



BUDDHIST
WOMEN

Transforming
Attitudes

An interview with
Ven Karma Lekshe Tsomo
in conjunction with the
9th Sakyadhita Conference

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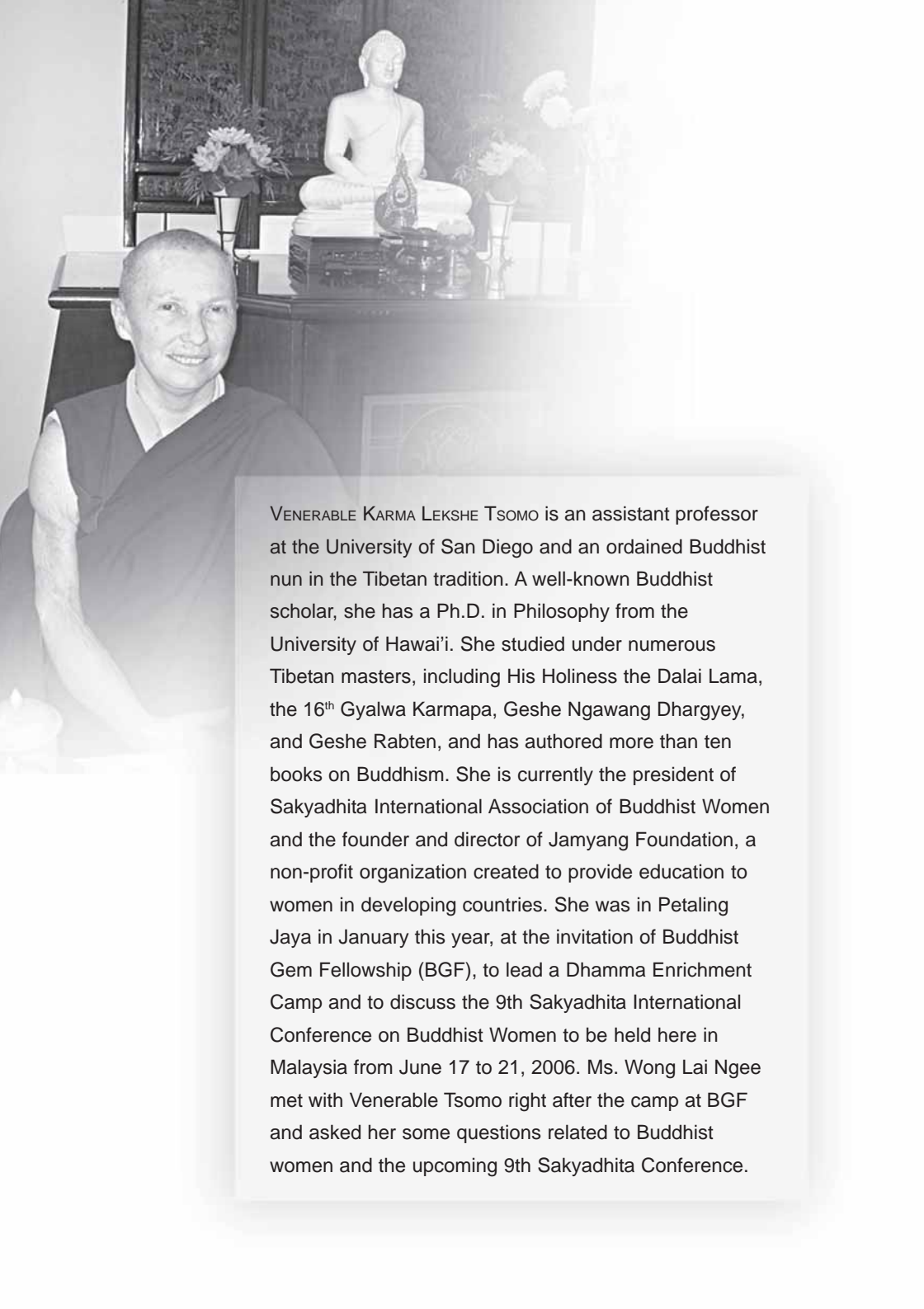
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VENERABLE KARMA LEKSHE TSOMO is an assistant professor at the University of San Diego and an ordained Buddhist nun in the Tibetan tradition. A well-known Buddhist scholar, she has a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Hawai'i. She studied under numerous Tibetan masters, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, and Geshe Rabten, and has authored more than ten books on Buddhism. She is currently the president of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women and the founder and director of Jamyang Foundation, a non-profit organization created to provide education to women in developing countries. She was in Petaling Jaya in January this year, at the invitation of Buddhist Gem Fellowship (BGF), to lead a Dhamma Enrichment Camp and to discuss the 9th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women to be held here in Malaysia from June 17 to 21, 2006. Ms. Wong Lai Ngee met with Venerable Tsomo right after the camp at BGF and asked her some questions related to Buddhist women and the upcoming 9th Sakyadhita Conference.

WONG LAI NGEE: When we speak of Buddhist women, who are we speaking of?

VENERABLE KARMA LEKSHE TSOMO: Buddhist women include nuns, laywomen, and a new category in the United States called “neither lay nor ordained.” This term refers to women who are full-time practitioners, but not ordained as nuns or priests. Buddhist women are incredibly diverse. We are women from many different countries, speaking many different languages, and practicing in many different traditions. Buddhist women include doctors, lawyers, business owners, artists, writers, scholars, meditators, and activists. There are extremes in our education and income, ranging from the highly educated to the totally uneducated, millionaires to women living in abject poverty. Buddhist women are diverse and everywhere.

But they have something in common?

What Buddhist women have in common is their devotion to the Buddhist path. All of them are trying to walk the Dharma path and, in that way, they have similar values. They value honesty, peace, compassion, loving kindness, and wisdom. Hence, they all share the basic foundation of being Buddhist and they live by these values in their own unique ways. The 9th Sakyadhita International Conference will bring together this rich variety for sharing and learning.

The Sakyadhita website mentions that there are over 300 million Buddhist women in the world. Have conditions for Buddhist women improved in the past 40 years? Or are we still faced with the same issues and challenges?

There has been tremendous progress in the last 20 years. When we organized the first Sakyadhita Conference in Bodhgaya in 1987, there was a new awareness of the difficult living conditions of many Buddhist women. Many Buddhist nuns were facing major difficulties even getting the basics – food and shelter – and they didn't know what to do. They wanted to learn Buddhism, but they did not have opportunities. They wanted to become nuns, but they were not allowed. They wanted to become fully ordained *bhikkhunis*, but there was no *bhikkhuni* ordination for them.

Only a few hundred people were able to come to the Sakyadhita Conference in 1987, but all of them had observed how very difficult things were for Buddhist nuns, especially in developing countries. In those days, many older nuns were dressed in rags, without enough to eat, a place to stay, or adequate health care. They had no way to study Buddhism, because they were illiterate. Their conditions were really tragic. In the last 20 years, things have really improved. Due to the hard work and the generosity of a lot of people, we have been able to open Buddhist education and training centers for women in many countries, especially in the developing world. The Sakyadhita Training and Meditation Center that opened in Sri Lanka in 2000 is one example.

Generally speaking, women in Taiwan and Korea are very fortunate. They have everything they need to practice the Dharma – teachings, books, education, food, retreat facilities, and monasteries. Several hundred Buddhist colleges in these countries provide nuns and laywomen with a systematic education, often free of charge. Buddhist women have worked very hard to gather these good conditions and they now take full advantage of the opportunity to study, practice, teach, and write about Buddhism. It's beautiful to see all the good work of Buddhist nuns and laywomen in these two countries.

In the other countries, there have been many improvements, but there is still much progress to be made. For example, through Jamyang Foundation, we've opened some study centers for nuns in India and young girls in Bangladesh, but there are still many challenges. The schools still face shortages of teachers, adequate nutrition, and basic health care, so laywomen and nuns still don't have equal educational opportunities.

Are equal opportunities related to particular Buddhist traditions? For example, in Taiwan and Korea, the predominant tradition is Mahayana. *Bhikkhuni* ordination is a success there. In the Theravada tradition, it's more difficult for women to get ordained. Is this still a big issue?

There seems to be a strong correlation between equal opportunities for ordination and the status of Buddhist women in general. In societies where women have equal opportunities for ordination – Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam – they also have roughly equal opportunities for education. In societies where women do not have equal opportunities for ordination – Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, and Tibet – they also have difficulty receiving a systematic Buddhist education. Nuns who are fully ordained receive respect and support from society, so their living conditions are much better and they are able to contribute fully to benefit society.

Women need teachers they can go to for learning the Dharma, for guiding their meditation practice, for advice on life in general, and for helping guide their children. Once they are educated, nuns and laywomen can become Dharma teachers and help society in many ways. In Taiwan and Korea, nuns have set up old folk's homes, kindergartens, dialysis centers, research centers, hospitals, and women's shelters, as well as monasteries and universities. In these countries, there are a huge number of nuns – about 20,000 *bhikkhunis* in both Korea and Taiwan! In Vietnam, too, nuns are everywhere and very active.

When they come up with a project, like building a retreat center or hospice, everyone supports the nuns.

But in countries where there are no *bhikkunis*, conditions are more difficult. Nuns in some countries are not considered real nuns. Either they are novices their whole life, as in the Tibetan tradition, or they are regarded as laywomen with shaved heads, as in Thailand. Even a nun who has shaved her head, worn robes, practiced Dharma devoutly, and not taken solid food after 12 o'clock for 60 years, is not recognized as being fully a nun in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, because they don't have *bhikkhuni* ordination in those countries. Last year, Daw Thisawati was detained by the Burmese government for the "crime" of having received full ordination.

The big success story has been Sri Lanka. This is due to the effort of laywomen and nuns working together to change things. Inspired by the 1st Sakyadhita Conference in Bodhgaya in 1987, the nuns and laywomen went back to Sri Lanka and figured out a way to re-establish the *bhikkhuni* lineage in Sri Lanka. With the help of openminded monks, they were able to realize their dream. Today, out of about 2,000 nuns in Sri Lanka, more than 500 are *bhikkunis*. Since 1998, many *bhikkhuni* ordinations have been held in Sri Lanka. In the the fifth century, the *bhikkhuni* lineage was transmitted from Sri Lanka to China, and now it has been brought back from China to Sri Lanka. It's a beautiful thing to see.

Can nuns from other countries take ordination in Sri Lanka?

Yes, nuns from Thailand, Indonesia, and Burma have already taken *bhikkhuni* ordination in Sri Lanka. These nuns belong to the Theravada tradition, so they prefer to take ordination with Theravada nuns and monks. That's already happening.

What challenges do Buddhist women still face?

The biggest challenge is to change attitudes about women. Most of the problems are rooted in the old attitude that women are somehow not as capable and not as worthy as men. This attitude is not only just coming from men, but also from women themselves. The belief of “I am not worthy” is prevalent in many countries – that women are not worthy to go to school, to learn to read, to do a retreat, to receive support, to teach, and so forth. So a very important part of Sakyadhita’s work has been changing attitudes towards women, including the attitude of women towards themselves and other women.

When I was in Myanmar recently, a Buddhist tour guide remarked, “The Buddha said that the nuns will be the cause of the downfall of the Sangha and Dharma”. This attitude seems to be quite prevalent in Asian countries. Women are often restricted from entering certain areas in the temples and other sacred places. Why?

There is a prediction, put in the Buddha’s words, that if women were admitted to the Sangha, the *sasana* would die out after 500 years. This prediction has influenced people’s attitudes towards women throughout Buddhist history. It is unlikely that the Buddha himself made this prediction, however. About 800 years after the the Buddha’s *parinirvana*, texts started to appear that say, “If women are admitted to the Sangha, then the *sasana* will die out after 1000 years.” Over time, the prophecy seems to get revised again and again, in response to the fact that the Buddha admitted women to the Sangha and the *sasana* was still going strong. And now 2500 years have already passed and the *sasana* is still alive and well. These predictions seem to be the creation of ordinary human beings who lived after the time of the Buddha. The problem

is, these predictions have influenced attitudes toward women in Buddhist countries, which is very unfortunate. Even today, there are pollution taboos in Thailand, Burma, Bhutan, and Ladakh that forbid women from entering certain Buddhist places. My guess is that these taboos about women are pre-Buddhist and that the local people have simply incorporated indigenous pollution taboos into popular Buddhism. The Buddha never said anything about women being polluted.

All these cultural beliefs and pollution taboos have resulted in the perception and belief that women are “dirty” or polluted. In fact, are we wholesome?

Women and men are no different in this regard. The minds and bodies of both women and men may be either wholesome or unwholesome, clean or unclean. There is no distinction of gender here. Women who are wholesome in body, speech, and mind are as capable and worthy of support of men. In countries like Taiwan and Korea, where women are not labeled “dirty” or “polluted,” they do admirable work at all levels in society. Nuns never get the same level of support as monks, no matter how well they work, but they get enough to survive and thrive. In some countries, though, we find cultural beliefs about women’s inferiority. The tragedy is that it’s often in countries where women barely get enough food. What is most shocking is when women themselves regard women as inferior or polluted. Many women prefer to support monks and give little or no support to nuns. For this reason, we need to transform women’s own attitudes.

Some of these attitudes toward women are actually based on discrimination in the Buddhist texts themselves. In the *sutras*, we find both positive and negative images of women. For example, there are the *eight special*

rules that subordinate the nuns to the monks. These eight rules were imposed on Mahaprajapati, the Buddha's stepmother and the first Buddhist nun, as the price of admission to the Sangha. Here, again, it is unlikely that these rules were actually spoken by the Buddha. Just as these eight rules place nuns in roles subordinate to monks, Buddhist societies generally place women in roles subordinate to men.

I think it is valuable to challenge these attitudes, which are often based on mistaken information. When we see misinformation, we need to correct it. For example, in the United States, people often say that in the eight special rules, a *bhikkhuni* who has been ordained even for 100 years must bow at the feet of a novice ordained even that day. But that's not true. *Bhikkhunis* do not have to bow to novices. This has been misinterpreted. A *bhikkhuni* is supposed to bow to a *bhikkhu* ordained that day, not a novice. Nevertheless, even this rule is discriminatory. The eight special rules state nuns need to be ordained by both monks and nuns, and so on. Even though it is quite clear that these rules were not spoken by the Buddha, these rules have influenced Buddhist societies all over the world. Even if they are unfounded, these misinterpretations take on a life of their own. Even statements that are illogical and clearly contradict the Buddhist teachings can exert a powerful influence on people's thinking if they are regarded as the words of the Buddha.

Who do you think is most pivotal in supporting Buddhist Women?

Everyone is responsible for transforming attitudes and supporting Buddhist women, both women and men. It is Buddhist women's responsibility to help Buddhist women. We can't expect the monks to do it for us. And we need all the allies we can get – nuns, monks, laywomen, and laymen. To encourage Buddhist women, we can always refer to the Buddha's affirmation of women's

equal spiritual potential. I take this affirmation to heart – that women have equal potential for liberation and enlightenment. We have accounts of the thousands of women who achieved liberation during the Buddha’s lifetime. All we need to do is take the opportunity and run with it. Of course, it’s not easy. Women in the Himalayas would like to do more – to come to the Sakyadhita conferences, for example – but they can’t possibly afford it. Women want to participate fully – in Buddhist teachings, retreats, conferences, and so on – but they need education and language skills to make the most of them.

Venerable, what issue is closest to your heart?

The empowerment of women. I would like to help women understand their tremendous potential. It is really tragic for women to think that they are hopeless and don’t have the power to change things. Just in the past 20 years, I’ve seen that determined women can make tremendous changes. We have examples of remarkable women in Buddhist countries who have started from zero and were able to do great things. Khunying Kanitha started the first shelter for battered women in Thailand. Ven. Shig Hiu Wan founded the first Buddhist university in Taiwan. Ven. Dhammawati revived the Bhikkhuni Sangha in Nepal. These breakthroughs are extremely inspiring. I have great faith in Buddhist women and I know that we can do much more. We are just getting started. Sometimes it’s difficult to get the ball rolling, because we have to start from scratch. In many cases, we have had to start from literacy, and so it takes time. Those of us who are privileged to get 12 years of free education may take it for granted. We need to remember that, in many countries, women don’t have these opportunities. The goal is to get women up to speed, to the point where they are self-sufficient, capable, and confident

enough to make maximum use of their capabilities. Women are not stupid, no matter what they are told. Women have the same capabilities as men, they simply don't have the same opportunities.

Ordination is an opportunity that only a few women will choose, but access to full ordination is symbolic of something larger. If women are consigned to be novices for life, without any hope of becoming fully ordained, they may be excellent practitioners, but psychologically they will be burdened with the misconception that they are somehow not good enough. If monks are revered in a country, because they belong to the Sangha, but there are no women in the Sangha, this sends a message that women are somehow inadequate. Women are not just marginalized, they are not in the picture at all. We know that women are highly capable, because in the home, women do everything, including teach Dharma to the children. We know that women are highly capable, because it is women who support the monasteries and the monks. We know that women are capable of great things, because we have examples of great Buddhist women. And women can do much more once they gain confidence and appreciate the enormous potential they have.

This brings me the theme of the 5-day Sakyadhita Conference to be held in KL: “Buddhist Women in a Global Multicultural World.” What is a multicultural world?

A multicultural world is one with many people, languages, religions, ideas, and cultures. The world has become much smaller now, with new transportation systems, telecommunications, and technologies. Via email, I talk to people in 20 or 30 different countries everyday. Our world has gotten smaller, but we still have not learned how to get along together. For the survival of the planet, it is really critical that we figure this out. The more we

learn about each other, the better hope there is for human understanding and world peace. Now is the time. Not only do people of different religions need to learn to get along with each other, but Buddhists of different traditions also need to learn to get along. Because Malaysia is a multicultural society, it's the perfect country and the perfect theme. Buddhist women want to learn from the Malaysian experience. We want to learn what works and what doesn't work, so we can take that knowledge out into the world and make it a more peaceful place. Malaysia is a wonderful place to hold a conference, because you have all the facilities and conveniences here. And the fact that so many people here speak English makes it very easy to network internationally.

Will all the speakers speak in English?

Most of them will speak in English. We will provide simultaneous translation in Mandarin and Korean, so that everyone can participate fully in the conference. Speakers of other languages – Lao, Thai, Nepali, Singhalese, and so on – will bring their own translators to help them understand the talks and the workshops.

Will most of the participants be nuns? How many are you expecting?

Everyone is welcome at the Sakyadhita conferences – lay and ordained, women and men, of every national and religious background. The women at the conferences are usually about half nuns and half laywomen, except in Korea, where nuns came in droves! There were almost a thousand nuns there. The capacity of Sau Seng Lam Exhibition Hall is 1000. We hope many Malaysians will come. We will meditate together, chant together, talk, learn,

and watch cultural performances together. It's best to attend everyday, to get the full experience. People think five days is a long time, but even when the conferences lasts a week, the time always goes by far too quickly.

What does Sakyadhita hope to achieve in this 5-day conference?

We hope to establish global communications among Buddhist women, especially links between international Buddhists and Malaysian Buddhists. We hope to create bridges of peace and understanding among Buddhist women in Malaysia and other countries. We especially want to spotlight the achievements of Buddhist women in Malaysia. People are not familiar with Buddhism in Malaysia, women's achievements. But when we visit the temples in Malaysia, we find that women are doing remarkable work, which often goes unrecognized. This is not unusual. Wherever we hold a Sakyadhita conference, we find that women's achievements have been overlooked. Nobody noticed or really cared to document Buddhist women's contributions. We want to correct that neglect and help recover Buddhist women's history. In Malaysia, women have been working behind the scenes since the beginning, even though they are often invisible. Women have been supporting, organizing, funding, advising, and working to make Buddhist activities a success all along.

Normally we see men at the forefront and women in the background to ensure that things go smoothly. How do we reverse this?

Women will come out of the shadows once they gain confidence in their own abilities. When Buddhist women in Malaysia come to the conference, they will be inspired by the lives of other women. This inspiration will give

them confidence to do more. The people who benefit most from the Sakyadhita conferences are the people from the host country, especially the women. When they see what women in other countries are doing, they become tremendously encouraged and go on to do great things.

Some of the talks sound interesting and relevant to our society. They take up classism, racism, sexuality, and so forth. Will people be able to absorb all these deep issues in 5 days?

They will be *introduced* to these issues. In the panel conference, each speaker presents her topic very concisely in just 15 minutes. The speakers will present their ideas very clearly, so it won't be too complicated. After each panel, we have a Q & A session where people in the audience can ask for clarification and raise questions about what the speakers have said. A year ago, we sent out a Call for Papers. People from many countries responded and we selected the papers with the most interesting ideas relevant to the conference theme. After the Q & A sessions, we break into smaller groups of 10-20 people for discussions on specific topics, so there is a chance to take the conversation further and clear up any doubts.

Will there be facilitators?

Yes, there will be facilitators in each group to guide the discussions. That's one way people can help out. Malaysian women can also help with translation and informal interpretation in the various discussion groups.

The workshops also sound interesting. Is this a typical feature of the Sakyadhita conferences?

We have held workshops at conferences in the past. But at this conference, we are emphasizing the workshop format to make the experience more interactive. People will be able to choose among the different workshops and discussion group topics, according to their own interests. Some of the workshops will be held more than once, or even everyday. That way, people will have a chance to attend more than one workshop. This time we will have more workshops than ever before and I think people will like it.

What happens in these workshops?

The workshops will be presented by professional and experienced facilitators. (They are all volunteers, by the way.) The facilitators conduct the workshops in their own style, based on their own experience. Often they start off with an ice-breaker, so that the participants can get to know each other better. Then they lead activities related to the workshop theme. For example, there may be an exercise to help us recognize our own racist attitudes, our own sexist attitudes, or our own class privilege. These are interactive sessions where people are not just talking, but actually “doing” and reflecting. Each workshop will be completely different.

Are there follow-ups after the conferences? For example, do the host countries sometimes have their own “mini Sakyadhita” conferences?

Yes, we have had many follow-up gatherings. Sakyaditta International shares the responsibility of organizing the conference with local residents. After the conference, we encourage the local organizers to carry the conversation forward. Often the local organizers establish a branch of Sakyadhita in their country after the conference. The national or local branch then helps facilitate future activities. The organization does not need to be big and very formal,

but it serves as a medium for following up on the ideas and projects that are sparked at the conferences. The members of the local or national Sakyadhita branch can determine their own priorities. They have the freedom to identify what activities they would like to do in their local group.

You are currently the director of Jamyang Foundation, a education project for Himalayan nuns. Can you elaborate?

Jamyang Foundation was founded in 1987 to help address educational inequalities in the Tibetan tradition. Monks have many opportunities to study at monastic universities and are fully sponsored to do Buddhist studies. But at that time, women had no place to go. Jamyang Foundation started with a literacy programme for nuns who had walked out of Tibet and wanted to be able to read the Buddhist teachings they had devoted their lives to. Gradually we added courses in philosophy, meditation, languages, debate, and the like. Within a short time, the literacy programme evolved into a full-time education project. Soon women from different countries and regions of the Himalayas arrived and began to study. Then we began to get messages asking us to set up study programmes in Himalayan border areas. Laywomen are welcome, but most of the students are nuns. In the Tibetan cultural region, people who are sincerely interested in Buddhism usually want to become nuns or monks. There is no age requirement, so the students include children as well as elderly nuns. The projects have become a focus of community development, with local families involved in building the schools and other village improvements.

Where are the projects located?

The projects are located in the Indian Himalayas and Bangladesh. The first two projects were established in Dharamsala, where H.H. Dalai Lama lives.

Then, in response to heartfelt requests, we created three projects in Spiti, one in Kinnaur, and nine in Zangskar – all remote Himalayan border areas. We have also started three primary schools for young girls in Buddhist tribal areas of Bangladesh. Our aim is to help those who are most needy and neglected. In these remote locations, Buddhists live in very sad circumstances. Most are unimaginably poor, but nobody helps them. In both India and Bangladesh, Buddhists are a small minority and the last to get social services. In Bangladesh, Buddhists make up just one percent of the population, living in remote areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. These are examples of the kinds of projects people are inspired to start once they attend a Sakyadhita conference.

How is Jamyang Foundation funded? Is it part of Sakyadhita?

Jamyang Foundation is not funded by Sakyadhita. It is an independent non-profit organization funded by contributions from people in different countries. Sakyadhita is an international organization that inspires people to take up specific projects in various countries. The two organizations are separate non-profit organizations with separate mission statements, but since Sakyadhita's focus is Buddhist women, they work in close cooperation, especially in the Himalayan region. I helped found both organizations and just happen to be heading both of them at the moment.

Is there still a problem with caste in India? For example, do untouchables have a problem becoming nuns?

Yes, caste discrimination is still a terrible problem in India. Most Buddhists in central India who have converted to Buddhism since the 1950s come from the lower caste and outcaste communities. They are desperately poor and

they get very little support from any direction, especially the women. There is one organisation in Britain that supports schools for the boys, but by some oversight, they forgot to give equal opportunities to girls. These unfortunate Buddhists need all the support and encouragement they can get – teachers, books, meditation facilities, and health care. There are some nuns in these areas. One monastery has 15 nuns who were ordained as *bhikkhunis* in Bodhgaya in 1998. They are incredibly dedicated and hardworking, but their living conditions are extremely sad.

In what ways can people to come forward to support Sakyadhita?

First, they can help support the upcoming conference in Malaysia. The best way is to sponsor a laywoman or nun from Nepal, India, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Burma, China, Thailand, or Indonesia to attend the conference. So many women want to participate, but most are dirt poor. In spite of the tremendous contributions these women are making in their local communities, unless someone helps them, there is no way they will be able to attend. For example, nuns like Donchee Ly Soeun in Cambodia are struggling against great odds to revive Buddhism and their sincerity is incredibly moving. A group of friends here in Malaysia can get together, make a pledge to pool their resources, and help bring a person from a developing country to join the conference. That's the most urgent need right now. People can also help with publicity, by helping get the word out. The conference is such a remarkable experience, but sometimes people don't hear about it until it's too late. People can help with hospitality, registration, translation, and in many other ways during the conference. They can write stories for local newspapers and magazine, and help uncover Buddhist women's history in Malaysia. After the conference is over, they can help by

writing articles and supporting projects to benefit Buddhist women around the world.

Thank you, Venerable Tsomo, for this interview. We hope that the 9th Sakyadhita Conference in Malaysia will be a great success and will inspire Buddhist women in Malaysia and other countries to great achievements.

9th Sakyadhita International Conference

Kuala Lumpur

June 17 to 21, 2006

Temple Tour: June 22 to 24, 2006

Sakyadita, "Daughters of the Buddha," the world's leading international organisation of Buddhist women, is an alliance of women committed to transforming the lives of women in Buddhist societies. This international alliance was founded in Bodhgaya, India, in 1987.

Sakyadita seeks to unite Buddhist women of various countries and traditions, to promote their welfare and to facilitate their work for the benefit of humanity.

The Sakyadita International Conference on Buddhist Women is held once every two years. This year, Malaysia has been selected to be the host of the 9th Sakyadhita Conference. You are cordially invited to attend!

Conference Venue

Sau Seng Lum (Puchong) Exhibition Centre

Pusat Pameran, Jalan Putra Perdana 10,

Taman Putra Perdana, Puchong

47100 Selangor, Malaysia

(Bus service: Metro Bus No. 20 at the bus stop

in front of Kota Raya Shopping Complex, KL)

Speakers

The 9th Sakyadhita Conference will feature 28 international and 7 local speakers. International speakers include the well-known Venerable Tenzin Palmo. Local speakers include Dr. Goh Pik Pin who will speak on Hospice and Counselling. YB Dato Sri Ong Ka Ting will officiate at the Opening Ceremony. YB Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun will officiate at the Closing Ceremony.

Programme

The conference programme includes panel presentations, workshops, group discussions, cultural performances, morning meditation, and evening chanting from all the 3 Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Mahayana, and Tibetan.

Registration Fees

Sakyadhita members: USD 300

Non-members: USD 350

Local nuns: Free of charge

Local lay people: RM150 (without accomodation)

RM250 (accomodation at temple/Buddhist association)

Local per day: RM50 per day (including meals)

Optional temple tour (Ipoh, Penang, Melaka): RM450 per person (meals and accomodation)

Why You Should Attend

Leading Buddhist scholars, practitioners, and social activists from around the world will share their ideas and offer insights on the critical issues facing contemporary society.

Workshops Topics

- * Nonviolent Communication Skills,
- * You Don't Understand Me (respectful listening skills)
- * Organisational Development for Buddhist Women's Groups

Buddhist nuns and lay devotees from 30 countries worldwide will convene in Kuala Lumpur for this first-ever Buddhist women's conference. Here are some ways you can help:

Sponsorship

Donations to help nuns and laywomen from developing countries attend the conference will be greatly appreciated.

General Donations

Toiletries, mineral water, water dispensers, biscuit packets, sachets of coffee, tea, other beverages, and detergent will be gratefully accepted.

Translators

Qualified translators and informal interpreters (Chinese to English) are needed for talks and discussion groups.

Further Information

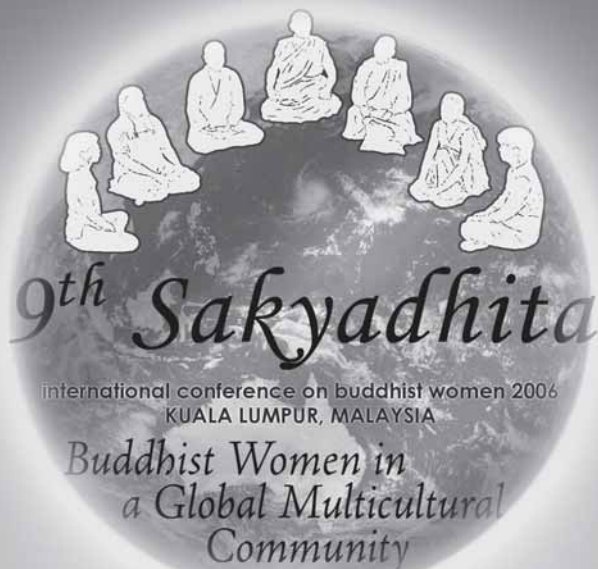
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Registration

Early registration is encouraged to ensure your place at the conference. More than 600 people are expected to attend! The registration form can be downloaded from the website: www.sakyadhita.org



9th Sakyadhita
International Conference
on Buddhist Women



Buddhist Women
in a
Global Multicultural Community
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
June 17 to 21, 2006



9TH SAKYADHITA

