

Dharmaguptaka Vinaya

# Varsā, Pravāraṇā, and Kāthina Rites





# **Dharmaguptaka Vinaya**

## **Varṣā, Pravāraṇā, and Kaṭhina Rites**

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



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## **Varṣā, Pravāraṇā, and Kaṭhina Rites**

**Compiled by  
Bhikṣu Hongchuan and Bhikṣu Shuyu**



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# Varṣā: Rains Retreat

## 1. Cause of Establishing the Rule

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “Once, the group of six bhikṣus traveled about [to procure alms] at all times during the spring, summer, and winter. During the summer months, torrential rains caused floods that washed away their robes, bowls, sitting cloths, and needle containers, and they trampled on and killed living plants. Then the laypeople saw this and criticized the bhikṣus, saying, “Sons of the Śākyas have no integrity and consideration for others. They travel about [to procure alms] at all times; water washes away their robes, bowls, sitting cloths, and needle containers; and they trample on and kill living plants. Practitioners of other sects observe a three-month *varṣā*,<sup>1</sup> and even insects and birds stay in their nests. Why do the sons of Śākyas travel about without settling?”

Then other bhikṣus heard [the laypeople’s criticism]. Among them, those who delighted in learning the precepts and had integrity and consideration for others reported this to the Buddha. After the Buddha reprimanded the group of six bhikṣus, he told the bhikṣus, “From now on, I allow the bhikṣus to observe summer *varṣā* for three months.”

## 2. Extending the Reprimand but Establishing Different Rules

Presently, it is said that the reprimand was extended, because the rule to observe *varṣā* pertains to all monastics. The [Buddha’s] reprimand of one group became commonly applied to all five groups of monastics. Therefore, the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya says, “According to the Buddha, all five groups of monastics should spend the rainy season in retreat.”

If bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, śikṣamāṇās, śrāmaṇeras, or śrāmaṇerīs do not observe early *varṣā*, they commit a wrongdoing (*duṣkṛta*). If a bhikṣu is unable to observe early *varṣā* and observes later *varṣā* instead due to matters regarding the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṅgha, or for medical reasons, he does not commit an offense. If he also does not observe later *varṣā*, regardless of whether there is a reason or not, he commits a wrongdoing.

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<sup>1</sup> Skt. *varṣā*: rain, rainy season. Ch. *an ju*. A retreat during the three months of the Indian rainy season, and also, say some, in the depth of winter... In Tokhara [an ancient region located in the triangle between the Pamir and the Hindukush Ranges and the River Amu-Darya in the south of modern Uzbekistan and the north of Afghanistan] the retreat was done in winter, from the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> month to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month. ... The two annual periods are sometimes called *zuo xia* and *zuo la*, sitting or resting for the summer and for the end of the year. (Soothill and Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, pp. 211-212)

The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “If a bhikṣu is traveling on the road and does not observe early varṣā, he commits one light offense (*vinayātikrama*). If, after reaching his retreat residence, he does not observe later varṣā, he commits two offenses. This person has broken the rule of observing varṣā and may not enjoy the offering of robes [i.e. the *kaṭhina*].”<sup>2</sup>

“Establishing different rules” refers to the rules established in the bhikṣuṇī precepts of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya. The Buddha established the rule that if a bhikṣuṇī does not observe early varṣā, she commits a wrongdoing. If she does not observe later varṣā, she commits a lapse (*pāyattika*). If she cannot observe early varṣā but observes later varṣā due to matters regarding the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṅgha or for medical reasons, she does not commit a lapse.”<sup>3</sup> (Lapse 164: If a bhikṣuṇī observes neither early nor later varṣā, she commits a lapse.) If bhikṣuṇīs observe varṣā at a place where there is no bhikṣu, they commit a lapse. (Lapse 143: If a bhikṣuṇī observes varṣā in a place where there is no bhikṣu, she commits a lapse.)

At the end of varṣā, the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha should go to the bhikṣu saṅgha and request the bhikṣus to point out any offenses that the bhikṣus have seen, heard, or suspected. If the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha does not do this, they commit a lapse. (Lapse 142: At the end of varṣā, the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha should go to the bhikṣu saṅgha and ask them to point out offenses they have seen, heard, or suspected. If they do not, they commit a lapse.) This is also because it goes

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<sup>2</sup> This quotation is preceded by: “If a bhikṣu is traveling on the road and has not yet reached his dwelling when it is time to begin varṣā, then at the side of the road or under the shade of a tree or a cart, he should perform the transaction to enter varṣā. When dawn breaks, he should proceed to his dwelling. At the time to begin later varṣā, he exposes his right shoulder, kneels with palms joined, and says, ‘Venerable, please listen. I Bhikṣu \_\_\_\_\_ will observe varṣā at this monastery for the later three months.’ (3x)” (Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya, T.22.1425, p. 450c10-15)

Performing the transaction to enter varṣā alone pertains only to bhikṣus; bhikṣuṇīs are not permitted to live alone or observe varṣā alone.

There are two ways of counting the terms of varṣā: one is two terms—early and later, and the other three terms—early, middle, and later. For the former, early varṣā begins on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> lunar month, and later varṣā on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> lunar month, both lasting three months. For the latter, the dates of early and later varṣā are the same, and middle varṣā begins any date between the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> lunar month, and the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> lunar month, ending after 90 days. See [APPENDIX I](#) for more details.

<sup>3</sup> The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says that if bhikṣuṇīs do not observe varṣā, they commit a lapse. If the other four groups of monastics, bhikṣus and so on, do not observe varṣā, they commit a wrongdoing.

Only two or more bhikṣuṇīs can observe varṣā; a bhikṣuṇī cannot do it alone because bhikṣuṇīs must live with a companion bhikṣuṇī. If a bhikṣuṇī lives alone, she can go to a monastery for the transaction to enter varṣā. She says the name of the monastery where she is doing the transaction to enter varṣā as the monastery that she will rely on, and then on the same day returns to her dwelling and observes varṣā there with no territory. At the end of varṣā she returns to the same monastery to give pravāraṇā. A bhikṣuṇī can also do the transaction to enter varṣā at one monastery, but say the name of another monastery that she will rely on. On the same day, she should go to the monastery she will rely on and begin varṣā there.

against the eight heavy dharmas (*gurudharmas*). “A place without bhikṣus” means that there is no dwelling place of bhikṣus near where the bhikṣuṇīs observe their varṣā.

### 3. Considering the Dwelling Place

When you want to observe varṣā, you should first consider whether [you will dwell in] a monastery, forest, tree, or mountain cave. (The Buddha established the rule that bhikṣuṇīs are not allowed to observe varṣā in a forest, under a tree, or in a mountain cave.) This place should be free from noise, as well as from obstacles such as lions, tigers, wolves, poisonous snakes, mosquitoes, ants, thieves, and floods. Consider if you will be able to stay in this place until the end of varṣā. Is there someone nearby on whom you can rely?

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “[If observing varṣā] during the summer, you should rely on a Vinaya master who can extensively recite [i.e. who has mastered the] two Vinayas [bhikṣus’ and bhikṣuṇīs’].”<sup>4</sup>

The *Vinaya Dvāvijṣati Prasannārtha Śāstra* (*Lu Er Shi Er Ming Liao Lun*) says, “You may spend varṣā at a place free from five faults: (1) being too far away from villages as it is difficult to obtain requisites (it becomes exhausting to go for alms); (2) being too close to a city as there are hindrances to practice; (3) having many mosquitoes and ants as it will hurt both the creatures and you (harming creatures hurts your compassionate mind); (4) having no one to rely upon;<sup>5</sup> (5) having no donors to provide medicine. You may observe varṣā at a place without these five faults.”

The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya says, “You should not observe [varṣā] at a frightening place deep in the mountains where there are no inhabitants.”

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “When you want to observe varṣā, you should first assess if this place has obstacles. If it does not, you can stay; if it does, you should leave.

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<sup>4</sup> The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “In the spring and winter, there are four kinds of Vinaya master you should rely on: one who can recite (1) the precepts till the 30<sup>th</sup> [rule], (2) the precepts till the 90<sup>th</sup> [rule], (3) the [entire] bhikṣus’ precepts, (4) the precepts of the two saṅghas. Many conditions arise during the summer, therefore the Vinaya master must be skillful and knowledgeable to deal with them. You should rely on the fifth kind of Vinaya master, one who can extensively recite the Vinaya of the two saṅghas.” (Vinaya Master Daoxuan, *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya*, T.40.1804, p. 39b18. See T.22.1428, p.1004b21-28 for the original text.)

<sup>5</sup> The person to be relied upon needs to be endowed with five virtuous qualities. He can (1) cause you to hear what you have not yet heard, (2) refine what you have already heard, (3) be able to settle doubts, (4) have thorough understanding of Dharma and secular topics, (5) be able to eliminate your wrong views and help you to gain right views.

## 4. The Limits of the Territory

When you want to observe varṣā, first note whether the [perimeter of the] territory in the four directions is clear. If it is not, establish the markers of the territory so that the group observing varṣā knows where the perimeter is. This is done to prevent cases of being separated from robes, being separate from the group, or breaking [the rule to observe] varṣā. The question arises, “If you observe varṣā without a territory or without establishing a territory, is the varṣā fulfilled? The answer is, “It is not fulfilled.” According to what is clearly stated in the Vinaya, all bhikṣus and bhikṣuṇīs should not live outside a territory. If they observe varṣā without establishing a territory around their dwelling place, they go against what the Buddha established. Their action is not accomplished, and the monastics involved commit an offense.<sup>6</sup>

The *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Nidāna* (*Gen Ben Ni Tuo Na*) says, “If incoming bhikṣus go to another [monastic’s] dwelling, and after staying there for seven or eight days, nobody comes (i.e. none of the residing bhikṣus comes), these incoming bhikṣus should establish a territory.

It also says that the territory of bhikṣuṇīs should not overlap with that of bhikṣus. That means when establishing territories, the territories of the bhikṣus and bhikṣuṇīs should be separate. From the time the sun sets and it is dark until before daybreak of next day, bhikṣus cannot enter the territory of bhikṣuṇīs, and bhikṣuṇīs cannot enter the territory of bhikṣus. During the time of varṣā, pay special attention to this.

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<sup>6</sup> A group of four or more bhikṣu/ṇīs must establish a territory because they form a saṅgha and saṅghakarmans must be performed in a territory. Fewer than four bhikṣu/ṇīs cannot establish a territory. A bhikṣu living alone can perform the rite to begin varṣā by an individual karman inside or outside of a territory. For bhikṣuṇīs, there need to be at least two persons, and they perform the rite to begin varṣā with a one-to-one transaction either inside or outside a territory.

## 5. Intercalary<sup>7</sup> Month in Summer

There is no actual text in the Vinaya regarding observing varṣā during an intercalary month. [However,] the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya Vibhāṣā* (*Sa Po Duo Lun*) says, “If the intercalary month is the 4<sup>th</sup> month, you begin varṣā on the first 16<sup>th</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month. On that day, you should receive the robe for bathing in the rain. Between then and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month there are 120 days.” The exception to receive that robe in this manner occurs during varṣā when there is an intercalary month. Therefore, we know that the intercalary month is included in the time period.

*Commentary on “Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya” (Zi Chi Ji)* explains, “Although [varṣā] lasts for four months, the intercalary month is not counted. You continue to observe varṣā during that month so as not to disrupt it in the middle. The three months are the actual varṣā.”

Now, based on *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya (Si Fen Lu Shan Fan Bu Que Xing Shi Chao)* the dates of varṣā that include an intercalary month are listed as follows.<sup>8</sup>

- If the intercalary month is the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> month, varṣā will definitely last 120 days.
- If the intercalary month is the 4<sup>th</sup> month, [there are two cases]: (1) varṣā begins from the 16<sup>th</sup> of the first 4<sup>th</sup> month and ends on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month; or (2) it begins on the first day of the intercalary month and ends at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. In both [cases], varṣā lasts for four months.
- If varṣā begins after the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the intercalary month, it ends at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. The amount of the days is fewer [than four months] because it goes over the intercalary month.
- If it begins between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month, varṣā takes three months.
- If the intercalary month is the 7<sup>th</sup> month, [there are two cases]: (1) varṣā begins on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month and ends on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first 7<sup>th</sup> month; or it begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month and ends at the end of the first 7<sup>th</sup> month. In both [cases] the retreat lasts three months. This is because varṣā has lasted 90 days before the intercalary month begins.
- If varṣā begins after the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month, it lasts four months. Because it has not lasted 90 days yet, the intercalary month has to be included.

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<sup>7</sup> Sometimes the lunar calendar has a double month, e.g. two 4<sup>th</sup> months.

<sup>8</sup> The months listed are according to the Chinese lunar calendar.

## **Karman of the Bhikṣuṇī Saṅgha to Assign a Delegate to Request Reliance for Varṣā** *(Done by bhikṣuṇīs only before the stick ceremony)*

According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, if a bhikṣuṇī observes varṣā in a place where there is no bhikṣu who is a Vinaya master she can rely on, she commits a lapse (bhikṣuṇī lapse 143). The bhikṣuṇī saṅgha should perform a one-motion one-proclamation karman to assign a bhikṣuṇī to go a qualified bhikṣu Vinaya Master<sup>9</sup> to request reliance on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha.

### **A. Performing the Preliminaries** *(only bhikṣuṇīs can be present)*

**Abbess:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Abbess:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Abbess:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Abbess:** Are there any absent bhikṣuṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** *(stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined):*

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ *(or from many bhikṣuṇīs)* who is ill *(attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma)*. She gives her consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Abbess:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. *(half-bow and returns to her place)*

**Abbess:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman of assigning a bhikṣuṇī to request reliance from a Vinaya master for varṣā.

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<sup>9</sup> The bhikṣu Vinaya master should have observed at least 20 varṣās and be well-versed in the entire Vinaya. In modern times, bhikṣuṇīs can rely on a bhikṣu Vinaya master by telephone or video conference. It is not necessary that they are nearby.

## B. One-Motion One-Proclamation Karman to Assign a Delegate

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to assign Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to request reliance from a Vinaya master for varṣā on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to assign Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to request reliance from a Vinaya master for varṣā on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha. Those who agree that the saṅgha assigns Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to request reliance from a Vinaya master for varṣā on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣuṇī saṅgha has completed assigning Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to request reliance from a Vinaya master for varṣā on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha. This matter will proceed as decided.

### Requesting Reliance on a Vinaya Master for Varṣā<sup>10</sup>

Source: Adapted from the transaction to request reliance on an *ācārya* (instructor) from *Miscellaneous Karmans of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (Tan Mo De Lu Bu Za Jie Mo)*, T.22.1432, p.1043b9-12.

*The bhikṣu/ṇī bows three times,<sup>11</sup> kneels with palms joined and says:*

**Bhikṣu/ṇī:** Virtuous one, please listen. The bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha at \_\_\_\_\_ (monastery) located in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) is in harmony. We now request Venerable to be our Vinaya master during varṣā. Venerable, please allow us to rely on you as our Vinaya master during varṣā. By relying on Venerable as our Vinaya master, we will observe varṣā according to the Dharma. Please accept our request with [great] compassion. (3x, adding “great” on the third recitation)

**Vinaya master:** Agreed. I will give you reliance. Be vigilant; do not let your mind be uncontrolled.

**Bhikṣu/ṇī:** We will do as directed.

**Vinaya master:** Good.

**Bhikṣu/ṇī:** Yes.

*The bhikṣu/ṇī bows three times.*

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<sup>10</sup> This procedure is done by bhikṣuṇīs as they may not observe varṣā in a place where there is no bhikṣu [who is knowledgeable about the Vinaya]. Senior bhikṣus and their disciples who are not clear about the Dharma and Vinaya, and bhikṣus who have not yet observed five varṣās, should also observe varṣā by relying on a Vinaya master and can use this rite to request reliance.

<sup>11</sup> Each set of bows ends with a half-bow.

# Accepting the Sticks to Begin Varṣā

The *One Hundred and One Karmans of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* (*Gen Ben Bai Yi Jie Mo*) says you accept the stick (*śalākā*) on the 15<sup>th</sup> day<sup>12</sup> and begin varṣā on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The rite of accepting sticks is as follows.

## 1. Cleaning the Place and Setting Seats for the Buddha and Weituo Pusa<sup>13</sup>

According to the *One Hundred and One Karmans of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, on the day before varṣā begins, the monastic on duty asks some people to clean the premises. After the cleaning is finished, they stand and announce as follows:

**The monastic on duty:** Virtuous saṅgha, tomorrow the saṅgha will begin varṣā. All matters should be considered accordingly.

On the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>, in front of the main hall or the dining hall hang a notice, “We will perform the stick-accepting today and begin varṣā tomorrow.” Monastics on duty should clean and set up the place where the saṅgha will gather. In the front center is our root teacher, the founder of Buddhism in the *Sahā* world,<sup>14</sup> Śākyamuni Buddha. In the rear left corner,<sup>15</sup> facing the front of the hall, place the Dharma protector Weituo Pusa. Offer flowers, lights, and fruit. At the two sides of the hall, arrange the seats of the saṅgha members. In the front at the head of the left row, facing the back or the center of the hall, place the abbess’/abbot’s seat. Put a table with an incense burner in front of the Buddha. In front of the table, put a kneeling cushion. Also, put a bowing cushion for the abbess/abbot in the central aisle.

Depending on the number of the people, prepare the tray(s) for the sticks. Prepare two large sticks: one for the Buddha to be distributed first, and one for Weituo Pusa to be distributed last. The sticks should not be coarse or crooked.<sup>16</sup> The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “The sticks should not be shorter

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<sup>12</sup> Do poṣadha that day.

<sup>13</sup> Weituo Pusa is a heavenly general who vowed to protect the Dharma, his full name is Honored Dharma Protector Skanda Bodhisattva. He is the leader of the 24 celestial guardian deities mentioned in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. Skanda was the son of a virtuous king with faith in Buddha’s teachings. When the Buddha entered nirvāṇa, he instructed Skanda to guard the Dharma, protect saṅgha members when they were disturbed by Māra, and help resolve conflicts amongst monastics. A few days after the Buddha’s passing and cremation, evil demons stole the Buddha’s relics. Skanda’s vow of protecting the Dharma was proven when he defeated the evil demons and returned the relics.

<sup>14</sup> The world where sentient beings endure suffering.

<sup>15</sup> The orientation of left is in terms of the Buddha statue, i.e. facing the same direction as the Buddha.

<sup>16</sup> Chopsticks are fine. All the sticks should be the same, although those for the śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerī/as should be a different color than those of the bhikṣu/ṇīs. This way the number of each group of monastics can be easily counted.



than the width of five fingers put together, not longer than the length from one's elbow to fist, not thicker than one's small finger, nor thinner than a chopstick." Dip the sticks into fragrant boiling water while reciting the verse:

Four groups of noble disciples are gathered,  
The assembly of ordinary sentient beings is in harmony.  
Fragrant water purifies the sticks,  
Varṣā purifies our three doors.

Then place the sticks neatly on a tray, and sprinkle fresh flowers on them. If there are few participants, prepare one tray with sticks and one empty tray. If there are many participants, prepare two trays with sticks and two empty trays. Place the trays on a table.<sup>17</sup>

If someone is busy with matters concerning the Three Jewels or is ill, they are allowed to take leave and express their consent. One capable bhikṣu/ṇī is assigned to receive the consent from those who cannot attend. Wait for the bhikṣu/ṇī who receives the consent to return to the assembly hall. When the time comes, gather the saṅgha.

## 2. Gathering the Saṅgha and Paying Homage to the Buddha

*Make a signal.*<sup>18</sup> *The saṅgha members put on their seven-strip robe (uttarāsaṅga, chogu), take their sitting cloth, and go to the assembly hall. They stand in ordination order, facing the central aisle with palms joined. When everybody has arrived, the monastic on duty in the hall goes to invite the abbess/abbot.*

**Chant leader:** Let us respectfully invite the abbess/abbot to enter.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle.*

*See pages 10-11 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 abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, walks slowly to the altar, makes a half-bow, kneels, and offers three incense sticks to the Buddha. They stand, make a half-bow, walk back to the bowing cushion, and bow to the Buddha three times.*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The *Collection* says to put the tray with the sticks and the empty tray on the table in front of the Buddha altar or on a table in the rear of the room. On another table put the water basin and towel, which is also on a tray.

<sup>18</sup> This could be the sound of a bell, hitting a board, blowing a conch, and so forth.

<sup>19</sup> Each set of bows ends with a half-bow. The chant leader rings the bell whenever anyone bows.

# 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. \_\_\_\_\_

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha.

**Abess/Abbot:** With utmost sincerity, visualize and bow to the Buddha and ask the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to protect us with compassion. During this period of 90 days while we practice diligently, may we be free from Māra's<sup>20</sup> obstructions.

**Chant leader:** Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.

*The abess/abbot does not bow because they have bowed earlier.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle.

*The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish,<sup>21</sup> followed by the abess/abbot, walk to Weituo Pusa. The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish stand facing each other in front of Weituo Pusa's offering table, with the chant leader on the right side of Weituo Pusa. They wait for the abess/abbot to stand before the offering table for Weituo Pusa.*

*See page 13 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Weituo, divine general, bodhisattva emanation,  
Supports the Buddhadharma through his deep and vast vows.  
Subduing Māra's army with his treasured pestle,  
His qualities and merits are incomparable.  
May his actions be with our wishes.  
Homage to Universal-eye Bodhisattva Mahāsattva  
And to the great Prajñāpāramitā.

*While everyone chants, the abess/abbot makes a half-bow, offers three incense sticks to the bodhisattva, and makes three half-bows. When the chanting ends, the abess/abbot stands to the left of Weituo Pusa.*

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<sup>20</sup> Māra is a desire realm god who disturbs practitioners' minds with desire. When referred to in the plural, the māras also include the afflictions, the five polluted aggregates, and death.

<sup>21</sup> The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish carry their instruments with them.

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

## Praise to Weituo Pusa

△ X

Wei tu o di vine ge- ner-al, bo-dhi-satt-va em-a - na-tion, su-pports the

6 Bu ddha dhar - ma through his deep and vast vows. Sub-du-ing Ma ra's ar - my

11 with his trea-sured pes-tle, his qua li - ties and me - rits are in-com para-ble.

17 May his ac - tio - ns be with our wi shes. Ho mage to

22 Uni - ni ver - sal-eye Bod hi sat va Ma ha satt - va,

25 and to the grea - - t Praj - na - pa - ra mi ta

**Chant leader:** Face Weituo Pusa.

**Abbess/Abbot:** With utmost sincerity, make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa and pray to this great bodhisattva to support us. May we be free from disturbance by inner defilements and outer hindrances.

**Chant leader:** Make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa.

*The abbess/abbot does not make the half-bows.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle.

*The chant leader and the person who hits the wooden fish walk side by side to their places. The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once. (*walks to their place*)

**Chant leader:** Śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as, please leave the hall.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Virtuous saṅgha, please sit down.

### 3. Announcing Restrictions and Assigning Persons to be on Duty

The *One Hundred and One Karmans of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* says, “Having gathered the saṅgha, set the stick trays well. Then, [the abbess/abbot] explains the restrictions of varṣā.”

**Abbess/Abbot:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I will now explain the restrictions for observing varṣā at this dwelling. If virtuous monastics delight in spending varṣā at this place and will not go against the restrictions, you may accept the stick. During varṣā, the bhikṣu/ṇīs should not criticize each other, saying others contradict the right view, the precepts, right behavior, or right livelihood. If you know someone here who has committed these offenses speak up now. It is not suitable to bring it up and criticize each other during varṣā so that it annoys other bhikṣu/ṇīs, causing them not to live peacefully.<sup>22</sup> Virtuous monastics who delight in spending varṣā at this place should observe these restrictions and make diligent practice their most important activity.

*The abbess/abbot now assigns the stick-distributor and the stick-collector. If the group is small, assign one person for each job. If it is big, two persons may be assigned for each job.*

**Abbess/Abbot:** The saṅgha is assembled today to do the saṅghakarmans<sup>23</sup> in order. I now assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as the person to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as the person to collect the sticks.<sup>24</sup>

The Vinaya says, “A person endowed with five virtuous qualities should be assigned to distribute the sticks. The five virtuous qualities are: being free from partiality, anger, fear, and ignorance, and knowing whether a stick has been distributed to someone or not.”

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<sup>22</sup> Saṅgha members can sort out minor issues during varṣā. Avoid bickering, and make special effort to maintain harmony in the community.

<sup>23</sup> A karman procedure is a formal action of the saṅgha in which those present decide a matter—for example, to ordain a candidate—through consensus. To indicate approval, participants remain silent.

<sup>24</sup> The stick-distributor and stick-collector are junior bhikṣu/ṇīs who serve the saṅgha. The same two people can do the water/towel and the sticking distributing/collecting.

#### 4. Performing the Preliminaries (*only bhikṣu/ṇīs can be present*)

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Are there any absent bhikṣu/ṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** (*stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined*):

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ (*or from many bhikṣu/ṇīs*) who is ill (attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma). They give their consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. (*half-bow and returns to their place*)

**Abbess/Abbot:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karmans of receiving the sticks for observing varṣā.

#### 5. Single-motion Karman to Observe Varṣa

**Abbess/Abbot:** The karman master<sup>25</sup> will make the motion.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Assign someone who is capable of performing the karman, not on the basis of whether they are senior or junior, nor whether or not they are an expert in the Vinaya. *Further Explanations of the Commentary on the Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣu Prātimokṣa with Notes (Si Fen Lu Han Zhu Jie Ben Xing Zong Ji)* by Vinaya Master Lingzhi Yuanzhao explains, “There are four points listed regarding someone who can carry out a karman. The first two are regarding seniority in ordination, the latter two are regarding knowledge and ability. Someone who does not recite the precepts [by memory] but understands their meaning, and therefore knows how to carry out the karman according to correct procedure, and knows what is or is not in line with the Vinaya, is considered capable of carrying out a karman properly.”

<sup>26</sup> In a saṅghakarman, a motion is a statement of an issue and a suggestion for its resolution. A proclamation is a repetition of the motion and a request that those who disagree speak up. After each proclamation, there is a pause so that bhikṣu/ṇīs may state their disagreement. A resolution is achieved when the number of proclamations required for that issue is completed. There are three kinds of karman procedure in the Vinaya: (1) one motion, (2) one motion followed by one proclamation, and (3) one motion followed by three proclamations.

*The karman master rises, walks to the central aisle, bows to the Buddha once, returns to their place, sits, and says with palms joined:*

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha will begin varṣā on the 16<sup>th</sup> day. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree that saṅgha members receive the sticks today and begin varṣā tomorrow. This is the motion.

## **6. Karmans to Assign the Stick-distributor and the Stick-collector**

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks. Those who agree that the saṅgha assigns Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha has completed assigning Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks. This matter will proceed as decided.

*The assigned persons stand up and with proper comportment go to the central aisle, bow to the Buddha three times, return to their places, and sit. The stick-distributor says with palms joined except where the stick-collector says their own name and role:*

**Stick-distributor (and stick-collector):** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree that I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ will distribute the sticks to the saṅgha, and I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ will collect the sticks from the saṅgha. This is the motion.



## 7. Receiving the Sticks to Enter Varṣā

*All bhikṣu/ṇīs remain seated when they wash their hands. The stick-collector and stick-distributor stand up. If the assembly is large, they stand in the central aisle facing the Buddha, forming two rows, the distributors in front and the collectors behind. If the assembly is small and there is only one person for each job, they stand side by side. Together they bow once. They distribute fragrant water and the hand towel. The person holding the water basin walks in front and the person holding the tray with the hand towel follows. Both go to the abbess/abbot and bend down or squat so the abbess/abbot can reach the water. The abbess/abbot with palms joined, puts their fingers in the water, and while sprinkling water on their palms (symbolizing the purification of their body, speech, and mind), they say:*

**Abbess/Abbot** (and later, saṅgha members):

Water with eight good qualities purifies all filth.

Washing my palms removes dirt, and my mind is unpolluted.

Upholding pure precepts without faults or offenses.

May this situation come about for all sentient beings.

*S/he dries her/his hands with the towel. They now distribute the water and hand towel to the next senior saṅgha member who recites the above verse. In this way, they distribute the water and hand towel down to the last saṅgha member. At the end, the two persons go to the table where the water basin was and holding the water basin for each other, they wash their hands, say the verse, and dry their hands. They then put the water basin and towel on the table.*

*After distributing the fragrant water, the stick-distributor and stick-collector each hold their own tray. The distributor walks first, the collector follows. They walk to the Buddha, stand on the left and right sides of the Buddha, and face each other. They are not to stand too far from or too close to the table in the front of the Buddha. They do not turn their backs to the abbess/abbot. They also do not stand too far away from each other so that they cannot reach each other's hands. The distributor puts her/his tray with the sticks on top of the empty tray. S/he bows to the Buddha three times, kneels, and takes one large stick from the tray. S/he holds the stick horizontally at the level of her/his eyebrows between her/his hands,<sup>27</sup> and says:*

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<sup>27</sup> The stick is held between the thumb and forefinger of each hand, near each end of the stick. The remaining three fingers of each hand are extended.

**Stick-distributor:** This is the year of \_\_\_\_\_. The assembly will observe varṣā for three months. May Buddha Śākyamuni, our fundamental teacher and the founder of the Buddhadharmā in the Sahā world, receive the first stick.

*S/he puts the stick on the incense burner, stands up, and bows to the Buddha once. S/he takes her/his own tray and stands on one side. The stick-collector puts her/his empty tray on top of the distributor's tray, bows to the Buddha three times, and kneels. With both hands s/he takes the stick on the incense burner and places it on the empty tray. S/he stands up and bows to the Buddha once.*

*They then hold their own trays. The distributor walks in front and the collector follows. Both go to the abbess/abbot and kneel. The abbess/abbot kneels with palms joined, takes one stick holding it horizontally as above, raises it to the height of their eyebrows, and says:*

**Abbess/Abbot** (and later, saṅgha members):

Like a vajra without obstruction, the stick of liberation  
Is hard to obtain and today I am able to receive it.  
Receiving it with delight, I now hold it up to my head.  
May this situation come about for all sentient beings.

*They put the stick on the empty tray and say with palms joined:*

Endowed with purity, I receive this stick.  
Endowed with purity, I return this stick.  
Firm, joyous, and unattached, I am free of faults and offenses.  
May this situation come about for all sentient beings.

*The abbess/abbot sits down. Now the distributor and collector go to the next senior saṅgha member, who kneels, takes and stick and so forth. In this way, they go down to the last saṅgha member, according to the order of ordination. At the end, the distributor and collector receive sticks from each other. For a person who has taken leave and given consent, the conveyor of their leave takes their stick, saying:*

**Conveyor:** I take the stick in place of Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_.

*According to the Vinaya, if there are śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as observing varṣā, the abbess/abbot or ācārya may receive their sticks. Alternatively, they may now enter the hall.*

**Chant leader:** All śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as enter in ordination order.

*Hearing the bell, śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerī/as put their robes on neatly, go into the hall, and stand in ordination order facing the Buddha.*

**Chant leader:** Bow to the Buddha three times.

*The monastic on duty directs them to the end of the line of bhikṣu/ṇīs. They kneel with palms joined in ordination order. Now, one by one, each śikṣamāṇā and then each śrāmaṇerī/a puts water on their hands while reciting the appropriate verse above, and dries them. Then each one takes a stick, says the appropriate verse, returns the stick, and says the appropriate verse. After everyone has received and returned a stick, they sit down.*

*Both the stick-distributor and stick-collector go before Weituo Pusa. They stand on his right and left sides, facing each other. The distributor puts her/his tray on the top of the collector's tray. S/he makes three half-bows to Weituo Pusa. As before, with both hands s/he holds a large stick at eye level and says:*

**Stick-distributor:** This is the year of \_\_\_\_\_. The assembly will observe varṣā for three months. May the honorable heavenly being Weituo Pusa, protector of the Buddhadharma, receive the last stick.

*S/he puts the stick on the incense burner and makes a half-bow. S/he takes her/his own tray and stands on one side. The collector puts her/his tray on top of the distributor's tray, makes three half-bows to Weituo Pusa, takes the stick on the incense burner with both hands, and puts it on her/his tray, and makes one half-bow. Then both take their own tray and go to a screened place and count the sticks to see how many bhikṣu/ṇīs and how many śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerī/as there are, including themselves. They should remember the number clearly. They put their trays on the table. The collector walks in front and the distributor follows as they walk to the middle of the saṅgha and stand facing the Buddha. The collector stands in front and the distributor behind. If the assembly is small, they stand in one row.*

**Stick-collector:** This is the year of \_\_\_\_\_. In the assembly that will observe varṣā for three months, there are now \_\_\_\_\_ bhikṣu/ṇīs, \_\_\_\_\_ śikṣamāṇās, and \_\_\_\_\_ śrāmaṇerī/as who received a stick.

**Stick-distributor:** We have completed distributing and collecting sticks from the saṅgha.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Stick-distributor and Stick-collector:** Yes.

*Both bow to the Buddha once. They return to their places.*

**Abbess/Abbot:** Everyone, we now know there are \_\_\_\_\_ people observing varṣā at this place this summer (winter). We will recite the precepts later today. Restrain your body, speech, and mind. Within these 90 days, make effort to concentrate on practice. We have completed the action of receiving the sticks.

## **8. Dedication of Merit**

**Chant leader:** Everyone please rise, face the central aisle with palms joined, and dedicate the merit.

*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

*See page 21 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Receiving the sticks 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 abbess/abbot 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.*



**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the Buddha three times.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the back of the hall and goes before Weituo Pusa.*

**Chant leader:** Face Weituo Pusa. Make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa.  
*The abbess/abbot stands to the right side of the main door of the hall, facing the Buddha.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. In gratitude, bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once.

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Wait respectfully as the abbess/abbot leaves the hall.

*Everyone leaves the hall in ordination order. The monastic on duty assigns junior bhikṣu/ṇīs, śikṣamāṇās, or śrāmaṇerī/as to help put away the implements before they return to their rooms.*

The ancient masters said, “All Dharma objects are shared by the saṅgha of the four directions. Their bodies spread throughout the ten directions. You should use them very carefully and protect them like your eyes. This responsibility depends entirely on the management of the person on duty. Only when you use and store them with care like your own belongings are you free from fault. If objects are lost or damaged, your fault is not light. Therefore, you should be very careful about this.”

## Observing Varṣā

The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya Ekottara* (*Pi Ni Zeng Yi*) says, “There are three types of varṣā—early varṣā, middle varṣā, and later varṣā. Participants in varṣā should immerse their minds in peace and quiet. It is important to stay within the territory during this period, spur oneself to practice diligently and wholeheartedly, and rely on the dwelling place for support, whatever conditions arise.”

The following is an explanation based on *Main Points Concerning the Vinaya* (*Pi Ni Guan Yao*). The Vinaya establishes three periods, but emphasis is placed on observing varṣā in the summer, as three offenses typically occur [at this time]: (1) wandering about aimlessly, which hinders practice and expends energy; (2) harming living creatures, which violates [the cultivation of] compassion; (3) behaving improperly, which attracts public criticism. Given [the propensity for] these offenses [to occur], you should rouse enthusiasm for the teachings during this period. The *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna Sūtra* (*Zheng Fa Nian Chu Jing*) says, “During varṣā, you should always be seated in a cross-legged position, except when having to move your bowels.”

There are four months in the summer, but varṣā is observed for three months, to incorporate two forms of support [for the saṅgha]: (1) The uncertainties of life and death necessitate the garnering of resources even during break times, hence varṣā is observed for three months, leaving the final month open for robe offerings. (2) If varṣā had to be observed for four months in entirety, it would have to begin by the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month. If anyone deviated from this, it would not be possible to complete varṣā. Dharma teachings would be too rushed, and it would be difficult to have a regular and adequate supply of necessities. Therefore, one month is left open, during which the saṅgha can receive offerings freely to replenish supplies.

Presently, however, varṣā is observed only during the summer,<sup>28</sup> and there are three periods:

- Those who begin varṣā on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month and end it on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month observe early varṣā;
- Those who begin varṣā between the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month and the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month observe middle varṣā;
- Those who begin varṣā on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month and end it on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month observe later varṣā.

Just as the back foot follows the front foot, those in the middle varṣā must stay in varṣā for a full three months.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This is the current situation in Taiwan. See APPENDIX I for additional notes on the winter varṣā.

<sup>29</sup> This is counted as 90 days.

Those who observe varṣā by relying on a monastery and vinaya master are senior monastics who are not clear about the Dharma and Vinaya, and their disciples. The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya Ekottara* says, “During summer varṣa, you should rely on the fifth kind of Vinaya master: the first can recite the introduction to the precepts till the 30<sup>th</sup> rule, the second can recite the introduction to the precept till the 90<sup>th</sup> rule, the third can recite the entire [bhikṣus’] precepts, the fourth can recite the precepts of the two [bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī] saṅghas, the fifth can recite the entire Vinaya. During the spring, autumn, or winter, if you do not rely on one of the first four types of Vinaya master, you commit a wrongdoing. If you do not rely on the fifth kind of Vinaya master during summer varṣa, you commit a lapse.”

*One Hundred and One Karmans of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* says, “If a bhikṣu has a good and clear understanding of the *tripiṭaka* (three baskets), attained the three knowledges,<sup>30</sup> and eliminated the three poisons [of anger, attachment, and ignorance], but has yet to observe five varṣās, such a person must also rely on a Vinaya master. If a bhikṣu is 80 years old and has observed 60 varṣas, but has yet to read or recite the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* and does not understand its meaning, he must also rely on a [Vinaya master] who is junior. Aside from not bowing to pay respect, he should do the rest [of the rite] accordingly. Such a person is called an elderly junior bhikṣu.”

The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya says, “If bhikṣu has been ordained for many years but does not know the bhikṣu precepts, he should rely upon and live with a [Vinaya master] until the end of his life.”

Based on these explanations, we know that those who are not clear about the Dharma and Vinaya must observe varṣa by relying on a Vinaya master.

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<sup>30</sup> The recollection of previous lives, clairvoyance, and the cessation of pollutants — ignorance, afflictions, and their latencies.



## 1. Gathering the Saṅgha and Paying Homage to the Buddha and Weituo Pusa

*On the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup>, in front of the main hall or dining hall, post a notice saying “Varsā” in large print. It remains there until the end of pravāraṇā (invitation). At the place where the rite will take place, arrange the seats for the abbess/abbot and the saṅgha. Offer flowers, fruits, incense, and lamps or candles in front of the Buddha and Weituo Pusa. Make a signal. The saṅgha members put on their seven-strip robe (uttarāsamṅga, chogu), take their sitting cloth, and go to the assembly hall. They stand in ordination order, facing the central aisle with palms joined. When everybody has arrived, the monastic on duty in the hall goes to invite the abbess/abbot.*

**Chant leader:** Let us respectfully invite the abbess/abbot to enter.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle.*

*See pages 26-27 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 abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, walks slowly to the altar, makes a half-bow, kneels, and offers three incense sticks to the Buddha. They stand, make a half-bow, walk back to the bowing cushion, and bow 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 

50 

55 

60 

65 

70 

75 

80 

84

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha.

**Abbess/Abbot:** With utmost sincerity, we will visualize and bow to the Buddha and ask the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to protect us with compassion. May everyone practice the path diligently during varṣā.

**Chant leader:** Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.

*The abbess/abbot does not bow because they have bowed earlier.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle.

*The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish, followed by the abbess/abbot, walk to Weituo Pusa. The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish stand facing each other in front of Weituo Pusa's offering table, with the chant leader on the right side of Weituo Pusa. They wait for the abbess/abbot to stand before the offering table for Weituo Pusa.*

*See page 29 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Weituo, divine general, bodhisattva emanation,  
Supports the Buddhadharma through his deep and vast vows.  
Subduing Mara's army with his treasured pestle,  
His qualities and merits are incomparable.  
May his actions be with our wishes.  
Homage to Universal-eye Bodhisattva Mahāsattva  
And to the great Prajñāpāramitā.

*While everyone chants, the abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, offers three incense sticks to the bodhisattva, and makes three half-bows. When the chanting ends, the abbess/abbot stands to the left of Weituo Pusa.*



## 2. One-to-one Transaction to Rely on a Place and Vinaya Master for Varṣā

**Abbess/Abbot:** Everyone, please come in ordination order to perform the ceremony.

*The abbess/abbot officiates in this rite. The officiator needs to perform the rite first, and then they witness others doing it. Both the abbess/abbot and their counterpart stand and bow to each other once. They kneel with palms joined, facing each other.*

**Abbess/Abbot:** Virtuous one, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ now rely on \_\_\_\_\_ monastery to observe varṣā for the early (later) three months. (3x)

**Counterpart:** Good. Do not let your mind be uncontrolled.

**Abbess/Abbot:** I will be mindful in my practice.

**Counterpart:** Who is the Vinaya master you rely on?<sup>31</sup>

**Abbess/Abbot:** I rely on Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_.

**Counterpart:** When you have questions, ask him.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Yes.

*They bow to each other once from the kneeling position. They stand, make a half-bow, and sit in their places.*

*Each retreat participant goes before the abbess/abbot one by one, in order of seniority.*

**Participant:** I will bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** One bow.

**Participant:** *A mi tuo fo.*<sup>32</sup>

*The participant bows once, kneels with palms joined and says:*

**Participant:** Virtuous one, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ now rely on \_\_\_\_\_ monastery to observe varṣā for the early (later) three months. (3x)

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good. Do not let your mind be uncontrolled.

**Participant:** I will be mindful in my practice.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Who is the Vinaya master you rely on?

**Participant:** I rely on Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_.

**Abbess/Abbot:** When you have questions, ask him.

**Participant:** Yes.

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<sup>31</sup> According to the Vinaya, bhikṣuṇīs must rely on a bhikṣu for guidance. If no bhikṣu saṅgha is nearby, bhikṣuṇīs can use the telephone or skype to talk to the Vinaya master who guides them.

<sup>32</sup> The participant says the name of Amitābha Buddha in gratitude for the abbess/abbot's compassionate instruction to bow just once.

*The participant bows once from the kneeling position, stands, makes a half-bow and returns to their place. The second participant performs the rite in the same way. The words for śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerī/as are the same except they change “bhikṣu/ṇī” to their proper title. If the assembly is large, senior saṅgha members can be assigned to officiate in other places at the same time, after they have done the rite. Everyone relies on the same Vinaya master.*

### **3. Dedication of Merit**

**Chant leader:** Everyone please rise, face the central aisle with palms joined, and dedicate the merit.

*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

*See page 32 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Varṣā 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 abbess/abbot 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.*

# Varsa Dedication

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

△ X

Var - - - sa - - - 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.



**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the Buddha three times.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the back of the hall and goes before Weituo Pusa.*

**Chant leader:** Face Weituo Pusa. Make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa.  
*The abbess/abbot stands to the right side of the main door of the hall, facing the Buddha.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. In gratitude, bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once.

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Wait respectfully as the abbess/abbot leaves the hall.

*Everyone leaves the hall in ordination order. Those who come later to participate in the retreat perform the rite upon their arrival. The words of the rite are the same as above. If it is a middle or later varṣā, change the wording accordingly.*

#### 4. Individual Transaction to Observe Varṣa by Relying on a Vinaya Master from Afar (*bhikṣus only*)

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “There was a bhikṣu who did not know the Vinaya and did not rely on a Vinaya master, for whom doubts arose during varṣa. He thought, ‘The World-Honored One does not allow me to travel around during varṣa, but there is no one to whom I can direct my questions. What should I do?’ This was reported to the Buddha, and the Buddha said, ‘I allow you to rely on a place where there is a Vinaya master to observe varṣa.’”

If the lodging where the Vinaya master resides is cramped, you are allowed to stay in a nearby place where you can reach the Vinaya master’s residence and return within seven days on foot, and then do the individual transaction to observe varṣa by relying on a Vinaya master from afar.

Even if they know the tripiṭaka, all senior monastics who do not understand the Vinaya, and bhikṣus who have not observed five varṣas, should follow this section to observe varṣa by relying on a Vinaya master from afar.

*On the morning of varṣa, offer flowers, lamps or candles, and fruit in front of the Buddha. With good deportment, go before the Buddha and bow to the Buddha three times, kneel with palms joined and say:*

**Person living alone:** I Bhikṣu \_\_\_\_\_ now rely on \_\_\_\_\_ monastery to observe varṣa for the early three months, and rely on Vinaya master \_\_\_\_\_ from afar. (3x)

*Having spoken, rise and bow to the Buddha again three times.*

You should only do the individual transaction to observe varṣa by relying on a Vinaya master from afar in cases where the Vinaya master’s residence is too cramped.

## 5. Individual Transaction to Observe Varṣa (*bhikṣus only*)

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “Once, some bhikṣus stayed in a place where there was no Vinaya master, so they did not know to whom they should declare [that they were entering varṣā]. The bhikṣus had doubts and wondered whether their varṣā was valid. The Buddha said, “From now on, I allow the bhikṣus, if they do not have a Vinaya master whom they can rely on, to perform the individual transaction to [observe] varṣā.” It also says, “Bhikṣuṇīs may not live alone, thus they do not perform the individual transaction of varṣa.” According to the *Sarvastivada Vinaya*, during times of famine, an exception is made for bhikṣuṇīs relying on and staying with relatives to do the individual transaction of varṣa. Nonetheless, [bhikṣuṇīs] should still exercise caution.

This section on the individual transaction of varṣa applies to senior bhikṣus who know and understand the Vinaya.

*On the morning of varṣa, offer flowers, lamps or candles and fruit in front of the Buddha. With good deportment, go before the Buddha and bow to the Buddha three times, kneel with palms joined and say:*

**Person living alone:** I Bhikṣu \_\_\_\_\_ now rely on \_\_\_\_\_ monastery to observe varṣa for the early three months. (3x)

*Having spoken, rise and bow to the Buddha again three times. If you are relying on a forest, tree or mountain cave, change the name of the dwelling as appropriate and recite the text.*

## 6. Changing the Place of the Retreat if Obstacles Occur

According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, two kinds of obstacles may arise: (1) obstacles to the holy life (*brahmacarya*), and (2) life-threatening obstacles.

*Obstacles to the holy life.* Suppose a bhikṣu observes varṣā in a dwelling, and at that time a woman, an unmarried teenage girl, a licentious woman, or a *paṇḍaka*<sup>33</sup> comes to seduce him. Fear of committing a serious offense should arise [in him]. The Buddha said, “If such an obstacle occurs, you should leave.” Suppose ghosts and spirits tell the bhikṣu that there is buried treasure there. For fear of creating obstacles to his pure practice, the Buddha also allowed him to leave. Suppose a bhikṣuṇī observes varṣā in a dwelling, and men come to seduce her. Fear of committing a serious offense should arise [in her]. Or ghosts and spirits tell the bhikṣuṇī that there is buried treasure there. For fear of creating obstacles to her pure practice, the Buddha also allowed her to leave.

*Life-threatening obstacles.* These refer to ghosts and spirits, evil thieves, poisonous snakes, or wild animals who wish to take your life, or [because of] many poisonous insects, you are unable to do walking meditation and practice the Dharma. The Buddha said, “If such an obstacle occurs, you should leave.” Or if you are unable to obtain food, drink, medicine, or helpers as you require, and if you stay there, you will encounter life-threatening obstacles, then the Buddha also allowed leaving.

From dawn of the day of your departure, you must immediately exert effort to seek a place to reside if you have valid reasons for changing the place of varṣā. If you are unable to find a dwelling, even though you spend the night [outside the varṣā territory], [the rule to observe] varṣā is not broken. However, you must not therefore become negligent and delay [your search]. On the contrary, if you do not seek [a new dwelling] from the start of the day, [the rule to observe] varṣā is immediately broken. If you find a dwelling, you should perform the transaction to enter varṣā. If no reason arises, you should not leave the place, for fear of breaking [the rule to observe] varṣā. If your original dwelling becomes free from obstacles, you should not return there, as you have already performed [the transaction to enter varṣā at the new dwelling].

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<sup>33</sup> A person who has physiological or psychological irregularities related to sex. According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, there are five categories: (1) someone born without sexual organs (*jāti-paṇḍaka*), (2) someone who has been castrated (*āpat-paṇḍaka*), (3) a voyeur (*īrṣyā-paṇḍaka*)—someone who needs to see other people having sexual intercourse to arouse sexual desire, (4) someone whose sexual organ disappears when engaging in sexual intercourse (*āsaktaprādurbhāvī-paṇḍaka*), (5) half-month paṇḍaka (*pakṣa-paṇḍaka*), someone who can act as a male only for half of a month.

Second, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “If a bhikṣu observing early or later varṣā in a dwelling sees that there are life-threatening obstacles or obstacles to pure practice, he should tell his donor and request to move. If the donor agrees, that is good; if not, he should leave.”

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “If basic food is inadequate, or encountering parents and relatives brings suffering or joy, for fear of losing your intent to practice the Dharma, you are allowed to break [the rule to observe] varṣā without [it being considered] an offense.”

The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya and the *Samantapāsādikā* (*Shan Jian Lu Pi Po Sha*) say, “If you move away during varṣā due to obstacles, there is no offense.”

The *Vinaya Dvāvijjati Prasannārtha Śāstra* says, “If one has already entered varṣā during the summer months, and due to the eight obstacles<sup>34</sup> one gives up [observing] varṣā, one does not commit an offense.”

The *Māṭṛikā Śāstra* (*Pi Ni Mu Lun*) says, “Moving [the location] of varṣā does not break [the rule to observe] varṣā.”

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya *Skandhaka on the Robes* says, “If you observe varṣā in two places, you receive robes according to the place where you stayed for the most days. If you stayed at both places for an equal amount of time, spend half your time at each place to receive robes.”

The Mahāśāṃghika Vinaya and Sarvāstivāda Vinaya say, “If there are life-threatening obstacles or obstacles to the holy life and you have to move to a second place to observe varṣā, you should receive robes where you do the pravāraṇā. Those who have broken [the rule to observe] varṣā may not receive robes, and on this basis, those who have not observed varṣā may not receive robes. If you are allowed to receive robes, it logically follows that you must have fulfilled varṣā.”

*There is no rite for moving away in the Vinaya. If a bhikṣu/ṇī is living with a group, when they leave, they need to tell the group and explain the reason for moving away. At breakfast or lunchtime, they stand in the central aisle, facing the front, and make a half-bow. They say with palms joined:*

**Person who moves away:** Virtuous ones, I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have been observing varṣā at this dwelling. Due to the obstacle of \_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to practice the Dharma. I will now move to stay at another place.

*They make a half-bow. Next, they bid farewell to the abbess/abbot and the Vinaya master on whom they rely. Then they may leave.*

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<sup>34</sup> These refer to obstacles caused by kings, thieves, fire, flood, illness, humans, non-humans, and poisonous insects.

## Receiving Days of Leave to Go Outside the Territory<sup>35</sup>

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “At one time, a donor invited a bhikṣu, saying, ‘I wish to make offerings to you at my house.’” The Buddha said, “From now on, I allow you to receive a seven-day leave. You should not receive a seven-day leave solely for the sake of [accepting] food and drink. [You may receive a seven-day leave] for other reasons, such as to [accept] robes, alms bowls, sitting mats, needle containers, or medicines. You should return by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> day.”

A bhikṣu may receive a seven-day leave if he is asked to grant probation (*parivāsa*), restarting (*mulāya-paṭikassana*), penance (*mānatva*), and rehabilitation (*abhyāyana*) to bhikṣus who have committed remainders (*saṃghāvaśeṣa*),<sup>36</sup> to grant penance and rehabilitation to bhikṣuṇīs who have committed remainders;<sup>37</sup> to give full ordination to śikṣamāṇās,<sup>38</sup> or to give ordination to śrāmaṇerī/as.

A bhikṣuṇī may receive a seven-day leave if she is asked to grant penance and rehabilitation to bhikṣuṇīs who have committed remainders; if śikṣamāṇās wish to confess and repent transgressions of their precepts and receive the ordination again,<sup>39</sup> or to receive full ordination; or to give a śrāmaṇerī the six trainings.

If a donor is sick or has worries and troubles; or if your parents are sick or wish to meet, you are allowed to receive a seven-day leave. The same applies for siblings, relatives, and friends.

If you are carrying out important and beneficial matters for the Three Jewels that will create virtue and eliminate nonvirtue, you are allowed to receive a seven-day leave. If midway, you hear of [obstacles that may cause you to] die, go against your precepts, join a non-Buddhist sect, or meet with the eight obstacles, do not leave. If you are gravely ill, there is no need to receive days of leave. Leaving immediately does not break [the rule to observe] varṣā.

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<sup>35</sup> A bhikṣu/ṇī may go outside the territory but must return before dawn. S/he requests leave if s/he needs to be away overnight.

<sup>36</sup> If a bhikṣu has concealed a remainder, he has to undergo a period of probation for the number of days the offense was concealed. After that, he does one week of penance. If he commits another remainder during the time of probation or penance, he has to restart the period of probation or penance. When penance is complete, he requests rehabilitation, which is done with a saṅgha of 20 bhikṣus.

<sup>37</sup> Bhikṣuṇīs do not undergo probation. The penance period is two weeks. If she commits another remainder while doing penance, she has to restart the period of penance. Rehabilitation is done with 20 bhikṣus and 20 bhikṣuṇīs.

<sup>38</sup> Technically, bhikṣus do not give the śikṣamāṇā ordination. This seems to be an exception that occurred during varṣā.

<sup>39</sup> If a śikṣamāṇā transgresses any one of the six trainings, she has to retake the śikṣamāṇā ordination.

If [you receive days of leave] to make a living and seek profit, [such as by] begging for grains, wheat, and so on from the respected and powerful, or being hired to copy out sūtras or draw portraits, you should return and undergo repentance. If you receive leave for one purpose and subsequently carry out many affairs; or you fabricate reasons [to receive leave] even though you have no actual matters [to attend to]—it is unsuitable to receive days of leave for such unbeneficial affairs. Even though it is unsuitable to receive leave [for these affairs], there are many presumptuous [monastics] pretending to observe varṣā, arrogant and unprincipled, undeserving of the offerings of the faithful, whose records are filled with grave offenses. The *Samantapāsādikā* says, “Someone who seeks their own gain during varṣā and receives offerings commits a heavy offense.” The *Sūtra of 500 Questions* by Mahāmaudgalyāyana on *Vinaya Matters* (*Wu Bai Wen Shi*) says, “Those who break the precepts to make a living, obtaining wealth by going against the Buddha, will not avoid great sufferings in hell, much less receive fortune.”

## 1. One-motion One-proclamation Karman to Go Outside the Territory

In the Vinaya, the Buddha said, “Suppose a bhikṣu observing varṣā has to carry out matters related to the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. If he is unable to return by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> day, I allow him to receive a half-month leave; if he is still unable to return by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> day, he should then receive a one-month leave, [both] through a one-motion one-proclamation karman.” The assembly should assign someone who is capable of performing the karman, not on the basis of whether they are senior or junior, nor whether or not they are an expert in the Vinaya, to carry it out as follows.

*Three people may take leave each time the karman is done. If this is done, state their names in succession. The abbess/abbot or karman master asks [the questions], and the chant leader responds.*

**Karman master:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Karman master:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Karman master:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Karman master:** Are there any absent bhikṣu/ṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** (*stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined*):

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ (*or* from many bhikṣu/ṇīs) who is ill (attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma). They give their consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Karman master:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. (*half-bow and returns to their place*)

**Karman master:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman of receiving a 15-day (one-month) leave.

**Karman master** (*stands with palms joined*): Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree that Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ receives an over-seven-day leave for 15 days (one month) to go outside the territory in order to \_\_\_\_\_ and then return here for varṣā. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to approve that Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ receives an over-seven-day leave for 15 days (one month) to go outside the territory in order to \_\_\_\_\_ and then return here for varṣā. Those who agree that the saṅgha approves that Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ receives an over-seven-day leave for 15 days (one month) to go outside the territory in order to \_\_\_\_\_ and then return here for varṣā remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha has completed approving that Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ receives an over-seven-day leave for 15 days (one month) to go outside the territory in order to \_\_\_\_\_ and then return here for varṣā. This matter will proceed as decided.

Note: According to *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary (Si Fen Lu Xing Shi Chao Zi Chi Ji)* 12.52, if you receive a 15-day leave on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month, the day of departure is not counted within the half month, because months have different numbers of days. For the one-month leave, the entire month is counted, not 30 days.



## 2. One-to-one Transaction to Receive Days of Leave

*The person who wishes to receive leave reports to the abbess/abbot who assesses [the situation] and gives permission. After the abbess/abbot has given instruction, the person goes to a bhikṣu/ṇī, informs them about the situation, and then declares the karman. If the counterpart is equal or junior in ordination age, the two of them stand facing each other and say the words. If the counterpart is an elder member of the saṅgha or senior in ordination age, the person should pay respect by bowing, kneel with palms joined, and say:*

**Person seeking temporary leave:** Virtuous one, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ now receive a seven-day leave<sup>40</sup> to go outside the territory in order to \_\_\_\_\_ and then return here for varṣā. I declare this to inform the virtuous one. (3x)

**Counterpart:** Good.

**Person seeking temporary leave:** Yes. (*one bow*)

## 3. Cautionary Advice to Those Who Leave the Territory

*After performing the one-motion one-proclamation karman or the one-to-one transaction [to receive leave], the abbess/abbot or an elder member of the saṅgha gives advice.*

**Abbess/Abbot:** The Vinaya establishes that although you are allowed to receive a seven-day (15-day/one-month) leave, even though physically you are outside the territory, mentally you should continually keep your mindfulness inside the territory and not let your mind be uncontrolled. Recite sūtras and meditate every day as usual. After you have completed the matter, return immediately. You are not permitted to wait for a fixed [period of] seven days and only return when the period [of leave] is complete. If you have completed the matter and deliberately remain outside the territory, wasting time in vain, this is breaking [the rule to observe] varṣā and your varṣā will not be fulfilled.

**Note:** Outside the territory, keep count of the days, and return immediately once you complete your affairs. You must prioritize the Dharma and keep your mindfulness within the territory. Do not make exceptions and commit offenses as you wish, appearing to observe varṣā only in name and not in reality. The proper instruction passed down [from past generations] is to spend only six nights outside the territory. By the [end of the] 7<sup>th</sup> day you must have returned inside the territory.

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<sup>40</sup> The day of departure is counted as day one, so you can be gone six nights but must return before daybreak of the 8<sup>th</sup> day. If you take the seven-day leave starting after dawn on a Monday, you must be back before dawn of the following Monday.

Question: If you encounter [valid] reasons to leave the territory but forget to receive days of leave and spend the night [outside], is varṣā fulfilled?

Answer: There is no text in all the Vinayas that assesses [this situation]. Only the *Sūtra of 500 Questions by Mahāmaudgalyāyana on Vinaya Matters* says, “During varṣā, you forget to receive a seven-day leave and travel outside the territory. Once you recollect [your offense], if you immediately repent, [varṣā is] fulfilled. Within one varṣā, you may not repent this offense more than three times. If you exceed three instances of repentance, you may not count the [varṣā as one of your ordination] years.” (Repentance refers to painfully recollecting and regretting your earlier heedlessness and returning immediately to the territory.)

Question: You receive days of leave to go outside the territory due to [valid] matters and suddenly you meet with obstacles of water and land routes being cut off, such that you are unable to return to the territory. Do you lose the [varṣā as one of your ordination] years?

Answer: There is also no text in the Vinaya that assesses [this situation].<sup>41</sup> In the past during the earlier [Northern] Qi Dynasty, the ten Vinaya masters<sup>42</sup> who presided over all [monastic discipline] made a collective assessment that varṣā would be considered fulfilled. If you are unable to return to the territory due to matters that benefit the Three Jewels, or personal matters of great importance, these are [also allowed as] exceptions. If you remain at your leisure for no beneficial purpose, there is no doubt that you have broken [the rule to observe] varṣā.

If you exceed the period of leave and do not return, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “At one time, a bhikṣu received a seven-day leave to go outside the territory, and stayed for the sake of his mother. By the time he wished to return, it was too late to do so by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> day. He wondered whether he could count or would lose the [varṣā as one of his ordination] years. He [told the bhikṣus, the bhikṣus] went and told the Buddha, and the Buddha said, “He will not lose the [varṣā as one of his ordination] years. The same applies to parents, brothers, sisters, former wives, or former mistresses, or if there are obstacles from *yakṣas* (nature spirits), ghosts, and spirits. If water and land routes are blocked, or there are obstacles from thieves, wolves, tigers, and lions, he also will not lose the [varṣā as one of his ordination] years.””

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<sup>41</sup> This is incorrect. The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (T.22.1428, p.835a11-14) says, “At one time, a bhikṣu received a seven-day leave to go and stay outside the territory, but water and land routes were blocked, or there were obstacles from thieves, wolves, tigers, and lions, [so he was unable to return in time]. He wondered whether he could count or would lose the [varṣā as one of his ordination] years. He told the bhikṣus, the bhikṣus went and told the Buddha, and the Buddha said, ‘He will not lose the [varṣā as one of his ordination] years’.”

<sup>42</sup> These ten saṅgha officials were appointed by the Emperor Wenxuan (550-559 CE).

## 4. Confession for Forgetting to Receive Days of Leave and Leaving the Territory during Varṣā

During varṣā, if you encounter [valid] reasons to leave the territory but forget to take days of leave and spend the night [outside], there is no text in all the Vinayas that assesses whether the varṣā is fulfilled. Only the *Sūtra of 500 Questions by Mahāmaudgalyāyana on Vinaya Matters* says, “During varṣā, you forget to receive a seven-day leave and travel outside the territory. Once you recollect [your offense], if you immediately repent, [varṣā is] fulfilled. Within one varṣā, you may not repent this offense more than three times. If you exceed three instances of repentance, you may not count the [varṣā as one of your ordination] years.”

### A. Requesting an Amends-attester

The person seeking repentance goes to any pure bhikṣu/ṇī, bows once, kneels with palms joined, and says:

**Person seeking repentance:** Virtuous one, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ forgot to receive a seven-day (15-day/one-month) leave, spent the night outside the territory, and committed a wrongdoing. 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.

**Person seeking repentance:** Yes. (*one bow*)

The moment you recollect and are aware of your offense, you should return immediately to the territory, confess, and repent, then there is no offense of concealment and so forth. If you deliberately remain outside [the territory], pretending not to remember [your offense] and having no integrity nor consideration for others, this is breaking [the rule to observe] varṣā.

## B. Actual Confession and Repentance

*The person seeking repentance again kneels facing the amends-attester. They both have palms joined. The person seeking repentance sincerely gives up the offense.*

**Person seeking repentance:** Virtuous one, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ forgot to receive a seven-day (15-day/one-month) leave, spent the night outside the territory, and committed a wrongdoing. I now reveal, confess, and repent this before the virtuous one. I will not do this again. May the virtuous one support me. (*1x*)

**Amends-attester:** Restrain your mind and cultivate antipathy toward such behavior.

**Person seeking repentance:** Yes. (*one bow*)

Although you have not committed this offense deliberately, you still need to confess and repent before another person. This is because [observing] varṣā is an essential duty of the saṅgha. Unlike other offenses, it must therefore be confessed and repented before another person.

## Pravāraṇā: Invitation<sup>43</sup>

Although 90 days of Dharma practice purifies the body and mind, most people are unable to evaluate themselves and cannot see their own faults. Therefore, you should rely upon instruction given by a pure assembly out of compassion. By inviting the saṅgha to bring up your faults, internally it is clear that you have concealed nothing, and externally it is apparent that you are pure. You entrust your body and speech to others [for feedback]; thus this is known as “giving oneself up.” In the past, the Sanskrit term pravāraṇā was translated [into Chinese] as “giving oneself up”; its new translation is to “follow one’s wishes.”<sup>44</sup>

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “There were many bhikṣus observing summer varṣā in separate dwellings. They established common rules not to converse, pay respect to, or exchange greetings with each other. Those who went earlier or later to the village to procure almsfood would return, and each would act accordingly as they should [to ensure everyone had enough food and to clean the dining area]. If they needed to carry implements together, they would beckon to fellow bhikṣus. In this way, they were able to abide in peace and happiness.

After completing varṣā, the bhikṣus approached the Buddha, bowed at his feet, and each sat to one side. The Buddha acknowledged the bhikṣus’ efforts with concern [by asking], “Were you peaceful and happy? Did you have enough food and drink? Did you dwell in harmony?” The bhikṣus fully reported the past events to the Buddha.

The Buddha said, “You foolish men, what you think is happiness free from misfortune is actually misfortune. You live together as if you were enemies, and act like white sheep.<sup>45</sup> I have taught the bhikṣus through countless expedient means to teach each other and discuss [the Dharma] amongst yourselves in order to attain awakening step by step. You foolish men behave like practitioners of non-Buddhist sects by adopting the 40

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<sup>43</sup> Pravāraṇā is an important monastic rite held at the end of the varṣā providing a forum for all resident monastics to invite critical peer feedback and redress any offenses that have been seen, heard, or suspected by their bhikṣu/ṇī peers during that period.

According to the *Māṭṛikā Śāstra*, the reason to give pravāraṇā at the end of varṣā is to check for any possible transgression of the precepts or any flaw in your virtuous deeds committed during the varṣā. Monastics give the pravāraṇā (1) to advise each other, (2) to help each other recall offenses, (3) to teach each other, (4) to respect each other, (5) to heed each other’s advice.

<sup>44</sup> The Chinese term *zì zì* literally means to let go of your restraints, possibly connoting the end of the varṣā retreat discipline.

<sup>45</sup> White sheep remain silent even when they are about to be slaughtered. Those monastics who cannot distinguish happiness and suffering, what to practice and what to abandon, are like dumb sheep.

practices<sup>46</sup> together. If you practice observing silence in this way, you commit a wrongdoing.”

Once, the group of six bhikṣus said to each other, “The Buddha has instructed bhikṣus to teach each other and discuss [the Dharma] amongst ourselves in order to attain awakening step by step.” They then began to accuse other bhikṣus whose conduct was pure of committing offenses. The Buddha said, “You should not accuse bhikṣus who are free from offenses of misdeeds. If you wish to point out another bhikṣu’s misdeeds, you should first request his permission.”

Once, the group of six bhikṣus became resentful as some bhikṣus with pure conduct had requested permission from them [to point out their misdeeds]. They retaliated by requesting permission from the bhikṣus with pure conduct [to point out their misdeeds]. The Buddha said, “I allow those who possess five virtuous qualities to request permission [to point out others’ misdeeds]. The five virtuous qualities are: knowing when [to request permission] and not doing so at inappropriate times; relying on the truth and not falsehoods; wishing to benefit and not [acting] without benefit; being gentle and not tactless; having kindness and not anger.”

Those in the group of six bhikṣus did not possess the five virtuous qualities. Other bhikṣus with pure conduct possessed the five virtuous qualities. They requested permission from the group of six bhikṣus [to point out their misdeeds], but the group of six bhikṣus refused their request. The Buddha said, “From now on, I allow you to give the pravāraṇā at the end of varṣā. I also allow you to suspend the pravāraṇā. You should not request permission [to point out others’ misdeeds]. Why is this so? The pravāraṇā itself is giving permission [because you invite others’ feedback]. You should not give the pravāraṇā all at the same time, but give the pravāraṇā one by one. You should not give the pravāraṇā as you wish, you should go in [ordination] order beginning with the most senior bhikṣu. I allow you to assign a pravāraṇā acceptor; you should assign someone who possesses five virtuous qualities. What are these five? Being free from partiality, anger, fear, ignorance, and knowing a valid pravāraṇā from an invalid pravāraṇā. Those who have these five virtuous qualities should be assigned as a pravāraṇā acceptor.”

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<sup>46</sup> Buddha forbade monastics from adopting 40 practices—e.g. behaving like an animal, not speaking, etc.—done by non-Buddhist sects, because they were not conducive to the path to awakening.

# Accepting the Sticks to Give the Pravāraṇā

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, do the karman of accepting the sticks once again to see if anyone left during varṣā and if anyone new joined the community for pravāraṇā. On that morning, in front of the main hall or the dining hall, hang a notice saying, “We will perform the stick-accepting today and give the pravāraṇā tomorrow.”

## 1. Cleaning the Place and Preparing the Sticks

According to the *One Hundred and One Karmans of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya (Gen Ben Bai Yi Jie Mo)*, on the day before the pravāraṇā, the monastic on duty asks some people to clean the premises. After the cleaning is finished, they stand and announce as follows:

**Monastic on duty:** Virtuous saṅgha, tomorrow the saṅgha will give the pravāraṇā. All matters should be considered accordingly.

The monastics on duty clean and set up the place where the saṅgha will gather. The altars have already been set up at the beginning of varṣā. Offer flowers, lamps or candles, and fruit. At the two sides of the hall, arrange the seats of the saṅgha members. In the front at the head of the left row, facing the back or the center of the hall, place the abbess’/abbot’s seat. Put a table with an incense burner in front of the Buddha. In front of the table, put a kneeling cushion. Also, put a bowing cushion for the abbess/abbot in the central aisle.

Depending on the number of the people, prepare the tray(s) for the sticks. Prepare two large sticks: one for the Buddha to be distributed first, and one for Weituo Pusa to be distributed last. The sticks should not be coarse or crooked. The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “The sticks should not be shorter than the width of five fingers put together, not longer than the length from one’s elbow to fist, not thicker than one’s small finger, nor thinner than a chopstick.” Dip the sticks into fragrant boiling water while reciting the verse:

Four groups of noble disciples are gathered,  
The assembly of ordinary sentient beings is in harmony.  
Fragrant water purifies the sticks,  
Pravāraṇā purifies our three doors.

Then place the sticks nicely on a tray, and sprinkle fresh flowers on them. If there are few participants, prepare one tray with sticks and one empty tray. If there are many participants, prepare two trays with sticks and two empty trays. Place the trays on a table.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The *Collection* says to put the tray with the sticks and the empty tray on the table in front of the Buddha altar or on a table in the rear of the room. On another table put the water basin and towel, which is also on a tray.

If someone is busy with matters concerning the Three Jewels or is ill, they are allowed to take leave and express their consent. One capable bhikṣu/ṇī should be assigned to receive consent from those who cannot attend. Wait for the bhikṣu/ṇī who receives consent to return to the assembly hall. When the time comes, gather the saṅgha members.

## **2. Gathering the Saṅgha and Paying Homage to the Buddha**

*Make a signal. The saṅgha members put on their seven-strip robe (uttarāsaṅga, chogu), take their sitting cloth, and go to the assembly hall. They stand in ordination order, facing the central aisle with palms joined. When everybody has arrived, the monastic on duty in the hall goes to invite the abbess/abbot.*

**Chant leader:** Let us respectfully invite the abbess/abbot to enter.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle.*

*See pages 49-50 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 abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, walks slowly to the altar, makes a half-bow, kneels, and offers three incense sticks to the Buddha. They stand, make a half-bow, walk back to the bowing cushion, and bow 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 

50 

55 

60 

65 

70 

75 

80 

84

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha.

**Abbess/Abbot:** With utmost sincerity, we will visualize and bow to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in gratitude, for having had the opportunity to do the beneficial practice of observing varṣā for 90 days.

**Chant leader:** Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.

*The abbess/abbot does not bow because they have bowed earlier.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle.

*The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish,<sup>48</sup> followed by the abbess/abbot, walk to Weituo Pusa. The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish stand facing each other in front of Weituo Pusa's offering table, with the chant leader on the right side of Weituo Pusa. They wait for the abbess/abbot to stand before the offering table for Weituo Pusa.*

*See page 52 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Weituo, divine general, bodhisattva emanation,  
Supports the Buddhadharma through his deep and vast vows.  
Subduing Mara's army with his treasured pestle,  
His qualities and merits are incomparable.  
May his actions be with our wishes.  
Homage to Universal-eye Bodhisattva Mahāsattva  
And to the great Prajñāpāramitā.

*While everyone chants, the abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, offers three incense sticks to the bodhisattva, and makes three half-bows. When the chanting ends, the abbess/abbot stands to the left of Weituo Pusa.*

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<sup>48</sup> The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish carry their instruments with them.

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

## Praise to Weituo Pusa

△ X

The musical score is written in a single system with five staves. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4, then to 2/4, and finally to 3/4. Above the notes, there are symbols for bells (O), fish (X), and gongs (△). The lyrics are written below the notes, with line numbers 6, 11, 17, 22, and 25 indicating the start of new lines of text.

Wei tu o di vine ge- ner-al, bo-dhi-satt-va em-a - na-tion, su-pports the  
 6 Bu ddha dhar - ma through his deep and vast vows. Sub-du-ing Ma ra's ar - my  
 11 with his trea-sured pes-tle, his qua li - ties and me - rits are in-com para-ble.  
 17 May his ac - tio - ns be with our wi shes. Ho mage to  
 22 Uni - ni ver - sal-eye Bod hi sat va Ma ha satt - va,  
 25 and to the grea - - t Praj - na - pa - ra mi ta

**Chant leader:** Face Weituo Pusa.

**Abbess/Abbot:** With utmost sincerity, make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa in gratitude for this great bodhisattva's support and protection during the varṣā.

**Chant leader:** Make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa.

*The abbess/abbot does not make the half-bows.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle.

*The chant leader and the person who hits the wooden fish walk side by side to their places. The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once. (*walks to their place*)

**Chant leader:** Śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as, please leave the hall.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Virtuous saṅgha, please sit down.

### 3. Giving Instruction and Assigning Persons to be on Duty

The *One Hundred and One Karmans of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* says, “Having gathered the saṅgha, set the stick trays well. Then, the abbess/abbot gives instruction about the pravāraṇā.”

**Abbess/Abbot:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I will now explain the pravāraṇā. During varṣā we focused on studying, reflecting, and meditating on the Dharma. We emphasized harmony in the community and purity in keeping our precepts. During this time, we did not point out each other’s offenses. Today, everyone confessed their offenses and others gave feedback to clear up any unsettled issues. Tomorrow at the pravāraṇā each of us will humbly invite others in the community, especially the pravāraṇā acceptor who has five virtuous qualities, to give us any remaining feedback with compassion.

After the pravāraṇā, we will transition from the varṣā period to our usual activities. Let us rejoice at the merit we have created and purification we have done. But we should always keep in mind that our precious human life is transient and does not last long. We must continue to be vigilant and not let our minds be uncontrolled. Harmony in the community and diligence in our practice, as well as wisdom and compassion, remain priorities.

*The abbess/abbot assigns the stick-distributor and the stick-collector. If the group is small, assign one person for each job. If it is big, two persons may be assigned for each job.*

**Abbess/Abbot:** The saṅgha is assembled today to do the saṅghakarmans in order. I now assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as the person to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as the person to collect the sticks.

The Vinaya says, “A person endowed with five virtuous qualities should be assigned to distribute the sticks. The five virtuous qualities are: being free from partiality, anger, fear, and ignorance, and knowing whether a stick has been distributed to someone or not.”

### 4. Performing the Preliminaries *(only bhikṣu/ṇīs can be present)*

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Are there any absent bhikṣu/ṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** (*stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined*):

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ (*or* from many bhikṣu/ṇīs) who is ill (attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma). They give their consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. (*half-bow and returns to their place*)

**Abbess/Abbot:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman of receiving the sticks for giving the pravāraṇā.

## **5. Single-Motion Karman to Give the Pravāraṇā**

**Abbess/Abbot:** The karman master will make the motion.

*The karman master rises, walks to the central aisle, bows to the Buddha once, returns to their place and says with palms joined:*

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha wishes to give the pravāraṇā to conclude the varṣā on the 15<sup>th</sup> day. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to allow saṅgha members to receive the sticks today and give the pravāraṇā tomorrow. This is the motion.

## **6. Karmans to Assign the Stick-distributor and the Stick-collector**

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks. Those who agree that the saṅgha assigns Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha has completed assigning Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute the sticks and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to collect the sticks. This matter will proceed as decided.

*The assigned persons stand up and with proper comportment walk to the central aisle, bow to the Buddha three times, return to their places and sit down. The stick-distributor says with palms joined except where the stick-collector says their own name and role:*

**Stick-distributor (and stick-collector):** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree that I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ will distribute the sticks to the saṅgha, and I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ will collect the sticks from the saṅgha. This is the motion.

## **7. Receiving the Sticks to Give the Pravāraṇā**

*All bhikṣu/ṇīs remain seated when they wash their hands. The stick-collector and stick-distributor stand up. If the assembly is large, they stand in the central aisle facing the Buddha, forming two rows, the distributors in front and the collectors behind. If the assembly is small and there is only one person for each job, they stand side by side. Together they bow once. They distribute fragrant water and the hand towel. The person holding the water basin walks in front and the person holding the tray with the hand towel follows. Both go to the abbess/abbot and bend down or squat so the abbess/abbot can reach the water. The abbess/abbot with palms joined, puts their fingers in the water, and while sprinkling water on their palms (symbolizing the purification of their body, speech, and mind), they say:*

**Abbess/Abbot (and later, saṅgha members):**

Water with eight good qualities purifies all filth.

Washing my palms removes dirt, and my mind is unpolluted.

Upholding pure precepts without faults or offenses,

May this situation come about for all sentient beings.

*S/he dries her/his hands with the towel. Next, they distribute the water and hand towel to the next senior saṅgha member who recites the above verse. Like this, they distribute the water and hand towel down to the last saṅgha member. At the end, the two persons go to the table where the water was and holding the water for each other, they wash their hands, say the verse, and dry their hands. They then put the water basin and towel back on the table.*

*After distributing the fragrant water, the stick-distributor and stick-collector each hold their own tray. The distributor walks first, the collector follows. They walk to the Buddha, stand on the left and right sides of the Buddha, and face each other. They should not stand too far from or too near the table in the front of the Buddha. They do not turn their backs to the abbess/abbot. They also do not stand too far away from each other such that they cannot reach each other's hands. Then, the distributor puts her/his tray with the sticks on top of the empty tray. S/he bows to the Buddha three times, kneels, and takes one large stick from the tray. S/he holds the stick horizontally at the level of her/his eyebrows between her/his hands, and says:*

**Stick-distributor:** This is the year of \_\_\_\_\_. Having observed varṣā for three months, the assembly will give the pravāraṇā. May Buddha Śākyamuni, our fundamental teacher and the founder of the Buddhadharmā in the Sahā world, receive the first stick.

*S/he puts the stick on the incense burner, stands up, and bows to the Buddha once. S/he takes her/his own tray and stands on one side. The stick-collector puts her/his empty tray on top of the distributor's tray, bows to the Buddha three times, and kneels. With both hands s/he takes the stick on the incense burner and places it on the empty tray. S/he stands up and bows to the Buddha once.*

*They then hold their own trays. The distributor walks in front and the collector follows. Both go to the abbess/abbot and kneel. The abbess/abbot kneels with palms joined, takes one stick holding it horizontally as above, raises it to the height of their eyebrows, and says:*

**Abbess/Abbot** (and later, saṅgha members):

Like a vajra without obstruction, the stick of liberation  
Is hard to obtain and today I am able to receive it.  
Receiving it with delight, I now hold it up to my head.  
May this situation come about for all sentient beings.



*They put the stick on the empty tray, and says with palms joined:*

Endowed with purity, I receive this stick.

Endowed with purity, I return this stick.

Firm, joyous, and unattached, I am free of faults and offenses.

May this situation come about for all sentient beings.

*The abbess/abbot sits down. Next, the distributor and collector go to the next senior saṅgha member, who kneels, takes the stick and so forth. In this way, they go down to the last saṅgha member, according to the order of ordination age. At the end, the distributor and collector receive sticks from each other. For a person who has taken leave and given consent, the conveyor of their leave takes their stick, saying:*

**Conveyor:** I take the stick in place of Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_.

*According to the Vinaya, if there are śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as giving the pravāraṇā, the abbess/abbot or ācārya may receive their sticks. Alternatively, they may now enter the hall.*

**Chant leader:** All śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as enter in ordination order.

*Hearing the bell, śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerī/as put their robes on neatly, go into the hall, and stand in ordination order facing the Buddha.*

**Chant leader:** Bow to the Buddha three times.

*The monastic on duty sends them to the end of the line of bhikṣu/ṇīs. They kneel with palms joined in ordination order. Now, one by one, each śikṣamāṇā and then each śrāmaṇerī/a puts water on their hands and dries them, reciting the appropriate verse above. Then each one takes a stick, says the appropriate verse, returns the stick, and says the appropriate verse. After everyone has received and returned a stick, they sit down.*

*Both the stick-distributor and stick-collector go before Weituo Pusa. They stand on his right and left sides, facing each other. The distributor puts her/his tray on the top of the collector's tray. S/he makes three half-bows to Weituo Pusa. As before, with both hands s/he holds a large stick at eye level and says:*

**Stick-distributor:** This is the year of \_\_\_\_\_. Having observed varṣā for three months, the assembly will give the pravāraṇā. May the honorable heavenly being, Weituo Pusa, protector of the Buddhadharma, receive the last stick.

*S/he puts the stick on the incense burner and makes a half-bow. S/he takes her/his own tray and stands on one side. The collector puts her/his tray on top of the distributor's tray, makes three half-bows to Weituo Pusa, takes the stick on the incense burner with both hands, and puts it on her/his tray, and makes one half-bow. Then, both take their own tray and go to a screened place and count the sticks to see how many bhikṣu/ṇīs and how many śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerī/as there are, including themselves. They should remember the number clearly. They put their trays on the table. The collector walks in front and the distributor follows as they walk to the middle of the saṅgha and stand facing the Buddha. The collector stands in front and the distributor behind. If the assembly is small, they stand in one row.*

**Stick-collector:** This is the year of \_\_\_\_\_. In this assembly that will give the pravāraṇā, there are now \_\_\_\_\_ bhikṣu/ṇīs, \_\_\_\_\_ śikṣamāṇās, and \_\_\_\_\_ śrāmaṇerī/as who received a stick.

**Stick-distributor:** We have completed distributing and collecting the sticks from the saṅgha.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Stick-distributor and Stick-collector:** Yes.

*Both bow to the Buddha once. They return to their places.*

**Abbess/Abbot:** Everyone, we now know there are \_\_\_\_\_ people giving the pravāraṇā at this place. Everybody restrain your body, speech, and mind. Continue to make effort to concentrate on practice. We have completed the action of receiving the sticks.

*Bhikṣus and śrāmaṇeras skip section 8 and go to the dedication of merit on page 60.*

**Chant leader:** Śikṣamāṇās and śrāmaṇerīs, stand and bow to the Buddha three times. Please leave the hall.

## **8. Karman of the Bhikṣuṇī Saṅgha to Assign a Delegate**

*(Done by bhikṣuṇīs only on the 14<sup>th</sup> or early morning on the 15<sup>th</sup>)*

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “The World-honored One allowed that after the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha has completed varṣā, they should go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā by asking them to point out offenses that they have seen, heard, or suspected.<sup>49</sup> The bhikṣuṇī saṅgha should perform a

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<sup>49</sup> For example, you see someone leave a room in a hurried, furtive manner and suspect them of stealing. Go to the person whose room it is and ask them if something is missing. At pravāraṇā, there must be some evidence of an offense; you can't make unfounded accusations. However, if there is evidence, then it's more than a suspicion. So “suspect” means you need to investigate.

one-motion one-proclamation karman to assign a bhikṣuṇī to go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha. Those who do not do so commit a lapse.” If the bhikṣu saṅgha is ill, not in harmony, or incomplete (i.e. there are less than five bhikṣus), the bhikṣuṇīs should send a messenger to pay respect to the bhikṣu saṅgha, otherwise they commit a wrongdoing. If the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha is ill, not in harmony, or incomplete, the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha should also send a messenger to pay respect to the bhikṣu saṅgha, otherwise they commit a wrongdoing.

If the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha is complete, they should find out whether any bhikṣuṇī wishes to give her consent. First, they verbally assign a capable bhikṣuṇī to go around the territory to receive consent [from bhikṣuṇīs who will be absent from the karman]. Wait for the bhikṣuṇī who receives consent to return.

### **A. Performing the Preliminaries** *(only bhikṣuṇīs can be present)*

**Abbess:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Abbess:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Abbess:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Abbess:** Are there any absent bhikṣuṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** *(stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined):*

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ *(or from many bhikṣuṇīs)* who is ill (attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma). She gives her consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Abbess:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. *(half-bow and returns to her place)*

**Abbess:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman of assigning a bhikṣuṇī to go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā by asking them to point out offenses that they have seen, heard, or suspected.

## B. One-Motion One-Proclamation Karman to Assign a Delegate

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to assign Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to go to the bhikṣu saṅgha on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā by asking them to point out offenses that they have seen, heard, or suspected. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to assign Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to go to the bhikṣu saṅgha on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā by asking them to point out offenses that they have seen, heard, or suspected. Those who agree that the saṅgha assigns Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to go to the bhikṣu saṅgha on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā by asking them to point out offenses that they have seen, heard, or suspected remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣuṇī saṅgha has completed assigning Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to go to the bhikṣu saṅgha on behalf of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā by asking them to point out offenses that they have seen, heard, or suspected. This matter will proceed as decided.

## 9. Dedication of Merit

**Chant leader:** Everyone please rise, face the central aisle with palms joined, and dedicate the merit.

*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

*See page 61 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Receiving the sticks 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 abbess/abbot 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.*

# Receiving the Sticks Dedication

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

△ x

Re - cei - ving the sti - cks 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.

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the Buddha three times.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the back of the hall and goes before Weituo Pusa.*

**Chant leader:** Face Weituo Pusa. Make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa.  
*The abbess/abbot stands to the right side of the main door of the hall, facing the Buddha.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. In gratitude, bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once.

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Wait respectfully as the abbess/abbot leaves the hall.

*Everyone leaves the hall in ordination order. The monastic on duty assigns junior bhikṣu/ṇīs, śikṣamāṇās, or śrāmaṇerī/as to help put away the implements, before they return to their rooms.*

The ancient masters said, “All Dharma objects are shared by the saṅgha of the four directions. Their bodies spread throughout the ten directions. You should use them very carefully and protect them like your eyes. This responsibility depends entirely on the management of the person on duty. Only when you use and store them with care like your own belongings are you free from fault. If objects are lost or damaged, your fault is not light. Therefore, you should be very careful about this.”

## 10. Bhikṣuṇīs Request the Bhikṣu Saṅgha to Point Out Offenses They Have Seen, Heard, or Suspected<sup>50</sup>

A bhikṣuṇī who travels alone is without protection. For safety reasons, two or three bhikṣuṇīs should be verbally assigned as companions to accompany the delegate to the bhikṣu saṅgha.

*Upon arriving at the guest hall, the delegate bhikṣuṇī bows to the guest master three times. Then, the delegate kneels with palms joined and says:*

**Delegate bhikṣuṇī:** Venerable, please listen. At \_\_\_\_\_ monastery the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha is in harmony. The saṅgha has assigned me Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to come and give the pravāraṇā by inviting the bhikṣu saṅgha to point out offenses that you have seen, heard, or suspected.

*She bows once and waits in the guest hall for the bhikṣu saṅgha to assemble. When the bhikṣu saṅgha has completed the preliminaries, the delegate bhikṣuṇī is called in.*

**Abbot:** Are there any bhikṣuṇīs who have been sent here to give the pravāraṇā by inviting us to point out offenses that we have seen, heard, or suspected?

**Guest master (stands):** Yes. Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. At \_\_\_\_\_ monastery/ies, the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha is in harmony. The saṅgha has sent Bhikṣuṇī(s) \_\_\_\_\_ to pay homage to the bhikṣu saṅgha and to give the pravāraṇā by inviting us to point out offenses that we have seen, heard, or suspected. (3x)

**Abbot:** Ask them to come in.

*The guest master goes to the guest hall and then invites them to enter.*

**Bhikṣu chant leader:** Face the Buddha and stand in ordination order. At the sound of the bell, bow three times. Then, kneel with palms joined. Speak in ordination order.

**Delegate bhikṣuṇī (with lowered eyes):** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The bhikṣu saṅgha has completed varṣā. The bhikṣuṇī saṅgha has also completed varṣā. The saṅgha has verbally assigned me Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to give the pravāraṇā by asking you to point out offenses that you have seen, heard, or suspected. Please tell us with compassion. On seeing the offenses, we will make amends according to the Dharma.<sup>51</sup> (3x) (pause)

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<sup>50</sup> Bhikṣus do this rite as part of their pravāraṇā ceremony after paying homage to the Buddha and Weituo Pusa and doing the preliminaries. This booklet has the order in which bhikṣuṇīs would do the rites.

<sup>51</sup> In Taiwan, many nunneries may send delegates to the same bhikṣu saṅgha. Each delegate says this verse. Then the abbot replies to everyone at once, and all the bhikṣuṇī delegates reply together.

**Abbot:** Everyone in the bhikṣu assembly has remained silent. This is because the members of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha have inwardly restrained their three doors of body, speech, and mind diligently, and thus outwardly did not commit any offenses that we have seen, heard, or suspected. Although this is the case, you should convey this teaching sincerely and instruct all members of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha to give the pravāraṇā according to the Dharma. Be vigilant, and do not let your mind be uncontrolled.

**Delegate bhikṣuṇī:** We will do as directed.

*In gratitude, the bhikṣuṇīs bow once and leave. They return to their monasteries and convey the instruction from the bhikṣu saṅgha.*



# Giving the Pravāraṇā

## 1. Announcement to the Saṅgha and Receiving Requests to Take Leave and Give Consent (*At breakfast, the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>*)

**Senior monastic:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Today is the full moon on the 15<sup>th</sup>. This morning, the saṅgha will gather at \_\_\_\_\_ to give the pravāraṇā. (*half-bow*)

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “If you have to attend to matters related to the Three Jewels, or if you are ill, you are allowed to take leave and give consent.” Assign a capable monastic to go around the territory to receive consent from those who cannot attend. The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “There are five ways to give consent for the pravāraṇā. The sick monastic says, (1) ‘I give you my pravāraṇā,’ (2) ‘I declare my pravāraṇā,’ (3) ‘Please convey the pravāraṇā for me,’ (4) if one cannot speak, use physical gestures to signal authorization to give the pravāraṇā, or (5) give the pravāraṇā by reciting the formula in full three times.”<sup>52</sup>

**Bhikṣu/ṇī to be excused** (*palms joined*): Virtuous one, please listen. Today, the saṅgha will give the pravāraṇā. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ should also give the pravāraṇā. I am ill (attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma) so I am unable to attend. I give my pravāraṇā and consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Conveyor of consent:** Good.

**Bhikṣu/ṇī to be excused:** Yes.

## 2. Gathering the Saṅgha and Paying Homage to the Buddha

Everyone confesses before the pravāraṇā ceremony. If someone has committed a remainder, they confess but do the formal amends process later. Those who refuse to confess their offenses should be expelled. If they refuse to leave, do not give the pravāraṇā, so as not to cause a schism in the saṅgha.

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<sup>52</sup> The *Pravāraṇā Skandhaka* mentions only four ways of giving consent, omitting the second way listed above. In the *Mātrikā Śāstra* Vol. 8, it says there are five ways to give consent for the pravāraṇā: (1) to say, “I give the pravāraṇā,” (2) to say, “I do the pravāraṇā,” (3) to say, “Please convey the pravāraṇā for me,” (4) to use physical gestures to indicate consent, (5) to use sounds to indicate consent.

*The set up for the hall is the same as for varṣā. When it is time, make a signal. The saṅgha members put on their seven-strip robe (uttarāsaṃga, chogu), take their sitting cloth, and go to the assembly hall. They stand in ordination order, facing the central aisle with palms joined. When everybody has arrived, the monastic on duty in the hall goes to invite the abbess/abbot.*

**Chant leader:** Let us respectfully invite the abbess/abbot to enter.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle.*

*See pages 67-68 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 abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, walks slowly to the altar, makes a half-bow, kneels, and offers three incense sticks to the Buddha. They stand, make a half-bow, walk back to the bowing cushion, and bow 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. \_\_\_\_\_

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.  
*The abbess/abbot does not bow because they have bowed earlier.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle.

*The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish, followed by the abbess/abbot, walk to Weituo Pusa. The chant leader and the person hitting the wooden fish stand facing each other in front of Weituo Pusa's offering table, with the chant leader on the right side of Weituo Pusa. They wait for the abbess/abbot to stand before the offering table for Weituo Pusa.*

*See page 70 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Weituo, divine general, bodhisattva emanation,  
Supports the Buddhadharma through his deep and vast vows.  
Subduing Mara's army with his treasured pestle,  
His qualities and merits are incomparable.  
May his actions be with our wishes.  
Homage to Universal-eye Bodhisattva Mahāsattva  
And to the great Prajñāpāramitā.

*While everyone chants, the abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, offers three incense sticks to the bodhisattva, and makes three half-bows. When the chanting ends, the abbess/abbot stands to the left of Weituo Pusa.*

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

## Praise to Weituo Pusa

△ x

The musical score is written in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the time signature is 3/4. The score consists of six staves of music, each with a line of lyrics underneath. Above the notes, there are performance instructions: 'O' for Bell, 'X' for Fish, and '△' for Gong. The lyrics are: Wei tu o di vine ge- ner- al, bo-dhi-satt-va em-a - na-tion, su-pports the Bu ddha dhar - ma through his deep and vast vows. Sub-du-ing Ma ra's ar - my with his trea-sured pes-tle, his qua li - ties and me - rits are in-com para- ble. May his ac - tio - ns be with our wi shes. Ho mage to Uni - ni ver - sal-eye Bod hi sat va Ma ha satt - va, and to the grea - - t Praj - na - pa - ra mi ta

**Chant leader:** Face Weituo Pusa. Make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa.  
*The abbess/abbot does not make the half-bows.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle.

*The chant leader and the person who hits the wooden fish walk side by side to their places. The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once. (*walks to their place*)

**Chant leader:** Śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as, please leave the hall.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Virtuous saṅgha, please sit down.

### 3. Performing the Preliminaries *(only bhikṣu/ṇīs can be present)*

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Are there any absent bhikṣu/ṇīs who cannot participate and have given their pravāraṇā and consent?

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** *(stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined):*

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ *(or from many bhikṣu/ṇīs)* who is ill (attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma). They give their pravāraṇā and consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Abbess:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. *(half-bow and returns to their place)*

**Abbess/Abbot:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karmans of the pravāraṇā.

### 4. The Delegate Bhikṣuṇī Returns *(Done by bhikṣuṇīs only)*<sup>53</sup>

*The delegate bhikṣuṇī walks to the central aisle, bows once and kneels with palms joined. All bhikṣuṇīs have palms joined.*

**Delegate bhikṣuṇī:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha assigned me Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to invite them to point out offenses that they have seen, heard or suspected. All in the assembly remained silent. They did not speak about us having committed any offenses. The abbot said, “It is because the members of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha have inwardly restrained their three doors of body, speech, and mind diligently, and thus outwardly did not commit any offenses that we have seen, heard, or suspected. Be vigilant, and do not let your mind be uncontrolled. Give the pravāraṇā according to the Dharma.”

**Bhikṣuṇīs:** We will do as directed.

*The delegate bhikṣuṇī bows once and returns to her place.*

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<sup>53</sup> The bhikṣu saṅgha would do the rite “Bhikṣuṇīs Request the Bhikṣu Saṅgha to Point Out Offenses They Have Seen, Heard, or Suspected” here.

## 5. One-motion One-proclamation Karman to Assign the Pravāraṇā Accepters

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya and the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya say, “Two or more pravāraṇā accepters can be assigned at the same time. If there are only five monastics all together, none of them is allowed to take leave and give consent, nor should two pravāraṇā accepters be assigned at the same time. Assign the accepters one after the other, performing one karman to assign one acceptor at a time, thus performing two karmans. If there are six monastics or more, two accepters can be assigned in one karman. If the saṅgha assembly is large and wishes to assign four or six pravāraṇā accepters, they should perform the karman twice, assigning two or three accepters in each karman, but they should not assign four accepters in one karman. Why? One saṅgha does not perform a karman on another saṅgha. A pravāraṇā acceptor should possess five virtuous qualities: being free from partiality, anger, fear, ignorance, and knowing a valid pravāraṇā from an invalid pravāraṇā.<sup>54</sup> Assign the acceptor by performing a one-motion one-proclamation karman.”

**Abess/Abbot:** We now assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to be the pravāraṇā accepters. Karman master, please make the motion according to ordination order.

*The bhikṣu/ṇīs with five virtuous qualities walk to the central aisle, bow to the Buddha once, and return to their places.*

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to be the pravāraṇā accepters. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to be the pravāraṇā accepters. Those who agree that the saṅgha assigns Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to be the pravāraṇā accepters remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha has completed assigning Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ and Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to be the pravāraṇā accepters. This matter will proceed as decided.

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<sup>54</sup> The abess/abbot usually is not a pravāraṇā acceptor. It is important that the acceptor is not afraid of other people getting upset. The acceptor whose name is said first accepts pravāraṇā from the abess/abbot, so the karman master announces the accepters' names according to the order said by the abess/abbot.



## 6. Single-motion Karman to Give the Pravāraṇā

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Today the saṅgha gives the pravāraṇā. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to give the pravāraṇā in harmony. This is the motion.

*Accepters stand in the central aisle. The first accepter goes in front of the abbess/abbot and if they are junior, they kneel. The abbess/abbot also kneels; they bow to each other and with palms joined:*

**Abbess/Abbot** (and later, saṅgha members who give pravāraṇā): Virtuous one, please listen. Today the saṅgha gives the pravāraṇā. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ will give the pravāraṇā. If you have seen, heard, or suspected that I have committed an offense, please tell me with compassion. On seeing the offense, I will make amends according to the Dharma. (3x)<sup>55</sup>

**Pravāraṇā acceptor:** Good.<sup>56</sup>

**Abbess/Abbot:** Yes.<sup>57</sup>

*The abbess/abbot and pravāraṇā accepter bow to each other from the kneeling position, stand, and make a half-bow. Then, the second accepter goes to the next senior bhikṣu/ṇī and so on in ordination order.<sup>58</sup> According to the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya, when the places in ordination order of the two pravāraṇā accepters are reached, they give their pravāraṇā before continuing to receive the pravāraṇā from others.<sup>59</sup>*

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<sup>55</sup> The person giving the pravāraṇā speaks slowly, clearly, and sincerely. Everyone present must be able to hear and understand what they are saying. Each person gives the pravāraṇā individually.

<sup>56</sup> The accepter says this only if the person has no offenses. Otherwise they give feedback. Others may also point out offenses, although hopefully that was managed during the confession prior to the pravāraṇā. In Taiwan they give feedback. If that person or others in the assembly don't agree with the feedback, they can say something at this time. This is the time to speak of broken precepts and serious bad behavior that affected the harmony of the assembly.

<sup>57</sup> The person always responds "yes," no matter what feedback they receive. Saying "yes" means, "Yes, I accept your feedback." It is not an acknowledgement of having committed that offense. If the pravāraṇā accepter points out an offense, the person confesses it later.

<sup>58</sup> One accepter accepts the pravāraṇā of all those sitting on the left side of the hall, while the other accepts the pravāraṇā of those on the right side.

<sup>59</sup> One accepter accepts the pravāraṇā from the other accepter. They go back to their places to give the pravāraṇā.

*If the pravāraṇā acceptor is senior in ordination, they stand and the person giving the pravāraṇā bows to them once, then kneels with palms joined. After giving the pravāraṇā, the junior bows once from the kneeling position, stands, makes a half-bow, and sits down.*

*If the pravāraṇā acceptor is equal or junior in ordination, both parties bow to each other once and kneel facing each other with palms joined. After giving the pravāraṇā, they bow to each other from the kneeling position, stand, and make a half-bow.*

*When one bhikṣu/ṇī is giving their pravāraṇā, the next in ordination order stands and waits. In this manner, from the most senior to the junior, the pravāraṇā is given one by one.*

**Chant leader:** Śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as, enter in ordination order and face the Buddha.

**Chant leader:** Bow to the Buddha three times.

*The monastic on duty sends the śikṣamāṇās and/or śrāmaṇerī/as to the end of the line of bhikṣu/ṇīs, where they kneel with palms joined in ordination order and wait until it is their turn. The pravāraṇā accepters receive their invitation one by one. They recite the same text as above, except they change “bhikṣu/ṇī” to “śikṣamāṇā or śrāmaṇerī/a.”*

*After giving the pravāraṇā in this way, the two pravāraṇā accepters walk together to the central aisle and say to the abbess/abbot:*

**Senior pravāraṇā acceptor:** The saṅgha has completed giving the pravāraṇā with one-pointed mind.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Both pravāraṇā accepters:** Yes. (return to their places)

## 7. Giving Instruction to Observe the Precepts after the Pravāraṇā

**Abbess/Abbot:** Today, the assembly has completed the pravāraṇā according to the Dharma and the Vinaya. This is the conclusion of the retreat. However, the Vinaya precepts are very strict. According to the *Varṣā Skandhaka*, one begins varṣā on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month and ends it on the end of the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. You cannot leave the territory before the daybreak of the 16<sup>th</sup>. If someone leaves the territory before then, they break the rule to observe varṣā. According to what is clearly said in the Vinaya, they may not then receive the offering of robes. Each one of you, continue to practice diligently and do not let your mind be uncontrolled. We have completed giving the pravāraṇā.

## 8. Dedication of Merit

**Chant leader:** Everyone please rise, face the central aisle with palms joined, and dedicate the merit.

*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

*See page 76 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Pravāraṇā 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 abbess/abbot 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.*

# Pravarana Dedication

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

△ X

Pra - va - ra - na is a vir - tuous  
 won - der - ful\_ dee - d. We de - di - cate the\_  
 bound - le - ss, mag - ni - fi - cent 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 - tva - s ma - ha - sa - tva - s an - d to\_ the\_  
 grea - t Pra - jna - pa - ra - mi - ta.

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the Buddha three times.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the back of the hall and goes before Weituo Pusa.*

**Chant leader:** Face Weituo Pusa. Make three half-bows to Weituo Pusa.  
*The abbess/abbot stands to the right side of the main door of the hall, facing the Buddha.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. In gratitude, bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once.

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Wait respectfully as the abbess/abbot leaves the hall.

*Everyone leaves the hall in ordination order. The monastic on duty assigns junior bhikṣu/ṅīs, śikṣamāṇās, or śrāmaṇerī/as to help put away the implements, before they return to their rooms.<sup>60</sup>*

## **9. One-to-one Transaction to Give the Pravāraṇā<sup>61</sup>** *(if there are two, three, or four bhikṣu/ṅīs)*

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “If there are four monastics all together, then they give the pravāraṇā to one another. *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary 13.21* says, “When it is time to gather at the end of varṣā, they are not allowed to take leave and give consent. The four monastics give the pravāraṇā to each other, speaking one at a time. Those who have committed a lapse or lower do not need to invite someone to point out their offense, as they should have confessed it before beginning the pravāraṇā. In this way, the monastics declare their purity verbally. Those who do not speak the truth yet declare their purity three times commit three lapses.

*The most senior in ordination gives the pravāraṇā first. They and the other three monastics bow once to each other, then kneel with palms joined.*

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<sup>60</sup> *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary 13.24* says, “Having completed the pravāraṇā, is it necessary to recite the precepts?” Answer: The *Vinaya Dvāvijṣati Prasannārtha Śāstra* says, “First recite the precepts, then give the pravāraṇā.” However, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “The pravāraṇā itself is [equivalent to] the recitation of precepts.” The latter is what is commonly accepted, and a separate poṣadha is not done on the pravāraṇā day.

<sup>61</sup> When there are not enough bhikṣu/ṅīs to give the full pravāraṇā (i.e. four bhikṣu/ṅīs plus an acceptor, they say the pravāraṇā to each other.

**Person giving the pravāraṇā:** Three virtuous ones, please listen. Today the saṅgha gives the pravāraṇā. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ am pure and also give the pravāraṇā. (3x)

**The other three persons:** Good.

**Person giving the pravāraṇā:** Yes.

*They bow once to each other and the second monastic gives the pravāraṇā. If there are two or three monastics all together, the same procedure is followed. If there are five monastics, they carry out the pravāraṇā procedure for assemblies.*

The source of the above text is *Commentary on the Brief Explanation of “Important Karmans” (Sui Ji Jie Mo Qian Shi Jiang Ji) 760* and the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (T.22.837). *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary 13.22* also says, “If you have committed a grave offense such as an infraction (*sthūlātyaya*) or a remainder, confess this to a senior monastic before the recitation of precepts or before giving the pravāraṇā. After that, although you are waiting for the full number of saṅgha members to purify the offense, this does not hinder you from giving the pravāraṇā.

**Person with an unpurified offense who is giving the pravāraṇā:**

Virtuous ones, please listen. Today, the saṅgha gives the pravāraṇā. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have committed the remainder of \_\_\_\_\_. As the number of saṅgha members is insufficient, I have not yet made amends for the offense. As for the rest of the precepts, I am pure. (3x)

**The three persons:** Good.

**Person giving the pravāraṇā:** Yes.

## 10. Individual Transaction to Give the Pravāraṇā (*bhikṣus only*)

If a bhikṣu observes varṣa alone, on the pravāraṇā day, he should go where the precepts are recited, sweep and sprinkle water, lay out sitting cloths, prepare water containers, containers for washing feet, light lamps, and prepare sticks [for counting the number of bhikṣus], then wait for visiting bhikṣus to come. If there are all together five or more bhikṣus, they should perform a one-motion and one-proclamation karman to appoint a pravāraṇā acceptor. If there are four bhikṣus all together, they should do the one-to-one transaction to give the pravāraṇā.

*If no visiting bhikṣus come, the bhikṣu should, with good comportment, go before the Buddha and bow to the Buddha three times, kneel with palms joined, make this determination in his mind and say aloud:*

**Person living alone:** Today, the saṅgha gives the pravāraṇā. I Bhikṣu \_\_\_\_\_ am pure and also give the pravāraṇā. (3x)

*Having spoken, he bows to the Buddha three times.*

The individual transaction to give the pravāraṇā can only be performed by a bhikṣu who is truly pure and without offense. Otherwise, the bhikṣu should seek out a place where the pravāraṇā is given in accordance with the Dharma, and give the pravāraṇā together with a saṅgha assembly.

Note: *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary 13.23* says, “If you have committed a minor wrongdoing offense, do the transaction of self-censure<sup>62</sup> and then give the pravāraṇā. If you have committed a wrongdoing intentionally or a more serious offense and do not make amends, you will be penalized.” It also says, “You can also follow the method of confession and repentance practiced in the Theravāda tradition, and give the pravāraṇā by listing all your offenses. (For the abovementioned person who lists their offenses), then recite the precepts, according to *Sūtra of 500 Questions by Mahāmaudgalyāyana on Vinaya Matters*, (think, ‘If I have the [opportunity to meet] a pure bhikṣu, I will make amends for the offense in accordance with the Dharma.’ Having thought this, you should make this determination in your mind and say it aloud three times.) Confess to the saṅgha of the four directions, and then recite the precepts (give the pravāraṇā). You can also follow this example.”

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<sup>62</sup> This rite can be found in the *Bhikṣu/ñī Poṣadha and Rites to Establish the Territory* published by Sravasti Abbey.

## 11. Single-motion Karman to Extend the Pravāraṇā to Increase the Benefit of Varṣā<sup>63</sup>

The *Pravāraṇā Skandhaka* says, “The Buddha said, ‘Suppose many bhikṣus in a residence gather for varṣā, practice diligently, and attain progressive realizations of the fruits of the path. The bhikṣus think to themselves, ‘If we give the pravāraṇā today, after that we will have to move to other places and may not feel as blissful.’ Then, these bhikṣus make an announcement to extend the pravāraṇā in order to increase the benefit of varṣā.”

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree not to give the pravāraṇā today but to wait until the end of the full four months. This is the motion.

Having made this announcement, the saṅgha can observe varṣā for four full months and give the pravāraṇā at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> month. For the peace and happiness of practicing the path, varṣā can be extended to the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month. The *Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya* says, “If there is one person in the assembly observing early varṣā, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month the assembly gives the pravāraṇā with this person. Afterwards, they continue to observe varṣā until the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month. If the entire assembly observes later varṣā, everyone gives the pravāraṇā on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month.”

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<sup>63</sup> This happens in the case that many people receive benefit from observing varṣā and want to lengthen the period of varṣā.



# Kaṭhina: Receiving the Robe of Merit After the Conclusion of Varṣā

## 1. The robe of merit

According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (*Kaṭhina Robe Skandhaka*) there are four matters that should be carried out at the end of varṣā:

1. give the pravāraṇā,
2. dissolve the [existing] territory,
3. establish the [new] territory, and
4. receive the robe of merit (*kaṭhina* robe).

If the saṅgha does not wish to establish a new territory, items two and three do not need to be carried out.

The term “robe of merit” may refer to cloth to make into a robe or an actual finished robe. It also symbolizes the five privileges received by the saṅgha during the kaṭhina period, which are to:

1. have extra robes,
2. spend the night separated from their robes,
3. eat in one place and then again in another,
4. eat separately from the community,
5. go to others’ homes before and after mealtime without informing other bhikṣu/ṇīs.

The following can be received as a robe of merit:

- new cloth that has to be made permissible<sup>64</sup> so it can be used without incurring a forfeiture-lapse, usually by marking the cloth. Used cloth has to be washed first and then made permissible.
- donated cloth
- discarded cloth

The following cannot be received as a robe of merit:

- cloth obtained through wrong livelihood, which the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra* (*Da Zhi Du Lun*) describes as:
  - a. making deceitful displays to arouse wonder,
  - b. boasting of your good qualities,
  - c. divining fortunes for others,
  - d. speaking loudly and forcefully to inspire fear and respect, and
  - e. speaking of previously obtained offerings to provoke others to give.
- cloth obtained through flattery
- cloth obtained through hinting, e.g. putting on heavy robes in the summer, or light robes in the winter, to suggest that you lack proper robes

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<sup>64</sup> The Chinese term “*zuo jing*” literally means “to make pure.”

- cloth obtained through insinuation, e.g. saying to a lay follower, “Five other people have donated things,” with the intention of provoking a donation
- cloth that has been kept overnight
- cloth that was forfeited under the forfeiture-lapse rules, even if it has been made permissible

Only one robe can be received as the robe of merit. If additional robes are offered, they should be distributed to the rest of the saṅgha through a saṅghakarman.

## 2. Criteria for receiving the robe of merit

The *Samantapāsādikā* lists three types of monastics who may not receive the robe of merit:

1. those who have broken [the rule to observe] varṣā,
2. those from a different residence,
3. those observing later varṣā in an assembly that observed early varṣā. These monastics have done the pravāraṇā but have yet to complete varṣā, thus they cannot receive the robe of merit. If the entire assembly observes later varṣā, this restriction does not apply, as all the monastics give the pravāraṇā together and are entitled to receive the robe of merit.

These monastics may join the assembly at the kaṭhina ceremony to rejoice in harmony, but they do not do the one-to-one transaction of receiving the robe of merit.

## 3. The robe-keeper

A bhikṣu/ṇī is assigned by two saṅghakarmanas to be the robe-keeper and to obtain the robe of merit, which s/he holds in safekeeping on behalf of the saṅgha for the five-month kaṭhina period. Due to her/his commitment to protect the robe, the rest of the saṅgha does not commit an offense if they spend the night separated from their robes, and can keep extra robes for an extended period of time.

The robe-keeper keeps the robe but does not receive it. “Keep” refers to obtaining and protecting the robe, whereas “receiving” the robe refers to doing the one-to-one transaction to receive the benefits and privileges—it does not refer to obtaining an actual robe. The robe-keeper does not receive the five privileges. However, because s/he keeps the robe, the saṅgha can do the one-to-one transaction with her/him and receive the five privileges of the kaṭhina robe.

After the kaṭhina ceremony, the robe-keeper relinquishes one of her/his three robes, determines the robe of merit, and can wear it throughout the kaṭhina period. If s/he spends one night outside the territory, her/his commitment to protect the robe is broken; it is akin to spending the night

separated from her/his robes and s/he commits the offense of being separated from her/his robes. This causes the rest of the saṅgha to lose the five privileges. If there are saṅgha members outside the territory who are separated from their robes and are unaware that the robe-keeper has broken their commitment, they do not commit an offense.

At the end of the kaṭhina period, the saṅgha relinquishes the robe of merit and the five privileges. The robe of merit then belongs to the robe-keeper. If s/he already has three robes and none of them is damaged, s/he may give away the robe of merit.

The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya lists five virtues that the robe-keeper should possess: being free from partiality, hatred, fear, ignorance, and knowing whether or not the kaṭhina robe has been properly received. It also lists five types of bhikṣu/ṇī who may not be assigned as the robe-keeper:

1. someone who has no varṣā age, i.e. someone who did not observe the early or later varṣā and did not do the pravāraṇā,
2. someone who has broken [the rule to observe] varṣā,
3. someone who observed later varṣā,
4. someone who has been expelled,
5. someone who lives apart from the community. This could refer to someone who observed varṣā in a different residence or is staying apart from the community to undergo probation and/or penance for an offense.

Such a person is also unsuitable to receive the kaṭhina robe.

The robe-keeper should declare whether or not they are one of these five types of persons. These ten criteria should be considered together when assigning the robe-keeper.

The *Samantapāsādikā* states that the robe of merit should be given by saṅghakarman to a monastic whose robe is spoiled. If there are many monastics whose robes are spoiled, it is given to the oldest monastic. If there are many elderly monastics, it is given to the monastic most senior in ordination age. The robe should not be given to a monastic who is miserly or greedy.

According to the *Vinaya Dvāvijṣati Prasannārtha Śāstra*, at the beginning of varṣā, the bhikṣu/ṇī who volunteers to be the robe-keeper should make her/his intention known to the community. The community then observes if this individual:

1. is not easily distracted and will be mindful of the robe,
2. does not tend to lose things and can be entrusted with the robe,
3. is not greedy and whose intention is not just to obtain a robe,
4. has compassion and cares about the saṅgha,
5. is generous and strives to benefit others.

If the bhikṣu/ṇī is approved, the community may give its consent. If not, the request will not be granted.

If no one is able to keep the commitment to stay within the territory for

five months, the saṅgha receives the five privileges for only one month after the conclusion of early varṣā.

#### **4. Dates of the kaṭhina period**

According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, there are 30 days during which the saṅgha can receive the robe of merit. In the Chinese lunar calendar, early varṣā begins on 4/16, and ends on 7/15. The kaṭhina can be spread anytime between 7/16 and 8/15. It is relinquished on 12/15. If the entire saṅgha observes later varṣā, they receive the robe on the 8/16 and relinquish it on 12/15.

#### **5. Relinquishing the robe of merit**

There are two ways in which the saṅgha relinquishes the robe of merit:

1. The robe-keeper stays outside the territory overnight, i.e. they are outside the territory at dawn of the next day.
2. The saṅgha relinquishes the robe of merit in harmony.

If a monastic does not relinquish the robe of merit at the end of the kaṭhina period, they commit a wrongdoing.

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya also lists eight ways an individual monastic may relinquish the robe of merit during the kaṭhina period, by:

1. leaving the territory with a completed robe, without the intention to return;
2. leaving the territory, making a completed robe, and deciding not to return;
3. leaving the territory with unfinished robe material and deciding not to make a robe nor return to the territory;
4. leaving the territory with unfinished robe material, deciding to make a robe and not to return to the territory, and afterwards the robe is lost;
5. leaving the territory, going to a place where you hope to receive a robe, and having your expectations disappointed;
6. leaving the territory intending to make a robe and return afterwards, but while away, hearing that the saṅgha has relinquished the robe of merit;
7. leaving the territory intending to make a robe and return afterwards, but the saṅgha relinquishes the robe of merit before you return;
8. leaving the territory to make a robe, regardless of whether it is completed or unfinished, returning to the territory and relinquishing the robe of merit together with the saṅgha in harmony.

*Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary 13.41* notes that in the first five instances, the monastic relinquishes the robe of merit intentionally with the motivation of desire. In the last three instances, the robe of merit is relinquished through a saṅghakarman.

# Kaṭhina: Receiving the Robe of Merit

## 1. Preparing the Place, Gathering the Saṅgha, and Paying Homage to the Buddha

Bhikṣu/ṇīs observe varṣā for three months, completing it on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. After giving the pravāraṇā, in the early morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> between 3 a.m. and 7 a.m., hang a sign stating in large print, “Today we receive the kaṭhina robe.” The altars have already been set up at the beginning of varṣā. Offer flowers, lamps or candles, and fruit. The monastic on duty assigns junior bhikṣu/ṇīs, śikṣamāṇās, or śrāmaṇerī/as to clean the premises, set a seat for the abbess/abbot in the front center and seats for the saṅgha on the left and right sides of the hall. Put a table with an incense burner in front of the Buddha. In front of the table, put a kneeling cushion. Put a bowing cushion for the abbess/abbot in the central aisle. At the back of the hall, put a table with a clean tray and a cover, and place the robe of merit on the tray. Sprinkle flower petals on it. Place another table at the front of the room where the robe will be put later.

*When the arrangements are complete, make a signal. The saṅgha members put on their seven-strip robe (uttarāsaṅga, chogu), take their sitting cloth, and go to the assembly hall. They stand in ordination order, facing the central aisle with palms joined. When everybody has arrived, the monastic on duty in the hall goes to invite the abbess/abbot.*

**Chant leader:** Let us respectfully invite the abbess/abbot to enter.  
*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle.*

*See pages 86-87 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 abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, walks slowly to the altar, makes a half-bow, kneels, and offers three incense sticks to the Buddha. They stand, make a half-bow, walk back to the bowing cushion, and bow 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  $\triangle$  X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 ppea - r. Ho - ma - ge to \_\_\_\_\_ Per - fu med

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

55 X X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 ttva \_\_\_\_\_ Ma - ha - sa - ttva \_\_\_\_\_ Ho - mage

60 O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 to \_\_\_\_\_ Per - - fu - med Clou - - - d

65 X X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 Ca-no-py Bo - dhi - sa - - - - - ttva \_\_\_\_\_

70 X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 Ma - ha - sa - ttva \_\_\_\_\_ Ho - mage to \_\_\_\_\_

75  $\triangle$  X X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 Per - - fu - med Clou - - - d Ca-no-py

80  $\triangle$  X X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 Bo - dhi - sa - - - - - ttva \_\_\_\_\_

84 X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O X O  
 Ma - ha - sa - - - - - ttva. \_\_\_\_\_

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.  
*The abbess/abbot does not bow because they have bowed earlier.*

**Chant leader:** Bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once. (*walks to their place*)

**Abbess/Abbot:** Everyone, please sit down.

**Abbess/Abbot** (*gives a teaching*): The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (*Kaṭhina Robe Skandhaka*) says, “There were many bhikṣus observing varṣā. After giving the pravāraṇā on the 15<sup>th</sup>, they went to see the Buddha on the 16<sup>th</sup>. It rained on the way. Their clothes became wet, their outer robes grew heavy, and they were exhausted. The Buddha said to the bhikṣus, ‘There are four matters that should be carried out at the end of varṣā: (1) give the pravāraṇā, (2) dissolve the [existing] territory, (3) establish the [new] territory, and (4) receive the robe of merit. After receiving the robe of merit, the saṅgha obtains five privileges.’”

“What can be received as a robe of merit? New cloth, donated cloth, or discarded cloth may be used. If the cloth is new, stack it to make it so you can use it.<sup>65</sup> If it is not new, it may be accepted after it is washed, then make it so you can use it. The cloth cannot be obtained through wrong livelihood, flattery, hinting, or insinuation. It may not be kept overnight. It may not be a forfeited robe [even if] it has been made so you can use it.”

## 2. Offering the Kaṭhina Robe to the Saṅgha<sup>66</sup>

*The donor<sup>67</sup> bows to the Buddha three times at the bowing cushion in the central aisle, and then goes to the abbess/abbot.*

**Donor:** I will bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** One bow.

**Donor:** *A mi tuo fo.*<sup>68</sup>

*The donor kneels and offers the robe to the abbess/abbot with both hands.*

**Donor:** Venerables, we present this robe together with other requisites to the saṅgha. Venerables, please accept this robe and the other requisites from us, for our long-lasting welfare and happiness.

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<sup>65</sup> New cloth may be made so you can use it by stacking it under old cloth or robes. Marking is another way of making the cloth permissible, which is more commonly practiced.

<sup>66</sup> The donor’s formulae is adapted from the Pāli (*Buddhist Monastic Code II*, p.401-2). The abbess’/abbot’s response is translated from the Pāli acknowledgement of the offering.

<sup>67</sup> Other donors are present, but one represents the group to offer the robe to the abbess/abbot, who accepts it on behalf of the saṅgha.

<sup>68</sup> The donor says the name of Amitābha Buddha in gratitude for the abbess/abbot’s compassionate instruction to bow just once.



**Abbess/Abbot:** Those who are wise, generous, and free from selfishness give at appropriate times. Thus what is given to those who are worthy and ethically sound is an offering of great purity and substance. Those who likewise show appreciation or perform acts of service equally make offerings and they also share in this merit. In giving, the heart is unbounded, what is given bears great results, and those meritorious deeds bring about good fortune in many lives to come.

*The donor walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle, bows three times, and leaves the hall. The abbess/abbot puts the robe on the table in the front of the room.*

**Chant leader:** Śikṣamāṇās, śrāmaṇerī/as, and lay followers, please leave the hall.

### **3. Performing the Preliminaries** *(only bhikṣu/ṇīs can be present)*

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Are there any absent bhikṣu/ṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** *(stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined):*

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ *(or from many bhikṣu/ṇīs)* who is ill *(attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma)*. They give their consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. *(half-bow and returns to their place)*

**Abbess/Abbot:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman to receive the kaṭhina robe, the karman to assign a robe-keeper, and the karman to give the robe for safekeeping.

#### 4. Single-Motion Karman to Receive the Robe of Merit

**Abbess/Abbot:** Karman master, first declare the motion to inform the saṅgha of the matters that will be carried out. Then, do the one-motion one-proclamation karman to assign a robe-keeper, and then perform the karman to give the robe for safekeeping.

*The karman master rises, walks to the central aisle, bows to the Buddha once, returns to their place, sits, and says with palms joined:*

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Today the saṅgha will receive the robe of merit. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to receive the robe of merit in harmony. This is the motion.

#### 5. One-motion One-proclamation Karman to Assign the Robe-Keeper

**Abbess/Abbot:** Who can keep the robe of merit on behalf of the saṅgha?

**Robe-keeper:** I can.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Today we assign virtuous Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the robe of merit on behalf of the saṅgha.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the robe of merit on behalf of the saṅgha. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the robe of merit on behalf of the saṅgha. Those who agree that the saṅgha assigns Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the robe of merit on behalf of the saṅgha remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha has completed assigning Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the robe of merit on behalf of the saṅgha. This matter will proceed as decided.

*The robe-keeper rises, walks to the central aisle, bows to the Buddha three times, and then returns to their place.*

## 6. One-motion One-proclamation Karman to Give the Robe for Safekeeping

*The karman master rises, picks up the robe of merit, returns to their seat (with the robe), and sits down. The karman to give the robe to the assigned bhikṣu/ṇī is as follows:*

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha of this residence has received cloth that can be shared. The saṅgha that is present will share it. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to give this robe to Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ who will receive it as the robe of merit of the saṅgha and keep it in this residence. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha of this residence has received cloth that can be shared. The saṅgha that is present will share it. The saṅgha is now going to give this robe to Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_. S/he will receive it as the robe of merit of the saṅgha and keep it in this residence. Those who agree that the saṅgha gives this robe to Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ who will receive it as the robe of merit of the saṅgha and keep it in this residence remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha has completed giving this robe to Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ who will receive it as the robe of merit on behalf of the saṅgha and keep it in this residence. This matter will proceed as decided.

*The karman master and the robe-keeper rise. The karman master hands the robe to the robe-keeper who receives the robe and places it on the table in front. The robe-keeper walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle, bows to the Buddha once, and carrying the robe with both hands, goes before the abbess/abbot. S/he bows to the abbess/abbot once, kneels, and gives and receives the robe respectfully three times, each person raising the robe above their head when receiving it. Then, s/he walks to the back of the hall and stands sideways with the robe unfolded, with another bhikṣu/ṇī holding one end of the robe.*

## 7. Spreading the Robe to Show the Saṅgha

**Robe-keeper:** The name “robe of merit” and the essence of this robe material, which is the virtue of the saṅgha that the robe symbolizes, accord completely with the Dharma. I will now spread the robe for the saṅgha to see.

*The robe-keeper holds the robe with both hands and spreads it for display. They enable the entire assembly to see the robe—that it has five strips made of ten pieces. The robe-keeper spreads the robe with both hands, with the proper side facing outwards.*

**Robe-keeper:** This robe has five strips and ten pieces. It is marked and made properly.<sup>69</sup>

*They repeat this while showing the robe to the saṅgha so they can see that it is properly made and to receive their approval. Facing the front, they walk slowly along the right side of the hall<sup>70</sup> with the robe facing the assembly and their body turned sideways. They then walk along the left side of the hall. Another monastic may help to hold the robe if necessary. Then they fold the robe, carry it in both hands, and go before the Buddha to offer the robe, raising it above their head. They then go before the abbess/abbot, kneel, and announce to the assembly:*

## **8. One-to-one Transaction to Bestow the Merit of the Robe on the Saṅgha<sup>71</sup>**

**Robe-keeper:** The saṅgha shall receive this robe as the robe of merit. The saṅgha now receives this robe as the robe of merit. The saṅgha has completed receiving this robe as the robe of merit. (3x)

*The robe-keeper unfolds the robe into a long strip and carries it with both hands while walking around the saṅgha's seats again, going to the most senior monastic first.<sup>72</sup> One by one each monastic who receives the robe kneels, holds the edge of the robe, and says:*

**Person receiving the robe:** One who receives the robe of merit receives virtue. May all the merit derived from this robe accrue to me. (1x)

**Robe-keeper:** Good.

**Person receiving the robe:** Yes.

This text follows the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya where the robe is received individually. In this manner, after the senior monastic has received the robe, the robe-keeper goes to the next senior monastic, until the most junior monastic is reached. The robe-keeper walks around the hall so that the

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<sup>69</sup> The purpose is to show the robe is properly made and to get the saṅgha's approval.

<sup>70</sup> The right side is according to the Buddha's right.

<sup>71</sup> This section symbolizes that each saṅgha member receives the kaṭhina privileges. Here each person gives their approval and rejoices.

<sup>72</sup> Alternatively, the robe-keeper stands at the front of the hall holding the robe folded into a long strip, and the saṅgha members step out one by one to receive the merit of the robe, kneeling and holding the edge of the robe.

monastics receive the robe in ordination order. After one row on the left side has received the robe, they go to the next row on the right side. They do so for two, three, four, up to a thousand rows, so that all receive the robe in the same manner. Each person receiving the robe follows the procedure by reciting the formula and doing as the person before them did.

*When the entire assembly has individually received the robe, the robe-keeper walks to the central aisle, places the robe on the table, makes a half-bow and says with palms joined:*

**Robe-keeper:** Today the saṅgha has completed receiving the robe of merit in harmony.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Robe-keeper:** Yes.

*The robe-keeper bows to the Buddha once and carries the robe back to their seat. The abbess/abbot teaches on the five privileges to reward virtue, and the situations that allow the robe to be kept for a long time.<sup>73</sup> In this way, monastics will be cautious when going in and out of the territory during the kaṭhina period.*

**Abbess/Abbot:** Those who receive the robe of merit obtain five types of privileges: (1) to have extra robes, (2) to spend the night separated from their robes, (3) to eat in one place and then again in another, (4) to eat separately from the community, and (5) to go to others' homes before and after mealtime without informing other bhikṣu/ṇīs. Although you may enjoy the above five privileges, you should still cultivate equanimity, observe and train your body, speech, and mind. Do not let your mind be uncontrolled. Be careful with regard to receiving offerings, as gain and loss disturb the mind. Leave aside all wandering thoughts and engage in the four practices of a bodhisattva.<sup>74</sup> You will have nothing to fear and will attain unsurpassed magnificence. Concern with gain and loss, fame and humiliation, is the root cause of engaging in business, which violates the precept to live from offerings obtained by right livelihood. Practicing in this way, you will not be affected by delight or dejection. We have completed the action of receiving the robe.

*The śikṣamāṇās, śrāmaṇerī/as, and lay followers may enter now and stand facing the central aisle.*

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<sup>73</sup> Source text: *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary* 13.43

<sup>74</sup> To generate bodhicitta, to practice with joyous effort by relying on a spiritual mentor, to practice fortitude, and to realize emptiness.

## 9. Dedication of Merit

**Chant leader:** Everyone please rise, face the central aisle with palms joined, and dedicate the merit.

*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

*See page 95 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Receiving the robe 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 abbess/abbot bows once while the assembly recites the first two lines; once while reciting lines 3 and 4; and once while reciting lines 5 and 6; and makes a half-bow during line 7.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the Buddha three times.

**Chant leader:** In gratitude, bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once.

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Wait respectfully as the abbess/abbot leaves the hall.

*Everyone leaves the hall in ordination order.*

# Receiving the Robe Dedication

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

△ X

Re - cei - ving - the ro - be is a vir - tuous  
 won - der - ful\_ dec - 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 - ma - ha - sa - ttva - s an - d to the  
 grea - t Pra - jna - pa - ra - mi - ta.

## 10. Individual Transaction to Receive and Relinquish the Kaṭhina Robe (*bhikṣus only*)

The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya section on the kaṭhina robe says, “If a person is living alone, when he takes [the kaṭhina robe-cloth] he should say, ‘I now receive this piece of kaṭhina robe-cloth.’ (3x) When cutting the kaṭhina robe he should say, ‘I now receive this kaṭhina robe-cloth.’ When sewing, washing, dying, and marking or using a knife to make the robe so he can use it, he should repeat this statement.”

*When the robe is finished, with good comportment, go before the Buddha and bow to the Buddha three times, kneel with palms joined, make this determination in your mind and say aloud:*

**Person doing the transaction:** I Bhikṣu \_\_\_\_\_ receive this kaṭhina robe. (3x)

*Having spoken, rise, and bow to the Buddha three times.*

Although the Vinaya contains this text for receiving [the kaṭhina robe], there is no text for the individual transaction to relinquish [the kaṭhina robe]. When it is time to relinquish the kaṭhina robe, bring the robe before the Buddha, bow to the Buddha three times, kneel with palms joined, make the determination in your mind and speak aloud, and change the word “receive” [in the text above] to “relinquish.”



# Relinquishing the Robe of Merit at the End of the Kaṭhina Period

## 1. Preparing the Place, Gathering the Saṅgha, and Paying Homage to the Buddha

The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month,<sup>75</sup> the last day of winter, is the time when bhikṣu/ṇīs [perform the rite to] relinquish the robe of merit. On that morning, hang a sign stating in large print, “Today we relinquish the kaṭhina robe.” The monastic on duty should assign junior bhikṣu/ṇīs, śikṣamāṇās, or śrāmaṇerī/as to clean the premises, set a seat for the abbess/abbot in the front and seats for the saṅgha on the left and right sides [of the hall]. Offer flowers, lamps or candles, and fruit on the altar. Put a table with an incense burner in front of the Buddha. In front of the table, put a kneeling cushion. Also, put a bowing cushion for the abbess/abbot in the central aisle.

*When the arrangements are complete, make a signal. The saṅgha members put on their seven-strip robe (uttarāsamga, chogu), take their sitting cloth, and go to the assembly hall. They stand in ordination order, facing the central aisle with palms joined. When everybody has arrived, the monastic on duty in the hall goes to invite the abbess/abbot.*

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Let us respectfully invite the abbess/abbot to enter.

*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion in the central aisle.*

*See pages 98-99 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 abbess/abbot makes a half-bow, walks slowly to the altar, makes a half-bow, kneels, and offers three incense sticks to the Buddha. They stand, make a half-bow, walk back to the bowing cushion, and bow to the Buddha three times.*

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<sup>75</sup> This is according to the Chinese lunar calendar.

# Incense Offering Chant

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

△ X

6  
 Whe - n in - ce - nse in the urn is\_\_ hea - te -  
 11  
 - d, the\_\_\_\_\_ u - ni - ve - rse is\_\_\_\_\_ per  
 16  
 fu - - - - - med. The\_\_\_\_\_

21  
 a - ssem - bly of Bu - ddhas vast-as the o - ce - an se - nse it from a  
 26  
 fa - r. Ah\_\_\_\_\_ Au -  
 30  
 - spi - cious clou - ds fo - rm e - very - whe -  
 35  
 re. Whe - - re sin - cere\_\_\_\_\_

40  
 mi - - - - nds a - bou - - - -  
 - 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. \_\_\_\_\_

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.  
*The abbess/abbot does not bow because they have bowed earlier.*

**Chant leader:** Bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once. (*walks to their place*)

**Abbess/Abbot:** Virtuous saṅgha, please sit down.

## 2. Teaching on Relinquishing the Five Privileges

The abbess/abbot gives instruction on the origin of the procedure of relinquishing the robe of merit and suspending the five privileges. After they caution and encourage everyone to practice and keep their precepts with joyous effort, resume the ceremony.

**Abbess/Abbot:** According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, the robe of merit should be relinquished at the end of the four months of winter.<sup>76</sup> There are two ways of relinquishing it: (1) the bhikṣu/ṇī keeping the robe of merit stays outside the territory overnight, and (2) the saṅgha relinquishes the robe of merit in harmony. The rite for relinquishing the robe states that the rule was established because the group of six bhikṣus refused to relinquish the robe of merit in order to prolong the five privileges that should have been suspended. The Buddha thus established the requirement to relinquish the robe of merit. If a monastic does not relinquish the robe of merit beyond the time when the saṅgha has relinquished the robe together, they commit a wrongdoing.

## 3. Performing the Preliminaries (*only bhikṣu/ṇīs can be present*)

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Is it in harmony?

**Chant leader:** It is in harmony.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**Chant leader:** Everyone here is fully ordained.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Are there any absent bhikṣu/ṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

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<sup>76</sup> The Indian calendar during the Buddha's time was divided into three seasons each lasting four months: cold season (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> month), hot season (5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> month), and rainy season (9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> month).

**Chant leader:** No, there are not.

*Or*

**Conveyor of consent** (*stands, bows to the Buddha once, kneels with palms joined*):

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ (*or* from many bhikṣu/ṇīs) who is ill (attending to saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma). They give their consent [to all saṅgha matters done in accord with the Dharma].

**Abbess/Abbot:** Good.

**Conveyor of consent:** Yes. (*half-bow and returns to their place*)

**Abbess/Abbot:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman of relinquishing the kaṭhina robe.

#### **4. Single-motion Karman to Relinquish the Robe of Merit**

**Karman master (or robe-keeper):** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Today the saṅgha will relinquish the robe of merit. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to relinquish the robe of merit in harmony. This is the motion.

*The robe-keeper walks to the central aisle, bows once, and kneels with palms joined.*

**Robe-keeper:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Today the saṅgha relinquishes the kaṭhina robe. (*3x. Bows once and returns to their place.*)

#### **5. Dedication of Merit**

**Chant leader:** Everyone please rise, face the central aisle with palms joined, and dedicate the merit.

*The abbess/abbot walks to the bowing cushion.*

*See page 102 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Relinquishing the robe 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.

# Relinquishing the Robe Dedication

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

△ X

Re - lin - quish - ing the - ro - be 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.

*The abbess/abbot makes one bow while the assembly recites the first two lines; one bow while reciting lines 3 and 4; and one bow while reciting lines 5 and 6; and a half-bow during line 7.*

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the Buddha three times.

**Chant leader:** In gratitude, bow to the abbess/abbot three times.

**Abbess/Abbot:** Bow to the Buddha once.

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Wait respectfully as the abbess/abbot leaves the hall.

*Everyone leaves the hall in ordination order.*

# Appendix I: Determining the Dates of Varṣā

Monastics in Taiwan typically observe summer varṣā. The start dates of the different periods of varṣā are as follows (months are according to the Chinese lunar calendar):

Division into 3 (later development in Chinese tradition, for the convenience of monastics)		Division into 2 (according to Vinaya)	
Early	4/16 (ends 7/15)	Early	4/16 (ends 7/15)
Middle	4/17 to 5/15 (ends after 90 days)	Later	5/16 (ends 8/15)
Later	5/16 (ends 8/15)		

Participants who observe middle varṣā give the pravāraṇā with those who observed early varṣā, and continue to observe varṣā until 90 days after their start date. Those who observe later varṣā give the pravāraṇā on 8/15.

A *Fo Guang Dictionary of Buddhism* entry explains the development of the winter varṣā (<http://m.fodizi.tw/f05/65865.html>):

Aside from summer varṣā, the period from 10/16 (lunar calendar) to 1/15, during which the saṅgha is not allowed to travel and focuses on study and practice, is known as winter varṣā. Since the beginning of Buddhism in India, summer varṣā was observed during the rainy season, but in Northwest India and Central Asia temperatures are colder and winters are snowy with freezing rain, making it difficult to travel. Hence winter varṣā was established in place of summer varṣā. There is no record of winter varṣā in the Theravāda Vinaya. The earliest scriptural record of winter varṣā was in the bodhisattva precepts in the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra*. In China, temples in the north largely observe winter varṣā, and temples in the south typically observe summer varṣā. Japan originally did not have the practice of observing winter varṣā. It was introduced by [Zen Master] Dao Yuan (1200-1253) and subsequently practiced there. Currently, the Sōtō Zen divides winter varṣā as follows: early varṣā (10/16 to 01/15), middle varṣā (11/16 to 2/15), later varṣā (12/16 to 3/15). Summer varṣā is referred to as “rains retreat,” and winter varṣā is referred to as “snows retreat.”

[Textual sources: *Great Tang Records of [Travels to] the Western Regions, Volume 1 (Da Tang Xi Yu Ji)*; *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya, Upper Volume (Si Fen Lu Shan Fan Bu Que Xing Shi Chao Juan Shang)*; *A Composition on the Images and Utensils of the Zen Grove, Volume 4, Section on Seasons (Chan Lin Xiang Qi Jian Juan Si Jie Shi Men)*]

Bhikṣuṇī Hengching used the division according to the Sōtō Zen school to



establish the start date of Sravasti Abbey’s winter varṣā in 2014, which began on 12/16 of the lunar calendar. However, she suggests that we apply the approach taken in Taiwan for establishing the early, middle and later varṣā in future, for instance:

Early varṣā	10/16 (ends 1/15)
Middle varṣā	10/17 to 11/15
Later varṣā	11/16 (ends 2/15)

## Appendix II: Karman to Assign Someone to Make the Robe of Merit

Source: *New Edition of the Essential Collection of Rites Used by the Saṅgha*

If a layperson has offered a ready-made robe, receive the robe of merit according to the karman. There is no need to carry out this particular karman. The Vinaya says, “If the [cloth offered] has yet to be made into a robe, the saṅgha performs a karman to assign a bhikṣu/ṇī to make the robe.”

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to make the robe of merit. This is the motion.

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. The saṅgha is now going to assign Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to make the robe of merit. Those who agree that the saṅgha assigns Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to make the robe of merit remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up.

**Karman master:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣu/ṇī saṅgha has completed assigning Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to make the robe of merit. This matter will proceed as decided.

When the robe has been made, carry out the karman to receive the robe of merit.

# Legend and Instructions for Instruments

O = bell

Ø = bell stop

△ = gong

△ = gong stop

X = wooden fish

- To perform a gong stop: tap the rim of the gong with the mallet and let it rest on the rim.
- To perform a bell stop: push the striker against the side of the bell and leave it resting on the side of the bell.

## **When to bow and strike the hand bell during the Repentance Chant and the Three Refuges Chant**

- The Repentance Chant begins with a gong stop followed by the wooden fish sounding one beat. After each verse the assembly bows. After the first verse, the bell is struck three times followed by a bell-stop (the assembly bows). The bell is struck once to stand up. The bell is struck once after the second verse (the assembly bows) and once more to stand up. It is struck twice after the third verse (the assembly bows) and once more to stand up. A half-bow follows the third bow. The bell is rung to begin the half-bow and then immediately to signal the return to upright.
- The Three Refuges Chant begins with a bell stop. Then bow and strike the bell after each verse as described above for the Repentance Chant.

# Credits

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

## *Varṣā: Rains Retreat*

Translated from Chinese to English by Bhikṣuṇī Tianchang. Revised with additional commentary from the *Collection* translated from Chinese to English by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Damcho. English editing by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Chodron.

## *Pravāraṇā: Invitation*

Translated from Chinese to English by Bhikṣuṇī Hengching. Additional commentary from the *Collection* translated from Chinese to English by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Damcho. English editing by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Chodron.

## *Kaṭhina: Receiving the Robe of Merit After the Conclusion of Varṣā*

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

Cover design by Traci Thrasher. Production by Traci Thrasher and Cynthia Laurell.

## Principal reference for the rites

*Rites: 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. Abbreviated as *Collection*.

*Varṣā: Vinaya Research Team from Zhengjue Temple. The Procedures of Varṣā and Pravāraṇā (Jie Xia An Ju Jie Xia Zi Zi Yi Gui).* Taizhong, Taiwan: Nanputuo Monastery, 2004.

*Kaṭhina: Shu Yu (Bhikṣu). Saṅghakarman Rites (Jie Mo Yi Shi).* Hangzhou, China: Zhaoqing Monastery, 1698.





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