



The women of the early Buddhist story have long been neglected in our collective tellings. The future Buddha's wife, his mother, his stepmother/aunt, and the many women who followed him into a life of renunciation, all played pivotal roles in the early history, but they do not get the attention they surely deserve.

In these two lectures, we will explore some of the neglected stories, beginning with Yaśodharā, the wife the Bodhisattva left behind in his quest to achieve awakening. We will hear about their relationship that spanned countless lifetimes, and about the loss Yaśodharā suffered when he left without her with his Great Departure. We will then follow her into the second lecture, as Yaśodharā joins a growing gathering of women who hoped to receive ordination from the Buddha, so that they might practice alongside him, and we will hear about the Buddha's complicated response.

These stories are not always easy to hear. The first Buddhist women faced much disappointment and loss. Yasodhara lost her husband; the gathering women were not welcomed into the Sangha with open arms. But these women did not collapse with despair. They faced their obstacles, each

in their own way, ultimately revealing their courage, resilience, and determination.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Friday Evening, October 6th

(All times are Hawaii Standard Time)

- 6 pm Welcome and Introduction
- 6:10 pm Lecture: *Yaśodharā and The Buddha*
- 7:00 pm Discussion & Questions
- 7:10 pm Break
- 7:20 pm Lecture: *The Gathering*
- 8:10 pm Discussion & Questions
- 8:30 pm Closing

Professor Vanessa R. Sasson

Vanessa R. Sasson is a professor of Religious Studies in the Liberal Arts Department of Marianopolis College where she has been teaching since 1999. She is also a Research Fellow at the University of the Free State and Research Member at CERIAS at UQAM. She has published a number of articles and book chapters, is the author of *The Birth of Moses and the Buddha: A Paradigm for the Comparative Study of*

Religions (Sheffield University Press, 2007) and editor or co-editor of a number of academic volumes, including *Little Buddhas: Children and Childhoods in Buddhist Texts and Traditions* (Oxford University Press, 2013), and more recently, *Jewels, Jewelry, and Other Shiny Things in the Buddhist Imaginary* (Hawaii University Press, 2021). *Yasodhara and the Buddha* (Bloomsbury, 2021) is her first academic novel; it is followed by *The Gathering* (Equinox 2023), which focuses on the women's request for ordination. *

Available at: <https://www.amazon.com>

Doctor George Tanabe (respondent)



Professor emeritus in the Department of Religion at the University of Hawai'i, Dr. Tanabe is also President of BDK America. Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai (BDK), the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism,

which promotes an understanding of Buddhist wisdom through sponsoring activities and programs around the world.

Kenko Futaba & Alfred Bloom

The Futaba Lecture Series is endowed by Dr. Alfred & Ms. Dorothy N. Bloom to honor the memory of friend and mentor, Professor Kenko Futaba. Dr. Futaba, a noted Shin Buddhist scholar, served as President of Kyoto's Ryukoku University from 1983 to 1995 and then became Chancellor of Kyoto Women's University. A pioneer in what today is called "engaged" Buddhism, Kenko Futaba campaigned passionately for the rights of minorities and was a prolific writer.



Rev. Dr. Alfred Bloom is widely regarded as one of the most significant scholars and educators in American Shin Buddhism. Al fervently

hoped that this lecture series would be a continuing inspiration for the nurturing of American Buddhism and for the social participation of Buddhists in the quest of social justice and peace. His website continues to serve as a resource for students today: <https://bschawaii.org/shindharmanet/>

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August 2023

NOTE: Lectures will be hybrid

In-Person & Online

Zoom link available on October 6 at

<https://hawaiiibetsuin.org/calendar>

Available on the Hawaii Betsuin YouTube channel after October 13:

<https://hawaiiibetsuin.org> 

For reminders and updates

Free Registration Advised

<https://hawaiiibetsuin.org/event/>

No program fees

Donations Appreciated

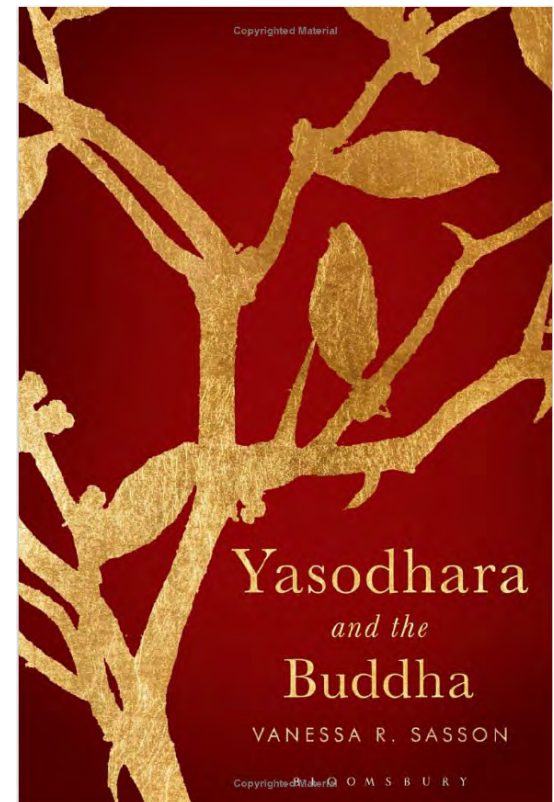
24th Annual

Bloom-Futaba Memorial Lectures

Sponsored by

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"Telling Her Stories: Reflections on Some of the First Buddhist Women."



Friday, October 6, 2023

6-8:30 pm

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