

Sikkhamana Dhammakhippa (Kay Rush) began as a volunteer at Songdhammakalyani while she was still hosting an Italian radio show and living in the French Alps. She sponsored and supervised the new monastery website and she assisted Venerable Dhammananda in editing her autobiography before requesting ordination in 2023.

Dhammakhippa has been on a spiritual path for many years. She is a serious meditator (samatha-vipassana) and she studies the Dhamma-Vinaya texts on a daily basis. She has participated in many meditation and Sutta study retreats. She became a Theravadin Buddhist after reading books on Ajahn Chah, Ajahn Buddhadasa, and after listening to Dhamma talks by some of the world's leading Western Dhamma scholars and monks of the Theravada tradition. Slowly, the yearning for ordination grew in her. Her path eventually led her to Venerable Dhammananda in Thailand and there was no need to look further. Kay was born in the US to an American father and a Japanese mother. Her mother raised her alone as a single parent. She has one older brother and, until they were pre-teens, they lived in government housing projects. Even though they didn't have much money, Kay has fond memories of her childhood. Her mother raised her to be independent, self-sufficient, and of high moral standards.

She graduated from high school when she was only 16 and immediately began university but a strong desire to see the world made her come to the decision to quit her studies. She did odd jobs until she had enough money to buy a one-way ticket to New York and as soon as she turned 18, she left Milwaukee. After a short time in New York, barely getting by, she got one job as a model and with that money she bought a one-way ticket to Paris where she arrived when she was 19 years. A modelling agency in Milan, Italy saw her and invited her to Italy and that was when her life really began.

She quit modelling (a job she never liked) and began deejaying in clubs in Milan and was soon offered a job at a radio station where she did mostly technical work. From there, she was asked to co-host a music video show on Italian television and she was also the main interviewer. In her long career in music, she has interviewed hundreds of famous artists amongst them David Bowie, The Rolling Stones, Tina Turner, Sting, Elton John, and Coldplay.

From hosting music shows, she went on to host a Sunday night football show and that's how she became a household name in Italy.

She has won numerous awards for her work and since 1989 she has been on the Italian Foreign Press list.

Even though she had more than she had ever dreamed of, she began feeling dissatisfied in her life and an inner yearning for a deeper

meaning took root. She left the big city and moved, with her cat, to the mountains and realised that she thrived in solitude. Around this time, Kay had her first 'existential crisis' so she quit television and spent more and more time in the mountains where she became an avid mountain climber, rock climber, skier, and paraglider. From the Italian Alps she moved to Chamonix, in the French Alps, where she lived until moving to Thailand.

In the early 2000's, she returned to television to host a popular TV show in Spain which she did for 4 years until finally giving up television for radio. She continued to host her own radio shows in Italian until she quit to be ordained as a monastic in 2024. At the same time she was hosting her daily radio show, she also deejayed in clubs, specializing in soulful house music and she released 20 soulful house compilations. She also wrote two novels which were published in Italy and she has a diploma as a professional wine sommelier. When she turned 50, she knew it was time to dedicate her life to something more profound. She divorced her husband of 8 years and moved to India where she studied yoga, Advaita Vedanta and Hindi. She also opened and ran an NGO to help Indian women and children in Rishikesh. After 7 years, she returned to France to open a yoga school until she realised that what she desired most was to renounce the mundane life and dedicate herself to the meditative path of Buddhism and to studying the Dhamma. She closed her company, sold her belongings and moved to Thailand.

Dhammakhippa is vegan. She speaks 5 languages: English, Italian, French, Spanish, and Hindi. She is now learning Thai. She will take full ordination after training two years as a sikkhamana under Venerable Dhammananda Bhikkhuni.