

Overcoming the Challenges for the Re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka through the Study of Historical Experiences

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The *Bhikkhunī* Order which was established in Sri Lanka at the early period of the advent of Mahamahinda Thera gradually developed amidst obstacles and hardships. As a result of socio-religious factors, it declined in certain periods in Sri Lanka. Although Public concern, awareness and discussion have been created on the re-establishment of Order of Nuns in the present context, the lineage has been broken and there exists no well organized and disciplined *Bhikkhuni* Order in the world.

A number of methods could be introduced for overcoming the challenges faced by *Bhikkhunīs* in the process of the re-establishment of their Order. In the historical context; seeking admonitions from the *Bhikkhus*, royal patronage, and earnest request by women in organized and exemplary manner, creating social awareness of the importance of *Bhikkhunī* Order, dedication of *Bhikkhunīs* and making a continuous discussions and arguments could be found. Similarly, they can be adopted in the present context. Furthermore, enthusiasm, determination and perseverance, scholastic insight, discipline and virtue, generosity, modesty and flexibility are the noble qualities that should be cultivated in the minds of *Bhikkhunīs* seeking Higher Ordination. Proper organization endowed with the above physical prowess and mental caliber is to be implemented to make the re-establishment of the Order of Nuns a reality

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to identify the challenges for the re-establishment of the Order of *Bhikkhunīs* in Sri Lanka introducing some of the factors which are conducive to overcoming of them. It is obvious that if these factors would be taken highly into consideration by the versatile Nuns in Sri Lanka under the inspiration of historical experiences revealed in canonical literature and other historical evidences, the *Bhikkhunī* Order could be re- established in the face of the existing challenges.

Key words: *Bhikkhunī order, Re- establishment, Challenges, Overcome, Historical experiences*