

# Sakyadhita

International Association of Buddhist Women

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Women Acquiring the Essence

Buddhist Women Ancestors:  
Hymn to the Perfection of  
Wisdom

Female Founders of Tibetan  
Buddhist Practices

Invocation to the Great Wise  
Women

The Wonderful Benefits of a  
Female Lineage Invocation

An Ordinary and Sincere  
Amitbha Reciter: Ms. Jin-Mei  
Chen-Lai

Prajñatara: Bodhidharma's  
Master

In Memory of Bhiksuni Tian Yi  
(1924-1980) of Taiwan

One Worldwide Network:  
A Report

Newsline

H.H. Dalai Lama Announces  
Full Support for the Bhiksuni  
Sangha

How I Became a Bhikkhuni

Visualizing a Global  
Sakyadhita Network



H. H. the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and Speakers at the First International Congress on Buddhist Women's Role in the Sangha

## WOMEN ACQUIRING THE ESSENCE

Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

*On July 10, 1998, I invited the women of our Sangha to gather to explore the practice and lineage of women. Here are a few thoughts that helped get us started.*

Several years ago while I was visiting ZCLA [Zen Center of Los Angeles], Nyogen Sensei asked me to give a talk about my experiences as a woman in practice. I had never talked about this before. During the talk, a young woman in the *zendo* began to cry. Every now and then I would glance her way and wonder what was happening: Had she lost a child? Ended a relationship? She cried and cried. I wondered what was triggering these unstoppable tears?

The following day Nyogen Sensei mentioned to me that she was still crying, and he had gently asked her if she could tell him why. "It just had not occurred to me," she said, "that a woman could be a Buddha." A few years later when I met her again, the emotions of that moment suddenly surfaced. "I felt a powerful rush of energy, and I could not stop it," she said when I asked her if she remembered that moment. "It was so organic, so natural. Something just opened up."

So those tears were not of sorrow, as I had assumed, but tears of discovery, of joy, and of empowerment. Still today I feel a stirring deep within myself when I remember that moment. I have come to recognize this stirring as the energy of the feminine, dormant for so long, reclaiming itself and flowing fiercely forth.

So when I reflect upon the practice of women, I begin by affirming the obvious. The obvious is that for an immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions, trillions of *kalpas*, women have practiced, manifested, realized, and accomplished the Buddha Way. Who are all these women whose names have been forgotten or left unsaid?

In growing up in the Japanese Soto Zen tradition, I have chanted daily the lineage of patriarchs. During my Dharma transmission retreat, I bowed to the patriarchs at least three times each day, all 81 of them. By the second day, when my teacher Roshi Glassman came to hold *dokusan* for me, I asked, "Where are the women?" The next day, I asked with more urgency, "Where are the women?!" And by the fourth day, it was "WHERE ARE THE WOMEN!"

As I began to explore my female Buddha ancestors, I sensed the lineage of women as a spiral, moving in wide, all-encompassing circles. I sensed, too, that in swallowing and promoting the male-dominated forms and milieu of my inherited tradition, I had concealed myself as a woman to myself and to other women. Here I was a woman stepping into the shoes of the patriarchs, so-to-speak. So where were the matriarchs? Where were the women to mentor me?

Women too often seem to find it necessary to whisper this concern (if they do so at all), almost as though to speak this issue outloud is to reveal a lack of understanding about the true Dharma, among other things. In awakening to the wisdom of non-duality, do we not awaken to our fullness as human beings? The implications of this awakening have yet to manifest in the societies and environments in which Buddhism lives. Can we women trust ourselves to reveal the means that will illuminate this wisdom?

One day while flying across the country in the womb of a United jet, words about my female ancestors flowed forth. I offer a draft (without the footnotes) for your consideration, and I look forward to this exploration with the women of the *sangha*.

### The Lineage of Women (A Working Draft)

From ancient times, living female Buddhas have accomplished the Way. The spiritual attainment and practice of females have flowed in a continuous yet hidden stream to the present time. All Buddhas pass through Prajñāpramita, the Mother of the Buddhas. From the blackness of her womb, Buddhas appear and disappear, sometimes as male, sometimes as female. The proclamation of the World-Honored One, Shakyamuni, confirms women as Buddhas.

In the *Lotus Sutra*, the World-Honored One proclaimed the prophecy of the attainment of Buddhahood for the nun Mahaprajapati, the nun Yashodhara, and the 6,000 female disciples present. Upon hearing these prophecies, they said in the presence of the Buddha: "World-Honored One, we have heard these prophecies and our minds are peaceful and satisfied."

Among the early nuns, we can also sing the names of Mitta, Tissa, Sumana, Upasama, Visakha, Khema, Uppalavanna, Sundari-Nanda, Vaddhesi, Patacara, Uttama, Bhadda-Kundalakesa, Nuanduttara, Dantika, Sakula, Siha, Dhammadina, Kisagotami, Vasetthi, Ubbiri, Patacara-Pancasasta, Isidasi, Bhadda-Kapilani, Mutta, Capa, Dhamma, Citta, Vimala, Addhakasi, Padumavati, Ambapali, Anopama, Abhirupa-Nanda, and Jenti.

The seven-year-old daughter of the dragon king Sagara achieved enlightenment in an instant. Of her attainment, Great Master Dogen said, "At the time a female became a Buddha, everything in the universe was completely understood. What person would hinder her from entering the restricted territories thinking that she had not truly come into this world? The merits of her attainment exist right now, illuminating the whole universe."

Great Master Bodhidharma transmitted his marrow, skin, flesh, and bones to four disciples, three monks and a nun. Great Master Keizan transmitted the Dharma to the nun Sonin. The nun Mo-shan, disciple of Kao-an Ta-yu, taught the monk Chih-hsien. The nun Miao-hsin, disciple of Hui-chi, enlightened 17 monks. Iron Brush Liu and Kuei Shan played equally in the fields of joyous *samadhi*.

The World-Honored One also named laywomen among the four major practice groups. With the lion's roar of a Buddha, laywoman Queen Srimala first taught the Buddhadharma to laywomen, then to her non-Buddhist husband, followed by laymen. An old woman helped to clarify the mind of Te-shan. Antoku Inden Kasho Myokei Zenni, the mother of Taizan Maezumi Honored One, bore seven sons who became monks and raised them in the pure Dharma realms. From ancient times, laywomen have accomplished the Way.

All the great masters know that paying homage to female adepts and females acquiring the essence is the living spirit of the ancient Buddhas. The lineage of the matriarchs is to be revered. Now this lineage lives as you. Please cherish this forever.

**Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao** ordained with Bhikkhu Taungpulu Sayadaw in Bodhgaya, India, in 1982. In 1983, she ordained as a Zen priest with Taizan Maezumi Roshi, training with him until his death in 1995. She subsequently trained with Bernie Glassman Roshi and received the Preceptor and Dharma Transmission (Shiho) in the White Plum Lineage (1996) and the Seal of Approval (Inka) in 2004 from him. Roshi has served as the abbot and head teacher of the Zen Center of Los Angeles since 1999. She is the co-editor (with Sensei Eve Myonen Marko) of *Appreciate Your Life* by Taizan Maezumi and co-editor (with John Daishin Buksbazen) of *On Zen Practice: Body, Breath, and Mind* (2002) and *The Hazy Moon of Enlightenment* (2007).

Reprinted with permission from *Women Acquiring the Essence*, Zen Center of Los Angeles, 1998.



### BUDDHIST WOMEN ANCESTORS: HYMN TO THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

At Zen Center of Los Angeles (ZCLA), we have chanted the names of our women ancestors since 1997, alternating every other day with the patriarchal lineage. When we began this practice, people found it deeply moving and emotional; both women and men would cry. The *sangha* at ZCLA readily embraced this practice. Recently, we revised the list slightly and the current chant is included below. At ZCLA, we typically chant three chants for the morning service, the second one for the lineage.

The Invocation ("Homage to...") was adapted from an invocation used at the Berkeley Zen Center.<sup>1</sup> As I recall, they adapted it from Lex Hixon's *Mother of the Buddhas*. I added the names, "The Great Ancestors," as they appear in our current version of the chant. During our recent revision process, we decided to leave in the descriptors and also added currently deceased American female teachers, including pioneer women practitioners who were not transmitted teachers (such as Flora Courtois), but whom we wished to honor for their pioneering status. There is nothing definitive about the list, but is our attempt to capture those important to us at this place and time. As the names of more and more women come to light, I am sure we will revise the list again at some future date.

Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom,  
Prajñāparamita, the Mother of the Buddhas.  
The lovely and the holy Perfection of Wisdom gives light.  
Unstained, the entire world cannot stain her.  
She is a source of light and, from everyone  
in the triple world, she removes darkness.  
Most excellent are her works.  
She brings light so that all fear and distress may be forsaken  
and disperses the gloom and darkness of delusion.  
She herself is an organ of vision.  
She has a clear knowledge of her own being, of all dharmas,  
for she does not stray away from it.  
The Perfection of Wisdom of the Buddhas,  
the Buddhas set in motion the wheel of Dharma.



**The Great Ancestors:**

Mahprajapati  
Mitta  
Yasodhara  
Tissa  
Sumana  
Upasama  
Viskha  
Khema

Uppalavanna	Isidasi
Sundari-Nanda	Bhadda-Kapilani
Vaddhesi	Mutta
Patacara	Capa
Uttama	Dhamma
Bhadda-Kundalakesa	Citta
Nanduttara	Vimala
Dantika	Addhakasi
Sakula	Padumavati
Siha	Ambapali
Dhammadina	Anopama
Kisagotami	Abhirupa-Nanda
Vasetthi	Jenti
Ubbiri	Patacara-Pancasata

The seven-year old daughter of the Dragon King Sagara  
Soji, Dharma heir of Bodhidharma  
Mo-shan, disciple of Kao-an Ta-yu  
Miao-hsin, disciple of Hui-chi who enlightened 17 monks  
Iron Brush Liu, an equal of Master Isan.

**The women disciples of Dogen Zenji:**

Egi  
Eshin  
Shogaku  
Ryonen

**The women disciples of Keizan Zenji:**

Sonin, Dharma heir and chief priest of Enzuin  
And her daughter Ekan, chief priest of Enzuin

Shozen	
En'i	Shinmyo
Myosho	Shinsho
Ekyu	Jonin
Myosin	Ninkai

**And all other direct Soto women ancestors:**

Shune	
Joa	Genshu
Shue	Honsho
Somyo	Soki
Soitsu	Zensho
Myojun	Ryoso
Myozen	Myoko

Mugai Nyodai, founder of the first Zen Buddhist convent in Japan  
Ryonen Genso, who sacrificed her beauty  
Kojima Kendo, advocate of the equality of women in the Soto Sect  
Ruth Fuller Sasaki, first American Rinzai priest  
Jiyu Kennett, founder of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives  
Gesshin Myoho Prabhasa Dharma, founder of the Moon Heart Sangha  
Maurine Stuart, American Zen pioneer  
Jishu Angyo Holmes, co-founder of the Zen Peacemakers

We recognize all laywomen who carried the Dharma:

The Indian Queen Srimala, who roared the Lion's Roar  
Flora Eko Courtois, founding member of ZCLA  
and especially Antoku Inden Kasho Myokei Zenni, mother  
of Taizan Maezumi

And all women ancestors whose names have been forgotten or left unsaid.

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> *Hymn to Prajña Paramita*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Zen Center, 2000.

*Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao has served as the abbot and head teacher of ZCLA since 1999. See: [www.zcla.org](http://www.zcla.org).*

**JOIN US IN MONGOLIA!**

Over 150 international participants are planning to attend the Sakyadhita Conference on Buddhist Women in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from July 1 to 5, 2008. Temple tours will follow the conference on July 6 and 7, 2008. Optional tours to Erdene Zuu and the Buryat Republic (Russian Federation) will follow the conference. A few spots are still open, if you register quickly. The updated conference program and registration information can be found at: [www.sakyadhita.org](http://www.sakyadhita.org). Look forward to seeing you in Mongolia!

## FEMALE FOUNDERS OF TIBETAN BUDDHIST PRACTICES

Miranda Shaw

Anyone encountering Tibetan Buddhism in practice today would have little idea of the women who played a role in its founding. The lineage-holders whose names are chanted in the liturgies are almost exclusively male, giving the impression that the practices and teachings stem from male adepts. We hear of the great male pioneers of the late Indian Buddhism that flowed into Tibet. The contributions of such masters as Tilopa, Naropa, Luipa, Virupa, Saraha, Kanhapa, Maitripa, and Rechungpa are well known. My research into the lives of these and other founding figures led to an even deeper historical layer, namely, the female teachers who guided, initiated, and instructed them. In virtually every case, their female *gurus* imparted the very teachings and practices with which their male disciples are credited. Thus, it is now possible to herald the illustrious women who played a creative role in the movement as the spiritual mothers of the “founding fathers.” We can speak the names and praise the greatness of such female luminaries as Laksminkara, Mekhala, Kanakhala, Padmalocana, Jñanalocana, Vajravati, Siddharajñi, and Bhiksuni Laksmi. The women’s own writings, as well as the poetry, teachings, and praises recorded by their disciples, provide us with a precious legacy of sublime accomplishments and enlightened wisdom.

The inspiring stories of these pioneering women abound. Many are detailed in my book *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism*. One of the glorious foremothers is Siddharajñi, “Queen of Adepts,” who bequeathed a practice that remains important in Tibetan Buddhism. From the biography of Rechungpa, her disciple, we learn that during her lifetime, in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, Siddharajñi was an authority on how to attain long life. When Rechungpa received a prediction of his imminent death, his male *guru*, Tiphupa, sent him to Siddharajñi, the only person who could help him. Although Rechungpa had received many teachings, they would avail him nothing if he did not have the time to practice them.

When Rechungpa first met Siddharajñi, her powerful presence made his hair stand on end. He trembled, wept, and threw himself to the ground at her feet, placing her feet on his head in a gesture of supreme respect. Siddharajñi taught him a practice and directed that he do it for seven days continuously, without sleeping. This averted his impending death and earned him further instruction and teachings, which he later took to Tibet. At a feast on the eve of his departure, Rechungpa and Tiphupa offered songs in Siddharajñi’s praise, including the following paean:

Vajravarahi [female Buddha] incarnate...,  
 Mother of all Buddhas,  
 Homage to you, Siddharajñi!  
 You have the thirty-two signs of a Buddha.  
 Your rainbow body is brilliant as a diamond.  
 Bliss-bestowing woman, with every excellence,  
 wearing jewels and ornaments of bone,  
 You hold a flaying knife and skull cup full of nectar.  
 Amid an ocean of enlightened females (*dakinis*),  
 In a crystal meditation bower,  
 On a throne of gold, silver, turquoise, coral, and pearls,  
 You are our only mother, Siddharajñi!

Rechungpa recognized Siddharajñi as a female Buddha, possessed of the 32 bodily traits of a Buddha. His purified vision revealed her to be seated in a jeweled bower, a type of canopy

designed to welcome and honor a Buddha. Her brilliant “rainbow body” refers to the rainbow-like translucence and beauty of enlightened being that shines forth when all mental and emotional impurities have been removed without a trace.

Tiphupa lauded Siddharajñi as one who had met enlightened beings on transcendent planes of experience, receiving teachings and initiations from them: “You gazed at the faces of all the long-life deities and received the long-life empowerment and instructions for practice.”<sup>2</sup> The source of Siddharajñi’s teachings and basis of her authority was a visionary journey in which she met Amitayus, the Buddha of Infinite Life, face-to-face and received the long-life practices directly from their divine source. This concourse with Amitayus was the origin of her revelations to her disciples and their spiritual descendants on how to invoke this Buddha and accomplish the purification of *karma* that lengthens life.

The writings about Siddharajñi reveal the awe in which she was held, while her own writings detail the religious practices she introduced, including advanced esoteric meditations for accomplishing the complete mental and emotional purifications leading to Buddhahood. Siddharajñi’s influence on Tibetan Buddhism is visible and widespread. The main practice she introduced encompasses the initiation, meditations, and rituals devoted to Amitayus. She also provided instructions for *gurus* on how to tap the power of this Buddha and channel it to their disciples during an initiation and to the broader community during public ceremonies. Her system is still used in the Sakya, Kagyu, and Gelug sects. The long-life rituals are a frequent occurrence in the Tibetan ritual year; staged annually during the New Year celebrations as well as any time a donor requests one. A 19<sup>th</sup> century observer in Tibet reported that large-scale long-life ceremonies were performed weekly at some of the larger monasteries. In addition to public rituals for communal well-being, solitary meditators perform the advanced *yogas* she taught.

Although Siddharajñi’s long-life ceremony and Amitayus practices are eminently visible in Tibetan Buddhist culture, their female founder is not. One commonly used abbreviation for the practice, Grub-gyal-lugs, contains no gender marker, concealing from all but the most learned the female gender of the founder of the system. Therefore, many are not aware that the initiation they receive, the practices they do, and the rituals they perform and attend are based on the teachings of a woman.

Unlike some of the other founding mothers, Bhiksuni Laksmi has attained the status of a culture hero. She introduced a popular ascetical discipline that continues to be a key practice for Tibetan Buddhism in all its geographical locations and sectarian branches. One cannot live in a Tibetan Buddhist community for very long without hearing about individuals or, more often, large groups undertaking the fasting ritual she instituted. Bhiksuni Laksmi is one of the most well-known of the female founders because her practice is more public and she is often put forward as an exemplar when the practice is imparted.

Bhiksuni Laksmi was born as a princess in Kashmir in the late tenth or eleventh century. Young Laksmi had a sensitive and sympathetic temperament. When she discovered that animals – such as the lambs in which she delighted – were slaughtered for food, she resolved to cut her ties to worldly life. Overcoming the opposition of her parents, the princess renounced the privilege and wealth to which she was born and became a fully ordained nun (*bhiksuni*). Laksmi distinguished herself at logical debate and, having defeated many leading philosophers and Tantric scholars, was installed as abbess of a monastery. She held this position for many years, until she contracted leprosy. The monks then drove



her out and pitilessly abandoned their abbess in the forest to die.

Too ill to walk, Laksmi crawled into a cave and collapsed, using her waning strength to call on Avalokiteśvara. The Bodhisattva of Compassion responded to her prayers and appeared before her in a dazzling white, thousand-armed form. In one version of the story, he poured clear water through her body, instantly curing her of leprosy; in another, he gave her medicinal pellets that healed her in three days.

After her miraculous healing, the revelations continued. The abbess flew with Avalokiteśvara to a celestial realm, where she danced in the clouds with beautiful *dakinis*. At the culmination of her visionary journey, the Bodhisattva of Compassion revealed a fasting practice to the nun and directed her to teach it to everyone – monastics and laity – as a swift and powerfully effective method of merit-accumulation and purification.

Meanwhile, the abbess's attendant assumed that her mistress had died in the forest and came looking for her bones. Bhiksuni Laksmi emerged from the cave fully restored to health and related all that had happened. The attendant advised that they should return to the monastery and impart the fasting practice to the monks. Still stinging from their callous treatment, Laksmi retorted, "That monastery? I wouldn't even go there to pee!" Compassion prevailed, however, and the two women went to the monastery and taught the newly revealed practice. They then set forth and taught the fasting practice across India and Tibet.

The Kashmiri nun's fasting ceremony (*uposana*; Tib. *smyang-gnas*, pronounced: *nyung-nay*) became an important discipline for monks, nuns, and laypeople alike. It is practiced throughout the Himalayan region and by Tibetans and Buddhist converts wherever Tibetan Buddhism has spread, including the U.S., Europe, Taiwan, and other outposts of the Tibetan diaspora. It is a key event in the Tibetan Buddhist ritual year and, in addition to its annual performance, can be undertaken at any time. The usual length of the ritual is between two and four days, although consecutive sessions may be undertaken for weeks or even months. People may take a vow to perform a monthly fast or to complete a certain number of fasts during their lifetime.

The core of the fasting practice is total abstinence from food and drink, accompanied by prostrations, prayers, and *mantra* recitation. Bhiksuni Laksmi wrote a devotional hymn in praise of Avalokiteśvara that is especially treasured and recited for many hours each day in accompaniment to the prostrations. Some laypeople shave their heads, go barefoot, and avoid leather products for the duration. The practice is a chance for laypeople to adopt the rigors of monasticism and for monastics to undergo a period of intensified renunciation. The end of the ritual and return to ordinary life is marked by a feast.

The fasting ritual introduced by Bhiksuni Laksmi is practiced in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. She wrote an instruction manual for the visualization and other liturgies have been added over the centuries, including one by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Moreover, the form in which Avalokiteśvara appeared to the Kashmiri abbess is one of the most widely encountered Tibetan Buddhist icons, depicted in scroll paintings, statuary, and temple frescoes. In this form, Avalokiteśvara appears with eleven heads, a thousand arms, and identifying attributes in his eight major hands: a rosary, Dharma-wheel, and gesture of blessing in his right hands; a lotus, bow and arrow, and vase in his left hands; and a pair of hands cupping the wish-granting gem of enlightenment at his heart. Bhiksuni Laksmi explained the symbolic meanings of the heads, hand gestures, and hand-held implements in her meditation manual and other writings. As his foremost devotee, the Kashmiri abbess is sometimes portrayed at his feet. She is shown with her



hands cupping a wish-fulfilling jewel at her heart, mirroring his central gesture, which symbolizes her intimate communion with the Bodhisattva of Compassion and her role in revealing the fasting practice he entrusted to her.

When we closely examine the annals, biographies, and historical works of the late Indian Buddhism that fed into the living stream of Tibetan Buddhism, the records lead beyond the "founding fathers" of the movement to its extraordinary foremothers, such as Siddharajñi, Bhiksui Laksmi, and so many others. I believe that women today should preserve and spread the memory of the enlightened women who have gone before us. The songs in their praise and verses and liturgies they penned would make beautiful chants. Their stories have extraordinary power to inspire us with the example of their awesome attainments, sublime teachings, and legacies of active practice lineages.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> My translation. *rje btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba bzhuqs so* (Kulu-Manali: Apo Rinpoche, [1989]), fol. 45b.5-46a.3.

<sup>2</sup> My translation. Ibid., fol. 46a.3-4. For further translations from Rechungpa's biography and Siddharajñi's writings, see Miranda Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 117-25.

**Miranda Shaw** (Ph.D., Harvard University) is author of the award-winning *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* (Princeton University Press, 1994), which has been translated into four languages, and *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Princeton University Press, 2006), focusing on the female divine in Buddhist thought and practice. Currently at work on *Buddhist Goddesses of Tibet and Nepal*, she can be reached at [mshaw@richmond.edu](mailto:mshaw@richmond.edu).

## INVOCATION OF THE GREAT WISE WOMEN

*Tara-Libre-Mandala Germany*

In recalling our Great Wise Mothers  
we pay homage to the mother of all Buddhas,  
Prajña Paramita,

And to the first nuns who realized the Way:

Mahapajapati, Mitta, Yasodhara, Tissa, Sumana, Upasama,  
Viksha, Nanduttara, Dantika, Sakula, Siha, Dhammadina,  
Kisagotami, Vaidehi, Vasetthi, Ubbiri, Patacasa-Pancasata,  
Isidasi, Bhadda-Kapilani, Mutta, Capa, Dhamma, Citta, Vimala,  
Addhakasi, Padumavati, Ampapali, Anopama, Abhirupa-Nanda,  
Jenti, Punnika.

And to the Queen Srimala, the one who uttered the Lion's Roar  
of the Tathagata,

To the Dragon Girl, who preached the *Lotus Sutra*,

To Tara, Noble Mother of Compassion, who liberates from all  
fears.

To Kuan Yin, essence of compassion,

And to the great Mahayana mothers, to the tantric *yoginis*,  
ancestors, honored ones:

Laksminkara, Bhiksuni Laksmi, Sabari, Sahajayoginichinta,  
Guneru, Dombiyogini, Bandhe, Aloki, Dushila, Gangadhara,  
Siddharajni, Cinta, Niguma, Sukhasiddhi, Yeshe Tsogyal,  
Mandarava, Pemasal, Nangsa Obum, Machig Labdrön, Machig  
Ongjo, Jomo Memo, Drenchen Rema, A-Yu Khadro, Machig  
Koncham, Damchö Tshomo, Jetsun Lochon Shuksepma.

And to the teachers of our time: Aache Jhampa,\* Bhiksuni Ann  
McNeil, Bhiksuni Ayya Khema, Gesshin Prabhasha Dharma  
Roshi, Yeshe Sangyā Dharma Danya.\*\*

And to all the women honored ones,  
seen and unseen,  
whose names have been forgotten  
or left unsaid.

We dedicate this chant to the true nature  
of all beings,  
in hearts and voices  
of gratitude.  
May we be the perfection of wisdom  
of all our Great Mothers  
and turn the Wheel of the Dharma  
with ever-present Great Compassion.  
Hand in hand, may we realize  
the Awakened Way together.

\*The previous female incarnation of Lama Thubten Yeshe,  
followed by the female teachers of Sylvia Wetzel.

\*\* Sylvia Wetzel's Dharma name.

### Colophon:

This invocation is an English translation of the German version used in  
the Tara-Libre-Mandala of Sylvia Wetzel. It was inspired by the English  
version of Sensei Wendy Egyoku Nakao of the Zen Center of Los Angeles,  
which was brought to us in 2002 by Evi Gemmon Ketterer, a German  
student of both. It was translated and adapted to our primarily Tibetan  
lineage by Agnes Pollner in 2002 and 2005, and is used as the first part

of the Green Tara Puja, which is chanted in German with Tibetan and  
modern melodies. For recitation, we have inserted special marks for  
chanting and indicating where a gong is rung, which are omitted here.  
Tara-Libre-Mandala has made an audio CD of this invocation and the  
Green Tara Puja. – Sylvia Wetzel

## THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF A FEMALE LINEAGE INVOCATION

*Sylvia Wetzel*

In 2002, we began reciting this wonderful lineage prayer to our  
women ancestors. It has a tremendous effect when we chant it at  
the beginning of the Green Tara *puja*, during courses, and in local  
meditation groups. We can see the women grow in confidence and  
determination to follow the path. In mixed courses, we notice the  
great respect men develop when they chant to a female lineage,  
and some irritation, too.

We have the great fortune that Agnes Pollner, one of my long-  
term students and teaching assistants, tells some of the life stories  
of the women ancestors in each longer course and has written a  
book with some 30 life stories, which will be published in 2008.  
She has also written and composed songs of some verses of the  
early nuns, the *Therigatha*, and some other verses from the life  
stories. In each course, some names come alive. Then, when we  
chant the invocation, it is like meeting revered teachers and  
deeply respected friends.

This invocation helps us acknowledge that there were woman  
practitioners, in all times, whose names often "were forgotten  
and left unsaid," as the text says. Occasionally I notice tears in  
some eyes when we recite this part.

The invocation brings alive the crucial relationships to one's  
own gender, which women and men alike need. For women,  
this means that we need horizontal relationships to women  
peers and this happens in courses for women. We need vertical  
relationships to female teachers and role models, and a female  
lineage to learn to appreciate the competence of women, which  
is necessary for appreciating ourselves as women. We also need  
transcendental relationships to female Buddhas and female  
images of enlightenment, which cut through all limited ideas we  
might have of women. In the same way, men need these three  
kinds of relationships with other males. Once the connections  
with our own gender are "good enough," the relationships to the  
other gender will finally start to work or work better. Using this  
model, we can see what exists in our life and what is lacking. We  
can enjoy the relationships we have and develop those that are  
missing. Green Tara provides a transcendental role model. The  
invocation honors many role models in the vertical dimension.  
Celebrating the *puja* with other women provides a wide horizontal  
spectrum of different female lifestyles. All together, these  
relationships provide a female cultural ground from which we  
can deal with women and men, and a still predominantly male-  
oriented culture, with dignity and humor.

Sylvia Wetzel is a meditation teacher and a founding member of  
Sakyadhita. She holds a university degree in Politics and Russian  
Language and has studied and practiced Buddhism since 1977, mainly in  
the Tibetan tradition, with a strong influence from Theravada and Rinzai  
Zen. She was a founding participant of the Network of Western Buddhist  
Teachers in Dharmasala in 1993 and served on the Board of Directors  
of the German Buddhist Union for 15 years. [www.sylvia-wetzel.de](http://www.sylvia-wetzel.de) and  
[www.tara-libre.org](http://www.tara-libre.org).



### WOMEN'S LINEAGE CHART

The editors would like to publish a chart of Buddhist women's lineage. We understand that charts of female Buddhist ancestors have been developed and may be in active use in several Dharma centers. Other centers are in the process of developing female lineage charts. If you would like to share the chart in use at your Dharma center with the Sakyadhita membership and write about the process of developing one, please contact [newsletter@sakyadhita.org](mailto:newsletter@sakyadhita.org).

### AN ORDINARY AND SINCERE AMITABHA RECITER: MS. JIN-MEI CHEN-LAI

*Dr. Hsiang-Chou Yo with Grace Chen*

Ms. Jin-Mei Chen-Lai (my mother-in-law and Grace's mother) was an ordinary, sincere practitioner who recited the name of Amitabha Buddha. On December 18, 2006, at the age of 87, she completed her practice of Amitabha chanting at Tzu-Chi Hospice and headed for the Pure Land. Together with other family members, Grace stayed by her bedside and accompanied her in chanting the name of Amitabha. This elderly practitioner left this world with great ease and peace.

My mother-in-law had much respect for the Three Jewels. After her husband Xing-Zong Chen passed away in 1997, my mother-in-law became even more industrious in her practice. She chanted the name of Amitabha Buddha 100,000 times every day. For a period of time, she lived in a community on a hill in the suburbs of Taipei. Every morning, she woke up at 5 AM. Carrying two rice balls and a bottle of boiled water, she hiked alone to the top of the hill. There, before a seated image of the *bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara slightly larger than life size, she began her daily chanting. Facing the Guanyin Mountains in the direction of the rising sun, the old practitioner completed 50,000 recitations of Amitabha's name before 10 AM. Then she would take a break, eat her first rice ball, take a sip of water, then continue chanting. By 2 or 3 PM, she would complete 100,000 recitations. This 80-year-old woman was extremely spontaneous, industrious, and independent. Her faith in Amitabha Buddha was profound. As many people observed, such achievements can only be found in great practitioners.

Unlike many women of her generation, my mother-in-law was illiterate, but not uneducated. She became a Buddhist thanks to a monk named Bhiksu Jingxin. For over 30 years, she practiced with the Taipei Lotus Group. She diligently marked the dates of the group's practice sessions on her calendar. When she did prostrations, she used two bowls. One bowl was full of beans and, as she completed each prostration, she would transfer one bean from this bowl to the other. In this way, she was able to keep track of the number of prostrations she did each day. This method may seem clumsy, but it helped her keep up a regular, solid practice.

In her lifetime of practicing Buddhism, Jin-Mei also participated in several retreats, such as Buddha 7 and Zen 7, and also took several short-term ordinations. In 1992, she received the *bodhisattva* vows.

My mother-in-law was a wonderful cook. She was especially good at preserving plums. Whenever she had time, she would help cook at Buddhist temples. In 2003, she spent a summer in Los Angeles with two of her daughters. People there were envious of her good fortune in having such pious daughters and lovely

grandchildren, but the old practitioner preferred to spend her time volunteering at Hsi Lai Temple. Throughout the summer, she cultivated great merit and made many positive karmic connections.

In early September 2006, Jin-Mei felt some physical discomfort. After an examination at Tzu Chi Hospital in Taipei, we discovered that she was already in the terminal stages of cancer. When we told her about her condition, with surprisingly ease, the old practitioner said "Now I am going to Amitabha's Pure Land." Up to the end of her life, she never showed any fear or anxiety. Even though she was seriously ill, everyday she chanted the name of Amitabha Buddha at least 30,000 times. At times, she suffered great pain, but then she would simply chant Amitabha's name more loudly. As a result of her diligence in practice, she was able to rest her mind on the Buddha, rather than on the pain.

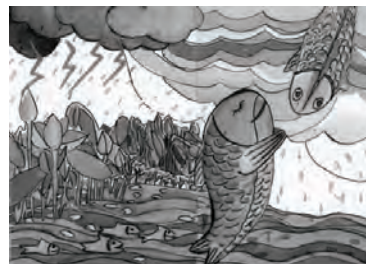
In mid-November 2006, she moved to the Lotus Hospice at Tzu Chi Hospital. Dr. Boqing Zhu told us that he and most of the hospice staff members always got depressed by the fact that most patients and their families treated the hospice as a place to await death. However, Grandma Jin-Mei (as they addressed the old practitioner) had created a positive and optimistic atmosphere for the whole hospice. Everyday, from Room 6C03 came laughter and the sound of chanting. Dr. Zhu concluded that Grandma Jin-Mei was a model patient.

On December 8, Dr. Zhu arranged for Jin-Mei to be interviewed by Great Love TV Channel. Representatives of Tzu-Chi Foundation came to interview my mother-in-law and the interview was broadcast on December 13. The program was titled, "The Smiling Bodhisattva of Lotus Hospice."

For days afterwards, the aged practitioner continued to chant the name of Amitabha, despite her frailty. She chanted even in her sleep and the sound was just as clear as if she was awake. On the morning of December 18, the old practitioner's breathing became lighter. At 10 a.m., she ended this life and departed for the Pure Land of Amitabha.

After her passing, with great compassion and loving-kindness, many Sangha members and Buddhist friends gathered and continued to chant for the old practitioner for 24 hours. Everyone witnessed her beautiful, mindful, and peaceful complexion after death. All were impressed that an old, illiterate practitioner had demonstrated the precious achievements possible in one lifetime through chanting Amitabha's name. The experience of this exemplary practitioner should not be ignored. Although these words are inadequate to describe what I personally witnessed, I hope my words convey the beauty and deep meaning of this practitioner's life.

*Professor Hsiang-Chou Yo currently teaches Buddhism at Foguang University in Taiwan. In addition to taking leadership and advising many local Buddhist groups in Taiwan, Professor Yo has been active in various international Buddhist organizations, such as the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) and International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). His wife Grace Chen is a sincere full-time Buddhist practitioner.*



**PRAJÑATARA: BODHIDHARMA'S MASTER**

Rev. Koten Benson

When Rev. Jiyu-Kennet was in Japan, Koho Zenji told her that there were women masters in our direct ancestral line and she gave me the task of trying to find them. The following is the result, thanks in large part to monks of the Korean Zen tradition, as well as laypeople from the Indian state of Kerala who have handed down and treasured the memory of Prajñatara.

Bodhidharma's master, Prajñatara, was originally a homeless person who wandered all over eastern India. Nobody knew her name or where she came from, because she was an orphan who did not even know her own name. She called herself Keyura, which means "bracelet" or "necklace," and made her living by begging. One day, she encountered the great master Punyamitra, who was from southern India. Remembering the Dharma connection between them from previous existences, she became his disciple. Punyamitra considered her to be a manifestation of the *bodhisattva* Mahastamaprapta (Great Strength of Compassion).

Keyura renounced the world, taking the ordination name of Prajñatara. She became a great and accomplished master, known for her marvelous spiritual abilities: a great Mahayana *yogini* (one who has realized true union with Great Compassion), an accomplished *siddhi* (one with all the spiritual powers), and for having the divine eye: seeing far and near, past and future.

Although she was considered to be head of the Sarvastivadins, her teaching was not limited to any one of the philosophical schools of Buddhism then in existence, and she made use of the *Lankavatara Sutra* as her main teaching scripture.

When the Hun invasions of northern India caused widespread havoc in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, destabilizing the Gupta Empire, Prajñatara traveled south to the home country of her master Punyamitra. She was invited to teach in Kanchipuram, the capital of the Pallava dynasty of South India, by the reigning king Simhavarman. Bodhitara, the king's youngest son, caught her attention due to his spiritual abilities. After the death of his father, Prajñatara helped him to become a fully ordained monk and gave him the name Bodhidharma. She trained him in all aspects of meditation and told him of his karmic affinity with the people of China. She predicted the eventual demise of the Dharma in India and advised Bodhidharma to go to China after her death.

Prajñatara passed away at the age of 67 amidst many wondrous signs. The *stupa* erected in her memory was revered for many generations thereafter.

When the time was right, Bodhidharma boarded a boat for China from the great port of Mahabalipuram on the east coast of southern India. He left behind Prajñatara's disciples, including Buddhasena, and his own disciple, Visvamitra, to carry on the lineage in India.

Bodhidharma took the usual sea route used by traders and travelers of the period, including many Buddhist monks headed for the great *sutra* translation centers in China. A colleague of his, the monk Bodhiruci, had made the trip a number of years before and had become the abbot of Shaolin Monastery, built by the Chinese emperor to accommodate Indian monks.

The knowledge that Bodhidharma had a woman master seems to have been lost in China after a few generations, because in written Chinese, gender is inferred from context rather than stated explicitly. Prajñatara's gender and details about her life have been established from three different sources. First, archaeological discoveries have confirmed the existence of this great woman teacher in southern India. Second: the historical and oral traditions of the people of the state of Kerala provide

details about the lives of both Prajñatara and Bodhidharma. Third, information transmitted through the Zen lineages of Korea confirm the information.

*Rev. Koten Benson was ordained by Rev. Jiyu-Kennett in 1978 and named as a Dharma heir and Buddhist master in 1983. He served as her research assistant and her official biographer. He is the prior (resident teacher) at Lions Gate Buddhist Priory, PO Box 701, Lytton, BC, Canada V0K 1Z0, Canada. This article was originally published in the Priory's newsletter.*

**In Memory of Bhiksuni Tian Yi (1924-1980) of Taiwan**

Roseanne Freese (Yi Guang)

Way back in 1978, a teenage American girl wandered into Yuan Tong Buddhist Academy on Chao Zhou Street in Taipei. I had been in Taiwan for no more than two months when I happened on the tiny *vihara* in the middle of the Shi Fan University neighborhood. I had been Buddhist in my heart since I was 15, and when I traveled to Taiwan, I wanted to find a community and deepen my understanding.

I had just moved to the neighborhood a few days earlier when I discovered Bhiksuni Tian Yi's temple just two blocks from my apartment. Yuan Tong Buddhist Academy was a city temple of old rickety rooms built during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan (1895-1945). Its gray walls and yellow eaves were not at all imposing, especially when compared to the majestic red pillars, great wooden doors, and throngs of worshipers that filled the other temples of Taipei. I was seeking a place of refuge, a place for reflection. The smell of incense and the sound of chanting brought me in, but it was the heartfelt hospitality and deep cultivation that kept me coming back.

Yuan Tong Academy was unlike other temples. Other places had monastics, but not all of them were diligent. Some places were tended by enthusiastic and sincere laypeople who were just as happy to sacrifice a roast pig to the Queen Mother of the West as to offer incense to Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha. At Yuan Tong, by contrast, there were no televisions, no one loafing about, and no intrusions from the outside world. Day after day, I found nuns of every age, who were chanting, studying, and meditating. They had more rain than visitors, yet these nuns practiced with a warm inner and outer dedication.

My knowledge of Buddhist culture was too poor to realize that I had found an unusual place. In the 1970s, most nuns in Taiwan had only finished grammar school and many temple residents were not nuns, but *zhaigu* (vegetarian women) – laywomen who chanted the morning and evening services entirely from memory, because they could not read. *Zhaigu* kept a vegetarian diet and, though they did not marry, felt unworthy to go forth and become nuns. Even in communities that were home to many nuns living together, meditation practice was rare. Most nuns were simple women from the countryside who seldom visited other temples outside their own districts or heard popular commentaries. For many, going out to farmers' homes to say prayers for the dead was their biggest responsibility.

Even though I was too young to understand why, my heart knew that Yuan Tong was a true *vihara* – a refuge of study, cultivation, and kindness. One by one, I got to know the *bhiksunis*. When the nuns weren't chanting or meditating, they were studying *sutras*, Buddhist logic, or history. The nuns always welcomed me. After my Mandarin class, I often joined them in chanting the evening service (*wan ke*). Although the women of the neighborhood



laughed at me for bringing my own incense instead of buying it at the temple, the nuns never did. At the time, I did not know that buying the temple's incense would increase my karmic connection with the temple.

Instead of criticism or neglect, every day Bhiksunis Hsin Da and Yi De pointed out which verse or *mantra* to chant. Every week, they gave me new books to read. One day, Bhiksuni Yi De wanted to give me a modern Chinese commentary on an old *sutra*. A nun whispered, "Don't give her that! She'll never understand it." But Yi De said, "Don't worry. Someday she will!"

After I had visited twice a week for two months, a nun called me over and very solemnly said, "The abbess would like to speak with you." Although I was born the Year of the Pig and hams love attention, I was utterly bewildered. At 19 years old, all I knew of Abbess Tian Yi was that she was ancient, traveled a lot, and had many responsibilities. She managed four temples, home to more than 80 nuns! Later, I learned that she was in the very first group of women in Taiwan to receive full ordination and the only nun in Taiwan at that time to have attended university before ordination. Tian Yi eventually served at 20 ordination assemblies and was therefore an integral part of training an entire generation of ordained women.

Tian Yi was born in the town of Feng Shan in Pingdong, Taiwan's southernmost county, on November 16, 1924.<sup>1</sup> Remote from Taiwan's major cities – Taipei in the north, Taichung in the center, and the port of Kaohsiung in the south – Pingdong is best known for its sugar cane fields, rice paddies, and seaside fishing villages. Pingdong was so remote that, even in the 1970s, no one in the seaside villages had doors on their houses or cars in their yards. The older people were illiterate, but spoke fluent Japanese. The younger people could read and write, but spoke no Mandarin.

Born Hong Jin Zhu, Tian Yi enjoyed a remarkable childhood as the daughter of a successful businessman who sold traditional Chinese baked goods and holiday dumplings. In an era when learning Chinese was illegal in Taiwan, she studied the Confucian classics at a temple dedicated to Taiwan's most revered god and patron of fishermen, Ma Tzu (Mother of the Ancestors). Tian Yi also excelled at learning Japanese. As a teenager, she won one of four scholarships to study at Pingdong Girls' Middle School, a high school founded for the daughters of Japanese military officers. Rather than marrying after graduation, she went on to study at Tokyo Showa University. After returning from Japan, she ran her father's business. Despite having a great future ahead of her, she chose to leave the household life in 1952 and became a novice nun and the disciple of Abbess Yuan Rong of Dong Shan Temple in Pingdong County.

In 1953, when she was 29 years old, Tian Yi received full monastic vows and *bodhisattva* vows from Bhiksu Bai Sheng (1904-1989). A scholar originally from mainland China, Bai Sheng ordained Tian Yi at Da Xian Temple at Da He, Tainan County. Although China has a lineage of nuns that goes back to the fifth century, Taiwan did not hold fully documented *bhiksuni* ordinations in accordance with the Vinaya (monastic law) until 1953. That was the year that Tian Yi and roughly 20 others received the *bhiksuni* precepts. Except for the ordination of a few individuals during the Japanese occupation, the Da Xian ordination was the first one performed in 400 years of Taiwanese history.<sup>2</sup>

Although Tian Yi never founded a temple of her own or published her own books, she did something that no other nun in Taiwan had done before: she taught the Bhiksuni Vinaya. Starting with the very first anniversary of her ordination, Tian Yi served as Bhiksu Bai Sheng's Mandarin-Taiwanese interpreter

when he served as the leading precept master at the ordination assembly at Yuan Guang Temple in Shi Tou Shan in 1954. In later years, Tian Yi served in many roles at ordination assemblies. She taught the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya at the ordination assembly at Lin Ji Temple in 1970 and served as the very first female Vinaya ordination master in Taiwanese history at the ordination assembly at Long Hu Yan Temple in 1976.

Although Taiwanese people are famous for their piety, it was Tian Yi who revived the monastic tradition of confession, with chanting of the *Pratimoksa Sutra*, every two weeks. She also revived the monastic tradition of the summer rains retreats (*vassa*) at her temples, a practice that was unknown before or during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan. Throughout her life, she advocated two things, "Women must be taught by women" and "*Bhiksunis*, stand up!"<sup>3</sup>

Bhiksuni Tian Yi was known for transforming women's Buddhism in Taiwan from vegetarian gatherings, where laywomen wore nuns' clothing and many could not read or write,



Chanting Practice in a Monastery for Women in Taiwan

into an era in which nuns made financial, intellectual, and spiritual self-reliance their goal and their achievement. Her disciples obtained high school diplomas, attended Taiwan's rapidly multiplying Buddhist colleges, and brought the spirit of self-reliance to the study of Vinaya, *sutras*, and meditation. Eventually, some of her disciples walked in her footsteps. A few studied overseas and a few even went on to manage temples overseas. Fa Tzang Temple in Bacolod, Cebu, Philippines is now home to Bhiksunis Yi Cheng, Hsin Jie, and Yi Wen – all disciples of Tian Yi.

At the time, these achievements were barely known to me. I visited Yuan Tong Buddhist Academy for the beauty of the chanting and the serenity of the practice. The nuns there gave me what I needed most: gentleness, Dharma education, and the gift of their example. At the time I was more interested in flirting with boys, playing with water buffalo, and wandering the countryside, but Tian Yi gave me a vision of something deeper that will be forever fresh for me.

I clearly remember the day a nun brought me into a brightly lit office where Abbess Tian Yi sat smiling. She sat facing me, with her hands on her knees, like someone out of an old Chinese painting. Surrounded by cases holding Buddhist images, books, and photos of her journeys to Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, she impressed me as kind-hearted, open, and experienced. With a smile, she asked me a myriad of questions

about how I had discovered Buddhism, my family's background (Roman Catholic), the books I had read, and my Asian Buddhist friends in the United States. I told her how I had come to Taiwan to study Chinese language and culture, and how I loved to visit Buddhist temples.

With an even bigger smile, she asked whether I would like to visit her other temples in Taiwan. The spark in her eyes was reflected in mine and, although I remained silent, the delight in my eyes had already spoken for me. She sent me off with arms full of books and mementos, and a heart full of exuberance.

Guided by Bhiksunis Xin Da and Yi Cheng, disciples of the abbess, I visited Xing Long Temple, Ci Yun Temple, and Bai Yun Temple. Xing Long (Rising Dragon) Temple was built on the outskirts of Kaohsiung in the early 20th century. I still remember the first morning I arrived there. A rising sun illumined the open red and gold eaves of the temple and stirred the birds to sing their merry twitter. I felt I had entered a magical world and, 30 years later, those mornings are still with me. On the last morning of my stay, the nuns showered me with gifts, their eyes beaming with light. Their kind goodbyes were like the first bird songs of the morning. Their energy was a warm embrace of love.

Ci Yun (Vermillion Cloud) Temple, built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is a cacophony of merry, wildly upturned eaves in green and blue, topped by ceramic dragons in pink, yellow and white who appear ready to take flight. The temple is located in Ban Tian Yan (Halfway to Heaven Cliff), nestled in the foothills of the Alishan Mountains, where peaks pierce the sky at 3,000 meters. Last, I went to Bai Yun (White Cloud) Temple, which was built in the early 20th century in Zhang Hua, central Taiwan.

Although I enjoyed the tea plantations and *pagodas* that surrounded White Cloud Temple, it was Halfway to Heaven Cliff that became my home away from home. With a valley below, mountains above, cockcrow at dawn, and stars at night, I fell in love with the temple. The village of banana palms, towering *longyan* trees, and bright butterflies of indigo, crimson, and emerald welcomed me back time and again. Sometimes I stayed for as long as a month.

At Halfway to Heaven Cliff, Tian Yi's nuns taught me to count in Taiwanese, so I could help pilgrims select *malas* (prayer beads), incense, or sacred images to take home. After morning chores, I studied Buddhist primers for children. I taught the farmers and their children the names of barnyard animals in English, and they taught me the names in Taiwanese. After meditation and *sutra* study, I roamed the mountain paths surrounding the temple. With long faces, the nuns told me that the farmers had a punishment for people who stole their fruit: they were forced to eat one fruit from each and every tree in the orchard! Somehow, the compassionate Guan Yin had beaten the tempter Mara. A farmer had presented me with a bag of lychees, so I had escaped that fate.

At Halfway to Heaven Cliff, there was never any fatigue from too much work or boredom from too little study. The nuns and lay sisters all enjoyed their tasks, from gardening to cooking, chopping wood, rolling incense, or sewing shoe soles. The Dharma hall was well stocked with books and well lit by big windows. Creativity was always encouraged and hospitality never forgotten. All food was shared in common, from pickled greens and tired beans in winter to giant pink elephant-ear rice cakes and roasted chestnuts at the New Year Festival.

When there were no festivals, the abbess asked her disciples to take me around. The nuns took me to climb mountains and to visit wondrous places: villages of Taiwan's ten indigenous nationalities, new temples made of marble, old temples made of

red brick and ceramic, Buddhist colleges, and farming villages. Tian Yi wanted me to see the fullness of life in Taiwan, from temple festivals (*bai bai*) where thousands gathered around entranced shamans beating themselves with red maces, to vegetarian feasts for hundreds where dishes were served from woks four feet wide. She wanted me to see the varieties of Buddhist practice in Taiwan – the monastic and communal, scholarly and pious.

Whenever I returned to Taiwan, whether from the wealthy, easy-going United States or the poor, repressed China of the 1980s and 1990s, I went to visit these Dharma friends. I took many friends to meet them: my adopted Chinese family, my American classmates at Nanjing University, and even my mother from California. My mother, who speaks no Chinese, still treasures her "conversation" with Bhiksuni Yi Wen when, under the bodhi trees, they shared tea and tangerines.

One spring day, I got up in the dark for morning meditation at 4 am. I brushed my hair, washed my face, sat in the Dharma hall for an hour, and then joined the nuns in the main shrine to chant the morning service and then sweep the temple floor. Breakfast came and went and, although I was awake, I was not conscious. Too tired to feel satisfaction in finishing my morning chores and practice, I sat in a folding chair along the monastery's stone wall and stared out into the fog. As I sat like a sack of bricks, Bhiksuni Yi Cheng passed to and fro. Finally, she approached with a tea tray. *Omitofo!* Homage to the Buddha of Boundless Light! Amazingly, she had brought a steaming pot of coffee! Such was the hospitality of Tian Yi's disciples. Again and again, they showed me that there truly are 84,000 ways to enlightenment.

Warmth, spontaneity, and creativity were the special qualities of Tian Yi and her disciples. Although most remember her as a woman of immense learning, unceasing stamina, and an iron will. I remember her differently. Our last meeting, like our first, ended in laughter. When I had finished my year of Mandarin studies and it was time to go home, I couldn't leave Taiwan without saying farewell to my friends at Halfway to Heaven Cliff. One pleasant, sunny afternoon when there were no special dharma assemblies or pilgrims, Tian Yi called me over as she relaxed on a porcelain seat in the shape of an elephant. As we enjoyed the afternoon air, she said, "Roseanne, do you remember the day I gave you the Three Refuges last year at Yuan Tong Academy?"

"You did what?!" An eyebrow rose quizzically and a slight smile crossed her face, "Don't you remember? I gave you and that other little girl the Three Refuges? Don't you remember that day? The day that elderly laywoman came and liberated all those parakeets?" "Oh, yes, I remember now. You were giving me the Three Refuges then? I didn't know! I thought you were just giving me some kind of blessing."

Booming like a thunderbolt, her laughter rang out through the temple. Nuns came running from the shrine hall, the Dharma hall, and the fields. No one had ever heard her laugh like that. They all wondered what had happened. One nun was worried that I had upset the abbess and Tian Yi was laughing to cover her feelings. "What happened? What did you say to her?" asked the nuns, some still holding their gardening hoes and shovels.

"Yes," Tian Yi continued, "I gave you the Three Refuges then!" She looked right at me, shaking her head from side to side. "Omitofo! I gave her the Three Refuges and she didn't know it!"

I felt a little embarrassed, but I was glad to finally understand the significance of the day when the birds were set free. While the words of that ceremony had gotten lost in the translation, the intention certainly hadn't. "Omitofo!" I said, "Now that I know, may I receive them again?"

"Why certainly!" Laughing, we parted. I went off to study and



reflect; she went off to tend to administrative duties. Three days later, no longer cloaked in the fog of ignorance, caffeine withdrawal, or linguistic knots, after I knelt and offered incense, Tian Yi bestowed the Three Refuges upon me. I was only 19 years old when I became her disciple. Little did I realize that, nearly 30 years later, I would be immersed in research on the first nuns of China and the transmission of monastic ordination from India to China.



China's first nun, Hui Guo, asked her teachers again and again, "I should like to receive the precepts of a nun, but what is the proper way of taking them? Who should give the precepts? Where can the precepts be received? Who should witness receiving the precepts? Is the aspiration alone enough?" My meeting with Bhiksuni Tian Yi taught me that right intention alone is not enough. Right speech and right action must also follow, if we are to complete the path.

That was the last time I saw her. The Dharma name she gave me, Yi Guang (First in Brightness) brings me joy and humbles me as well. Unfortunately for our generation, her life-long battle with diabetes damaged her health. She passed away the following year, in 1980, at the age of 56. Although I may have been the last disciple she took, she continues to be one of the great heroes of my life.

I am deeply grateful that I made this lovely woman laugh. Bhiksuni Tian Yi taught me the precepts. Rather than seeking fame or fortune, she revived meditation and reflection. Despite illness, she lived well. Rather than pursuing worldly wealth, she encouraged women disciples. I was fortunate to be among her spiritual daughters. The Buddha's stepmother had to request ordination three times to become a nun, but for me, requesting the Buddha's Way twice was good enough. Omitofu!

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the details of Tian Yi's biography are all from the first biography of Tian Yi: Shi Zi Lun and Shi Jian Hua, eds., *Shi Tian Yi: Zou Guo Taiwan Fojiao Zhuan Xingqi de Biquni* (Tian Yi: Crossing Over During an Era of Change in Taiwan's Buddhism), Taipei: Zhong Tian Chubanshe, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest *bhiksuni* ordination in Taiwan may have taken place as early as 1919, according to records uncovered by Shi Huiyan. See Shi Huiyan, "Cong tai ming ri fojiao da hudong kan niseng zai Taiwan da fazhan," *Chung-Hwa Journal of Buddhist Studies* 12 (1999) 249-74. Cited in Wei-Yi Cheng, "Luminary Buddhist Nuns in Contemporary Taiwan: A Quiet Feminist Movement," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 5:10 (2003), p. 51. Available online.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

*Roseanne Freese is a historian and economist with the United States government in Washington, D.C. She has done extensive research in Buddhist history and biography and has a long-standing interest in tracing the history of the bhiku lineage in China.*

#### ONE WORLDWIDE NETWORK: A REPORT

*Evelyn Diane Cowie*

As the Buddha counseled, all conditioned things are subject to change. Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women is no exception to this rule. As it begins its 21<sup>st</sup> year, Sakyadhita is entering a period of change. How Sakyadhita manages this change is critical to its long-term success. This report presents an overview of branch and chapter building as a factor driving change and as an important step forward for Sakyadhita.

#### Planning for the Future of Sakyadhita

Sakyadhita's philosophy and mission is spread through its biennial conferences, publications, dedicated volunteers, and in particular, through the tireless work of its Executive Committee. The president of Sakyadhita, Karma Lekshe Tsomo, spends four months a year traveling internationally and most weekends traveling domestically in the United States, at her own expense, promoting Sakyadhita. The vice-president, Christie Chang, tirelessly promotes Sakyadhita in Asia and beyond. The secretary, Carol Stevens, keeps a careful account of all memberships, while the treasurer, Becky Paxton, keeps a careful accounting of all funds. Additionally, the Executive Committee is responsible for working with other volunteers in coordinating the biennial conferences and Sakyadhita publications. The Executive Committee's efforts are successful. Sakyadhita continues to strike a deep cord within women around the world, inspiring women to organize new national branches and local chapters.

The recent upswing in interest in organizing branches is a sign of positive growth, although branches and chapters are not new to Sakyadhita. During its first two decades, a small number of women volunteered as national representatives or organized national Sakyadhita branches and local chapters. In 1999, when the Sakyadhita bylaws were revised, the sections on branches and chapters were added. However, the branches, chapters, representatives, and Sakyadhita International were not tightly organized in a unified network. Because of distance, the branches, chapters, and representatives could only meet regularly with the Sakyadhita Executive Committee via email. More importantly, the relationship between Sakyadhita and its branches and chapters - the ways Sakyadhita could support its branches and the ways branches could support Sakyadhita and its international mission - needed to be clarified.

Being staffed by an all-volunteer staff and working across languages and time zones created limitations. Sakyadhita International and the women who organizing national branches struggled to develop a plan to unite all the Sakyadhita national branches. Over the years, some branches became inactive and Sakyadhita International could not keep closely in touch.

Recently, women in Australia, Buryatia, Canada, India, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States expressed interest in forming additional branches. The willingness of these women - as well as previous volunteers - to take on the huge task of organizing branches and chapters is wholeheartedly valued and supported by Sakyadhita. At the same time, experience has shown that a plan to unify the national branches and local chapters with



Sakyadhita as the parent organization needed to be established. This unifying plan needed to be simple to implement and sustain, yet flexible enough to meet the needs of Sakyadhita members in their diversity, in both Asia and the West.

Thus, in 2006 Sakyadhita began to focus its attention on branch/chapter building. It started by attempting to answer a myriad of questions: What is Sakyadhita? Who are the current members and who are the potential members? What is a branch? What is a chapter? How should they interact? In 2006-2007, Sakyadhita members drafted a 50-page guide, the *Sakyadhita Branch and Chapter Guide*. The goal of the *Guide* was to: (1) envision the roles of the branches and chapters in relation to Sakyadhita International; (2) address the realities faced by Buddhist women attempting to organize branches; and (3) unite all current and future branches and chapters into one worldwide network. The *Guide* accomplishes these goals. For example, the *Guide* defines the relationship between Sakyadhita and its branches/chapters. It establishes a network and mechanisms for implementing the network. It creates an application process, so that Sakyadhita has contact information and an historical record of the branches – something that is often missing in the history of Buddhist women. It lists basic principles to protect the Sakyadhita name and image as branches and chapters develop around the world. The *Guide* links all branches and chapters in the network and formally affiliates them with Sakyadhita through a written legal agreement.

Sakyadhita circulated a draft of the *Guide* to get input from existing chapters. The idea was to bring existing branches and chapters under the provisions of the *Guide* prior to adding new branches. To date, Sakyadhita Sri Lanka, Sakyadhita Ladakh, Sakyadhita Hawai'i, and Sakyadhita USA have sought affiliation within the network. Sakyadhita India and Sakyadhita UK are also applying for branch/chapter status. Sakyadhita encourages other branches to affiliate formally with Sakyadhita and its network under the terms of the *Guide* and values their participation.

### The Beginning of a New Era

The central feature of the network created in the *Guide* is a forum called the Branch and Chapter Council. The Council is composed of representatives from all Sakyadhita branches and chapters, plus volunteers in countries without chapters or branches, who are called chapter development coordinators. The Council will meet monthly via a private blog to discuss issues related to branch/chapter building. Historically, meeting monthly has been problematic for Sakyadhita, because of time zone and language differences. Using a private blog may solve this long-standing problem. For the first time, organizers of Sakyadhita branches will have an opportunity to work together in a mutually supportive network of like-minded women on issues specific to organizing and managing branches. Organizers building branches and chapters will have a place to discuss problems, share solutions, network, and plan for the future.

The *Guide* and the network marks the start of a new era for Sakyadhita. Over time, Sakyadhita branches, chapters, and eventually international projects will develop, in much the same way that the Sakyadhita conferences and publications have helped develop a body of literature on Buddhist women and ordination. An active, engaged network offers Buddhist women an unprecedented opportunity to make projects such as schools and micro-credit programs a reality in the developing world.

The developing world is mentioned frequently in this report,

because as an international association of Buddhist women, it is imperative that the majority of Buddhist women, who live in the developing world, are not forgotten. Millions of Buddhist women live trapped by abject poverty, illiteracy, and entrenched, gender-based, institutionalized discrimination, with little access to education, full ordination, or economic opportunities to alter their circumstances. The problems are daunting, but a united, worldwide Sakyadhita network can effect change, starting with this generation of women. To benefit these millions of disadvantaged Buddhist women, such a network is of paramount importance. When Sakyadhita plans, these women must not be forgotten.

### Realizing Sakyadhita's Vision and Mission

The *Guide* emphasizes the formation of a worldwide network for mission related reasons. International association, by and for the benefit of Buddhist women, is Sakyadhita's reason for being. A worldwide network promotes friendship, working relationships, and alliances among Buddhist women internationally. Therefore, by definition, the branches and chapters are integral parts of a worldwide network.



Sakyadhita Members from around the World Meet in Hamburg, Germany

As subsets of Sakyadhita International, the national branches incorporate Sakyadhita's mission and philosophy into their own domestic mission. National branches therefore have a dual function: to organize Buddhist women nationally and locally and to participate internationally within the Sakyadhita network. Dual domestic and international participation, nation by nation, is critically important to the future success of Sakyadhita as an international association. It builds the worldwide strength and unity needed to effect positive change for Buddhist women, while allowing women the freedom to develop national branches focused on their national and local needs.

Within any given nation, in Asia or the West, developed or developing, Buddhist women face gender-based bias to varying degrees in Buddhist institutions. In addition, some gender-based issues affect Buddhists globally, across national boundaries. For example, the continuing delay in establishing a *bhiksuni* lineage within the Tibetan tradition affects all Tibetan Buddhist practitioners worldwide. The Sakyadhita network was designed to address both types of gender bias. Nation by nation, Buddhist women work to dismantle gender bias domestically. In addition, by integrating their national branches into one large international

network, they work to dismantle gender bias internationally. This two-pronged approach to organizing Buddhist women and dismantling discrimination is viewed as the best way to accomplish Sakyadhita's mission of achieving equity for Buddhist women around the world.

National branches are organized in accordance with the *Guide*, so national organizers need to be clear that are interested in working both nationally *and* internationally. A national branch of Sakyadhita is not the same as a national association of Buddhists, for example. Sakyadhita does not support the organization of regional branches, since they divert national branches and their members from the Sakyadhita worldwide network. This runs counter to Sakyadhita's efforts to create one unified worldwide network to build the strength and resources needed to effect change. Regional networking within the Sakyadhita network is supported, but regional branches could diminish Sakyadhita's global vision. To be affiliated with Sakyadhita International, an organization must work within the Sakyadhita guidelines.

Sakyadhita's goal is to build a worldwide, mutually supportive forum to share knowledge, experience, and resources. National branches are free to determine their own priorities, as long as they are consistent with Sakyadhita's mission. Communications among branches and chapters is encouraged through the Sakyadhita Branch and Chapter Council, so that all organizers in the Sakyadhita network can learn from the experience of others and strengthen the network for the benefit of all.

### The Experience of Sakyadhita Sri Lanka

The realities of creating branches demonstrate the importance of one worldwide Sakyadhita network. The *Guide* developed from real-life lessons learned in Sri Lanka and in other parts of the world. Bhikkhuni Kusuma's article in this issue provides more information and additional insight on the importance of global networking.

Sakyadhita Sri Lanka was Sakyadhita's first national branch. It developed from the interest and support generated by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sakyadhita Conference in Colombo in 1993 and stands as a revolutionary accomplishment for Buddhist women. Sakyadhita Sri Lanka assisted in the re-establishment of the Bhiksuni Sangha in Sri Lanka, after a lapse of nearly a thousand years. It also led to the development of the Sakyadhita Training and Meditation Center, an education project for nuns. Grants from the Heinrich Böll Foundation supported the Sakyadhita Training and Meditation Center for some years. But grant money is seed money, not a permanent endowment. Now alternative, ongoing support must be found to maintain the training center for nuns. Sakyadhita Sri Lanka needs additional funds to develop projects for laywomen and to expand its facilities. In Sri Lanka, as in many traditional Buddhist cultures where alms giving is the norm, there is a cultural preference for supporting monks over nuns. Consequently, finding sufficient economic support for Sakyadhita Sri Lanka's projects is a continuing challenge. These realities demonstrate both the need and importance of a worldwide Sakyadhita network. A vibrant, socially engaged network of Sakyadhita branches, once established, can sustain Buddhist women's progress until they become self-sustaining.

### Applying Lessons Learned in Developing the Network

One lesson learned from Sakyadhita Sri Lanka is that seed money from grants is available to start Sakyadhita branches and

chapters. Therefore, the success of Sakyadhita Sri Lanka can be duplicated many times over in other nations. Accordingly, an important role that the worldwide Sakyadhita network can serve is to help identify grants and donors. Imagine the potential outcome if branches in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, for example, combined their expertise to look for seed money, both for branches in developing nations and their own branch and local chapters. Uniting in this way helps all branches increase their fundraising skills and increases their likelihood of success.

Another lesson learned from Sakyadhita Sri Lanka is that gender bias in almsgiving is a major obstacle facing Sakyadhita branches and projects. Branches in more affluent countries are also looking for ways to sustain their branches and chapters long-term. Women in certain Asian nations (Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, for example) have a history of success on both issues. Thus, another function of the global Sakyadhita network is combine expertise, resources, and ideas to find ways to sustain branches and chapters long-term. Each branch and chapter has much to gain and much to contribute by participating in the network. All branches and chapters have much in common.

Due to economic and educational disparities between the developed and developing worlds, branches and chapters in more affluent countries can help branches in the developing world until they become self sustaining. Plans for specific international fundraising projects are left to the discretion of each branch and chapter. Methods may be as simple as asking for *dana* at a workshop or as complex as writing grant proposals and mounting fundraising campaigns. Realistically, within any given national branch, some members will want to focus on domestic issues and other members will want to focus on international issues, while some will want to do both. As each national branch brings Sakyadhita's mission home to its nation and raises consciousness about the plight of the majority of Buddhist women, supporting all three choices will naturally become easier.

### Using Technology to Support the Network

Organizing national branches and coordinating their development is a large undertaking. Sakyadhita is focusing on internet technology to help Sakyadhita and its branches in these endeavors. The cornerstone of this web initiative is to revamp Sakyadhita's current website. After a total redesign, the website will be translated into multiple languages. A multi-lingual website will be a huge step forward for Sakyadhita, increasing its ability to publicize its efforts and build support. Sakyadhita branches and chapters around the world will benefit similarly.

Sakyadhita began implementing its web initiative by moving its website to a new web hosting company. Sakyadhita's new web hosting company offers new options, such as blogging and PayPal®. The PayPay® option makes it possible to make donations and pay membership dues and conference registration fees online. The PayPal® payment option is now available at [www.sakyadhita.org](http://www.sakyadhita.org).

Technology is opening up numerous possibilities for Sakyadhita and its branches and driving beneficial changes. Sakyadhita now offers fledgling branches and chapters free web space and email addresses. More established branches and chapters are encouraged to develop their own web sites in accordance with their own interests. The aim is to link Sakyadhita branches and local chapters electronically, creating a visible, unified presence in cyberspace.



## The Realities of an All-Volunteer Staff

Since its beginnings, Sakyadhita has staffed entirely by volunteers. Coordinating the development of the Branch and Chapter Council and other components of the Sakyadhita network – not to mention keeping up with new technologies – are tasks that volunteers need to fold into their existing workloads. The work of Sakyadhita includes planning international conferences; editing, indexing, and publishing newsletters and books; maintaining corporate, membership, and financial records; and many other activities. Sakyadhita's success so far is due to the dedication of its members and volunteers. Sakyadhita rejoices in its grassroots origins. At the same time, it needs a paid staff to grow. Meanwhile, we rely upon the generosity of our members.

One major way to support Sakyadhita is to volunteer. Volunteering time and expertise remains critically important to Sakyadhita's continued success. The need for legal, financial, and fundraising expertise is ongoing. Volunteers with this type of expertise are welcome. Currently, Sakyadhita needs designers to design websites, letterhead, and brochures. Donation of printing services would also be appreciated.

Sakyadhita and its branches have a continuing need for translators and proofreaders in various languages to translate and proofread website copy, brochures, meeting notices, and articles. Sakyadhita also needs English-language editors and proofreaders.

Another way to support Sakyadhita is to help coordinate branch and chapter development. Sakyadhita is accepting nominations and self-nominations for positions as Branch and Chapter Development Coordinators. These coordinators will help develop branches and chapters in their countries and are asked to serve two-year terms. If you would like to volunteer your time and expertise, please contact me.

Supporting Sakyadhita financially is also critically important. Paying membership dues annually is an important way to provide funds for Sakyadhita. Dues make the newsletter and other Sakyadhita projects possible. Please consider sending your membership and a donation today. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

*Evelyn Diane Cowie, M.S., J.D., is coordinating the development of branches and chapters for Sakyadhita. She has received approval to organize Sakyadhita USA, a national branch in the the United States. If you would like to volunteer, or want more information about volunteering or starting a branch or chapter in your nation, please contact her at: [brancheschapters@sakyadhita.org](mailto:brancheschapters@sakyadhita.org).*

### PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTWORK WELCOME

Sakyadhita has an ongoing need for photographs and artwork to complement written articles. Original photographs and artwork for publication in the newsletter are welcomed. Photos and artwork must be suitable for reduction and in keeping with the mission of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women.

For more information or to submit artwork and photographs, please contact: [newsletter@sakyadhita.org](mailto:newsletter@sakyadhita.org).

## NEWSLINE

### Congressional Gold Medal for Aung San Suu Kyi

In April, the United States Congress voted unanimously to award Aung San Suu Kyi the nation's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. Aung San Suu Kyi, the dissident leader of Burma, is the first person in the award's 232-year history to be granted the honor while under house arrest. Her supporters hope that the international attention focused on this award will help expedite her release and a response to her calls for dialogue with the ruling military junta.

Each year, Congress makes awards to just one or two nominees, usually Americans. Others who have received this honor include George Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elie Wiesel, and Mother Theresa. It is significant that Aung San Suu Kyi, a Buddhist woman who embodies nonviolence, has been honored at this moment in history. Demonstrations in Burma against the military government last September, led by Buddhist monks and nuns, captured headlines around the world.

Military generals, who have ruled Burma since 1962, have isolated Aung San Suu Kyi both from the Burmese people and the international community for over 12 years. The generals have more than 400,000 soldiers under their control, but Aung San Suu Kyi has the hearts of the Burmese people. Her party, the National League for Democracy, won by a landslide in elections held in 1990, but was never allowed to take seats in the government. Today, nearly 2,000 political detainees languish in Burmese prisons. Jailed monks continue reciting the *Sutra on Loving Kindness*, as they did during the recent demonstrations.

Aung San Suu Kyi is a renowned advocate of nonviolence, human rights, and self-determination for the Burmese people. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Canada recently awarded her honorary citizenship, in recognition of her long struggle for democracy. During her lonely years in detention, dating from 1989, she has devoted herself to the study and practice of the Buddhist teachings. Meditation on loving kindness and compassion have sustained her through years of hardship, in solidarity with the people of Burma.

For daily updates on conditions in Burma, contact [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org).

### Awards and Accolades for Buddhist Women

Jacquetta Gomes, B.A., M.L.S., was recently honored by inclusion in *Burke's Landed Gentry, Volume III, England's Northwest, Including Contemporary People of Distinction*. She has been an authorized teacher of Buddhism and meditation since 1983 and is the founder of The Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada).

Sylvia Wetzel, a founding member of Sakyadhita, was nominated for a 2008 Outstanding Women in Buddhism Award. Sylvia and the other nominees were honored at an international ceremony at the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women in Bangkok on March 6, 2008. A number of Sakyadhita members have been honored with this award. A full list of nominees is available on the award's website: [www.owbaw.com](http://www.owbaw.com).

### Submission of News

Sakyadhita invites submission of news and news-related articles in the following categories: (1) news about members, including publications, honors, achievements, etc.; (2) current events



from Sakyadhita branches and chapters; (3) lectures, programs, conferences, and projects by, for, and about Buddhist women; and (4) current international news relevant to Buddhist women. All submissions must be in tune with Sakyadhita's mission as an international association of Buddhist women and its readership. Sakyadhita generally does not publish general interest news from Dharma centers, except those that are directly relevant to women. Please email your submission to: newsletter@sakyadhita.org.



Progressing on the Issue of Full Ordination for Women in Buddhism: H.H. Dalai Lama Meets with International Vinaya Scholars in Hamburg, Germany

## H.H. DALAI LAMA ANNOUNCES FULL SUPPORT FOR THE BHIKSUNI SANGHA

by Rebecca Paxton

From July 18 to 20, the First International Congress on Buddhist Women's Role in the Sangha: Bhikshuni Vinaya and Ordination Lineages met at the University of Hamburg in Germany to discuss the history and future prospects of full ordination for women in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. At the conclusion of the Congress, H.H. the Dalai Lama announced that "after extensive research and consultation with leading Vinaya scholars and Sangha members of the Tibetan tradition and Buddhist traditions internationally, and with the backing of the Tibetan Buddhist community, since 1960s, I express my full support for the establishment of the Bhikshuni Sangha in the Tibetan tradition." Further, he said, "There are already nuns within the Tibetan tradition who have received the full *bhiksuni* vow according to the Dharmagupta lineage and whom we recognize as fully ordained." He outlined the next step for introducing full ordination into the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, recommending that a conference be held in India that would include senior monks, Vinaya scholars, and a delegation from the international Buddhist monastic community.

The focus of the Congress was to understand the history and transmission of *bhiksuni* ordination, considering especially how the ordination can be introduced in the Tibetan tradition. However, many aspects of the research presented have implications for other Buddhist traditions where full ordination to women either was never introduced or has been lost over the centuries. Among the distinguished speakers from the international Buddhist community, eminent *bhiksus*, *bhiksunis*, and lay scholars offered their perspectives and substantiated their arguments by citing textual documentation and historical precedents. It was truly a historic moment for all Buddhists.

## BOOKS: NEW AND NOTABLE

Caroline Brazier. *The Other Buddhism: Amida Comes West*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: O-Books, 2007.

Wei-yi Cheng. *Buddhist Nuns in Taiwan and Sri Lanka: A Critique of the Feminist Perspective*. Surrey, UK: RoutledgeCurzon, 2006

Lama Chonam and Sangye Khandro. *Lives and Liberation of Princess Mandarava: The Indian Consort of Padmasambhava*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006.

Hildegard Diemberger. *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty: The Samding Dorje Phagmo of Tibet*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Janet Gyatso and Hanna Havnevik. *Women in Tibet: Past and Present*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Sachiko Kaneko Morrell and Robert E. Morrell. *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes: Japan's Tokeiji Convent Since 1285*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Ranjini Obeyesekere. *Portraits of Buddhist Women*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001.

Miranda Shaw. *Buddhist Goddesses of India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Sallie Tisdale. *Women of the Way: Discovering 2,500 Years of Buddhist Wisdom*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

Karma Lekshe Tsomo, ed. *Buddhist Women in a Global Multicultural Community*. Kuala Lumpur: Sukhi Hotu Press, 2008.

## Books for Children and Parents

Sarah Conover. *Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents*. Spokane, WA: Eastern Washington University Press, 2001.

Lisa Desmond. *Baby Buddhas: A Guide for Teaching Meditation to Children*. Riverside, NJ: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2004.

Jonathan Landaw. *Prince Siddhartha: The Story of Buddha*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003.

Jeanne M. Lee. *I Once Was a Monkey: Stories Buddha Told*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999.

Karen Maezen Miller. *Momma Zen: Walking the Crooked Path of Motherhood*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006.

Sarah Napthali. *Buddhism for Mothers: A Calm Approach to Caring for Yourself and Your Children*. Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003.

Sarah Napthali, *Buddhism for Mothers of Young Children: Becoming a Mindful Parent*. Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2008.

Sister Susan, *Each Breath a Smile*. Berkeley: Plum Blossom Books, 2002.

Thich Nhat Hanh, *A Pebble for Your Pocket*. Berkeley: Plum Blossom Books, 2002.



## Research Articles of Interest

Wei-yi Cheng, "Luminary Buddhist Nuns in Contemporary Taiwan: A Quiet Feminist Movement," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 10 (2003).

Yuet Keung Lo, "Recovering a Buddhist Voice on Daughters-In-Law: The Yuyenü Jing," *History of Religions* 44:4 (2005) 318-50.

Jonathan S. Walters, A Voice from the Silence: The Buddha's Mother's Story," *History of Religions*, 33:4 (May 1994) 358-79.

Note: Please send news of your recent publications to newsletter@sakyadhita.org.

## VOLUNTEER WRITERS WANTED

The Sakyadhita Newsletter is in need of writers to submit brief summaries of major news events related to Buddhist women, both at the national and international level. Two submissions per year are currently required. To volunteer as a news writer, please contact: newsletter@sakyadhita.org.

## NEW SAKYADHITA EMAIL ADDRESSES

To contact Sakyadhita by email, please use the following new email addresses:

## Officers:

Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo	presiden@sakyadhita.org
Christie Yu-ling Chang	vicepresident@sakyadhita.org
Carol Stevens	secretary@sakyadhita.org
Rebecca Paxton	treasurer@sakyadhita.org

## Departments:

Branch and Chapter Development Inquiries:  
brancheschapters@sakyadhita.org  
Newsletter Submissions and Inquiries:  
newsletter@sakyadhita.org  
Website Inquiries and Comments:  
webmaster@sakyadhita.org

## HOW I BECAME A BHIKKHUNI

*Bhikkhu Kusuma*

Over the years, many people have invited me to write my story. I have always declined, but when I visited Berlin, Gabriele Kustermann insisted, "Here is the paper and pen. You write now." It was an order from a highly revered friend, so I sat down and wrote a few pages for publication in the Sakyadhita Newsletter, by invitation of the editors.

Ten years have passed since I ordained as the first *bhikkhuni* in modern Sri Lanka in a ceremony held at Sarnath, India. It is past history now, but the ordination was very controversial at the time. People started writing and publishing their personal views about the ordination and there were misinterpretations without factual evidence. Among the Theravada monks, some were supportive, while others were opposed. The issue hit the headlines of the daily newspaper ("Resurrection of the Bhikkhuni Order!") and the controversy was too much to handle. Since I had achieved my purpose, I thought it would be prudent to be silent. I wondered,

'Have I inadvertently upset a hornet's nest by becoming ordained as a *bhikkhuni*?

My intention in receiving *bhikkhuni* ordination was clear, however. I had been a Vinaya research scholar for 20 years and was fully cognizant of Vinaya procedures. This may be one reason that nobody confronted me directly. Even the monks had not studied Bhikkhuni Vinaya. At my doctoral defense, some senior monks on the examination board asked me questions about the Vinaya that they themselves could not answer. I was able to respond to their satisfaction and was awarded the Ph.D.

The next important episode in my life was the Sakyadhita conference held in Sri Lanka in 1993. Ranjani de Silva and I, who were the main organizers, became "activists" to re-introduce the *bhikkhuni* order in Sri Lanka. She was the secretary and I was president of Sakyadhita Sri Lanka. We approached Bhikkhu Mapalagama Vipulasara Thero, president of the Mahabodhi Society of India, who was also the founder and secretary of the World Buddhist Sakyamuni Sangha Council. We asked him about the possibility of resurrecting the *bhikkhuni* order.

After much deliberation, he communicated with the Korean Sangha of the Jogye Order. They were very willing to help us re-introduce the *bhikkhuni* order to Sri Lanka, but questions remained about the feasibility of such an ordination and the finances needed to support it.

It was decided that Sri Lanka could not be the venue for the ordination ceremony, because of possible opposition, but that an ordination would be possible in Sarnath, India, under the auspices of the Mahabodhi Society. They decided to select ten candidates to be ordained in India. The ten newly ordained *bhikkhunis* would be required to stay in India for two years after ordination to receive training as *bhikkhunis*. This meant that arrangements needed to be made to financially support their board, lodging, and travel expenses to India. The building that had been the living quarters of Anagarika Dharmapala was 100 years old and had to be renovated at great cost to house the *bhikkhunis*. I gratefully acknowledge the enormous amount of energy and funds spent by Bhikkhu Vipulasara Thero, in cooperation with the Korean Sangha.

Selecting ten nuns to receive ordination was critical to the success of reintroducing the *bhikkhuni* lineage to Sri Lanka. The ordination was advertised in the local newspapers and about two hundred applicants turned up for the interview. But the moment the applicants heard about the prevailing opposition of monks and the required two years of training, many became reluctant, as it would mean leaving their temples and residing in India for two years. Ranjani and the other women on the interview board selected nine nuns. The candidates were to be given eight months of training at Parama Dhamma Cetiya Pirivena in Ratmalana, Sri Lanka, prior to their departure to India. I was one of the teachers selected to give instruction in Dharma and Vinaya.

In the midst of the planning, Bhikkhu Vipulasara called me up one day and said, "You have to go to Korea and study their ordination procedures." It was quite an order, but I had no valid reason to refuse. I had been wearing white, meditating, and living as a recluse for over 15 years, ever since the death of my 21-year-old daughter. At the age of 55, I retired from the University of Sri Jayawardanapura after 20 years of teaching, having completed post-graduate studies in Pali, Buddhism, and Vinaya. For these reasons, Ven. Vipulasara selected me to perform this weighty responsibility.

I soon found myself in Bomyunsa, a famous Korean temple in Kwang-ku, a district of Seoul, in the middle of winter. Hardly anyone spoke English, except the abbess, the great *bhikkhuni* Sang



Wong. Despite extreme difficulties, I stayed for three months and read through the Vinaya in English translation. I also translated the Vinaya procedure into Sinhala, the language of Sri Lanka, so that it could be read by the Sri Lankan nuns seeking ordination. The nuns then studied this material, so that they would be acquainted with the ordination procedure beforehand.

To my great satisfaction, I found that the Dharmagupta Vinaya and the ordination procedures were the same as in the Sri Lankan tradition. There is a reason for this. Ven. Sanghamitta brought the *bhikkhuni* ordination lineage to Sri Lanka in the third century BCE. They crossed the dangerous seas in a ship captained by a man named Nandi. This event is documented in Chinese historical records. Prof. Hema Goonatilake has done much research on the subject and published the results. From China, the *bhikkhuni* order spread to Korea, Taiwan, and other Mahayana countries. Thus, it can be seen that all fully ordained nuns in the world today are descendants of Sri Lanka *bhikkhunis* and can claim to uphold the lineage transmitted from its beginnings with Bhikkhuni Mahapajapati at the time of the Buddha.

### Korean Ordination

While I was in Korea, the Korean Maha Sangha and over 150 laypeople were preparing to come to India to bestow ordination on the Sri Lankan nuns. They booked their air tickets and made elaborate plans to perform this very important, historic ceremony. In the meantime, massive public opinion was mounting in Sri Lanka. Some monks who had supported Ven. Vipulasara declined to support the ordination. Ranjani even wrote to me to say that it would be best to give up the ordination, in the face of opposition from Theravadin monks. We had a crucial decision to make.

At this point, Ven. Vipulasara telephoned me from Sri Lanka and conveyed the facts. The Koreans were alarmed and some even doubted the pure intentions of Bhikku Vipulasara. Bhikkhu Vipulasara told me that he felt the nuns selected were not up to the standard required for ordination, because their language skills and knowledge were inadequate. "It is an international responsibility," he said. In the face of all this, he invited me to join the nuns and take a leadership role as the first *bhikkhuni*. Otherwise, he said, he would be constrained to abandon the whole project! I was caught between two worlds and had hardly any time to think. I replied, "Venerable sir, please do not abandon the project. Even at the risk of my life, I will be willing. There will never be another chance." So, by the time Ven. Vipulasara hung up the receiver, we had decided to go ahead with the ordination. This was how I decided to become a *bhikkhuni*.

But the Korean Sangha was not completely satisfied. They had begun to have doubts and to question Ven. Vipulasara's credibility. Under the circumstances, they decided to invite Ven. Vipulasara to Korea, so they could question him in great detail. When Ven. Vipulasara arrived in Korea, he was interrogated by the Maha Sangha behind closed doors, with the help of an interpreter. Even Bhikkhuni Sang Wong and I were excluded. But as the *devas* (gods) deemed it and fate decreed, Ven. Vipulasara's words dispelled their consternation. So, finally, the decision was made to hold the ordination.

### Ordination as a Ten-Precept Nun

After my stay in Korea, I returned to Sri Lanka and received ordination as a ten-precept nun at the Kelaniya Rajamaha Vihara under the tutelage of Bhikkhu Kollupitiya Mahinda Thero, the chief incumbent monk. There was a record crowd to witness this

ceremony. Sri Lanka is a small island nation and many people knew me. I had been on Sri Lanka State Broadcasting's weekly Buddhist radio forum for over 18 years. Tears were shed when I took leave of my husband and family. People showered me with gifts, which mounted up in a big heap. I was the happiest of all, as I donned the yellow robe.

### Higher Ordination in Sarnath



Bhikkhuni Kusuma Speaking at the 7<sup>th</sup> Sakyadhita Conference in Taipei

For my family and me, it was quite unexpected that I would be going to India to receive higher ordination as a *bhikkhuni* and reside in Sarnath for two years of further *bhikkhuni* training. In light of some vocal opposition to the *bhikkhuni* ordination, I was in an unenviable position. But my mind was made up and I had made a pledge to undertake the ordination "even at the risk of my life," so we soon proceeded to India.

On December 8, 1996, the premises of the Mahabodhi Society in Sarnath was a site of unimaginable splendor. The ordination candidates and preceptors were taken in procession, complete with caparisoned elephants and horses. Large crowds of Sri Lankan pilgrims and nuns carried Buddhist flags. *Bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunis*, and laypeople had arrived from Sri Lanka, Thailand, and many other countries to witness the ceremony. Bhikkhuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo, president of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women, was among them.

The venue was the very spot where the Buddha preached the first sermon, known as the *Turning the Wheel of Dhamma Sutta* (*Dhamma Chakka Pavattana Sutta*) to the five ascetics. Both *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* of the Korean Sangha participated in the ceremony, with an interpreter to translate from Korean to English. It was my sacred duty to translate the proceedings from English to Sinhala for the other nuns seeking ordination. The ceremony took eight hours and the discipline and formality were so austere that my knees ached and were bleeding from all the kneeling. I still have the scars to remind me of this most auspicious day.

We received the ordination in the presence of both *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*, as was the tradition from the time of the Buddha. We were dressed in Korean monastic robes and it was a magnificent sight. Many photos and videos were taken, which were flashed to Sri Lankan newspapers and to communities throughout the world. Friends from the U.K., mostly doctors, chartered a special plane to come to Sarnath to see me. The Sri Lankan newspapers publicly acclaimed the ordination in their headlines. News of this event led to well-publicized debates, with advocates speaking both for and against the ordination.



Personally, I felt confident of my Dhamma path, in accordance with the Theravada Pali tradition and the two years of training that I received from the esteemed Sri Lankan pundit, Bhikkhu Andawala Devasiri Thero, in Sarnath. As the Sri Lankan monks recognized the ordination, we were offered Sri Lankan robes. Because I was the first to be ordained, I was considered the first of the ten *bhikkhunis*.

On this path of renunciation, I am forever grateful to everyone who extended their kind help to establish the *bhikkhuni* order in



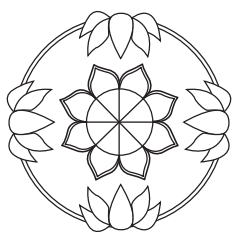
With Bhikkhuni Shig Hiu Wan and Dharma Friends at the 7th Sakyadhita Conference

Sri Lanka after a lapse of almost a thousand years. In conclusion, I like to quote a famous statement from the *Mahavamsa*. In this ancient Sri Lankan historical chronicle, Ven. Mahinda, who brought ordination to Sri Lanka in the third century BCE, addresses the king: "Oh Maharaja, until a person born in the soil of the land takes ordination, the ordination will not be established in the land."

We are so happy that we were "born in the soil of the land and received ordination," and, in this way, were able to reestablish the Bhikkhuni Sangha in Sri Lanka. It is up to the future *bhikkhunis* to continue living according to the precepts and practicing well to keep the wisdom of the Buddha alive.

May all achieve the highest happiness of *nibbana*!

*Bhikkhuni Kusuma (Devendra) is a fully ordained Buddhist nun with a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies. She taught at Sri Jayawardena University for many years and is currently establishing Ayya Khema International Buddhist Mandir in honor of her mentor, Bhikkhuni Ayya Khema. The center will offer classes in Pali, Theravada Buddhist suttas, Abhidhamma, chanting, meditation, and English for women seeking of solitude and wisdom through the teachings of the Buddha.*



## VISUALIZING A GLOBAL SAKYADHITA NETWORK

Evelyn Diane Cowie

*The practice of visualization is integral to the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. It is also an essential component of creativity, and creativity is not limited to the arts. Creativity can be applied everywhere, including planning for the future of a nonprofit organization like Sakyadhita. So please, sit back, relax and join me in visualizing a global Sakyadhita network.*

Imagine that, around the world, nation-by-nation, pioneering Buddhist women organize across the various Buddhist traditions and across racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic differences. With careful attention to issues of diversity and inclusion, the women form Sakyadhita national branches, as well as local and student chapters within the national branches. Within each country, the national branch and local chapters sponsor local and regional meetings and workshops. To network nationally, the branches sponsor biennial national conferences, reaching out to all Dharma centers and temples in the country.

Visualize national conferences and Sakyadhita International conferences held on alternate years with, so that members of the national branches can network internationally at the biennial Sakyadhita International conferences and link up with others in the Sakyadhita network. The Sakyadhita International conferences expand to include a forum for international networking for branch and chapter organizers and leaders, with sessions on nonprofit management and project development.

Imagine the national branches bringing Sakyadhita's philosophy and mission home to the national level. Within their countries, in their local language(s), the national branches support and promote Buddhist women in their full diversity as laywomen,

### VOLUNTEER WRITERS WANTED

The Sakyadhita Newsletter is in need of writers to submit brief summaries of major news events related to Buddhist women, both at the national and international level. Two submissions per year are currently required. To volunteer as a news writer, please contact: [newsletter@sakyadhita.org](mailto:newsletter@sakyadhita.org).

ordained nuns, and Dharma teachers; as writers and artists; as business and professional women; as mothers, wives, and daughters; and as agents of social change. They work to ensure that the ideas, needs, and concerns of Buddhist women are represented within their Buddhist communities and at the local and national levels. They examine gender discrimination in Buddhism in their own countries and organizations and work to eliminate it. They nurture the development of laywomen, ordained women, and Dharma teachers in their countries as equally valuable life choices. They nurture the development of temples and meditation centers where women are respected and valued. They explore ways to transmit Buddhist values to their children and grandchildren, and ways to create greater understanding, especially in multi-religious societies.

Visualize the Sakyadhita branches and chapters growing stronger and stronger over time. Gradually, they develop women-friendly, socially engaged Buddhist social welfare projects and programs, including hospices, food banks, women's shelters, and the like. The projects reduce suffering in their countries, train

women as Dharma teachers, and educate the population about Buddhist values. Through these projects, the national branches ensure that Buddhist women are active participants in a new flourishing of Buddhist institutions and human understanding as Buddhism becomes mainstream. The exclusion and subordination of women in Buddhist institutions becomes a relic of the past. Wow!

Picture that, as the national branches work on a range of issues

### EDITORS AND PROOFREADERS NEEDED

The Sakyadhita Newsletter is in need of editors and proofreaders help prepare the final copy for the newsletter. If you are detail-oriented, have excellent grammar and spelling skills, and cannot abide typos, mislabeled photos, or grammatical errors, the newsletter needs you! Contact: [newsletter@sakyadhita.org](mailto:newsletter@sakyadhita.org) to volunteer.

and projects, they also help erode barriers to understanding among the world's religions and among Buddhists in different traditions and parts of the world. Through international networking, Sakyadhita members increase their understanding of the obstacles facing many Buddhist women: poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, exploitation, discrimination in education, sex-trafficking, and other social ills. They learn that, in some parts of the world, Buddhist girls do not attend school, because the public schools teach a foreign culture in a foreign language and because they are at risk of sexual assault while walking to school. They learn that, in some places, girls are excluded from local temple schools that are organized for Buddhist boys and taught by monks. They learn women in some Buddhist cultures do not have access to equal ordination opportunities and that nuns are regarded as laywomen with shaved heads, while monks are revered. They learn that some Buddhist women are sold by their families into the sex trade, marked for life as prostitutes by brands on their heels. They learn that some, compelled by poverty, work as prostitutes to support their families, and donate money earned from prostitution to the local temple to offset the unwholesome karma they accumulate through working in the sex trade.

Imagine that, over time, women open their minds and stop involuntarily shutting down when they hear these reports. Instead, they resolve to act as agents of change and combine their strengths, so that Sakyadhita becomes a vital network for correcting these injustices. Their ethnic diversity strengthens the perception of women as peacebuilders and community leaders. They create a network of connections with Buddhist women throughout the world and work in solidarity with women in Central and South America, Africa, and the Middle East.

Envision that women in all the Sakyadhita national branches experiment and create action projects that reflect the needs and ideas of women in their countries. Local and regional meetings and workshops and biennial national conferences are sponsored to foster awareness and national networking. On alternate years, the women attend the Sakyadhita International conferences to also foster international networking. They gain skills at working with women of many cultures and backgrounds. They examine notions of gender equality, human rights, and civil rights. They examine sexism in Buddhism and work to eliminate it. They think creatively to ensure that the needs and concerns of Buddhist women are represented. They work to ensure that

history acknowledges the contributions of Buddhist women in society. They become aware of the plight of Buddhist women in developing countries and resolve to strengthen Sakyadhita's international network to address global crises and eliminate suffering.

Now, imagine that Buddhist women, both in Asia and the West, discover how much work is left to do to correct injustices in the world and understand that they are uniquely qualified to do it. They become aware that 300 million women, including tens of thousands of women in robes, have enormous power to raise human consciousness and are capable of transforming global society to live in peace and harmony. Through their national branches, they commit to strengthening and expanding educational opportunities for Buddhist girls and young women throughout the world. The national branches use their networks to raise funds and awareness. They galvanize the extensive experience and expertise of their members to develop Buddhist institutions and to organize projects for the social good. They share their resources to help develop women leaders, both in the lay community and the Bhiksuni Sangha. They help sustain women's projects until they become self-sustaining. Awe-inspiring!

Now, visualize that, in each country, a few energetic and creative woman take the lead in helping form a national branch. Undaunted by any difficulties along the way, they serve as facilitators to coordinate branch and chapter development in their countries. They coordinate meetings domestically and link up monthly with Sakyadhita's international network. They make contact with other pure-hearted, well-motivated, caring, qualified people in their areas. Together, they develop an action plan for benefitting others – sisters helping sisters. They develop fundraising skills and discover sources of seed money and donations to implement their plans. They create websites in national languages and grow stronger and stronger day by day.

Imagine that, through the years, the good intentions and skillful actions of each Sakyadhita organizer, member, volunteer, and donor makes a ripple effect, like a pebble that creates ripples throughout a still lake of water, and each ripple transforms human consciousness throughout the world. Visualize that each Sakyadhita branch, chapter, project, conference, and publication forms many ripples, large and small, that increase Buddhist social engagement. The ripples from the efforts and good will of Sakyadhita members coalesce over the years to create a great wave of human happiness and well-being that spreads around the globe, eliminating violence and human suffering. Can you see the Buddha's serene smile?

*Evelyn Diane Cowie, M.S., J.D., is interested in nonprofit management, end-of-life decision-making, and law as they relate to Buddhism. She is a volunteer editor and strategic planner for Sakyadhita International. She is coordinating the development of branches and chapters for Sakyadhita and has received approval to organize Sakyadhita USA from the Executive Committee. She can be reached at: [brancheschapters@sakyadhita.org](mailto:brancheschapters@sakyadhita.org).*

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This issue of the Sakyadhita newsletter was compiled by Evelyn Diane Cowie, Becky Paxton, and Karma Lekshe Tsomo. Design by Allen Wynar. Artwork by Gloria Staackman. Photographs by Christie Yu-ling Chang.

# *Sākyadhitā Membership*

Support Buddhist Women by joining Sākyadhitā!

- ☐ I would like to join Sākyadhitā
- ☐ I would like to renew my Sākyadhitā membership
- ☐ \$300 Lifetime Membership
  - ☐ \$150 Benefactor
  - ☐ \$75 Supporter
  - ☐ \$30 Regular Member
  - ☐ \$15 Nun/Student/Unemployed
- ☐ Additional Tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (Home): \_\_\_\_\_

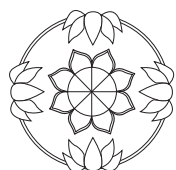
Phone: (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Ideas and Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please include a check or money order in U.S. dollars only. Thank you for your support!



## *Sākyadhitā*

*International Association of Buddhist Women*

923 Mokapu Blvd.

Kailua, HI 96734 USA