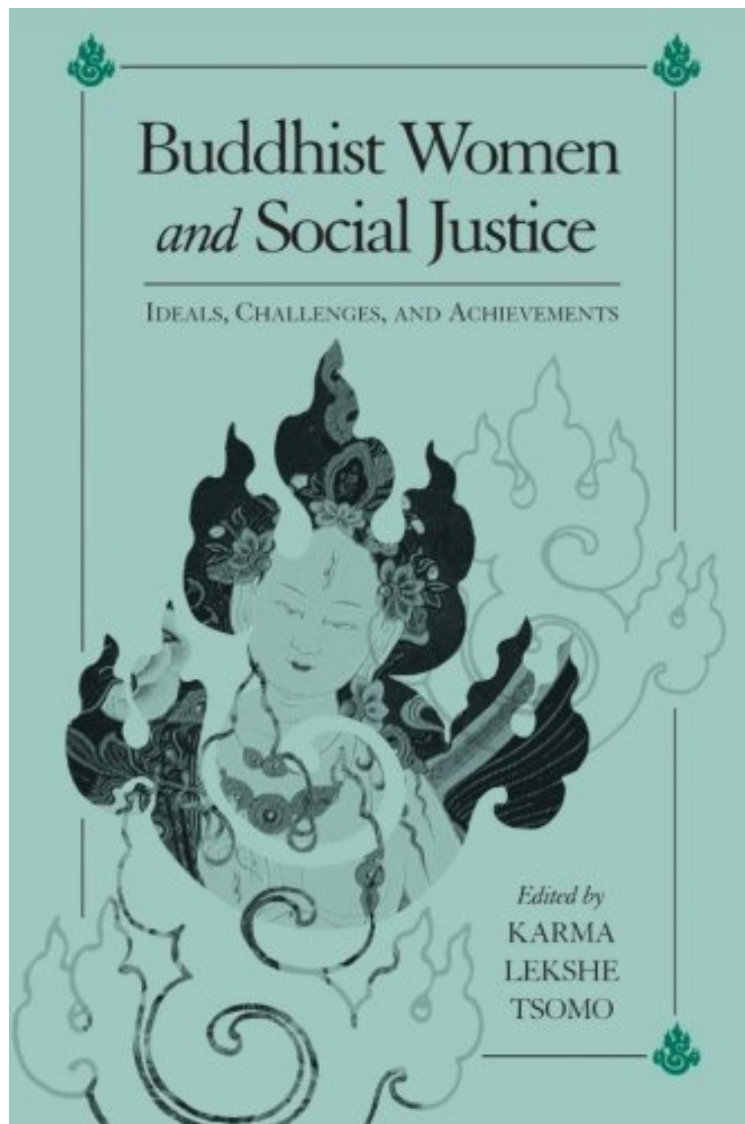


(Library ebook) Buddhist Women and Social Justice: Ideals, Challenges, and Achievements (SUNY series, Feminist Philosophy)

## **Buddhist Women and Social Justice: Ideals, Challenges, and Achievements (SUNY series, Feminist Philosophy)**

*Karma Lekshe Tsomo*

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**Karma Lekshe Tsomo : Buddhist Women and Social Justice: Ideals, Challenges, and Achievements (SUNY series, Feminist Philosophy)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddhist Women and Social Justice: Ideals, Challenges, and Achievements (SUNY series, Feminist Philosophy):

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Western feminist view of global social action by Buddhists By Neal J. Pollock This is a set of 16 essays on Buddhist women's social change efforts around the globe, including little-known areas as Newar Buddhists of Nepal, Spiti Valley, the unnerving "Trafficking in Buddhist Girls." The quality of the articles varies dramatically. However, as David Gellner points out, p. 156, "Social work by monks or nuns, worthy though it is, is a modernist adaptation of traditional Buddhist practice." Indeed, the book seems an application of feminism to Buddhism, disregarding Buddhist spirituality. In fact, some of the interviewed nuns disagreed with Western women authors on the why of gender differences, their meaning to them, their actual importance. IMHO, the strong Western feminist bias detracts from the book's impact. Per Caren Ohlson p. 248: "The conflict between Asian and Western cultural values is just one example of the challenges...Western focus on individual goals and the cultivation of a 'unique' identity grate against the Asian idea of identity in connection to family and community, not to a sense of individual uniqueness." Strangely, her article is replete with bias high valence language--seemingly she knows better than Asian nuns what's best for them. "Misogyny" is overused--in truth, nuns model it--its main meaning is "anti-marriage;" though "institutional androcentrism" "anti-feminist" are justified, IMO. Several writers convincingly (both historically per present trends) object to the 8 special rules making nuns subservient to monks. But their discounting Sri Lanka monks' objections to breaking lineage labeling them misogynists is unjustified--people vary in need for structure etc. attributing motivations to other people (in a different culture) is risky at best. Also, most of their arguments are sociological-- p. 239: Caren Ohlson: "the socially constructed dichotomy of 'woman' as the temptress and 'man' as tempted." Jungians might consider this as psychological projection. Tsomo states: p. 67: "If Buddhist monastic institutions are to continue in the modern world, they must be based on gender equity...Neither the Buddha, his followers, nor the Buddhist monastic codes can be extracted from their social context...Now that gender equity has become part of a new global ethic, it is opportune to explore how Buddhism's egalitarian principles can be practically applied to social and religious institutions." But this assumes that SE Asia chooses to enter the "modern" (Western) world--one in which Buddhism has yet to make a major impact--despite p. 231 note 8: Elise Anne DeVido saying: "The requirements of the modern world demand modification to, or liberal interpretation of, the Vinaya." True, in her Introduction, Tsomo argues cogently concerning the legitimacy of Vinaya monastic rules their relation to the 8. She is supported strongly in the last essay: pp. 237-8: Caren Ohlson: "Sponberg claims that the above story is by no means a historical account to the establishment of the nun's order. On the contrary, he asserts that the story was fabricated by monks...after the death of the Buddha...The 8 special rules that were created to govern nuns' behavior represented a mirror image of the husband/wife relationship in the lay community." Still, it's the prevailing Buddhist myth and scattered social action is unlikely to change it quickly especially without strong, active involvement leadership by local Buddhist men women. Tsomo others' books do document progress in this related areas. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. excellent survey By garfield This book let women talk about their own encounter of the difficulties in buddhist life. The situation differs from country to country. In some countries the achievement of women is amazing. They have to swim against the stream and all are willing to struggle for one main goal an equal and fulfilling buddhist life for women.

Looks at Buddhist women's activism for social change from the time of Buddha to the present day. This book on engaged Buddhism focuses on women working for social justice in a wide range of Buddhist traditions and societies. Contributors document attempts to actualize Buddhism's liberating ideals of personal growth and social transformation. Dealing with issues such as human rights, gender-based violence, prostitution, and the role of Buddhist nuns, the work illuminates the possibilities for positive change that are available to those with limited power and resources. Integrating social realities and theoretical perspectives, the work utilizes feminist interpretations of Buddhist values and looks at culturally appropriate means of instigating change. This is a work of socially engaged Buddhism, written by scholars who are practicing Buddhists and social activists. Intersections: Gender, History, and Culture in the Asian Context This text is well worth the read particularly for those of us who are Christian and somewhat ignorant of Buddhist spirituality. It is refreshing to come to know similar journeys of those from distant lands and to realize that what is emerging in the universe is beyond our tradition and control. The call to oneness and wholeness is deep in the heart of humanity. Missiology" Karma Lekshe Tsomo has put together an extremely compelling and useful collection which forges into the newest areas of feminist Buddhist thought and action. She is uniquely positioned to speak with authority and gather a collection which gives specific insight into Buddhist practice in relation to the complex topic of gender in religion." Julie Gutmann, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute "The balance of theory and case studies throughout the book takes this topic in new directions. Tsomo should be congratulated warmly for putting together this important and timely contribution." Grace G. Burford, author of *Desire, Death, and Goodness: The Conflict of Ultimate Values in Theravada Buddhism* Contributors include Lin Chew, Meenakshi Chhabra, Margaret Coberly, Ranjani de Silva, Elise Anne DeVido, David N. Gellner, Paula Green, Anne C. Klein, Khandu Lama, Sarah LeVine, Kathryn L. Norsworthy, Caren I. Ohlson, Karma Lekshe Tsomo, and Diana E. Wright.

"The balance of theory and case studies throughout the book takes this topic in new directions. Tsomo should be

congratulated warmly for putting together this important and timely contribution."About the AuthorKarma Lekshe Tsomo is Assistant Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego. She is the author of *Sisters in Solitude: Two Traditions of Buddhist Monastic Ethics for Women* and the editor of *Buddhist Women Across Cultures: Realizations*, both also published by SUNY Press.