

Konferenzberichte

International Conference on Buddhist Nuns, Bodh Gaya, India

The International Conference on Buddhist Nuns was held in Bodh Gaya, India, during February 11-17, 1987. From the press release prepared by the organizers, this conference

“will be the first time in history that Buddhist nuns come together to pool their talents, ideas and resources for the enrichment of all. The Conference is attracting the attention not only of nuns from all over the world, but also of scholars, journalists and feminists, and Buddhist lay people from countries as far afield as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Norway, South Africa and the United States. It is becoming widely recognized that a strong community of female monastics is an asset in the spread of the Buddhist teachings, especially in Western countries.

In general, the nuns of the various Buddhist countries have remained isolated in their own localities, pursuing their practices without communications with their sisters in other lands. They have had little opportunity to share their common concerns or to explore the spiritual links that join them one to another. In the present day, when there is a heightened awareness of women's potentialities, and simultaneously, an increasing interest in the teachings of the Buddha throughout the world, it is understandable that women who have dedicated their lives to the Buddhist path should wish to meet together.

The conference is open to all, regardless of gender, profession or nationality. One of the express intentions of the conference is to draw attention to the fact that women are ready to take a more active role in the propagation of the Buddhist teachings and in projects designed to apply those teachings to the problems of our troubled world. Heart to heart exchanges of information and personal experience will broaden the base of international potentialities of Buddhist women so that they may take a greater part in the betterment of humanity as a whole.

The vision of an International Conference on Buddhist Nuns arose spontaneously in the minds of several friends in far-flung places, with few resources, but strong faith that such a convocation will encourage the growth of the Bhikshuni Sangha and foster the establishment of an International Buddhist Women's Association. The conference will be followed by a week-long pilgrimage to the

sacred Buddhist sites of Rajgir, Nalanda, Sarnath, Lumbini, Kushinagar and Sarvasti.

The Conference is being coordinated by Sister Ayya Khema, an internationally known meditation teacher and founder of the Parappuduwa Nun's Island in Sri Lanka, Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Professor of Religion and Eastern Philosophy of Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand and Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo of the Buddhist School of Dialectics, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, India."

At 1 p.m. on February 11, 1987 His Holiness the Dalai Lama graced over the opening ceremony which drew a large audience of more than 1,000 people. His address was warm and encouraging to Buddhist sisters, he urged them to study the dharma. He agreed and supported the idea that women should have opportunity for full ordination and the positive role could help benefit the Sangha and the society in general. All the nuns and participants of the conference were deeply inspired by his presence and his speech.

Both nuns and lay people attended the conference – they were from 24 countries, namely: Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Nepal, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, England, W. Germany, Canada, South Africa, Sweden, The Netherlands, U.S.A., France, Poland, Switzerland, New Zealand, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Tibet. The number of registrations exceeded 120 but there were also many unregistered observers who happened to be in Bodh Gaya at the time and were interested in the conference.

The conference was organized with various discussions including topics e.g.: "The Status of Nuns in Various Countries"; "The Livelihood of the Sangha"; "The Possibility of International Bhikshuni Sangha"; "The International Buddhist Women's Organization".

After each panel-discussion participants had opportunities to discuss and exchange their views in further details in workshops. Then there were special group discussions provided at the end of each day.

There were religious activities for participants which were received with great enthusiasm. There was a meditation course offered every morning before each day schedule. These meditation courses were led each day by nuns from various traditions. At 5 p.m. in the evening there was evening chanting from various traditions e.g. Sri Lankan, Chinese, Thai, etc. This interchange of rituals and religious practices intended to offer participants richer experience and opportunity to open themselves up for better understanding of other traditions.

To provide further information for those who are interested in full ordination, a video on Bhikshuni ordination was also provided, many participants found it both educational and inspiring.

The scenes behind stage should also be mentioned. Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo deserved full credit for all the hard and tedious work of preparations for this historic conference. And the three coordinators would like to express their thanks and appreciation for all the help they received financially and in kind, thus bringing about the success of the conference. The scenes of volunteers helping scrub the floor of the dining hall, carrying chairs to the conference site, etc. were only among the many scenes deserving mention. The genuine and selfless efforts shown by nuns, monks and lay people for the conference were simply beautiful and memorable. If I am permitted to mention just a few of them, Sam Uddall from U.S.A. helped with all the last minute endless typing; Sam Canyon from U.S.A. helped with the sound system; Wendy Barzetovic from England helped organize the kitchen and dining rooms; Ven. Jampa Tsedron flew in early from W. Germany and ironed out registration and accommodation list, etc.

The conference was fully recorded and filmed. Thanks to our camera crews, Robyn Brentano, Ngawang, Elda Hartley and Robert Mathews.

The following are the resolutions from the conference and the committee set up in full.

**Resolution agreed upon
at
the International Conference on Buddhist Nuns
Bodh Gaya, India
February 11 - 17, 11, 1987**

Whereas, although our specific practices and lineages may vary, we are all sisters and brothers in the Buddha dharma and share a common source,
and

Whereas Buddhist women wish to improve themselves and take their just and equal opportunity and responsibility in society,
and

Whereas there is convened at Bodh Gaya, India, the place of Lord Buddha's enlightenment, a Conference on Buddhist Nuns from many countries around the world,

We, therefore, resolve that on this 16th day of February 1987, we establish SAKYADHITA, World-Wide Buddhist Women, an international organization formed to assist Buddhist women around the world.

It is further resolved that an interim executive committee begin effecting the establishment of such an organization,
and

It is further resolved that the goals of this organization shall be:

1. Foster World Peace for all sentient beings
2. Work in harmony with all Buddhist Sanghas, traditions and communities
3. Establish and promote harmonious understanding with other religious communities.
4. Hold conferences and seminars on Buddhist women's issues.
5. Establish a system of communication between Buddhist women all over the world.
6. Research into women's role in the Buddha dharma.
7. Improve education for Buddhist women (general and dharma).
8. Encourage and improve Buddhist practice for nuns and lay women.
9. Educate and train women as teachers of Buddha dharma.
10. Preserve the teaching and make it available throughout the world.
11. Research into the Vinaya of the different traditions.
12. Establish an international Bhikkhuni Sangha organization.
13. Introduce Sramanerika, Sikhamana, Bhikkhuni ordinations where they currently do not exist.
14. Provide help and assistance to Buddhist nuns and those who wish to ordain.
15. Establish committees to carry out the organizations' goals.
16. Set up by-laws, constitution and effect registration of the organization.

The following Committees are established for the implementation of the above goals:

1. Executive Committee (interim)
2. Vinaya Research team
3. Development Committee
 - a. Training program
 - b. Educational program (5 sections)
4. Financial Committee
5. Publications Committee
6. National Representatives

Sakyadhita
World-Wide Buddhist Women

I. Executive committee (interim)

Chairperson: to be nominated.

(Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Thailand was nominated in her absence, she suggested Ven. Dr. Karuna Dharma to chair the committee, her suggestion is yet to be approved by the committee.)

Members: Ven. Bhikshuni Pema Chodron, Canada
 Ven. Dr. Karuna Dharma, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
 Ven. Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo, India
 Ven. Bhikshuni Yung Kai, Taiwan
 Ven. Sramanerika Jampa Chodron, France
 Khandro Rinpoche, India
 Mrs. Kusuma Devendra, Sri Lanka
 Mr. A. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

II. Vinaya research team

Members: Ven. Bhikshuni Jen Hua, Taiwan
 Ven. Bhikshuni Jampa Tsedron, W.Germany
 Ven. Sramanerika Lobsang Dechen, India
 Ven. Sramanerika A. Jampa Chodron, France
 Dr. Friedgard Lottermoser, W. Germany
 Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Thailand
 Mrs. Kusuma Devendra, Sri Lanka

III. Development committee**1. Training Program**

Members: Ven. Bhikshuni Pema Chodron, Canada
 Ven. Bhikshuni Ihan, U.S.A.
 Sister Ranwalla, Sri Lanka
 Sister Dhammawati, Nepal
 Ven. Sramanerika Sangye Chodron, Nepal
 Mr. A. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

2. Educational Program**a. Buddhist Studies**

Ven. Tesho Kondo, Japan
 Ven. Sramanerika Thubten Dekyong, Nepal
 Ven. Sramanerika Tenzin Drolkar, India

Khandro Rinpoche, India
 Mrs. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka
 Ms. Violet Themiminulle, Sri Lanka
 Ms. Indrani Fernando, Sri Lanka
 Ms. Gnana Ranasinghe, Sri Lanka

b. English as a second language

Ms. Gnanwathie, Sri Lanka

c. Social Service Training

Ven. Sramanerika Thupten Lhundup, U.S.A.
 Ms. Ranjani de Silva, Sri Lanka
 Ms. Chandrani Jayawardena, Sri Lanka
 Ms. Clara Perera, Sri Lanka
 Ms. Priti Kana Barua, Bangladesh
 Ms. Jharna Barua, Bangladesh
 Mrs. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

d. Counselling Training

Ven. Sramanerika Thupten Sangye, Germany
 Ms. Wendy Barzetovic, England

e. Vocational Training

Ven. Bhikshuni Kunga Zangmo, U.S.A.
 Ms. Anula Rajapakse, Sri Lanka

f. Meditation

Ven. Sramanerika Sangye Khandro, U.S.A.
 Ven. Sramanerika Sumedha, U.S.A.
 Sister Dhammapali, Sri Lanka
 Sister Uttari, Sri Lanka

IV. Financial committee

Ms. Chitra de Silva, Sri Lanka
 Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Thailand
 Ms. Tessa Bartholomew, U.S.A.

V. Publications, communications, etc.

Ven. Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo, India
 Ven. Bhikshuni Miao Kwang Sudharma, U.S.A.
 Ven. Bhikshuni Kunga Zangmo, U.S.A.
 Ven. Sramanerika Thupten Sangye, Germany (chair)

Ms. Sallie Davenport, Nepal (Vice-chair)

Ms. Cynthia Josayna, U.S.A.

Mrs. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

National representatives

Australia:	Ven. Thupten Lhundup
Bangladesh:	Mrs. Priti Kana Barua
Cambodia:	Ven. Maha Ghosananda
France:	Ven. Tenzig Chodron
Germany:	Ven. Jampa Tsedron
Japan:	Ven. Kyozen Kitagawa
India:	Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo
Malaysia:	Ven. Yi Hwa
Nepal:	Sister Dhammawati
North America:	Ven. Pema Chodron
Poland:	Ven. Karma Tsultrim Palmo
Sri Lanka:	Mr. Abeya Weerakoon
Taiwan:	Miss Wang Hsu-Hsien
Thailand:	Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh

Chatsumarn Kabilsingh

15th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists / 6th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth

Vom 27. November bis 2. Dezember 1986 fand in Kathmandu die 15th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) und die 6th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth (WFBY) statt. Bei der World Fellowship of Buddhists, 1950 von dem Ceylonesen G.P. Malalasekera in Colombo ins Leben gerufen, handelt es sich um einen internationalen Dachverband, dessen Mitglieder nationale oder auch regionale buddhistische Organisationen bilden. Dabei können durchaus mehrere Organisationen aus einem Land als selbständige