

E-learning course 2014 on Bhikkhuni/Bhikshuni ordination



The e-learning course that has been held in 2014 built on the foundation of the [1. International Conference on Buddhist Women's Role in the Sangha](#), which was held at the University of Hamburg in 2007, by continuing the same theme, namely the topic of bhikkhuni/bhikshuni ordination. This topic is of high priority at present in the Theravada and Mulasarvastivada monastic traditions. The course offered academic research on the legal questions, based on a study of the relevant Vinaya material, followed by an updated regional survey on the current situation of nuns in the Theravada and Mulasarvastivada traditions.

The first e-learning course was a starting point for further e-learning courses to be offered in subsequent semesters to further explore the various themes within historical and modern topics on Women in Buddhism.

E-learning Course on Perspectives on Bhikkhuni Ordination, Summer Semester, 2014, hosted by the Center for Buddhist Studies and the Women in Buddhism Study Initiative at the University of Hamburg.

Course Dates

The course was held every Thursday from 17 April to 10 July, from 2.15 to 3.45 pm CET. The course consists of 13 lectures and related coursework.

Those who had registered could view the lecture on the online platform at any time during the duration of the entire course, according to their personal convenience and local time requirements, and had access to the online forum for discussions related to each lecture.

Registration

Registration has been completed.

During the later part of March, registered participants received an email with a password and instructions on how to access the website where the course is held.

Learning Objectives



Participants in the class were to gain knowledge of the three Vinaya schools in regards to bhikkhuni ordination, and, taking an academic approach, develop the ability to analyze the complexities involved in applying the Buddha's ideal of the Fourfold Sangha in the conventional world. Finally, students were to learn about the strategies women have adopted in order to pursue their renunciant aspirations, in the context of challenges they have faced due to gender bias.

Course outline

The course began with the Madhyama-agama version of the foundation of the bhikkhuni order, thereby continuing the [e-learning course series of the last three years](#) which have focused on Madhyama-agama discourses.

Following this introductory lecture, a series of lectures covered the topic of bhikkhuni/bhikshuni from the viewpoint of the canonical Vinayas, and, building on this foundation, proceeded to present the actual situation of ordained women in detail. The latter series of lectures focussed on bhikkhunis, wherever such an order has come into being, and on the other nun traditions in Asian countries, i.e., the dasasil matas in Sri Lanka, the mae chis in Thailand, the thila shins in Burma and sramanerikas in the Himalayan countries.

Syllabus

For some lectures we unfortunately do not have the permission to make these available.

17 April: [Ven. Analayo](#), Numata Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Hamburg: The Foundation of the Bhikkhuni Order

Recommended Readings

Anālayo 2011: "Mahāpajāpatī's Going Forth in the Madhyama-āgama", Journal of Buddhist Ethics, vol. 18 pp. 268–317.

Anālayo 2013: "The Legality of Bhikkhunī Ordination", Journal of Buddhist Ethics, vol. 20 pp. 310–333.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

24 April: [Ann Heirman](#), Centre for Buddhist Studies, Ghent University: The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya on Bhikshuni Ordination

Recommended Reading

Heirman, Ann 2007: "Vinaya: From India to China", in *The Spread of Buddhism, (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section Eight, Central Asia, Volume 16)*, A. Heirman, S.P. Bumbacher (ed.), Leiden: Brill, pp. 167-202.

Heirman, Ann 2011: "Buddhist Nuns: Between Past and Present", *Numen*, vol. 58 pp. 603-631.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

1 May: [Petra Kieffer-Pülz](#), Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz: The Theravada Vinaya on Bhikkhuni Ordination

Recommended Reading

Kieffer-Pülz, Petra 2007: "Stretching the Vinaya Rules and Getting Away with It", *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, vol. 29 pp. 1-49.

Hüsken, Ute and P. Kieffer-Pülz 2012: "Buddhist Ordination as Initiation Ritual and Legal Procedure", in *Negotiating Rites*, edited by U. Hüsken and F. Neubert, 255-276. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8 May: [Ven. Damchoe Diana Finnegan](#), University of Wisconsin-Madison: The Mulasarvastivada Vinaya on the Formation of Bhikshunis

Recommended Reading

Finnegan, Damchö Diana 2009: "'For the Sake of Women too': Ethics and Gender in the Narratives of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya", *University of Wisconsin-Madison*. (especially recommended for reading are pages 144-210 and 298-396)

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

15 May: [Nirmala Salgado](#), Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill.: Dasasil Matas in Sri Lanka

Recommended Reading

Salgado, Nirmala S. 1996: "Ways of Knowing and Transmitting Religious Knowledge: Case Studies of Theravada Buddhist Nuns," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 19 no. 1 pp. 61-79.

Salgado, Nirmala S. 1998: "Buddhist Nuns, Revivalist Ideals and Nationalist Discourse", *Nethra*, vol. 2 no. 2 pp. 32-64 (follow link and then scroll down)

Salgado, Nirmala S. 2013: *Buddhist Nuns and Gendered Practice, In Search of the Female Renunciant*, New York: Oxford University Press.

22 May: [Susanne Mrozik](#), Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass.: Bhikkhunis in Sri Lanka

Recommended Reading

Mrozik, Susanne 2009: "A Robed Revolution: The Contemporary Buddhist Nun's (Bhikṣuṇī) Movement", *Religion Compass*, vol. 3 no. 3 pp 360-378.

Mrozik, Susanne 2011: "In the Company of Spiritual Friends: Sri Lanka's Buddhist Nuns", *Present*, 4-11.

Mrozik, Susanne 2014: "'We Love Our Nuns': Affective Dimensions of the Sri Lankan Bhikkhuni Revival", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, vol 21 pp. 57-95.

29 May: [Martin Seeger](#), University of Leeds: Mae chees in Thailand

Recommended Reading

Martin Seeger 2009: "The changing roles of Thai Buddhist women: obscuring identities and increasing charisma", *Religion Compass*, vol. 3/5 pp. 806–822.

Martin Seeger 2010: "Against the Stream: the Thai female Buddhist saint Mae Chi Kaew Sianglam (1901–1991)", *South East Asia Research*, vol. 18 no. 3, pp. 555–595.

5 June: [Ven. Dhammananda](#), Abbess of Wat Songkhammakalayani, Thailand: Bhikkhuni Sangha in Thailand

Recommended Reading

Dhammananda bhikkhuni 2009: *Bhikkhunis in Thailand*. Bangkok.

Dhammananda bhikkhuni 2010: *Women Strengthening Buddhism*. Bangkok: Thai Tibet Center.

Dhammananda bhikkhuni 2010: *A Different Voice*. Bangkok: Thai Tibet Center.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

12 June: [Hiroko Kawanami](#), Lancaster University: Thila Shins in Burma

Recommended Reading

Kawanami, Hiroko: "The religious standing of Burmese Buddhist nuns (thila-shin): the Ten Precepts and religious respect words", *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 13.1: 17-39.

Kawanami, Hiroko 2007: "The bhikkhuni ordination debate: global aspirations, local concerns, with special emphasis on the views of the monastic community in Burma", *Buddhist Studies Review*, 24.2: 226-44.

Kawanami, Hiroko 2013: *Renunciation and Empowerment of Buddhist Nuns in Myanmar-Burma: Building a Community of Female Faithful*. Boston and Leiden: Brill.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

19 June: [Ven. Jampa Tsedroen](#), Akademie der Weltreligionen, University of Hamburg: The Bhikshuni Ordination Rite in the Tibetan Translation of the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya

Recommended Reading

Tsedroen, Jampa 2008: "Generation to Generation: Transmitting the Bhikṣuṇī Lineage in the Tibetan Tradition", in *Buddhist Women in a Global Multicultural Community. 9th Sakyadhita International Conference*, Karma Lekshe Tsomo (ed.), 205-215, Kuala Lumpur: Sukhi Hotu Publications.

Tsedroen, Jampa 2013: "The Gurudharma on Bhikṣuṇī Ordination in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Tradition", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, vol. 20 pp. 743–774.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

26 June: [Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo](#), University of San Diego, Cal.: Sramanerikas in the Himalayas

Recommended Reading

Karma Lekshe Tsomo 1999: "Change in Consciousness, Women's Religious Identity in Himalayan Buddhist Cultures", in *Buddhist Women Across Cultures: Realizations*, Karma Lekshe Tsomo (ed.), 169-189, Albany NY: State University of New York Press.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

3 July: [Peter Skilling](#), École française d'Extrême-Orient : Bhikshunis in Indian Inscriptions

Recommended Reading

Skilling, Peter 2001: "Eṣā agrā: Images of Nuns in (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin Literature" *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 24 no. 2 pp. 135-156.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)

10 July: [Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo](#): Bhikshuni Ordination across cultures

Recommended Reading

Karma Lekshe Tsomo 2009: "Global Exchange: Women in the Transmission and Transformation of Buddhism", in *TransBuddhism: Transmission, Translation, and Transformation*, Nalini Bhushan, Jay Garfield and Abraham Zablocki (ed.), 209-236.

University of Massachusetts Press.

[Lecture](#), [Audio](#), [Handout](#)