

# Bhikkhunī - ordination controversy in Theravāda Buddhism

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## 1. Introduction

In Theravāda Buddhism it is widely but not unanimously accepted that Bhikkhunīs (nuns) need to be ordained in a dual ceremony by both the male Sangha and the female Sangha (see below). It is believed that approximately 1,000 years ago the Bhikkhunī lineage died out and there were no more nuns left to ordain new Bhikkhunīs and since then until recently Theravāda Bhikkhunīs did not exist. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more and more women voiced interest to revive the Bhikkhunī Sangha and to receive full ordination in Theravāda Buddhism again.

In the following I will have a short look at the historical background of Bhikkhunī ordination in Buddhism, will present some of the arguments for and against a revival of female ordination in Theravāda Buddhism and, as I'm living in Thailand, will specifically look at the situation in this country. A great deal of the information provided in this paper is a collection and review of already available texts on the internet.

As I cannot read the early Buddhist texts written in Pāli, Sanskrit or some Chinese language, I have to rely on translations of these early texts and their commentaries into English or German language. Any misinterpretation of these texts or commentaries as well as any peculiar use of the English language (I am not a native English speaker) is solely the responsibility of the author and I sincerely apologise for any mistake that may have occurred.

The relevant quotes used for this paper are given either in the text itself or in the footnotes so that readers who do not have the Nikāyas at hand can follow up easily. Sometimes I commented inside a quotation. These comments are clearly marked in [\[square brackets\]](#) and/or in blue colour. Pāli terms, common Buddhist terms and extended quotations in the text itself are printed in *italics*.

Any comment, suggestion, critique regarding this paper is welcome.

## 2. Historical background

The Buddha established an order of Bhikkhunīs, the first Bhikkhunī being his foster mother Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.<sup>1</sup> He is said to have been reluctant to ordain women and rejected the request at first, maybe due to the living conditions of the 'gone forth' in the forests in those days.<sup>2</sup> In the scriptures one can find passages which state that with women ordained Buddhism will last for 500 years, without for 1,000 years.<sup>3</sup> This has proven to be wrong as the order of Bhikkhunīs died out in Sri Lanka about 1000 C.E. (in India about 800 C.E.), that is, in Theravāda Buddhism it lasted for 1500 years already, and it is doubtful

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<sup>1</sup> For example: *Gotami*, AN 8.51, iv274..., pages 1188... in / 1 /

<sup>2</sup> [...] that, at a time when the Buddhist order was still in its beginnings, lack of proper dwelling places and the other harsh living conditions of a homeless life might be too much for Queen Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her following. [Bhikkhu Anālayo in / 2 /, page 12]

<sup>3</sup> "If, Ananda, women had not obtained the going forth from the household life into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Tathagata, the spiritual life would have been of long duration; the good Dhamma would have stood firm even for a thousand years. However, Ananda, because women have gone forth from the household life into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Tathagata, now the spiritual life will not be of long duration; the good Dhamma will last only five hundred years."<sup>1743</sup>

<sup>1743</sup> Assuming the historical authenticity of this passage, if the Buddha had wished to proscribe the ordination of women, it seems he would likely have pointed out this danger to Ananda at the beginning of their conversation. Ananda would then have desisted from his effort and women would not have received the right to ordain. [Gotami, AN 8.51, iv 278-279, pages 1191-1192 in / 1 / and the commentary at note 1743 in / 1 /]

**Four groups** (ordained women and men as well as lay women and men)

“The *Pāsādika-sutta* [DN 29] in the *Dīgha-nikāya* proclaims that the completeness of the holy life taught by the Buddha was evident in the accomplishment of his four assemblies of disciples, including an order of *bhikkhunīs*. The same emerges from the *Mahāvaccagotta-sutta* in the *Majjhima-nikāya* according to which the completeness of the Buddha’s teaching can be seen in the high numbers of *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs* who had become fully liberated, and in the fact that similarly high numbers of lay followers of both genders had reached other levels of awakening. Clearly, without accomplished *bhikkhunīs* the Buddha’s dispensation [= religious system] would not have been complete.

According to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* in the *Dīgha-nikāya* [DN 16], the Buddha had declared that he would not pass away until he had achieved his mission of having competent disciples from each of the four assemblies, including *bhikkhunīs*. The importance of this statement is reflected in the fact that it recurs again in the Pāli canon in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, the *Anguttara-nikāya*, and the *Udāna*.” [Bhikkhu Anālayo in / 2 /, page 13]

**DN 29** [*Pāsādika-sutta*, DN 29, page 430 in / 3 /]

12. In such cases, if there are such senior teachers, and such senior disciples, but there are no monks of middle standing with these qualities,... or [despite the presence of these] no junior monks with these qualities,... no senior disciples among the nuns,... no middle-ranking or junior nuns,... no white-robed lay followers, male or female, celibate or otherwise, or if the teaching does not prosper and flourish, is not widespread, widely known, proclaimed far and wide,... or [even if these conditions are fulfilled] has not gained the first place in public support, then the holy life is not perfected.

15. However, there are senior teachers among the monks, who are experienced, trained, skilled, who have attained peace from bondage, able to proclaim the true Dhamma, able to refute by means of the Dhamma any opposing doctrines that may arise and, having done so, give a grounded exposition of Dhamma. And there are middle-ranking monks who are disciplined and experienced, there are novices who are disciples, there are senior, middle-ranking and novice nuns who are disciples, there are white-robed lay followers, male and female, celibate and non-celibate, and the holy life I proclaim prospers and flourishes, is widespread, widely-known, proclaimed far and wide, well-proclaimed among humans.

**DN 16** [*Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, DN 16, page 247 in / 3 /]

3.8. [...] And the Blessed Lord has said: “I will not pass into final Nibbāna until I have nuns and female disciples who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, knowers of the Dhamma, trained in conformity with the Dhamma, correctly trained and walking in the path of the Dhamma, who will pass on what they have gained from their Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; till they shall be able by means of the Dhamma to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dhamma of wondrous effect.”

### Outstanding nuns

“But if, dear, you go forth from the household life into homelessness, you should become like the *bhikkhunīs* Khemā and Uppalavannā for this is the standard and criterion for my female disciples who are *bhikkhunīs*, that is, Khemā and Uppalavannā.” [*Lābhasakkārasamyutta* SN 17.24, page 689 in / 4 /] [*Khemā and Uppalavannā have been the two chief bhikkhunī disciples respectively in regard to wisdom and psychic potency*].

“Sire, there is no ascetic or brahmin in Toranavatthu whom your majesty could visit. But, sire, there is the *bhikkhuni* named Khemā, a disciple of the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One. Now a good report concerning this revered lady has spread about thus: ‘She is wise, competent, intelligent, learned, a splendid speaker, ingenious.’ Let your majesty visit her.

[...] On one occasion, venerable sir, I approached the *bhikkhuni* Khemā and asked her about this matter. The revered lady explained this matter to me in exactly the same terms and phrases that the Blessed One used. It is wonderful, venerable sir! It is amazing, venerable sir! How the meaning and the phrasing of both teacher and disciple coincide and agree with each other and do not diverge, that is, in regard to the chief matter.” [*Abyākatasamyutta*, SN 44.1, page 1380 and 1383 in / 4 /]

that the Buddha has uttered a prophecy like that.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary he repeatedly said that it needs all four groups (ordained women and men as well as lay women and men) for Buddhism to flourish and there are several passages in the scriptures mentioning outstanding nuns (see textbox on the previous page).

For a comparative study of the seven main versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns [Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (Chinese), (Haimavata?) Vinayamātrkā, Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda Vinaya, Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya (Tibetan), (Sarvāstivāda) Madhyama-āgama and Theravāda Aṅguttara-nikāya] see Bhikkhu Anālayo in / 5 /.

### 3. Re-establishing of a Bhikkhunī Sangha in Theravāda Buddhism

In the Theravāda tradition, it is commonly believed that the Bhikkhunī lineage became extinct in the 11th to 13th centuries C.E. (see Wikipedia / 6 /).

The widely held assumption in Theravāda Buddhism is that Bhikkhunīs need to be ordained in form of a double ordination by nuns and monks. This assessment is based on the two main vinaya-rules<sup>5</sup> given by the Buddha to the Bhikkhus:

1. "I allow that Bhikkhunīs be given full Acceptance by Bhikkhus."<sup>6</sup>
2. "I allow that one who has been given full Acceptance on one side and purified (of the 24 obstructing factors) in the Bhikkhunī sangha be given full Acceptance in the Bhikkhu sangha."<sup>7</sup>

*"According to the first rule given to Bhikkhus on the issue of ordaining Bhikkhunīs, Bhikkhus alone can give the higher ordination. Without this rule being explicitly rescinded [= withdrawn, cancelled], the subsequent rule then stipulates that the higher ordination of female candidates requires the cooperation of a community of already existing Bhikkhunīs. These first perform their part in giving the candidate the higher ordination, followed by a completion of the ordination ceremony in the presence of a community of Bhikkhus."<sup>8</sup>*

Bhikkhu Bodhi writes:

*"The preliminary ordination by Bhikkhunīs was introduced because the candidate has to be questioned about various obstructions to ordination, among them issues relating to a woman's sexual identity. When the Bhikkhus asked women candidates these questions, they were too embarrassed to reply. To*

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<sup>4</sup> Now this prophecy is surprising, since one would not expect the Buddha to do something which he knew in advance would have such an effect. In fact, the prophecy in the way it is recorded in the *Vinaya* has not come true, as after 2,500 years the teaching is still in existence. Even the *bhikkhunī* order was still in existence in India in the 8th century and thus more than a 1,000 years after the time of the Buddha. [Bhikkhu Anālayo in / 2 /, page 14]

<sup>5</sup> "The Vinaya Pitaka, the first division of the Tipitaka, is the textual framework upon which the monastic community (Sangha) is built. It includes not only the rules governing the life of every Theravada bhikkhu (monk) and bhikkhuni (nun), but also a host of procedures and conventions of etiquette that support harmonious relations, both among the monastics themselves, and between the monastics and their lay supporters, upon whom they depend for all their material needs."  
[Vinaya Pitaka: The Basket of the Discipline. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/vin/>]

<sup>6</sup> After receiving full Acceptance, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached the Buddha and asked him what should be done with the 500 Sakyan women who had followed her in requesting ordination. The Buddha's reply was to allow that bhikkhunī be given full Acceptance by bhikkhus. [*Bhikkhunīs*, Cv.X.2.1. on page 372 in / 7 /]

<sup>7</sup> *Bhikkhunīs*, Cv.X.17.2 on page 378 in / 7 /

<sup>8</sup> Bhikkhu Anālayo in / 2 /, page 2

*avert this impasse, the Buddha proposed that a preliminary ordination be held by the Bhikkhunīs, who would first question the candidate about the obstructions, clear her, give her a first ordination, and then bring her to the Bhikkhu Sangha, where she would be ordained a second time by the bhikkhus. In this arrangement, it is still the Bhikkhu Sangha that functions as the ultimate authority determining the validity of the ordination.”<sup>9</sup>*

There are two different views on these rules. Some hold that the second rule overrules the first one in any case and therefore a Bhikkhunī order can never be re-established once extinguished. This is for instance the stance of the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand (the ultimate authority for all religious matters within the Thai Sangha). Others regard these two rules as interchangeable. As long as a Bhikkhunī order exists, the second rule is valid. In case no Bhikkhunī order exists, the first rule applies. Thus a Bhikkhunī order could be re-established by a Bhikkhu sangha alone. Detailed reviews of the arguments for and against a revival of Bhikkhunī ordination are given by Bhikkhu Bodi in / 8 / and Bhikkhu Anālayo / 2 /. Those in favour of a revival of the Bhikkhunī ordination see two ways of doing so within the framework of the Theravāda vinaya:

1. Under exceptional circumstances, when no Bhikkhunī sangha exists, the Bhikkhu sangha may revert to a single sangha ordination of Bhikkhunīs;
2. In order to preserve dual-sangha ordination, the Theravada Bhikkhu sangha can collaborate with a Bhikkhunī sangha from an East Asian country such as Taiwan following the Dhammguptaka vinaya.

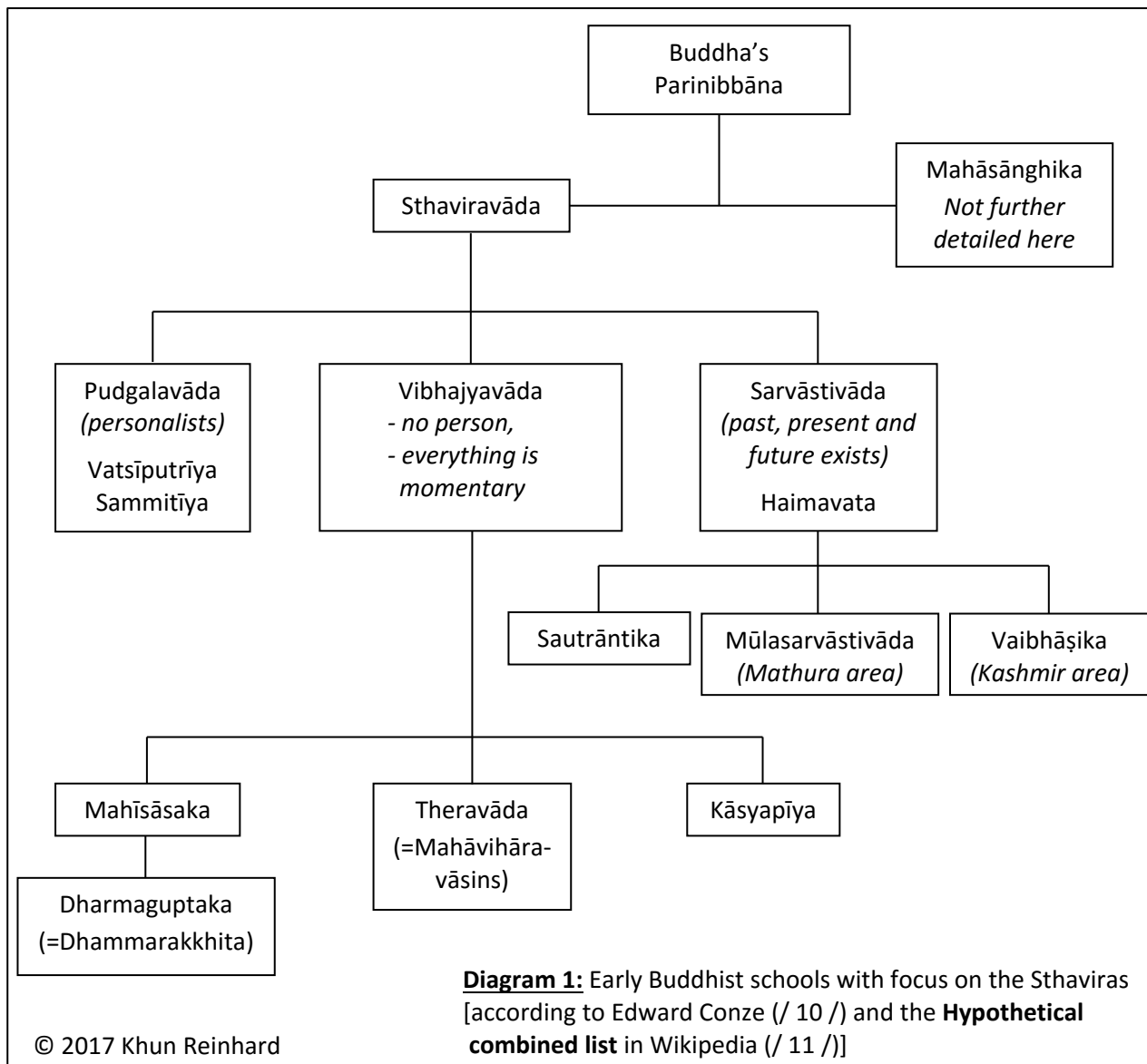
The second method, the one generally preferred, could be combined with a single-sangha ordination by Theravāda bhikkhus in two successive steps. This was the procedure used at the grand ordination ceremony at Bodhgaya in February 1998, in order to re-establish Bhikkhunī ordination.

*“The grand ordination ceremony assembled bhikkhus from several traditions - Chinese Mahāyāna, Theravāda, and Tibetan - along with Taiwanese and Western Bhikkhunīs to conduct the full dual-ordination in accordance with the Chinese tradition. The women who were ordained included Theravāda nuns from Sri Lanka and Nepal, as well as Western nuns following Tibetan Buddhism. One might think that this was a Mahāyāna rite which made the nuns Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs, but this would be a misunderstanding. While the Chinese monks and nuns were practitioners of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the monastic Vinaya tradition they observe is not a Mahāyāna Vinaya but one stemming from an early Buddhist school, the Dharmaguptakas, which belonged to the same broad Vibhajyavāda tradition to which the southern Theravāda school belongs [see Diagram 1 on the next page]. They were virtually the northwest Indian counterpart of the Theravāda, with a similar collection of suttas, an Abhidharma, and a Vinaya that largely corresponds to the Pāli Vinaya. Thus the upasampadā ordination performed by the Chinese Sangha at Bodhgaya conferred on the candidates the Bhikkhunī lineage of the Dharmaguptakas, so that in Vinaya terms they were now full-fledged Bhikkhunīs inheriting the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya lineage.*

*However, the Bhikkhunīs from Sri Lanka wanted to become heirs to the Theravāda Vinaya lineage and to be acceptable to the Theravāda bhikkhus of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan Bhikkhus who sponsored their ordination, too, were apprehensive that if the nuns returned to Sri Lanka with only the Chinese ordination, their co-religionists would have considered their ordination to have been essentially a Mahāyānist one. To prevent this, shortly afterwards the newly ordained Bhikkhunīs traveled to Sarnath, where they underwent another upasampadā conducted in Pāli under Theravāda Bhikkhus from Sri Lanka. This ordination did not negate the earlier dual-ordination received from the Chinese Sangha, but gave it a*

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<sup>9</sup> Bhikkhu Bodi in / 8 /  
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**Some comments on Buddhists Sects and Sectarianism by Bhikkhu Sujato (/ 12 /)**

“The first division was between the Sthaviras and Mahāsāṅghikas. Then the disputes on the ‘person’ and ‘all exists’ produced respectively the Puggalavāda and Sarvāstivāda schools (or groups of schools, or philosophical movements). What remains is the Vibhajjavāda, which, due mainly to geographical separation, gradually differentiated into the Mahāvihāravāsins [= Theravādins], Dharmaguptakas, Mahīsāsakas, and Kaśyapīyas, and perhaps others.” (/ 12 /, page 101).

“Today we call this school ‘Theravāda’, but this name invites various forms of confusion. In particular it is a mistake to identify this school with the ‘Sthaviras’ who split from the Mahāsāṅghikas at the first schism. Rather, the Mahāvihāravāsins are just one branch of the Sthaviras who became established in Sri Lanka with their headquarters at the Mahāvihāra in [the city] Anuradhapura.” (/ 12 /, page 13).

“We are thus perfectly justified as seeing the Mahāvihāravāsins and the Dharmaguptakas, not as warring [= fighting, opposing] schismatic parties, but as long lost brothers parted only by the accidents of history and the tyranny of distance.” (/ 12 /, page 15).

“So it seems that the split between the Mahāvihāravāsins and the Dharmaguptakas was due to neither Dhamma nor Vinaya, but mere geography. The Dharmaguptakas were a Northwestern branch of the Vibhajjavāda, and the Mahāvihāravāsins or Theravādins were the southern branch. While the Mahāvihāravāsins in a belligerent [= hostile, aggressive] mood issued a purely formal denunciation of the Dharmaguptakas, the texts, doctrines, and history instead reveal a close affinity.” (/ 12 /, page 133).

*new direction. While recognizing the validity of the upasampadā they received through the Chinese Sangha, the Sri Lankan Bhikkhus effectively admitted them to the Theravāda Sangha and conferred on them permission to observe the Theravāda Vinaya and to participate in saṅghakammas, legal acts of the Sangha, with their brothers in the Sri Lankan Bhikkhu Sangha. This procedure was very similar to the dalhikamma often given in Sri Lanka to allow bhikkhus from one Nikaya to change over to another Nikaya or to join another monastic community.”<sup>10</sup>*

The question may arise: Why not change the rules, the vinaya, regarding Bhikkhunī ordination? Bhikkhu Anālayo explains:

*“According to Theravāda tradition, five hundred arahants met three months after the passing away of the Buddha in order to compile a collection of authoritative texts of two types: the dhamma and the vinaya. ‘Dhamma’ is the name for the teaching leading to liberation as explained by the Buddha. ‘Vinaya’ describes the code of discipline for his disciples that the Buddha established during his lifetime. Theravādins believe that the dhamma deals with eternally valid truths about life and the path to deliverance. In contrast to this, the vinaya is not eternal, but a reaction to the social realities of northern India during the lifetime of the Buddha, designed as a system for creating an optimal environment for spiritual practice, taking into account the social conditions of the time. The Buddha had explicitly allowed his order to revoke or abolish minor training rules of vinaya texts, yet the five hundred arahants at the First Rehearsal decided to freeze all training rules of the vinaya, agreeing unanimously that these rules must not be changed.”<sup>11</sup>*

## 4. Bhikkhunīs in Thailand

Until recently it was not possible to ordain as a Bhikkhunī in Thailand. Women had to go to Sri Lanka or Taiwan for ordination but the situation is slowly changing (see below). In Thailand you will see Mae Chees, dressed all in white – Bhikkhunīs would wear a yellow robe like her male counterparts. Many Mae Chees try to live like Bhikkhunīs, but do not get any of the privileges the monks get. Their life can be quite hard as they have only few places where they are really supported, not just tolerated. Often they end up in the monastery kitchen, cooking for visitors and themselves. Both Bhikkhunī and Mae Chee are translated as ‘nun’ into English.

*“There is no evidence to suggest that there have ever been Theravāda nuns in Thai history. The first attempt to establish a Bhikkhunī-order in Thailand is thought to have been undertaken in 1927 by the former government official and engaged lay-Buddhist Narin Phasit, when he had his two daughters, Sara and Congdi, ordained as sāmanerīs. [...]The two sisters were ordered to remove their robes, and Sara was sentenced to imprisonment and a fine of 20 Baht. When Narin asked the then-reigning King of Siam (Thailand), Rama VII, for help, his plea was refused.*

*As a reaction to the ordination of Sara and Congdi, the Thai Sangharāja signed a regulation that was promulgated [= officially declared] on 18 June 1928. This regulation forbids Thai monks to ordain women as sāmanerī, sikkhamānā (probationer), or Bhikkhunī. The regulation is still in effect today. [...]*

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<sup>10</sup> Bhikkhu Bodi in / 9 / with some minor modifications by the author

<sup>11</sup> Bhikkhu Anālayo in / 2 /, pages 156/157



*A Bhikkhunī ordination in Thailand might be rendered judicially precarious [= dangerous] by a paragraph in the Thai penal law, according to which a person who is not properly ordained, but wears the robes of clerics, can be sentenced to imprisonment of no longer than one year or to a fine of not more than 20,000 Baht, or both.”<sup>12</sup>*

A more recent account on the legal issue of Bhikkhunī ordination in Thailand is given on a blog administered by Bhikkhu Sujato (/ 14 /): “The following is the most accurate account I have found, from ‘Making fields of merit: Buddhist female ascetics and gendered orders in Thailand’ by Monica Lindberg Falk, pg. 243.

*Since October 2002, the bhikkhuni issue has been of special interest to the Thai Senate Committee on Women, Youth, and Elderly. The board of senators (upper house) set up a sub-committee led by a female senator, Rabiabrat Pongpanit, to investigate the possibility of establishing the bhikkhuni order in Thailand. A study group spent six months researching the topic. They found that the bhikkhuni order did not defy the principles of Buddhism. Senator Rabiabrat said the ban issued in 1928 by the Supreme Patriarch prohibiting monks from ordaining women as novices or female monks should be revoked because it violated the constitution, which enshrines gender equality and freedom of faith. Senator Rabiabrat and the senatorial sub-committee presented their study to the parliament on the 11 March 2003. The ensuing discussions with representatives of the Sangha council have so far not led to sanctioning of a bhikkhuni order in Thailand. The deputy prime minister has announced that the bhikkhuni issue is not a case for the secular constitution, but he has urged the Sangha’s Council of Elders to consider the bhikkhuni sangha. In February 2004 the National Buddhist Bureau stated in reply to the senate proposal that there can never be bhikkhuni ordination in Thailand due to the irretrievable loss in the lineage of Theravada bhikkhuni order and lack of a bhikkhuni preceptor.”*

#### 4.1 Bhikkhunī Dhammananda

*“On February 28, 2003, Dhammananda Bhikkhunī, formerly known as Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, an accomplished Buddhist scholar, author and university lecturer, became the first Thai woman to receive full ordination as a Theravādin nun. Because Thailand’s laws and Buddhist clergy forbid women to ordain as samaneris (novices) or Bhikkhunīs, Chatsumarn sought novice ordination in nearby Sri Lanka in March, 2001. Recently, she returned to Sri Lanka to receive full ordination, becoming Thailand’s first Theravadin Bhikkhunī. [...]*

*In February, 2002, Dhammananda invited a delegation of Sri Lankan bhikkhunis to her temple so they could give novice ordination to a mae chee. Varanghana Vanavichayen became the Ven. Dhammarakita Samaneri, the first Thai woman to be ordained as a novice bhikkhuni on Thai soil. Dhammarakita had been a mae chee for nine years. [...]*

*Officially, the Thai clergy does not recognize Dhammananda’s bhikkhuni status. But unlike the Catholic Church, which in June 2002 excommunicated seven women who tried to be ordained as priests aboard a boat in the Danube river, the Thai clergy does nothing to prevent Dhammananda’s work. Perhaps it’s an example of the Thai value of mai pen rai, or “never mind,” where people ignore what they don’t like rather than actively oppose it.”<sup>13</sup>*

On November 29, 2014 Bhikkhuni Dhammananda, now abbess of Wat Songdham Kalayani in Nakhon Pathom, organized a Bhikkhunī ordination at Thippayasathandhamma Bhikkhuni Arama in Songkhla's Koh Yor. Members of the Sri Lanka Bhikkhunī sect were invited to perform the ordination. The Supreme

<sup>12</sup> Excerpts from a text by Martin Seeger in / 13 /, pages 159/161

<sup>13</sup> Excerpts from an article by Kristin Barendsen in / 15 /



Sangha Council (SSC) of Thailand responded with renewing its ban on female ordination and, as the Thai Theravada Buddhist clergy has no authority whatsoever to stop the Theravāda schools of other countries from ordaining women, they sought help from the Foreign Ministry to ban any more Sri Lankan monks from coming here to ordain women and threatened to punish any Thai monks who support it.

[The information in this paragraph was compiled from two recommendable articles published in the Bangkok Post (/ 16 / and / 17 /)].

*“Today (September 2015), there are around 100 bhikkhunis in Thailand—former professors, executives, journalists, doctors, and noodle sellers—living a celibate life governed by 311 precepts, although they and their monasteries are not recognized and do not receive the same state funding and other supports provided to other monasteries and the country’s roughly 200,000 male monastics. Nevertheless, these nuns are determined to have their legal status recognized as they slowly gain acceptance among the country’s lay Buddhists.”<sup>14</sup>*

I’d like to end with a quotation by Bhikkhu Bodi (see / 19 /):

*“In my opinion, in dealing with this issue, the question that should be foremost in our minds is this: ‘What would the Buddha want his elder Bhikkhu-disciples to do in such a situation, now, in the twenty-first century?’ Would he want us to apply the regulations governing ordination in a way that excludes women from the fully ordained renunciant life so that we present to the world a religion in which men alone can lead the life of full renunciation? Or would he instead want us to apply the Vinaya in a way that is kind, generous, and accommodating, thereby offering the world a religion that truly embodies principles of justice and nondiscrimination?”*

And I would like to add: Let us heed the Buddha’s insight as recorded in the Pāsādika Sutta, DN 29.12 (see textbox on page 3): ‘In such cases, if there are [...] no senior disciples among the nuns,... no middle-ranking or junior nuns,... no white-robed lay followers, male or female, celibate or otherwise [...], then the holy life is not perfected.’

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<sup>14</sup> BD Dipananda in / 18 /  
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## 5. Literature

- / 1 / **Āṅuttara Nikāya**  
The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha  
Translated from the Pāi by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
Wisdom Publication, Sommerville, MA 02144 USA, 2012  
ISBN: 978-1-61429-040-7
- / 2 / **Bhikkhu Anālayo**  
On the Bhikkhuni Ordination Controversy  
<https://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/pdf/5-personen/analayo/bhikkhuni-controversy.pdf> (accessed April 09, 2017)
- / 3 / **Dīgha Nikāya**  
The long discourses of the Buddha  
Translated from the Pāli by Maurice Walshe  
Wisdom Publications, 1995  
199 Elm Street, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144  
ISBN 978-0-86171-103-1
- / 4 / **Samyutta Nikāya**  
The Connected Discourses of the Buddha  
Translated from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2000  
ISBN: 978 0-86171-168-8
- / 5 / **Bhikkhu Anālayo**  
The foundation history of the nun's order  
<https://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/pdf/5-personen/analayo/foundation.pdf>  
(accessed April 09, 2017)
- / 6 / **Wikipedia**  
Bhikkhuni  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhikkhuni> (accessed April 25, 2017)
- / 7 / **The Buddhist monastic code II**  
The Khandhaka Rules  
Translated and explained by Thanissaro Bhikkhu  
3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition 2013  
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/bmc2.pdf> (accessed April 23, 2017)
- / 8 / **Bhikkhu Bodi**  
The revival of bhikkhunī ordination in the Theravāda tradition  
<http://thubtenchodron.org/2007/09/full-ordination-women-restore/1/>  
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Bhikkhu Bodhi on Bhikkhuni ordination  
<http://www.abhidhamma.org/forums/index.php?showtopic=291>  
(accessed July 21, 2017)
- / 10 / **Edward Conze**  
Buddhist Thought in India  
First published in 1962, Reprinted with corrections, 1983  
Allen & Unwin, London  
ISBN: 0-04-294128-8

### Abbreviations

AN	Āṅuttara Nikāya
DN	Dīgha Nikāya
MN	Majjhima Nikāya
SN	Samyutta Nikāya

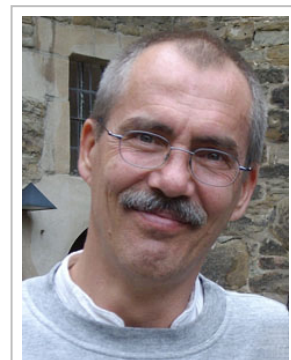
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## 6. About the author

My name is Reinhard Hölscher. In Thailand I'm politely addressed as Khun Reinhard.

For many years now I'm living in southern Thailand, studying Buddhism, practising meditation, teaching yoga and sharing my knowledge and experience regarding both *Theravāda* Buddhism and Hatha-Yoga with a large number of foreign students.

In 1995 I've started to participate in the monthly 10-day meditation retreats at the International Dharma Hermitage of Wat Suan Mokkh, Chaiya, Thailand. First as a participant, then as a helper, yoga teacher and coordinator, and later I've given talks during these retreats. Between 1995 and today I've altogether spent more than seven years at the International Dharma Hermitage.



Khun Reinhard

Together with my wife we are now offering the course 'Introduction to Buddhism and to Buddhist Meditation' at a small meditation centre in Hua Hin (Thailand). Detailed information about this course is available on our website at:

<http://www.meditationinhuahin.org>

Another interest of mine is yoga. I have practised Hatha Yoga for 46 years and taught it for more than 16 years after yoga teacher training in 2000 at the Vivekananda Ashram near Bangalore in India.

During my lessons I have introduced more than 2,000 women and men to the basics of Hatha-Yoga. Most were taught in 10-day courses.

Information, articles and books regarding my meditation and yoga experiences are available on my website at:

<http://www.khunreinhard.com>

## Publications

**eBooks** (available in PDF, EPUP, MOBI ... – format in both English and German language)

- **An Engineer Turned Meditation Teacher - 20 years fascinated by Suan Mokkh –**
- **Introduction to Buddhism and to Buddhist Meditation**
- **Enjoy Hatha Yoga**

**Articles** (PDF, free of charge, most but not all are available in German language as well)

- **Non-Self and The Five Aggregates**
- **The Here-and-Now-Interpretation of Dependent Origination - An attempt to explain the arising of the self-concept in the human mind -**
- **Karma and Merit in (Thai) Buddhism**
- **Bhikkhunī-ordination controversy in Theravāda Buddhism**
- **Meditation – postures and practices**
- **Meditation in daily life**
- **Aging and Yoga**
- **Breathing and Yoga**                      **and more ...**