

Thesis Title : The Buddha's Method of Teaching Women in
Buddhist Scriptures

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ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled 'The Buddha's Method of Teaching Women in Buddhist Scriptures' has three objectives: 1) to study women's status in Buddhism, 2) to study Dhamma that Lord Buddha taught women in Buddhist scriptures and 3) to analyze Buddha's method of teaching women in Buddhist scriptures. This is a qualitative research.

From the research it is found that there were various viewpoints concerning women's status that appeared in Indian contexts before and after Lord Buddha's times. Before the advent of Lord Buddha's time, women's status was in the low states. Their lives were under the beliefs of social control by Brahman culture and tradition. The wife's and mother's roles were basically given to them as the significant one. Generally, they were allowed to join religious function in period of the Veda only. However, such viewpoints had been gradually changed and improved in the time of Lord Buddha giving rise to good life in terms of their status and roles; they were free in their mind and spirit particularly the ability to get enlightenment in Buddhism which was strongly regarded as the highlight of Buddhism

From the research it is found that Many Dhammas had been occasionally taught by Lord Buddha to women. However, this research only focused on the history and Buddha's methods of teaching in respect of six women who were somehow associated with Lord Buddha; Mahāpajāpatigotamī Therī, Bhaddācaccānā Therī, Patācārā Therī, Kīsāgotamī Therī, Visākhā and Sāmāvatī. Though Sāmāvatī never directly hear Dhamma from Lord Buddha, yet she heard it from her servant named 'Khujjuttarā'. Such a supreme Dhamma can take those who listen to it to the way of

worldly as well as supramundane happiness. In the research of their histories and backgrounds of them, it was found that those women were actually encountered with suffering in similar aspects that were about not getting what they really wanted and lost beloved one. To relieve them from a great deal of such suffering, Lord Buddha purposely utilized different methods of teaching for different characteristics in their inclinations: that are six inclinations. Lord Buddha had considered the readiness and the ripeness of their perfection of epistemology in order to get what was suitable for this one to learn or how should this kind of teaching be carried out. Those methods of teaching are available in Tipitaka, to wit, it is a kind of dialogue, description and prescription depending upon the situation involved. There are four essential methods of Buddha's teaching: Santassanā; giving clearly explanation, Samadhapanā; inspiration of audiences towards the goal, Samuttejanā; encouragement of audiences to have confidence and Sampahangsanā; filling audiences with delight and joy. Furthermore, the cleverness making use of means such as the usage of analogy, folktale and tools to have a proper understanding had also been obviously utilized by the Buddha.

Having heard Lord Buddha's teaching, those women came to get enlightenment; four Bhikkhunīs attained Arahanta, two laities were the stream-enterers. Each woman showed their strong point in a different way. For example, Mahāpajāpatigotamī Therī showed her excellence in leadership, Bhaddākkaccānā Therī showed excellence in being good wife, Patācārā Therī showed excellence in being the exemplar of women who suffered because of losing beloved ones, Kīsāgotamī Therī showed excellence in being good mother, Visākhā showed the greatest quality as a lay supporter who had an external and internal good manner and Sāmāvatī showed the greatest quality in loving kindness towards others without any comparison. The essence gained from these women can be applied by women in daily life towards different roles at the present society. Those Buddhist principles are as follows: four paths of accomplishment, four bases of social solidarity, seven kinds of wife, six directions, four sublime states of mind, four virtues for a good household life, the Dhamma principles for women such as five precepts, four benefits, the Dhamma principles for laities such as seven qualities conducive to the progress of a lay disciple and the benefit of donation. Suffice it to say that there are basic Dhamma principles given by Lord Buddha for women's conducts in various roles serving as the guideline for women to be appropriately followed.