

Buddhist Nuns Monks And Other Worldly Matters Recent Papers On Monastic Buddhism In India Studies In The Buddhist Traditions

Now in Paperback! Explore with the Dalai Lama the common ground underlying the diverse traditions of Buddhism. Buddhism is practiced by hundreds of millions of people worldwide, from Tibetan caves to Tokyo temples to redwood retreats. To an outside viewer, it might be hard to see what they all have in common. In *Buddhism*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and American Buddhist nun Thubten Chodron map out with clarity the convergences and the divergences between the two major strains of Buddhism—the Sanskrit traditions of Tibet and East Asia and the Pali traditions of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Especially deep consideration is given to the foundational Indian traditions and their respective treatment of such central tenets as the four noble truths the practice of meditation the meaning of nirvana enlightenment. The authors seek harmony and greater understanding among Buddhist traditions worldwide, illuminating the rich benefits of respectful dialogue and the many ways that Buddhists of all stripes share a common heritage and common goals.

Women played major roles in the history of Buddhist China, but given the paucity of the remaining records, their voices have all but faded. In *Daughters of Emptiness*, Beata Grant renders a great service by recovering and translating the enchanting verse - by turns assertive, observant, devout - of forty-eight nuns from sixteen centuries of imperial China. This selection of poems, along with the brief biographical accounts that accompany them, affords readers a glimpse into the extraordinary diversity and sometimes startling richness of these women's lives. A sample poem for this stunning collection: The sequence of seasons naturally pushes forward, Suddenly I am startled by the ending of the year. Lifting my eyes I catch sight of the winter crows, Calling mournfully as if wanting to complain. The sunlight is cold rather than gentle, Spreading over the four corners like a cloud. A cold wind blows fitfully in from the north, Its sad whistling filling courtyards and houses. Head raised, I gaze in the direction of Spring, But Spring pays no attention to me at all. Time a galloping colt glimpsed through a crack, The tap [of Death] at the door has its predestined time. How should I not know, one who has left the world, And for whom floating clouds are already familiar? In the garden there grows a rosary-plum tree: Whose sworn friendship makes it possible to endure. - Chan Master Jingnuo

The second in a series of collected essays looking at Indian Buddhism.

Taking a comparative approach, this fieldwork-based study explores the lives and thoughts of Buddhist nuns in present-day Taiwan and Sri Lanka. The author examines the postcolonial background and its influence on the modern situation, as well as surveying the main historical, economic, and social factors which influence the position of nuns in society. Based on original research, including interviews with nuns in both countries, the book examines their perspectives on controversial issues and in particular those concerning the status of women in Buddhism. Concerns discussed include allegedly misogynist teachings relating to women's inferior karma, that they cannot become Buddhas, and that nuns have to follow additional rules that monks do not. Bridging the gap between feminist theory and the reality of women in religion, the book makes a distinct contribution to the study of women in Buddhism by focusing on nuns from both of the main wings of Buddhism (Theravada and Mahayana) as well as furthering feminist studies of Buddhism and religion in general.

"A millennium and a half ago some remarkable women cast aside the concerns of the world to devote their lives to Buddhism. *Lives of the Nuns*, a translation of the *Pi-ch'iu-ni chuan*, was compiled by Shih Pao-ch'ang in or about A.D. 516 and covers exactly that period when Buddhist monasticism for women was first being established in China. Originally written to demonstrate the efficacy of Buddhist scripture in the lives of female monastics, the sixty-five biographies are now regarded as the best source of information about women's participation in Buddhist monastic practice in premodern China." "Among the stories of the Buddhist life well lived are entertaining tales that reveal the wit and intelligence of these women in the face of unsavory officials, highway robbers, even fawning barbarians. When Ching-ch'eng and a fellow nun, renowned for their piety and strict asceticism, are taken to "the capital of the northern barbarians" and plied with delicacies, the women "besmirch their own reputation" by gobbling down the food shamelessly. Appalled by their lack of manners, the disillusioned barbarians release the nuns, who return happily to their convent." "Lives of the Nuns gives readers a glimpse into a world long vanished yet peopled with women and men who express the same aspirations and longing for spiritual enlightenment found at all times and in all places." "Buddhologists, sinologists, historians, and those interested in religious studies and women's studies will welcome this volume, which includes annotations for readers new to the field of Chinese Buddhist history as well as for the specialist."--BOOK JACKET. Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

First Buddhist Women is a readable, contemporary translation of and commentary on the enlightenment verses of the first female disciples of the Buddha. The book explores Buddhism's relatively liberal attitude towards women since its founding nearly 2,600 years ago, through the study of the *Therigatham*, the earliest known collection of women's religious poetry. Through commentary and storytelling, author Susan Murcott traces the journey of the wives, mothers, teachers, courtesan, prostitutes, and wanderers who became leaders in the Buddhist community, roles that even today are rarely filled by women in other patriarchal religions. Their poetry beautifully expresses their search for spiritual attainment and their struggles in society.

In these articles, Gregory Schopen once again displays the erudition and originality that have contributed to a major shift in the way that Indian Buddhism is perceived, understood, and studied.

For young women in early South Asia, marriage was probably the most important event in their lives, as it largely determined their socioeconomic and religious future. Yet there has been little in the way of systematic examinations of the evidence on marriage customs among Buddhists of this time, and our understanding of the lives of early Buddhist women is still quite limited. This study uses ten stories from the *Avad?na?ataka*, the collection of Buddhist narratives compiled from the second to fifth centuries CE, to examine the social landscape of early India. The author analyzes marital customs and the development of nuns' hagiographies, while revealing regional variations of Buddhism in South Asia during this period.

Provides the first English translation of the Tibetan and Chinese texts on monastic discipline for Buddhist nuns and presents a comparative study of the two texts. An important contribution for studies of women's history, feminist philosophy, women's studies, women in religion, and feminist ethics.

In *Renunciation and Empowerment of Buddhist Nuns in Myanmar-Burma*, Kawanami offers a detailed account of how Buddhist nuns build their monastic community through fostering scriptural education and engaging in religious activities devoted to the dissemination of the Buddha's teaching.

Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters: Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India is the fourth in a series of collected essays by one of today's most distinguished scholars of Indian Buddhism. In these articles Gregory Schopen once again displays the erudition and originality that have contributed to a major shift in the way that Indian Buddhism is perceived, understood, and studied.

Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India University of Hawaii Press Explores the milieu of Taiwan's Buddhist nuns, who have the greatest numbers in the Buddhist world and a prominent place in their own country.

In this study, based on both historical evidence and ethnographic data, Paula Arai shows that nuns were central agents in the foundation of Buddhism in Japan in the sixth century. They were active participants in the Soto Zen sect, and have continued to contribute to the advancement of the sect to the present day. Drawing on her fieldwork among the Soto nuns, Arai demonstrates that the lives of many of these women embody classical Buddhist ideals. They have chosen to lead a strictly disciplined monastic life over against successful careers and the unconstrained contemporary secular lifestyle. In this, and other respects, they can be shown to stand in stark contrast to their male counterparts.

They may shave their heads, don simple robes, and renounce materialism and worldly desires. But the women seeking enlightenment in a Buddhist nunnery high in the folds of Himalayan Kashmir invariably find themselves subject to the tyrannies of subsistence, subordination, and sexuality. Ultimately, Buddhist monasticism reflects the very world it is supposed to renounce. Butter and barley prove to be as critical to monastic life as merit and meditation. Kim Gutschow lived for more than three years among these women, collecting their stories, observing their ways, studying their lives. Her book offers the first ethnography of Tibetan Buddhist society from the perspective of its nuns. Gutschow depicts a gender hierarchy where nuns serve and monks direct, where monks bless the fields and kitchens while nuns toil in them. Monasteries may retain historical endowments and significant political and social power, yet global flows of capitalism, tourism, and feminism have begun to erode the balance of power between monks and nuns. Despite the obstacles of being considered impure and inferior, nuns engage in everyday forms of resistance to pursue their ascetic and personal goals. A richly textured picture of the little known culture of a Buddhist nunnery, the book offers moving narratives of nuns struggling with the Buddhist discipline of detachment. Its analysis of the way in which gender and sexuality construct ritual and social power provides valuable insight into the relationship between women and religion in South Asia today.

Scholarly and popular consensus has painted a picture of Indian Buddhist monasticism in which monks and nuns severed all ties with their families when they left home for the religious life. In this view, monks and nuns remained celibate, and those who faltered in their "vows" of monastic celibacy were immediately and irrevocably expelled from the Buddhist Order. This romanticized image is based largely on the ascetic rhetoric of texts such as the Rhinoceros Horn Sutra. Through a study of Indian Buddhist law codes (vinaya), Shayne Clarke dehornes the rhinoceros, revealing that in their own legal narratives, far from renouncing familial ties, Indian Buddhist writers take for granted the fact that monks and nuns would remain in contact with their families. The vision of the monastic life that emerges from Clarke's close reading of monastic law codes challenges some of our most basic scholarly notions of what it meant to be a Buddhist monk or nun in India around the turn of the Common Era. Not only do we see thick narratives depicting monks and nuns continuing to interact and associate with their families, but some are described as leaving home for the religious life with their children, and some as married monastic couples. Clarke argues that renunciation with or as a family is tightly woven into the very fabric of Indian Buddhist renunciation and monasticisms. Surveying the still largely uncharted terrain of Indian Buddhist monastic law codes preserved in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese, Clarke provides a comprehensive, pan-Indian picture of Buddhist monastic attitudes toward family. Whereas scholars have often assumed that monastic Buddhism must be anti-familial, he demonstrates that these assumptions were clearly not shared by the authors/redactors of Indian Buddhist monastic law codes. In challenging us to reconsider some of our most cherished assumptions concerning Indian Buddhist monasticisms, he provides a basis to rethink later forms of Buddhist monasticism such as those found in Central Asia, Ka?m?r, Nepal, and Tibet not in terms of corruption and decline but of continuity and development of a monastic or renunciant ideal that we have yet to understand fully.

When the Buddha established his community over twenty-five centuries ago, he did so upon a foundation of radical equality among women and men. And indeed, the earliest Buddhist scriptures celebrate the teachings and inspiring influence of these path-blazing female renunciants. Nonetheless, through much of the Buddhist world, the order of nuns has disappeared or was never transmitted at all. Dignity & Discipline represents a watershed moment in Buddhist history, as the Dalai Lama together with scholars and monastics from around the world, present powerful cases, grounded in both scripture and a profound appeal to human dignity, that the order of Buddhist nuns can and should be fully restored.

The search to understand our mind and heart, to be at peace withing ourselves, is the most valuable path one can follow.

At publication date, a free ebook version of this title will be available through Luminos, University of California Press's Open Access publishing program. Visit www.luminosoa.org to learn more. The Monastery Rules discusses the position of the monasteries in pre-1950s Tibetan Buddhist societies and how that position was informed by the far-reaching relationship of monastic Buddhism with Tibetan society, economy, law, and culture. Jansen focuses her study on monastic guidelines, or bca' yig. The first study of its kind to examine the genre in detail, the book contains an exploration of its parallels in other Buddhist cultures, its connection to the Vinaya, and its value as socio-historical source-material. The guidelines are witness to certain socio-economic changes, while also containing rules that aim to change the monastery in order to preserve it. Jansen argues that the monastic institutions' influence on society was maintained not merely due to prevailing power-relations, but also because of certain deep-rooted Buddhist beliefs.

Explores the roles of Korean Buddhist nuns and laywomen from the fourth century to the present. Uncovering hidden histories, this book focuses on Korean Buddhist nuns and laywomen from the fourth century to the present. Today, South Korea's Buddhist nuns have a thriving monastic community under their own control, and they are well known as meditation teachers and social service providers. However, little is known of the women who preceded them. Using primary sources to reveal that which has been lost, forgotten, or willfully ignored, this work reveals various figures, milieux, and activities of female adherents, clerical and lay. Contributors consider examples from the early days of Buddhism in Korea during the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods (first millennium CE); the Kory? period (982–1392), when Buddhism flourished as the state religion; the Chos?n period (1392–1910), when Buddhism was actively suppressed by the Neo-Confucian Court; and the contemporary resurgence of female monasticism that began in the latter part of the twentieth century. "...this work is a great success, and is an important first step in opening an area of research that will hopefully see continued expansion in the years to come." — Journal of Buddhist Ethics

The term "revival" has been used to describe the resurgent vitality of Buddhism in Taiwan. Particularly impressive is the quality and size of

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the nun's order: Taiwanese nuns today are highly educated and greatly outnumber monks. Both characteristics are unprecedented in the history of Chinese Buddhism and are evident in the Incense Light community (Xiangguang). Passing the Light is the first in-depth case study of the community, which was founded in 1974 and remains a small but influential order of highly educated nuns who dedicate themselves to teaching Buddhism to lay adults. The work begins with a historical survey of Buddhist nuns in China, based primarily on the sixth-century biographical collection Lives of the Nuns and stories of nuns in subsequent centuries. This is followed by discussions on the early history of the Incense Light community; the life of Wuyin, one of its most prominent leaders; and the crucial role played by Buddhist studies societies on college campuses, where many nuns were first introduced to Incense Light. Later chapters look at the curriculum and innovative teaching methods at the Incense Light seminary and the nuns' efforts to teach Buddhism to adults. The work ends with portraits of individual nuns, providing details on their backgrounds, motivations for becoming nuns, and the problems or setbacks they have encountered both within and without the Incense Light community. This engaging study enriches the literature on the history of Buddhist nuns, seminaries, and education, and will find an appreciative audience among scholars and students of Chinese religion, especially Buddhism, as well as those interested in questions of religion and modernity and women and religion.

'No, but we are different. Tonpa Sherab treated men and women in the same way, he passed on his teachings to both men and women and that is why we nuns are on equal footing with the monks, quite unlike the Buddhists.' The Bon religion is often seen as a part of the Tibetan Buddhism but its bond is actually far more complex and has its own origin in the history of Tibet. The role of women worshipping in Bon and Tibetan Buddhism, is quite different. And although there are studies on Buddhist nuns, there is hardly any research available on nuns in the Bon tradition. This pioneering study vividly portrays the nuns of the Redna Menling monastery in Dolanji (India), the headquarters of the Bon religion, in exile. It focuses on the developments of the Bon in exile, the specific context in which Bon nuns live and how the monastic tradition takes shape. It provides interesting insights into the monastic community in exile, the historic context of the Bon religion as well as the personal motives to become a nun.

With reference to India.

A 60,000-mile odyssey in search of Buddhist nuns—hailed as “inspiring and necessary” (Kirkus), “ambitious” (Tricycle), and “compelling” (Financial Times) They come to the monastic Buddhist life from every faith and career: a policewoman, a princess, a Bollywood star, a violinist. Out of the public eye, despite hardship and even persecution, they vow to seek enlightenment in a world full of noise. Who are these women? What motivates them, and what stands in their way? Award-winning journalist Christine Toomey investigates. From Nepal to California, she encounters unforgettable nuns who reveal the blessings—and perils—of carrying a 2,500-year tradition into the twenty-first century. Often denied equal status with monks, they are nonetheless devoted—to their faith, and to change.

In recent years Buddhist nuns from Asia and the West have met together to become more active in improving their status in the female sangha. At "Life As A Buddhist Nun," the 1996 conference in Dharamsala, His Holiness the Dalai Lama supported this effort of Buddhist nuns to clarify their purpose in taking vows, widening their context, broadening community beyond their own abbeys, and supporting one another on their quest to achieve greater equality. This book gathers some of the presentations and teaching at this conference. Coming from many different countries and backgrounds, these women show ways they have found to embrace group practice in an era when most societies extol individualism. Their passion for earned wisdom should inspire lay practitioners and other nuns seeking the essence of Buddhist practice.

The life of A?vaghos?a Bodhisattva / translated from the Chinese of Kum?raj?va by Li Rongxi -- The life of N?g?rjuna Bodhisattva / translated from the Chinese of Kum?raj?va by Li Rongxi -- Biography of Dharma Master Vasubandhu / translated from the Chinese of Param?rtha by Albert A. Dalia -- Biographies of Buddhist nuns / translated from the Chinese of Baochang by Li Rongxi -- The journey of the eminent monk Faxian / translated from the Chinese of Faxian by Li Rongxi

The flourishing of the Taiwanese bhiksuni community illustrated how women's determination to pursue a formal monastic membership enables them to utilize social and conventional resources to gain ecclesiastical recognition. In return, both their ritual prestige and social independence were institutionalized in term of the religious identity of bhiksuni.

This is the extended and annotated edition including * an extensive annotation of more than 10.000 words about the history and basics of Buddhism, written by Thomas William Rhys Davids * an interactive table-of-contents * perfect formatting for electronic reading devices The Kullavagga includes accounts of the First and Second Buddhist Councils and the establishment of the community of Buddhist nuns, as well as rules for addressing offenses within the community. The Cullavagga has 12 chapters:- the first deals with various procedures to be followed in dealing with badly behaved monks- the next deals with probation for monks guilty of certain offences (see Suttavibhanga)- the next chapter deals with the case where a monk on probation commits a further offence- explanation of the seven rules for settling disputes (see Suttavibhanga)- minor matters- lodgings- schism; this chapter starts with the story of Devadatta, the Buddha's fellow clansman; he starts by inviting the elderly Buddha to retire and appoint him in his place; when this is refused he makes three attempts to assassinate the Buddha; when these fail he asks the Buddha to impose strict practices, including vegetarianism, on the monks; when this is refused he leads a schism- observances; various duties- a monk may suspend the recitation of the Patimokkha if another monk has an offence unconfessed- nuns; the Buddha, after being asked seven times, finally agrees to establish an order of nuns, but warns that it will weaken the teaching and shorten its lifetime, and imposes strict rules subordinating nuns to monks (some even more misogynistic material can be found in the Pali Canon, most notably the Kunala Jataka; for the other side see Therigatha)- shortly after the Buddha's death, Kassapa holds a council at which the teachings are recited; Upali answers questions on the vinaya and Ananda on the dhamma- a century later a dispute arises on various points, mainly on the acceptance of gold and silver; another council is held which agrees on the stricter position, after receiving advice from an aged pupil of Ananda (courtesy of wikipedia.com)

Here are practice poems, novice precepts, and "Mindful Manners" on how to be a Buddhist monk and nun in the Plum Village tradition. With inspiration for every step in the monastic timetable from "Waking Up" and "Taking the First Steps of the Day" to "Lighting a Candle" in the evening, this book was originally compiled for novices who are still learning how to practice mindfulness in daily life. Thus it is perfect for beginners in mindfulness who wish to make progress in their practice at home, for young people considering a life in a spiritual community, and especially for followers of Thich Nhat Hanh who wish to deepen their understanding of the monastic way of life today.

Twelve years ago, the Sager Family Foundation, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, and the Dalai Lama's private office began a groundbreaking program called Science for Monks to teach Western science to Tibetan monks and nuns. Recently, Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama announced a decision by the leaders of the monasteries to make the study of Western science part of the core curriculum required of all monastic scholars in the Gelug tradition. Beyond the Robe tells the story of the decade long development of the Science for Monks program and what it reveals about the larger role Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns can play in their monasteries, in their communities, and in the world at large. Beyond the Robe is a collection of essays from the monks and scientists containing the first insights that have come out of this historic effort. Beyond the Robe follows the monks' study of science, but it is not a science book. The real story here is what the study of science has revealed about who these remarkable men and woman really are and the much bigger role that they seem so suited to fill. "I hope that Beyond the Robe helps you to feel closer to the monks and nuns and to better understand their immense potential to provide leadership in their world and further insight into ours. Instead of simply admiring them from afar, let's all get close enough to really listen." —Bobby Sager "Bobby Sager has been not only a most generous and dedicated benefactor of the Science for Monks program since it was launched 12 years ago, but also he is a direct witness to its flourishing. His testimony and insight are key to an in-depth understanding of this unique encounter between two major traditions of knowledge, Buddhist contemplative science and modern Western science. His account provides a welcome encouragement to this wonderful meeting of minds and hearts at the service of humanity." —Matthieu Ricard "Beyond the Robe has many fascinating dimensions and makes a critical contribution to Tibet, to Buddhism, and to our world today. The space it opens is the world of the Tibetan Buddhist monastic universities, still thriving in Indian exile. Within that world, we encounter, in beautiful and thought provoking ways, the living tradition of Buddhist monastics, their realms of study, debate, prayer, and meditation, and their living intellectual and experiential encounter with the modern worldview, with its discoveries, technologies, and anxieties." —Robert Thurman

This book offers for the first time a comprehensive account of Buddhist nuns and Tibetan Buddhist nuns in particular... Based on historical research and an extensive period of fieldwork in an exile nunnery in India, the present study gives a detailed description of the life of Buddhist nuns past and present. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between the normative view of women in Buddhism and how in fact Tibetan nuns adjust to, or try to alter, to these norms. Myanmar-Burma has one of the largest concentrations of Buddhist nuns and monks in the world today. In Renunciation and Empowerment of Buddhist Nuns in Myanmar-Burma, Kawanami traces the nun's scholarly lineage in modern Myanmar history and examines their contemporary religious position in Myanmar's social and political contexts. Although their religious status may appear ambiguous from a textual viewpoint, it is argued that their large presence is a clear indication as to the important functions Buddhist nuns perform in the monastic community. Sagaing Hill where the main research was conducted, occupies an important educational centre for Myanmar nuns in consolidating their scholarly lineage and spreading the network of dharma teachers. The book examines transactions that take place in their everyday lives and reveals the essence of their religious lives that make Buddhist nuns an essential bridge between sangha and society. Book jacket.

Only fifty years ago, Tibetan medicine, now seen in China as a vibrant aspect of Tibetan culture, was considered a feudal vestige to be eliminated through government-led social transformation. Medicine and Memory in Tibet examines medical revivalism on the geographic and sociopolitical margins both of China and of Tibets medical establishment in Lhasa, exploring the work of medical practitioners, or amchi, and of Medical Houses in the west-central region of Tsang. Due to difficult research access and the power of state institutions in the writing of history, the perspectives of more marginal amchi have been absent from most accounts of Tibetan medicine. Theresia Hofer breaks new ground both theoretically and ethnographically, in ways that would be impossible in todays more restrictive political climate that severely limits access for researchers. She illuminates how medical practitioners safeguarded their professional heritage through great adversity and personal hardship.

Nirmala S. Salgado offers a groundbreaking study of the politics of representation of Buddhist nuns. Challenging assumptions about writing on gender and Buddhism, Salgado raises important theoretical questions about the applicability of liberal feminist concepts and language to the practices of Buddhist nuns. Based on extensive research in Sri Lanka as well as on interviews with Theravada and Tibetan nuns from around the world, Salgado's study invites a reconsideration of female renunciation. How do scholarly narratives continue to be complicit in reinscribing colonialist and patriarchal stories about Buddhist women? In what ways have recent debates contributed to the construction of the subject of the Theravada bhikkhuni? How do key Buddhist concepts such as dukkha, samsara, and sila ground female renunciant practices? Salgado's provocative analysis of modern discourses about the supposed empowerment of nuns challenges interpretations of female renunciation articulated in terms of secular notions such as "freedom" in renunciation, and questions the idea that the higher ordination of nuns constitutes a movement in which female renunciants act as agents seeking to assert their autonomy in a struggle against patriarchal norms. Salgado argues that the concept of a global sisterhood of nuns—an idea grounded in a notion of equality as a universal ideal—promotes a discourse of dominance about the lives of non-Western women and calls for more nuanced readings of the everyday renunciant practices and lives of Buddhist nuns. Buddhist Nuns and Gendered Practice is essential reading for anyone interested in the connections between religion and power, subjectivity and gender, and feminism and postcolonialism.

An Ancient Collection Reimagined Composed around the Buddha's lifetime, the original Therigatha ("Verses of the Elder Nuns") contains the poems of the first Buddhist women: princesses and courtesans, tired wives of arranged marriages and the desperately in love, those born into limitless wealth and those born with nothing at all. The authors of the Therigatha were women from every kind of background, but they all shared a deep-seated desire for awakening and liberation. In The First Free Women, Matty Weingast has reimagined this ancient collection and created an original work that takes his experience of the essence of each poem and brings forth in his own words the struggles and doubts, as well as the strength, perseverance, and profound compassion, embodied by these courageous women.

Recounts the struggles of a young Thai woman to become a Buddhist nun and the challenges and rewards of that life.

The Community of Buddhist Nuns is one of the oldest women's organizations in human history. In this book Dr. Wijayaratna explains how this community was started by the Buddha in the 5th century BCE, and how it developed gradually. To show the motivation and the way of life of these ordained women, the author uses the oldest texts of the Pali canon. Several chapters of this book discuss the position of Buddhist nuns in the field of the three famous monastic themes: poverty, chastity and obedience. This book describes in detail the structure of the organization of their Community, their day-to-day practices, and the virtues and mental discipline through which they strove to attain the sublime goal, Nibbana.

The seventeenth century is generally acknowledged as one of the most politically tumultuous but culturally creative periods of late imperial Chinese history. Scholars have noted the profound effect on, and literary responses to, the fall of the Ming on the male literati elite. Also of great interest is the remarkable emergence beginning in the late Ming of educated women as readers and, more importantly, writers. Only recently beginning to be explored, however, are such seventeenth-century religious phenomena as "the reinvention" of Chan Buddhism—a concerted effort to revive what were believed to be the traditional teachings, texts, and practices of "classical" Chan. And, until now, the role played by women in these religious developments has hardly been noted at all. *Eminent Nuns* is an innovative interdisciplinary work that brings together several of these important seventeenth-century trends. Although Buddhist nuns have been a continuous presence in Chinese culture since early medieval times and the subject of numerous scholarly studies, this book is one of the first not only to provide a detailed view of their activities at one particular moment in time, but also to be based largely on the writings and self-representations of Buddhist nuns themselves. This perspective is made possible by the preservation of collections of "discourse records" (yulu) of seven officially designated female Chan masters in a seventeenth-century printing of the Chinese Buddhist Canon rarely used in English-language scholarship. The collections contain records of religious sermons and exchanges, letters, prose pieces, and poems, as well as biographical and autobiographical accounts of various kinds. Supplemental sources by Chan monks and male literati from the same region and period make a detailed re-creation of the lives of these eminent nuns possible. Beata Grant brings to her study background in Chinese literature, Chinese Buddhism, and Chinese women's studies. She is able to place the seven women, all of whom were active in Jiangnan, in their historical, religious, and cultural contexts, while allowing them, through her skillful translations, to speak in their own voices. Together these women offer an important, but until now virtually unexplored, perspective on seventeenth-century China, the history of female monasticism in China, and the contribution of Buddhist nuns to the history of Chinese women's writing.

This 1991 book describes the ideal way of life prescribed for Buddhist monks and nuns in the Pali texts of the Theravada school of Buddhism.

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