

Dharmaguptaka Vinaya

Vinaya Teachings and Rites for Śrāmaṇerī/as



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According to the Buddha's Vinaya,
only Buddhist monastics may read this text.

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**Compiled by
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and Bhikṣu Zhuhong**



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Confession and Repentance before Reciting the Precepts

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (*Poṣadha Skandhaka*) says, “The World-honored One established the precepts. If you commit a misdeed, you are not allowed to recite or listen to the precepts [without first repenting]. Do not confess and repent to someone who has transgressed the precepts [and not yet repented]. Someone who has transgressed the precepts also should not receive another’s confession and repentance.” Śrāmaṇerī/as [who have committed misdeeds] go to a place where there is a pure bhikṣu/ṇī. First, they request [the pure bhikṣu/ṇī] to be the amends-attester for their confession and repentance, and then they confess their misdeeds.

The śrāmaṇerī/as bare the right arm, take off their shoes, bow once, and kneel with palms joined. They state their misdeeds, requesting the amends-attester as follows:

Śrāmaṇerī/a: Virtuous one, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī/a _____ have committed the misdeeds that I have told you. I now request the virtuous one to be the amends-attester for my confession and repentance. With compassion, may the virtuous one be the amends-attester for my confession and repentance. (3x)

Amends-attester: Good.

Śrāmaṇerī/a: Yes. (*one bow*)

The śrāmaṇerī/as kneel with palms joined and say:

Śrāmaṇerī/a: Virtuous one, please listen and support me. I Śrāmaṇerī/a _____ have committed the misdeeds that I have told you. I now confess and repent them before the virtuous one. I will not conceal them. Confession and repentance bring peace and happiness; concealment brings sorrow. Remembering my misdeeds, I reveal them. Knowing that I have committed them, I will not conceal them. May the virtuous one affirm that I am pure, that my precept-body is complete, and that I can perform the poṣadha with purity. (3x)

Amends-attester: Be responsible for the state of your mind. Cultivate antipathy towards such behavior.

Śrāmaṇerī/a: Yes. (*one bow*)

Excerpt from the Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣu/ṇī Poṣadha¹

When they hear the signal for bhikṣu/ṇīs to gather for poṣadha, śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/śrāmaṇeras put on their seven-strip robe (uttarāsaṅga, chogu) and go to a place where they can see but cannot hear the bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha. They wait to be invited into the hall to participate in the poṣadha.

9. Karman of Confession and Repentance

Chant leader: Please call in those who are not fully ordained.
Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/Śrāmaṇeras enter the hall.

Chant leader: Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/Śrāmaṇeras, line up in ordination order and face the Buddha. Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.² Kneel with palms joined.

Upādhyāyā/a (*faces śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/śrāmaṇeras*): Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/Śrāmaṇeras, listen attentively. It is hard to obtain a human body. It is hard to have the opportunity to listen to the teaching on the Vinaya. Time passes quickly and the holy path is hard to accomplish. Purify your body, speech, and mind diligently and study scriptures, Vinaya, and commentaries. Be cautious and do not be complacent.
The upādhyāyā/a gives advice that fits the recipients.

Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/Śrāmaṇeras: Yes, I will do as directed.

Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/Śrāmaṇeras: Ārya saṅgha! Today the saṅgha of the ten directions recites the precepts. I Śikṣamāṇā/Śrāmaṇerī/Śrāmaṇera _____ am pure. May the saṅgha support my observance of the precepts. (3x)

Chant leader: Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/Śrāmaṇeras, bow to the Buddha once.

Chant leader: Everyone face the Buddha.

¹ This is the only part of the Bhikṣu/ṇī Poṣadha that śrāmaṇerī/as can attend.

² Each set of bows ends with a half-bow. The chant leader rings the bell whenever anyone bows.

See page 4 for the music score.

Assembly: Every harmful action I have done
With my body, speech, and mind,
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and confusion,
All these I openly lay bare before you. (*one bow*)

Every harmful action I have done
With my body, speech, and mind,
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and confusion,
I now confess all my nonvirtuous actions. (*one bow*)

Every harmful action I have done
With my body, speech, and mind,
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and confusion,
I now confess all these roots of nonvirtue. (*one bow*)

Repentance Chant

O--Bell
 △--Gong
 ▲--Gong Stop
 ∅--Bell Stop

▲ ∅

E - v'ry ha - rm - fu - l a - ction
 I ha - - ve do - - -
 - ne with my bo - dy, spee - - ch, an - d mi - - nd,
 o - ver - whe - - lmed by
 a tta - ch - ment, an - - ge - - r,
 an - d co - n - fu - - sio - - -
 - n, a - - ll the - se I o - - pen - ly lay
 ba - re be - fo - re you
 ba - re be - fore you

Performance markings include:
 - Circles (O) above notes, indicating bell strikes.
 - Triangles (△) above notes, indicating gong strikes.
 - Triangles with a vertical line (▲) above notes, indicating gong stops.
 - Circles with a diagonal slash (∅) above notes, indicating bell stops.
 - Trill markings (3) above notes.
 - Time signature changes: 4/4, 5/4, 4/4, 5/4, 4/4, 5/4, 4/4, 5/4, 4/4.
 - First ending bracket (1, 2) and second ending bracket (3).
 - Repeat signs at the end of the piece.

Chant leader: Face the central aisle.

10. Inviting the Prātimokṣa Reciter

Prior to the poṣadha, the saṅgha has assigned a bhikṣu/ṇī to recite the prātimokṣa.

Chant leader (*palms joined*): Virtuous one, with compassion, please recite the prātimokṣa for the assembly.

Prātimokṣa reciter: It is my privilege to recite the prātimokṣa.

Chant leader: Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Bhikṣu/ṇī _____ has been assigned to recite the bhikṣu/ṇī prātimokṣa for the assembly. May the virtuous one _____ take the high seat.

Prātimokṣa reciter (*walks to the bowing cushion*): The assembly has assigned me Bhikṣu/ṇī _____ to recite the prātimokṣa. I would first like to bow to the virtuous saṅgha. (*one bow*)

11. Offering Incense and Ascending the Seat

See pages 6-7 for the music score.

Assembly: When incense in the urn is heated, the universe is perfumed.
The assembly of Buddhas vast as the ocean sense it from afar.
Auspicious clouds form everywhere.
Where sincere minds abound, the entire bodies of Buddhas all appear.
Homage to Perfumed-Cloud-Canopy Bodhisattva Mahāsattva.
(*last line 3x*)

When the gong is rung at “heated,” the prātimokṣa reciter makes a half-bow, walks slowly to the altar, makes a half-bow, kneels, and offers three incense sticks to the Buddha. S/he stands, makes a half-bow, walks back to the bowing cushion, and bows to the Buddha three times.

Incense Offering Chant

O--Bell
 X--Fish
 △--Gong
 △--Gong Stop

△ X

Whe - n in - ce - nse in the urn is__ hea - te -
 6 - d, the__ u - ni - ve - rse is__ per
 11 fu - - - - med. The__
 16 a - ssem - bly of Bu - ddhas vast-as the o - ce - an se - nse it from a
 21 fa - r. Ah__ Au -
 26 - spi - cious clou - ds fo - rm e - very - whe -
 30 - - re. Whe - - re sin - cere__
 35 mi - - - nds a - bou - - -
 40 - nd, the__ en - ti - re bo - dies of Bu - ddhas all__ a -

45 ppea - r. Ho - ma - ge to _____ Per - fu med

50 Clou - d Ca-no-py Bo - dhi - sa - - - -

55 ttva _____ Ma - ha - sa - ttva _____ Ho - mage

60 to _____ Per - - fu - med Clou - - - d

65 Ca-no-py Bo - dhi - sa - - - - - ttva _____

70 Ma - ha - sa - ttva _____ Ho - mage to _____

75 Per - - fu - med Clou - - - d Ca-no-py

80 Bo - dhi - sa - - - - - ttva _____

84 Ma - ha - sa - - - - - ttva. _____

The prātimokṣa reciter walks to the high seat in the front, makes a half-bow to the seat and a half-bow to the assembly, ascends the seat, and faces the assembly.

Chant leader: Turn and face the Buddha.

Chant leader: Spread the sitting cloth (*niṣīdana*).

Prātimokṣa reciter: No need to spread the sitting cloth.

Chant leader: Bow to the prātimokṣa reciter.

Prātimokṣa reciter: No need to bow.

Chant leader: Half-bow and be seated.

Assembly: (*ring gong*) As the sound of the gong pervades the great universe of the three levels of a thousand world systems, the Buddhadharma spreads to tens of thousands and hundreds of millions of lands. May all the merit generated be dedicated for world peace. May the benefit bless all the supporters for their extensive kindness.

Prātimokṣa reciter: Homage to our root teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha. (*na mo ben shi shi jia mou ni fo*) *The assembly repeats after them. (3x)*

Prātimokṣa reciter: It is rare to hear the teaching of the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra*, and it may take countless great eons to encounter it. Studying and reciting it are also rare. Practicing it is the rarest of all.

Prātimokṣa reciter (*hits block*): I Bhikṣu/ṇī _____ pay respect to the saṅgha with palms joined. The saṅgha has appointed me to recite the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra*. I am afraid I might make mistakes. May the virtuous saṅgha point them out to me with compassion.

12. Actual Poṣadha: Formal Recitation of the Bhikṣu/ṇī Prātimokṣa

Prātimokṣa reciter: The recognition of the Teacher, the Buddha, in the prātimokṣa; the recognition of diligence in your own training; and the recognition that the long abiding of the Victor’s doctrine depends on this method—pray listen with these three set in your mind.

Prātimokṣa reciter (*palms joined*): In the language of India, *Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣu/ṇī Prātimokṣa Sūtra*.³

The bhikṣu/ṇīs hold the right tips of their robes between their joined palms, raise them to their forehead and say together:

All bhikṣu/ṇīs: Homage to the Omniscient One!

Prātimokṣa reciter (*palms joined*): I bow and pay respect to all the Buddhas, Dharma, and Saṅgha. I will now proclaim the precepts of the Vinaya so the correct Dharma will last forever.

The precepts are as limitless as the ocean, like jewels that can be sought tirelessly. To protect the sacred treasure of the Dharma, the saṅgha is gathered to listen to me. To eliminate the eight defeats, to extirpate the 17 remainders, and to prevent the 30 forfeiture-lapses, you are assembled to listen to me.

Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni—all these World-honored Ones of great virtue taught this *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* to me. I now wish to proclaim it well. All you worthy ones listen together.

Just as a person whose leg is injured is unable to walk, similarly those who have broken the precepts cannot be born as a *deva* (celestial being) or a human being. Those who wish to be born in the celestial world or the human world should always protect all the precepts and not violate them in any way.

Just as a coachman driving on a treacherous road is worried because the wheel-bolts are gone and the axle is broken, so a person who has broken the precepts is afraid at the time of death.

³ In Chinese *Si Fen Bi Qiu (Ni) Jie Ben*. In Tibetan *Chos sbas pa'i dGe slong (ma)'i So sor thar pa'i mdo*.

Just as when looking in a mirror the beautiful are delighted while the ugly feel sad, similarly during the recitation of the prātimokṣa those who keep the precepts feel happy, while violators feel sad.

Just as in combat between two armies, the brave advance while the cowardly retreat, similarly during the recitation of the prātimokṣa the pure are tranquil, while the defiled are afraid.

A king is the greatest worldling, the ocean is the greatest body of water, the moon is the greatest star, and the Buddha is the greatest sage.

Among all the regulations, the highest is the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra*. The Tathāgata set forth these precepts that are recited every half month.

Chant leader: Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs/Śrāmaṇeras, bow to the Buddha three times. Then go to another room and recite your precepts.

The Essentials of the Śrāmaṇerī/a Precepts and Rules of Comportment⁴

Compiled by a disciple of the bodhisattva precepts, Śramaṇa Zhuhong⁵ of Yunqi Monastery.

1. Introduction

The Sanskrit word *śrāmaṇerī/a*, which means novice, is translated into Chinese by the words “cease” and “compassion.” By ceasing destructive actions and cultivating compassion, a novice puts an end to worldly defilements, and strives with compassion to liberate all sentient beings. The word *śrāmaṇerī/a* is also translated as “to pursue diligently,” and “to seek out peace.” The “precepts and rules of comportment” refer to the ten precepts and the minor precepts of training.

2. The Śrāmaṇerī/a Precepts

The Buddha instructed those who leave the householder’s life to devote themselves to the study of the precepts for the first five years after ordination. After five years, they may listen to teachings and practice meditation. After shaving their heads, *śrāmaṇerī/as* first receive the ten precepts, and later receive the full ordination.

Presently, there are those who are called *śrāmaṇerī/as*, but know nothing about the precepts they have taken, or neglect to study them out of arrogance. They fail to follow the proper steps and yet want to aim high. How lamentable this is!

For this reason, I would like to explain the ten precepts to set beginning students on the right track. Those who leave the householder’s life with the right mindset should diligently observe these ten precepts, and be cautious not to transgress any of them. These precepts serve as a stepping stone to receive the full *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* precepts, and in the long run, as the foundation for the bodhisattva precepts.

Observing the precepts gives rise to *samādhi* (concentration), and *samādhi* gives rise to wisdom. This leads you to attain the noble path, making your choice of the homeless life worthwhile.

If you wish to study these precepts further, read the entire Vinaya-piṭaka. The ten precepts are excerpted from the *Sūtra on the Comportment and Rules of the Ten Śrāmaṇerī/a Precepts (Sha Mi Shi Jie Yi Ze Jing)*, which the Buddha enjoined Śāriputra to teach Rāhula.

⁴ In Chinese *Sha Mi Lu Yi Yao Lue*.

⁵ 1535-1615. The 8th Patriarch of the Pure Land School and an accomplished Chan Master.

1. The first precept: Do not kill.

Do not deliberately take a sentient being's life, from the Buddha, the āryas, your teachers, saṅgha members, your parents, down to even the smallest of insects that fly or crawl. Do not take a life yourself, or have someone else do it, or rejoice in acts of killing. This precept is discussed extensively in Vinaya texts and need not be elaborated upon here.

The scriptures say that if you have lice during the winter, you should put them in a bamboo tube with cotton, keep them warm, and feed them greasy food, so that they will not starve or freeze to death. Monastics are also encouraged to filter their drinking water [to avoid killing small creatures that may live in it], and to cover lamps [to prevent insects from falling into them]. They are also discouraged from keeping [predatory animals such as] cats and foxes as pets. All this is done in the spirit of compassion. If even small creatures are to be treated with such care, we can understand how other living creatures should be treated.

If you are unable to carry out such compassionate actions, at least do not add to any creature's suffering. As the scriptures say, "Practice generosity and kindness, aid those in need, and bring all beings to peace." If you see an act of killing [and cannot stop it], generate compassion for both the victim and the perpetrator. Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

2. The second precept: Do not steal.

Do not take anything that has not been freely given to you, from valuable items such as gold or silver, down to a needle or a blade of grass. Whether it is the property of your monastery, a faithful donor, the saṅgha, government officials, or citizens, it is considered stealing to take any object by force, through stealth, or by fraud, including tax evasion and smuggling.

It is recorded in the scriptures that a śrāmaṇera stole seven pieces of fruit belonging to his monastery, another stole pastries belonging to the saṅgha on numerous occasions, and another stole a small amount of honey belonging to the saṅgha. All of them fell into hell. Therefore, the scriptures say, "It would be better to cut off your hand than to take something that does not belong to you." Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

3. The third precept: Do not engage in sexual activity.

The [third of the] five precepts observed by Buddhist laypeople prohibits only sexual misconduct. The [third of the] ten precepts for monastics requires complete abstinence from sexual activity. Any sexual activity with any person, male or female, is a transgression of this precept.

The *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (*Shou Leng Yan Jing*) mentions Bhikṣuṇī Padmagandha who secretly engaged in sexual activity. She told herself that

sexual activity did not involve killing or stealing, therefore it would not lead to negative results. Eventually her body burst into flames, and she was reborn in hell.

Due to sexual desire, worldly people destroy their bodies and ruin their families. How can those of us who have left the householder's life engage in sexual activity? Desire is the root of all birth and death. As the scriptures say, "Although we are born due to the impurity of sexual desire, it is far better to die in purity." Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

4. The fourth precept: Do not lie.

There are four types of deluded speech:

- a. The first is lying. This refers to saying that what is true is wrong, and what is wrong is true; saying you have not seen something when you have seen it, saying you have seen something when you have not seen it, etc. In short, untrue speech.
- b. The second is idle talk. This refers to flamboyant, exaggerated speech, alluring lyrics and sentimental poetry that arouse desire, increase sorrow, and shake your resolve [to practice the Dharma].
- c. The third is harsh speech. This refers to rebuking and cursing others rudely and maliciously.
- d. The fourth is divisive speech. This refers to talking about one person's faults to a second person, and then talking about the second person's faults to the first person; speech that separates people who have kind and respectful relations; speech that creates quarrels and strife, etc. This also includes first praising others to their face and then later disparaging them, hypocritical speech, revealing others' faults, and speaking of their shortcomings.

All these are examples of deluded speech.

If an ordinary being claims to have attained the state of the āryas, such as claiming that they have attained the result of *srotāpanna* (stream-enterer), *sakṛdāgāmin* (once-returner), etc., they have told a great lie, and committed a serious misdeed.

There is no transgression of this precept if you speak falsely with the intention to save a person in danger, or as a skillful means with a compassionate intention to aid another being.

The ancients said, "The essentials of self-discipline begin with refraining from false speech." Needless to say, those seeking the path to liberation must practice this.

It is recorded in the scriptures that a śrāmaṇera mocked an old bhikṣu's recitation of sūtras, saying that he sounded like a barking dog. However, this old bhikṣu was an arhat. It was only because the arhat encouraged the śrāmaṇera to repent his transgression immediately, that the śrāmaṇera narrowly avoided a rebirth in hell. Nevertheless, he was reborn as a dog. One phrase of malicious speech can result in harm such as this!

As the scriptures say, "People live in the world with axes in their mouths; through harmful speech they cut themselves to pieces." Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

5. The fifth precept: Do not take intoxicants.

Taking intoxicants refers to consuming any substance that can cause you to become inebriated, [including alcohol, illegal drugs, or abusing prescription drugs]. There are many different types of intoxicants—those made from sugarcane, grapes, flowers, rice, and so forth. All of these are prohibited. An exception is made only in the case of severe illness that can only be cured by taking an intoxicant. In such a case, inform the saṅgha assembly before taking the intoxicant. Otherwise, do not let even a single drop touch your lips. Do not sniff intoxicating substances, go to places where liquor is sold, or offer intoxicants to others.

[According to legend,] when Yidi invented the method to brew alcohol, [her husband, the Emperor] Yu cut off all ties with her. The Emperor Zhou, [the last king of the Shang Dynasty], filled a pool with alcohol, and brought his country to ruin. It is even more shameful for a member of the saṅgha to drink.

In the past, there was a pious layman who transgressed the precept against drinking, and in his drunkenness, he eventually broke all of the other precepts. Intoxication leads to the 36 faults,⁶ thus transgressing this precept is not a minor matter. Those who crave intoxicants will, upon death, fall into the hell of boiling excrement. In successive rebirths they will be ignorant, having lost the seed of wisdom. Intoxicants confuse the mind and induce madness, more so than if you were to take arsenic. As the scriptures say, "It would be better to drink molten copper. Be cautious not to transgress the precept against taking intoxicants." Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

⁶ These are enumerated in the *Sūtra on the Discrimination of Good and Evil (Fo Shuo Fen Bie Shan'E Suo Qi Jing)*.

6. The sixth precept: Do not wear flower garlands or apply fragrance to the body.

In India, there is the custom of stringing flowers into a wreath and wearing them as adornments. In China, this would be comparable to using silk, velvet, gold, and jewels to make items such as ornamented scarves and hats. In India, wealthy people would also have their servants rub expensive fragrances on their bodies. In China, this would be comparable to applying perfumes, using cosmetics, and such items. How can those who have left the householder's life use such things?

The Buddha allowed the saṅgha to use three robes, all made of coarse hempen cloth. Do not wear furs or silks as doing so harms animals and contradicts our practice of compassion. Except for monastics over the age of 70 who are infirm and are unable to keep warm without wearing such materials, everyone else is not allowed to do so.

Emperor Yu of the Xia Dynasty despised fine clothing, and the official Gongsun wore coarse material. They were honored as king and minister, but did not take advantage of their station. How could spiritual practitioners do the opposite and covet finery and adornments? Rather, we should dress appropriately in drab colors and rag-ropes. In the past, an eminent monastic wore the same pair of simple sandals for 30 years. What more needs to be said for us common monastics? Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

7. The seventh precept: Do not sing, dance, participate in performances, or go to watch or listen to them.

Singing refers to vocal music; dancing refers to using the body to perform movements; performances refer to music produced by wind or string instruments. Monastics must neither engage in such activities, nor intentionally watch or listen to others engage in them.

In ancient times, there was an immortal who listened to a woman sing an enticingly beautiful song and lost his supernormal powers as a result. Given the dangers of listening to and watching such performances, how much more so is the folly of engaging in such activities yourself?

Presently, ignorant people think that because the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Miao Fa Lian Hua Jing*) mentions lutes and cymbals, it is permissible to learn to play music. However, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* refers to playing music as an offering to the Buddhas, not for our own enjoyment. Music should only be played in monasteries during religious ceremonies or funeral services, when requested by lay people.

Now, for the sake of [abandoning the cycle of] birth and death, we have cast aside the worldly life and gone forth into the homeless life. Can it be fitting to neglect spiritual cultivation, which is our proper duty, and instead

seek to acquire music skills? This precept also prohibits gambling, playing chess or dice, and such recreational games, as these distract the mind from practicing the spiritual path and increase misdeeds and negativities. Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

8. The eighth precept: Do not sit or lie on high, luxurious seats or beds.

The Buddha instructed that the height of string beds should not exceed the width of eight of the Tathāgata's fingers,⁷ and that using a bed [or seat] higher than this was a transgression. Furthermore, beds and seats should not be painted colorfully, beautifully carved, or adorned with fine and precious decorations.

People in ancient times sat on the grass and slept under trees. That we have beds and seats in the present day is already an improvement. Why make them higher and broader merely to indulge an illusory body? Throughout his life, Venerable Pārśva never once lay down, and the meditation master Gao Fengmiao resolved not to use a bed or chair for three years. On the other hand, the Master Wuda received a sandalwood chair as a gift, which diminished his merit and created negative results. Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

9. The ninth precept: Do not eat at unsuitable times.

Unsuitable times means any time after noon, as this is a period when members of the saṅgha may not eat. The devas eat at dawn, the Buddhas eat at noon, animals eat in the afternoon, and *pretas* (hungry ghosts) eat at night. The saṅgha should emulate the Buddhas and so should not eat after noon. When pretas hear the sound of eating utensils, fire blazes in their throats. Therefore, we should eat quietly even at noon. Needless to say, [we should refrain from eating] after noon.

In ancient times, there was an eminent monastic who heard a monastic in an adjacent room prepare a meal after the noon hour. He began to weep uncontrollably, lamenting the decline of the Buddhadharmā.

At present, however, people's bodies are weak and prone to illness, and those who need to eat more may not be able to observe this precept. For this reason, the ancients called the evening meal "medicine meal," since it is consumed with the intent to alleviate illness. Nevertheless, we should be aware that we are transgressing the Buddha's precept and have great regret for doing this. Be mindful of the pretas' sufferings, and practice compassion continuously to liberate them. Do not overeat, eat fine food, or eat in a leisurely manner. With these restrictions, [eating after noon] is permissible. Otherwise, you commit a serious misdeed. Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

⁷ One Buddha finger is approximately two inches long.

10. The tenth precept: Do not handle gold, silver, precious items, [or money].

Gold and silver refer to these metals found in their crude state, as well as to alloys of gold and silver. Precious items refer to the seven kinds of treasure⁸ and the like. All these things increase thoughts of desire and hinder your practice. For this reason, when the Buddha was still in this world, he enjoined all of his monastic followers to accept alms for food. They were not to have kitchens in their monasteries, and they were to rely on outsiders—their followers—for clothing and lodging. Under such conditions, gold, silver, [and money] are useless. Touching and handling gold and silver was not even allowed. It is clear how strict monastics were concerning the matter of money.

In ancient times, there was a scholar who dug up buried gold but paid no attention to it whatsoever. If the worldly disciples of Confucius conducted themselves in this way, what use do the disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha, who claim to live simply, have for accumulated wealth?

Presently, people are unable to support themselves fully by going out on alms round. Some people enter large monasteries, some live in small hermitages, and some spend their lives traveling to distant places. In such cases, they cannot avoid the use of gold and silver [money] to pay for their expenses. They should be aware of the fact that they are transgressing the Buddha's precept and have great regret.

Be mindful of the poverty of others and always practice generosity. Do not run a business, accumulate wealth, engage in trade, or adorn your clothing or possessions with the seven kinds of treasure. With these restrictions, handling money is permissible. Otherwise, you commit a serious misdeed. Indeed, how could we not observe this precept?

3. Rules of Comportment

The Buddha instructed that when śrāmaṇerī/as reach 20 years of age, they may receive the full ordination. If they are unable to answer questions on matters related to a śrāmaṇerī/a's conduct, they may not be given the full precepts.⁹ [The śrāmaṇerī/a's teacher] should say to the śrāmaṇerī/a, "You are now a śrāmaṇerī/a, yet you know nothing of the duties of a śrāmaṇerī/a. The work of a śramaṇa (renunciate) is of great consequence and difficult to accomplish. You should study the precepts until you are familiar with them, and when you know them thoroughly, you may receive the complete

⁸ According to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, these are gold, silver, lapis lazuli, seashell, agate, pearl, and carnelian. This list differs among Buddhist scriptures.

⁹ Women are to have two years of śikṣamāṇā training, and at age 20, they can receive full ordination.

precepts. If we were to give you the full ordination now, everyone would say that the Buddhadharma is easy to practice, and that it is easy to become a śramaṇa.”

For this reason, the novice should be questioned about the following items, which have been taken from scriptures on śrāmaṇerī/as’ rules of comportment, from pure monastic regulations that have been followed since ancient times and from the present-day *Guide for the Śrāmaṇerī/a* (*Sha Mi Cheng Fan*). I have also taken excerpts from *Exhortation on Manners and Etiquette for Novices in Training* (*Jiao Jie Xin Xue Bi Qiu Xing Hu Lu Yi*) by Vinaya Master Daoxuan, which, although intended for newly ordained bhikṣu/ṇīs, can also be used by śrāmaṇerī/as.

In these degenerate times, people tend to be indolent and dislike complicated discourses. As such, I have abridged elaborations, extracted the essential points, and classified them into different sections for ease of study. In incomplete sections, I have added a few points to round out the meaning. Those who wish to study the precepts extensively should refer to the complete works.

1. Respecting elder śramaṇas

- Do not call an elder monastic by name.
- Do not eavesdrop when elder monastics are reciting the precepts.
- Do not spread stories about elder monastics’ transgressions.
- Do not fail to rise [or show respect] when an elder monastic walks past, except when reciting sūtras, or if you are ill, shaving your head, eating, or engaged in work for the monastery.

The Exhortation on Manners and Etiquette for Novices in Training says, “After you have been fully ordained for over five years, you may attain the position of an ācārya (teacher). When you have been fully ordained for over ten years, you may attain the position of an upādhyāyā/a (preceptor).” Even though this is a matter that only concerns fully ordained monastics, novices should know this in advance.

2. Attending to your teacher

- Rise early in the morning. Knock three times before entering your teacher’s room.
- If you commit a transgression and your upādhyāyā/a or ācārya admonishes and instructs you, do not talk back. Regard your upādhyāyā/a and ācārya as you would the Buddha.
- When removing unclean vessels [from your teacher’s room], do not show contempt or become angry [about being given this task].

- Regarding bowing to pay respect:
 - Do not bow when your teacher is seated in meditation, doing walking meditation, eating, lecturing, brushing their teeth, bathing, sleeping, or engaged in such activities.
 - When your teacher's door is shut, do not bow on the other side of the door. If you wish to enter their room to bow, knock three times. If your teacher does not answer, return later.
- When serving food or drink to your teacher, carry it respectfully with both hands. After your teacher has finished eating, collect the eating utensils slowly and mindfully.
- When attending to your teacher, do not stand directly in front of them, at a higher place, or too far away. Your teacher should be able to speak to you softly, without exerting themselves.
- When asking questions about the Buddhadharma, wear your robes properly, bow, and kneel with palms joined. When your teacher speaks, listen attentively and sincerely, and think deeply about their words. When asking questions about ordinary matters, there is no need to bow and kneel, but you should stand upright at your teacher's side and speak truthfully.
- If your teacher is tired in body or mind and tells you to leave, do so without being displeased or allowing displeasure to show on your face.
- Do not conceal any matters related to transgressions of your precepts, but go to your teacher immediately and request to make confession and repent. If your teacher gives you permission, confess all the particulars of your transgression, sincerely regret and reform your actions, and thus regain purity.
- Do not speak until your teacher has finished speaking.
- Do not sit in your teacher's chair, lie on their bed, or wear their robes and hats, even in jest.
- When delivering a letter for your teacher, do not secretly open and read it or give it to someone else to read. Upon delivering the letter, if you are questioned [by the recipient], answer truthfully. If it is inappropriate to answer, then skillfully and politely decline to do so. If invited to stay, do not delay, but think one-pointedly of your teacher, who is awaiting your return.
- When your teacher receives guests, stand where you usually would in attendance to your teacher's side or behind them, vigilant and ready to attend to his/her needs.
- When your teacher is ill, look after them with the utmost care. Clean their room and bedding, prepare medicine and food, and wash and dry their clothing and shoes. These instructions are as recorded in the Vinaya, so I will not repeat the details here.

Further notes:

- Generally, when serving your teacher, do not sit down unless told to. Do not speak without being asked to, unless you have matters requiring your teacher's advice.
- When standing in attendance, do not lean against the wall or a table, but stand straight with feet together, to the side of your teacher.
- If you wish to bow and your teacher tells you not to do so, respect their wishes and do not bow.
- Whenever your teacher converses with guests and speaks about the Dharma to benefit the body and mind, remember their words.
- When your teacher gives instructions, carry them out promptly, without insolence or delay.
- Do not go to sleep before your teacher.
- Whenever someone asks for the name of your teacher, respond in a respectful manner.

Disciples should seek out a knowledgeable teacher, stay close to them for a long period of time, and not leave their teacher too soon. If your teacher is not truly knowledgeable, seek another good guide. If you leave your teacher, always remember the good instructions you have received. Do not be ruled by your afflictions and do as you please, be swept away by mundane worldly life, or engage in improper behavior. Do not live near the hustle and bustle of a town, in non-Buddhist places of worship, in laypeople's homes, or near members of the opposite sex. Do not engage in worldly affairs and all manner of negativities because you no longer live with your teacher.

3. Accompanying your teacher outside the monastery

- Do not stop at houses along the way, or stop to converse with people on the side of the road.
- Do not look to the left and the right, but follow behind your teacher with your gaze lowered.
- At the home of a donor, stand to one side and sit down only when your teacher tells you to do so.
- At other monasteries, when your teacher pays respect to the Buddha or when you bow to the Buddha, do not take it upon yourself to ring the bell.
- When traveling in the mountains, carry your teacher's bedding and sitting cloth. When traveling for a long distance, do not become separated from your teacher for too great a distance. When crossing water, use a staff to carefully test the depth of the water. Carry your teacher's bottle, walking staff, and so on. These instructions are as recorded in the Vinaya, so I will not repeat the details here.

Further notes:

- By chance, if you and your teacher have to travel by separate routes, agree to meet at a predetermined location, and do not be late.
- When your teacher is having a meal, stand by their side and perform the food offering. When the meal is finished, remain standing to receive the offerings made to your teacher on their behalf.

4. Joining the saṅgha assembly

- Do not quarrel over seating arrangements. When seated, do not call out to others who are seated far away and talk and laugh with them.
- If a saṅgha member does not act with propriety, overlook their negativities and extol their good qualities.
- Do not boast about what you have done in order to show off your merits.
- Wherever you live, be the last to retire and the first to rise.
- When washing your face, do not use too much water. When brushing your teeth, lower your head to spit out the water and be careful not to splatter the water on others. Do not blow your nose or spit loudly. Do such things privately and not in the vicinity of a monastery building or stūpa, in a clean room, on clean floors, or in clean water.
- When drinking tea or soup, do not raise only one hand in salutation [instead of putting your palms joined together respectfully].
- Do not brush your teeth facing a stūpa or facing your upādhyāyā/a or ācārya.
- When you hear a bell, with palms joined, recite this *gāthā* (verse) silently:
Hearing the sound of the bell reduces my afflictions,
Wisdom grows and the awakening mind is born.
Leaving the hell realms and escaping the pits of fire,
May I attain Buddhahood to liberate all sentient beings.
Om karatiye svaha (3x)
- Do not laugh too much. When you laugh or yawn, cover your mouth with the sleeve of your robe.
- Do not walk hurriedly.
- Do not take lamps offered to the Buddha for your personal use. When lighting a lamp, it is best to cover it with a shade so that insects will not fly into it.
- When offering flowers to the Buddha, offer those that are in full bloom, and do not smell them first. Remove the withered flowers before offering new ones. Do not discard withered flowers on the ground or step on them, but dispose of them properly.
- Do not refuse to respond when you are called. It is best to respond by reciting [Amitābha] Buddha's name.

- Whenever you find lost articles, inform the saṅgha member in charge of the monastery property immediately.

Further notes:

- Do not become too close to young śrāmaṇerī/as.
- Do not wear your three robes in a sloppy manner.
- Do not have too many robes. When you have extra robes, give them away.
- Do not acquire fine accessories, objects for amusement, or worldly adornments because this will cause learned people to ridicule the saṅgha.
- Do not wear colorful robes or ornaments such as those worn by worldly people.
- Handle your robes only with clean hands.
- When entering a temple, adjust your pants and socks. Do not be sloppy or casual about your appearance.
- Do not stroll about aimlessly.
- Do not talk too much.
- Do not sit idly and watch while the assembly is hard at work, avoiding your responsibilities and resting without permission.
- Do not take any food, drink, utensils, or property belonging to the monastery for your own use, such as bamboo, lumber, flowers, fruits, vegetables, etc.
- Do not discuss politics; the merits or faults of the national, state, or local government; or the good points or shortcomings of laypeople.
- When referring to yourself, use your Dharma name instead of the first-person pronoun, “I.”
- Do not quarrel over trifles. If something major arises that is difficult to endure, remain calm and tranquil and discuss the matter with reason and logic. If you are unable to do this, excuse yourself and withdraw. Becoming angry and acting rudely is not suitable for a monastic.

5. Eating with the saṅgha assembly

- When you hear the signal for mealtimes, arrange your robes properly and recite the mantras and prayers for mealtimes with reverence.
- When offering food to the pretas, do not use more than seven grains of rice, one inch of noodle, or a fingernail-sized piece of bread. If you give too much, you will become greedy, if you give too little, you will become stingy. No other type of food—vegetables or tofu—should be offered. Place the food offering in the palm of the left hand and recite this gāthā silently:

To the assembly of ghosts, spirits, and so forth,
I now bestow these offerings.
May this food pervade the ten directions
To be shared by all ghosts and spirits.
Om muliling svaha (3x)

- When eating, perform the following five contemplations:
 1. I contemplate all the causes and conditions and the kindness of others by which I have received this food.
 2. I contemplate my own practice, constantly trying to improve it.
 3. I contemplate my mind, cautiously guarding it from wrongdoing, greed, and other defilements.
 4. I contemplate this food, treating it as wondrous medicine to nourish my body.
 5. I contemplate the aim of Buddhahood, accepting and consuming this food in order to accomplish it.
- Do not talk about whether the food is good or bad.
- Do not give food away secretly, for example, feeding it to dogs.
- When the server comes [to offer second helpings], do not decline out loud. If you are full, use your hand to signal that you do not want more food.
- Do not scratch your head during mealtime, such that dandruff falls into your neighbor's bowl.
- Do not talk with your mouth full, or laugh and engage in idle talk.
- Do not make noise when you are chewing.
- If you need to pick your teeth, cover your mouth with the sleeve of your robe when you do so.
- If there is an insect in your food, remove it discreetly and put it away. Do not let your neighbor see it and become disturbed.
- Finish your meal in one sitting. After you have finished eating and left the table, do not return to eat again.
- Do not scrape your bowl with your fingers.
- In general, do not eat too quickly or too slowly.
- If the server is slow to arrive, do not be upset. When they do arrive, indicate what kind of food you want by pointing to it silently. Do not call out loudly or make noise with your bowl.
- Do not leave the table before others even if you have finished eating.
- If you transgress a saṅgha regulation and hear this being announced to the assembly,¹⁰ do not object and refuse to follow the regulations.
- If there is an unhusked kernel of rice, remove the husk and eat the rice.

¹⁰ In Chinese Buddhist monasteries, announcements to the saṅgha and disciplinary talks are usually given during or after breakfast or lunch.

- Do not give rise to thoughts of greed or eat without control when you see a fine meal.
- Do not eat apart from the assembly.

6. Bowing

- Do not bow in the center of the Buddha hall as that is the place reserved for the abbess/abbot.
- When someone is bowing to the Buddha, do not walk in front of them.
- When joining your palms, place the fingers together evenly, and do not leave space between the palms.¹¹ Do not touch your nose with the tips of your fingers; rather, keep them level with your chest.
- Do not bow at times that are not designated for this purpose [so that you don't disturb others]. If you want to bow at such times, do so when people are quiet.
- When your teacher bows to the Buddha, do not bow beside them, but do so behind them at a distance. When your teacher bows to another person, do not bow at the same time.
- When in your teacher's presence, do not bow to someone equal to you, or receive bows from someone else.¹²
- Do not bow to anyone if you are carrying scriptures or an image of Buddha in your hands.

Note: Bow with utmost sincerity and reverence while visualizing [the Buddha]. A śrāmaṇerī/a should be aware of the seven ways of bowing.¹³

7. Listening to the Dharma

- Upon seeing an announcement to go to the main hall [for Dharma teachings], proceed to the hall early instead of waiting until the drum [announcing the start of the teachings] is beaten loudly.
- Arrange your robes neatly and enter the temple looking straight ahead. Sit up properly, do not engage in idle talk, and avoid coughing or spitting loudly.

¹¹ In the Tibetan tradition, the thumbs are tucked in and there is a space between the two palms, symbolizing emptiness.

¹² If you are attending a teaching given by your teacher's teacher, and your teacher is present, do not bow to them or wait for them to sit down before being seated. As they are in the presence of their teacher, it is uncomfortable for them to receive such expressions of respect.

¹³ These are (1) bowing without respect; (2) bowing in accord with chanting; (3) bowing with respect in body and mind; (4) bowing with wisdom and purity; (5) bowing to the pervasive sphere of reality; (6) bowing with correct insight; (7) bowing to the equality of ultimate reality.

Further notes:

- When listening to the Dharma, you should listen to the teaching, think about what you have heard, and put it into practice. Do not merely memorize the words of the teaching for the sake of making conversation.
- Do not claim to understand something that you do not understand, mindlessly mouthing words without understanding their meaning.
- A young śrāmaṇerī/a who is not yet firm in the practice of the precepts would do well to first study the Vinaya before attending lectures on doctrine.

8. Studying scriptures

- First study the Vinaya, and later study the sūtras. This order should not be reversed.
- Before studying a particular sūtra, first let your teacher know about this. When you have finished studying the sūtra, let your teacher know what sūtra you will be studying next.
- Do not blow dust off the top of sūtras, and do not place tea utensils or other miscellaneous articles on the table where scriptures are kept.
- Do not walk close to or in front of a table on which someone is studying scriptures.
- If a scripture is damaged, repair it immediately.
- Do not study non-Buddhist philosophers and secular books before finishing the basic course of study for śrāmaṇerī/as.

Further notes:

- Do not focus exclusively on studying the sūtras chanted at funeral services [for financial gain].
- Do not study spurious texts or works on fortune telling, physiognomy, medicine, military tactics, divination, astronomy, geography, prognostication, alchemy, supernatural phenomena such as ghosts, making charms, etc.
- Do not study the art of poetry recitation.
- Do not study non-Buddhist books, unless you are exceptionally wise and wish to make a comparative study of the depth of Buddhist and non-Buddhist systems. In such a case, you may refer to non-Buddhist works, but do not study these teachings [in order to follow them].
- Do not study poetry writing, or become attached to perfecting skill as a calligrapher. It is enough to write in a clear, legible hand.
- Do not handle scriptures with dirty hands. Regard the scriptures as you would the Buddha, and do not laugh and joke in their presence.
- Do not leave books and papers spread out in disarray on your desk.
- Do not make loud noises that disturb the assembly.

- Do not borrow scriptures and fail to return them or take care of them, such that they become damaged.

9. Entering a monastery

- Do not enter the monastery through its central aisle, but walk to its left or right side. If you walk to its left, step your left foot over the threshold first; if you walk to its right, step in with your right foot first.
- Do not enter the main hall of a temple and wander around without purpose. Similarly, do not enter a stūpa [pagoda] without good reason.
- When entering the main hall of a temple or a stūpa, circumambulate it to the right [clockwise], not to the left.
- Do not blow your nose or spit in the main hall or in a stūpa.
- Circumambulate a stūpa three, seven, ten, or even a hundred times, and keep track of how many times you have done so.
- Do not set walking sticks or anything else against the walls of the main hall.

10. Entering the meditation hall with the saṅgha assembly

- Do not shake out your clothes or bedding noisily, stirring up a wind and disturbing your neighbor.¹⁴
- When getting off the bed, recite this gāthā silently:
 Unceasingly from dawn till dusk,
 May all sentient beings protect yourselves.
 If you should lose your life beneath my feet,
 May you instantly be reborn in a Pure Land.
 Om iddhiruni svaha (3x)
- Do not speak in a loud voice.
- Raise and lower the curtains gently.
- Do not drag your feet or cough noisily.
- Do not whisper to a fellow meditator or talk about worldly affairs.
- If Dharma friends or relatives come to visit you, do not talk for a long time in the guest reception hall, but invite them to walk beneath the trees or along the water's edge where you can converse freely.

¹⁴ In some monasteries, monastics sleep in the meditation hall.

- Read scriptures silently with a clear mind, seated in an upright posture. When the wooden clappers sound twice, return immediately to your place in the meditation hall and recite this gāthā silently:
 When I straighten my body and sit upright,
 May each and every sentient being
 Sit in the seat of awakening
 With minds free from attachment.
Om vasora anipanrani yutaya svaha (3x)

Further notes:

- Do not enter the meditation hall walking directly up its central aisle.
- Sit down on and get up from your meditation cushion mindfully, without disturbing your fellow meditators.
- Do not write while you are seated on your meditation cushion, except when everyone is reading scriptures or receiving teachings.
- When seated on the meditation cushion, do not gather in groups for tea and idle talk, or mend your clothes and bedding.
- When you lie down to sleep, do not talk to your neighbor and disturb the assembly.

11. Offering service

- Treat the saṅgha's property with care.
- Follow the instructions of the monastery manager or director without disobeying or challenging them.
- When washing vegetables, rinse them three times.
- Wash your hands before drawing water. Whenever you use water, examine it carefully to see if there are any insects in it. If there are insects, strain the water through a fine cloth net before using it. In severely cold weather, do not filter the water early in the morning but wait until the sun has risen.
- Do not use rotten firewood to light the stove.
- Do not prepare food with dirt under your fingernails.
- Do not throw dirty water out onto the middle of the road, or from a high level such that it splashes everywhere. Instead, hold the bucket about four or five inches off the ground and pour the water out slowly and carefully.
- Do not sweep against the wind or sweep dust behind doors.
- Remove insects from your underwear carefully before washing it.
- In the summer months, cover water containers; otherwise insects will breed in the water.
- Do not pour hot water onto the ground.
- Do not heedlessly discard rice, noodles, fruits, vegetables, and so forth, but use them with care.

12. Bathing

- Start by washing your face with hot water and continue from the top to the bottom.
- Wash slowly and mindfully so that you do not splash water on those around you.
- Do not urinate in the bathtub.
- Do not chat and joke with others in the bath. *The Jeweled Reflection for Humans and Gods (Ren Tian Bao Jian)* says, “A śrāmaṇera who played and laughed in the bath was reborn in the hell of boiling water.”
- Do not wash private parts in the [public] bath.
- If you have sores [boils] or scabs, bathe after others have finished bathing. If you have particularly unsightly sores, avoid going to the bath so as not to offend others.
- Do not dally in the bath, inconveniencing those waiting to take their baths after you.

Further notes:

- Dress and undress in a calm, mindful manner.
- Wash yourself with care before getting into the bath water, and do not pour dirty water back into the bathtub.
- If the water is too hot or too cold, strike the signal board to indicate this; do not call out loudly.

13. Going to the toilet

- Go to the toilet when you feel that you have to. Do not wait until it is urgent.
- Hang your clothes neatly on the rack provided for them¹⁵ and fasten them with a handkerchief or belt to identify them and prevent them from falling onto the ground.
- Take off your ordinary shoes and put on the shoes used in the bathroom. Do not enter a bathroom with clean shoes.
- Knock three times to let anyone in the bathroom know that you wish to enter. If someone is in the bathroom, do not rush them.
- In the bathroom, snap your fingers three times and recite this gāthā silently:

As I relieve myself,
May each and every sentient being
Abandon attachment, anger, and ignorance
And relinquish negative deeds.
Om laludaya svaha (3x)

¹⁵ Remove your ritual robe(s) and *mālā* (rosary) before entering the bathroom.

- Do not look down while you are on the toilet.
- Do not draw on the ground with straw.
- Do not make loud noises.
- Do not talk to others through the partition.
- Do not spit on the walls of the bathroom.
- If you meet someone in the bathroom, do not bow. Instead, stand to one side and let them pass.
- Do not walk and put on your clothes at the same time.
- When you have finished going to the toilet, wash your hands. Do not handle any objects until you have done so. While washing your hands, recite this gāthā silently:
 As I wash my palms with water,
 May each and every sentient being
 Have hands clean and pure
 To receive and uphold the Buddhadharma.
 Om shukalaya svaha (3x)

Further notes:

- Roll up the sleeves of your robes while urinating. Do not urinate wearing your full ritual robes.

14. Sleeping

- Sleep on your right side; this is called the auspicious sleeping posture.¹⁶ Do not lie on your back or on your stomach, or sleep on your left side.
- Do not sleep in the same room or on the same bed as your teacher. If perchance you share their room, do not sleep on the same bed. Also, do not sleep on the same bed with fellow śrāmaṇerī/as.
- Do not place your shoes or hang your socks or undergarments at a level higher than your head.

Further notes:

- Do not sleep without garments.
- Do not laugh and talk loudly while lying in bed.
- Do not carry chamber pots in front of sacred images or in front of the Dharma Hall.

¹⁶ It is also called the lion's position.

15. Around the fireplace

- Do not gather just to chit-chat.
- Do not throw dirty substances into the fire.
- Do not dry your shoes or socks over the fire.
- Do not stand at the fire for too long and keep those behind you waiting. After you have warmed yourself, return to your place.

16. In the residence

- Before greeting someone with a half-bow, determine who is senior and who is junior.
- If you wish to enter a room with a lamp [with an open flame], first tell those inside, "I'm coming in with a lamp."
- When you wish to put out the lamp, first ask the people in the room if they need light or not. Do not blow it out.
- Do not recite mantras in a loud voice.
- If someone is ill, look after them with compassion until they have recovered.
- If someone is sleeping, do not rattle objects and make a racket, or talk or laugh loudly.
- Do not enter someone else's room without reason.

17. Visiting a monastery of the opposite sex

- If there is a separate seat for you to sit on, sit on it. Otherwise, do not sit down.
- Do not speak at improper times.
- When you return, do not discuss the beauty or ugliness of the monastics.
- Do not communicate by writing letters to each other, and do not use making or washing [robes] as a pretext to visit them.
- Do not shave their heads with your hands.
- Do not sit together in a secluded spot.

Further notes:

- Do not enter a monastery of the opposite sex alone. There should always be at least two of you.
- Do not send presents back and forth.
- Do not encourage monastics of the opposite sex to seek offerings from wealthy and influential families, and ask them to conduct chanting ceremonies and repentance rituals.
- Do not form close friendships with them such that you regard each other as father or mother, as elder or younger sibling, or as [inseparable] Dharma friends.

18. Visiting private homes

- If there is a separate chair for a monastic, you may sit in it. Do not sit together with laypeople on the same couch.
- If a person asks about a teaching, know whether it is the right time to speak; take care not to speak at the wrong time.
- Do not laugh too much.
- If the host offers you food, even though you are not at a Dharma assembly, do not neglect to eat with decorum.
- Do not go out at night.
- Do not sit alone in a room or in a screened place and converse with someone of the opposite sex.
- Do not exchange letters or engage in other activities mentioned above [with members of the opposite sex].
- When you go to visit your parents, first go to the altar and pay respect to the Buddha or make a half-bow to images of the sages. Next, greet your father, mother, and relatives with a half-bow.
- Do not tell your parents that your teacher is especially strict, that the monastic life is difficult, that you experience loneliness and hardship, or about the difficulties and challenges you have had to undergo. It is better to discuss the Buddhadharma so that their faith will increase.
- Do not sit or stand for a long time with your parents, laypeople, or small children, making idle talk or laughing and joking with them. Do not ask about good or bad things that have occurred in the family.
- If it gets late in the day and you decide to stay with your family overnight, sleep on a separate bed alone. You should not sleep too much but sit up most of the night reciting [Amitabha] Buddha's name. When you have finished your affairs, return to your monastery immediately and do not linger.

Further notes:

- Do not glance to the left and right.
- Do not engage in idle talk.
- If you speak to a person of the opposite sex, do not whisper or speak in a low voice, and do not talk to them for too long.
- Do not put on the appearance of being dignified, or being a great meditator in order to receive respect [and offerings] from others.
- Do not speak falsely about the Buddhadharma and answer others' questions incorrectly in order to appear knowledgeable and to receive respect [or offerings].
- Do not give laypeople gifts, obliging them to return the favor.
- Do not concern yourself with householders' matters.
- Do not sit in any place where intoxicants are used.

- Do not cultivate close relationships with laypeople such that you regard each other as father, mother, or siblings.
- Do not discuss the faults of other monastics.

19. Going on alms round

- Always travel with a senior, adult monastic. If no one is available to accompany you, you should know the places you are allowed to visit.
- When you arrive at someone's front door, behave properly and do not be lax in your comportment.
- If there are no people of the same sex as you in a household, do not enter.
- Before sitting down, first examine the seat. If there are weapons, valuables, clothing or ornaments, and other such things on it, do not sit down.
- If you wish to teach, know the proper and improper times to do so.
- Do not tell laypeople, "If you give me food, you will accumulate good fortune."

Further notes:

- When on alms round, do not cajole laypeople to give you food out of pity, or speak extensively about cause and effect with the hope of obtaining more offerings.
- If you receive a lot of food, do not become greedy. If you obtain a small amount of food, do not become angry.
- Do not go exclusively to the homes of donors whom you know well or to monasteries where you have close connections, with the aim of getting food.

20. Going into town

- Do not go to a village or town unless there is a pressing need to do so.
- Do not walk hurriedly or swing your arms back and forth as you walk.
- Do not glance repeatedly at people and things around you while walking.
- Do not talk and joke with children or other śrāmaṇerī/as while walking.
- Do not follow behind people or monastics of the opposite sex, drunk or mentally unstable people, or arrange it so that they follow behind you.
- Do not turn to stare at someone who is sexually attractive or cast glances at them.
- If you encounter elder monastics or relatives, first greet them with a half-bow and then stand to one side of the road.
- If you encounter street performances or unusual events, do not watch them but continue walking along in a proper and dignified manner.

- Do not try to jump over puddles or ditches but walk around them. If there is no path and everyone else is jumping over the puddle or ditch, you may do so.
- Do not ride a horse unless you are attending to the sick or there is an emergency. Even then, do not whip the horse to make it go faster for fun.

Further notes:

- Avoid officials, be they great or minor [in rank].
- If you encounter people fighting, keep a distance from them. Do not stand around and watch.
- When you return to the monastery, do not boast about the marvelous things that you saw in town.

21. Shopping

- Do not haggle over prices.
- Do not sit in shops run by people of the opposite sex.
- If you have been cheated, leave the place, and do not try to seek redress.
- Once you have agreed to buy an object from someone—even if you find that you can buy it cheaper elsewhere—do not go against your word to purchase it, as this will make the shopkeeper angry.
- Do not act as a guarantor and thereby run the risk of being censured.

22. Actions for which permission should be requested

Inform your teacher before doing the following actions:

- coming and going from the monastery
- making new robes
- wearing new robes
- shaving your head
- taking medicine for illness
- doing work for the saṅgha
- keeping pens and paper for personal use
- reciting scriptures or performing Buddhist chants

Inform your teacher and obtain their permission before:

- receiving a donation or a gift
- giving a donation or a gift
- loaning or borrowing things

Regardless of whether your teacher gives you permission, you should pay respect to them and not harbor resentment.

Further notes:

Always inform your teacher first regarding all important matters, such as traveling a long distance, going to lectures, entering the congregation for special ceremonies, guarding monastic property and lands, or asking for donations. You should never do these things on your own.

23. Traveling

- When traveling a long distance, bring a good friend as a companion. The ancients did not consider a thousand miles too far to travel in order to seek a teacher who could help them to understand the mind.

Further notes:

- When you are young in years and in your observance of the precepts, do not travel afar.
- If travel is necessary, do not travel with unwholesome companions.
- You should travel in order to seek a good teacher who can teach you the path to liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Do not travel for the purpose of sightseeing, or travel far and wide in order to boast about your travels to others.
- When you arrive at a place of lodging, put down your luggage. [Pay respect to the Buddha, but] do not walk directly into the main hall along its central aisle. One person should look after the luggage, and the other should obtain permission to stay from the residents and inquire about the daily activities of the monastery residents and what parts of the monastery you may or may not visit. Then, you may enter and arrange your luggage.

24. Robes and alms bowl

- The five-strip robe is called *antarvāsas* in Sanskrit. This means “undergarment,” “lower robe,” or “all-purpose work robe.” Wear this robe when doing manual labor in the monastery and when coming and going from the worksite. When putting on this robe, recite this gāthā:

How wonderful is this garment of liberation,

Robe of an unsurpassable field of merit.

I now respectfully receive it above the crown of my head,

May I never be separated from it for life after life.

Om siddhoye svaha (3x)

- The seven-strip robe is called *uttarāsaṃga* in Sanskrit. This means “upper robe,” or “robe for entering the saṅgha assembly.” Wear this robe when you pay respect to the Buddha, perform the repentance ceremony, recite scriptures, sit in meditation, receive meal offerings, listen to lectures, and attend the *poṣadha* (recitation of precepts) and the *pravāraṇā* (invitation for feedback at the end of the rains retreat). When putting on this robe, recite this gāthā:

How wonderful is this garment of liberation,
 Robe of an unsurpassable field of merit.
 I now respectfully receive it above the crown of my head,
 May I wear it often for life after life.
Om dhupadhupa svaha (3x)
- The 25-strip robe is called *saṃghāṭī* in Sanskrit. This means “harmony,” “heavy,” or “patchwork robe.” Wear this robe when you enter the king’s palace to give a formal lecture, or when you enter a village on alms round. This robe has nine categories: the lowest category has nine, 11, or 13 strips; the middle category has 15, 17, or 19 strips; and the highest category has 21, 23, or 25 strips. When putting on this robe, recite this gāthā:

How wonderful is this garment of liberation,
 Robe of an unsurpassable field of merit.
 Respectfully upholding the Tathāgatha’s instructions,
 May I extensively liberate all sentient beings.
Om maha kapapata siddhi svaha (3x)
- The alms bowl is called *pātra* in Sanskrit. This means “vessel of a set size,” because it corresponds to Dharma regulations in terms of its composition, color, and capacity. It should be made of either pottery or metal; colored by smoking with burning herbs; and its capacity is divided into three: large, medium, and small.
- The sitting cloth is called *niṣīdana* in Sanskrit. This means “sitting cloth” or the “cloth for the feet.” When spreading the sitting cloth, recite this gāthā:

This sitting cloth, the niṣīdana,
 Nourishes the sprouts of my mind’s nature.
 Spreading it, I ascend the sacred ground,
 Respectfully upholding the Tathāgatha’s instructions.
Om tampa tampa svaha (3x)

Vinaya Essentials for Daily Life¹⁷

Compiled by Bhikṣu Duti, propagator of the Vinaya from Baohua Mountain.¹⁸

Awakening at dawn

The sūtras and Vinaya all state that disciples who have gone forth should diligently practice the path to awakening with joyous effort in the early and later parts of the night.¹⁹ They should not be attached to sleep nor be lazy and heedless. Therefore, when waking from sleep, recite this gāthā.

Upon waking from slumber,
May each and every sentient being
Awaken to omniscient wisdom
And regard sentient beings in the ten directions with compassion.

Ringing the bell

Whenever you ring the bell at dawn or dusk, go before the bell, put your palms together respectfully, and after reciting this gāthā, use the mallet to ring the bell. You may recite the names of all the venerable Buddhas, or the names of Mahayana sūtras, or mantras, to enable all sentient beings to become free from duḥkha and attain liberation when they hear the bell.

May the sound of this bell transcend the ten realms,²⁰
To be heard by all in the darkness of the hells.
By realizing the emptiness of both hearing and sound, and completely
penetrating the nature of phenomena,
May all sentient beings attain full awakening.

Hearing the bell

Once you hear the sound of the bell at dawn, dusk, and while walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, recite this gāthā and mantra immediately.

¹⁷ In Chinese *Pi Ni Ri Yong Qie Yao*.

¹⁸ Bhikṣu Duti, also known as Vinaya Master Jianyue, lived from 1601-1679 and was the fifth Abbot of Longchang Monastery on Baohua Mountain, China. Established in the 5th century CE, the monastery is known as the “Foremost Mountain of the Vinaya School.”

¹⁹ The early part of the night is from 6 pm to 10 pm, the middle part from 10 pm to 2 am, and the later part from 2 am to 6 am.

²⁰ The realms of the four kinds of āryas (Buddhas, bodhisattvas, solitary realizers, and hearers) and the realms of the six classes of ordinary sentient beings (gods, demigods, humans, animals, pretas, and hell beings).

Hearing the sound of the bell reduces my afflictions,
Wisdom grows and bodhicitta is born.
Leaving the hell realms and escaping the pits of fire,
May I attain Buddhahood to liberate all sentient beings.
Om karatiye svaha (3x)

The virtuous elders said:
Lying in bed and refusing to rise when you hear the bell
Angers benevolent deities who protect the Dharma.
This reduces your merit and wisdom in the present
And results in lower rebirth as a snake in future lives.

Those who are lazy in their meditation practice and sūtra recitation will experience the results of negative karma. These are extensively described in the sūtras and Vinaya, so I will not elaborate further here.

Putting on clothes

Whenever you put on and change your clothes, recite these gāthās accordingly each and every time. Do not think that you only have to recite them once when putting on your clothes at dawn.²¹

As I put on upper garments,
May each and every sentient being
Reap excellent roots of virtue
And reach the other shore of the Dharma.

As I put on lower garments,
May each and every sentient being
Gird their roots of virtue
By having integrity and consideration for others.

Smoothing my clothes and fastening my belt,
May each and every sentient being
Examine and gather their roots of virtue
Lest they get lost.

²¹ The first verse is recited when wearing the *saṃkākṣikā* (undershirt). Chinese Buddhist monastics sleep in trousers and the short garment, a long-sleeved shirt that ends above the knees (comparable to the undershirt and shirt or tank top worn by Tibetan Buddhist monastics). Therefore, they recite these verses when they put on the middle garment, a long-sleeved shirt that ends at the knees, and monastic socks.

Getting off the bed²²

Snap your fingers three times, then recite this gāthā and mantra silently.

Unceasingly from dawn till dusk,
May all sentient beings protect themselves.
If they should lose their lives beneath my feet,
May they instantly be reborn in a pure land.
Om iddhiruni svaha (3x)

Walking without harming insects

As I lift my feet,
May each and every sentient being
Emerge from the sea of birth and death
Equipped with a multitude of virtuous deeds.
Om tilivili svaha (3x)

Leaving the room

When I leave my dwelling,
May each and every sentient being
Gain deep insight into Buddha's wisdom
And leave behind the three realms²³ forever.

Going to the toilet

Go to the toilet when you feel that you have to. Do not wait until it is urgent. Take off your shoes and change into slippers. Do not wear clean shoes into the toilet. When you go in, snap your fingers three times, which has two purposes. One, to let people in the toilet know you are there. Do not rush those in the toilet to make them come out. Two, to scare off spirits that eat filth and keep them away. After getting onto the toilet, snap three times again, then recite this gāthā and mantra silently.

As I relieve myself
May each and every sentient being
Abandon attachment, anger, and ignorance
And relinquish destructive deeds.
Om laludaya svaha (3x)

²² The Chinese word *dan* refers to a single-bed-sized platform that monastics used for meditation in the day and sleeping at night, arranged in rows in a traditional Chan Buddhist meditation hall. Traditionally, monastics would get dressed before stepping off the platform. In modern times the order of the verses on “Putting on clothes” and “Getting off the bed” can be reversed.

²³ The desire realm, form realm, and formless realm.

Cleaning²⁴

After defecating, go to a water source and recite this gāthā and mantra.

As I finish and approach water,
May each and every sentient being
Go quickly and swiftly
On the path to liberation.
Om srivasha svaha (3x)

Removing filth

As I cleanse filth from my body,
May each and every sentient being
Be pure and gentle,
Constantly in a state free from defilements.
Om garamirti svaha (3x. Wash with the last two fingers of the left hand.)

Washing hands

As I wash my palms with water,
May each and every sentient being
Have hands clean and pure
To receive and uphold the Buddhadharmā.
Om shukalaya svaha (3x)

If you only urinated, just washing your hands once with water will make them clean. If you defecated and are washing your hands after removing filth, you may use ash and mud as soap to wash in accordance with the Dharma.

Miscellaneous Records on the Washroom (Xi Tang Za Lu) says, “In the middle of the Yuanyou era (1086-1093), there was a monastic from the state of Shu named Venerable Zhichao who often read the *Avatamsaka Sūtra (Da Fang Guang Fo Hua Yan Jing)*. After doing so for 30 years, he happened to meet a child whose appearance was pure and bright. The child raised his hands and bowed deeply.

Venerable Zhichao asked, ‘Where do you come from?’

‘From Wutai.’²⁵

‘Why have you come here from so far away?’

‘Because there are some matters I wish to give you assistance and guidance on.’

‘I’m willing to listen.’

‘Venerable, it is praiseworthy that you recite sūtras, but you have been remiss in washing up after going to the toilet. Your hands are completely

²⁴ This and the next gāthā are comparable to using toilet paper to clean yourself.

²⁵ Mount Wutai in China came to be identified with the mythical Mount Qingliang in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* where the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is said to be constantly teaching the Dharma.

covered in dirty water, and you often do not use ash and mud as soap. The Vinaya states that you should wash your hands seven times with ash and mud. At present, however, you only wash your hands twice or three times. Because of this, there is still dirt on your hands. In the case when you bow to the Buddha and recite sūtras, you commit an offense.’

When he finished speaking, the child disappeared. Venerable Zhichao felt remorse and changed his ways.”

Those who are knowledgeable might say that this was a manifestation of Mañjuśrī who appeared to warn Venerable Zhichao. Therefore, know that you have to wash your hands in accordance with the Dharma. The *Sūtra on the Cause and Effect of Virtue and Nonvirtue (Shan'E Yin Guo Jing)* says, “Those who obtain sūtras with dirty hands will receive the result of rebirth as an insect in the toilet.”

Washing the face

As I wash my face with water,
May each and every sentient being
Access the doors to the pure Dharma
And be free from defilements at all times.
Om ram svaha (21x silently)

Drinking water

Observing an alms bowl of water,
The Buddha sees 84,000 insects.
If I do not recite this mantra before drinking,
It is similar to eating sentient beings’ flesh.
Om vashiparamani svaha (3x)

Putting on the five-strip robe

The five-strip robe (antarvāsas, T. *shamdup*) is called the robe for doing tasks. It has five strips, each made up of one long and one short piece. Whenever you carry out your responsibilities and offer service in the monastery, go in and out, leave and return, wear this robe and recite this gāthā and mantra. The *Sūtra Analyzing the Establishment of an Ordination Platform (Guan Zhong Chuang Li Jie Tan Tu Jing)* says, “The five strips represent cutting off attachment and purifying destructive karma of the body.”

How wonderful is this garment of liberation,
Robe of an unsurpassable field of merit.
I now respectfully receive it above the crown of my head,
May I never be separated from it for life after life.
Om siddhoye svaha (3x)

Putting on the seven-strip robe

The seven-strip robe (uttarāsamga, T. *chogu*) is called the robe for entering the assembly. It has seven strips, each made up of two long pieces and one short piece. Whenever you go to receive a meal, listen to teachings, recite mantras or sūtras, sit in meditation, bow to the Buddha, bow to a stūpa, bow to the abbess/abbot, or when the saṅgha assembles in harmony, wear this robe and recite this gāthā and mantra.²⁶ The seven-strip robe represents cutting off anger and purifying destructive karma of speech.

How wonderful is this garment of liberation,
Robe of an unsurpassable field of merit.
I now respectfully receive it above the crown of my head,
May I wear it often for life after life.
Om dhupadhupa svaha (3x)

Putting on the outer robe

The outer robe (samghāṭī, T. *namjar*) is called the patchwork robe. There are nine types of robe, high, middle and low. The lowest of the low type has nine strips. The middle of the low type has 11 strips. The highest of the low type has 13 strips. All have strips with two long pieces and one short piece. The lowest of the middle type has 15 strips. The middle of the middle type has 17 strips. The highest of the middle type has 19 strips. All have strips with three long pieces and one short piece. The lowest of the high type has 21 strips. The middle of the high type has 23 strips. The highest of the high type has 25 strips. All have strips with four long pieces and one short piece. The greater number of long pieces and fewer short pieces represents the increase in one's Dharma understanding and decrease in one's mundane concerns. Whenever you enter a palace, ascend a seat to teach the Dharma, enter a village to go for alms, or debate with non-Buddhists, wear this robe and recite this gāthā and mantra.²⁷ It represents cutting off ignorance and purifies mentally rejoicing in negativities.

How wonderful is this garment of liberation,
Robe of an unsurpassable field of merit.
Respectfully upholding the Tathāgatha's instructions,
May I extensively liberate all sentient beings.
Om maha kapapata siddhi svaha (3x)

²⁶ In the Tibetan tradition, the *zen* (shawl) is often worn during these functions, and the *chogu* worn during teachings, poṣadha, and other, more formal, occasions.

²⁷ In the Tibetan tradition, the *namjar* is worn only on very special occasions, such as giving monastic ordination or bodhisattva precepts.

Those who wear the three robes are called the field of merit. The *Record on Increasing Glory (Zeng Hui Ji)* says, “Just as fields are irrigated by water channels, growing good seedlings that nourish the physical life of sentient beings; the field of the Dharma robes is irrigated by the water of the four benefits,²⁸ multiplying the seedlings of the three virtues,²⁹ which nourish the wisdom-life of the mind that will become the *dharmakāya* (Buddha’s truth body).”

The *Sūtra on the Meaning of Scriptures (Zang Yi Jing)* says, “Wearing the *kāṣāya* (monastic robes) has ten benefits: (1) the path to awakening becomes foremost in your mind; (2) you reside with the saṅgha, the best among humans and devas; (3) your parents pay respect to you; (4) lions give up their lives for you;³⁰ (5) you avoid obstacles from *nāgas*;³¹ (6) the monarch trusts and respects you; (7) sentient beings bow and pay respect to you; (8) *rakṣas* (flesh-eating demons) respect you; (9) devas and *nāgas* protect you; (10) you will attain Buddhahood.”

The *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka Sūtra (Bei Hua Jing)* also says, “Śākyamuni Buddha generated this resolve before Ratnagarbha Buddha, ‘I resolve that when I become a Buddha, wearing the *kāṣāya* will have five merits: (1) Should those who have entered into the Dharma that I teach commit a grave offense such as generating wrong views, if amidst those thoughts, they have a respectful mind, they will surely receive teachings of the three vehicles³² and remember them. (2) If devas, *nāgas*, spirits and so forth can have a little respect for these robes, they will immediately enter the three vehicles without falling back. (3) Suppose such beings as spirits and deities obtain even four inches of a robe, they will have abundant food and drink. (4) When sentient beings betray each other, upon remembering the robes they will seek to generate loving-kindness. (5) If one wears these robes for a short time with respect, they will often be superior to others.”

The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra (Da Zhi Du Lun)* says, “In essence, disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha receive and keep the prohibitive precepts. In appearance, they shave their heads and wear dyed robes.”

In the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, the Buddha told the bhikṣus, “Wherever you reside, always have your three robes with you. Just like the two wings of a bird, they should constantly be on your body. You have relinquished the name of your original clan and gone forth out of faith. As such, this should be

²⁸ A Dharma practitioner receives four benefits from eating. It (1) supports the body for Dharma practice, (2) nourishes organisms living in the body, (3) generates merit for the donor, (4) destroys the wrong view held by non-Buddhists that starving the body is a path to liberation.

²⁹ Non-attachment, non-hatred, and non-ignorance.

³⁰ The *Damamūka Nidāna Sūtra* recounts the story of a solitary realizer who lived in the forest and was respected by all the animals. A hunter put on monastic robes to trick the animals and shot a lion, which did not retaliate out of respect for the robes.

³¹ A serpent-like animal that lives near water or in trees.

³² The hearer, solitary realizer, and bodhisattva vehicles.

the case: wherever you go, your Dharma robes should follow you. Do not sleep overnight apart from your robes.”

In the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya, the Buddha said, “Bhikṣus should always have their three robes and alms bowl with them. Monastics who violate this precept by going outside the territory without their robes and bowl commit an offense. Respect the three robes by thinking of them as akin to a stūpa.”

In the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, the Buddha said, “Protect your three robes as you would your own skin. Protect your alms bowl as you would your eyes. Wherever you go, have your three robes and alms bowl with you. You will be free from worries and longing, like a bird in flight. If you do not wear your three robes and enter a village where laypeople reside, you commit an offense.”

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “Carefully protect your three robes like the thin skin on your body. They should constantly be on your body, like the wings of a bird that follow whether it is flying or walking.”

In the Mahayana bodhisattva precepts from the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* (*Fan Wang Jing*), the Buddha said, “Disciples of the Buddha should often practice *dhūta*³³ during two periods: when sitting in meditation during the winter *varṣā* (rains retreat), and when observing summer *varṣā*. They should often use their toothbrush, soap, three robes, vessel, alms bowl, sitting cloth, staff, incense burner, water filter, hand towel, knife, flint, tweezers, string-bed, sūtras, Vinaya, Buddha image, and bodhisattva image. When bodhisattvas practice *dhūta*, including when they are traveling, walking for 100 or 1,000 miles, they should always have these 18 items with them. If they violate this rule, they commit an offense.”

Each and every Buddha has used the three robes and alms bowl himself, and this practice was passed on from one patriarch to the next. The seven assemblies³⁴ all respect these precepts, and the two vehicles (Fundamental Vehicle and Mahāyāna) commonly establish them. If anyone claims that the Buddha’s monastic disciples can be separated from their robes and bowl because practices differ in China and India, please read the three baskets to find which sūtra, Vinaya, or treatise allows an exception. Know that the Buddha’s word can be trusted, while the speech of ordinary beings has no basis. Those who have wisdom should not be defiled by detrimental practices, but must have firm faith and strength.

³³ The 12 ascetic practices that the Buddha approved as laid out in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya concern *shelter* (staying in a forest, beneath trees, in a charnel ground, or in an open area without a roof); *sleeping* (sleeping sitting up crossed-legged, using grass as a mattress); *food* (going on alms, eating only one meal a day, not taking a second helping, not omitting any house when on alms round); *clothes* (wear robes made from discarded material, have only one set of the three robes).

³⁴ Fully ordained monks and nuns, training nuns, novice monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen.

Spreading the sitting cloth

The sitting cloth (niṣīdana) is a cloth laid over the seat or that is close to the feet. Its length is two and a half Buddha fingerspans, and its width is two Buddha fingerspans. The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “One Tathāgatha fingerspan is two *chi* and four *cun*.” This is using the small *chi* as a unit of measure. If you use the large *chi*, one Tathāgatha fingerspan can be counted as two *chi*.³⁵ Do not use the sitting cloth to make your three robes; do not give it away or use it indiscriminately to collect firewood and grass or to store objects. You may only lay it out for sitting. If traveling to a place where you will be seated, take it with you to sit on. The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya says, “A new sitting cloth can have two layers. An old one can have four layers. Do not receive a niṣīdana with only one layer.”

The Vinaya states the sitting cloth came into being for the sake of the body, robes, and bedding. *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya (Si Fen Lu Shan Fan Bu Que Xing Shi Chao)* says, “For sake of the body: for fear that the ground you sit on has something harmful on it. Next, for the sake of the robes: for fear that without a mat, the three robes will be easily damaged. For the sake of the bedding: for fear that your body is unclean, which will dirty the saṅgha’s beds and couches.” According to the Vinaya, a new or old niṣīdana should have a border on four sides and be of an unattractive color. If you make a niṣīdana, it should be properly hemmed.

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “Cut the cloth into three parts. Sew the long ends together. Hem the four sides, unless they were already hemmed.”

In the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya and *A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms of the Southern Archipelago (Nan Hai Ji Gui Nei Fa Zhuan)* by Venerable Yijing, spreading the sitting cloth when bowing to pay respect is not allowed. This practice is rarely seen or heard of in the Western Regions³⁶ or in India. Here in Chinese Buddhist culture, we spread the sitting cloth when bowing. It is unknown when this practice began. According to what the Buddha established, not using the sitting cloth when bowing is proper. If you are of the opinion that this is for protecting the robes, there is no harm in spreading the sitting cloth when bowing. This has been explained clearly in detail; the student may do as they please.

This sitting cloth, the niṣīdana,
Nourishes the sprouts of my mind’s nature.
Spreading it, I ascend the sacred ground,
Respectfully upholding the Tathāgatha’s instructions.
Om tampa tampa svaha (3x)

³⁵ Two large *chi* is about 22 inches.

³⁶ Historical Chinese term for Central Asia.

Ascending to the Dharma Hall³⁷

When I have the opportunity to see the Buddha,
May each and every sentient being
Attain unobstructed vision³⁸
And behold all the Buddhas.
Om amrte hum phat tat (3x)

Praising the Buddha

The Honored One, unsurpassable Dharma king,
Peerless throughout the three realms,
Guide and teacher of devas and humans,
Compassionate father of the four kinds of birth,³⁹
Now in this brief instant of taking refuge,
My destructive karma of three countless great eons has been eliminated.
In billions of eons I could never finish
Expressing my praise and adoration.

Bowing to the Buddha

In the heavens above, in the world below, the Buddha is incomparable.
Throughout the worlds of the ten directions, he is also unequalled.
Of all that I have seen in this world
There no one at all like the Buddha.

Mantra of universal homage

Om vajra hoh

Recite and bow three times. Be energetic and visualize the Buddha with sincerity. The five parts of your body⁴⁰ should touch the ground. The teachings list seven ways of bowing that you must know about:

1. Bowing without respect—you may stand in place in ordination order, but there is no respect in your mind, which is racing all over the place. The five wheels of your body do not completely touch the ground, and you bow going up and down like a husking sieve.

³⁷ The Chinese term *dao chang* (Skt. *bodhimāṇḍa*) originally referred to the Buddha's seat of awakening. The term has come to refer more broadly to any place where one may become awakened.

³⁸ This refers to the five sublime eyes: (1) physical eye limited to the range of sight of the being that possesses it; (2) divine eye that sees the death and rebirth of all beings, (3) wisdom eye that knows all conditioned and unconditioned phenomena, (4) Dharma eye that knows the attainments of all āryas, (5) Buddha eye that sees all phenomena from the state of full awakening.

³⁹ Birth from egg, womb, moisture, and spontaneously.

⁴⁰ The forehead, two hands, and two knees.

2. Bowing in accord with chanting—you have proper comportment, but your mind does not have peaceful thoughts. When you see other people around, your body is at ease and you bow quickly. When they leave, your body is weighed down and your mind is tired. You conceal that your mind is distracted and only your mouth is chanting.
3. Bowing with respect in body and mind—when hearing and chanting the Buddha’s name, you bring to mind thoughts of the Buddha. Your body and mind are respectful, and you are energetic without growing tired or lazy.
4. Bowing with wisdom and purity—you connect with the Buddha realms, which appear according to the magnitude of your mind. When you bow to one Buddha, you bow to all Buddhas. When you bow once, you bow to the sphere of reality. The purpose of this is to merge your mind with the Buddha’s dharmakāya.
5. Bowing to the pervasive sphere of reality—think that from the time of their origin your body, mind, and phenomena have never been separate from the sphere of reality. The Buddha and the self are equal in emptiness. Bowing to one Buddha now, you instantly bow to all Buddhas throughout the sphere of reality.
6. Bowing with correct insight—bowing to your own Buddha nature without visualizing another Buddha. Why do you do this? All sentient beings have Buddha nature and are equal in their potential for full awakening.
7. Bowing to the equality of ultimate reality—as above, you visualize while bowing that the two separate entities of self and other become indistinguishable. The ordinary and sacred are the same in their ultimate nature. By bowing you enter nonduality. Therefore, Mañjuśrī said, “The person who is able to bow and the object bowed to are by nature the emptiness of nirvāṇa.”

The first three ways of bowing are concerned with ordinary appearances, while the latter four focus on deeper levels of meaning. In the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the hearer Jṣānapradīpa asked Mañjuśrī, “How should one bow to the Buddha?” Mañjuśrī replied, “If you see the purity of the Dharma, it is the same as seeing the purity of the Buddha. Your body and mind should not be too low or too high, but rest upright, without moving or shaking. When the mind is peaceful and quiet, and engaged in the cultivation of peace and quiet, this is known as bowing to the Buddha.”

Bhikṣu/ṇīs should not have both shoulders covered by their robes when bowing to the Buddha. If they do, when they die they will fall into the hell of the forest of iron nails. There is no offense for covering both shoulders when sitting in meditation or receiving meals. Bhikṣu/ṇīs should not wear the meditation robe to bow to the Buddha, recite sūtras, do walking meditation, bow to a respected person, or when walking in front of a stūpa or Buddha

hall. If they do, after death they will become an animal such as a fish, turtle or frog. They also should not cover their head and must show their crown. Those who go against these rules commit an offense, except when they are ill or it is very cold. All those who have gone forth to receive the precepts with proper faith must be cautious about this.

Offering the pure vessel

A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms of the Southern Archipelago says, “There are two types of vessels (*kuṇḍikā*). The first, made of porcelain, is used for purification rituals. The second, made of copper, is for ordinary use.” Explained here is the use of the vessel for purification. Every day in the early morning, when bhikṣu/ṇīs have finished reciting sūtras and mantras, fill the pure vessel with clean water and offer it before the statues of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. When filling the vessel, visualize the noble faces of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

After bowing with proper comportment and rising, take the [empty] vessel and silently recite this gāthā and mantra.

As I hold the pure vessel in hand,
May each and every sentient being
Be free from defilements internally and externally
Becoming completely brilliant and pure.
Om sekala katalanda svaha (3x)

Rinsing the pure vessel

After bowing to the Buddha, bring the empty vessel to a place where you can obtain clean water. Hold the sleeve of your robe with your left hand and the vessel with your right hand. Slowly fill the vessel with water and rinse it three times. Each time, recite this mantra seven times. Do not pour the water used to rinse the vessel back into the clean water, but discard it outside.

Om ram svaha (21x)

Filling the pure vessel

After rinsing the vessel so it is clean, fill it with clean water. Recite this mantra silently.

Om vashipalamani svaha (3x)

Go before the Buddha and kneel. Hold the vessel in your left hand and make the mudra of offering to all beings with your right hand. Recite the *Great Compassion Dhāraṇī* (*Da Bei Zhou*) seven times.

When removing the water offering in the evening, make the same mudra as before. First recite the *Great Compassion Dhāraṇī* seven times, then the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya Sūtra* (*Bo Re Buo Luo Mi Duo Xin Jing*) and the mantra for rebirth in Amitabha's Pure Land seven times each. Go outside and sprinkle the water in the food storage places with your hand in the mudra of giving nectar.⁴¹ Silently recite the mantra of the deathless.

Namah sarabaya tandagataya tadyatha om surasura handasura handasura svaha (3x)

When reciting the mantra, visualize that the vessel is a wish-fulfilling vessel from which all kinds of food pour forth. First make offerings to all the devas, then to all ghosts and spirits, then to the pretas, then to animals, and think that each group of beings is satisfied. Then visualize that the vessel emits towers, palaces, precious treasures, jewelry, parasols, fragrant flowers, clothes, and everything that beings need. To conclude, teach them the twelve links of dependent origination and give them the three refuges. By enabling them to hear the Dharma and receive refuge, the beings attain the joy of the Dharma and samādhi. Bow and then leave.

Accepting a meal

When bhikṣu/ṇīs accept a meal, they should sit cross-legged and spread their napkin across their knees should rice, soup, vegetables, or gruel fall on their robes. When holding the alms bowl, silently recite this gāthā.

When I see an empty alms bowl,
May each and every sentient being
Attain the final state of purity
Abiding in emptiness without afflictions.

The alms bowl (pātra) is a vessel of a set size. The Vinaya does not allow bhikṣu/ṇīs to keep or use alms bowls made of materials such as jewels, copper, tin and lead alloy, wood, stone, and so forth. Basically, two materials are allowed: clay and iron.

The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “The alms bowl is a vessel for those who have gone forth, who should be content and have few desires. It is not suitable for laypeople.” The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya says, “The alms bowl is the emblem of all Buddhas. Do not use it for negative purposes or to wash your hands. Respect it as you would your eyes.” The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “The Buddha himself outlined the basic qualities of the alms bowl, in order to establish a model for later monastics.”

⁴¹ Nectar (*amṛita*) can refer to the nectar of the gods that confers immortality or to final liberation.

Notes on the Generation of Sorrow (Fa Zhen Chao) says, “A vessel in line with the Dharma has three aspects: its material, color, and size. All three must be in accord with the Dharma. There are two allowed materials: clay and metal. Regarding its color, crush sesame or almonds, and apply the paste to the inside and outside of the alms bowl. Treat it with smoke from burning bamboo. Smoking creates the color of a turtledove’s neck or the color of a peacock. What is the purpose of smoking the alms bowl? In the summer, it can store food without spoiling, and will not be dirtied by grease. Treat the alms bowl with smoke for these functions. Regarding size, it may be large, medium, or small. If you measure according to the Tang Dynasty unit of measure *dou*, a large alms bowl is one *dou*.⁴² A medium alms bowl is seven and a half *sheng*. A small alms bowl is five *sheng*. For this reason, it is called the vessel of a set size.”

Great Master Dagan (1543-1603), one of the four great Buddhist masters of the Ming Dynasty, said, “The alms bowl is a vessel that supports the Three Jewels and has six virtues. How does it support the Three Jewels? If the use of the alms bowl declines, the saṅgha will not have resources. If the saṅgha does not have resources, the life of wisdom is cut. If the life of wisdom is cut, the seed of Buddhahood is extinguished. Using the alms bowl enables purity, equanimity, frugality, extensive benefit, respect, and is time-honored. It is time-honored because the alms bowl was passed down by the Buddha. It indicates respect because the alms bowl was offered to the Buddha by devas. It is extensive because its use by the saṅgha brings widespread benefit to all beings. It means frugality because the saṅgha does not eat after midday. It symbolizes equanimity because the saṅgha benefits equally from offerings of fine and coarse foods. It indicates purity because the laity cannot bear to place meat inside. As such, how would we not treasure the alms bowl greatly?”

When your alms bowl is filled with food, silently recite this gāthā.

When I see a full alms bowl,
May each and every sentient being
Be replete and abundantly filled
With all virtuous deeds.

When chanting the food offering verses, use your right hand to support the edge of the bowl that faces towards you, to prevent your breath from touching the bowl. With your left hand, hold the alms bowl in line with your eyebrows. Place the spoon into the alms bowl with the curved part pointing away from you. Finish chanting the food offering verses and place the alms bowl on the table.⁴³

⁴² One *sheng* is about 20 fluid ounces or 600 ml. One *dou* is ten *shengs*.

⁴³ In Chinese Buddhist monasteries, after food has been served to monastics in their alms bowls, the saṅgha assembly chants a food offering text that includes recitations of the names of Buddhas and bodhisattvas and beneficial aspirations for all sentient beings, which is not

Offering food to the pretas and other beings

Put out a food offering by scooping seven grains of rice with your spoon, or a noodle that is less than an inch long. Press the thumb and ring finger of your left hand together in the mudra of giving nectar and recite these gāthās silently.

The *Commentary on the Single Direction (Yi Xiang Zhuan)* says, “At breakfast, recite the gāthā on the inconceivable power of the Dharma. At lunch, recite the gāthā on the great golden-winged garuḍa.” Theoretically, whether it is at breakfast, snack time, or lunch, whenever food offerings are made, both gāthās should be recited together. When possible, conform to the original purpose of reciting these gāthās to avoid falling to wrong views and practices that are not in line with the Dharma.

The power of the Dharma is inconceivable,
Its kindness and compassion are without obstruction.
These seven grains of rice pervade the ten directions,
Extending offerings to worlds numerous as the grains of sand of the Ganges.

Give the rice in the spoon to the attendant to put outside. The attendant points the spoon in the direction the offering is being carried and recites this mantra.

Om turiya svaha (3x, snapping your fingers with each recitation)

The great golden-winged garuḍa,
The assembly of ghosts and spirits in the wilderness,
And the rakṣas Hārītī⁴⁴ and her children,
Are completely filled with nectar.

Om muti svaha (3x, snapping your fingers with each recitation)

Nowadays, it is common to see the attendant make a finger mudra to represent Mount Sumeru, and circle food [held in their other hand] around it several times. Or after making the circles, they flip their hands into mudras, doing all kinds of complicated actions. If you check against the sūtras and Vinaya, there is no scriptural basis for doing this, and it looks completely undignified. Theoretically, you use only the left hand to make the mudra and

included in this text. Simultaneously, one monastic attendant offers food to the pretas and other beings and goes outside to serve it while silently reciting the relevant gāthās. The entire food offering procedure concludes with the chant leader alone chanting the *saṃprāpta* aloud.

⁴⁴ Various sūtras recount that these flesh-eating beings came to take refuge and precepts with the Buddha. To support them in keeping the precept not to kill, the Buddha asked his monastic disciples to offer them a portion of their alms food each day. Hārītī was a female demon who killed human babies to feed her children until the Buddha intervened and assured her she would receive food from his monastic disciples. She later became revered as a Dharma protector.

the right hand to offer food while reciting this gāthā and mantra silently. This is the proper method.

According to *A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms of the Southern Archipelago*, monastics in the Western Regions go to the place where they will receive food. In that place, there is a high seat for the ārya saṅgha in front, and to the side a small table with a basin for the offering to Hārītī and her children. When distributing food, the attendant first offer food to the ārya saṅgha, then to the monastic assembly present, and afterwards to Hārītī and her children. They do not require each monastic to put out a food offering. Presently, we follow the ancient rites of China. Although each monastic puts out a food offering, not everyone should make the various mudras.

The attendant serves food to the pretas and other beings

To the assembly of ghosts, spirits, and so forth,
I now bestow these offerings.
May this food pervade the ten directions
To be shared by all ghosts and spirits.
Om muliling svaha (3x)

When the attendant returns from serving food, the chant leader recites the *saṃprāpta* (*seng ba*) as follows:

The Buddha enjoined bhikṣu/ṇīs
To keep in mind the five contemplations during meals.
Scattered minds and idle talk
Make it difficult to digest food offered by the faithful.
When the assembly hears the sound of the bell,
Each person should contemplate properly.

In the Vinaya, the Buddha established that when the saṅgha assembly receives a meal, they should recite the [Sanskrit term] “saṃprāpta.” This was because non-Buddhists had offered the Buddha and monastics a meal that was secretly poisoned. The Buddha then asked all the bhikṣus to recite “saṃprāpta” together, and all the poison was transformed into the most wonderful and delicious tastes. The assembly enjoyed the meal peacefully, with none being harmed by poison. In Chinese this term has been transliterated as “seng ba” with the first character “seng” referring to the saṅgha assembly that receives the food, and “ba” referring to the mantra recited. The Sanskrit term saṃprāpta is said to mean “equally obtained,” referring to how food is offered equally to all members of the saṅgha. It is also said to mean “well-arrived,” referring to the implements for the food offering being well-prepared and the mealtime having arrived. Presently, we Chinese Buddhists recite [an exhortation to practice] the five contemplations to lead the assembly to receive the meal with one-pointed mind, and we take

this to be the equivalent of reciting the term “samprāpta.” This is because nowadays there is no harm from poisoning by non-Buddhists, and [practicing the five contemplations] leads each monastic to receive food with integrity and consideration for others. Although this [practice of the five contemplations] was not formally established by the Buddha, it is carried out across Chinese Buddhist culture.

Raising the alms bowl

As I hold the vessel of a set size,
May each and every sentient being
Become vessels for the Dharma
And receive offerings from devas and humans.

Om zhilizhili vajra hoh bocha (3x)

Hold the alms bowl at the chest while eating. There is a procedure for taking the first three spoonfuls.

(1st spoonful) I resolve to eradicate all nonvirtues.

(2nd spoonful) I resolve to cultivate all virtues.

(3rd spoonful) I resolve to liberate all sentient beings.

In this way, a practitioner undertakes the powerful aspiration of this recitation. Generating this magnificent aspiration creates greater merit than offering the seven treasures of the Ganges river and food and drink of a hundred flavors to all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and ārya saṅgha. Do not be distracted from the five contemplations.

The five contemplations

1. I contemplate all the causes and conditions and the kindness of others by which I have received this food.
2. I contemplate my own practice, constantly trying to improve it.
3. I contemplate my mind, cautiously guarding it from wrongdoing, greed, and other defilements.
4. I contemplate this food, treating it as wondrous medicine to nourish my body.
5. I contemplate the aim of Buddhahood, accepting and consuming this food in order to accomplish it.

(1) *I contemplate all the causes and conditions.* The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra* says, “This food is grown and cultivated, then reaped and ground to remove the husks. The husks are discarded, and it is cooked until it is ready for consumption. The work involved is extremely great.” *The kindness of others by which I have received this food.* The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “The donor reduces the portion for their spouse and children and offers it to create merit.” Whenever you receive food, contemplate in this way.

(2) *I contemplate my own practice, constantly trying to improve it.* The *Mātrikā Śāstra (Pi Ni Mu Lun)* says, “If you do not meditate and recite sūtras, manage the affairs of the Three Jewels, or keep your precepts, yet receive offerings from the faithful, thus becoming degenerate for the purpose of wealth, then it is not suitable for you to receive food. If you are complete in your practice of virtue, it is suitable for you to receive food that has been offered.” Whenever you receive food, contemplate in this way.

(3) *I contemplate my mind, cautiously guarding it from wrongdoing, greed, and other defilements.* The *Vinaya Dvāvijāti Prasannārtha Śāstra (Lu Er Shi Er Ming Liao Lun)* says, “After going forth, you must first guard the mind against three faults. These are generating attachment towards food that tastes good, generating aversion towards food that tastes bad, and generating ignorance towards food with neutral taste. As a result of these three, you lack integrity and consideration for others and will fall into the three unfortunate realms.” Whenever you receive food, contemplate in this way.

(4) *I contemplate this food, treating it as wondrous medicine to nourish my body.* Hunger and thirst are the principal illnesses, while the 404 illnesses are additional illnesses. Therefore, food is used as medicine to nourish this body. Whenever you receive food, contemplate in this way. The 404 illnesses refer to the human body being composed of the four great elements: earth, water, fire, and wind. For imbalances with each element, 101 illnesses arise. With four great elements, there are in total 404 illnesses.

(5) *I contemplate the aim of Buddhahood, accepting and consuming this food in order to accomplish it.* If you do not eat, you will be hungry, thirsty, and sick. How then can you attain Buddhahood? It says in the *Numerical Discourses (Zeng Yi A Han Jing)*, “Eating too much results in suffering. Eating too little results in weak strength. Eat in moderation, like a scale that is balanced.” Whenever you receive food, contemplate in this way.

Concluding the meal

At the end of the meal first recite the *Cundī Dhāraṇī* (*Zhun Ti Zhou*)⁴⁵ and then recite the following gāthā.

Those who practice making offerings
Will certainly receive its benefits.
Those who take delight in giving
Will certainly have peace and happiness later.

The meal is finished,
May each and every sentient being
Accomplish all their endeavors
And be fully endowed with the Buddhadharma.

Rinsing the alms bowl⁴⁶

With this water collected from rinsing the alms bowl,
Its taste like heavenly nectar,
I offer it to all ghosts and spirits
Completely filling and satisfying them all.
Om machulashi svaha (3x)

Laying out the alms bowl to dry

The Tathāgatha's vessel of a set size,
I now have the opportunity to lay it out to dry.
May I together with the entire multitude,
Be equal in the emptiness of the circle of three.⁴⁷
Om sumomani svaha (3x)

Receiving offerings⁴⁸

The two offerings of wealth and the Dharma
Are equal without distinction.
The perfection of generosity
Has been completely fulfilled.

⁴⁵ Cundī bodhisattva appears with eighteen arms seated on a lotus and is known as “Goddess of the 70 million Buddhas.” Her dhāraṇī is *namaḥ saptānāṃ samyaksaṃbuddha koṭīnāṃ tadyathā oṃ cale cule cundī svāhā*.

⁴⁶ In Chinese Buddhist monasteries, water is distributed to the saṅgha to rinse out the alms bowl after the noon meal. The water is then collected and offered to pretas and spirits by pouring it onto clean ground and reciting the gāthā and mantra. In some monasteries, monastics drink the water as a practice of frugality and humility.

⁴⁷ The giver, the recipient, and the offering.

⁴⁸ According to Vinaya Master Shuyu's commentary, in the past, donors would line the seats of the saṅgha with cloth, which would be offered after the meal to make robes. Later, this was replaced by a monetary offering for requisites.

Picking up the toothbrush

In the Vinaya, the twig of the neem tree is called the “wood for cleaning teeth.” There are four types of neem, and their twigs can all be used for brushing teeth: (1) white neem with round leaves; (2) green neem with long leaves; (3) red neem with leaves that turn red at the first frost; (3) yellow neem with a very delicate character that is difficult to cultivate. Today everyone uses willow twigs in place of neem twigs as willow twigs hang downwards, even small willows. If you are in a place that does not have willows, how will you brush your teeth? All types of wood can be used for brushing your teeth and can all be called “wood for teeth.” Nonetheless, choose wood based on its characteristics and bitterness. Wood from the willow tree is not the only type that you can use.

As I hold my toothbrush in hand,
May each and every sentient being
Attain the sublime Dharma
And be completely purified.

Om sarvashudda saribadalima sarvavashudali om ram svaha

After that recite the mantra that purifies the sphere of reality.
Namah samanta fotonan dharmadatu samopofu juhen (21x)

Brushing teeth

When I brush my teeth,
May each and every sentient being
Have harmonious and pure minds,
Eating away all afflictions.

*Om amoghamimali nivakala soyudani padmakumara nivasayudaya
daradarasu nimalisha svaha (3x)*

Whenever you chew the neem twig, do so with saliva, then rinse with water. Do not brush your teeth with water in the mouth at the same time. Chewing the neem twig has five benefits: (1) the mouth does not taste bitter; (2) the mouth does not smell bad; (3) it gets rid of wind; (4) it gets rid of heat; (5) it gets rid of phlegm. Throw away used or leftover twigs in a place that is out of the way. Do not discard them in a place where the assembly walks or sits.

Rinsing the mouth

When I rinse my mouth clean, as well as my mind,
The water’s touch brings the fragrance of hundreds of flowers.
With three doors of karma—body, speech, and mind—constantly clear and pure,

May I proceed to the Pure Land with the Buddha.

Om kam om gan svaha (3x)

Taking out the staff

The staff (*khakkhara*) is carried by all the Buddhas of the three times. It represents carrying out meritorious actions with the wisdom that purifies and eliminates afflictions and karma. Every morning after eating breakfast and brushing their teeth, bhikṣu/nīs should bow to the Buddha and take out the staff. If there are laypeople or śrāmaṇerī/as, have them offer the staff to you. If not, after bowing to the Buddha three times and rising, take it yourself and carry it out. Facing the east, wipe away dust on the staff, visualizing in accordance with the Dharma. Regarding the visualization and how to conduct your actions, see the *Extended and Concise Sūtras on the Staff (Guang Xiang Xi Zang Jing)*. When you hold the staff in hand, silently recite this gāthā.

As I hold the staff,

May each and every sentient being

Establish assemblies of great generosity⁴⁹

And reveal the path to reality.

Om nalisān nalisān nalitapanti naliti nayapani hum phat tat (3x)

Arranging the seat and sitting in meditation

When I arrange my seat,

May each and every sentient being

Expand their practice of virtue

And see the ultimate nature of reality.

When I straighten my body and sit upright,

May each and every sentient being

Sit on the seat of awakening

With minds free from attachment.

Om vasora anipanrāni yutaya svaha (3x)

Sleeping

Just before going to sleep, put your palms together and face the west.

Visualize and recite the name of Amitabha Buddha ten times, 1,000 times, or 10,000 times, then recite this gāthā.

When it is time to sleep and rest,

May each and every sentient being

Have physical peace and security,

With minds free from disturbance.

Ah

⁴⁹ This is a practice started by King Aśoka in which the reigning monarch hosts an assembly to give offerings to monastics and laity regardless of their status.

Visualize a wheel of the syllable *ah*. With one breath, recite the syllable 21 times, then lie down. Lie down on your right side in the auspicious sleeping posture. Do not lie on your back, on your stomach, or on your left side. Do not take off your indoor clothes and sleep in your underwear. Maintain your Original Contemplation (*ben can*).⁵⁰

Getting water

A sieve for filtering water (*parisrāvāṇa*) is used to remove insects. According to the Vinaya, when all the bhikṣus heard that the Buddha established the precept against drinking water with insects in it, they did not know how to make a pouch for filtering water. The Buddha allowed monastics to make filters in the shape of a ladle or triangle, a broad strainer, or a filter-bottle. If you filter out struggling insects, keep them safely in the sand in the filter. Do not throw them on the ground but return them safely to the water.

The *Record of Proper Understanding (Hui Zheng Ji)* says, “If you make a pouch for filtering water, the best material to use is finely woven thread. If you do not have fine thread, you can also use a fine cotton cloth.” The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “When looking in water for insects, do not use the divine eye or ask someone with poor eyesight to do it. Those who can see the fine lines on their palms can look. Do not look too quickly or too slowly, but be like an elephant pulling a bamboo-cart turning to look for a moment. If there are extremely tiny insects in the water, do not use it to wash your hands and face or for various activities.” *Admonitions for Those in the Dark-[Robed] School (Zi Men Jing Xun)* says, “The water filter is a tool for the practice of compassion. Its purpose is to benefit beings. Great deeds arise from such small actions. Reaching the path is thereby accomplished.”

Whenever you get water, recite the names of the venerable Buddhas and this gāthā and mantra. You create boundless merit and can be considered a true precept-holder.

When I see a stream,
May each and every sentient being
Be motivated by virtuous intentions
And wash off the defilements of delusion.

Homage to the Buddha King Adorned with Joy
Homage to the Tathāgatha Ratna Śikhin
Homage to the Buddha King of Boundless Victory
Om vasiparamani svaha (3x)

⁵⁰ A term referring to the first stage of breakthrough in meditation as described in the Chinese Chan tradition.

When I see a great river,
May each and every sentient being
Attain the state of stream-enterer
And join the stream of the Buddha's wisdom.

When I see a bridge,
May each and every sentient being
Extensively bring all sentient beings to cross over
Acting as bridges for others.

Bathing the Buddha

I now bathe all the Tathāgatas
Adorned with pure wisdom and the collection of merit.
May sentient beings in the time of five degenerations⁵¹ be freed from
defilements,
Realizing the Tathāgata's pure dharmakāya together.

Praising the Buddha

When I praise the great signs of a Buddha,
May each and every sentient being
Attain the Buddha bodies⁵²
And realize the attribute of signlessness.⁵³
Om muni muni sammuni svaha (3x)

Circumambulating a stūpa

The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says not to pay respect to the Buddha like a dumb sheep and bow to a stūpa. Circumambulate the stūpa to your right, just as the sun, moon, and stars circumambulate Mount Sumeru. Do not circumambulate the stūpa to your left. There are five things to be mindful of when circumambulating: (1) lower your head to look at the ground; (2) do not step on insects; (3) do not look left and right; (4) do not lie on the ground; (5) do not speak to others. You receive five benefits from circumambulation: (1) you will have a good body with regular features in your next life; (2) you will have a voice that sounds good; (3) you will be born in the heavens; (4) you will be born into nobility; (5) you will attain the path to nirvāṇa.

⁵¹ A period in the cosmic cycle marked by degeneration of lifespan, wrong views, afflictions, sentient beings, and time.

⁵² The dharmakāya (truth body), *sambhogakāya* (enjoyment body), and *nirmāṇakāya* (emanation body).

⁵³ One of the three attributes of nirvāṇa, which are emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness.

As I circumambulate a stūpa to the right,
May each and every sentient being
Be free from contradiction in their practice
And attain all-knowing wisdom.
Namah samanta buddhanam am tapa tapa svaha (3x)

Caring for the sick

The Buddha established that a person with five virtues is allowed to care for the sick. These are: (1) Knowing what a sick person can or cannot eat—give the sick what they can eat. (2) Being without aversion to a sick person’s feces, urine, mucus, and vomit. (3) Having compassion—not caring for the sick for the sake of obtaining robes and food. (4) Able to manage the person’s medications until they recover or die. (5) Able to teach the Dharma to the sick person. Your own body will experience increased benefits through engaging in virtuous deeds. Although you may only witness the suffering of illness occasionally, once you do, recite this gāthā immediately. Among the eight fields of merit,⁵⁴ caring for the sick is the foremost field of merit.

When I see a sick person,
May each and every sentient being
Realize that their bodies are empty in reality
And abandon wrong and conflicting views.
Om srita srita kundali svaha (3x)

Shaving hair

Mañjuśrī bodhisattva collated the following days of the lunar month for shaving hair: 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 29th. Recite this gāthā silently.

When I shave my hair and beard,
May each and every sentient being
Leave their afflictions far behind
And attain final cessation.
Om sidhanta mantara bhadaya svaha (3x)

Bathing

The Vinaya states that bhikṣu/ṇīs should bathe once every half-month, not more, except when they are sick, it is hot, they have been working, it is windy, it rains, or they are traveling. There is no debate about this. Another rule regarding bathing is to select a suitable day. The six days for fasting are prohibited as these are days when the four heavenly kings descend into the

⁵⁴ These are the Buddhas, arhats, *upādhyāyā/as* (preceptors), *ācāryas* (teachers), monastics, your father, your mother, and the sick.

world below the heavens to assess beings' virtuous and nonvirtuous behavior. As such, these are days to practice virtue and do good deeds. The six days for fasting are the 8th, 14th, 15th, 23rd, 29th, 30th of every lunar month.

Whenever you enter the bath, hang your clean clothes on the rack for clean clothes, and your dirty clothes on the rack for dirty clothes. Do not urinate in the bath. Do not chat and joke with others. Do not wash your private parts. Those with sores or scabs should bathe after others have finished bathing. If you have particularly unsightly sores, avoid going to the public bath so as not to be an eyesore to others. When bathing, recite this gāthā silently.

When I bathe my body,
May each and every sentient being
Have bodies and minds free from defilements
Internally and externally brilliant and pure.
Om vajra nakacha svaha (3x)

Washing feet

When I wash my feet,
May each and every sentient being
Be endowed with supernormal powers
Free from obstructions wherever we go.
Om ram svaha (3x)

The ten śrāmaṇerī/a precepts

There are two types of śrāmaṇerī/as: (1) śrāmaṇerī/as in form, and (2) śrāmaṇerī/as in accord with the Dharma. If you have only shaved your head but have yet to receive the precepts, you are called a śrāmaṇerī/a in form. If you have received the ten pure precepts, you are called a śrāmaṇerī/a in accord with the Dharma. Among the śrāmaṇerī/a in accord with the Dharma, there are three further divisions: those from age seven to 13 are called a śrāmaṇerī/a old enough to chase a crow; those from age 14 to 19 are called a śrāmaṇerī/a suitable to learn the Dharma; and those age 20 and above are called a śrāmaṇerī/a in name.⁵⁵

1. Do not kill.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not engage in sexual activity.
4. Do not lie.
5. Do not take intoxicants.
6. Do not wear flower garlands or apply fragrance to the body.

⁵⁵ Those age 20 and above can be ordained as bhikṣu/ṇī, but must first train as śrāmaṇerī/as before taking the full ordination, hence they are called “śrāmaṇerī/a in name.”

7. Do not sing, dance, participate in performances, or go to watch or listen to them.
8. Do not sit or lie on high, luxurious seats or beds.
9. Do not eat at unsuitable times.
10. Do not handle gold, silver, precious items, or money.

A śrāmaṇerī/a should possess five virtues and know the ten numerical lists

The *Sūtra on the Householder Requesting the Merit Field of the Saṅgha* (*Ju Shi Qing Seng Fu Tian Jing*) says, “A śrāmaṇerī/a should know five virtues:

1. Renounce the worldly life and embrace the holy life by embarking on the supreme path without letting yourself be interrupted.
2. Give up attachment to the body by wearing Dharma robes and do not beautify the body.
3. Sever attachment to loved ones by treating all sentient beings with equal kindness.
4. Be willing to give up your life to pursue the holy life and follow the path.
5. Follow the Mahāyāna in order to lead sentient beings to awakening.”

The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “Teach the ten numerical lists of Dharma terms to śrāmaṇerī/as:

1. all sentient beings rely on food to live
2. name and form
3. three feelings
4. four truths of the āryas
5. five aggregates (skandha)
6. six sense bases (āyatana)
7. seven awakening factors: mindfulness, wisdom, effort, joy, pliancy, concentration, equanimity
8. eightfold path of the āryas: right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration
9. nine abodes of sentient beings: humans and devas (i.e. the desire realm), four form realms (dhyānas), and four formless realms
10. ten all-encompassing dhyānas: blue, yellow, red, white, earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness (*kaśīnas*).”

The śikṣamāṇā precepts

A woman learning the bhikṣuṇī precepts is called a *śikṣamāṇā*. The Buddha allowed ten-year-old girls who have been married and 18-year-old unmarried women to learn the precepts for two years to purify the body. They receive the six trainings⁵⁶ to purify the mind. Gather the bhikṣuṇī assembly for a one-motion three-proclamations saṅghakarman. Those married girls who are 12

⁵⁶ In addition, śikṣamāṇās train in four fundamentals and 292 training rules.

years old or unmarried women who are 20 years old may receive the full precepts. If they have not completed the two years of training, or have not kept the six trainings purely, they may not receive the bhikṣuṇī precepts.

1. Do not engage in sexual activity.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not kill.
4. Do not lie.
5. Do not eat at unsuitable times.
6. Do not take intoxicants.

The Vinaya states that those in these three assemblies—śikṣamāṇās, śrāmaṇeras, and śrāmaṇerīs—should have an upper and lower robe. The former is the uttarāsaṅga, and the other is a plain antarvāsas robe (*man yi*), a robe that is not made of cut cloth in the pattern of a rice field. The alms bowl that they use is a copper vessel, not the pātra that is the vessel of a set size.

Presently at our monastery, all those who are between seven and 18 years of age and wish to receive the śrāmaṇerī/a precepts are required to make two sets of the plain robe in line with the Vinaya. For those who are at least 20 years old and request the full ordination, they make three robes with the pattern of a rice field, and use a pātra that is the vessel of a set size. Although they do not have a plain robe, they are still allowed to receive the ten śrāmaṇerī/a precepts and put them into practice. This is because first, they are not far away from receiving full ordination. Nothing is closer to the full ordination than the śrāmaṇerī/a precepts, which serve as the foundation for the bhikṣu/ṇī precepts. Second, it is difficult to obtain a full set of robes. If they are required to find a plain robe, this becomes an obstacle to receiving the precepts. Now, this practice has been clearly explained to enable those learning the Vinaya to understand what the Buddha established. Our intention is not to appear different and confuse the assembly.

Further, in the older edition of this text, the five categories of bhikṣu precepts were listed after the śrāmaṇera precepts. These have now been removed and are appended after the poṣadha rites for the two vehicles.⁵⁷ The Buddha established that śrāmaṇeras and laypeople should not know the five categories of bhikṣu precepts (nor should śrāmaṇerīs know the categories of bhikṣuṇī precepts). These have therefore been removed for fear of causing obstacles to anyone’s full ordination by their committing the offense of taking “affiliation by theft.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ In the Chinese tradition, the bodhisattva precepts are recited after the *prātimokṣa* precepts during the fortnightly recitation of precepts.

⁵⁸ Undeservedly claiming the rights of monastic status or seniority; in particular, knowingly participating in a saṅghakarman while not having the qualifications. Other cases of affiliation by theft are eavesdropping on a saṅghakarman, and taking the precepts even though you have one of the 13 major hindrances.

The upāsaka/ upāsikā precepts

1. Do not kill.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not commit sexual misconduct.
4. Do not lie.
5. Do not take intoxicants.

If you are unable to take all five precepts, you can take and keep one, two, three, or four precepts. The Buddha allowed the precepts to be taken one by one as a compassionate and skillful means. If someone with sincere faith and wisdom takes and keeps all five precepts, this is the proper receiving of the precepts.

The precepts of the fast with eight restraints

1. Do not kill.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not engage in sexual activity.
4. Do not lie.
5. Do not take intoxicants.
6. Do not wear flower garlands or jewelry, or apply fragrance to the body.
7. Do not sit or lie on high, luxurious seats or beds. Do not sing, dance, participate in performances, or go to watch or listen to them.
8. Do not eat at unsuitable times.

The *Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣā* (*A Pi Da Mo Da Pi Po Sha Lun*) says, “In essence, the person who fasts avoids eating after midday. Supported by the eight precepts, this becomes the essence of the fast. Both practices support each other, hence this is called the practice of fasting with eight supports, or the fast with eight restraints.”

The *Tattvasiddhi* (*Cheng Shi Lun*) says, “For what purpose did the Buddha say to abandon eight actions? These eight precepts are doors to liberation. Through these eight precepts, one abandons all negativity.” Among these, the first four are naturally negative. Taking intoxicants is the door to all negativities. The remaining three can create causes and conditions that hinder one’s spiritual path. Through these eight precepts, one accomplishes the five vehicles.⁵⁹ “Restraint” refers to blocking all negativities.

These eight precepts are observed for only one day and one night, on the 8th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month or on the six days for fasting that were explained in the section on bathing. You can also take and keep the eight one-

⁵⁹ Being reborn as a human or a deva, or becoming a hearer or solitary realizer arhat or bodhisattva.

day precepts on the birthdays of the various Buddhas and bodhisattvas or on your own birthday.⁶⁰

The treatises say, “When you receive the eight precepts, it is for one day and one night. Do not confuse them with the precepts that you take for life.” All those who have received the five lay precepts or the bodhisattva precepts for householders can receive the eight one-day precepts. Recently many of those who have shaved their heads and gone forth observe [only] the eight precepts. Their teachers also say that they have given their disciples the five and eight precepts. These people do not study the Vinaya seriously; they like to be others’ teachers but are the blind leading the blind. They think they are doing the right thing when they are not. Presently at our monastery, anyone who has gone forth (i.e. received the head-shaving but not the monastic precepts) but comes to the temple only to request the one-day eight precepts and wishes to put on the five-strip or seven-strip robe after that is not allowed to do so.

Further, the Buddha established that those with the lay upāsaka and upāsikā precepts are not allowed to wear robes cut in the pattern of rice fields. They are required to wear the plain robe for bowing and repentance when bowing to the Buddha and reciting sūtras. This applies to the two assemblies of householders, male and female. The Buddha instructed laypeople to make offerings to the Three Jewels according to their own ability. They are not allowed to receive the four requisites from others as they are not a field of merit for sentient beings. Therefore, they are not allowed to wear robes cut in the pattern of rice fields.

Those who have received the bodhisattva precepts for householders are required to keep the three robes, alms bowl, and mendicant’s staff and offer them before the Buddha. If they meet monastics who lack these robes and implements, or those who are of age and wish to receive ordination, they should offer to them these robes, alms bowl, and such, as requested. They should have extras made to present as offerings and not fail to set aside such items that monastics might need. They are allowed to wear one plain robe themselves when bowing and chanting. They are not allowed to wear the plain robe when traveling in the city or village to go to the temple. When they enter the temple to bow to the Three Jewels, they should keep it with them in a bag, and put it on when they enter the temple. As such, householders are allowed to spend the night separate from their robe. If they constantly wear it, they transgress a prohibitive precept. Monastics are not allowed to spend the night separate from their robes. If they are separated, they transgress a prohibitive precept. Presently at our monastery, whenever householders with faith from the male and female assemblies request the five precepts and the

⁶⁰ It is fine for lay followers to take the eight one-day precepts on any other day as well. Monastics do not take these precepts because they are a lay ordination. However, they may take the eight Mahāyana precepts for one day.

bodhisattva precepts, they are required to make a plain robe and to bow and pay respect to the Three Jewels. They are not allowed to wear robes with strips that look like a rice field. As this is a bodhisattva precept, it will not be explained in the *Vinaya Essentials for Daily Life*, but is listed in the actual text of the bodhisattva poṣadha rite.

Dedication from the Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣu/ṇī Poṣadha

When they hear a signal, śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerī/as return to the hall to participate in the poṣadha dedication.

17. Summary and Dedication

Prātimokṣa reciter: Fortitude is the first and foremost path. The Buddha regards this as supreme in his teachings. One who has left the household life yet annoys others is not called a renunciate. This is the Vinaya of Tathāgata Vipāśyin, the Arhat, the Fully Awakened One.

Just as a person with clear eyesight can avoid a treacherous road, so a wise person in the world can avoid all negativities. This is the Vinaya of Tathāgata Śikhin, the Arhat, the Fully Awakened One.

Do not slander or envy others. Always keep the precepts. Be content with food and drink. Always enjoy living in a hermitage. Concentrate the mind and take delight in joyous effort. This is the Vinaya of Tathāgata Viśvabhū, the Arhat, the Fully Awakened One.

Just as a bee feeding on flowers extracts only their nectar without spoiling their color or fragrance, so a bhikṣu/ṇī entering a city or village is mindful only of his/her own behavior to see if it is correct and does not interfere in others' affairs or inspect what they do or do not do. This is the Vinaya of Tathāgata Krakucchanda, the Arhat, the Fully Awakened One.

Do not lose control of the mind and diligently study the sacred Dharma. Thus freed from anxiety and sorrow, concentrate the mind and enter nirvāṇa. This is the Vinaya of Tathāgata Kanakamuni, the Arhat, the Fully Awakened One.

To avoid all wrong; to bring all good to perfection; to fully discipline your mind; this is the Buddha's teaching. This is the Vinaya of Tathāgata Kāśyapa, the Arhat, the Fully Awakened One.

Guard your speech well, purify your mind, and avoid all negativities of the body so that the actions of your three doors are pure. Being able to do all this is the path of the Great Sage. This is the Vinaya of Tathāgata Śākyamuni, the Arhat, the Fully Awakened One, taught to the undefiled saṅgha during [the first] 12 years. Only after that did he elaborate on it.

If a bhikṣu/ṇī takes delight in the Dharma and in the renunciate life, has a sense of personal integrity and consideration for others, and takes delight in learning the precepts, s/he should study these [seven Vinayas].

A wise person who is able to keep the precepts can enjoy these three: (1) good reputation and material gain [in this life]; (2) birth in the celestial realms in the future life. (3) You should contemplate like this: Wise ones diligently keep the precepts. Pure precepts give rise to wisdom, and the supreme path is attained.

The past and future Buddhas and the present World-honored Ones who have transcended all sorrow all respect the precepts. This is the Dharma of all the Buddhas.

Those who seek the Buddha's path should, for their own benefit, always respect the true Dharma. This is the teaching of all the Buddhas.

The seven Buddhas, World-honored Ones, taught the seven Vinaya Sūtras to cut through all defilements and eliminate all sophistry forever so that sentient beings may be free from all fetters and enter nirvāṇa.

To follow the words of the Great Sage and the precepts honored by the worthy ones—this is the practice of the disciples.

When the World-honored One was about to enter parinirvāṇa, great compassion arose in him and he gathered the assembly of monastics together and gave these instructions:

“Do not say after my parinirvāṇa that pure practitioners have no protector. Now that I have taught the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* and the excellent Vinaya well, regard these as the World-honored One after my parinirvāṇa.

“If this sūtra remains long in the world, the Buddhadharma will be widespread, and because it is widespread, nirvāṇa can be attained.

“Failure to keep the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* and to conduct the poṣadha as it should be is like the setting of the sun, when darkness shrouds the entire world.

“Always protect and keep the precepts, just as a yak protects its tail. Always stay together in harmony according to the Buddha's words.”

I have recited the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* and the assembly's poṣadha is complete. I now dedicate all the merit of reciting the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* so that all sentient beings may attain Buddhahood.

18. Closing Statement

The prātimokṣa reciter stands.

Prātimokṣa reciter: I Bhikṣu/ṇī _____ want to thank the virtuous ones. I was assigned to recite the prātimokṣa. Due to my physical, verbal, and mental laziness, the recitation was not smooth and took a long time, which may have annoyed the virtuous ones. May the virtuous ones with compassion rejoice and share their happiness with all. (*half-bow and steps down*)

Chant leader: Everyone stand and face the Buddha.

The prātimokṣa reciter walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle.

Chant leader: Venerable, thank you. Everyone make a half-bow to the Buddha.

Chant leader: Everyone face the central aisle.

Prātimokṣa reciter: Through the merit generated from our practice, we respectfully request Brahmā, Śakra, the four guardian kings, devas, *nāgas*, and the rest of the eight groups of beings,⁶¹ the Protector Saṃghārāma,⁶² as well as guardians who protect the land, to use your majesty and divine power to protect the country and the Dharma.

May _____ (*name of the temple*) spread the Dharma forever without interruption. May the head of state lead the citizens well. May the government work for the benefit of all people.

By this merit, may all spiritual teachers, fellow practitioners, parents, good and bad friends,⁶³ supporters in the ten directions, and all sentient beings in the universe cross the ocean of saṃsāra and reach the other shore.

19. Dedication of Merit

Assembly: The Buddha's appearance in the world is to be widely celebrated. Listening to the Dharma and practicing it accordingly is the surest cause for peace. The harmony of the assembly is the surest factor for nirvāṇa. Liberating sentient beings from suffering is the utmost happiness.

⁶¹ These are celestial beings (devas), serpents (nāgas), demons (*yakṣas*), demigods (*asuras*), divine musicians (*gandharvas*), mythical birds (*garuḍas*), half-horse half-humans (*kiṃnaras*), great snakes (*mahorāgas*).

⁶² In Chinese Buddhism, Saṃghārāma Bodhisattva refers to the general Guan Yu (160-220 CE), deified and revered as a heavenly Dharma protector. The term "saṃghārāma" can also refer to a group of devas who guard the Dharma and Buddhist monasteries.

⁶³ This refers to spiritual guides who benefit our practice and those who harm it.

See page 70 for the music score.

Assembly: Poṣadha is a virtuous wonderful deed.
We dedicate the boundless, magnificent merit.
May all sentient beings submerged in suffering
Quickly go to the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Light.
Homage to all Buddhas in ten directions and three times,
To all bodhisattvas mahāsattvas,
And to the great Prajñāpāramitā.

The prātimokṣa reciter bows once while the assembly recites the first two lines; once while reciting lines 3 and 4; once while reciting lines 5 and 6; and makes a half-bow during line 7.

Posadha Dedication

O--Bell
 X--Fish
 △--Gong
 △△--Gong Stop

△ x

Po - sa - dha is a vir - tuous
 won - der - ful_ dee - d. We de - di - cate the_
 bound - le - ss, mag - ni - fi - ce - nt me -
 rit. May a - ll sen - tien - t beings su - b - merge - d i - n
 su - ffe - ri - ng qui - ckly
 go to the Land of the Bu - ddha of In - fi - nite_
 Li - ght. Ho - ma - age to a - ll Bu - ddhas in
 te - n di - rec - tions a - nd three ti - mes, to all bo - dhi -
 - sa - ttva - s ma - ha - sa - ttva - s an - d to the_
 grea - t Pra - jna - pa - ra - mi - ta.

20. Refuge and Dedication

Chant leader: Everyone face the Buddha.

Assembly: I take refuge in the Buddha.
 May each and every sentient being
 Understand the Great Way profoundly
 And bring forth the bodhi mind. (*one bow*)

I take refuge in the Dharma.
 May each and every sentient being
 Deeply enter the sūtra treasury
 And have wisdom vast as the sea. (*one bow*)

I take refuge in the Saṅgha.
 May each and every sentient being
 Form together a great assembly,
 One and all in harmony. (*one bow*)

O--Bell
 ∅--Bell Stop

Three Refuges

∅

I take re- fuge in the Bu- ddha. May each and ev' ry
 I take re- fuge in the Dhar- ma. May each and ev' ry
 I take re- fuge in the San- gha. May each and ev' ry

10
 sen - tie - nt be - - ing un der - stand the Great Way pro -
 sen - tie - nt be - - ing deep - ly en - ter the su -
 sen - tie - nt be - - ing form to - ge - ther a grea - t a -

16
 fou - nd - ly and bring forth the bo - dhi mind.
 tra trea - su - ry and have wis - do - m vast as the sea.
 ssem - bly one and all in har - mo - ny.

Chant leader: Half-bow to thank the reciter.

Prātimokṣa reciter: No need for extra formality.

Chant leader: The poṣadha is now complete. You may leave the hall.

Everyone leaves the hall in ordination order. The monastic on duty assigns junior bhikṣu/ṇīs, śikṣamāṇās, or śrāmaṇerīs to put away the implements.

Rites to Determine and Relinquish Robes

1. Śrāmaṇerī/a Determination of Robes

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “Śikṣamāṇās, śrāmaṇerīs, and śrāmaṇeras commit a wrongdoing (*duṣkṛta*) if they are separated from their robes overnight.” The *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya Vibhāṣā* (*Sa Po Duo Lun*) says, “The lower and upper robes—the *antarvāsas* (*shamdup*) and the *uttarāsaṃga* (*chogu*) respectively—should be determined.” The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya does not have a rite for determining the robes. The following rite is from the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya and the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya.

The person determining the robe brings it to a place where there is a bhikṣu/ṇī knowledgeable in Vinaya. They hand the robe to the bhikṣu/ṇī, bow once, kneel with palms joined, and say:

Śrāmaṇerī/a determining the robe: Virtuous one, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī/a _____ determine this antarvāsas (uttarāsaṃga). (3x)

Bhikṣu/ṇī: Good.

Śrāmaṇerī/a determining the robe: Yes.

The senior raises the robe once towards the person determining the robe, who receives it with both hands and puts it on. They bow to the Buddha three times, and then thank the senior.

2. Śrāmaṇerī/a Relinquishing the Robe

If there is a valid reason requiring the relinquishing of robes, [the person relinquishing the robe] brings it to a place where there is a bhikṣu/ṇī knowledgeable in Vinaya, bows once, holds the robe with both hands, kneels with palms joined, and says:

Śrāmaṇerī/a relinquishing the robe: Virtuous one, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī/a _____ have this antarvāsas (uttarāsaṃga) as one of my two robes. I have determined it as such before, and now I relinquish it. (1x)

Bhikṣu/ṇī: Good.

Śrāmaṇerī/a relinquishing the robe: Yes.

Having relinquished the robe, they hand it to the senior, bow once, and leave carrying the robe.

3. Indirect Pure Giving of an Extra Robe

The *Skandhaka on Robes* says, “There are two kinds of pure giving: (1) actual pure giving and (2) indirect pure giving. Actual pure giving refers to purely giving an item to someone else; indirect pure giving is performed as a skillful means.” The *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya Vibhāṣā (Sa Po Duo Lun)* says, “The 96 types of non-Buddhists do not have the method of pure giving. The Buddha, out of great love, compassion, and the power of his skillful means, taught how to carry out the action of pure giving, which is giving through skillful means and not actual giving. This enables all his disciples to keep extra property without breaking their precepts.”

A. Requesting a Recipient of Indirect Pure Giving

The *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya Vibhāṣā* says, “Except for money and precious objects, all extra property can be made permissible⁶⁴ [so you can use it without committing a wrongdoing] by any member of the five monastic assemblies. You should request a virtuous precept-holder who has heard many teachings to be the recipient of indirect pure giving. Then, organize the items you have received and say the name of the recipient of indirect pure giving to a bhikṣu/ñī. If the recipient of indirect pure giving dies or leaves for a foreign country, request a new recipient of indirect pure giving.”

To request a recipient of indirect pure giving, go with proper comportment to a place where there is a bhikṣu/ñī and bow once. Stand facing each other with palms joined.

Person giving the robe: Virtuous one, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī/a _____ now request the virtuous one to be the recipient of indirect pure giving for my extra robes, medicine, and alms bowl. Please accept my request with compassion. (3x)

Recipient of indirect pure giving: Good.

Person giving the robe: Yes.

B. Formal Declaration of Indirect Pure Giving

The person who wishes to make an extra robe permissible brings it to a place where there is a bhikṣu/ñī knowledgeable in Vinaya. They bow once, carry the robe with both hands, and stand facing their counterpart.

⁶⁴ The Chinese term “*zuo jing*” literally means “to make pure.”

Person giving the robe: Virtuous one, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī/a _____ have this extra robe (*or* robe-cloth) that has yet to be made so I can use it. To make it so I can use it, I offer it to the virtuous one as an act of indirect pure giving.

Witness: Virtuous one, please listen. You have this extra robe that has yet to be made so you can use it. To make it so you can use it, you give it to me, and I now receive it [on behalf of the recipient of indirect pure giving]. (*They take the robe and hold it.*) Who do you offer this robe to?

Person giving the robe: I offer it to Bhikṣu/ṇī _____. (*Say the name of the recipient of indirect pure giving.*)

Witness: Virtuous one, please listen. Your extra robe has yet to be made so you can use it. To make it so you can use it, you give it to me, and I now receive it. I have received the robe that you give to Bhikṣu/ṇī _____. Bhikṣu/ṇī _____ already has such a robe. You may safekeep it well for Bhikṣu/ṇī _____ and use it according to the circumstances.

Person giving the robe: Yes.

The person giving the robe bows once. The counterpart raises the robe up once towards the person doing the action, who receives it with both hands and also raises it up once before leaving with the robe.

With indirect pure giving, regardless of whether you ask the recipient, you may use the robe as you wish. The same applies to an extra alms bowl and leftover medicine once these have been made permissible. Only further extra robes are referred to as the other person's.

4. Actual Pure Giving of an Extra Robe

The person who wishes to make an extra robe permissible brings it to a place where there is a bhikṣu/ṇī knowledgeable in Vinaya. They bow once, carry the robe with both hands, and stand facing their counterpart.

Person giving the robe: Virtuous one, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī/a _____ have this extra robe that has yet to be made so I can use it. To make it so I can use it, I now relinquish and give it to the virtuous one as actual pure giving. (*1x*)

Recipient: Good.

Person giving the robe: Yes.

The person giving the robe hands it to the recipient, bows once, and leaves. The extra robe has been relinquished and the recipient keeps it.

The *Skandhaka on Robes* says, “With actual pure giving, you should ask the recipient for permission, then you may use the robe.” The same applies to an extra alms bowl and leftover medicine once these have been made permissible. Only further extra robes are referred to as the other person’s.

Note: *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary (Chao Ji)* 31.31 says, “According to the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, if the recipient of actual pure giving dies, the item is not returned to the saṅgha⁶⁵ as it belongs to someone else. It has only been given in name. The *Samantapāsādikā* says, ‘If something has been purely given and for your own convenience you hide and refuse to return it, this is considered a direct transgression of the precepts. (Because you know it belongs to its original owner.)’”

Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary explains, “Since the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya says that when the recipient of actual pure giving dies, the item is not returned to the saṅgha, it can be seen that for both types of pure giving, the item belongs to you, there is no alternative assessment. [...] The further commentary in the *Samantapāsādikā* proves the same point, demonstrating that the purely given object does not belong to another.”

⁶⁵ When a monastic dies, their property goes to the saṅgha and is distributed through a *karman*.

Credits

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya was translated from Sanskrit to Chinese by Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian between 410-412 CE.

*Confession and Repentance Before Reciting the Precepts
Rites to Determine and Relinquish Robes*

Translated from Chinese to English by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Damcho. English editing by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Chodron.

Excerpt and Dedication from *Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣu/ṇī Poṣadha (Si Fen Bi Qiu (Ni) Jie Ben)*

Source: Taishō Vol. 22, no. 1431. Compiled by Bhikṣu Huaisu (634-707).

Based on the translation of the *Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣuṇī Prātimokṣa* from Chinese into English by Miao Shu-Lien, revised and published in *Sisters in Solitude* by Bhikṣuṇī Hengching and Bhikṣuṇī Karma Lekshe Tsomo. Further additions of rites and revisions to precepts made by Bhikṣuṇī Jendy, Bhikṣuṇī Tianchang, and Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Damcho. English editing by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Chodron.

The Essentials of the Śrāmaṇerī/a Precepts and Rules of Comportment (Sha Mi Lu Yi Yao Lue). Compiled by Śramaṇa Lianchi Zhuhong (1535-1615).

Translated from Chinese to English by the Buddhist Text Translation Society, California and the Editing and Translation Committee of Miao Fa Chan Temple, Taiwan in 2010. Revised by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Damcho. English editing by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Chodron.

Vinaya Essentials for Daily Life (Pi Ni Ri Yong Qie Yao)

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Hongchuan (Bhikṣu). *New Edition of the Essential Collection of Rites Used by the Saṅgha (Xin Bian Seng Qie Zuo Chi Yao Ji)*. Taizhong, Taiwan: Nanputuo Monastery, 2011.



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