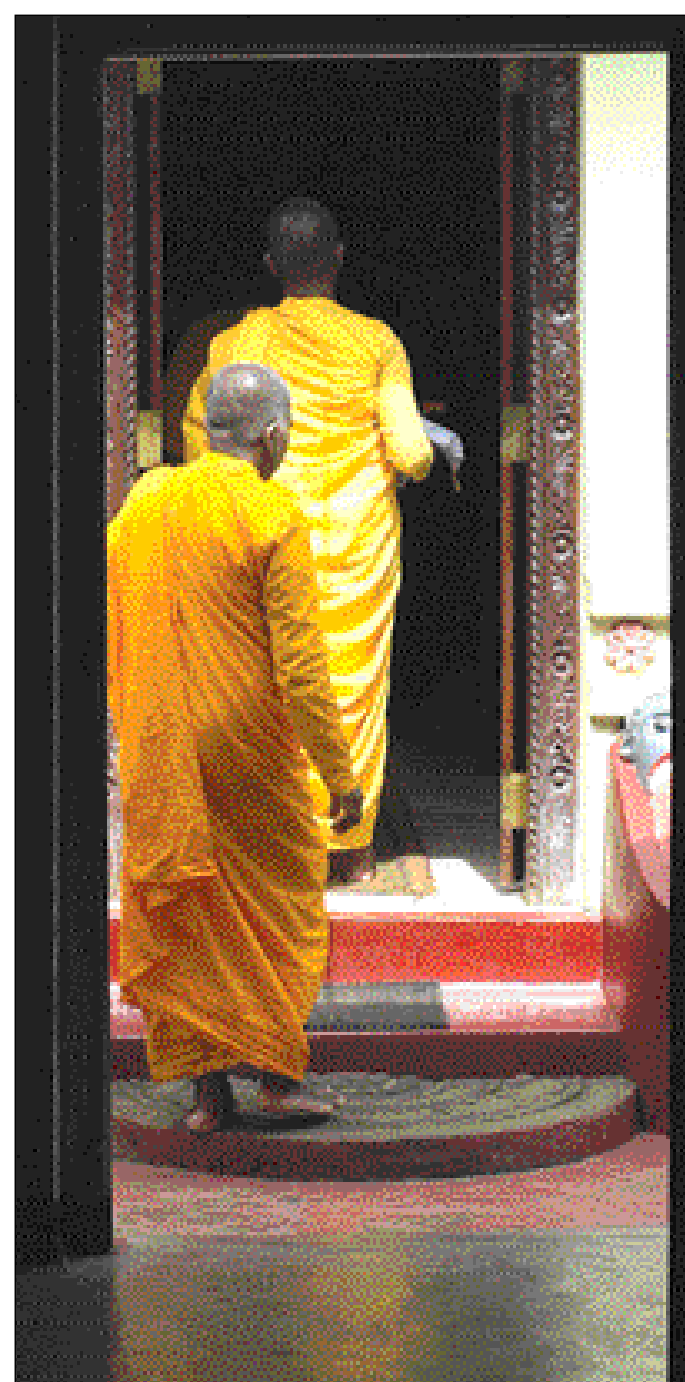
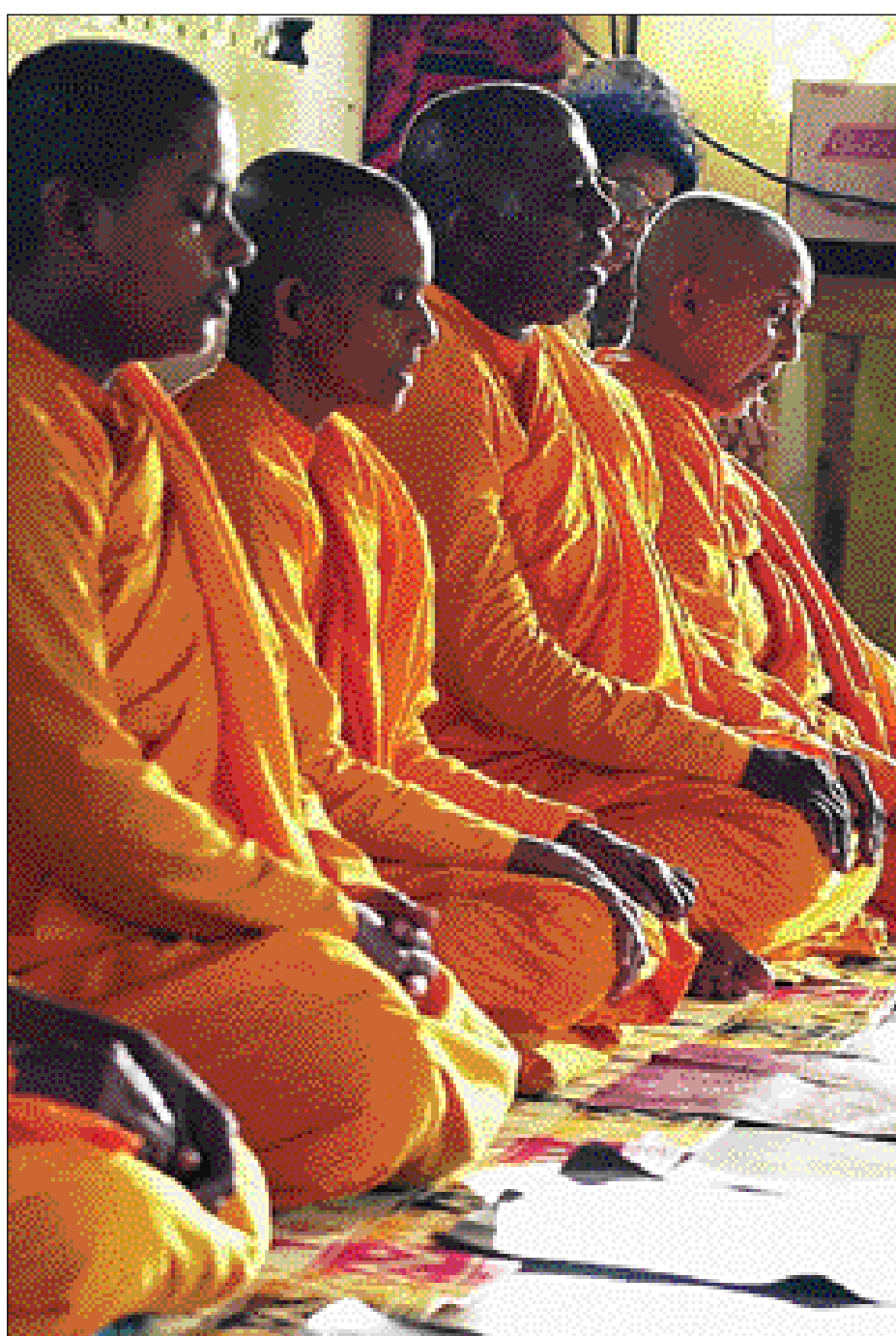
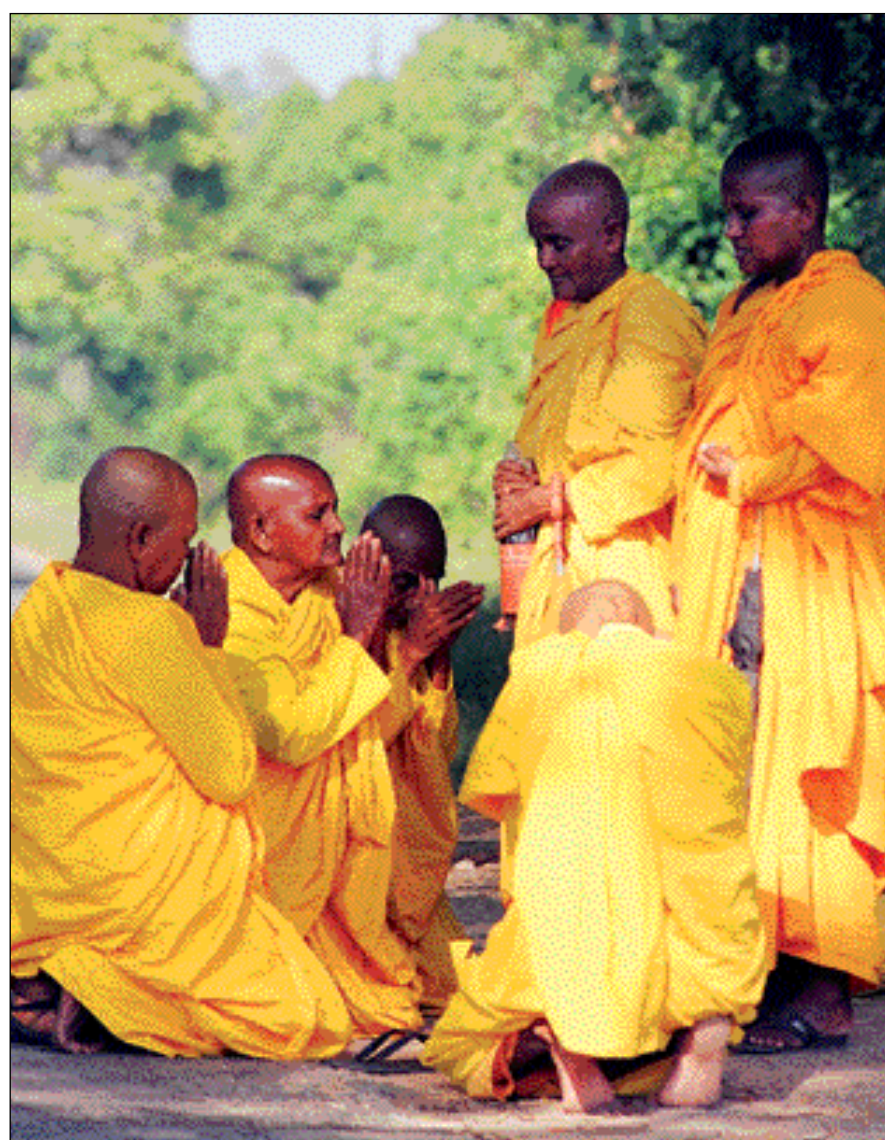
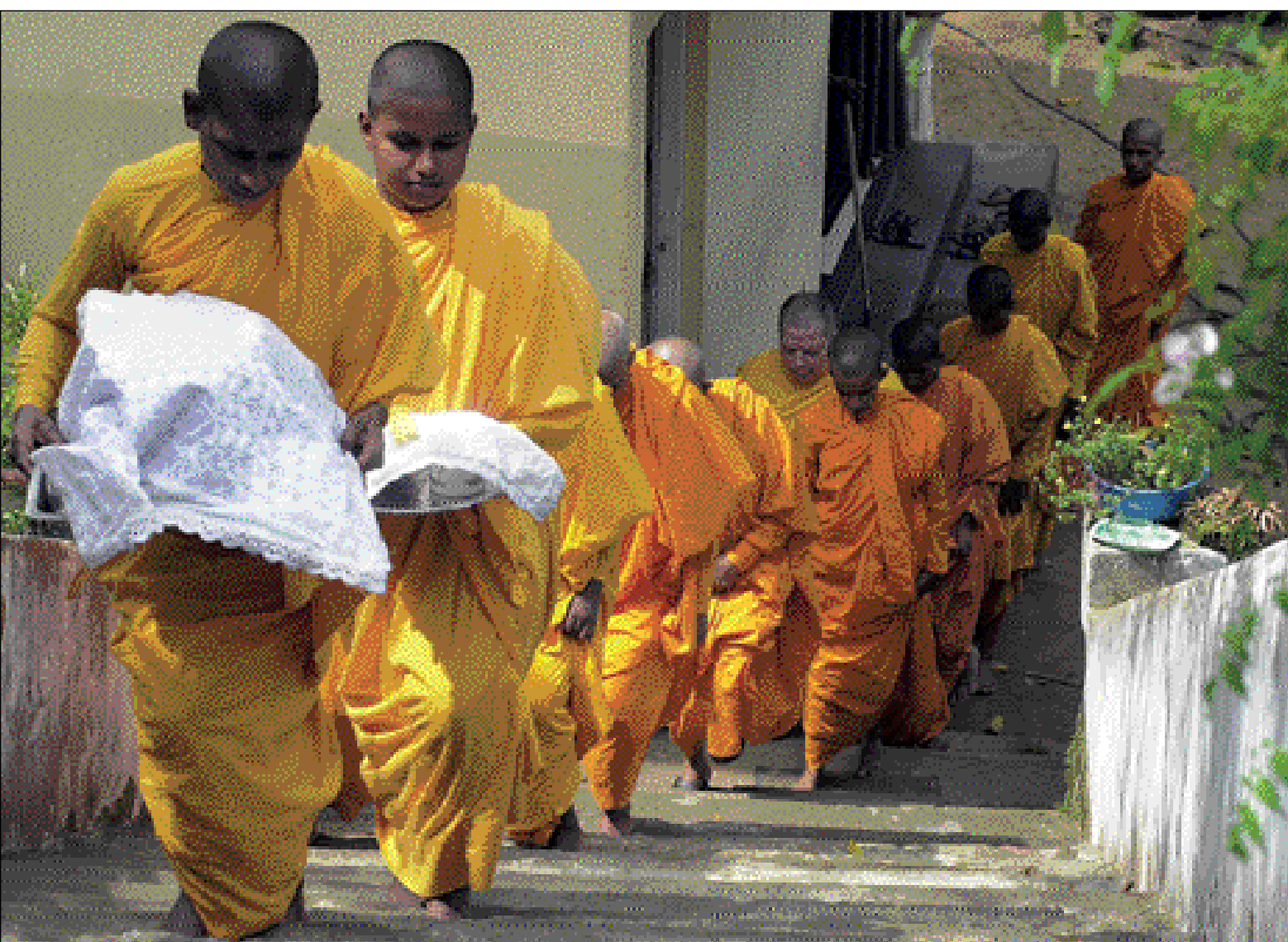


Women in Buddhism



PADUKKA: | "Bhiksuni" (Sanskrit) or "Bhikkhuni" (Pali) or the order of Buddhist nuns was introduced to Sri Lanka during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa. (BC 250 - 210) by Bhikkuni Sangamitta.

Since then this order flourished at Anuradhapura as well as in other parts of Sri Lanka for about 2250 years. With the fall of the Kingdom of Anuradhapura and the establishment of several other kingdoms such as Polonnaruwa, Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Kandy, the Bhikkhuni order slowly but surely disintegrated.

In the 20th century Anagarika Dharmapala who was the pioneer of the Buddhist revival opened the first nunnery at Darley Lane, Colombo.

He was followed by Miss Catherine de Alwis who went to Burma and was ordained there as a junior nun. She came back to Sri Lanka in 1903 and founded the Dasa Sil Mata order of Buddhist nuns.

Now that the Theravada Bhikkhuni Order has been established in Sri Lanka, female seekers of solitude, truth and wisdom leading the holy life of a Bhikkhuni, through the teachings advocated by The Buddha, have again emerged strongly to fulfill their vows.

Text & Pictures
by Sriyantha Walpola

