

Research Article

Journal of Global Buddhism 10 (2009): 375-412



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R e s e a r c h A r t i c l e

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Abstract

In this paper, through working at the intersection of the works on nationalism and women, and the literature on Buddhist nuns during the Republican period, I aim to take up questions of gender relations in the broader studies of Buddhism and Buddhist modernization. I explore the Buddhist nuns' movement by examining the establishment of various academies for female Buddhists. I also analyze the writings by female Buddhists in the twentieth century. In so doing, I argue that the Buddhist nuns' revival movement fitted into the broader women's liberation discourse and the national modernization project during this time. This paper promises to provide insights into the history of women and nationalism from a Buddhist perspective, and shed light on gender-related issues of modern Chinese Buddhism in the course of China's modernization.

Introduction

In the last decade, there has been an explosion of interest in Republican China (1911–1949), triggered both by China specialists' rising interest in the multifarious voices of Chinese modernity and collective discovery of

parallels between Republican China and the post-1976 period. Scholars, including Ted Hutters, Wen-xin Yeh, Madeleine Yue Dong, Sherman Cochran, Shao Qin, and Frank Dikötter, have explored various but intertwined facets of the Chinese Republic. By looking into economy and economic culture, everyday experience, social and cultural practices, the literary field, and politics and political behaviors, they construct the Republican period as a dynamic and complex process, in which the global interacted with the local and/or tradition was intertwined with transformation (Huter, 2008; Yeh, 2000 & 2007; Dong, 2003; Cochran, 2000; Shao, 2003; Dikötter, 2008).

An important issue for the Republican period is the experience of Chinese women. China experts have stressed finding new ways beyond modern Western and feminist methodology to "engender history" in the Chinese context, situating women in all social, political, cultural, and familial discourses. Their research not only shows how "modern women" were created by men and history, but, more importantly, reveals how women remade themselves as modern historical agents. (2) In this paper, through working at the intersection of the works on nationalism and women, and the literature on Buddhist nuns during this period, I aim to take up questions of gender relations in the broader studies of Buddhism and Buddhist modernization. Specifically, I will explore the Buddhist nuns' movement by examining the establishment of various academies for female Buddhists. I shall also examine writings by female Buddhists in the twentieth century. (3) In so doing, I shall argue that the Buddhist nuns' revival movement fitted into the broader women's liberation discourse and the national modernization project during this time. This paper will provide some insights into the history of women and nationalism from a Buddhist perspective, and at the same time shed light

on gender-related issues of modern Chinese Buddhism in the course of China's modernization.

The Discourse on Women's Liberation in China from the End of the Nineteenth Century to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

The period from the end of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, which was marked by dramatic decentralization of government and large-scale military conflicts, was one of the most turbulent times in Chinese history. However, it was also a time when all kinds of intercultural dialogues and intellectual creativities thrived. With the decline of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and the expanding influence of Western colonial powers in China, the Chinese masses experienced tremendous suffering and poverty caused by domestic turmoil and foreign invasion. Intellectuals and religious leaders, both conservative and radical, were simultaneously pondering the past three thousand years of Chinese civilization as well as seeking new routes to save the people and strengthen the nation.

In the midst of these transformations, Chinese women became the site at which national modernity was imagined and constructed: China's weakness was the weakness of its women; only if Chinese women were liberated would the Chinese nation be strong (Hershatter 2004, p.1,028). While male sympathy towards women did exist, and male intellectuals sometimes did embrace women's rights for women's sake, current scholarship demonstrates that well-known intellectuals and writers always focused on how women's emancipation was linked to national salvation. (4)

During the 1898 reform, faced with Western missionaries' criticism of women's status in China and impressed by the achievements of Christian female education, Chinese reformers represented by Kang

Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927) and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929) linked strengthening the nation with banning foot-binding and educating women to produce "good wives and wise mothers" (*xianqi liangmu* 賢妻良母). (5) They believed that the modernization of China could only take place through the "modernization" of Chinese women. Nevertheless, in reformers' pragmatic and nationalistic framework, women, as a social group, were simply a tool to be used in the modernization of the nation: with a stronger body without bound feet, they could bear stronger sons to resist foreign enemies; educated mothers could raise and educate more talented young men (Gipoulon 1989–90, p.48).

In the first decade of the twentieth century, women's emancipation continued to be a focal point of the nationalist discourse. Women's education became officially institutionalized, although it was still dominated by male participation for the sake of restoring the nation. Women's textbooks in this period aimed to educate women with a very specific kind of education: to produce qualified "mothers of citizens" (*guomin zhi mu* 國民之母), emphasizing the new scientific knowledge, such as child psychology, hygiene, physiology, and economics, that a woman must have in order to successfully fulfill her duty as "the biological and moral source of a new citizen" (Judge 1997, p.110). Nonetheless, ironically, women themselves were not recognized as "citizens" in the constitution of the Republic (1912) (Gipoulon 1989–90, p.49). In addition, by separating women from traditional and modern cultural capital—scholarly practice, poetry, and knowledge about Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism—male reformers managed to deprive women of a potentially vital source of self-knowledge and subject the new meaning of women and women's literacy solely to the nationalist project (Judge 1997, p.110).

In the midst of overturning the Manchu empire and demanding governmental reform, revolutionaries in the early twentieth century also opened the door for women to enter the public arena by advocating equal rights between men and women. Nevertheless, the educative role of women as mothers was again emphasized, in that a mother who strongly believed in the revolutionary cause would then so educate and influence her son (Gipoulon 1989–90, p.49). In addition, the revolutionaries desired more women's support for their cause than women's rights.

Both reformers and revolutionaries called upon women to participate in the modernization of the nation. But rather than speak for women's rights, both groups only wanted to motivate women for the purpose of their own nationalist projects. The gulf separating the education and worldly ambition of men from that of women persisted. For instance, Xiang Jingyu 向警予 (1895–1928), one of the best-known feminists in the Communist movement and a teacher herself, stressed how the educational inequalities between the two sexes persisted. (6) The girls' schools, she wrote, have become places of seclusion, cut off from society. The girls go from the home to the school, but their vision of the world remains the same. Modern learning has not penetrated the schools, and the most brilliant graduates from girls' schools will never be anything more than good secretaries for their husbands (Gipoulon 1989–90, p.55).

Therefore, the question is, with men being the dominant presence in education, politics, and public life in early twentieth-century China, were women just subordinates to male undertakings? The following account will try to answer this question by analyzing a specific group of women, Buddhist nuns, and their endeavors to confront the challenge of their times and their accomplishments. Through unraveling the

complex relationship between nationalism and women in the specific context of Buddhist reform, the subsequent analysis intends to explore how Buddhist nuns actively participated in the women's liberation discourse through inserting their understanding of gender, and how they managed to constitute alternative female subjectivities to the ones prescribed by men and redefine their roles in the nationalist project.

Buddhist Modernization and Taixu's Reform in the Twentieth Century

Though Chinese Buddhism enjoyed great imperial patronage from the Qing court due to its strategic and political importance in dealing with the triangular relations among Qing rulers, Tibetans, and Mongols, the Taiping rebellion (1858–1864) at the end of the Qing dynasty regenerated persecution and proved catastrophic for Buddhism in modern China. In southeast and central China, where the Taiping rebels' power was extensive, Buddhist monasteries were destroyed and Buddhist monks were massacred. It is said that the Taiping attack on Buddhism was almost fatal (Pittman 2001, p.35). Persecution of the Buddhists continued after the fall of the Qing dynasty. Local warlords who controlled the political and economic powers ordered the confiscation of Buddhist properties and closed the monasteries for the use of public education.

Besides the persecution by local government, Buddhism also was challenged by both Chinese intellectuals and Christian missionaries. In the period during and after the May Fourth Movement (1919), Westernized Chinese intellectuals and cultural radicals employed the "end of history" rhetoric, specifically "Scientism," to launch campaigns against religion, which was condemned as superstitious and backward (Duara, 1995: 85). Considered along with Confucianism and Daoism as the

remnants of feudal society and the source of superstition, Buddhism was attacked by Chinese revolutionaries under the slogans "Mr. Science" (*sai xiansheng* 賽先生) and "Mr. Democracy" (*de xiansheng* 德先生). Buddhism was regarded as useless or even an impediment to the unification of the country and reconstruction of the nation. Christian missionaries, who at this time were mainly Protestants, expanded their influence extensively in China with the assistance of imperialism by preaching and offering various social services, such as education and medical treatment. Regarded as the major religious competitor of Christianity in China, Buddhism inevitably became the target of criticism. Christian missionaries argued that despite Buddhism's long influence in China, its characteristics marked by idolatry and superstition had little value, or were even obstacles, to China's modernization.

Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), whose secular name is Lü Peilin 呂沛林, developed his career as a "reformist monk" in that context. Born in 1890 in Congde district, Zhejiang Province, in Southeast China, where Buddhism has had deep-rooted influence since its earliest entry to China, he was brought up by his grandmother, who introduced him to Buddhism. Gradually, after studying with a variety of Buddhist teachers and reading widely, Taixu started to display his talents as a creative spiritual leader and an active religious reformer in his early twenties. In response to the challenges posed to Buddhism by the state, modernist intellectuals, and Christian missionaries, he reformed Buddhism to facilitate the modernization of the nation, calling for the revitalization of Buddhism through educational modernization, social service, and international cooperation (Pittman 2001, p.96). In his reform plan, Taixu suggested that in order to dismantle popular misunderstanding of Chinese Buddhism and disassociate it from superstition, the first necessary step was to

reeducate Buddhist clergy with a more comprehensive curriculum that placed Buddhist teachings in relation to the social and political issues of the day. It is under the circumstances of the Buddhist reform movement in the twentieth century that Chinese Buddhist nuns actively responded to women's liberation and nationalist discourse. However, due to the conflicts between conservatives and radicals in the *sangha*, Taixu's struggle for national leadership of Buddhism was not smooth. (7)

The Establishment of the First Academy for Female Buddhists

In 1920, after his reform plan encountered several failures within Buddhist circles in southeast China, Taixu went to lecture in Wuhan in Hubei Province and gained great popularity among *sangha* and lay Buddhist supporters there. In order to continue his Buddhist reform, Taixu decided to build a modern Buddhist educational institute to educate new generations of Buddhists who could carry out his Buddhist modernization and reform plan. In 1922, with the help of several lay supporters, Taixu established the first modern Buddhist educational institution in Chinese history—Wuchang Buddhist Academy (*Wuchang foxueyuan* 武昌佛學院)—in Wuhan (*Wuhan shi zhi: Shehui zhi* 1997, p.194). In 1924, as part of Wuchang Buddhist Academy, Taixu formed Wuchang Academy for Female Buddhists (*Wuchang foxueyuan nüzhong yuan* 武昌佛學院女眾院) with support from layman Li Yichen 李隱塵 (?–1929) (*Wuhan shi zhi: Shehui zhi* 1997, p.196). This was the first modern educational institute for female Buddhists in Chinese history.

The Academy for Female Buddhists followed the same structure as the Wuchang Buddhist Academy and accepted both ordained nuns and laywomen through examination. The courses taught at the Academy

included both Buddhist texts and other subjects, such as philosophy and literature. Less than two years after its establishment, the Academy was temporarily closed because of warfare. But in 1928, it was reopened by Fafang 法舫 (1904–1951), a Wuchang Buddhist Academy graduate, and a lay Buddhist named Tang Dayuan 唐大圓 (1885–1941) (He, 1999). (8) In 1931, Taixu changed Wuchang Buddhist Academy into World Buddhist Institute (*Shijie foxue yuan* 世界佛學苑), and the Academy for Female Buddhists was also changed to the World Buddhist Institute for Female Buddhists (*Shijie foxue yuan nüzhong yuan* 世界佛學院女眾院). In 1933, Li Deci 李德慈, the wife of layman Fang Benren 方本仁 (1880–1951), organized a trustees' committee for the World Buddhist Institute for Female Buddhists. Taixu, Daxing 大醒 (1900–1952), and lay Buddhist scholar Wang Sengpu 王森甫 (1881–1934) became teachers at the Institute. Subsequently, with stable financial support and proper academic guidance, the Institute gradually became the center for female Buddhist education in China. The two nuns in charge of the Institute were both very well-educated: Deying 德瑛 had studied art in Japan and had been a teacher for many years, and Dingcheng 定成, according to Zhang Shenghui 張聖慧, an active Buddhist laywoman, also "came from the scholastic background, later studied sutras and scriptures, and was especially good at taking care of business" (Zhang 1934, p.88). (9) Zhang also described the achievements of the Institute: "[The Wuchang Academy for Female Buddhists] has survived for almost ten years and produced several dozen of graduates. Most of them can become Buddhist dharma masters and disseminate Buddhist teachings" (Zhang, 1934, p.88).

In 1934, laywomen Li Dezhao 李德肇 and Cai Chaoshuang 蔡超爽 took charge of the Institute after Deying retired (Zhang 1934, p.88). Following these two laywomen, Dingchu 定初 became the incumbent. And

more course subjects such as English and mathematics were added to the curriculum. The length of study at the Institute was three years, and each class consisted of twenty to forty students. In 1948, after the establishment of the Hankou Academy for Nuns (*Hankou qiyin nizhong xueyuan* 漢口栖隱尼眾學院) at the Nunnery of Secluded Rest (*Qiyin si* 栖隱寺), all the students at World Institute for Female Buddhists were transferred there. In 1949, forty students graduated from the Hankou Academy for Nuns. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hankou Academy for Nuns was turned into part of the socialist mass workforce. All the students were eventually transferred to Wuhan Women's Knitting Factory, and the school was closed down until the reestablishment of the Wuchang Academy for Nuns at the Nunnery of Lotus Creek (*Lianxi si* 蓮溪寺) in 1986.

The Pure Bodhi Vihara (*Puti jingshe* 菩提精舍) and the *Dedicated Journal for Female Buddhists* (Fojiao nüzhong zhuankan 佛教女眾專刊)

With Taixu's influence and active support from lay Buddhists, Wuhan soon became the most important platform for female Buddhists. Zhang Shenghui wrote in her article "The impression from observing Buddhism in Wuhan" (Zhang 1934, p.88):

It has been several decades since our country started promoting female education. Though it has been developing at a speed of a thousand miles a day, it is still far behind compared with the West. The education of female Buddhists is even more backward, to be honest. Though there are female Buddhists all over the country, one has never heard of the establishment of academies for female Buddhists, except a few small convents. However, the northern part of Hubei Province is different from other places. In Wuchang city

alone there are already three educational institutes for female Buddhists.

Besides the Wuchang Academy for Female Buddhists, established by Taixu in 1924, the other two study institutes for female Buddhists mentioned are the Pure Bodhi Vihara (*Puti jingshe* 菩提精舍) in Wuchang and the Institute of the "Eight Precepts" (*Bajing xueshe* 八敬學社) in Hankou.

The Pure Bodhi Vihara was established by Hengbao 恒寶 in 1931 with the help of layman Wang Sengfu 王森甫, the president of Hankou Lay Buddhist Association, (10) and Huijüe 慧覺 from the Wuchang Buddhist Academy. The Vihara was located in a residence bought from a Deng family at Dachao jie 大朝街 in Wuchang. According to "The abbreviated codes for the Pure Bodhi Vihara," the goal of the this institute was to "establish a cultivation and study institute for nuns, to cultivate nuns' talents and virtues so as to preach Buddhist dharma, and to educate and affect female lay Buddhists" (Zhu, 1934). The daily schedule of the Vihara included "three hours of chanting and reciting, five hours of reading and reviewing, four hours of working (cooking, knitting, cleaning, and gardening), and two hours of Buddhist scripture learning" (*Hai Chao Yin*, 1934, p.49). The course subjects included *Amituo jing* 阿彌陀經 (Amitaayur-dhyaana-sutra), *Wuliangshou jing* 无量壽經 (the larger Sukhaavatii-vyuuha-sutra), *Zajia lüyao* 在家律要 (The Abbreviated Precepts for Lay Buddhists), *Zongpai yuanliu* 宗派源流 (The Origins of Schools), *Shannüren zhuan* 善女人傳 (Biographies of Virtuous Women), *Xindiguan jing* 心地觀經 (Sutra on the Contemplation of the Mind), *Shami lüyi* 沙彌律儀 (Manual for Buddhist Novices), *Jingxin jieguan fa* 淨心戒觀法 (The Method of Abstention and Contemplating the Purity of Mind), *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (Biographies of Chinese Buddhist Nuns from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries), *Biqiuni jie ben* 比丘尼戒本 (Precept

Manual for Bhik.su.nii), and *Wangsheng jingtu lun* 往生淨土論 (Treatise on Rebirth in the Pure Land). (11) After three years of study, students could stay at the Vihara to teach or conduct further study. In 1934, ten nuns were accepted through examination.

In addition to providing Buddhist nuns and laywomen with a systematic modern Buddhist education, the Vihara also published the first Buddhist journal for female Buddhists in China. In 1937, it published the *Dedicated Journal for Female Buddhists*. Although the journal only published one volume due to the capture of Wuhan in 1938 by the Japanese army, it signaled a big step forward in the history of Chinese Buddhist nuns. In this volume, Chinese Buddhist nuns had the opportunity not only to write in their own voices, but also to actually found their own journal. (12) In the "opening remarks" of the *Dedicated Journal for Female Buddhists*, Hengbao claims, "The *Dedicated Journal for Female Buddhists* is now born! In the history of Chinese Buddhism, not only are there no specific publications on female Buddhists, but there rarely are writings by them. This is the first time in history to publish a journal dedicated to female Buddhists...." She then asserted women's right to pursue religion: "Regarding equality between humans and equality between religions, women are the majority [of the Chinese people]. How could female Buddhists be ignored and not educated?" (Hengbao 1937, p.1)

The *Journal* explains in detail the curriculum and daily schedule of the Vihara. Compared to what was offered in 1934, the curriculum in 1937 included more courses on Buddhist teachings, such as *Weishi ershi lun* 唯識二十論 (Twenty Verses on Consciousness-only), *Abidamo jushe lun* 阿毗達磨俱舍論 (Abhidharma Storehouse Treatise), *Diamond Sutra*, and *Madhyamaka-sāstra* 中論 (The Middle Treatise), and the length of study also was extended from three years (six semesters) in 1934 to five years (ten semesters) in 1937. (13) Furthermore, the

curricula of the Vihara were not limited to Buddhist classics—it also incorporated a variety of modern subjects, such as Chinese language, English language, journalism, philosophy, calligraphy, writing, and speech.

The more comprehensive coursework at the Vihara was the result of Taixu's efforts to modernize Buddhism, and his insistence on understanding Buddhist teachings in relation to social and political issues of the day. Facing the criticism from intellectuals and revolutionaries that Buddhism was superstition, Taixu decided that in order to dismantle the popular misunderstanding of Chinese Buddhism, the first necessary step was to reeducate Buddhist clergy with a more comprehensive curriculum. This modern Buddhist education, though first initiated by a male monk, provided women an alternative learning path. (14) Many famous Buddhist dharma masters and scholars had taught at the Pure Bodhi Vihara, including Huijue 慧覺, Fafang 法舫, Chengkong 塵空 (1908–1979), Lü Jiucheng 呂九成, and Zhou Guanren 周觀仁.—

According to the *Journal*, the number of students at the Vihara grew from ten in 1934 to fifty by 1937. In her introductory article, Jingyun 錦雲 listed some brief information about each student: Most of the students were in their mid-twenties. The oldest student, Haiping 海屏, was thirty-eight and the youngest students, Dading 大定 and Zhigao 志高, were both only fourteen. (15) Most of these students had three to four years of formal education before coming to the Vihara. Some of them graduated from middle school or had studied several years at the Wuchang Academy for Female Buddhists. One nun, Haiguang 海光, even held a teacher's college degree.

In the early twentieth century, men played an important role in transmitting knowledge to Buddhist

nuns. But female nuns were not merely passive recipients. They recognized that although inspiration had come from their male counterparts, this in no way suggested that men were superior. Women's participation in the modern Buddhist education led by men did not prevent them from voicing their demand for equal status with their male counterparts. Chinese Buddhist nuns during this period actively used the cultural capital they gained from the broader discourse of Buddhist education to express their understanding of gender identity, advocate women's rights from a Buddhist perspective, and formulate an alternative role to the passive "mothers of citizens" in the national modernization discourse.

For instance, in her article "Buddhist attitudes toward women," Hengbao, the incumbent of the Pure Bodhi Vihara, first draws attention to the conventionally marginalized subject of women in Buddhism and Buddhist studies: "I could not help noticing that there are hardly any writings about women in Buddhism, such as how to reform them, how to educate them, and more. Even writings by women are rarely seen." She lost no time in identifying traditional patriarchy as the culprit: "This is not surprising because in the backward society of the past several thousand years, the question of men and women was considered an unspeakable secret ...". She declared her intention to revisit the issue of gender inequality, "I think men and women are all human beings in this world. [But] why are they named differently?"

Hengbao then quotes Buddhist texts to challenge the traditional androcentric assumptions about gender in Chinese society and to further reconceptualize the idea of gender. (16) In her view, there is a difference between the female (*nüren* 女人) and women (*nüxing* 女性). Gender, she emphasizes, is not just an inherent, natural, and universal attribute, but is a gendering process and a

system of power. It is morally constructed: "It is said on *Ekottara Agama* 增一阿含經, 'one with abundant cravings and sensual feelings will become the female.' In addition, according to the *Jingxin guanfa* 淨心觀法, 'the female has ten evils ... Whoever has all above ten evils is called the female.'" She therefore contended, "If a man is voluptuous and greedy and has the above ten characteristics, why shouldn't he be called a female?" For her, gender is also spiritually constituted: "Why does the female (*nüren*) have to refer to women? It is said on the *Nirvana Sutra*, 'one has to see the Buddha nature to be a man, otherwise, is a woman.'" Upon reinterpreting Buddhist scriptures, Hengbao asserted: "[I] want to ask those who are called men whether they have seen the Buddha nature? If not, I dare to say that all human beings in this world are women. No one is a man." Finally, Hengbao argues that it is exactly this kind of morally and spiritually constructed conception of gender in Buddhist texts that empowers women: "If there is no man in the world, why do we need to talk about the question of women? ... Therefore, the Buddha said that Buddhist dharma is neither masculine nor feminine. One can see how egalitarian Buddhist attitudes toward men and women are!" (Hengbao 1937, pp.17-18)

Furthermore, Hengbao defends the Buddhist view on women by arguing that the "Eight precepts" (*Bajing fa* 八敬法) originated in the specific social conditions in ancient India, and were not simply a result of the Buddha's discrimination against women:

In Indian culture...women are considered the lowest and the filthiest beings. Therefore, under these circumstances, the Buddha had to [lay the "Eight Precepts" on nuns] for the sake of [dispelling] oppositions and criticisms (Hengbao 1937, p.19).

Indeed, many modern scholars have argued vigorously that it is perhaps a mistake to depend solely on the existence of the additional monastic rules for *bhik.su.nii*, without examining their origin or social context, to form a generalized Buddhist view of women. (17) The *Journal* demonstrates that by the 1930s Buddhist nuns in China had begun to search for an alternative interpretation of the origin of Buddhist Vinaya rather than completely subordinating themselves to the male order.

In addition to Hengbao, several other nuns wrote about women's issues in Buddhism. Some of them explicated stories of mythical females in various Buddhist texts, such as the *Avatamsaka Sutra* 華嚴經 and *Vimalakirti Sutra* 維摩詰經, and how these stories advocate women's rights (*nüquan* 女權). As Rita Gross points out, the stories of mythic females could not be simply equated with the high status, freedom, or equality of women in the real society. We must distinguish between the discussion of gender and Buddhism in canonical texts and the relations between gender and Buddhism in history (Gross, 1993). Nevertheless, for nuns who wrote and read these articles, the cultural legacies they inherited from Buddhist texts and their inspiration coming from these mythical female figures not only allowed them to embrace the discourse of women's liberation in early twentieth-century China from a Buddhist perspective, but also enabled them to formulate an alternative role to the passive "mothers of citizens" ideal in order to become independent national actors. For instance, Tiantong 天童 wrote in her essay:

Bhik.su.nii are an intrinsic part of the Buddhist *sangha* and have equal status as *bhik.su* in Buddhist monastic community. *Bhik.su.nii* also have the responsibility to preach Buddhist dharma, lead Buddhists, cultivate and guide the society, benefit sentient beings, and carry on the

lamp of Buddhist wisdom. *Bhik.su.nii* are the real descendants of the Buddha in the Buddhist *sangha*. As citizens of the nation (*guomin* 國民), women stand on the same level as men in twentieth-century Republican China, whether in law, economics, politics, or education. [Women and men] are equal and not so different. Women also have the responsibilities to reform society, benefit human beings, benefit the nation, educate students, and cultivate citizens. Hence, one could see the high status and the important duties of *bhik.su.nii* both in Buddhism and in the nation. (Tiantong 1937, p.71)

Tiantong's writing endorses women's liberation and gender equality advocated by Chinese writers—many of them men—in the early twentieth century, which has greatly improved women's social status in China. By emphasizing the equal status of men and women in the modern discourse of Republican China, Tiantong justifies the equal status of *bhik.su.nii* and *bhik.su* in the Buddhist monastic community. Tiantong stresses women's role as "citizens of the nation" (*guomin*) rather than "mothers of citizens." For Tiantong and others, Buddhist nuns should contribute to the modernization of China equally with their male counterparts, such as by providing spiritual guidance for citizens and serving as educators, not as an instrument of fertility as prescribed by male nationalists.

Tiantong continues in her article:

Though there are many *bhik.su* who have talents and are good at providing spiritual guidance for others, they are secluded from society, especially from the two hundred million women of China. As men, it is inconvenient for *bhik.su* to preach to women. Therefore, women who are able to hear true dharma and learn wise knowledge are

extremely rare. We *bhik.su.nii* from now on should take up the responsibility to preach dharma and benefit sentient beings, especially preach Buddhist dharma to women, so as to persuade them to take refuge in the Three Jewels, abstain from killing, obey the Five Precepts, and cultivate the Ten Virtues ... (Tiantong 1937, p. 72)

Tiantong further points out a practical advantage of Buddhist nuns: their easy and convenient access to women audiences plays an important role in preaching Buddhist dharma and educating Buddhist laywomen.

Jueyuan 覺圓 wrote in the article "The Duty of the Pure Bodhi Vihara":

Students! Since we are members of Buddhist monastic community and disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha, we should follow Buddhist dharma and take up the responsibility to revive Buddhism and preach Buddhist dharma ... to expand our school, to extend it to the whole province and the whole country, and to create happiness for our 200 million women sisters ... [We should] revive China's degenerate Buddhism and disseminate profound Buddhist doctrines to the whole world so as to awaken people from delusional dreams and defeat evil. We should reveal the true value of the Buddhist dharma and the true salvational spirit of Buddhism (*Fojiao jiushi de zhen jingshen* 佛教救世的真精神) to the nation and all human beings so that they will become willing to take refuge in Buddhism. This is the duty of the Pure Bodhi Vihara! (Jueyuan 1937, p.89)

The idea of Buddhist salvational spirit (*Jiushi jingshen* 救世精神) was a key concept in Taixu's "Buddhism for the Human World" (*Renjian fojiao* 人間佛教) movement. It originates from the heroic descriptions of the bodhisattva's selfless actions in the various literatures

of Mahayana Buddhism. In response to criticisms of Buddhism's otherworldliness and escapist mentality, Taixu argued that because some people, such as Liang Shuming, did not understand the great compassion of a bodhisattva, they mistakenly assumed the incompatibility between Buddhism and twentieth-century China (Taixu 1998, pp.300–6). He further asserted that only a society shaped by Mahayana Buddhism—in which people seek enlightenment both by developing their own inner life and, simultaneously, by working to bring beneficial changes in the external world—can successfully address the problems of the twentieth century (Taixu 1935, p.6). As early as 1928, during his nine-month world tour to Europe, the United States, and Japan, Taixu had already been convinced that Buddhism should inevitably be the one religion that can save the world both because it is more compatible with modern sciences than Western theistic religions and because Buddhism will help to "reduce harmful ambitions and promote virtuous actions in the modern world (Taixu 1978, p.92). The writings in the *Journal* demonstrate that Buddhist nuns in the Republican period actively participated in this discourse of Buddhist modernization by assuming responsibilities equal to their male counterparts' in saving the world, saving the nation (*jiuguo* 救國), and saving all sentient beings (*jiudu zhongsheng* 救度眾生).

Another nun, Changchao 常超, quoting the story of the goddess in *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* to demonstrate the feasibility of Buddhahood for women, and called upon Buddhist nuns to lead Chinese women and embrace the liberation of women:

Nowadays, it is the time of liberation, we should also move forward following the ever-changing social circumstances. Men and women are the same in nature. Why should women be left behind? Therefore, we should work hard so as to truly

liberate women from all the restraints and share the same responsibility as men.

She continued:

Based on the current situation, there are indeed more female Buddhist practitioners than male ones. In addition, it is easier to affect and change women. But without model Buddhist academies for nuns, we cannot achieve great success even if there are wise nuns. Therefore, we need to build excellent academies for nuns and cultivate nuns with talents and skills... We should move forward and take up the duties to preach dharma and transform our society. We should think about how we can influence and guide women. We should extend Buddhism from county to province, to the entire country, and to the whole world. This is how to really expand and revive our female Buddhism. (Changchao 1937, p.52)

In the minds of Tiantong, Jueyuan, and Changchao, Buddhist nuns are situated at the heart of the national project of modernization and Buddhist reform. Buddhism not only provided nuns an alternative learning path with the establishment of modern academies, but also gave them a potentially vital source of self-knowledge and cultural identity. The cultural capital—the Buddhist education and other kinds of knowledge and training—they acquired from the comprehensive curriculum at modern Buddhist educational institutes granted Buddhist nuns independence and a very powerful sense of collective identity. As a group they wanted to respond to the nationalist project and take up the challenges given to them at the beginning of the century. And they shared with Taixu and other Buddhist/non-Buddhist intellectuals a cosmopolitan concern for the globe as well: by participating in the revival of Buddhism, they

aspired to play a crucial role not only in national salvation, but also in the salvation of the world.

These Buddhist nuns also identified themselves as the leaders of women, addressing themselves to all women of China, and integrating their female compatriots into their project of helping China and the world. The phrases "200 million women sisters" and "all women in China" came up again and again in their writings. Rather than stressing the importance of female fertility and domesticity as mothers to bear and educate sons, Buddhist nuns pointed out the importance of nuns in educating and transforming female Buddhist practitioners, who are the majority in the Buddhist community, and even all the women in China. Therefore, instead of being used as a tool in the modernization of the nation as "mothers of citizens," Buddhist nuns made themselves into independent national actors, serving as Buddhist dharma preachers, educators, religious leaders, and spiritual counselors.

Conclusion

First initiated in Wuhan, modern Buddhist education for nuns soon spread to other parts of China. In 1929, laywoman Zhang Lianjue 張蓮覺 (1875–1937) built an academy for female Buddhists—the Forest of Merit of Amitabha Buddha (*Wuliangshou gongdelin* 無量壽功德林)—in Aomen 澳門 (Macau), which started to accept Buddhist nuns and provide them with modern Buddhist education. Zhang Lianjue also established a branch of the Forest of Merit in Hong Kong in 1935 to continue female Buddhist education. In 1941, several female students at the Forest of Merit initiated a discussion on how to approach the discrimination against women in various Buddhist texts. This heated discussion attracted so much attention that the two prominent monks at the time—Taixu 太虛 and Hongyi 弘 (1880–1942)—participated through correspondence. In Zhejiang

province, Zhang Shenghui established the Fachang Academy for Female Buddhists (*Fachang foxueyuan* 法昌佛學院) in Fenghua 奉化 in 1937, and invited Buddhist nun Jueming 覺明 to lecture on the *Lankavatara Sutra* 楞伽經. Zhang Shenghui herself quit her job at Wuhan University and became a lecturer at the Fachang Academy for Female Buddhists. She also wrote and published frequently in major Buddhist journals, such as *Hai Chao Yin*, on topics related to Buddhism and women. The eminent Buddhist monk Zhizang 智藏 regarded her as "the no. 1 female lay Buddhist" in modern China (Zhizang 1935, p.180).

Buddhism in Republican China witnessed the culmination of a remarkable period of institutional and organizational innovation that began in the late nineteenth century. Following Taixu's reform efforts and support from lay Buddhists, Buddhist nuns actively participated in the modernization of Buddhism and the nation with incredible vitality. Wuhan was the center of Buddhist nuns' activism in the early twentieth century. Several educational institutes for female Buddhists were established there, and the first Buddhist journal for female Buddhist was published by the Pure Bodhi Vihara in Wuchang in 1937. Articles in the *Dedicated Journal for Female Buddhists* were written by Buddhist nuns and for Buddhist nuns. A close examination of these writings reveals the innovation and resilience of Chinese Buddhist nuns during this time. By embracing the discourse of women's liberation in the early twentieth century, and by drawing on the cultural capital gained through modern Buddhist education, Buddhist nuns challenged the androcentric concept of gender from a Buddhist perspective. In addition, they also vigorously argued for the equal status of men and women in the Buddhist monastic community. Furthermore, they reinterpreted the gender roles in the national project of modernization, and implemented their own understanding by focusing on Buddhist nuns'

responsibilities in saving the nation and saving the world.

The writings by Republican-era nuns provide an example of how they went beyond the prescriptive literacy discourse formulated by male reformers and nationalists. Their thought posited a new understanding of female literacy as a means of enabling women to become independent national actors, rather than passive "mothers of citizens." In addition, their struggle for gender equality in the Buddhist community shows that they had launched the project of challenging Buddhist patriarchy long before Western female Buddhists began to do so. (18) Buddhist nuns' activities in the early twentieth century not only constitute an integral part of Chinese women's ongoing struggle for emancipation, but also address intently some of the issues vitally relevant to their religious identity. These issues include, among others, the continuous exploration of the vexed relationship between Buddhism and gender, and the implications of nationalism for Buddhist nuns in a period of rapid social change.

To a significant extent, the Buddhist nuns' movement during the early twentieth century foreshadowed the development of female Buddhism in China. The establishment of various academies for female Buddhists was a big step forward in the history of Chinese Buddhism, which succeeding generations would use to their advantage. The Wuchang Buddhist Academy and Wuchang Academy for Female Buddhists have been recognized as educational models for Buddhist academies throughout China to this day. In addition, the various educational institutes for female Buddhists also have produced many eminent Buddhist nuns, who, as I shall show in closing, have worked tirelessly to sustain and support Buddhism in Mainland China during the

Republican Period, after 1949, and through the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution to this day.

It must be pointed out, furthermore, that in addition to inventing themselves as active Chinese citizens, Buddhist nuns also acted on this new identity. During the Japanese invasion of Wuhan in 1938, Buddhist nuns went beyond the rhetoric of saving the world and saving the sentient beings, to join the "Buddhist monastic emergency medical service team" led by Buddhist monk Haijing 海鏡. They also followed the No. 97 division of the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) to fight Japanese troops throughout China until the end of the war (Zhu 1992, pp.145–46). After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, many Buddhist nuns in Wuhan, such as Chaoquan 超筌 and Cixue 慈學 (1920–), actively participated in the new government. To maintain the status of Buddhism, they strove to serve as the mediator between the government and the Buddhist community, adapting to the socialist revolution movement. In the 1950s, Chaoquan and Cixue mobilized the Buddhist nuns at the Nunnery of Secluded Rest, the former Hankou Academy for Nuns, to establish the No. 1 Wuhan Women's Knitting Factory. Even though many Buddhist rituals were no longer allowed to be performed during this period, Buddhist nuns still managed to keep their celibacy status and carry out their daily worship in addition to participating in the socialist mass work force.

(19)

Finally, how can we place Republican-era nun's achievement in the Greater China perspective? Many scholars have vigorously demonstrated the active participation in Engaged Buddhism by female Buddhists in various Chinese communities, especially in Taiwan. (20) Buddhist nuns in contemporary Taiwan not only outnumbered monks 3 to 1, but also obtained highly visible achievements in a vast range of areas (Cheng,

2003: 39). From the charismatic character of Venerable Zhengyan 証嚴 to the global medical relief efforts by the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-chi (Ciji) Association Foundation 佛教慈濟功德會, and from the highly educated nuns at Luminary Buddhist Institute to the international presence of nuns in various branch temples of Buddha Light Mountain and to the outspoken nun Venerable Chao Hwei 昭慧 (1957–), they have extended nuns' social and cultural influence on that island and beyond. Undoubtedly, contemporary Taiwanese female Buddhists' activism has many roots. To a significant extent, it is based on Taiwan's particular circumstances and Japan's influence. However, the influence of mainland Buddhism should be counted, too. From the 1960s to the 1980s, nuns in Taiwan were directly or indirectly inspired by Yinshun 印順 (1905–2005) and Taixu. In this sense, what also deserves attention is the question of how their aspiration to save sentient beings and the world exemplifies a historical continuity, harking back to the Chinese Buddhist nuns' movement in the early twentieth century, which signaled the beginning of a long journey of female Buddhist activism in the modern world. (21)

Notes

1. I want to thank Duke Asian/Pacific Studies Institute, Duke Graduate School, and Social Science Research Council for their generous support, which made my various research trips to China to collect archives possible. I especially want to thank professor Hung-Yok Ip at Oregon State University for her help with several revisions of this paper.

2. Regarding scholarship on Chinese women, one good example is Judith Stacey, 1984. In this important book, Stacey shows how women were not granted equality by men in the Communist revolution. However, in the 1990s, in addition to analyzing how women were treated by men inside various social institutions and by larger historical forces, scholars have shown tremendous interest in dissecting how women themselves made history. For instance, Tyrene White, 1994. Also see Wang

Zheng, 1999. For a more recent example, see Denise Gimpel, 2008.

3. For the definition of movement (*yundong* 運動), see Hung-yok Ip's introduction to this special issue, note 14. Historically, nuns have always been the minority in Buddhist monastic community in China, with the exception of the more recent development of Buddhist nuns in Taiwan. In Wuhan, however, Buddhist nuns have outnumbered monks almost by half according to the government census in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s. In April 1950, there were 803 nuns and 410 monks in Wuhan and the number shrank to 581 nuns and 386 monks in 1959. In August 1966, there were 511 nuns and 239 monks in Wuhan. In 1985, right before the reestablishment of Wuchang Academy for Nuns at Nunnery of Lotus Creek there were only 299 nuns and 94 monks left. These statistics are taken from *Wuhan shi zhi: Shehui zhi* 武漢市志 · 社會志 (The Chronicles of Wuhan City: the Society), p. 158. After talking to Dr. Xue Yu on April 25, 2008, at the "Buddhist Activism in Greater China and Beyond" conference hosted by Oregon State University, I decided to change the translation of *Nüzhong foxueyuan* from "Buddhist academy for nuns" to "academy for female Buddhists." Buddhists include four different groups (*sizhong di zi* 四眾弟子): *bhik.su* (*Bi qiu* 比丘) or monks, *bhik.su.nii* (*Bi qiu ni* 比丘尼) or nuns, *upasaka* (*Youposai* 優婆塞) or layman, and *upasika* (*Youpoyi* 優婆夷) or laywoman. Because the academies mentioned in this paper accepted both Buddhist nuns and Buddhist laywomen, it is better to call them "academies for female Buddhists." This is quite different from the Buddhist academies for nuns in contemporary China (*Fojiao nizhong xue yuan* 佛教尼眾學院). For more, see my analysis below of the establishment of the first academy for female Buddhists.

4. See Weikun Cheng, 2000, and Xiong, 2008. In these two articles, both authors discussed male sympathy for women and some male intellectuals' commitment to women's growth for women's sake.

5. I would like to draw the reader's attention to a couple of articles: Ye, 1994, and Judge, 2002.

6. "Feminist" here is defined as Chinese women who fought for women's right to political participation, education, etc., in the Republican period. See Wang Zheng, 1999.

7. I would like to note that since the publication of Don Pittman's book on Taixu, other researchers have also

done interesting research on this famous monk. For instance, Tao Jiang (2002). By moving beyond the image of Taixu as a "modernist monk," established by Pittman, who appropriates the model of Kitagawa, Tao Jiang portrays a different image of Taixu, as one who believed in the superiority of Buddhist spirituality over scientific methods in a human quest for scientific truth.

8. I would also like to note that the famous Buddhist laywoman Lü Bicheng 呂碧城 (1883–1943) and Taixu became friends in the early 1930s.

9. Zhang's writings appeared frequently in the well-known Buddhist journal *Hai Chao Yin* 海潮音. The various articles written by her on Buddhism and related issues were later published as treatises of collective writings, such as *Bore hua* 般若花 (Yunmeng xueyuan yinxing; Taipei: Yuanquan chubanshe faxing, 1975) and *Yanshui ji* 煙水集 (Hongkong: Taiping chuban she, 1974). Unfortunately, because of the limited biographical materials on her and other female Buddhists mentioned in this paper, I was unable to specify their birth and death dates. And *Hai Chao Yin* (Sound of Tide) is one of the most influential Buddhist journals published in modern China. It was launched by Taixu in 1920 in Wuchang. It can be considered an essential source for scholars who study Republican-era Buddhism.

10. In 1920, after Taixu lectured at the Anhui Guild in Hankou (part of Wuhan city), lay supporters suggested the establishment of Hankou Buddhist Association (it was renamed the Buddhist Right Faith Society 佛教正信會 in 1929). See Wuhan shi dang'anguan 1999, p.342.

11. *Amituo jing* (*Amitaayur-dhyaana-Sutra*, Discourse Concerning Meditation on Amitaayus) is one of three texts basic to Pure Land Buddhism. Together with the larger and smaller *Sukhaavati-vyuha-Sutra* (Description of the Western Paradise Sutra), this text envisions rebirth in the celestial Pure Land of Amitaabha, the Buddha of Infinite Life.

Zai jia lü yao (The Abbreviated Precepts for Lay Buddhists) is a Buddhist treatise on rules to be obeyed by Buddhist lay followers composed by Ming dynasty Buddhist dharma master Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655). Also see *Xu Zang Jing* 續藏經 (Supplement to the canon) vol. X60, no. 1123, *Zaijia lüyao guangji* 在家律要廣集 (The Collective Treatise on the Abbreviated Precepts for Lay Buddhists).

Zongpai yuanliu (The Origins of Schools), also named *Fo jiao ge zong pai yuan liu* 佛教各宗派源流 (The Origins of

Buddhist Schools), was written by Taixu in 1922 as lecture notes for students at Wuchang Buddhist Academy. See Taixu, "Fo jiao ge zong pai yuan liu 佛教各宗派源流" in *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書 (The Complete Works of the Venerable Taixu) (Taipei: Shandao sifojing liutongchu, 1998), vol. 2, pp.761–868.

Shan nü ren zhuan (Biographies of Virtuous Women) was composed by Qing dynasty Buddhist scholar Peng Jiqing 彭際清 (1740–1796). It includes two volumes in total and records the stories of 138 Buddhist laywomen and their virtuous deeds. Also see *Xu Zang Jing*, vol. X88, no. 1657, *Shan nü ren zhuan*.

Xindiguan jing (Sutra on the Contemplation of the Mind) was translated into Chinese by Prajna (734–?). It describes the Buddha's discourse at Vulture Peak to Manjusri, Maitreya, and other great bodhisattvas on the contemplation of the mind, the elimination of delusions, and the attainment of the path of Buddhahood. See *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. T03, no. 159, *Dasheng bensheng xindiguan jing* 大乘本生心地觀經 (Sutra on the contemplation of the mind in Mahayana Jatakas).

Sha mi lü yi (Manual for Buddhist Novices), also titled *Shami lüyi yaolie* 沙彌律儀要略, is a treatise on Buddhist monastic rules, edited by famous Ming dynasty Buddhist dharma master Zhuhong 祿宏 (1523–1615).

Jingxin jieguan fa (The Method of Abstention and Contemplating the Purity of Mind) was composed by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667). See *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 45, no. 1893, *Jingxin jieguan fa* 靜心戒觀法.

Biqiuni zhuan (Biographies of Chinese Buddhist Nuns from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries) is a collection of chronologically organized biographies of sixty-five Chinese Buddhist nuns compiled by Buddhist monk Shi Baochang 釋寶唱 (495–528) around 516. It is an important work not only because it is the earliest text devoted to women in Buddhist canon, but also because it covers the period of the founding of the Buddhist monastic order for women. Also see *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 50, no. 2063, *Biqiuni zhuan*.

Biqiuni jieben (Precept Manual for Bhik.su.nii) refers to *Sifen biqiuni jie ben* 四分比丘尼戒本 (The Four-Parts Precept Manual for Bhik.su.nii). See *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 22, no. 1431, *Si fen bi qiu ni jie ben*.

Wangsheng jingtu lun 往生淨土論 (Treatise on Rebirth in the Pure Land), also named *Wuliangshou jing youpotishe*

無量壽經優婆提舍, is written by Vasubandhu 世親 and translated into Chinese during the northern Wei (386–534) in 529 by Bodhiruci 菩提流支. This text explains rebirth in the Pure Land to be the path of the Bodhisattva. See *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 26, no. 1524, *Wuliangshou jing youpoti she*.

12. I think this particular volume is path-breaking for two reasons. First, it is the first collective publication by a group of modern Chinese female Buddhists. And second, in this volume one can gain insights into the writings by ordinary female Buddhists and Buddhist novices (not just eminent nuns) whose voices are usually not heard in the history of Chinese Buddhism. For writings by female Buddhist masters in pre-modern China, see Beata Grant, 2009, and Miriam Levering, 2000.

13. I want to point out that most of the Buddhist scriptures mentioned in this paper are still taught in the academies for nuns in China today. For instance, while conducting field research in Wuhan in 2008, I participated in a small seminar discussion class on *Abidamo jushe lun* 阿毗達磨俱舍論 (Abhidharma Storehouse Treatise) with five nuns. We each took turns preparing one section of the book and explaining word for word the meaning of the texts to the class.

Weishi ershi lun (Twenty Verses on Consciousness-only) was written by Vasubandhu and translated in 661 by Xuanzang 玄奘. There are also translations by Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (with the title *Weishi lun* 唯識論) and Paramârtha 真諦 (with the title *Dasheng weishi lun* 大乘唯識論). This was one of Vasubandhu's most philosophically important Yogacara works, which refutes the realism of the non-Buddhist and pre-Mahayana schools. See *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 31, no. 1590, *Weishi ershi lun*.

Abi damo jushe lun was written by Vasubandhu and translated between 563 and 567 by Paramartha (*Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 29, no. 1559). It was also translated between 651 and 654 by Xuanzang (*Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 29, no. 1558). It is Vasubandhu's most important pre-Yogacara work. This text includes detailed analysis of the action of human consciousness in its relationship to the environment, as well as the transformations that occur in the process of meditation practice.

Diamond Sutra, also named *Jingang bore boluo mi jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經, is the Chinese version of the *Vajracchedikaa-praj~naapaaramitaa-sutra* translated by Kumarajiva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413).

Madhyamaka-śāstra (The Middle Treatise) is a Buddhist text attributed to Nagarjuna 龍樹 and translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva in 409. It is a basic text for the study of Madhyamaka thought.

14. I want to point out that even though Taixu initiated and supported the establishment of the various academies for female Buddhists, he himself did not encourage women to renounce household lives and become nuns. In his various writings and correspondence with lay Buddhists, he suggested that women should stay home and raise families while supporting Buddhist modernization as lay followers. See Taixu, "Reply to Lu Xinfan" (Fu Lu Xinfan ju shi shu 復陸心梵居士書), "Reply to Female Buddhists in Hongkong" (Fu Xianggang nüzhong shu 復香港女眾書). In addition, Taixu even suggested reducing the number of nuns in China in his "Treatise on Building Modern Chinese Buddhism."

Other prominent monks during the Republican period, such as master Yinguang 印光 (1862–1940), also thought that women's proper position was at home (*nü zhengwei hu nei* 女正位乎內) where they should work hard to raise children. He also suggested that women advocate Buddhist belief and protect the country by adopting a vegetarian diet. See Yinguang, [1936] 1996. *Yinguang dashi huguo xizai fayu* 印光大師護國息災法語 (Master Yinguang's lectures on how to protect the nation and how to lessen calamities of the world) (Taipei shi: Huazang jingzu xuehui, 1996).

15. A *bhik.su.nii* is a fully ordained Buddhist nun. There are three different levels of ordination in the *sangha* of women in Buddhism. A novice nun receives ten precepts: 1) Abstention from taking life, 2) Abstention from taking what is not given, 3) Abstention from sexual contact, 4) Abstention from lying, 5) Abstention from drinking alcohol, 6) Abstention from beautifying oneself with ornaments or cosmetics, 7) Abstention from dancing, singing, and entertainment, 8) Abstention from using a high or luxurious seat or bed, 9) Abstention from eating food at a wrong time, 10) Abstention from handling silver or gold. When a female novice reaches eighteen, she is required to receive an interim ordination as a probationary nun. A probationary nun must be trained for two years under the six rules before she is fully ordained. The contents and numbers of the six rules differ among the various Vinaya schools, but the probationary nun ordination basically represents a training period in preparation for the full ordination.

Therefore, based on the ages of these students at the Vihara, some of them may not yet have received full ordination at this time.

16. The androcentric assumption of gender mainly refers to what Hengbao said about "the question of men and women in the backward society of the past several thousand years." I don't think she is referring to Buddhist attitude toward women. The question whether or not Buddhism is misogynistic has long been a debate in the study of Buddhism and gender. From various studies, one can discern a certain ambiguity toward women and the feminine in Buddhist literature. Many scholars have noticed such a tension between the sometimes positive assessment of women and the feminine, and other times more blatantly negative attitudes within Buddhist literature, sometimes even within the same text. My approach to understanding the relations between Buddhism and gender is very close to Alan Sponberg's approach in his article "Attitudes toward Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism." See Alan Sponberg, 1991. In that article, Sponberg argues that the key issue in understanding the multivocality in early Buddhist literature with regard to the attitude toward women is to understand the social and intellectual dynamics of the early community of Buddhists that led to such an ambivalent juxtaposition of divergent views.

17. See Chung, 1999. Chung also suggested that because the "Eight Rules" were so different in character and tone from the rest of the body of the *bhik.su.nii praatimok.sa*, they could be disregarded as later additions appended by the compilers, and not indicative of either the intentions of Gautama Buddha himself or of the Buddhist traditions as a whole.

18. For a critique of Rita Gross's *Buddhism after Patriarchy*, especially its ethnocentric view on Buddhism and women, see Wei-yi Cheng, 2007. Elise Devido also wrote a review on Cheng's book (2007).

19. Based on my interviews with Master Cixue 慈學 in March 2008.

20. A few works are relevant. See Wei-Yi Cheng, 2007; Devido, 2004; Jones, 1999.

21. This point is inspired by my exchange with Elise Devido in late March 2009. She pointed out that Yinshun's and Taixu's works are included in some monasteries' and nunneries' curricula in Taiwan. It was definitely Taixu who began systematic training and

education of nuns and laywomen in Republican China. But she also emphasized that the modern Buddhist movement tackled in this paper should not be regarded as the only path to the phenomenon of modernized nuns in Taiwan. One of the other paths is via Japan. Under Japanese rule, several prominent Taiwanese nuns were trained in Japanese Buddhism, such as the master of the nun Wuyin 悟因 of the Luminary Buddhist Institute, Tianyi 天乙 (1924–1980).

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