

Revisoning Buddhism 6

[an occasional re-look at the Buddha's Example and Teachings]

Bhikkhuni Sangha revived

From the mud, the lotus grows in the bright sun.

On the morning of 4th November 2009, I woke up to an email from Santi Forest Monastery with the email from Bhante Sujato's blog:

Black Sunday

On Sunday 1 November at Wat Pah Pong (the head monastery of the Ajahn Chah tradition) Ajahn Brahm and his monastery Bodhinyana were formally expelled from Wat Pah Pong for performing bhikkhuni ordination.

This is a black day for all Buddhists. It is the end of innocence for Buddhism in the West.

For more information, see my <http://sujato.wordpress.com/>.

Bhante Sujato

Suddenly, I realize why Australian Dharma friends have emailed me about my views on bhikkhuni ordination. My initial response was outdated and guarded. That is, until I learned more about this historical development:

For new nuns

Wed, Nov 4, 2009 at 6:23 AM

Subject: Public Letters of Support for Bhikkhuni Ordination

Dear all,

If you have not yet heard the news, we are pleased to announce the bhikkhuni ordinations of the four women monastics at Dhammasara Monastery in Western Australia: Venerable Ajahn Vayama, and Venerables Nirodha, Hasapanna, and Seri. This was the first Theravada Buddhist bhikkhuni ordination in Australia. See the Santi website for links to photos and information about the ordination.

If you would like to write a letter of support for bhikkhuni ordination, you can do so at: <http://www.supportbhikkhunis.org>.

Anagarika Jason Chan set up this website as an independent project.

Bhante Sujato has also been writing a blog to keep us up-to-date on developments surrounding the bhikkhuni ordinations.

With metta,

Santi Forest Monastery

Piya's response (email 4 Nov 2009)

Ajahn Brahm, Bhante Sujato & Dharma friends,

Firstly, my sadness in Wat Pah Pong's rejection of your courageous effort in reviving the Bhikkhuni Sangha. The bright side (one way of looking at it) is that this means you (we) are an independent Sangha, free to perform your own Sangha acts now.

Secondly, it is time that we let go of rules and rituals that hinder the opportunity for women to taste the freedom of renunciation. Such vesarajja can only come from deep Dharma-inspired practice and great compassion.

Thirdly, some high standards similar to those of the Buddha's times should be applied, making sure that candidates intend to stay on and work in communion and not wander off on their own steam as I-pod gurus, which was common when I was a monk a generation ago.

Fourthly, the fourfold assembly (parisa) is now complete again: sadhu sadhu sadhu! May this respite last until the Buddha Metteyya's time.

With metta and mudita,

Piya

© 2009 Piya Tan

More info:

1. The Revival of Bhikkhuni Ordination in the Theravada Tradition by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi.
2. Bhikkhuni ordination procedure by Bhikkhu Sujato.
3. New bill only tightens clergy's grip on power. (Bangkok Post 2007).

Link: <https://sites.google.com/site/dharmafarer/home/bhikkhuni-ordination>