

Buddhist Women's Issues in Contemporary North American Buddhism

RITA M. GROSS

THE SHEER DIVERSITY AND VARIETY of forms of Buddhism practiced in North America make it very difficult to generalize about Buddhist women's issues. Every denomination of Buddhism practiced in the contemporary world is represented in North America. Asian forms of Buddhism, which had little contact with each other for centuries, are now being practiced in the same North American city—Theravada Buddhisms from Southeast Asia, Vietnamese, Tibetan, Korean, Chinese and Japanese varieties of Buddhism. Some Asian Buddhisms, especially Japanese and Chinese, have been practiced in North America for four or five generations. Many other Buddhists have arrived only recently, after changes in immigration policy in the 1960's facilitated immigration from Asia. In addition, a significant number of North Americans with no Buddhist antecedents have converted to Buddhism since about 1970. Initially, in the 1960's, these converts expressed counter-cultural dissatisfaction with Euro-American religion and culture and responded to the many Asian teachers who began to reach out to non-Asian audiences. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, convert Buddhists from ethnic groups not traditionally Buddhist have become part of the North American religious landscape. This development adds even more complexity to North American Buddhism, for their concerns, as Buddhists, are often quite different from those of traditionally Buddhist populations.

Making it even harder to generalize is the paucity of contact between the various groups to date. Not only is this the case for interactions between so-called "immigrant" Buddhists and so-called "convert" Buddhists; even within these two broad groups, the various sub-groups often have little interaction. Generally, members of any North American Bud-

dhist community are more interested in communication with their Asian forebears than with other types of Buddhists in North America. This is not because of hostility among the groups; rather, it is so difficult and time-consuming to be a Buddhist in North America, of whatever kind, that little energy seems to be available for ecumenical Buddhist activities.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, no one is sure how many Buddhists there are in North America. The best available estimate suggests between four and five million, about half of whom are women. All observers agree that Buddhists from traditional Buddhist cultures far outnumber convert Buddhists, although converts have captured the spotlight in terms of public attention. Usually well-educated, somewhat well-off, and used to being part of an elite, converts have commented copiously on Buddhist topics themselves and also have been written about more frequently. For example, in a typical bookstore, many books about Buddhism are written by convert Buddhists or Western scholars of Buddhism; the remainder are written by Asian teachers such as the Dalai Lama. Only recently have a few Asian American Buddhists written books about their forms of Buddhism intended for those outside their communities. Likewise, the various conferences about American Buddhism or women and Buddhism have been attended largely by convert Buddhists, and most of the speakers have been converts or Asian Buddhists. Thus, the majority of North American Buddhists, men as well as women, are somewhat invisible to the North American public.

In fact, convert Buddhists have been far more innovative, both in their thinking and practice. Many observe that for immigrant Buddhists, no matter how many generations they have lived in North America, Buddhism is a conserving force promoting links to and memories of their Asian cultures and ancestors. Usually, they express little dissatisfaction with Buddhism as they have received it and have little interest in "Americanizing" Buddhism. For converts, becoming Buddhist was part of a protest against conventional North American values. But converts have no loyalty to Asian cultural forms either, and often find the traditional Asian forms that encase Buddhism awkward at best. Those curious and radical enough to leave behind an inherited religion often will not hesitate to bring a similar spirit of exploration to their new religious identity, and convert Buddhists have done just that. Aspects of Buddhist thought and practice that are distinctive to North America are usually found in convert communities. For this reason, rather than because of the ethnicity of its practitioners, "American Buddhism" often refers to convert Buddhism.

Throughout its long history, Buddhism has crossed many cultural

frontiers and taken on forms distinctive to each different culture. These new Buddhist cultural forms were developed by indigenous people who became Buddhists, not the travelers and missionaries who brought Buddhist teachings into a new home. In the same way, one would expect that eventually an "American Buddhism" will evolve with convert Buddhists playing an important role in this development. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, the "Americanization" of Buddhism is a very controversial topic. But all observers agree that the "Americanization" of Buddhism will include different, non-traditional roles for women and that convert women will play a large part in those developments. In fact, many observers claim that the challenges of democracy, psychology, and women's equal participation in Buddhism are *the* three issues that American Buddhism must successfully negotiate if it is to be adopted widely in North American society.

To understand what is at stake for women in North American Buddhism, it is necessary to understand some important typical features of traditional Buddhism. First, like all major world religions, Buddhism, historically, has been male dominated. The meditations and philosophical explorations that many would consider the heart of Buddhism were practiced almost exclusively by men. Although according to traditional texts, the Buddha had reluctantly initiated parallel women's monastic institutions in which meditation and philosophy could be studied intensely, they were poorly supported, without prestige, and have died out in much of the Buddhist world. Therefore, those with respect and honor in the Buddhist communities were almost always men. Second, with the exception of Japan, all traditional Buddhist societies are marked by a strong lay-monastic dichotomy. Buddhism began as a religion of world renouncers and it has never lost that flavor or the demands and values that accompany the choice to leave career, family, and worldly society behind. Female world renouncers, often called "nuns" in Western literature, are found in most forms of Buddhism, but, as already stated, they are not nearly so well supported nor do they have the prestige of male world renouncers, usually called "monks" in Western literature. For a son to renounce the world brought great honor to the family, while a girl who renounced the world to become a nun brought little prestige to the family and could even be embarrassing. Additionally, the meditative and philosophical disciplines associated with Buddhism were practiced almost exclusively in the monasteries, which is why they were practiced almost exclusively by men. By and large, lay practitioners, men as well as women, had neither the time nor the inclination to pursue meditation

and philosophy to any great extent. Different disciplines, especially merit-making practices that would accumulate fortunate karma for the next rebirth and various devotional practices were developed by and for lay practitioners.

Convert Buddhists have seriously questioned all three of these practices that dominate traditional Asian Buddhism and in many cases significantly modified them. Though convert Buddhist communities still experience some male dominance, women are much more visible in all aspects of public Buddhist life and teaching, and gender equity is a high priority for many of these communities. Second, among convert Buddhists, monastics are rare. The symbiotic relationship in which lay practitioners engaged in merit-making by supporting monastics is simply not in place among converts and so monastics have difficulty surviving economically. However, convert monastics are about evenly divided between men and women, and some Western nuns are influential Buddhist teachers who have been active in improving conditions for nuns all over the Buddhist world, including efforts to revive the full ordination for nuns in those parts of the Buddhist world in which it has been lost. Additionally some nuns, for example, Pema Chodron, who practices in a Tibetan tradition, have become popular authors. Third, lay convert Buddhists regard meditation and study as the heart of *their* Buddhist practice, so much so that many express surprise and scorn for more traditional lay Buddhist practices. They often dismiss Asian American Buddhist communities as less serious about being Buddhist because meditation and study are not at the heart of their lifestyles. Women converts simply assumed that meditation and philosophy were disciplines relevant to them, with the result that the dichotomy between male expert meditators and female economic supporters, so typical of Asian Buddhism, simply is not found in convert communities. A higher percentage of women function as Buddhist teachers among convert Buddhists than in any other Buddhist community in history.

Few studies of Asian American Buddhist communities have been done, either of those in North America for several generations or those recently arrived, and even fewer specifically about women's perspectives and issues. Most observers surmise that patterns similar to those found in other immigrant communities will emerge. Prominent among these patterns are conflict and accommodation between the generations, as the second generation breaks sharply with its parents while the third generation is more curious about its grandparents' heritage. But there is little data with which to speculate about how much, for Buddhist immigrants,

these breaks and reconciliations will have to do with either Buddhism as a religion or women's roles in Buddhism.

Several stereotypes common among convert Buddhists about immigrant and Asian American Buddhists should be addressed. First, while women have not played the roles in Buddhism that feminist convert women seek for themselves, women have not been irrelevant either. Women's most important traditional role is that of donor or patron, a role that was central to the Buddhist understanding of how things work for all of its Asian history. Women usually have more authority over family donations to the monastics than men in traditional Buddhist societies. Furthermore, women participate freely and eagerly in the activities sponsored by temples and monasteries for lay Buddhists. Women may have little influence or prestige in the monastic community, but they are not second class participants in the lay community. And the role and importance of traditional lay communities has seldom been understood by convert Buddhists. Finally, as in all traditional societies, women are considered primary religious educators of the next generation in their role as caregivers to young children. In North America, this role is compromised by the competition of secular culture for young peoples' attention.

Another stereotype about immigrant and Asian American Buddhists common among converts is that they are "only" interested in Buddhism to maintain community and identity. This point is often made as a scornful contrast with convert Buddhists, who claim that because they meditate and study so much, they are better Buddhists. The problem with this stereotype is not so much that it is untrue—converts usually do study and meditate more than Asian American or immigrant Buddhists—as that viable community is not something whose religious significance, for women or for men, should be belittled. "Community," understood by some Buddhists to include both lay and monastic Buddhists and only as the monastic community by others, is the third of Buddhism's "Three Refuges." No confession of faith in Buddhism is more basic or frequent than "taking refuge in the three jewels," one of which is "community." Thus, to regard belonging to a viable community as an insufficient reason to be a Buddhist is to misunderstand Buddhism seriously. Ironically, a great problem for convert Buddhists is lack of strong sustaining communities. This weakness has been the topic of many discussions and experiments, few of which have been overwhelmingly successful to date.

Convert Buddhists, with few exceptions, are white, well-educated, and economically comfortable. These facts cause concern among many, who would like their community to be more diverse and suggest that for

Buddhism to be successful in North America in the long run, it must appeal to a wider spectrum of the North American population. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, only Sokka Gakkai, among the various forms of convert Buddhism in North America was racially and culturally diverse. Organizations for Buddhists of color are developing among converts and these will help address why Buddhism is under-represented among ethnic and racial minorities, both women and men.

Aside from the difficulties of communicating across racial and cultural lines, Buddhism, as it is defined by converts, presents economic challenges that make it difficult for many people to participate. Traditionally, meditation and study were carried on largely by monastics who were supported economically by a lay community. But, as indicated, converts reject this division of labor for many reasons and very few are monastics. Instead, lay Buddhists try to take on disciplines of study and practice that are more typical of monastics in traditional Buddhism. These disciplines take a great deal of time and money to pursue properly. Serious lay practitioners are expected to travel to meditation and study programs that are often far from their homes and last for months at a time. Not only do the costs involve travel and time lost from employment; such programs themselves often have relatively high program fees because, given the absence of donors, those who wish to attend must pay for the programs themselves. Most meditation centers do have scholarships, work-study programs, and sliding fees based on income, and many centers state publicly that no one will be turned away due to lack of money. Nevertheless, one still must have leisure time and some money to practice Buddhism as converts desire to practice it. Given the economic realities of North America, leisure time and money are more available to white professionals than to any other group. The ironic result is that a religion known for its economic moderation and its teachings about the inability of materialism to bring satisfaction ends up being available mainly to middle-class professionals! These factors, more than anything else, explain the lack of racial and cultural diversity in convert Buddhism.

These factors also affect women disproportionately; women earn less money than men on average and have more child care responsibilities. If they are single mothers with much work and little money, Buddhist study and practice will be even less available to them, even if communities or meditation centers give them significant financial aid. On the one hand, convert Buddhism makes the central Buddhist disciplines of meditation and study more available to women because it makes these traditionally monastic practices available to lay people. On the other hand, only the

minority of women who are somewhat well-off economically will be able to take advantage of this innovation. This contradiction has not been resolved, or even addressed, by most converts to date.

This troubling trend is not unprecedented. In its previous migrations, Buddhism has always been adopted by the well-educated and well-off before it became widespread in a culture. Core Buddhist teachings about suffering and the causes of suffering may be more appealing to those who are well-off but still suffer than to those who believe that sufficient material wealth would alleviate their suffering. Eventually, as Buddhism spreads more widely through a society, other forms of Buddhist practice develop or are adopted when it becomes clear that many people are not able to devote so much time and energy to study and practice, or may not even care very much for such pursuits. Thus, convert Buddhists may find themselves needing to learn more about how a viable community sustains immigrant Buddhists and provides a fulfilling and meaningful way for them to practice Buddhism.

Though many members of racial and ethnic minorities face structural problems with convert Buddhism's availability, lesbian women fare better, on average. Though the monastic code is very strict, Buddhist attitudes toward sexuality for lay people are not rigid. Typically, the dominant cultural attitudes toward sexuality are simply adopted by Buddhists. The educated liberals most likely to be convert Buddhists are also relatively accepting of homosexuality; thus, Buddhist lesbian women usually do not face the homophobia they may encounter in other religions. In cities in which large numbers of convert Buddhists are found, organizations and meditation groups for lesbian and gay Buddhists are relatively common.

All these developments are part of an emerging "American Buddhism," a Buddhism that would share family resemblance with all other forms of Buddhism, but which would also be distinctive and distinctively "American," as Chinese forms of Buddhism are distinctively Chinese, etc. To date, the way in which American lay practitioners, who also have jobs and families, attempt to pursue the time-consuming disciplines of study and practice is its most radical departure from Asian models. For converts, Buddhism *is* study and practice; they have largely ignored many other aspects of Buddhism developed in Asia. Perhaps even more striking is the way in which women participate in American Buddhism. Some Buddhist commentators claim that providing models of more equitable participation of women is the special karmic task of Western Buddhism. Western Buddhist women and men have taken up this task;

already Western Buddhist groups look quite different from their Asian counterparts regarding the visible, active presence of women in meditation centers and other public Buddhism forums. Some observers claim that the most noticeable difference between Asian and American Buddhist meditation centers is the presence of women in the latter. This claim is meant not only to draw attention to the presence of women, but also to the faithfulness with which Westerners have reproduced most other aspects of a meditation center. The iconography is the same; the meditation practices are the same; often the liturgies are chanted in Asian languages, and, in many cases, people wear Asian robes during meditation. But women practice side by side with men rather than being isolated in an under-funded women's practice center that has no prestige.

Undoubtedly, the strong presence of women in convert Buddhism owes something to the timing of Buddhism's arrival in North America. Though Buddhists had been present in North America before the 1960's and 1970's, these decades saw the influx of many Asian Buddhist teachers and large numbers of Euro-American converts to Buddhism. These years also marked the emergence of the second wave of feminism. The women most likely to be attracted to Buddhism were not about to play a secondary, supportive role to enable men to study and practice while they provided domestic services. These women insisted that if study and practice were good for men, they would also be good for women, and they took up these disciplines as enthusiastically. This coincidence, this lucky timing, may forever change the face of American Buddhism, and may well impact Buddhism worldwide.

The Buddhism they encountered seemed paradoxical to these women. On the one hand, the basic teachings were gender free and gender neutral, and many found the practice of meditation not only gender free but intensely liberating. To many feminist women of the 1960's and 1970's, Buddhism and feminism seemed to be allies, for good reason. On the other hand, the forms through which these teachings and practices were delivered were as male dominant as those of any other religion. The teachers and other leaders were, for the most part, men. Male language abounded in the liturgies, at least those that were translated into English. And, though the basic teachings were gender-free and gender-neutral, deeper explorations into the traditional texts revealed misogynistic passages as well as a strong overall tendency to favor men over women in matters of study and practice. Many women also encountered criticism and were ostracized for pointing out these facts. They were told that the *dharma* (Buddhist teachings) is beyond gender and that women were

being overly sensitive and divisive when they were bothered by misogynistic stories or institutional male dominance.

The issues faced by convert women can be divided into two major areas of concern. The women faced the problem of finding their way in a tradition that, by and large, had not been especially concerned with women's participation in its most valued institutions—the worlds of study and practice. And convert women faced the problem of trying to integrate their more traditionally feminine pursuits with their desire to participate fully in the worlds of study and practice.

Most convert women who began to practice Buddhist meditation and to study Buddhist teachings in the 1960's and 1970's probably were not immediately aware either of the historical significance of their activities or of common traditional attitudes toward women. Though gender practices were very different in their Asian homelands, the Buddhist teachers who came to teach in North America did not treat women students differently from men students. That these teachers worked with women students largely without prejudice is one of the more remarkable facets of this story. Asked later why they did not apply the more familiar Asian Buddhist norms and expectations regarding gender in North America, two reasons were given. First, the women students asked for teachings, and that a student ask to be taught is the most important requirement. Second, given that women participated with men in Buddhist gatherings, they assumed that North American gender norms were different from Asian norms. The lucky coincidence of feminism and the arrival of Buddhist teachers must be noted again, for if these teachers had arrived ten or twenty years earlier, in the 1950's, the situation would have been very different.

Nevertheless, women noticed the prevalence of men as teachers and other Buddhist authorities and the androcentric (male-centered) language of most liturgies. Those who knew more about Buddhist history and traditional teachings were troubled by teachings concerning the spiritual inferiority of women and their inability to attain liberation until they were reborn in a man's body. However, until they had received sufficient training in the various Buddhist disciplines, women were in a poor position to challenge these views or to suggest alternatives.

Convert women employed many of the same strategies for dealing with Buddhist male dominance as Christian and Jewish women had used in their struggles. The main tasks were to work towards gender inclusive and gender neutral liturgies, to advance women into positions of leadership, and, ultimately, for women to become fully qualified Buddhist

teachers. The two former tasks were accomplished earlier and more easily in many communities but at the beginning of the twenty-first century, many convert women had become Buddhist teachers as well.

Though meditation is the main religious discipline practiced by convert Buddhists, chanted liturgies are an important part of many meditations. This is especially the case for Tibetan Vajrayana *sadhana* practice and, to a lesser extent, for Zen Buddhism. (*Sadhana*-s are long chanted texts that describe the visualizations upon which one meditates.) Many convert *sangha*-s (groups or communities) chant their liturgies in an Asian language, which means that gender references are less clear to them, but other groups use English. The early translations were made before the demise of the generic masculine as acceptable English usage, and often the English translations were more androcentric than the Asian originals. Words that carry no specific gender in an Asian language were translated as "son," rather than "child," or "man" rather than "human," and the pronoun "he" was always used to refer to the meditator. Once in place, these translations took on an almost canonical status among some groups. Those who objected were ridiculed and told that, as Buddhists, they should be "above such silly, worldly, unimportant issues, since everyone knows that these terms refer to and include women." Gradually, most liturgies have been or are being changed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

A deeper problem emerged. Chanting the names of the lineage ancestors, from one's own generation back to the Buddha or some other central teacher, is an important part of many Buddhist services. Such chants verify the authenticity of one's lineage and one's own place in the transmission of teachings that go back to the foundations of Buddhism. The lineage ancestors, with very few exceptions, are men. Many women experienced great sorrow at the lack of female ancestors and role models and searched the Buddhist records for such figures. There have been great women practitioners in the history of Buddhism, but they are rarely as prominent in Buddhist memory as their male counterparts. One of the most popular sources for convert women became the *Therigata*, *The Songs of the Female Elders*. These stories and poems record the accomplishments of the first generation of Buddhist women, direct disciples of the Buddha who attained the same level of realization as his male disciples. At least one Zen Buddhist community, the San Francisco Zen Center, began the practice of chanting the names of female elders recorded in the *Therigata*, ending with an acknowledgement of "all the forgotten women ancestors," on alternating days. However, some male members of the com-

munity objected that these female elders were not in the direct line from the Buddha to the teachers of this community and, though they were considered fully realized disciples of the Buddha, a crucial transmission had been given only to one male disciple who became the direct ancestor of all Zen teachers. Most members of the community, nevertheless, continue to regard the lack of known and named female ancestors as a problem. As research is continued, previously unknown highly accomplished women emerge from historical records.

More central still is what some feminist convert Buddhists began to call "the problem of the male teacher." This "problem" has two aspects, one of them limited to a specific time and set of circumstances, the other more fundamental. The first concerned a series of sexual scandals that devastated many convert *sangha-s* in the 1980's. A number of Asian teachers participated freely in the sexual license that characterized the 1960's and 1970's, conducting frequent sexual affairs with their students. In some cases, this behavior was open and known by everyone in the community, but in other cases, these affairs were secret. Though teachers who conducted secret affairs usually had many fewer partners, the secrecy proved extremely problematic in the long run. By the 1980's, mores had changed considerably and many women expressed outrage at male teachers they felt had taken advantage of them. There was also considerable discussion about the ethical propriety of sexual intimacy between partners so unequal in power. The eventual result of this turmoil is that almost all convert *sangha-s* now have explicit guidelines discouraging sexual activity between teachers and students, and the sexual safety of female (and male) students is a high priority.

The more basic "problem of the male teacher" concerns Buddhism's longstanding practice of limiting the teaching role almost exclusively to men. Some commentators identified the lack of female teachers, historically and in the present, as *the* single most important issue for women in Buddhism. Historically, this lack results in the problems that occur with the absence of women in the lineage chants as well as the lack of role models and the wisdom of women practitioners that is missing from the tradition's teachings. The practice of having only male teachers sends a strongly discouraging message to women students. To take seriously Buddhist claims that the *dharma* is beyond gender is difficult if all those who embody and teach it have male bodies.

Fortunately, women teachers are becoming more common among convert Buddhists. It takes many years for a student of Buddhist meditation and philosophy to become qualified to teach and the first students to

be authorized by their Asian teachers to teach the *dharma* were men. But, especially among practitioners of Zen Buddhism and Vipassana meditation, women were authorized to teach relatively soon after men. Only among practitioners of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism are almost no women teachers found, but almost no convert men have been fully authorized as teachers either. Many observers comment that convert practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism were about a generation behind practitioners of Zen and Vipassana in becoming fully trained as teachers. In recent gatherings of Western Buddhist teachers, nearly half the teachers present were women, ample indication that American Buddhism may indeed be fulfilling its potential to address some of Buddhism's longstanding difficulties.

Much as study, practice, and teaching are at the forefront of many Buddhist women's concerns, nevertheless many convert lay practitioners also became involved in family life. This activity presented different challenges to women practitioners: how can one combine childcare with the demands of practice and study? Traditionally, this question did not arise because most practice was done by men; the women who practiced seriously were almost always nuns—childless by definition. By and large, convert Buddhist communities have responded that the problem of integrating childcare and practice should not be left to mothers alone. Commonly, Buddhist fathers do take on significant childcare responsibilities. *Dharma* centers often provide some childcare during programs so that parents can participate more fully. Many parents find the arrangements inadequate and wish for more help and support, but parents are encouraged to continue to practice and study in a serious way while they are raising children, rather than waiting for the children to grow up before resuming their own practice. This attempt is a major Buddhist experiment. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it remained to be seen how well that experiment proceeded and whether it will persist from generation to generation.

Another problem encountered by converts who became involved in family life is how to raise Buddhist children in a non-Buddhist culture. Asian American Buddhists also encounter this problem, but their situation is different. At least their children have many Buddhist relatives and a more cohesive Buddhist community used to sponsoring family events and activities for teenagers, and they may live in an ethnic neighborhood surrounded by other Buddhists. Converts usually live among non-Buddhists and most or all of their relatives are non-Buddhists. Furthermore, not having grown up as Buddhists, converts have little idea how to present their Buddhist practice, which is not especially child-friendly, to

their children. This is truly uncharted territory for them. Larger Buddhist communities have sometimes sponsored day school intended primarily for their children and many centers try to combine some Buddhist education with child care during meditation periods for adults. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the first generation of non-Asians to have grown up as Buddhists are reaching maturity. Many of them have left the Buddhist community, at least temporarily, many would consider themselves Buddhists but do not participate actively in Buddhist life, and others are following their parents into committed Buddhist practice. Many of them are in their teens or early twenties, much younger than their parents often were when they became Buddhists.

Sources¹

- Boucher, Sandy. *Turning the Wheel: American Women Creating the New Buddhism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
- Dresser, Marianne ed. *Buddhist Women on the Edge: Contemporary Perspectives from the Western Frontier*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Press, 1996.
- Friedman, Lenore and Susan Moon eds. *Being Bodies: Buddhist Women on the Paradox of Embodiment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997.
- Gross, Rita M. *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Gross, Rita M. *Soaring and Settling: Buddhist Perspectives on Contemporary Social and Religious Issues*. New York: Continuum, 1998.
- Prebish, Charles and Kenneth K. Tanaka. *The Faces of American Buddhism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Prebish, Charles. *Luminous Passage: The Practice and Study of Buddhism in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Rhys-Davids, C. A. F. and K. R. Norman, trs. *Poems of Early Buddhist Nuns (Therigatha)*. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1989.
- Seager, Richard Hughes. *Buddhism in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

¹ This article was originally written for and will be published in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of the Women and Religion in North America*, edited by Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether. Formatting and sources follow the guidelines for publication. Permission to publish this version of the article was granted by Indiana University Press.



Copyright and Use:

As an ATLAS user, you may print, download, or send articles for individual use according to fair use as defined by U.S. and international copyright law and as otherwise authorized under your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement.

No content may be copied or emailed to multiple sites or publicly posted without the copyright holder(s)' express written permission. Any use, decompiling, reproduction, or distribution of this journal in excess of fair use provisions may be a violation of copyright law.

This journal is made available to you through the ATLAS collection with permission from the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder for an entire issue of a journal typically is the journal owner, who also may own the copyright in each article. However, for certain articles, the author of the article may maintain the copyright in the article. Please contact the copyright holder(s) to request permission to use an article or specific work for any use not covered by the fair use provisions of the copyright laws or covered by your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement. For information regarding the copyright holder(s), please refer to the copyright information in the journal, if available, or contact ATLA to request contact information for the copyright holder(s).

About ATLAS:

The ATLA Serials (ATLAS®) collection contains electronic versions of previously published religion and theology journals reproduced with permission. The ATLAS collection is owned and managed by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and received initial funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The design and final form of this electronic document is the property of the American Theological Library Association.