

About this volume

We are proud to welcome Carola Roloff's monograph on the ordination of nuns in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to the Hamburg Buddhist Studies series. Her contribution is remarkable in at least two regards. Firstly, her critical edition introduces the Tibetan texts and their English translations of two important chapters in the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivādinaya: the Chapter on Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī (*Mahāprajāpatīgautamīvastu) and the Manual for Buddhist Nuns' Ordination (*Bhikṣuṇyupasaṃpadājñapti). Secondly, based on the presented materials, the author discusses ways in which the nuns' ordination in the Tibetan tradition—from which full ordination for women has been absent for centuries—may be legitimately reinstated. This is a concern Carola Roloff has been supporting for more than two decades. Her edition and exegesis of the Tibetan texts and their Sanskrit parallels constitute a solid foundation for discussing why the Mūlasarvāstivāda bhikṣuṇī lineage should be re-established and how concrete steps in that direction may look like.

The topic has elicited controversial debate, and has often been criticized; in that to advocate full ordination of nuns would mean to rely only on the arguments of interpreters of later centuries, i.e. on secondary authorities and not on the canon itself. The present study, in contrast, evidences that the Mūlasarvāstivādinaya itself contains chapters of utmost relevance to this issue. These important parts of the Vinaya have been edited and translated in this volume and should be fully taken into account in future exchanges. The publication of these new and momentous insights will contribute to the advancement of these important discussions and serve to promote a view which is, on the one hand, based on solid evidence of the monastic code of the early times, while on the other hand, also addresses central issues of the modern world such as the equality of gender in society and religions.

Michael Zimmermann and Steffen Döll