

## Voices of *Dasasilmātās*: Ethnographical Inquiry on Resistances against the Feminist Influence in the New *Bhikkhunī* Revival in Sri Lanka

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New *bhikkhunī* revival movement is a global project, which intends to empower Buddhist female renunciation with the idea of homogeneity. While acquiring this liberal notion of higher status, it has become a cause of fragmentation among alternative Buddhist female *renunciant* communities. This study mainly has brought criticisms for the Western liberal feminist approach. Although, the feminist academia and activists are one of the pioneers of the *bhikkhunī* revival movement in Sri Lanka, these International and local proponents are being criticized for their intervention. Thus, the main objective of this study is to recognize *dasasilmātās'* responses towards this mediation of feminist activism, as *dasasilmātās* are the oldest alternative form of female *renunciant* group, who highly affected by the new status of *bhikkhunī*-hood. This ethnographic study has carried out on the phenomenological basis by employing observation and in-depth interviews. The sample consisted of 16 executive committee members of the *Silmātā Jāthika Mandalaya*, 24 *dasasilmātās*, 10 *bhikkhunīs* and a government officer from the Department of Buddhist Affairs. According to ethnographic findings, most of *dasasilmātās* do not recognize and accept the International *bhikkhunī* higher ordination ceremonies and contribution made to them by local and international feminist activists. Interestingly, Majority of them did not recognize *bhikkhus* and other male activists as pioneer feminist activists, who also have involved in the reestablishment of *bhikkhunī* movement in Sri Lanka. Instead, they have highlighted the Western feminist influence. Therefore, they hardly identify the high profile of Asian feminist involvement in revival of *bhikkhunī* order in Sri Lanka. For instances, in reality there were multiple transnational *bhikkhunī* advocacy projects. *Dasasilmātās* not only equates feminism with the West, but also with elite class status. They reject accepting *bhikkhunī Kusuma* as the first *bhikkhunī*. Further, inner disagreements or factions among local feminists and activists in the early period of the *bhikkhunī* revival movement are important concerns.

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