

Gender and Religion: The Organization and Recognition of Buddhist Nuns in Taiwan

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Abstract : Buddhist nuns in Taiwan have shouldered various responsibilities in educational, cultural, economic, and social aspects that transforms and transcends Chinese Buddhism to a higher level in Taiwan and overseas. In the recent years, Nuns in Taiwan have formed various associations to reach their goals and satisfy their needs. This research will focus on the following: 1. How to distinguish a Buddhist organization from temple? 2. Whether the forming of female Buddhist organizations reveals religious purpose or gender conflict in Buddhism? 3. How can nuns in Taiwan be unified together to establish their identification? This paper will mainly study on the Chinese Buddhist Bhikkhuni Association (CBBA) because they have gained allies together to work for religious causes and social needs since 1996. However, with a mission to promote female practitioners' role in Buddhist circle, CBBA did not contribute much to the gender issue in Buddhism. The research found that CBBA did not achieve their goal to unite nuns in Taiwan because they failed to support nuns' education and did not recruit young and highly educated ones as CBBA's faculties. In conclusion, the research suggests i) to connect with other Buddhist organizations in order to achieve the dream of unity, ii) to fill the generation gap by overturn hierarchical system in Buddhist community and create a new environment for new generation to grow, iii) to shift financial contribution from social charity to nuns' education to promote female role in Buddhism in the future.

Keywords : Bhikkhuni in Taiwan, Bhikkhuni population and education, Buddhism in Taiwan, Chinese Buddhist Bhikkhuni Association

Conference Title : ICBS 2017 : International Conference on Buddhist Sciences

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : November 13-14, 2017