mandala of the Dharma realm (*dharmadhātuma ala*) displaying the path to unexcelled enlightenment. As such, this monastery (*vihāra*) is imbued with the multitude of virtues of a Sugata (*sugatagu aga a*), by which the builders, supporters, and practitioners could accumulate virtues (bhūmisa bhāra) to speedily accomplish the highest goal. This temple was therefore called Borobudur (*vara-buddha-rūpa*), an excellent Buddha image.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Lina Koleilat

#### **Defending the Environment in Courts: Jiyul Sunim's Journey with the Law**

In South Korea, Bhiksuni Jiyul is well known for raising awareness about environmental concerns caused by "development" projects since 2004. Bhiksuni Jiyul has filed multiple lawsuits in order to protect the environment and to prevent the damage caused to the ecosystem by both government and private construction projects.

As Eunsu Cho (2013) has noted, in one of her court cases Bhiksuni Jiyul filed a lawsuit representing a "non-human" class action suit called "The Clawed Salamander Class Action Suit," which was an unprecedented case in the South Korean legal system. The clawed salamander is a rare species of amphibian that, in this lawsuit, represented several plant and animal life forms that were endangered due to the planned construction of a tunnel for a high-speed train rail project connecting the two largest cities in the country. Without a law degree and without much legal support, Bhiksuni Jiyul was able to force the government to halt construction to allow an environmental evaluation of the project to be conducted. In February 2014, Bhiksuni Jiyul filed an additional lawsuit against two big corporations who are starting a project that will affect Yeongju Dam in Gyeongsang Province.

In this paper, I discuss the remarkable journey of a Buddhist nun's resistance to environmental destruction. Drawing on her lawsuits, the research will focus on how she used the legal system to put her case forward and raise awareness in relation to environmental issues in Korea today.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Seokjoo Kang

#### **The Uncomfortable Relationship Between the Self-management Boom and Feminism in Korea**

The concept of "self-management" is very popular in Korean society. "Self-management," meaning to manage one's appearance, health, qualifications, and emotions, has emerged and been promoted as a means of achieving individual success in Korean society. As more women enter the workforce, they must project high self-esteem, regardless of their age. A considerable number of self-help books and leadership lectures are available as self-management tools. These self-help books repeatedly emphasize the slogan, "Women of Korea, take full charge of your own life." The self-management boom has been strongly influenced by feminism, which has continuously conceptualized and articulated the ideals of individuality, independence, sovereignty, and the right to self-determination.

The message of feminism has laid a solid foundation to promote women's self-management; however, the message of individual success has proliferated without any particular political awareness and without regard for the concept of sisterhood or the concept of caring. Feminism in Korea focuses on individuality without sufficient concern for the quality of compassion or the political implications of self-regard. Rather than providing women with the opportunity to correlate their private experiences with their public persona and social agenda or potential, feminism has emphasized individuality and autonomy – a concern that may have led some women to fall into narcissism.

The feminist concept of "sisterhood," on the other hand, brings out the issues of solidarity and community that run through all generations, social classes, and religions. The keyword of "caring" has been a topic for a considerable amount of time, but advocates have failed to propose a substantial solution based on feminist values to address issues such as how to co-exist with and relate to others outside one's own family. This phenomenon has some correlation with the endless competition in Korean society. In order to survive, one has to look out for oneself. Thus, it is difficult to expect self-realized women to ally with others naturally and skillfully.

The Buddhist teaching of *paticca-samuppada* (dependent arising) provides an important idea for a paradigm shift in the self-management boom. As Joanna Macy has pointed out, according to the Buddhist teachings, human beings are inevitably involved with others. Therefore, we need to question the narrow concept of self-definition and go beyond the wall of ego. Ok-Sun An insists that being in relationship to others is the premise of personhood in early Buddhism. These concepts are directly relevant to feminist ethics, particularly the values of care and sensitivity in context. Building on the work of Macy and An, in this paper I will investigate how the concept of *paticca-samuppada* could be implemented to reconfigure feminism so as to restore its reputation as a compassionate perspective. Further, I will argue that the agenda of individualism in feminism can be refined with the help of Buddhist philosophy. Taking this approach, I will demonstrate that, while women pursue self-realization and self-improvement, they also need to continually attend to "others" in society and develop the potential power of empathy.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Pema Khandro

### **Bridging the Lay-Monastic Divide: Women's Religious Leadership in Tibet**

Appreciating the history of Tibetan Buddhist women's religious leadership requires an expanded paradigm beyond the lay-monastic divide that is generally applied to Buddhist communities. Among what is already a paucity of historical documentation on women in Tibetan history, the binary categorization of lay/monastic women further obscures the variety of roles of religious leadership women participated in and the power they exercised outside religious institutions.

Though there are few biographical materials about major female figures in Tibetan history, the narrative materials in compilations of Tibetan life stories that do exist reflect cultural frameworks and literary tropes that describe and proscribe a variety of women's religious roles. Understanding the role of women in Tibetan religious history requires reconceiving the assumption that Buddhist leadership falls into one of two categories: lay or monastic. Biographical narratives name historical female figures in numerous types of religious occupations. Their stories as treasure revealers, nuns, *yoginis*, non-celibate teachers, incarnations, (Tibetan: *sprul sku*; *sprul ba*), oracles, patrons, doctors/healers, mothers, and consorts reflects a diverse female influence on Tibetan religious life.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Sheng Ying Shi

### **The Significance of Bhiksuni Hiu Wan's Prajna Chan: Compassion and Art for Modern-day Education**

Bhiksuni Shig Hiu Wan, the founder of Huafan University, was an accomplished Chan practitioner who excelled in many fields, based on her background in art, literature, and education. She was a student of the master painter Gao Jian Fu of the Ling Nan School of Fine Arts. She not only taught Chinese painting, but also researched Chinese painting theory and was a renowned traveler. During her early life, she traveled to more than 30 countries and held solo art exhibitions all over the world. Wherever she went, she did not hesitate to promote the excellence of Chinese culture and art, particularly once she had incorporated Buddhism, the arts, and education as major forces in her life. In Buddhist terms, it could be said that she was a living *bodhisattva* who exemplified many of the qualities of the *bodhisattva* ideal. Her achievements in the arts were recognised by the Taiwanese Government in 1997 when she won the National Council for Culture Award. She told many people that her establishment of Huafan University was greatly inspired by her visit to Tagore University in India, where she was amazed to find an educational institution set in a beautiful natural environment. Aspects of this four-year period of her life had been expressly portrayed in some of her artwork.

Bhiksuni Hiu Wan's ideals can be subsumed into three areas: *chan* (meditation, concentration, stilling the mind), *prajña* (the development of wisdom, a deep understanding of values and life), and compassion (integrating Buddhist values and traditional Chinese cultural values into education). These themes are frequently expressed in her artwork. This paper explores the implications of these themes for the education of modern-day youth, using Huafan University as an example. When Huafan University was established, it was designed as a bridge between Buddhist culture and Chinese culture. The "enlightened education" advocated by Bhiksuni Hiu Wan was the university's guiding principle. She also proposed the "integration of the humanities and technology with an equal emphasis on the mutual enrichment of compassion and wisdom" as educational guidelines. These guidelines involve self-awakening, self-development, and rational thinking, based on Chinese ethics and Buddhist compassion. The university's objectives are to nurture students' academic competencies and to foster a deeper understanding of virtuous behavior, self-reflection, and all the inner qualities that are valued so much in young people, yet seem so lacking.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Kustiani

### **The Karmavibhanga Reliefs of Borobudur: Unveiling Their Moral and Social Value**

Borobudur has 2,672 relief panels, with each panel conveying a meaning and a moral teaching. Of these panels, 160 are located in the Karmavibhanga wall, the first wall of the temple. Unfortunately, at present we are able to see just four of the 160 relief panels. Another 156 relief panels have been closed with stone since Borobudur's restoration in the 1900s. Some sources say that these sections of the wall are closed in order to strengthen the foundation of temple; according to other sources, they are covered up because the reliefs panels contain pornographic images.

These reports make me curious and have encouraged me to do research on all the relief panels of Karmavibhanga by taking photographs of album photos that are still available in the museum of Karmavibhanga, located near Borobudur Temple. As far as I know, the relief panels of Karmavibhanga do not include any pornographic images, but instead depict teachings on the law of *kamma* (*karmavibhanga*). Therefore, I would like to share information about what the Karmavibhanga relief panels really contain. I hope to present a complete picture of the 160 relief panels and an analysis of their moral and social value.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Karen Lang

### **The Healing Power of Compassion in the Stories of the Buddha's First Daughters**

Compassion draws us out into the world, not away from it. In the Metta Sutta, the Buddha instructed his

followers to radiate love and compassion out to all beings in all directions. Compassion for all sentient beings grows with patient cultivation and takes root in a heart that cherishes all with the same self-sacrificing love that a mother feels for her child. Compassion can also heal the all-consuming grief felt by mothers whose intense love for their dead children leads to madness. This paper will focus on the stories of the first generation of the Buddha's daughters, particularly those of Patācārā and Vāsīthī. Sources used include the verses attributed to them in the Enlightened Nuns' Verses (*Therīgāthā*), and the commentarial literature, including the Noble Deeds (*Apadāna*), Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Words of Dhamma (*Dhammapada-atthakathā*), Dhammapāla's commentary on the Verses (*Therīgāthā-atthakathā*), and Yaśomitra's Commentary on Vasubandhu's Treasury of Abhidharma (*Abhidharmakośavyākḥā*).

Out of compassion, the Buddha and his cousin Ānanda healed these women's pain and offered them teachings and encouragement. Comforted and inspired, Patācārā and Vāsīthī entered the nuns' order, where they, in turn, inspired Uttarā, Sundarī, and hundreds of other women through the gift of the Buddhist teachings. These nuns' compelling words and the stories woven around them over many centuries continue to inspire and heal the pain and suffering of contemporary Buddhists as well, as oral narratives of Cambodian refugees collected by Anne Hansen attest.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Amy Paris Langenberg

#### **Pious Lady, Noble Woman: Relationships between Lay Women and Nuns as Narrated and Prescribed in the Mahasanghika-lokottaravada Bhiksuni Vinaya**

The Mahasanghika-lokottaravada *bhiksuni vinaya*, one of two complete nuns' *vinayas* surviving in an Indic language, is remarkable in that it appears to have been edited in order to provide a comprehensive set of rules, principles, and procedures for nuns, easily detachable from the monks' *vinaya*. This nun-centered *vinaya* text includes a number of narratives describing and prescribing nuns' interactions with laywomen. In one such narrative, a wealthy laywoman shelters the nun Sudinna, whose state of purity has been threatened by her deceased husband's brother. In another, nuns spin cotton for their lay patroness Visakha, who requests them to explain and recite the sutras instead. In a third, the nun Chandakamata establishes a medical clinic with the support of the wealthy and aristocratic women of Kausambi.

This paper surveys and analyzes these and other narratives involving the relationship between lay and monastic women in the Mahasanghika-lokottaravada *bhiksuni vinaya*, with comparisons to similar texts from the larger *vinaya* tradition. In these *vinaya* texts, the interactions between lay and ordained women go far beyond a simple exchange of alms for merit and teachings. Rather, through these texts, it is possible to glimpse a richly textured relationship, or at least the perception of such a relationship on the part of monastic lawyers. The Mahasanghika-lokottaravada *bhiksuni vinaya* narratives analyzed here depict a highly gendered ancient sangha and a complex monastic/lay relationship of reciprocal care, cooperation, and, at times, collusion in the face of pervasive male authority and privilege. Moreover, they depict a female monastic community that continuously and flexibly negotiates its relationship with the larger economic and social environment it inhabits, while striving to interpret and actualize the ideals of monastic discipline.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Elles Lohuis

#### **Monastic Inspiration for Daily Lay Life**

Living in a small monastery for Tibetan Buddhist nuns in the Northern Himalayas as a volunteer teacher for long periods of time between 2006 and 2010, I experienced the benefits of a monastic lifestyle as a lay woman. This paper discusses how the Tibetan Buddhist monastic lifestyle not only fits well within the monastic community, but also is suitable to the lay community. The paper explains how elements of monastic life can be a useful source of life orientation and lifestyle for those interested in living a mindful life – a life with focus and intention. I will go into the elements of the Tibetan Buddhist monastic lifestyle that I found beneficial outside the monastery to strengthen the quality of my own personal life and work, and how I apply these elements in my work as a life coach, working with Buddhist and non-Buddhist young adults.

First, I will sketch my own acquaintance with the Tibetan Buddhist monastic lifestyle – what I observed and learned, and how it helped me to grow and live a more joyous and purposeful life. Next, I will examine the basic patterns of the Tibetan Buddhist monastic life as I have experienced these in the Northern Himalayas and translate these patterns into the lay context. I will go into the elements of structure – simplifying, focusing, and managing time wisely – and into the elements of skill – listening skills and inspired personal leadership – to show how these elements, when applied in a lay context, can improve the quality of life and work, and ultimately lead to a more joyous, purposeful life. I will complete the paper with a contemplation on how these elements of the monastic lifestyle can not only benefit the individual, but also can ultimately nurture more peaceful societies.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Dipti Mahanta

#### **Buddhist Feminism: Its Ecumenical Role and Compassionate Activism**

While Buddhism in its traditional religious role and feminism in its post-modern contexts have diverse agendas,

certain Buddhist concepts, especially the four divine abidings (brahmavihara), the four noble truths, the noble eightfold path, and the doctrine of dependent arising, alongside feminist ideological claims for the protection and advocacy of equal rights for women in every sphere, can be embraced by adherents of either camp. The two perspectives can be combined for the social advancement of women in traditionally Buddhist countries in general and female monastics' predicament in particular. Although Buddhism as a religion and as a socio-cultural institution is not completely free of bias, the core Buddhist teachings on which individual spiritual progress rest are ecumenical. Likewise, while feminism in its conventional mode as a movement that aims to protect women's rights and liberty is not completely free of bias, its efforts to raise awareness and struggles against socio-cultural, religious, economic, and political injustices against women have been universally beneficial for humankind.

This paper will investigate the issue of osmotic exchange between Buddhism and feminism that shapes the contours of the spirituo-ideological stance of Buddhist feminism and the outcome of such mutual learning and borrowing. Conceptually, the paper will attempt to critically analyze the philosophical dimension of Buddhist feminism and its universality in praxis. The salient feature of Buddhist feminism is that it strategically leads to the cultivation of wisdom (paññā) and harmonious co-existence through a mindful construction of rigorous and compassionate activism at one level and deconstruction of all dichotomous thought-processes at another level.

Philosophically what is deconstructed in Buddhist feminism is not just biased discourses, but self-centeredness in all dimensions – linguistic, psychological, social, ethico-philosophical, and cultural orientations – for the holistic well-being of not only the upholders of Buddhist feminism but the beneficiaries of their actions as well. The trained mind of a Buddhist feminist transcends egotism and deconstructs dualistic notions at a higher contemplative level, starting from the very concepts of me and mine, self and other, thereby encompassing its activism within the sphere of compassion, non-aversion, altruism, and equanimity. This trend is evident in many contemporary female monastics, such as Ayya Khema and others. By mindfully defying reification of all mental formations, conditioned states, binary oppositions, and linguistic conventions, written and verbal, Buddhist feminists bring to the fore the importance of cultivating right understanding in day-to-day life for the well-being and true liberation of oneself and others. Buddhist feminism thus has great relevance today for productive and sustainable relationships not only among human beings, but also between human beings and nature. Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike can benefit from Buddhist feminism because the underlying messages embodied in it are free of sectarianism. Buddhist feminism can be applied at any time and in any situation by any interested person, irrespective of religious, cultural, or ideological background.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Annie McGhee*

#### **Compassionate Legacy: Mahayana Buddhism in Sumatra and its Connections with Tibet**

In this paper, I will explore the connections between the reformation of Buddhism in Tibet in the 11th century and the extensive monastic university at Muara Jambi in Sumatra, Indonesia, that was established in the early seventh century, during the Sriwijaya era. Muara Jambi, near the present day city of Jambi, was Dharmakirti Serlingpa Suvamadvipi's center for teaching. He was considered the greatest scholar of his time throughout South East Asia during the 11th century – the master of bodhicitta, the wish to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, and great compassion. Atisha Dipamkara Srijnana traveled to Muara Jambi at this time and stayed there for 12 years in order to receive extensive teachings from this esteemed teacher.

Compassion, the wish for all beings to be free from suffering, can be understood in a broader context as being part of a Buddhist concern for social justice, particularly in the modern era when Buddhism has expanded in the West. It is a transformative way of changing a society into one based primarily on loving-kindness, equality, empathy, and respect toward others, which comes through recognizing the needs and rights of others within a community. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama points out: "I believe that at every level of society – family, tribal, national, and international – the key to a happier and more successful world is the growth of compassion."

This paper will demonstrate the impact of Serlingpa's teachings about bodhicitta, which Atisha took back with him to Tibet. These precious teachings precipitated a resurgence of Buddhism in Tibet in the 11th century and remained intact there until the 20th century, when they found their way to the West.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Claralynn Rose Nunamaker*

#### **Buddhism and Social Enterprise: Creating a More Compassionate Economy**

In "Facing the Future," Bhikkhu Bodhi writes:

The massive transnational corporations that dominate this economic order, driven by the quest for commercial profit, have turned into the institutional embodiments of greed. Despite their impressive public-relations propaganda, their fundamental purpose is not to meet genuine human needs but to generate maximum profit at minimum cost. Profit is the fuel of corporate growth ...

Social enterprise is a relatively new business structure, one which "applies commercial strategies to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being, rather than maximising profits for external shareholders." In the U.K., social enterprise is understood to be unlike a charity in that it has a profit motive, and unlike a traditional corporation in that its primary directive is to further its social (human or environmental) mission.

This paper proposes that social enterprise is a business form especially well-suited to Buddhists, given its ethical foundation of commitment to social or environmental missions. It explores what social enterprise is, some of its

distinguishing characteristics, and its relevance to Buddhism. The paper further proposes several ways in which the Buddhist community and social enterprises might look to identify and strengthen connections for mutual benefit.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Jin Y. Park*

#### **Religion and the Right to Exist: Kim Iryöp on Buddhist Practice, Gender Identity, and Social Responsibility**

Our time is defined as a secular one in which religious practice is frequently considered to have only marginal importance. In the East Asian context, the word "religion" (Japanese: *shūkyō*, Chinese: *zōngjiào*, Korean *chonggyo*) itself was introduced only in the mid-19th century in the process of an East-West encounter. The meaning of religious practice tends to take a formalistic quality, understood as participation in a religious institution. The interpretation of religious practice and religious education of Korean Zen Buddhist nun and thinker Kim Iryöp (1896-1961) offers us a new vision of how religious practice is essential in our understanding of the self, the self's relation to others, and the meaning of our own existence. In her pre-monastic life, as a first generation Korean feminist, known as the "new woman," Kim Iryöp was an active participant in creating and raising a voice for women's issues. As a Buddhist nun, Kim Iryöp created writings and took part in activities that did not explicitly reveal her concern for women's issues. However, in this paper I argue that Kim Iryöp's interpretation of Buddhism and Buddhist practice demonstrate that Buddhism broadened the scope of her vision. Thus, in her interpretation and practice of Buddhism, Kim Iryöp not only considered the question of gender identity but also the question of the meaning of one's existence and responsibility for one's community. I will discuss these issues in two sections.

The first section will examine Kim Iryöp's discussion of self and its relation to gender identity as well as to consumer society, as revealed in her book *Reflections of a Zen Buddhist Nun* (1960). The second section will focus on her vision of religious practice and religious education, based on her definition of a buddha and Buddhist enlightenment. The concluding section will consider the meaning of social engagement from Kim Iryöp's Buddhist perspective by examining how she defines one's relation to others and one's responsibility to society.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Dian Pratiwi*

#### **Indonesian Women & Buddhist Social Service**

The Indonesian Buddhist Women's Fellowship (WBI) is one of a number of autonomous groups affiliated with the Indonesian Buddhayana Council (MBI). Its many activities are systematically organized according to a schema of five kinds of programs, namely :

1. Management and Organization
2. Education and Communications
3. Social Prosperity, including
  - a. Spirituality
  - b. Health
  - c. Society
4. Arts and Culture
5. Enterprises

Each kind of program is organized and discussed thoughtfully to encourage and motivate WBI members in 24 provinces (92, if we include the branches in remote areas). The main goal of WBI is to advance the welfare of Buddhist women, especially their ability to take initiative for their own well-being, the well-being of their families, and the well-being of society in general, for the sake of all beings.

In this paper, I will trace the three main types of activities that encourage Buddhist women to develop independently as woman, as mothers, as leaders, as part of Indonesian society, and also as a group working in fellowship for the sakes of all people and all sentient beings.

WBI has selected baby and child blessings as one of their main activities in all branches. We regard this as giving children a Buddhist "trademark" that enables them early on to become acquainted with the teachings of the Buddha. Buddhist women need to take initiative within the family and also in society. Leadership training is therefore given to nurture women's development as mothers, wives, and leaders in society. Last, but not least, a special activity of Buddhist women in Pati and Jepara (Central Java) involves hundreds or even thousands of people in collecting rice (Javanese: *beras jimpitan*) from each family daily, which they donate together as a community to establish a cooperative enterprise to help people in remote areas of the country. This activity has been very effective, both financially and socially, in helping gain support for larger events.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Darcie Price-Wallace*

#### **Gendering Nyungne, the Tibetan Buddhist Fasting Ritual**

*Nyungne* (*smyung-gnas*) is a Tibetan Buddhist ritual that focuses on karmic purification and merit-generation through the actions and performance of renunciation, fasting, recitation, prostration, invocation of silence, devotion, and in some ethnographic accounts, self-creation. In the ritual, the practitioner invokes the path of renunciation (taking eight of the monastic vows) and the path of purification (fasting and prostrating) while

visualizing and honoring the *bodhisattva* of compassion, Chenrezig (Avalokiteśvara) in the eleven-faced, thousand-armed form. The commemorated founder of nyungne, Gelongma Palmo (Bhiksuni Laksmi), lived in the tenth or eleventh century. In the hagiographies, she engaged in the highest level of tantra, became inseparable from Chenrezig, and attained a *siddhi* state.

As practiced in its current form as an action (and performance) tantra, *nyungne* centers on re-enacting Gelongma Palmo's fasting practice and her devotion to Chenrezig. The gender implications of *nyungne* are often emphasized; it is usually organized and performed in nunneries and is often called a "woman's practice." As documented in several ethnographies, women outnumber men in its practice.

Does framing *nyungne* as gendered practice reinforce dichotomies of gender, social status, and religious status? Through the austerities of *nyungne*, the practitioner not only generates an understanding of the limits of physicality but also enters a liminal space in which such dichotomies are temporarily suspended. If the ritual allows suspension of such dichotomies, how does this translate into the cultural context outside of the ritual practice space, in which gender (and other) dichotomies persist? Does performance of such austerities enable practitioners to translate this suspended dichotomous state back into the constructions of their conventional world?

This paper argues that the dichotomies of gender, social status, and religious status may persist and, in fact, may be reinforced by gendering the ritual. Ultimately, however, understanding the meaning of this practice and structuring it as a "woman's practice" for practitioners regardless of gender, social status, and religious status has several benefits. These include: (1) re-enacting the narrative of a female lineage holder in which the female body is accepted (and enlightened), thus highlighting the fourteenth tantric vow that forbids discrimination of women; (2) reinforcing and professionalizing *bhiksunis*; (3) potentially strengthening relationships among male and female lay practitioners and the renunciate community; and 4) engendering compassion for all sentient beings. In order to address these issues, this paper will examine the background of the lineage holder, Gelongma Palmo.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Vanessa R. Sasson

#### **Leaving Family Behind: Lessons of Love and Loss from the Buddha's Hagiography**

The Buddha's story is naturally focused on him, and most modern western tellings emphasize his decision to depart from the householder life without paying attention to those he left behind. Most traditional narratives, however, highlight the effects of his life decisions on others, reminding their audiences that the choice to renounce always comes at a price.

In this paper, I will look at some of the effects his journey is said to have had on those he left behind. For example, his wife is described in the *Lalitavistara* as having been angry, hurt, and even humiliated after his departure. According to the *Jatakanidana*, his horse Kanthaka also suffered due to the loss, dying at the edge of the forest while watching his master leave. And his father, who is said in Buddhaghosa's *Buddhacarita* to have dedicated his parenting to protecting his son from the evils of samsara, refused to accept his son's departure and sent out spies to find him and bring him home.

Eventually, all of these characters (with the exception of Kanthaka) overcame their pain and are described as having reached the greatest of spiritual heights by following the Buddha's teachings, but this was accomplished only after having fallen into the abyss of pain first.

The religious life often calls those who follow it to journey far from home, and this is no easy reality. The Buddha's life story is an extraordinary tale not only because it records his road to awakening, but also because of its ability to acknowledge the costs that such journeys create. Buddhist doctrine focuses much of its attention on the reality of *dukkha*, and Buddhist narrative is no different. The Buddha's story does not shield its audience from pain. Even when the suffering comes as a result of the Buddha's own decisions, Buddhist narratives recognize it and call it by name.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Chang Shen Shih

#### **An Emerging Alliance: The Diverse Family Formation Bill & Buddhist Gender Justice in Taiwan**

In September 2013, a bill drafted by civil unions for reforming the civil marriage and family system – the Diverse Family Formation Bill, which includes amendments to the Civil Code – was first sent to the Legislative Yuan in Taiwan for judicial review. This draft, whose amendments include same-sex marriage, a civil partnership system, adoption, and multiperson households, is the first and most radical marriage and family system reform bill in Asia. This bill provoked both strong support and opposition from society as well as religious groups, including an opposition march of nearly 100,000 people held on October 30, 2013, to maintain so-called family values. This paper will discuss how Buddhism engaged in this debate on marriage and family reform, in order to explore the relationship between Buddhist ethics and sexual politics in contemporary Taiwan.

To discuss the various positions Buddhists have taken in this debate, I will use the most important representative among Buddhist voices – Bhiksuni Zhao Hui, who is the most socially active feminist nun in Taiwan – as well as other supportive and opposing Buddhist voices. Bhiksuni Zhao Hui not only actively promotes this bill, but also held a Buddhist-style same-sex marriage ceremony at Hongshi Buddhist Institute in August 2012. This ceremony, which was the first and most innovative Buddhist same-sex marriage in history, will also be explored in this paper. In contrast to the views of earlier female Taiwan Buddhists, who separated

themselves from the feminist movement, this paper finds an emerging alliance between human rights in sexual politics and Buddhist gender justice in Taiwan.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Chih Yin Shih

**A Narrative Analysis of Buddhist Discourse on Gay Marriage in Taiwan: A Case Study of Master Chao Hwei**

As the legalization of gay marriage proceeds apace in Taiwan, so does the debate on the legitimacy of gay marriage. While objections to the practice are notably raised in Taiwanese Christian circles, Buddhist voices seem to be relatively quiet, with the exception of Bhiksuni Chao Hwei.

Bhiksuni Chao Hwei is a well-known social activist in Taiwan. She has already been involved in social movements such as animal rights and opposition to nuclear power plants, gambling, and so on. In August 2012, she caused an international sensation when she performed the wedding of two lesbians at her temple, Hong Shih Buddhist Institute. According to media reports, this was the first ceremony of its kind in Taiwan, if not in Asia. When debates about the legitimacy of gay marriage (or the "Marriage Equality Bill") take place in Taiwan, she is the most vocal Buddhist supporter for the legalization of gay marriage. My paper is a narrative analysis of Bhiksuni Chao Hwei's discourse on the topic.

The first section of my paper introduces the life and work of Bhiksuni Chao Hwei. Next, I provide excerpts of my interview with the two lesbians who were married in August 2012 to gain a better understanding of the relevance of religious sanctions and the legalization of same-sex marriage for the people who are personally involved, namely, homosexual Buddhists. Finally, in the major section of my paper, I offer a narrative analysis of Bhiksuni Chao Hwei's views on the legalization of gay marriage. The aim of my paper is not to discuss whether gay marriage or homosexuality is permitted in Buddhism; instead, my main interest is to shed light on the debate over gay marriage by citing a particular Buddhist case in contemporary Taiwan.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Shiou-Ding Shi (Wang Hsiu-Fei)

**Vipassana and Pain: A Case Study of Taiwanese Female Buddhists Who Practice Vipassana**

There has been little research on the religious practices of Taiwanese female Buddhists. Although these practitioners may not be able to control every aspect of their lives, they believe that their minds are free. They hope that, through Buddhism, they can be saved by the Buddha in their next life and achieve liberation. By contrast, according to the teachings on *vipassana* (insight) meditation, people can gain wisdom and attain nibbāna in this life. By practicing the Four *Brahma Viharas*, they can develop metta (loving kindness).

This paper is based on my research about women practitioners of *vipassana* meditation. In Taiwan, *vipassana* has gained popularity in recent decades. For over ten years now, I have been following a group of female practitioners who range in age from forty to sixty years old. Some of these practitioners are married and some are single; some are monastics and some are lay Buddhists; most have received a high school education and hold jobs. The format of the meditation courses they take is, first, to practice *vipassana* meditation for nine days and, second, in order to deepen their compassion, to devote the last day to the practice of the *Four Brahmaviharas* (Divine Abidings): *metta* (loving kindness), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (joy), and *upekkha* (equanimity).

My preliminary findings are that when the women first practice *vipassana*, they learn to perceive physical pain as a phenomenon and to see through it, rather than identifying with it. For example, they observe pain by focusing on one or several pain points. The perceived pain points have the characteristic of appearing and disappearing, and move in different directions by themselves.

After the women practice *vipassana*, they practice the *Four Brahmaviharas*. Through this practice, they find themselves to be less emotional. They are able to perceive phenomena with *upekkha* (equanimity) and respond to everything with wisdom. When they face a trying situation, they are able to observe it calmly, because they have developed an understanding of how to respond to trying situations correctly. Ultimately, after engaging in these Buddhist practices, the women develop the confidence that they can face any difficulties. Gradually, they find that they can achieve liberation not only in the next life, but also in this life.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Zhen Yuan Shi

**Chin Hui Pitt: An Exemplary Buddhist Woman Educator in Singapore**

Chin Hui Pitt was born in China in 1902 and migrated to Malaya at a very young age with her mother and sister Chin Xuan. Chin Hui was a very close disciple of her Dharma master, Bhikkhu Ci Hang, who gave her the Dharma name Zaihang. In 1948, with her Dharma master's encouragement, she founded the Maha Bodhi School in Singapore. She devoted her entire lifetime to diligently spreading the Buddha's teachings in Singapore, contributing greatly to the field of Buddhist education to benefit children and to create a more harmonious society. She ran the school herself, serving as the principle until her retirement in 1971 at the age of 70. She passed away in 1982 at the age of 81.

Chin Hui Pitt was a pioneer in Buddhist education in Singapore. As a devout lay follower, she believed that

Buddhists had a duty to spread the Buddhadharma. The three best ways to do so, she felt, were (1) to encourage children to study Buddhism, (2) to encourage adults to study and do research on Buddhism, and (3) to train Buddhist teachers to help develop and sustain the Buddhasana (the Buddha's teachings). In addition, Chin Hui participated actively in the World Fellowship of Buddhists and contributed to cooperation among the Buddhists of Singapore and Malaya. In this paper, I will trace the important events of her life and her lasting legacy.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Teresa I. Sivilli

#### **Compassion: The Path to Resilience**

The concept of resilience – the ability to bounce back from adversity – has gained great traction in the common discourse. But how do we help people become more resilient? Working from the hypothesis that resilience is a cluster of positive behaviors and habits of mind that can be cultivated and reinforced through contemplative interventions, an hypothesis that I established in a previous paper, one very effective way to build resilience in individuals is through training in compassion.

This hypothesis is being translated from theory into practice at the Garrison Institute, which has launched its Contemplative-Based Resilience Training program to build resilience skills in humanitarian aid workers. Aid workers, who respond to natural and man-made disasters around the world, are constantly exposed to traumatic experiences, both their own and those of the affected populations with whom they work. Faced daily with overwhelming suffering, and often powerless to alleviate it, aid workers often burn out and experience what is commonly called "compassion fatigue." In reality, as the Buddhist meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg has pointed out, compassion fatigue is more rightly called empathy fatigue; empathy, or feeling and understanding the suffering of others, can become overwhelming. Balancing empathy with compassion is the solution to this dilemma.

In this paper I will explain why that is true, presenting a theoretical model to demonstrate that compassion can build both physiological and psychological resilience. In addition, the paper will draw from and present the real-life experiences of aid workers who are learning to use compassion for self and others in the workplace.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Hyo Seok Sunim

#### **The Rearranged Roles of Buddhist Nuns in the Modern Korean Sangha: A Case Study of Practicing Compassion**

Buddhism is a teaching about suffering and freedom from suffering. In other words, the Buddha's teaching is compassion itself. The dictionary meaning of "compassion" is a feeling of empathy, sympathy, and understanding for those who are suffering. Buddhist practitioners strive to understand the impermanent, suffering, and self-less nature of life, and to become free from the bondage and suffering of life.

Korean Buddhism belongs to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Traditionally, Korean Buddhist monks and nuns have been divided into two groups: *yipan* and *sapan*. This is a sort of division of labor. The *yipan* monastics mainly practice Seon meditation and keep alive the spiritual side of the Buddhist tradition. The *sapan* monastics support the *yipan* by raising funds for the temples, protecting their well-being, and managing the environment for practice. The motto of Mahayana Buddhism is "to seek enlightenment above and save sentient beings below." The changes demanded by modern society, however, mean that monastics must become jacks of all trades. They must practice to seek enlightenment and also provide personal spiritual guidance to their followers. Modern Korean Buddhist monastics can no longer afford to stay within the confines of one group. *Yipan* and *sapan* are two sides of one coin and need to exist side by side.

Nowadays, nuns' temples are mostly located in urban areas and are tasked with the essential duties of educating and spreading Buddhism. Therefore, the involvement of nuns in the management of urban temples is necessary and unavoidable. No longer can it be asserted that meditation is the only way to follow the Buddha, because the modern environment for practice has changed drastically and the spiritual demands of laypeople continue to increase. Buddhist monastics practice Seon in meditation halls during the summer and winter retreats, but then they must come back to effectively manage temples. Seon practice is for cultivating compassion in the mind. After returning from retreat, practitioners have to put their compassion into action. Since *yipan* and *sapan* are two sides of one coin, we need to balance meditation and the practice of compassion, as the Buddha taught.

[Back to the Top](#)

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Jeong Wan Sunim

#### **Literacy and the Education of *Bhikkhunis* in Early Chinese Buddhism**

In Chinese society between the fourth and the sixth centuries, *bhikkhunis* played a unique role in the cultural interactions that influenced women's literacy. During that time, numerous temples and monasteries were built for *bhikkhunis* in major cities, including Luoyang, where their activities expanded. They were taught how to read, write, and teach. Unlike their male counterparts, Chinese women in earlier centuries typically had very limited opportunities to be educated. Only a small number of women were taught to read and write, and these women were tutored at home by their literate mothers and tutors. In general, women were socially excluded from institutional education. However, as Buddhism spread throughout China *bhikkhunis* required literacy for their religious rituals, since, as members of the four-fold Buddhist community, they needed to be able to read the Buddhist scriptures. Similar to *bhikkhus*, the *bhikkhunis* also gave explanatory lectures on the sutras and commentaries at their temples.

The first historical example of a *bhikkhuni* giving lectures can be found in The Compendium of Monastic History of the Great Song Dynasty (Chinese: *Da song seng shi lue*). This text documents the story of Bhikkhuni Dao Xin, who began lecturing at the Eastern Monastery in Luoyang in 368 CE. This text provides clear evidence of female education and literacy in China during the medieval period. I argue that the training of *bhikkhunis* in reading, writing, conducting research, and lecturing on Buddhist scriptures, along with their deep knowledge of Buddhism, distinguishes them from the vast majority of women throughout history, most of whom had limited access to literacy. Furthermore, I attempt to clarify that the Buddhist scriptures not only served as religious texts for women during this period, but were also used as textbooks, the reading of which helped increase female literacy.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Soun Sunim*

#### **Noblewomen and Monks: Lay-Monastic Relations in the Early Joseon**

The purpose of this topic is to introduce the achievements of Queen Mother Insu (1437-1504, after this Insu), who was a representative female Buddhists in the early period of the Joseon Dynasty. Insu was born as the last daughter of Han Hwak (1403-1456) in the King Sejo (1417-1468) period. In 1455, when she was 19 years old, she married the first son of Grand prince Suyang, and when King Sejo assumed the throne, she became the Crown Princess and Subin (her name at the time of her installation as the Crown Princess). Afterwards, she became the Queen Mother of King Seongjong (1457-1495), the 9th king of the Joseon Dynasty.

Ever since Buddhism was introduced to the Korean peninsula, the Buddhist scriptures had been the only object of intellectual research for scholar-officials and women in the royal family. Insu was also a woman who pursued intellectual research through the Buddhist scriptures. Particularly, Insu was one of the highly knowledgeable women in the royal family, and had great knowledge about the Mahayana sutras.

Insu was a woman Buddhist who worshipped Buddhism amidst the whirlpool of increasing suppression of Buddhism in the Joseon Dynasty. She went on a journey as a bodhisattva, wishing to protect the Buddhist monks from the Confucian scholars, to draw the foolish humankind into the state of nirvana or enlightenment only through Buddhism, and to free people in every condition from suffering and thus help them become happy and in peace. Accordingly, in this thesis, the character called Insu is briefly introduced, and her achievements in the journey as a bodhisattva as well as the Buddhist monks' responses to this are examined. The viewpoints of the Buddhist monks in those days regarding a woman attaining Buddhahood are also examined.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Thich Nu Nhu Nguyet*

#### **Compassion and Social Engagement: Interdependent Paradigms for Vietnamese Buddhist Women**

During his lifetime, the Buddha accepted nuns into the sangha and recognized that they had the same potential as men to achieve liberation. This transformed the lives of women ever since. From the time that Buddhism was introduced in Vietnam, it has continued to grow, contributing significantly to the lives of people of all social backgrounds. Buddhism nurtured the spiritual potential of all and was embraced enthusiastically by women. Using that spiritual strength, women helped Buddhism become deeply rooted, both as a religion and as a practice for daily life. Up to the present day, it continues to help women face whatever challenges they face.

Even so, in the past and up to the present day, the struggles and achievements of Buddhist women in Vietnam have received little attention. They are often neglected and disadvantaged in the religious sphere, both in the histories and at Buddhist events such as Buddhist conferences and Vesak celebrations. To my mind, the only practical way to help women become free of the social injustices caused by patriarchal ideology is compassionate social engagement. Some may counter that social engagement cannot adequately address structural inequalities. Further, they point out that Buddhist women may simply become consigned to social welfare activities, as unpaid social workers, and continue to have no real voice in Buddhist or Buddhist institutions or decision making. I wish to consider these objections and explore the ways in which women in Vietnam and elsewhere can become empowered through social engagement in ways that ultimately facilitate their progress on the path to liberation.

In the spirit of Sakyadhita, which serves as a bridge connecting women all over the world, this paper will document the integrated practice of compassion and social engagement among Buddhist women in Vietnam, including the immediate challenges they face. It will focus on Buddhist women's efforts in four areas: old-age homes, orphanages, Dharmma teaching, and construction projects, including bridges in rural areas.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Thich Nu Phuoc Uyen*

#### **Buddhist Schools in Australia: Buddhist Women's Roles**

According to census figures, Australia had a population of 21,507,719 in 2011, of whom 61 percent were Christian. Buddhism was the largest non-Christian religion, with 2.5% of the total population. However, there is only one Buddhist school in Australia, which is The Daylesford Dharma School, a village school located an hour and half from Melbourne. This school has only two classrooms: one for Grades 1 to 3 and the other for Grades 4 to 6. An independent school founded in 2009, it is the first primary school in Australia in which students observe Buddhist principles, including wisdom, compassion, interdependence, and respect for all life.

With recent significant growth in the Buddhist population in Australia, there is an urgent need for more Buddhist schools to accommodate the growing number of Buddhist students. Buddhist education is essential for teaching

practical Buddhist methods for developing wisdom, loving kindness, and compassion. This paper will explore how Buddhist women can contribute more to Buddhist education and help Buddhism to grow in Australia.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Carol L. Winkelmann*

**Emergent Buddhist Women's Leadership: Competing Feminist Views at the Intersection of the Sacred and the Profane**

Traditionally Buddhist women have encountered obstacles to leadership roles in their *sanghas*, communities, and organizations. They have often been socialized by culture and religion to assume less assertive roles in the public realm. Not surprisingly, self-effacement has long been considered an essential feminine virtue. Self-effacement inhibits women's ability to effectively work for social change. Today Buddhist women are rejecting such gender stereotypes as they strive to address significant, pressing social issues of our day.

This paper analyzes the strategic options for women working for social change by assuming leadership positions. Needless to say, Buddhist teachings pave the way. First, I focus on the Four Immeasurables which have been identified by Bhiksuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo as trustworthy signposts for virtuous, effective leadership. The skillful leader embodies loving-kindness, compassion, a joyful attitude, and equanimity.

Second, I argue that, though both desirable and ultimately dialogic, these virtues can become problematic in certain communities, especially in traditionally gendered contexts. A Buddhist feminist enjoinment of these virtues as women's leadership skills, either locally or globally, needs to be set within a framework carefully informed by secular, globally-informed leadership scholarship that increasingly advocates diverse and interdependent leadership styles. These leadership styles vary according to a leader's character, charges, challenges, interlocutors, and discursive contexts, not solely by her gender.

In addition, Buddhist women leaders must position themselves vis-à-vis several discourses used to construct their gendered identity, including anti-feminist, modernist, poststructuralist, and "post-feminist" perspectives. These discourses not only reflect historical moments in feminism, but are also connected to Buddhist women's own religious discourses. To be maximally effective, women need to respond thoughtfully to all these discourses.

In short, this paper seeks to relate contemporary feminist theory, secular leadership paradigms, and re-readings of foundational religious virtues. The core argument I propound is that poststructuralist feminism offers Buddhist women the most latitude in developing realistic, effective leadership styles. Concurrently, I argue that Buddhism is well-aligned with poststructuralist understandings of gendered identities and thus well-positioned to engage secular feminist theory. This approach inflects the Buddhist concept of interdependence with critical features of pluralism and diversity.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Sr. Malia Dominica Wong*

**The Pearl in the Bubble Tea: Buddhist Women and Social Change**

When Buddhism came to Hawai'i around 1868 with the first Japanese immigrants, it served to sustain the plantation workers in their spiritual needs as they adjusted to unfamiliar peoples, languages, working conditions, culture, and social customs in a new land that became their home away from home. Gradually the people, Asian cultures, and Buddhism flourished beautifully together.

Today's younger generation, however, was not raised in ethnically segregated plantation camps nor nurtured with ancestral rituals and traditions. Thus, following the path of the Buddha may not seem relevant to many of them. Fortunately, there are a number of Buddhist women in Hawai'i who, in small ways and large, have diligently and devotedly brought the Buddha's teachings to the people, going beyond barriers of age, race, and even religious identity. Like the pearls in bubble tea, they have creatively sought ways to adapt and transform the original Buddha's teachings into vibrant bursting pearls of the Dharma, changing hearts one at a time.

This paper aims to share vignettes from the lives of exemplary Buddhist women in Hawai'i who, through adapting ancient traditions to modern life, have given their loving kindness, equanimity, compassion, and sympathetic joy to create a new and very visible face for Buddhism in contemporary Hawaiian society.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Fen-jin Wu*

**Yuanwu Keqin's Chan Praxis: Teaching for Women**

Much of Chinese Buddhist history developed within a patriarchal social framework, in which women were constrained in their practice, research, and propagation of Buddhism, and were therefore less likely to become Dharma heirs. Thus, there are fewer records of women than men in Buddhist literature. During the Song Dynasty, however, Buddhism was very popular and women increasingly participated in religious activities. This is reflected in historical records of the period, which include more frequent mention of women studying and practicing Chan than in earlier Buddhist literature. Miriam Levering's research about women teaching Chan during the Song, her observations about Linji Chan and gender, Tahu's teachings for women, and so on, and Ding-hwa E. Hsieh's studies about images of women in Song Chan are valuable contributions. As yet, however, there have been few studies that specifically discuss the practice of Chan master Yuanwu Keqin (1063-1135) and his teachings for nuns and laywomen. This paper analyzes literary sources as an attempt to understand Yuanwu's three methods of instructing female disciples, the unique characteristics of his teachings for women, and the Chan practice methods of his female disciples during the Song.

Yuanwu used three distinct teaching approaches when instructing disciples in their practice and study of Chan, depending on the character and potential of the student. The first approach was straightforward: to mediate on crucial *kung-an* (*koan*) phrases, such as "sucking up the water of the western river in a breath," using no rationale. This method of instruction, which was ineffable and focused directly on the mind, was for the sharpest students. The second approach involved questioning students and exposing their ignorance through a process of questioning, then pointing out the students' weak points. The third approach involved providing beginners with commentaries and notes to explain the kung-an or Dharma teaching in detail.

Yuanwu's 13 female disciples are mentioned in the *Yuanwu Fokuo Chanshi Yulu*, *Wudeng Huiyuan*, and *Fokuo Ke-qin Chan Shi Xin Yao*. Most of these women were from families of high social status, for example, Senior Imperial Consort Jiāo, Senior Imperial Consort Wang, Princess Ta-chang, Madam Yi-gou, Madam Qing-gou, Madam Zhang Guo-tai, Madam Fang, Jue An Dao Ren Zu Shi, Ling Ren Ben Ming, and so on. The last three became Yuan-wu's Dharma heirs, and the senior imperial consort Jiāo became the Dharma heir of Ta-hui. These female lay disciples supported Dharma gatherings, offered patronage to the sangha, and propagated Dharma at the palace. They overcame the gender constraints of patriarchal history and society to practice and study Chan Buddhism. Yuan-wu instructed these women in their investigation of kung-an by means of a three-fold method that depended solely on their talent, without gender discrimination. As a result, some of them achieved realization and became Dharma heirs. This paper will examine the methods of instruction that enabled these remarkable women to write an important page in the history of Song Dynasty Chan.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Rotraut Jampa Wurst*

#### **Sexual Diversity in Germany**

When I first read the letters LGBTQ on the Call for Papers for the 11th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women in Ho Chih Minh City, Vietnam, I thought it was something like a lesbian Buddhist talk. I didn't know for what the letters stood for. But I thought that discussion about Buddhism and different lifestyles is a good thing. It is good, because surely Buddhism has something to say about different lifestyles and surely the Buddhist point of view would be valuable when people of diverse lifestyles are still confronting so many prejudices.

When the word "lesbian" was mentioned for the first time in a talk at the 10th Sakyadhita Conference in Ulaan Batar, Mongolia, I thought, "Wow! It's very good that this is mentioned." There are so many different people in the world. And there are also many different Buddhists in the world. Great! Lets talk! But the path was somehow much more difficult than I initially thought.

After attending several workshops, I thought that it would be much easier in Germany, where I come from. I thought that it would be possible to talk about LGBTQQI, as we say now, to show that we speak about all types of people who are confronting prejudices, no matter whether they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, questioning, or intersexual. How naive I was! The situation in the West – in Germany, at least – is not easier, especially the situation of women. Buddhist women are generally not willing to talk openly about what they think, about how they themselves live, about whether they live in a diverse partnership, or about questions of Buddhism and diversity.

This paper explores what women in Germany who say that they are Buddhist women think about LGBTQQI. The paper is a search for women who live openly and honestly, even when they are confronted by majority Christians who are convinced that they live correctly and are the arbitrators of what is right and wrong. My research also extends to lesbian Christian women who are trying to work together with lesbian Buddhist women on diversity workshops. Will there be a breakthrough in the 21st century? We shall see.

[Back to the Top](#)

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*Hyangsoon Yi*

#### **A Buddhist Nun as Military Hero in "The Tale of Master Chaun"**

My paper focuses on a folktale that I discovered in 2010 in the southern coastal areas of the Korean peninsula. It presents an extraordinary picture of a Buddhist nun as a brilliant naval commander during the Imjin War between Korea and Japan (1592-1598). Buddhist history shows several instances in which armed monastics engaged in war. As expected, all of them involve only monks. However, a traditional oral narrative titled "The Tale of Master Chaun" centers on a Buddhist nun known as Sŏn (Zen) Master Chaun (Purple Cloud). This is the first and perhaps the only case in Korean Buddhist history and literature that portrays a female monastic as a military hero who takes part in a sea battle.

The tale of Master Chaun is a rare piece of literature whose importance goes far beyond the value of a dramatic war epic. The Confucian Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910) adopted a powerful anti-Buddhist policy. For five centuries, numerous temples were forcibly closed and destroyed. As monks and nuns were disrobed and relegated to the lowest caste, along with butchers and courtesans, the monastic community virtually disintegrated. Therefore, it is widely accepted by historians and Buddhist scholars that the nuns' order had virtually disintegrated in Korea by the mid-16th century.

This view, however, is seriously challenged by the tale of Master Chaun. This exceptional narrative suggests that this Buddhist nun was perceived as a messiah figure in post-Imjin Korean society. In my presentation, I will first examine one historical source of this tale, according to which Master Chaun was a prominent scholar monk who served as a naval commander during the Imjin War. The main body of my paper will focus on political, socio-cultural, religious, and literary factors that influenced the process of transforming Master Chaun from a male to a female in the 16th-century Korean folk imagination. I will conclude my presentation by discussing several critical implications of this tale for an appropriate understanding of the state of the nuns' order in late Chosŏn Korea.

[Back to the Top](#)

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### About

Working at the grassroots level, Sakyadhita provides a communications network among Buddhist women internationally. We promote research and publications on Buddhist women's history and other topics of interest. Our members strive to create equal opportunities for women in all Buddhist traditions. [Read More](#)

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