

Quotes from "Experiencing Inequality in Everyday Life as a Tibetan Nun" by Dawai Semo
*Draft translation, please do not cite or circulate without written permission from Jue Liang
 (liangj@denison.edu)*

1. The universal respect mothers and motherhood command

Opening statement: *In the entire world in general, and the human race in particular, everyone comes of age under the warmth of maternal love.*

Mothers and motherhood are important in two aspects: spiritual and secular matters:

- *"[T]he mother is the square axle supporting an auspicious household. The compassionate ama is the main caretaker with genuine love and kindness; she is the warmth in the mind of family members altogether."*
- *"[A mother] teaches you how to eat, how to don clothes, how to walk, and how to speak when you don't know how to do those things. The great warmth that comes with the words "a" or "ama" is calling the mother, it needs no explanation."*
- *From a Buddhist perspective, because women represent the essence of wisdom, if one degrades women, it is a root downfall; everyone knows this well.*
- *Some say that it is not permitted for women to go inside a protector's temple. If womenkind or mothers are not allowed to go in, then what about the female classes of protectresses and goddesses? They are also female, should we get rid of them?*

External quote from an interview with another khenmo: *Yes. In worldly terms, women are the treasure of the world (ལྷོ་མོ་) through their identity as mothers. In transcendental terms, the source of compassion is women and women generate the compassionate mind more easily than men.*

2. The inseparability of femininity and motherhood

*Not bedecked by turquoise or coral ornaments,
 Not glorified by those versed in meters or rhymes,
 Because of that, she has no perverse views, lies, or hypocrisy,
 This is the status of womankind and mothers.*

3. Providing an explanation for the history and reality of gender inequality

Highlighting eminent women from the past as well as the history of gender inequality:

- *Some people's view of men being superior and women being inferior is accepted as an honorable tradition from our forefathers. The matrilineal line is said to be the principal one during the reign of the ancestral dharma kings. Therefore, where can we find such evil views of discrimination in the exalted mind of our noble ancestors, their traditions, and their logical thoughts?*
- *However, men, not considering the nature of things, always slander and belittle mothers, looking down on them, scorning them, criticizing them, and considering them inferior. The situation of not even placing [mothers] among the ranks of human beings is grossly unreasonable and a grave mistake.*

A complementarian explanation of gender differences: *"Generally, because male and female physiques are different, men and women also have different strengths, thoughts, timbres of speech, and so forth. This needs no explanation. It is grossly inappropriate to assign different statuses just because of that."*