

Buddha's Daughters: Spiritual Journeys of Early Women of the Dharma

Kate Blickhahn



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Buddha's Daughters: Spiritual Journeys of Early Women of the Dharma Kate Blickhahn Historical fiction. Fifty stories of Buddhist women from the time of the Buddha in the sixth century B.C.E. to the twelfth century C.E. The Buddha welcomed women from all castes and circumstances as equals into his group of followers, despite the mores and traditions of the patriarchal, even misogynistic Brahman culture into which he was born. His teachings, his instructions for attaining enlightenment, were essentially gender neutral. As Buddhism evolved, however, into its many forms, strong cultural forces gave this and other major world religions and spiritual paths a heavily patriarchal overlay. In short, the history of Buddhist women, their many achievements, their very names, have frequently been largely ignored, only dimly seen, rarely known. These fifty stories include portraits from the major traditions and schools that form the basis for "Vajrayana" (Tibetan Buddhism). Tales are drawn from the early "Way of the Elders," from the later tradition of "Mahayana," and from the traditions that ultimately coalesced into "Vajrayana." The author hopes that the spiritual journeys of these women, some more widely known than others, might introduce Buddhist practitioners and other readers to the inspiring achievements of some of their spiritual Mothers. For readers who already know these women, or some of them, may these stories enrich that acquaintance.

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