

Patimokkha and Garudhamma

Buddhism is a profound ideology. However for the last few centuries it has been enshrouded in inaccuracy. These inaccuracies linger on from the misreadings of past colonial scholarship. Unfortunately even today due to the nature of institutional education [mentorship etc.] this extreme reliance on the past scholarship is preventing correct perspective in the study of this profound ideology.

A look at the textual description by the Buddhist text on the topic on Patimokkha and Garudhamma will reveal the shortcomings in the understanding of contemporary scholarship on these topics [both orthodoxy and Orientology]. Their simplistic interpretations are not true to Buddhism.

In the Patimokkha and the Garudhamma the topic is not social or political as these institutions believe. By interpreting the Patimokkha and the Garudhamma as rules governing sexual misconducts etc. as laid down by “the Buddha” one reduces the Patimokkha and Garudhamma to regulations and control by a male misogynist, thereby diverting from the profound metaphysics the ancient texts offer. These simplistic misreadings abound in the entirety of not only Eastern Spiritual ideologies but also Western Spiritualism. We of the contemporary culture have unwittingly maligned our forefathers due to our ignorance. Feminism unfortunately merely capitalizes on these misinterpretations to exploit for their political advantage.

The following article reveals the metaphysical clarity of these two most misunderstood doctrines of Buddhism. The rules for *bhikkhunis* (female monastics) and *bhikkhus* (male monastics) are laid down in the

Patimokkha in many Vinayas ('Basket of Discipline'): the Pali Vinaya in Shri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya in China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam, and the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya in Tibet and Mongolia. The Pali Vinaya containing the *Patimokkha* specifies 311 rules for *bhikkhunis* and 227 for *bhikkhus*. All the above-mentioned Vinayas have more tenets for *bhikkhunis* than *bhikkhus*.¹ The 'Eight Rules' mandated for *bhikkhunis* only are known as *Garudhamma* in Pali and *Garudharma* in Sanskrit and they are also found in the Pali, Chinese, Sanskrit² and Tibetan Vinayas and will be dealt with later on. We are going to deal mainly with the *Patimokkha* in this essay. We are going to deal with the *Patimokkha* in a traditional textual way from the Shri Kali perspective to avoid lingering on with 'contemporary overlays' on the study of the *bhikkhunis*, particularly by feminist scholars since the 1970's, and also to avoid dealing with the 'consequences of the Buddha's imposition of the "Eight Rules" ' in a historical sense, as the history of the *bhikkhuni* order is highly controversial and difficult to trace without an in-depth study. Recent attempts to restore a *bhikkhuni* order are also controversial. Apart from which, the Shri Kali view is that the socio-political renderings that project the *bhikkhunis* as subordinate to the *bhikkhus* is not an actual textual reading but a contemporary overlay and this needs to be substantiated and is best done by studying the *Patimokkha*.

Patimokkha

This article questions the validity of the current academic studies on the *Patimokkha*. The Pali word *Patimokkha* is analogous to the Sanskrit

¹ 'Pachow cites the Sammatiya Pratimoksha to contain only about 200 rules' cited in Charles S. Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline: the Sanskrit Pratimoksha Sutras of the Mahasanghikas and Mulasarvastivadins* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996), 23.

² There are also Sanskrit Vinayas as of the Mahasanghikas and Mulasarvastivadins (see Prebish).

word *Pratimoksha*. These words occur in the various Buddhist texts as the Pali Canon and the Sanskrit corpus too. The word *Patimokkha* denotes a doctrine in a 'wholly developed ideology', that is, the philosophy of the Theravada. This statement goes against the current belief, which is rooted in the colonial idea of Buddhism. Colonial scholarship bases their entire study on the belief that Social Darwinism is the key in reading the ancient ideology of the East. Recent studies offer alternative insights, discard the bias and expose the limited idea of Social Darwinism and therefore the limitations of colonial Orientology or Buddhology.³ Orientology curtails our progress in the understanding of the doctrines of Buddhism and Vedism or colloquially Hinduism. This article on the doctrine of *Patimokkha* illustrates this.

Buddhologists agree that the description of the tenets of the *Patimokkha* in its earliest form is that of the Vinaya Pitaka. The Buddhologist Prebish says that 'we find fully developed Vinayas of only six schools: Mahasanghikas, Theravadins, Mahisasakas, Dharmaguptakas, Sarvastivadins, and Mulasarvastivadins."⁴ Buddhologists often maintain that the Pali Vinaya could be the oldest version of the *Patimokkha* and is likely the original version, as they believe that the other traditions, such as the six quoted above, have borrowed from the Vinaya Pitaka and amplified its doctrines.⁵

³ Bhagavan Shri Shanmukha Anatha Natha and Shri Ma Kristina Baird, *Third Eye of the Buddhist, Divine Initiation and Divine Agamas* (Singapore: Shri Kali Publications, 2001).

⁴ Charles S. Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline: the Sanskrit Pratimoksha Sutras of the Mahasanghikas and Mulasarvastivadins* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University, 1975), 28, cited in In Young Chung, "A Buddhist View of Women: A Comparative Study of the Rules for *Bhikkhunis* and *Bhikkhus* based on the Chinese *Pratimoksha*," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 95, footnote 26.

⁵ Kabilsingh holds this view. See Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, *A Comparative Study of Bhikkhunā Pātimokkha* (Delhi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, 1984), 97, cited in In Young

The above rationale is based on the idea of evolution, a doctrine of Buddhology based on the Social Darwinian ideology, which holds that everything has to develop from a parent text. In this context, scholars hypothesize that the Vinaya Pitaka is the oldest text on the *Patimokkha* on the basis that anything seemingly amplified, in other words, with more doctrines must be a later development and anything that is lesser in doctrines must be the original parent model. On the whole, it does not occur to Orientalism that a lesser number can be a summary and therefore a later addition. This wouldn't suit their rationale of the Social Darwinian view of evolution in the religious texts. The Shri Kali view is that this model cannot be used as a rationale in validating the historicity of texts and doctrines. In other words, the texts were developed simultaneously as they contain analogous ideas and doctrines.⁶ Therefore, there need not be a lapse in time between the composition of texts, as believes colonial Orientalism.

Even the eminent scholar, the late Dr. Sukumar Dutt, adheres to the Buddhological understanding of evolution in the scriptures and thus he says, 'The most complete body of the Monastic laws, however, is to be found in the Vinaya Pitaka of the Theravada Pali Canon.'⁷ Dutt also says that the Pali word *Patimokkha* can be equated with the Sanskrit word *Pratimoksha*, 'which from its etymological parts lends itself to

Chung, "A Buddhist View of Women: A Comparative Study of the Rules for *Bhikkhunis* and *Bhikkhus* based on the Chinese *Pratimoksha*," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 32. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh is a Buddhist scholar and the abbess of the only temple in Thailand with fully ordained nuns at the Songdhammakalyani Monastery in the Muang District, Nakhonpathom province, Thailand. Her *bhikkhuni* name is Venerable Dhammananda. She has been labelled a 'Buddhist modernist' but she holds a PHD.

⁶ Bhagavan Shri Shanmukha Anatha Natha and Shri Ma Kristina Baird, *Third Eye of the Buddhist, Divine Initiation and Divine Agamas* (Singapore: Shri Kali Publications, 2001).

⁷ Sukumar Dutt, *The Buddha and Five After-Centuries* (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1978), 110, cited in In Young Chung, "A Buddhist View of Women: A Comparative Study of the Rules for *Bhikkhunis* and *Bhikkhus* based on the Chinese *Pratimoksha*," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 32.

interpretation as something serving for a bond, the prefix *prati* meaning “against” and the root *moksha* meaning “scattering”.⁸ However, according to the Shri Kali understanding, though the word *Patimokkha* can be equated with its Sanskrit equivalent *Pratimoksha*, one has to retain its relevance to its respective school or tradition.

It is important to remember that the word *Patimokkha* belongs to a serious school of thought, that is, the ideology of the Theravada, and therefore, we cannot just lay our ‘contemporary ideologies’ on top of it. Therefore, the haphazard reading of the word by today’s disgruntled females or males hailing from suburban or urban middle-class culture with their middle-class fears and projections cannot be taken seriously as the measure or shortcomings of any earlier civilisation or its ideology. In other words, we cannot apply contemporary middle-class theories to ancient cultures.⁹ Nearly all the scholars who have evaluated the position of the *bhikkhunis* in the texts have done so from this socio-political angle ‘positing an earlier egalitarianism [in Buddhism] amended by later, less forward-looking editors [see Isaline Blew Horner], or a gradual progression from an inherent sexism, even misogyny, to the development of egalitarianism in Mahayana, even Vajrayana’ [see Paul, Gross, Falk].¹⁰ But it should be noted that Horner’s book *Women under Primitive Buddhism: Laywomen and Almswomen* published in 1930 was

⁸ Sukumar Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monasticism* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1984), 72-3, cited in In Young Chung, “A Buddhist View of Women: A Comparative Study of the Rules for *Bhikkhunis* and *Bhikkhus* based on the Chinese *Pratimoksha*,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 33.

⁹ Will Sweetman agrees that Gross relies too heavily on ‘contemporary parallels’ though he asserts on then ‘contemporary Indian culture as an alternative’ to explain the subordination of *bhikkhunis* to *bhikkhus*. See Will Sweetman, “Module 4, Unit 4.3 Disciplined bodies II: *bhikkunis*” in *RELX309 The Body in Asian Religions Coursebook* (Dunedin: University of Otago, 2009), 263.

¹⁰ Kate Blackstone, ‘Dhamming the Dhamma: Problems with *Bhikkhunis* in the Pali *Vinaya*,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 292-312, cited in *RELX309 The Body in Asian Religions Coursebook* (Dunedin: University of Otago, 2009), 267.

almost the only existing book on the *bhikkhunis* for nearly fifty years.¹¹ The *bhikkhunis*, as a subject in itself, only came to prominence with feminism in the West in the 70's. Until this time too there were few Theravada Retreat Centres in the West¹² and therefore little interest or knowledge of nuns in Theravada Buddhism in the West. Not only this, the history (and the reinvention) of the *bhikkhuni* orders is controversial.

To avoid these contemporary readings of the *bhikkhunis* and difficult readings of the history of *bhikkhuni* orders, we have focused instead on the word *Patimokkha*. Thus in the traditional reading of the word *Patimokkha*, the prefix *prati* should be read as how it is prefixed to the word *pratityasamudpada*. Here the word *prati* reads as 'innate', 'inherent' or 'instantly here and now'.¹³ It is in this context that the prefix has been used according to the Shri Kali understanding. The word *mokkha* is analogous to its Sanskrit equivalent *moksha*. Thus the word *Patimokkha* gives us the meaning that 'one attains release or *moksha*'. This then takes us to altogether another rationale than that of contemporary academia. The meaning of the word *Patimokkha* is then the 'very observances that take or lead us to liberation or freedom' or *mokkha* or *moksha*. The Mahavagga has used the term *Patimokkha* in the sense of *mukha* or 'to face the way to the path'.

¹¹ Isaline Blew Horner (1896-1981) earned her BA from Cambridge in 1917 and then was a translator of Pali Texts for the Pali Text Society succeeding Stede and Mrs Rhys Davids and was subsequently awarded an honorary PHD by Ceylon University. She was also awarded an OBE in 1980.

¹² We can say that one stream of the Mahasi Sayadaw lineage is one of the oldest in the West represented by Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salsberg, and Jack Kornfield.

¹³ Sir Monier Monier-Williams in his *Sanskrit Dictionary* says the prefix *pra* (p.652) only refers to 'forthrightly' and *ati* (p.12) means 'beyond itself' or 'by itself'. Therefore, the word *prati* simply means 'now', 'innate', 'instantly now', 'here', or 'redoubling and taking one back'. The prefix *prati* (p.661-2) too signifies this. It can also be read to mean 'against' or 'back'. Harvard-Kyoto "Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary (2008 revision)" <<http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/monier/>> (12 May 2009).

An American scholar, Geoffrey Degraff (Thannisaro Bhikkhu), an ordained monk, says:

The meaning of the term *pātimokkha* is a matter of conjecture. According to the Mahāvagga, it means 'the beginning, the head (or entrance—*mukha*), the foremost (*pamukha*) of skillful qualities' (Mv.II.3.4). The term serves as the name not only of the basic code of training rules, but also of a sermon in which the Buddha enumerated the basic principles common to the teachings of all Buddhas: 'The non-doing of all evil, the performance of what is skillful, and the purification of one's mind: This is the Buddha's message' (Dhp.183). Thus whatever the etymology of the term *pātimokkha*, it denotes a set of principles basic to the practice of the religion.

The basic code of training rules for bhikkhus, in its Pali recension, contains 227 rules, divided into eight sections in accordance with the penalty assigned by each rule: *pārājika*, defeat; *sanghādisesa*, formal meeting; *aniyata*, indefinite; *nissaggiya pācittiya*, forfeiture and confession; *pācittiya*, confession; *pātidesanīya*, acknowledgement; *sekhiya*, training; and *adhikarana-samatha*, settling of issues. The following chapters will discuss the precise meanings of these terms.¹⁴

As the Mahavagga, in a sense, is like the Abhidhamma Pitaka, it too highlights the meaning of the word *Patimokkha* as 'arriving at liberation' and emphasises on the praxis aspect that is intertwined with the metaphysics of the Theravada and the 'whole Buddhism'. In this sense, the word *Patimokkha* assures one of the sense of 'entering into the practice' as a Buddhist and the Vinaya emphasises on the 'becoming' aspect of Buddhism. The term 'becoming' here is used as *Bhavana* or *Samadhi* that takes one to *Nibbana* or *Nirvana*.

¹⁴ Thanissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraff) is a teacher in the Thai Forest tradition and trained under Ajaan Fuang Jotiko, "Chapter One, Patimokkha," <<http://www.cambodianbuddhist.org/english/website/lib/modern/thanissaro/bmc1/ch01.html>> (11 May 2009). These are also the rules for *bhikkhunis*. Compare In Young Chung's tables of the entire rules for *bhikkhunis* and *bhikkhus* highlighting the distinctions between them, for example, in the *parajika dhammas*, there are four extra rules for *bhikkhunis*.

However, the heavy codification of the Hinayana and Mahayana texts has been a stumbling block to understanding the *Patimokkha* and this can be seen in the overriding perception of scholars that the *Patimokkha* tenets subordinate *bhikkhunis* to *bhikkhus*.

Thus Rita M. Gross 'describes the *Vinaya* rules as:

... placing all nuns lower in the hierarchy than any monks¹⁵

Similarly, Nancy Schuster Barnes maintains:

'However, by imposing rules on nuns which would place them in a permanently inferior position in all their interactions with monks, the monks reserved for themselves the control and leadership of the entire *sangha*.'¹⁶

Audrey Mck. Fernandez says:

'However, even today there are a couple of hundred more rules for women than men, which has rankled women and has kept who knows how many from leaving lay life.'¹⁷

Scholars, relying on the idea of colonial Buddhism, are not having the acumen to understand the Buddhist texts. They therefore misconstrue metaphysical doctrines with literal interpretations and read the

¹⁵ Rita M. Gross, "Buddhism and Feminism: Toward Their Mutual Transformation (I)," in *The Eastern Buddhist* (Tokyo: Komiyama Printing Co., 1986), 46, cited in In Young Chung, "A Buddhist View of Women: A Comparative Study of the Rules for *Bhikkhunis* and *Bhikkhus* based on the Chinese *Pratimoksha*," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 31.

¹⁶ Nancy Shuster Barnes, "Buddhism," in *Women in World Religions*, ed. Arvind Sharma (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 108, cited in In Young Chung, "A Buddhist View of Women: A Comparative Study of the Rules for *Bhikkhunis* and *Bhikkhus* based on the Chinese *Pratimoksha*," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 31.

¹⁷ Audrey Mck. Fernandez, "Women in Buddhism," in *Women Buddhism: A Special Issue of Spring Wind—Buddhist Cultural Forum* 6, No. 1, 2, 3, published by the Zen Lotus Society (Ontario: Spring Wind, 1986), 39, cited in In Young Chung, "A Buddhist View of Women: A Comparative Study of the Rules for *Bhikkhunis* and *Bhikkhus* based on the Chinese *Pratimoksha*," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999): 31.

bhikkhunis as subordinate to the *bhikkhus*, especially in relation to the *Patimokkha* and even more so in relation to the 'Eight Rules' or *Garudhamma*.

The Eight Special Rules (Garudhamma)

In the Shri Kali perspective, this is how the Buddha's initial refusal to accept the nuns into the Buddhist order would be seen.¹⁸

Five years after his enlightenment and the founding of the men's order and lay *sangha*, the Buddha received a visit from Prajapati at the Banyan Tree Park in Kapilavatthu, accompanied by a large group of women. Three times they asked to be admitted to the order, but each time were told, 'Enough, O Gotami [another name for Mahapajapati], let it not please thee that women should be allowed to do so.' The women left weeping [they are presented as being sad on the account of not being part of a profound system that teaches salvation—so they weep], but they persisted [this is so because as Sunya or the Buddha unfolds, there is also *Prajna* or Mind that unfolds and this is represented as the Nuns]. They cut off their hair [denotes they shorn off the notion of time see Rudra-Shiva's coiffure in *Divine Initiation*],¹⁹ put on saffron renunciates' robes [put on saffron robes means the Nuns accepted the metaphysics of the Theravada yet placed themselves at the right moment to be part of the way to *Nirvana*], and travelling on foot [refers to the *mantra pada* or, in other words, the Sonic essence travels through the sonic or *mantric* path], went on to the Buddha's next stopping place [Buddha's next stopping place is, in the unfoldment of the *Tattvas* scheme, the Absolute Sunya that unfurls in several stages to give us our experience of manifestation—

¹⁸ Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993). These are Gross' translation in the following translations. Gross' understanding of Buddhism represents her contemporary understanding as a 'love child' of the 'flower-power generation' escaping a life of conservative Christianity in Wisconsin 'milking cows' (see Rita M. Gross, *Soaring and Settling*, Continuum International Publishing Group, 1998, 35-6). To her credit, she was a pioneer of Buddhist-feminist-scholarship and she continues in her largely 'Comparative Religious Studies Lecture Circuit' until today, although perhaps she has been denied a prominent academic role due to her 'Buddhist leanings'. Nevertheless, her works are landmarks in history. In her time she 'transgressed traditional boundaries', *Ibid.*, 34.)

¹⁹ Bhagavan Shri Shanmukha Anatha Natha and Shri Ma Kristina Baird, *Divine Initiation* (Singapore: Shri Kali Publications, 2001).

in the text this is Veshali]. Their pitiful condition when they arrived is stressed in many retellings of the story [this is to emphasize the importance of *Nirvana* and how the Nuns strived for it but not to be sexist, which is an urban middle-class problem of the 'isolated' and 'persecuted' WASP culture].

At this point, Ananda, the Buddha's as-yet-unenlightened attendant, took up the women's case with the Buddha. [In the Theravada, Ananda before Enlightenment only refers to the evolutionary phase and Ananda after Enlightenment only refers to the dissolutionary phase—this is why it is always insisted that Ananda before the Enlightenment phase had a predilection towards women or *maya*.] Again the request was put forth three times and refused three times [three times refers to the three phases in the process of Manifestation, that is, *Srishti*—Creation, *Sthiti*—Preservation, and *Samhara*—Destruction].

Then Ananda, according to the text (Cullavagga, x1.3), approached the Buddha with another argument, asking, 'Lord, are women, having gone forth from home into homelessness in the *dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder, able to realize the fruit of stream-attainment [this refers to the mind and the unfoldment of its world-experience or what Tantrics term as *Srishti*. The 'fruit of stream-attainment' refers to the mind streams as denoted by Ganga in *Divine Initiation*]²⁰ or the fruit of once-returning [to *Sthiti* or the Manifested] or the fruit of non-returning or perfection [*Samhara* to Tantrics or the Dissolutionary phase]?' The Buddha replied they would be able to realize all these goals. [Here the Theravada emphasizes that the Nuns denote the cognitive reality rather than the sonic reality, as in their metaphysics there is no room for the Sonic manifestation like the transcendental Vedics.] Then Ananda argued that since women would be able to benefit from the practice of renunciation and since Prajapati had been so kind to Siddhartha, "... [as she was his aunt, foster mother, nurse, giver of milk—this is to emphasize that in the Theravada system *Maya* or Shakti is not a co-partner as Shiva and Shakti in the Tantras or Vedism] it were well Lord, that women should obtain the going forth from home [*grahastha* refers to us observing the Evolutionary path that follows the way of *Kriya*] into homelessness [*Pab-bajja* or the way of the Dissolutionary path so that they do not maintain a reality as a home and therefore they observe the Nuns or even the Monks' way of life] in the *dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder.' The Buddha replied, 'If, Ananda, the Gotamid

²⁰ Ibid.

Prajapati the Great accepts eight important rules [that is, Sunya and its unfoldment as the Buddha and the Sonic or feminine Prajna or Mindness], that may be ordination for her.' The Buddha recited the rules to Ananda, who conveyed them to Prajapati. She accepted them without reservation.

The Buddha is reported then to have uttered the oft-quoted statement:

'If Ananda, women had not obtained the going forth from home into homelessness in the *dharmma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder, the Brahma-fearing, Ananda, would have endured for a thousand years. But since, Ananda, women have gone forth... in the *dharmma* and the discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder, now Ananda, the Brahma-finding will endure only five hundred years.'

'The Buddha compared these rules to a dike [a dyke itself is an allegorical representation of the mind essence]²¹ built to hold in the water of a reservoir so that it wouldn't overflow. [Dyke represents the Sunyavadins concept of Mindness and not any physical likeness.]' ²²

1. 'Any nun, even of great seniority, must honor, rise for, and bow to each and every monk, even if newly ordained. [This alludes to the notion of monks as *arhants* and in fact representations of the Buddha according to the Theravada metaphysics.]
2. The nuns must spend the rainy season retreat in a location where they can be supervised by monks. [This alludes to the fact that in the Rainy or winter season the texts probably refer to minor dissolution and therefore the nuns' position should be accounted for as these are abstract presentations.]
3. Monks were to determine the dates for the twice-monthly confessional meetings of the order. [This will then make the metaphysics precise—it is according to the unfurlment or experience of the 'world order' from Sunya down as the Buddha and the *Arhants* that decides when and where the feminine

²¹ Compare Muller-Ortega where he alludes to the lake as allegorical. Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega, *The Triadic Heart of Siva: Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-Dual Shaivism of Kashmir* (Sri Satguru Publications, 1997).

²² Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 36.

aspects of the *Arhants* as Nuns meet to decide on the precision of the metaphysics of the Theravada.]

4. Monks would participate in the interrogation of nuns who were accused of breaking rules, but the reverse did not apply. [The monks or the abstract or metaphysical representations are the *Arhants* and not to be confused with human male persons. Thus it is from this position of the Monks or *Arhants* that the precise or apt determination of the role of a Nun as also a metaphysical concept can be determined. The reverse can't apply.]

5. Monks would help determine a nun's penalty for infractions, but the reverse did not apply. [In the Theravada metaphysics, *Arhants* or Monks describe the higher metaphysical order and Nuns describe the coarser or lower realms in manifestation. Therefore, present-day scholars have misread these abstract presentations of nuns as a lesser position of women to men.]

6. Monks must participate in the nuns' ordination, but the reverse did not apply. [This too suggests the same as the above reading.]

7. Nuns could not, under any circumstances, reprimand or criticize a monk. [This simply means that in the Theravada there is no involvement of the notion of *Vac* or sound in the account of creation—therefore the Nuns under no circumstances reprimand or criticize a monk. See *Vac* by Andre Padoux²³ or *Divine Initiation*.]²⁴

8. Finally, nuns were not allowed to officially admonish monks, though monks could admonish women. [This too is akin to the concept described above.]²⁵

Nonetheless, the confusion that arises from reading the texts literally has resulted in the reading of nuns or women as secondary to monks or men both in the texts and in actuality in Buddhist societies. Thus Nancy

²³ Andre Padoux, *Vac: The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989).

²⁴ Bhagavan Shri Shanmukha Anatha Natha and Shri Ma Kristina Baird, *Divine Initiation* (Singapore: Shri Kali Publications, 2001).

²⁵ Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 36.

Auer Falk argues that this formal subordination undermined the nuns and they never became important teachers of the community at large, though they made progress themselves and taught other women. Since they did not become major teachers, well known to lay donors, they lacked economic support. This economic disadvantage, the effects of the eight rules, and the undercurrent of misogyny that is exhibited in the Buddha's reluctance to found the order at all, weakened the order until it disappeared in most parts of the Buddhist world.²⁶ This is an unfortunate assumption due to lack of knowledge of the lingo of the ancient scriptures²⁷ and in fact the tracing of the history of the *bhikkhuni* orders has not been undertaken with the proper perspective of the traditions in mind. In similar fashion, the past traditions of Buddhism are unknown.²⁸ Gross argues that the rules that prevented women from becoming major teachers in the community were most central in the demise of the nuns order. To 'silence women is a dominant control tactic of androcentric consciousness and patriarchal gender arrangements' says Gross.²⁹

In conclusion, we cannot just presume that the tenets of the *Patimokkha* and the 'Eight Rules' represent the 'actual' subordination of the *bhikkhunis* to the *bhikkhus*. But as the knowledge of the ancient lingo of the scriptures is lost, the 'ideal' does not match the 'reality' and in some

²⁶ Nancy Auer Falk, "The case of the Vanishing Nuns: The Fruits of Ambivalence in Ancient Indian Buddhism," *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives*, ed. by Nancy Auer Falk and Rita M. Gross (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1989), 159, cited in Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 37-8.

²⁷ Bhagavan Shri Shanmukha Anatha Natha and Shri Ma Kristina Baird, *Third Eye of the Buddhist, Divine Initiation and Divine Agamas* (Singapore: Shri Kali Publications, 2001).

²⁸ See *Third Eye of the Buddhist* and the correct placement of the Mahasanghika and Bon traditions.

²⁹ Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 38.

Buddhist societies *bhikkhunis* are non-existent or their role is not taken as seriously as *bhikkhus*. As we do not know the exact time the lingo was lost, but can postulate that it was around the time of Shri Shankaracharya, then we cannot conclude on the 'consequences of the Buddha's imposition of the "Eight Rules" ' without further research. We can hypothesise that in ancient times *bhikkhunis* were subordinate to *bhikkhus* but until we trace the history of the *bhikkhunis* accurately and account for why there are no *bhikkhuni* orders in Thailand and so on, we are only speculating.

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