

Dharmaguptaka Vinaya

# Pravrajyā and Śikṣamāṇā Ordination Rites





# **Dharmaguptaka Vinaya**

## **Pravrajyā and Śikṣamāṇā Ordination Rites**

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



**Dharmaguptaka Vinaya**

**Pravrajyā and Śikṣamāṇā**  
**Ordination Rites**



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## Table of Contents

Preliminaries to Ordination .....	1
Śrāmaṇerī/a Ordination .....	9
Conferring the Śikṣamāṇā Training .....	31
Appendix I: Layout of the Hall .....	43
Appendix II: Checklist for Ordination Ceremony .....	45
Appendix III: Upādhyāyā/a's Discourse on the Four Aspects of the Precepts .....	47
Appendix IV: Hindrances to Ordination .....	50
Legend and Instructions for Instruments .....	52





# Preliminaries to Ordination

## Definition of Roles in the Ceremony

1. *Upādhyāyā/a*: preceptor (female/male) or abbess/abbot, i.e. the monastic who confers the precepts.
2. *Ācārya*: instructor.
3. Chant leader: the monastic who holds hand-bell, hits the gong to direct the ceremony, or leads others in chanting. Sometimes they are the respondent to a question in a karman procedure.<sup>1</sup>
4. Guide: the monastic who guides the disciple to do various acts in the ceremony.
5. *Karman* master:<sup>2</sup> a specialist in the karman procedure, the monastic who asks the questions and makes the motion and proclamation in a karman procedure.<sup>3</sup>
6. Disciple: “Someone who is earnest in practice,” i.e. the person who seeks ordination.

Ordaining and allowing people to enter the saṅgha community is carried out to continue the Buddha’s lineage and to enable the Buddhadharma to continue from one generation to the next without interruption. The principal concern, then, lies in the quality of the teacher. Whoever is a teacher must master the Vinaya and precepts, be possessed of practice (*pratipatti*) and knowledge (*paryavāpti*), and be endowed with wisdom in teaching disciples.

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<sup>1</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>2</sup> The function of the karman master may also be carried out by the ācārya, the chant leader, or the guide. 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>3</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.

They can then be a teacher, ordain candidates, and take them in as dependents.<sup>4</sup> Those who do not understand the Vinaya and precepts should not by any means take on disciples. Therefore, the *Samantapāsādikā* (*Shan Jian Lu Pi Po Sha*) says, “A person who does not understand the Vinaya but knows only sūtra and abhidharma is not allowed to ordain novices (male: *śrāmaṇera*; female: *śrāmaṇerī*) or take them in as dependents. Because Vinaya masters are able to uphold the Vinaya, the Buddhadharma will remain in the world for five thousand years.” Also, the *Sūtra of 500 Questions by Mahāmaudgalyāyana on Vinaya Matters* (*Wu Bai Wen Shi*) says, “Some monastics who do not recite the precepts or do not know the various matters associated with monastic life ordain many people or act as [one of] the three ordination masters. Do they commit a misdeed? Reply: These people are not even qualified to receive alms from the faithful, how much less to ordain people?” Those who intend to be a teacher must take this matter seriously.

When ordaining people, a teacher needs to exercise great caution in choosing those with suitable natural capacity. They should know that not everyone is capable of leaving home and becoming a monastic. Therefore, the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “When a person is seven years old and knows good from bad, ordination may be given. Those who are younger than 70 but need to be cared for when going to bed and getting up should not be given ordination. Those who are older than 70 and are still able to work are not allowed to go forth (receive ordination). Those who are too old or too young but have been ordained should not be expelled. However, the teacher commits a light offense (*vinayātikrama*).” Those who are not too old or too young but who are not able to carry out the practice should not be ordained. Ordaining these above-mentioned people does nothing but increase the burden of the Buddhadharma.<sup>5</sup>

## 1. Choosing the Place and Setting the Seats

The Vinaya says, “In an open area, set up a space seven feet on each side, sprinkle it with fragrant water, and hang banners (or flags) at the four corners.” Nowadays, people perform the ceremony in the Buddha hall or Dharma hall. If the ceremony is in the Dharma hall, set up a Buddha statue (or image), and place offerings of flowers, lights, fruits, etc. in front of it.<sup>6</sup>

- The seats of the upādhyāyā/a and ācārya are set on the right and left side of the hall in front of the Buddha statue, facing each other. The upādhyāyā/a’s seat is at the east side while the ācārya’s is at the west, east

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<sup>4</sup> Lapse 128: If a bhikṣuṇī ordains many disciples, yet does not teach them the śikṣamāṇā precepts for two years, nor provide them with two things [Dharma and requisites], she commits a lapse.

<sup>5</sup> See APPENDIX IV for more information about who may and may not be ordained.

<sup>6</sup> See APPENDIX I and II on preparing the hall and what is needed for the ceremony.

being the right side of the Buddha while facing the Buddha.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays, many people set the seats right in front of the Buddha and sit with their back to the Buddha. This is very disrespectful.<sup>8</sup> The misdeed is not minor. The *Commentary on “Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya”* (Zi Chi Ji) says, “But there are many setting the seats and sitting with their back to the Buddha. They are ignorant and disrespectful. Be careful not to imitate this behavior.” Hopefully, those who are intelligent will correct this mistake.

- The seat of the senior guide<sup>9</sup> is placed at the lower left of the upādhyāyā/a.
- The seat of the junior guide is placed at the lower right of the ācārya.
- The seats of saṅgha members are placed on two sides (of the hall after the guides).
- In front of the Buddha statue, after the seats, set two bowing mats side by side for the upādhyāyā/a and ācārya to use when bowing to the Buddha. Behind them set one more bowing mat for the disciple. **SEE THE LAYOUT** at the end of this document.
- The disciple’s parents or elder relatives—if they come—should sit outside the hall, in the shade, or if it is cold outside, in a warm room.

The disciple has shaved most of their head, leaving only a tuft of hair (*cūdā*) surrounded by four other tufts on the top of their head.<sup>10</sup> They bathe in fragrant water. The *Samantapāsādikā* says, “To bathe in fragrant water is to remove the scent of the laity.” Then they wear a round-neck shirt (t-shirt) and pants, as well as the black garment (*hai qing*).<sup>11</sup> Robes are not yet to be worn.

## 2. Teachers Enter the Hall

*The two teachers sit side by side in a place outside the hall. Make a signal.<sup>12</sup> The saṅgha members put on their nine-strip robe (saṃghāṭī, namjar), take their sitting cloth, and go to the assembly hall. They stand in ordination order, facing the central aisle with palms joined. The two guides stand at their places, facing each other.*

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<sup>7</sup> Some say that the two teachers sit on higher seats than other saṅgha members as you pay the same respect to a Vinaya teacher as to a Dharma teacher.

<sup>8</sup> The point here is that you should not sit as high as the Buddha or block people’s view of the Buddha.

<sup>9</sup> A second guide is necessary only for inviting the upādhyāyā/a and ācārya. In some situations, the two guides who invite the upādhyāyā/a and ācārya may be different from the guide who is active in the rest of the ceremony.

<sup>10</sup> The four surrounding tufts represent the whole head of hair. Later when the ācārya shaves these four tufts, it represents shaving the whole head except for the central tuft. After that, the upādhyāyā/a shaves off the central tuft.

<sup>11</sup> Those in the Tibetan tradition wear an underskirt, t-shirt, and a long maroon jacket.

<sup>12</sup> This could be the sound of a bell, hitting a board, blowing a conch, and so forth.

**Chant leader:** Face the Buddha. Sincerely bow to the Buddha three times.<sup>13</sup>

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

*Both the senior and junior guides hit a bell-stop.*

**Senior guide:** Inviting the teachers.

*The guides make a half-bow to each other and then to the Buddha. The senior guide rings the bell to begin the half-bow, the junior guide rings the bell to end the bow. The guides ring the bell—first by the senior guide, then by the junior guide—successively at four points to guide the inviting team: (1) when they start moving, (2) if they turn a corner, (3) at the midpoint of the journey, (4) at the door of the place where the teachers are waiting to alert the teachers of their arrival. The disciple follows behind the two guides with palms joined to invite the two teachers. The two guides stand on the right and left [of the two teachers], facing each other.*

**Senior guide:** Face the Buddha. Bow to the upādhyāyā/a and ācārya three times.<sup>14</sup>

**Two teachers:** One bow.

**Disciple:** *A mi tuo fo.*<sup>15</sup>

**Senior guide:** Kneel with palms joined.

**Senior guide:** Virtuous ones, Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ would like to go forth from home life into homelessness,<sup>16</sup> to practice the Dharma and become a Buddha. S/he invites the two teachers to enter the hall.

**Senior guide:** Bow from kneeling, then stand. Half-bow.

**Senior guide:** The last in line goes first.

*The guides half-bow to each other and then to the Buddha, taking turns to ring the bell. The guides walk first, the disciple next, followed by the ācārya and then the upādhyāyā/a. The guides ring the bell in the same way as when they came to invite the teachers.*

*After entering the hall, the two guides walk to the front of the hall and stand on the right and left of the Buddha, facing each other. The disciple stands at*

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<sup>13</sup> Each set of bows ends with a half-bow. The chant leader rings the bell whenever anyone bows.

<sup>14</sup> The guide should cue the disciple throughout the rite when to bow and whom they are bowing to, even if this is not spelled out in the rite as it is here.

<sup>15</sup> The disciple says the name of Amitābha Buddha in gratitude for the teachers' compassionate instruction to bow just once.

<sup>16</sup> Going from home life to homelessness means to leave the household life. The deeper meaning is wishing to leave cyclic existence. Replace this text with "receive the śikṣamāṇā training" if only the śikṣamāṇā ordination is being given.

*the side for the moment. The two masters go to the two bowing mats and stand there. When facing the Buddha, the ācārya's mat is on the left, the upādhyāyā/a's on the right. The disciple goes to their bowing mat and stands there.*

*While the assembly chants the incense offering, the two teachers make a half-bow to the Buddha. The ācārya goes first, then the upādhyāyā/a, followed by the disciple. They walk on the left side of the hall. The ācārya stands in front of their seat while the upādhyāyā/a makes a half-bow, kneels, offers three sticks of incense, stands, makes a half-bow, and stands by their seat. The ācārya and disciple make their offering in the same way. The ācārya followed by the upādhyāyā/a and the disciple walk on the right side of the hall back to their mats.*

*Offer the three pieces of incense as follows: kneeling in front of the Buddha, pick up one piece, holding it between the thumbs and index fingers of both hands at both ends of the stick. Raise it up to your forehead and put it vertically into the sandalwood powder. The first stick is put into the powder with the right hand, the second with the left, and the third with the right.*

*See pages 6-7 for the music score.*

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

*While the assembly chants the last line three times, the two teachers and disciple bow to the Buddha three times.*

**Chant leader:** Śikṣamāṇās, śrāmaṇerī/as, and lay followers, please leave the hall.<sup>17</sup> Virtuous saṅgha, please sit down.

*The upādhyāyā/a, ācārya, and saṅgha members take their seats.*

*If only the śikṣamāṇā ordination is being given, go to the section on “Conferring the Śikṣamāṇā Training” directly on page 31.*

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<sup>17</sup> A śikṣamāṇā, śrāmaṇerī/a, or senior lay practitioner can lead the lay people in meditation or chanting in another building. They may also want to prepare the lunch dana at this time.

# Incense Offering Chant

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

△ X

Whe - n in - ce - nse in the urn is\_\_ hea - te -

- d, the\_\_ u - ni - ve - rse is\_\_ per

fu - - - - - med. The\_\_

a - ssem - bly of Bu - ddhas vast-as the o - ce - an se - nse it from a

fa - r. Ah\_\_ Au -

- spi - cious clou - ds fo - rm e - very- whe -

- - re. Whe - - re sin- cere\_\_

mi - - - - nds a - bou - - - -

- nd, the\_\_ en - ti - re bo - dies of Bu - ddhas all\_\_ a -

45 

55 

65 

75 

84 

7





# Śrāmaṇerī/a Ordination

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

If there are only two or three bhikṣu/ṇīs present, do not perform the preliminaries for the saṅghakarman for head-shaving and the saṅghakarman for going-forth. If four or more are present, this part of the procedure needs to be done.

*The guide tells the disciple to go outside the hall and wait at a place where they can see but not hear.*

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Is it in harmony?

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

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

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

**Upādhyāyā/a:** 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].

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Good.

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

**Upādhyāyā/a:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman of head-shaving.

## 2. Single-motion Karman for Head-shaving and Summoning the Disciple

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “If the head-shaving is performed in a monastery, it has to be announced to all members of the saṅgha. If there is a schism in the community, the news should be announced to each room so that each member knows it. After that, the head-shaving is permitted. If the saṅgha is in harmony, make the motion and then do the head-shaving.”

**Karman master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ requests the head-shaving from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of upādhyāyā/a*). If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to give the head-shaving to \_\_\_\_\_. This is the motion.

**Ācārya:** I respectfully announce to the assembly: presently, at this monastery, Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ dislikes the worldly life and wishes to go forth, placing her/his heart with the Three Jewels. S/he will request upādhyāyā/a Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ to shave her/his head. Now, we ask the guide to guide her/him into the hall for the head-shaving.

## 3. Entering the Assembly and Requesting the Upādhyāyā/a

*The guide rises, walks to the central aisle, and bows to the Buddha once. S/he goes outside the hall to invite the disciple in, guides them to their bowing mat, and tells them to bow to the Buddha three times.<sup>18</sup> The guide then directs the disciple to go before the upādhyāyā/a, bow to her/him three times and kneel with palms joined.*

**Upādhyāyā/a:** One bow.

**Disciple:** A mi tuo fo.

*The disciple bows once and kneels with palms joined.*

**Guide:** Child of a good family,<sup>19</sup> according to Śākyamuni Buddha’s teaching, the five bodies of the Buddha are accomplished by depending upon a teacher whom you should serve sincerely. In the conventional way of requesting a teacher, you should speak on your own. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you.

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<sup>18</sup> The disciple always faces the Buddha except when the upādhyāyā/a and the ācārya shave their head, when the upādhyāyā/a gives them the robes and bowl, and when the ācārya sprinkles water on their head.

<sup>19</sup> “Family” here refers to the Buddha’s lineage.

**Disciple:**<sup>20</sup> Virtuous one, please listen. I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ (*given name*) now request the virtuous one to be my upādhyāyā/a. May the virtuous one be my upādhyāyā/a. By relying on the virtuous one, I will shave my head, go forth, and receive the śrāmaṇerī/a ethical restraint. Please accept my request with great compassion.<sup>21</sup> (3x)

**Upādhyāyā/a:** I will be your upādhyāyā/a for the head-shaving and going-forth.

*The guide directs the disciple to rise and bow to the upādhyāyā/a three times.*

#### 4. Requesting the Ācārya

The *Adbhutadharmaparyāya Sūtra* (Wei Ceng You Yin Yuan Jing) says, “When Rāhula went forth, Buddha asked Śāriputra to be the upādhyāya and Maudgalyāyana to be the ācārya.” Also, the *Sūtra of 500 Questions by Mahāmaudgalyāyana on Vinaya Matters* says, “Two persons can ordain a śrāmaṇerī/a; one person does not meet the requirement.”

*The guide directs the disciple to go before the ācārya and bow to her/him three times.*

**Ācārya:** One bow.

**Disciple:** A mi tuo fo.

*The disciple bows once and kneels with palms joined.*

**Guide:** Child of a good family, I now direct you to request the ācārya. This master teaches without fatigue and responds skillfully, so you should make your request attentively and respectfully. You should speak the words of request on your own. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you.

**Disciple:**<sup>22</sup> Virtuous one, please listen. I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ (*given name*) now request the virtuous one to be my ācārya. May the virtuous one be my head-shaving ācārya. By relying upon the virtuous one, I will shave my head, go forth, and receive the śrāmaṇerī/a ethical restraint. Please accept my request with great compassion. (3x)

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<sup>20</sup> The guide says this phrase by phrase and the disciple repeats it using their lay given name.

<sup>21</sup> The disciple is asking for dependence, i.e. to be cared for by and under the Dharma supervision of the upādhyāyā/a and in return, to serve the upādhyāyā/a.

<sup>22</sup> The guide says this phrase by phrase and the disciple repeats it.

**Ācārya:** I will be your ācārya for the head-shaving and going-forth. Listen attentively to all instructions.

## 5. Leaving the Family and Renouncing Worldly Ties

**Ācārya** (*hits block*): Child of a good family, you will now have your head shaved and leave your family. You should generate an expansive mind. First look up to the Buddha as the exemplar and proceed on the Buddha's path, then regard sentient beings and educate them. If you practice like this, the Buddhas will descend, bless you, and cause Dharma nectar to flow into your mind so that you will have the seed of awakening forever. Practice diligently; leave behind mundane worries. Dedicate the good deeds of bowing and doing recitations to your parents. Repay the kindness of your country by means of the merit created by practicing. For this reason the *Sūtra on Giving the Going-Forth to Upāsakas (Qing Xin Shi Du Ren Jing)* says, "Transmigrating within the three realms, one is not able to cut off attachment and bonds. Give up attachment and enter nirvāna. That is the true repayment of kindness to your parents, teachers, relatives, friends, fellow citizens of the planet, and all sentient beings."

You should know that those who go forth from household life to homeless life transcend worldly emotions and become the merit field of the world. Thus the king is no longer able to make you a subject, parents are no longer able to make you a child, and you will be worthy of respect and offerings from humans and *devas* (celestial beings). Therefore, having gone forth and put on monastic robes (*kāṣāya*), you should no longer pay homage to the king or your parents, much less to common people. Nevertheless, you should remember that your parents gave birth to you and brought you up. Their kindness has been great. Now sincerely bow to your parents and elder relatives and take leave of them. After that, come back and we will shave your head.

**Disciple:** Yes, I will do as directed.

*The guide directs the disciple to rise and bow once to the ācārya. S/he leads the disciple to go before the tablets with their parents' names and bow three times to thank them. The disciple bows while the assembly chants the verse.<sup>23</sup>*

*See page 13 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Transmigrating in the three realms, one is not able to sever attachment. Give up attachment and enter nirvāna. That is the true way to repay kindness.

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<sup>23</sup> In all chants that the assembly recites together, the chant leader begins and the assembly joins in.

## Transmigrating in the Three Realms

Ø

Trans-mi - gra ting in the\_ three realms, one is not\_ a - ble to se - ver a - ttach - ment.

9  
 Gi - ve up a - ttach - ment and en - ter nir - va - na. That is the true way to re - pay\_ kind - ness.

## 6. Exhortation and Bowing to the Buddhas

*The guide leads the disciple to their bowing mat and instructs them to bow to the Buddha three times. They then go before the ācārya, bow once, and kneel with palms joined.*

**Ācārya** (*hits block*): Child of a good family, you have planted deep virtuous roots for immeasurable eons. Therefore today you are able to encounter the Buddhadharma and go forth, shave your head, wear monastic robes, and cultivate the bodhisattva path. However, the practice cannot be accomplished on its own. You must live with ethical conduct (*śīla*). If you cultivate the virtue of ethical conduct, the water of concentration (*samādhi*) will become deep and clear, and by means of this, wisdom (*prajñā*) will arise. Due to this wisdom, the ignorance that has existed from beginningless time will be eliminated and destroyed. All seeds for future life and death will henceforth wither. You should establish the mind of going-forth, generate a strong determination, and aspire to learn the path diligently in order to attain liberation.

Vinaya Master Daoxuan says, “Those who sincerely go forth are frightened by the many sufferings of the four māras,<sup>24</sup> loathe the impermanence of the three realms, depart from those most beloved among the six kinds of kin,<sup>25</sup> and abandon intense involvement with the five sensual pleasures.” We know that all sentient beings are caught by the four māras,

<sup>24</sup> The four māras or negative forces are (1) the afflictions, (2) the five polluted aggregates, (3) death, and (4) the “son of the gods”—a desire realm god who disturbs practitioners’ minds with desire.

<sup>25</sup> This refers to close relatives such as parents and children, siblings, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, grandparents, and cousins.

bound in the three realms, tangled with the six kinds of kin, and indulge in the five sensual pleasures. Accordingly, sentient beings transmigrate in the cycle of birth and death for hundreds of thousands of eons. Having given up this body, they take another one; there is no escape. You should renounce afflictions and turn your mind to the truth. Keep the precepts, cultivate concentration, develop wisdom, engage in the myriad practices of the six pāramitās, and learn innumerable Dharma methods. In this time when the Dharma is declining in the world, establish yourself as a banner of the Dharma, attain a Buddha’s life of wisdom, and cause the lineage of the Three Jewels to continue without interruption so that sentient beings will benefit from it.

To do so is the true going-forth! You will then become a merit field for sentient beings in the six realms, the seed of the cause of the three vehicles, worthy of offerings from the faithful, and will not let down the four kinds of people to whom you are indebted.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the Buddha said, “If someone offers the four requisites to as many arhats as can fill the four continents of the world for a hundred years, this merit cannot equal the merit of someone who, for a day and night, fervently aspires to go forth.” Also, “If someone erects a seven-jeweled stūpa as high as the God Realm of the Thirty-three (*Trāyastriṃśa*), it cannot equal the merit of going-forth, which is far greater.” More can be found in the canon; I will not quote more now. Know yourself to be honorable and outstanding like this, generate the feeling of preciousness and respect, and do not despise yourself.

*In this way encourage and exhort the disciple in accordance with their capacity. Talk spontaneously. You do not need to recite these words.*

*Having said this, the ācārya picks up the fragrant water, dips their right ring finger in it, and either sprinkles a few water drops on the head of the disciple or writes “Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha” on the disciple’s head. Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya and its Commentary (Si Fen Lu Xing Shi Chao Zi Chi Ji) says, “The reason to sprinkle fragrant water on the head is to purify the body and to render it able to support the wholesome Dharma.”*

*See page 15 for the music score.*

**Ācārya:** How wonderful, great courageous one! You are able to know the world is impermanent, leave the worldly life, proceed to nirvāṇa. This is rare and hard to comprehend and speak about.

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<sup>26</sup> The Three Jewels, virtuous government officials, parents, and all sentient beings.

## How Wonderful Great Courageous One

O--Bell

Ø--Bell Stop

Ø

11 How won- der - ful, great cour - a-geous one! You are a - ble to

21 kno- w the wor-ld is im-per-man-e - nt, leave the wor-ldy li - fe,

27 pro - ceed to nir - va - na. This is ra - re and

ha - rd to com-pre hend and speak a - bou - t.

**Ācārya:** Go before the Buddha, pay homage to the Buddhas in the ten directions, and say the verse of taking refuge.

*The guide directs the disciple to rise, bow once to the ācārya, and leads them to the mat at the back of the room. The disciple pays homage to the Buddhas in ten directions—bowing three times or more while the assembly chants the verse of taking refuge.*

*See page 16 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Take refuge in the great World-honored Ones, who are able to cross over the sufferings of existence in the three realms. May all sentient beings entirely enter the bliss of nirvāna.

## Verse of Taking Refuge

O--Bell

Ø--Bell Stop

Ø

Ta - ke re - fuge in the great World - ho-nored Ones, who are ab le

11 to cross o - ver the suf-fer ings of ex - is-tence in the three - realms. May all

18 sen-tient beings en - ti-re-ly en - ter the bliss of nir - va na.

## 7. Shaving the Head and Donning the Robes

*The guide directs the disciple to go before the ācārya. They kneel with palms joined, a towel around their shoulders.*

**Ācārya:** The reason for shaving the head is to eliminate arrogance and conceit. The reason for wearing unattractive monastic clothes is to eliminate clinging and attachment. Before long, you will have comportment and appearance no different from those of the virtuous ones and sages of the three vehicles. Feel happy and rejoice for yourself.

*The ācārya shaves off the four surrounding tufts of hair, leaving only the tuft on the top of the head intact. During the shaving, the assembly chants the verse of going-forth.*

*See page 17 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Guard integrity and aspiration. Cut the bonds of family and kin. Leave your worldly home to practice the Dharma. Aspire to lead all beings to full awakening.



## Verse of Going-forth

Ø

Guard in-te-gri - ty and as - pir - a - tion. Cut the\_ bonds of fam'-ly and kin...

9

Leave your world - ly home to prac - tice the Dhar - ma. As -

13

pire to lead all beings to full a - wak - en - ing.

*The disciple rises, but does not bow. The guide directs them to go before the upādhyāyā/a. The disciple bows once and kneels with palms joined.*

*According to the Vinaya, when the upādhyāyā/a shaves the top tuft of hair, they first ask the disciple three times, “I am now going to shave the tuft of remaining hair, do you agree with that?” If the reply is “No,” the upādhyāyā/a says, “Now you can leave as you wish.” If the reply is “Yes,” they remove the remaining tuft of hair.*

**Upādhyāyā/a:** I am now going to shave the tuft of remaining hair, do you agree with that?

**Disciple:** Yes, I agree. (*Ask the question and answer 3x*)

*While the upādhyāyā/a shaves the tuft of hair, the assembly chants the verse of going-forth.*

*See above for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Guard integrity and aspiration. Cut the bonds of family and kin. Leave your worldly home to practice the Dharma. Aspire to lead all beings to full awakening.

*After the last tuft of hair has been shaved off, remove the towel.*

Next is the one-to-one transaction of receiving robes. The upādhyāyā/a takes the robes and gives them to the disciple who receives them while holding them up to the top of her/his head. After that, s/he returns them to the upādhyāyā/a. They do this three times. The robe given is the plain robe (man yi).<sup>27</sup> The reason for giving and returning them three times is as Commentary on “Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya” says, “To give three times is to show sincerity to its fullest extent. To return three times shows courtesy.”

**Disciple:**<sup>28</sup> Virtuous one, please listen. I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ (given name) receive these robes, the plain *antarvāsas* and *uttarāsaṃga*. (3x)

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Good.

**Disciple:** Yes.

The upādhyāyā/a puts the robes on the disciple while the assembly chants the verse below.

**Assembly:** Great are these clothes of liberation, clothes of the signless merit field. Wear them respectfully and act according to the precepts. Lead all sentient beings to liberation.

O--Bell  
Ø--Bell Stop

**Great Are These Clothes of Liberation**

Ø

9 Great are these clothes of li-ber - a tion, clothes of the sign-less me-rit field.

16 Wear them re- spect - ful - ly and act a-ccord-ing to the pre- ce

pts. Lead all sen - tient be- ings to li-ber - a - tion.

<sup>27</sup> A fully ordained monastic has three robes: the *antarvāsas* (T. *shamdup*) is the inner or lower robe, the five-strip robe. The *uttarāsaṃga* (T. *chogu*) is the upper robe, or seven-strip robe. The *saṃghāṭī* (T. *namjar*) is the nine-strip upper robe worn only by the fully ordained. In the Chinese tradition, the śrāmaṇerī/a receives a plain robe (*man yi*) known as a plain *antarvāsas*, which is worn above the black robe (*hai qing*). They may also receive a five-strip robe. They only receive the seven and nine-strip robes at the full ordination. In the Tibetan tradition the śrāmaṇerī/a receives a plain *shamdup* without a rice field pattern, and the *chogu*.

<sup>28</sup> The guide holds this booklet near the disciple so they can read this.

*Having put on the robes, the disciple goes to their bowing mat in the back of the room and bows to the Buddha three times. Then they go before the upādhyāyā/a, bow three times, and kneel.*

*The upādhyāyā/a takes the bowl and gives it to the disciple who receives it while holding it up to the top of her/his head. Then s/he returns it to the upādhyāyā/a. They do this three times. Next is the one-to-one transaction of receiving the alms bowl (pātra).*

**Disciple:**<sup>29</sup> Virtuous one, please listen. I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ (given name) receive this pātra, the vessel of a set size, because I will use it frequently. (3x)

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Good.

**Disciple:** Yes.

*The disciple bows from kneeling, stands, and goes outside if sections 8 and 9 are to be skipped.<sup>30</sup>*

## **8. Giving Three Refuges and Five Precepts**

*The guide directs the disciple to go before the upādhyāyā/a and kneel with palms joined.*

According to the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya and *Māṭṛikā Śāstra* (Pi Ni Mu Lun), “After shaving the head and putting on the robe, first give the three refuges and five precepts. Then give the ten śrāmaṇerī/a precepts for going-forth.” The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya and Mahīśāsaka Vinaya say, “First give the three refuges and five precepts; then permit them to go forth and give the ten precepts of a śrāmaṇerī/a.” Those who come to seek ordination and have already taken refuge and five precepts do not need to take refuge and five precepts again. Instead, directly shave their heads, have them put on robes, declare a motion to the saṅgha that they seek to go forth, and give them the ten śrāmaṇerī/a precepts.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): Child of a good family, the Buddhadharma is as vast as the sea. The more you enter it, the deeper it becomes. Since you seek to go forth, you should first take the three refuges and five precepts so that you can closely serve the saṅgha. Then receive the ten precepts of a śrāmaṇerī/a. You will be able to share the offerings and alms food of the saṅgha. What matters is your concentration and sincerity, so do not be

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<sup>29</sup> The guide holds this booklet near the disciple so they can read this.

<sup>30</sup> If the disciple has already received refuge and the five lay precepts, go directly to section 10, “Motion to the Saṅgha for Going-forth” on page 21.

conceited or negligent. Child of a good family, now you will take refuge in the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. I am concerned you might not know the words of taking refuge, so I will guide you.

*The upādhyāyā/a hits the block and says the following. The disciple repeats after the upādhyāyā/a phrase by phrase.*

**Upādhyāyā/a:** I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ for as long as I live, take refuge in the Buddha; for as long as I live, I take refuge in the Dharma; for as long as I live, I take refuge in the Saṅgha. (3x, bow from kneeling after each recitation)

**Disciple:**<sup>31</sup> I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ with great compassion, have taken refuge in the Buddha; I have taken refuge in the Dharma; I have taken refuge in the Saṅgha. From now on, as long as I live, I am an upāsikā/upāsaka, a disciple of the Buddha, Tathāgata, Arhat. The Fully Awakened One is my World-honored One. (3x, bow from kneeling after each recitation)

## 9. Explaining the Characteristics of the Five Precepts

*The guide tells the disciple to kneel with palms joined.*

**Upādhyāyā/a** (hits block): Child of a good family! So far, I have given you the three refuges and you have affirmed them. You have received the precept-body.<sup>32</sup> Since you wish to know the characteristics of the precepts in order to protect and keep them without transgression, I will explain them to you now. With utmost sincerity, join your palms.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (hits block before each one):

1. For as long as you live do not kill. This is the first upāsikā/upāsaka precept. Can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
2. For as long as you live do not steal. This is the second upāsikā/upāsaka precept. Can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
3. For as long as you live do not commit sexual misconduct. This is the third upāsikā/upāsaka precept. Can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
4. For as long as you live do not lie. This is the fourth upāsikā/upāsaka precept. Can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
5. For as long as you live do not take intoxicants. This is the fifth upāsikā/upāsaka precept. Can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

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<sup>31</sup> If the disciple has not memorized this verse of having taken refuge, they repeat it after the upādhyāyā/a.

<sup>32</sup> The essence of the precepts—the inspiration and power of refuge and precepts that the upādhyāyā/a has transmitted to the disciple's mind.

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Your actions must not contradict the above five pure precepts. Can you keep them? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

*The guide tells the disciple to rise and bow once. If a person who seeks śrāmaṇerī/a ordination has previously received only the three refuges, not the five precepts, they must go through the procedure of taking refuge first and then the five precepts as above. This is because the five precepts are received through taking the three refuges. For those who have already received both, the parts of the procedure for taking refuge and precepts can be omitted.*

## **10. Motion to the Saṅgha for Going-forth** *(only bhikṣu/ṇīs can be present)*

The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya says, “If someone wishes to give ordination in a monastery, the ordination should be made known to all saṅgha members. After the motion, permission can be given for the going-forth. Tell the disciple to go outside the hall and wait at a place where they can see but not hear.”

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Is it in harmony?

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

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

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

**Upādhyāyā/a:** 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].

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Good.

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

**Upādhyāyā/a:** What is the purpose of this harmonious saṅgha today?

**Chant leader:** To perform the karmans of going-forth and giving the śrāmaṇerī/a precepts.

**Karman Master:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ (*Dharma name*)<sup>33</sup> requests the going-forth and to receive the ten precepts of a śrāmaṇerī/a from Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to give the going-forth and to confer the ten śrāmaṇerī/a precepts on \_\_\_\_\_. This is the motion.

If the motion is made for head-shaving but not for going-forth, there is a light offense. If it is not made in both cases, there are two offenses.

## 11. Repent and Ask if There Are Hindrances or Obstacles

*The guide rises, walks to the central aisle, and bows to the Buddha once. S/he then goes outside the hall, directs the disciple to go to their bowing mat, and instructs them to chant the verse of repentance and bow.*

*See page 23 for the music score.*

**Assembly:** Every harmful action I have done  
With my body, speech, and mind  
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and confusion  
All these I openly lay bare before you. (3x)

*The disciple bows while chanting each line. 3 repetitions x 4 lines in the verse = 12 bows. The guide motions to the disciple when to bow and taps their shoulder when it is time to rise.*

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<sup>33</sup> At this point, the disciple is called by their ordination name. Before the ceremony, the upādhyāyā/a tells the karman master what the name is.

# Repentance Chant

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

△ ∅

E - v'ry ha - rm - fu - l a - ction

I ha - - ve do - - -

- ne with my bo- dy, spee - - ch, an-d mi - nd,

o - ver - whe - lmed by

a tta - ch-ment, an - - ge - r,

an - d co - n - fu - sio - -

- n, a - ll the - se I o - pen-ly lay

ba - re be - fo - re you

ba - re be - fore you

*After the disciple repents misdeeds, the guide leads them before the ācārya. They bow three times and kneel with palms joined. The ācārya investigates and questions if there are hindrances or obstacles. The disciple answers truthfully.*<sup>34</sup>

**Ācārya** (*hits block*): Child of a good family, listen. Now is the time for telling the truth with utmost sincerity. I will now ask you questions and you should answer truthfully. (*hits block before asking each question*)

1. Have you committed an excluding offense?<sup>35</sup> **Disciple:** No.
2. Have you ruined the pure conduct (chastity) of a bhikṣu/ṇī?  
**Disciple:** No.
3. Have you taken “affiliation by theft”?<sup>36</sup> **Disciple:** No.
4. Are you a person wavering between Buddhist and non-Buddhist paths?<sup>37</sup>  
**Disciple:** No.
5. Are you a *paṇḍaka*?<sup>38</sup> **Disciple:** No.
6. Are you a person who has committed patricide? **Disciple:** No.
7. Are you a person who has committed matricide? **Disciple:** No.
8. Are you a person who has killed an arhat? **Disciple:** No.
9. Are you a person who has caused schism in a harmonious saṅgha?  
**Disciple:** No.
10. Are you a person who has maliciously caused the Buddha to shed blood?  
**Disciple:** No.

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<sup>34</sup> If any of the first 13 hindrances apply, the person may not ordain. If they go through the ceremony, it does not count as being ordained. If any of the other hindrances apply, the person is considered undesirable as a monastic. If they are ordained, they count as ordained but the bhikṣu/ṇīs participating in the ceremony incur a wrongdoing (*duṣkṛta*).

<sup>35</sup> People who have taken the five or eight lay precepts and broken one of the first four—sexual misconduct, stealing, killing, or lying—are considered outside the congregation of the Buddhadharmā. Depending on whether the misdeed is serious, intermediate, or minor in severity, a Vinaya master will consider the individual situation to see if the disciple is disqualified from receiving monastic precepts. If the misdeed is of an intermediate or minor level, the disciple must have confessed and purified it before the ordination ceremony.

<sup>36</sup> Undeservedly claiming the rights of monastic status or seniority; in particular, knowingly participating in a saṅghakarman while not having the qualifications. Other cases of affiliation by theft are eavesdropping on a saṅghakarman, and taking the precepts even though you have one of the 13 major hindrances.

<sup>37</sup> Here someone is ordained in another religion, then requests ordination in the Buddhist saṅgha, then disrobes and goes back to their previous religion, and finally again requests to be admitted to the Buddhist saṅgha.

<sup>38</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 (*irīyā-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.



11. Are you a non-human being?<sup>39</sup> **Disciple:** No.
12. Are you an animal?<sup>40</sup> **Disciple:** No.
13. Are you a person who has both male and female organs? **Disciple:** No.
14. What is your name? **Disciple:** (*given name*)
15. Who is your upādhyāyā/a? **Disciple:** Venerable \_\_\_\_\_.
16. How old are you? **Disciple:** (*age*)
17. Do you have robes and a bowl? **Disciple:** Yes.
18. Do you have permission from your parents? **Disciple:** Yes.
19. Are you in debt? **Disciple:** No.
20. Are you a servant?<sup>41</sup> **Disciple:** No.
21. Are you a high official of the country?<sup>42</sup> **Disciple:** No.
22. Are you a woman/man? **Disciple:** Yes.
23. A woman/man could have such illnesses as leprosy, carbuncles, dry gangrene, or insanity.<sup>43</sup> Do you have any of these illnesses?  
**Disciple:** No.

*The disciple bows from kneeling once, rises, and makes a half-bow.*

## 12. Going-forth and Giving the Śrāmaṇerī/a Ethical Restraint

*Next is formally giving the precept-body. The guide directs the disciple to go before the upādhyāyā/a. The disciple bows three times and kneels with palms joined. The upādhyāyā/a first gives a discourse to guide and encourage them to generate compassion for all beings on all occasions. They can then receive the superior precepts.<sup>44</sup>*

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<sup>39</sup> Refers to gods or spirits that can change their form and come to receive ordination.

<sup>40</sup> Refers to *nāgas*—serpent-like animals that live near water or in trees—or animals that can change their form and come to receive ordination.

<sup>41</sup> A servant needs to get their master's permission to go forth.

<sup>42</sup> A high official of a country needs to get permission from the head of the country (king or president).

<sup>43</sup> *Buddhist Monastic Code II*, p. 229 includes those with serious, disfiguring or communicable diseases such as leprosy, boils, eczema, tuberculosis, or epilepsy, as well as goiter, hemorrhoids, fistulas, upsets of bile or phlegm, cough, asthma, or any disease that is chronically afflicting, very painful, and disagreeable. The Pāli Vinaya also includes notorious criminals, suspects for whom warrants have been sent out (this would include those on parole or probation), inmates who have escaped, those who have been branded or whipped as a punishment, and those who are physically disabled, feeble, or deformed, as unsuitable candidates for ordination.

<sup>44</sup> Receiving the śrāmaṇerī/a ethical restraint with great compassion for all beings on all occasions makes the ethical restraint superior. Another meaning of “superior” is that these precepts are an excellent foundation for the higher trainings in concentration and wisdom. The establishment of the precepts in the mind of the disciple deeply and firmly becomes an excellent foundation for further spiritual development.

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Most sentient beings in the six realms have obstacles to receiving the precepts. Only human beings are able to receive them. Still, hindrances exist, and so not everyone is fit to receive them. Since you do not have hindrances or obstacles, you are able to receive precepts. You should generate a superior intention while reciting the words of refuge. That is, wish to save and protect all sentient beings and to liberate them with the Dharma.

The precepts are the foundation of all virtues; they are the basis of the three vehicles. The precepts are a treasure in the Buddhadharma that cannot be found in other paths. The precepts can protect and sustain the Dharma, and enable the Dharma to remain for a long time. In addition, both the power and influence of this saṅghakarman and the great strength of the saṅgha assembly can uphold the highest Dharma in the sphere of reality and transmit it into your mind and body. You should listen attentively and one-pointedly, and repeat after me.<sup>45</sup>

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block, disciple repeats phrase by phrase*): I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ (*Dharma name*), take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Saṅgha. I now go forth as a follower of the Buddha. Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ is my upādhyāyā/a. The Tathāgata, Arhat, Fully-awakened One is my World-honored One. (3x, bow from kneeling after each recitation)

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*disciple repeats*): I Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ with compassion have taken refuge in the Buddha, I have taken refuge in the Dharma, I have taken refuge in the Saṅgha. With great compassion I have gone forth as a follower of the Buddha. Bhikṣu/ṇī \_\_\_\_\_ is my upādhyāyā/a. The Tathāgata, Arhat, Fully Awakened One is my World-honored One. (3x, bow from kneeling after each recitation)

### 13. Explaining the Characteristics<sup>46</sup> of the Śrāmaṇerī/a Ethical Restraint

*The śrāmaṇerī/a remains kneeling with palms joined.*

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): Child of a good family, I have given you the śrāmaṇerī/a ethical restraint and you have obtained the precept-body.

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<sup>45</sup> Tell them to visualize light which is the nature of the precepts filling their body at the end of the third recitation. The disciple then repeats this passage after the upādhyāyā/a.

<sup>46</sup> The Chinese word *xiang*, translated as “characteristics,” literally means “form” or “appearance.” The term conveys the idea that through generating sincerity and benevolence in their mind, the disciple obtains the precept-body. Due to receiving the essence of the precepts, they naturally restrain themselves from doing harm or bringing disadvantage to others as well as to themselves. The essence of the ten precepts manifests outwardly in their behavior.

I will now further explain the characteristics of the precepts. You should listen attentively and respond to me accordingly that you accept them and that you will observe them for life without transgression.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block before each one*):

1. For as long as you live, do not kill. This is the first śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
2. For as long as you live, do not steal. This is the second śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
3. For as long as you live, do not engage in sexual activity. This is the third śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
4. For as long as you live, do not lie. This is the fourth śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
5. For as long as you live, do not take intoxicants. This is the fifth śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
6. For as long as you live, do not wear flower garlands or necklaces made of precious stones, or apply fragrance to the body.<sup>47</sup> This is the sixth śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
7. For as long as you live, do not sing, dance, participate in performances, or go to watch or listen to them. This is the seventh śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
8. For as long as you live, do not sit or lie on high, luxurious seats or beds. This is the eighth śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
9. For as long as you live, do not eat at unsuitable times. This is the ninth śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.
10. For as long as you live, do not handle gold, silver, precious items, or money.<sup>48</sup> This is the tenth śrāmaṇerī/a precept; can you keep it? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): These are the ten śrāmaṇerī/a precepts that may not be transgressed for the rest of your life. Can you keep them?

**Disciple:** Yes, I can.

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<sup>47</sup> This includes any kind of jewelry worn for decoration and all scents and cosmetics used for beautification.

<sup>48</sup> A śrāmaṇerī/a can transform an “impure” item into a pure one, such as in the case of accepting money. If there is no lay helper to accept the money for them, they say the following to a śrāmaṇerī/a, śikṣamāṇā, or bhikṣu/ñī, “Virtuous one, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī/a \_\_\_\_\_ have received this impure wealth. I will keep this impure wealth to exchange it for pure wealth.” (3x) The way they transform the offering is by physically facing another monastic, verbally saying these words, and mentally cultivating a motivation to use this item to further their opportunity to practice the Dharma. A śikṣamāṇā and bhikṣu/ñī may also transform an impure object into a pure one in a similar way by making this statement to someone of the same or higher level of ordination. They must do this on the same day they receive the item, or if that is not possible, within a maximum of ten days.

*These are the characteristics of the śrāmaṇerī/a precepts. The guide tells the disciple to rise and bow once to the upādhyāyā/a and then kneel with palms joined. The upādhyāyā/a speaks to the disciple about the virtue of going-forth, exhorts and instructs them according to their capacity. Tell them directly to keep and uphold the precepts and not to break them. Also instruct them about the five virtues, ten numerical lists, and so on.*

**Upādhyāyā/a:** To be a field of merit worthy of receiving offerings from donors, monastics should possess five virtues. The *Sūtra on the Householder Requesting the Merit Field of the Saṅgha* (*Ju Shi Qing Seng Fu Tian Jing*) says, “A śrāmaṇerī/a should know five virtues: (1) renounce the worldly life and embrace the holy life by embarking on the supreme path without letting yourself be interrupted, (2) give up attachment to the body by wearing Dharma robes and do not beautify the body, (3) sever attachment to loved ones by treating all sentient beings with equal kindness, (4) be willing to give up your life to pursue the holy life and follow the path, (5) follow the Mahāyāna in order to lead all sentient beings to awakening.”

**Upādhyāyā/a:** The ten numerical lists are:<sup>49</sup>

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

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<sup>49</sup> This is an outline of major points in the Buddhadharma in a numerical format. The upādhyāyā/a elaborates on each one, explaining the ten to the disciple.

[Addendum from Venerable Thubten Chodron on further instructions that she has given:]

1. Don't be deceitful or proud, like a dog wearing a lion's skin.
2. The purpose of robes is to distinguish monastic from layperson and to protect the body from the elements. Wear robes and keep the precepts in every place, time, circumstance, no matter who you are with. Don't keep some precepts and neglect others.
3. Meditate on parts of the body to decrease attachment and develop renunciation.
4. Stay in dependence upon the upādhyāyā/a.
5. Go for alms, wear rag robes, live in a simple dwelling, use urine as medicine.
6. The disadvantages of lay life are: distraction, consumption of time, negative karma created doing actions motivated by attachment, regret at the time of death.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): Child of a good family, you have now completed receiving the śrāmaṇerī/a precepts. For as long as you live respect and uphold the precepts and do not transgress them. Make offerings to the Three Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. Stay near and see your upādhyāyā/a and ācārya frequently. Do not go against their instructions. Diligently practice virtuous actions of body, speech, and mind, meditate, recite sūtras, and work hard in various tasks. Do not be lazy or negligent or pass your time in vain. Do not pursue fame and gain. Do not engage in harmful deeds or break precepts so that you disgrace the saṅgha, ruin the Buddhadharma, and plant a great number of seeds for miserable future births and deaths. If you keep the precepts and follow this advice, you will close the door to the three unfortunate realms and open the gate to nirvāṇa. Remember these words constantly in order to spur yourself on, lest you have regrets later on and die in misery! Will you follow these teachings and act accordingly?

**Disciple:** Yes, I will do as directed. (*bows from kneeling once*)

*If only the śrāmaṇerī/a ordination is given, go directly to page 36, paragraph 3 where the newly ordained monastic bows to thank the preceptors and sangha members.*

**Upādhyāyā:** This concludes the śrāmaṇerī ordination. We will now begin conferring the śikṣamāṇā training.

While the assembly chants the homage to Śākyamuni Buddha (na mo ben shi shi jia mou ni fo),<sup>50</sup> the guide directs the disciple to go to their mat and to bow to the Buddha three times.

O--Bell  
 ∅--Bell Stop

## Homage to Śākyamuni Buddha

∅

Na Mo Ben Shi Shi Jia Mou Ni Fo Na Mo Ben Shi Shi Jia

6 1. Mou Ni Fo Na Mo 2. Mou Ni Fo Na Mo

10 Ben Shi Shi Jia Mou Ni Fo

<sup>50</sup> Homage to our root teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha.

# Conferring the Śikṣamāṇā Training<sup>51</sup>

*If the candidate is only receiving the śikṣamāṇā ordination, perform sections 3 and 4 of the śrāmaṇerī ordination to request the upādhyāyā and ācārya before requesting the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha. Change the text of the request accordingly to “receive the śikṣamāṇā ethical restraint.”*

## 1. Request the Ethical Restraint from the Saṅgha

The Vinaya says, “A śrāmaṇerī should go to the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha, bare her right shoulder, take off her shoes, pay homage at the feet of the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha three times, kneel with palms joined and request as follows.”

*The guide directs the śrāmaṇerī to bow to the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha three times.*

**Śrāmaṇerī:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. I Śrāmaṇerī \_\_\_\_\_ now request the saṅgha to confer two years of training in the precepts. My upādhyāyā’s first name is \_\_\_\_\_, her last name is \_\_\_\_\_. With great compassion, may the saṅgha confer on me the two years of training in the precepts<sup>52</sup> with the upādhyāyā whose first name is \_\_\_\_\_ and last name is \_\_\_\_\_. (3x, bow from kneeling after each recitation)

*The guide tells the śrāmaṇerī to rise and bow once to the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha.*

*The guide tells the śrāmaṇerī to go outside the hall and wait at a place where she can see but not hear.*

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

**Upādhyāyā:** Is the saṅgha assembled?

**Chant leader:** It is assembled.

**Upādhyāyā:** Is it in harmony?

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

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<sup>51</sup> The Vinaya states that after some female practitioners were ordained, they were not trained in the precepts for two years, and thus were imprudent, ignorant, and did various deeds against the Dharma. Therefore, the Buddha set up the rule that women who go forth must spend two years learning the [bhikṣuṇī] precepts before they can be given full ordination. After a female practitioner is ordained and given śrāmaṇerī precepts, no matter how old the woman or the girl who has been married is, she must be given the two years of training in the precepts. Then she can be given the full precepts.

<sup>52</sup> “Confer two years of training in the precepts” means “confer two years of training in the bhikṣuṇī precepts by observing the six trainings.”

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

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

**Upādhyāyā:** 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].

**Upādhyāyā:** Good.

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

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

**Chant leader:** To perform the karman of conferring two years of training in the precepts.

### 3. One-motion Three-proclamations Karman to Confer the Training

*The ācārya acts as the karman master. She says with palms joined:*

**Ācārya:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Śrāmaṇerī \_\_\_\_\_ now requests two years of training in the precepts from the saṅgha with Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as her upādhyāyā.<sup>53</sup> If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to confer two years of training in the precepts on Śrāmaṇerī \_\_\_\_\_ with Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as her upādhyāyā. This is the motion.

**Ācārya:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen. Śrāmaṇerī \_\_\_\_\_ requests two years of training in the precepts from the saṅgha with Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as her upādhyāyā. The saṅgha will now confer the two years of training in the precepts on Śrāmaṇerī \_\_\_\_\_ with Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as her upādhyāyā. Those who agree that the saṅgha confers the two years of training in the precepts on Śrāmaṇerī \_\_\_\_\_ with Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as her upādhyāyā remain silent. Those

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<sup>53</sup> According to *Brief Explanation of Important Karmans (Sui Ji Jie Mo Qian Shi)*, “A person relies upon the saṅgha to perform the procedure for receiving the precepts and learns about proper behavior in accordance with the precepts by following their preceptor (upādhyāyā).” For this reason, the preceptor is mentioned here. Having a preceptor is a prerequisite for requesting the two years of training from the saṅgha, just as it is for requesting bhikṣuṇī precepts. Relying on the preceptor for training is crucial. (cf. T.23.1439, pp. 498b16-7, c19, 499a16)



who do not agree speak up. This is the first, (second, third) proclamation.<sup>54</sup>

**Ācārya:** Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this bhikṣuṇī saṅgha has completed agreeing to confer two years of training in the precepts on Śrāmaṇerī \_\_\_\_\_ with Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ as her upādhyāyā. This matter will proceed as decided.

#### 4. Explaining the Characteristics of the Six Trainings

*The guide goes to the central aisle, makes one bow, and then calls the śikṣamāṇā in, and directs her to bow to the Buddha three times. The guide then leads her in front of the upādhyāyā, and instructs the śikṣamāṇā to bow three times and kneel with palms joined.*

**Upādhyāyā** (*hits block*): Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_, listen. The Tathāgata, Arhat, Fully Awakened One stated six trainings that are not to be transgressed.<sup>55</sup> (*hits block before each one*)

First, do not engage in the impure conduct of sexual intercourse. If a śikṣamāṇā engages in sexual intercourse, she is no longer a śikṣamāṇā or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. If she has physical contact with a man with a lustful mind, she commits a misdeed and should retake the śikṣamāṇā training. For as long as you live, can you keep this precept without transgression? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

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<sup>54</sup> This section is repeated three times, the ācārya saying “first,” “second,” or “third” in the last sentence according to which repetition it is.

<sup>55</sup> The first four precepts are each made up of two parts: (1) one of the four roots requiring expulsion when transgressed, and (2) one of the six trainings requiring retaking the śikṣamāṇā training when transgressed. The *Brief Explanation of “Important Karmans”* says, “A śikṣamāṇā should learn (i.e. practice) everything in the bhikṣuṇī precepts except for taking food herself and giving food to others. A śikṣamāṇā learns all of the precepts in these three categories: (1) the four roots; (2) the six trainings: to abandon physical contact with a man with lustful mind, stealing something worth less than five coins, killing an animal, minor lying, eating at unsuitable times, and taking intoxicants; (3) the training rules—various rules in the bhikṣuṇī precepts and comportment. All these need to be learned and established in her mind. If she breaks any of the four roots, she is expelled. If she commits any of the minor transgressions in the six trainings (the second category above), give her another two years of training by performing a karman. If she disregards the training rules, directly violating the Buddhist regulations, she needs to repent, but it does not nullify the six trainings that she has been learning.” (T.40.1808, p. 499) See *Śikṣamāṇā Precepts* by Śramaṇa Hongzan (*Wan Zi Xin Zuan Xu Zang Jing*, Vol. 40, no. 725) for a full list of the śikṣamāṇā precepts, which has been published in English by Sravasti Abbey in *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya Śikṣamāṇā Poṣadha and Other Rites*.

Second, do not steal, even a blade of grass. If a śikṣamāṇā steals [something worth] five or more coins from others; if she takes it herself or has someone else take it; if she cuts something [of that value] herself or has someone else cut it; if she breaks something [of that value] herself or has someone else break it; if she burns, buries, or discolors something [of that value],<sup>56</sup> she is no longer a śikṣamāṇā or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. If [with the intent to steal] she takes [something worth] less than five coins, she commits a misdeed and should retake the śikṣamāṇā training. For as long as you live, can you keep this precept without transgression? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

Third, do not deliberately take a sentient being's life, even that of an ant. If a śikṣamāṇā kills a human being herself; if she procures a weapon and gives it to someone [for that purpose]; if she advises death, praises death, encourages death; if she gives someone poison, performs an abortion, or performs black magic [to kill someone]; if she does it herself or has someone else do it, she is not a śikṣamāṇā or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. If she [deliberately] ends the life of an animal that is unable to change form,<sup>57</sup> she commits a misdeed and should retake the śikṣamāṇā training. For as long as you live, can you keep this precept without transgression? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

Fourth, do not lie, even in jest. If a śikṣamāṇā lacks spiritual attainments but falsely claims that she has attained superhuman faculties,<sup>58</sup> meditative stabilization (*dhyāna*), liberation (*vimokṣa*), concentration (*samādhi*), or other attainments (*samāpatti*);<sup>59</sup> or attained the result of stream-enterer (*srotāpanna*), once-returner (*sakṛdāgāmin*), non-returner (*anāgāmin*), or arhat; or claims that devas, nāgas, ghosts, or spirits come to make offerings to her, she is no longer a śikṣamāṇā or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. If she deliberately speaks falsely to a group of people,<sup>60</sup> she commits a misdeed and should retake the śikṣamāṇā training. For as long as you live, can you keep this precept without transgression? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

Fifth, do not eat food at unsuitable times. If a śikṣamāṇā eats food at unsuitable times, she commits a misdeed and should retake the śikṣamāṇā training. For as long as you live, can you keep this precept without

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<sup>56</sup> Destroying others' property is included in the precept against stealing.

<sup>57</sup> Animals that can change forms are, for example, nāgas that can appear as human beings.

<sup>58</sup> Skt. *uttari-manuṣya-dharma*, lit. "beyond human conditions," i.e. psychic powers.

<sup>59</sup> These refer to achievements in various meditative practices.

<sup>60</sup> Here it means that if she tells a lie to people (saṅgha or lay) other than lies about her spiritual attainments, she breaks the ethical restraint and has to retake it. Vinaya Master Daohai in *Commentary on the Brief Explanation of "Important Karmans"* (*Sui Ji Jie Mo Qian Shi Jiang Ji*) said the phrase in the fourth training about lying—"if intentionally lying to the assembly"—refers to "small lying," i.e. less severe lying that is not about her spiritual attainments. This refers to saying things untruthfully, that is, saying, "did not see" but in fact seeing; saying "do not know" but in fact knowing, etc.

transgression? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

Sixth, do not consume intoxicants. If a śikṣamāṇā consumes intoxicants, she commits a misdeed and should retake the śikṣamāṇā training. For as long as you live, can you keep this precept without transgression? **Disciple:** Yes, I can.

*The disciple bows from the kneeling position after each of the six trainings. After the last recitation, the śikṣamāṇā bows from kneeling. The guide tells her to rise, and bow once to the upādhyāyā. A śikṣamāṇā learns the entirety of the bhikṣuṇī precepts, except for taking food with her own hands.<sup>61</sup>*

## 5. Conclude with Exhortation and Bowing

According to the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, there should be a section of conclusion with exhortation.

*The guide tells the śikṣamāṇā to kneel with palms joined:*

**Upādhyāyā** (*hits block*): Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_, listen. The saṅgha has given you the two years of training in the precepts. A śikṣamāṇā observes the six trainings, which is why she is called a śikṣamāṇā, [someone who is learning and preparing for the advanced precepts]. You have received them complete in all aspects from an upādhyāyā who is complete in all aspects [referring to virtues, knowledge, and so on], an ācārya who is complete in all aspects, as well as a bhikṣuṇī saṅgha that is complete in all aspects. You also live in a good country and have a good place to practice. Even noble wheel-turning monarchs are not endowed with such fortune; yet you now possess all of these. Respect the Three Jewels: the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. Make offerings to your upādhyāyā and ācārya, and respect senior, equal, and junior fellow-practitioners. Work hard to cultivate the three higher trainings of ethical conduct (*śīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). Practice the three doors of liberation—emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness—and diligently cultivate three virtues of body, speech, and mind. Meditate, recite sūtras, and encourage others to do meritorious deeds. By practicing these trainings, you will open the door to nirvāṇa and attain the results of stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, and arhat. As lotus flowers grow day and night in water, so, too, will you grow in the

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<sup>61</sup> If a layperson is present, they offer food to a bhikṣuṇī because a bhikṣuṇī cannot eat food that has not been offered. If a layperson is not present, a śrāmaṇerī offers food to a bhikṣuṇī. If a śrāmaṇerī is not present, a śikṣamāṇā offers it. For example, the laity cook food in the temple and it is clearly meant for the bhikṣuṇīs. But before mealtime, the laypeople leave the temple and don't return in time to offer the food to the saṅgha. A śikṣamāṇā can take the food and offer it to the bhikṣuṇīs if there is no śrāmaṇerī who can do it.

Buddhadharma. In due course, you will be able to receive the bhikṣuṇī ethical restraint.

**Upādhyāyā:** Will you follow these teachings and act accordingly?

**Śikṣamāṇā:** Yes, I will do as directed.

*The guide tells the śikṣamāṇā to rise and bow once. Then, the guide directs the śikṣamāṇā to her bowing mat and tells her to bow three times to thank the upādhyāyā, who says, “One bow;” to bow three times to the ācārya, who says, “One bow;” to bow three times to the chant leader, who says, “One bow;” and to bow three times to the saṅgha members, who say, “One bow.” Then, the upādhyāyā tells the śikṣamāṇā to bow to thank the guide. A member of the saṅgha goes to call the śikṣamāṇās, śrāmaṇerī/as, and lay followers. While they do that:*

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

*The upādhyāyā and ācārya now descend from their seats. The chant leader leads the assembly in chanting the homage to Śākyamuni Buddha (na mo ben shi shi jia mou ni fo). The upādhyāyā and ācārya go to their bowing mats.*

O--Bell  
 ∅--Bell Stop

## Homage to Śākyamuni Buddha

∅

Na Mo Ben Shi Shi Jia Mou Ni Fo Na Mo Ben Shi Shi Jia

6 1. Mou Ni Fo Na Mo 2. Mou Ni Fo Na Mo

10 Ben Shi Shi Jia Mou Ni Fo

*After the others have entered the hall, the chant leader directs them to face the Buddha and bow to the Buddha three times, and then to face the central aisle. Having completed the ceremony of conferring the two years of training on a śikṣamāṇā, now dedicate the merit.*

## 6. Rejoice

*The chant leader directs everyone to chant the verse of rejoicing.*

**Assembly:** How wonderful! When one encounters the Buddha,<sup>62</sup> there is no one who is not happy. In the past we have created merit and generated the wish to meet the Buddhadharma, and now we have obtained great Dharma benefit.

O--Bell  
 ∅--Bell Stop

### Verse of Rejoicing

∅

Ho-w won-der ful! When one en-coun-ters the Bud-dha, the-re is no one who

8 is no-t ha-ppy. I-n the\_ past we have cre - a-ted me-ri-t and ge-ner - a-ted

17 the\_\_ wish to meet the\_\_ Bud-dha-dhar - ma, an - d no - w

21 we have\_\_ ob - tained gre - at Dhar-ma be - ne - fit.

<sup>62</sup> The one who encounters the Buddha refers to the disciple who just ordained.

## 7. Dedication

**Chant leader:** Through the merit generated from head-shaving, conferring the śrāmaṇerī/a precepts (and the two years of training in the śikṣamāṇā precepts), we respectfully request Brahmā, Śakra, the four guardian kings, devas, nāgas, and the rest of the eight groups of Dharma protectors;<sup>63</sup> the Protector Saṃghārāma,<sup>64</sup> as well as guardians who protect the land, to use your majesty and divine power to protect the country and the Dharma.

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

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

**Assembly:** Go forth to enter the path. Cut off bonds and bid family farewell. Now you are imbued with the precepts. Resolve to cut nonvirtue and cultivate compassion. Renounce illusion, return to the truth. How happy is the door to liberation.

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<sup>63</sup> These are celestial beings (devas), serpents (nāgas), demons (*yakṣas*), demigods (*asuras*), divine musicians (*gandharvas*), mythical birds (*garuḍas*), half-horse half-humans (*kiṃnaras*), great snakes (*mahorāgas*).

<sup>64</sup> In Chinese Buddhism, Saṃghārāma Bodhisattva refers to the general Guan Yu (160-220 CE), deified and revered as a heavenly Dharma protector. The term “saṃghārāma” can also refer to a group of devas who guard the Dharma and Buddhist monasteries.

## Go Forth to Enter the Path

Ø

Go for - th to en - ter the pa - th. Cut off bonds and  
bid fa mi - ly fare-well. Now you are im - bued with the pre - cepts. Re - solve to cut non -  
vir - tue and cul - ti - vate com - pa - ssion. Re - nounce ill - u - sion,  
re - tu - rn to the truth. How ha - ppy is the door to li - ber - a - tion.

See page 40 for the music score.

**Assembly:** Ordination 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.

*While the assembly chants, the upādhyāyā/a and ācārya make three bows and a half-bow to the Buddha. The śikṣamāṇā or śrāmaṇerī/a, who is standing behind them, also bows to the Buddha three times. The upādhyāyā/a and ācārya then make a half-bow to each other, half-bow to the right, half-bow to the center, half-bow to the left, half-bow center, half-bow to each other.<sup>65</sup>*

<sup>65</sup> The half-bows of the two teachers are expressions of their appreciation to the saṅgha members in the east/right and west/left sides of the hall and to each other, and to the Buddha in the center.

# Ordination Dedication

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

△ X

Or - di - na - tion 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 - ge 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 Three Refuges may also be chanted here. If so, it replaces the three bows to the Buddha that follow.*

**Chant leader:** Everyone face the Buddha.

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

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

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

O--Bell

Ø--Bell Stop

## Three Refuges

Ø

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

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

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

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

**Chant leader:** In gratitude, bow to the two teachers three times.

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Bow to the Buddha once.

**Chant leader:** Face the central aisle. Wait respectfully as the two masters leave the hall.

*The assembly bows to the Buddha once. The saṅgha members turn to face each other and wait until the two teachers leave the hall. They then leave the hall in ordination order. Before leaving, the new monastic may offer gifts to the two teachers. Lay followers may make offerings to the new monastic, and photos may be taken.*

## Colophon

This procedure of head-shaving and conferring ten precepts is based upon the Vinaya-piṭaka. In addition, I<sup>66</sup> made reference to the section on śrāmaṇerī/as in the *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya* (*Si Fen Lu Shan Fan Bu Que Xing Shi Chao*) [written by Vinaya Master Daoxuan in 630 CE], as well as the rituals of head-shaving and conferring precepts performed by ancient masters. However, in recent times there are those who observe the Vinaya rules for ordaining people, yet still a lot of what they do does not comply with Buddhadharma. Since going-forth is the beginning of forming the saṅgha and establishing the Buddha's teachings, I am not tired of seeking details or of collecting and selecting the important points in order to thoroughly inform people about going-forth in the Buddha's path. In addition, the ancient masters were very sincere and careful in accepting disciples, taking in followers, and ordaining people. If we now do our best to follow this way, that is comparable to protecting and holding the correct Dharma and enabling it to remain in the world for a long time.

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<sup>66</sup> It is not clear if the speaker is Bhikṣu Hongchuan, the latest compiler of the text; or Bhikṣu Hongyi, the annotator of the text.

# Appendix I: Layout of the Hall

Buddha

ācārya

upādhyāyā/a

guide

guide

bhikṣu/ṇī<sup>67</sup>

bhikṣu/ṇī

ācārya's mat

upādhyāyā/a's mat

disciple's mat

The preparation before the ceremony includes:

1. Clean up and set up the hall.
2. Offer flowers on the altar.
3. Sandalwood powder, sandalwood sticks, and incense for the incense burner. If there are two incense burners on the altar, use one for powdered incense and the other for stick or coiled incense. However, one burner for sandalwood powdered incense is sufficient. In preparation for the incense offering, put a layer of incense ashes at the bottom of an empty incense burner. Then put about one-half to two-thirds of a tablespoon of sandalwood powder into the burner. Right before the beginning of the ceremony, light a half-inch long piece of stick or coiled incense and put it vertically into the sandalwood powder to ignite it. Tweezers are helpful for doing this. After each use of the burner, use a spoon or a tool to blend the newly burned ashes with the old ones and spread them evenly in the burner so it is ready for the next use.
4. Gong, wooden fish, and two hand-bells to be used by the guides.
5. On the table by upādhyāyā/a's seat, put a block, razor, tissue or washcloth, robes, alms bowl bag, and alms bowl.
6. On the table by the ācārya's seat, put a block, fragrant water with a flower in it or water boiled with sandalwood, razor, tissue or washcloth.

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<sup>67</sup> These seats are for cases where more than four bhikṣu/ṇīs are present.

7. Two tablets with disciple's parents' names on them. If the parents are alive, the names are written on red paper for longevity; if they have passed away, on yellow paper for rebirth in the Western Pure Land. The two pieces of paper with names on them are stuck onto the tablets. If one parent has passed away, the tablet of the living parent is higher. The tablets are placed to the side at the back of the hall.
8. Before the ceremony, in another place the senior monastics shave the disciple's head, leaving five tufts of hair on their crown while everyone—lay and monastic alike—chants the homage to Śākyamuni Buddha (*na mo ben shi shi jia mou ni fo*). The disciple then bathes and puts on an underskirt, a shirt (no collar, no sleeves), and a long jacket.

# Appendix II: Checklist for Ordination Ceremony

## Ordination roles

1. Upādhyāyā/a: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Ācārya: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Chant leader: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Senior guide: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Guide: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Karman master: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Disciple: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Conveyor of consent: \_\_\_\_\_

## Musical roles

1. Bell: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gong: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Wooden fish: \_\_\_\_\_

## Other

1. Incense: \_\_\_\_\_

## List of materials

- *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya Pravrajyā and Śikṣamāṇā Ordination Rites*
- Musical scores as needed
- Certificate & pen
- 2 parents' tablets
- 2 wooden blocks (for preceptor and ācārya)
- Robes: (for preceptor's table in one stack from top to bottom)
  - chogu, shamdup, zen, donka, belt, bag for alms bowl
- Dingwas (for preceptor, ācārya, disciple, and assembly)
- 1 alms bowl (for preceptor's table)
- 3 kneeling-bowing cushions

- Disciple's bowing cushion
- 2 thin kneeling cushions (for disciple at preceptor's and ācārya's seats)
- Incense burner
- Sandalwood powder
- 1 stick of incense
- Matches
- 9 small sandalwood sticks
- Fragrant water (for ācārya only)
- 4 bells (for both guides, chant leader, and chanter)
- 1 large gong
- 1 large fish
- 1 conch (or signal)
- 2 side tables (for preceptor and ācārya)
- 3-4 music stands as needed
- Puja tables (for the rest of the assembly)
- Fully ordained assembly wears namjar
- 2 nice tea cups or thermoses of water (for preceptor and ācārya)
- 2 razors (for preceptor and ācārya)
- 2 pairs of scissors (for preceptor and ācārya)
- 1 small bowl for water for shaving tufts (for ācārya)
- 2 packets of tissue hair shavings (for preceptor and ācārya)
- 1 bath towel (for ācārya)
- 2 wash cloths (for preceptor and ācārya)
- 2 chairs for preceptor and ācārya (for the initial request by the disciple "offsite")
- Jacket for disciple for ceremony prior to putting on their robes

#### **Head shaving ceremony** (materials needed for one person)

- 2 electric hair clippers
- 2 extension cords for electric shavers
- 2-3 razors
- 1 large bath towel
- 2 wash cloths
- 2 hand towels
- 2 large bowls of water
- Shaving cream
- Bag for hair shavings

## Appendix III: Upādhyāyā/a's Discourse on the Four Aspects of the Precepts

This discourse is from a Śrāmaṇerī/a Ordination Rite that is often used at a Triple Platform Ordination. It is included here as it contains useful material for the disciple to study and contemplate.

**Upādhyāyā/a:** Actually, there is no difference in essence between being a householder and a monastic. Whether you are mindful or distracted, your true nature<sup>68</sup> does not change a bit. Seeing, hearing, knowing, and feeling, are nothing but the pure dharmakāya. Brightness, darkness, form, and space, are in the realm of complete harmony. Each of us is endowed with this [true nature], and everyone's is the same. Since there is no differentiation between purity and defilement, how can we have the idea of attaining one and abandoning the other? How can we seek liberation when there is no bondage to begin with?

Sadly, sentient beings are obstructed by ignorance, and their minds are confused and obscured. [As a result,] they mistakenly divide the wonderful body of One True Nature into non-sentient things and sentient beings, and falsely conceive the non-dual ground of awakening as the abode of self and others. On account of being entangled in clinging attachment, and indulging in anger and ignorance without restraint, they are submerged in worldly affairs, so that there is no end to cyclic existence. From ignorance, more ignorance grows, and they do not look within and reflect upon [their true nature]. From duḥkha, they enter into more duḥkha; they never have aversion [to cyclic existence] nor generate the determination to be free. Hence, all Buddhas appear in the world out of compassion to rescue all who are drowning [in cyclic existence]. Knowing that sentient beings' attachment mostly arises from the household life, they taught the path of renunciation to inspire people to go forth. Knowing that sentient beings' bondage arises from familial affection, they taught the path to liberation to inspire people to abandon attachment.

Thus the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Da Fang Guang Fo Hua Yan Jing*) says, "If people do not know the way of going-forth, happily indulging in cyclic existence and not seeking liberation, then bodhisattvas relinquish their wealth and country, going forth in order to show them how to attain tranquility and peace." The *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* (*Bao Ji Jing*) says, "No householders can attain unsurpassed full awakening."<sup>69</sup>

Why? Household life is a hub for attachment; monastic life is about

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<sup>68</sup> This refers to emptiness, the ultimate nature.

<sup>69</sup> Other Buddhist traditions say householders can attain awakening.

renunciation. Household life involves disputes; monastics practice equanimity. Household life is afflicted by worldly affairs; monastic life is tranquil and peaceful. Household life is pulled by negativity; monastic life is pulled by virtue. Household life is mired in the swamp of attachment and desire; monastic life extricates us from the swamp of attachment and desire. Due to this, we know that to seek the path of the sages we first have to go forth.

Therefore, our World-honored One, Śākyamuni [Buddha], manifested in India, spurred his white horse into the air and leapt over the city walls in the middle of the night. He reached a mountain and cut off his hair. [After attaining awakening], like thunder roaring, he ordained the first five disciples by saying, “Come, virtuous bhikṣu.” Soon after the rainfall of Dharma, the activities of the saṅgha flourished as far as the four seas. Until today, all of us are indebted [to the Buddha] for this precious gift.

Children of good families, you have created good causes in previous lives, and now you have come into contact with the wonderful opportunity to renounce, go forth, and adopt the appearance of a monastic. Nevertheless, if those who ascend the platform to receive ordination with a wholesome motivation do not know the inner meaning of the precepts, they only ascend the platform in name, and do not receive the precepts in reality. Their entire life is wasted; in fact, they are laypeople. That is why before the ordination I will instruct you in the four aspects of the śrāmaṇerī/a precepts—the content of the precepts, the precept-body, the practice of the precepts, and the characteristics of an offense. When you understand these clearly, then receiving and transmitting the precepts will be in accord with the Dharma; you will know how to practice the precepts and will not stray from what has been established in the Vinaya.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): With regard to the content of the precepts: when the Buddha instructed Śāriputra to ordain Rāhula,<sup>70</sup> what he established were the ten pure precepts and 24 topics regarding comportment. During the first 12 years [after his awakening], he taught the [essence of the] precepts in brief in [one] verse to the well-behaved bhikṣus. After 12 years, he extensively established the 250 [bhikṣu] precepts and the 348 bhikṣuṇī precepts. In addition, he established all rules of comportment that accompany the precepts for śrāmaṇerī/as. That is what you should read and study. Can you read and study this?

**All:** Yes, we can read and study this.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): With regard to [receiving] the precept-body: it arises due to contemplating the Three Jewels right at the moment of the transmission of the precepts. When taking refuge and paying respect to the

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<sup>70</sup> This was the first time a disciple of the Buddha ordained someone.



Three Jewels, expand your mind to think of all sentient beings and non-sentient living things; and based on this mental image, generate the aspiration to avoid all negativity, to cultivate all virtue, and to benefit all sentient beings. This is how you obtain the precept body. On the following morning when you come to receive the actual transmission of precepts, can you generate these aspirations based on this mental image?

**All:** Yes, we can generate these aspirations.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): With regard to the practice of the precepts: you all delight in leisure and fear hard work, dislike what is tedious and prefer what is simple. Now, since you are about to enter the first stage of the path, you should begin by learning the skills to serve your teacher and then to take on responsibilities in the sangha. From morning to night, whether you are moving or resting, all actions, including fine details, should be carried out in accordance with the precepts. This is the practice of the precepts. After you receive the ordination, can you practice the precepts with joyous effort like this?

**All:** Yes, we can practice the precepts.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): With regard to the characteristics of an offense: characteristics refer to perceivable behaviors. You all exist in conventional reality; your external body and inner qualities are no different from those of ordinary beings. Fortunately, you are now able to ascend the levels of precepts. Internally you are endowed with the virtues of compassion and peace, externally you wear the monastic robes.

Furthermore, you live in accord with the saṅgha, with a focus on all movements being graceful and dignified. All practice of the path to liberation is accomplished by keeping the precepts. Even if your negligent actions are small, they are still regarded as misdeeds. Therefore, these are the characteristics of an offense. After you receive the ordination, can you learn and practice excellent comportment?

**All:** Yes, we can learn and practice it.

**Upādhyāyā/a** (*hits block*): If you can listen with faith and contemplate, and after contemplating, accept and keep [the precepts], then respectfully observe the established precepts, and protect and cultivate your roots of virtue. First by looking up [to the Buddha], you can fulfill his purpose of inspiring sentient beings through keeping the precepts. Then by regarding [sentient beings], you will live up to the name [of śrāmaṇerī/a, which means] to cease defilements and help others with compassion. Hearing what I have said, can you comprehend and accept what I have said with utmost sincerity and do as directed?

**All:** Yes, we will do as directed.

## Appendix IV: Hindrances to Ordination

In order to receive ordination, a person must be free from certain obstacles. The following people have hindrances to ordination:

- Servants who are still obliged to their master.<sup>71</sup>
- Thieves—the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “If a thief dislikes their unwholesome career and asks for ordination, allow and bring them to a place where no one knows them and ordain them.”
- Those who are in debt. The *Samantapāsādikā* says, “If someone agrees to repay their debt, they can go forth.”<sup>72</sup>
- Officials who are in public service. The *Samantapāsādikā* says, “If they have fulfilled their duties and ended government pay, they can go forth. Or, if they request and are released from their jobs, they can go forth.”
- Those whose parents do not allow them to go forth. The *Samantapāsādikā* says, “If they can go to another region or country for ordination, they do not need to ask their parents for permission.”
- Those who have any of these five kinds of disease: leprosy, carbuncles, vitiligo, dry gangrene, or insanity. (cf. footnote 43)
- Those whose six sense faculties are not complete or who are disabled or deformed.<sup>73</sup>
- Those who have both male and female reproductive organs, eunuchs, and those whose reproductive organs are incomplete. These people are considered as being unsuitable vessels to uphold the Dharma and develop spiritually.
- Unethical persons who have committed any of the five heinous offences—patricide, matricide, killing an arhat, destroying the harmony of a saṅgha, or shedding the blood of a Buddha with a negative intention—or someone who has ruined the chaste conduct of a bhikṣu/ṇī who heretofore had kept their precepts flawlessly.
- Those who have committed an excluding offense. That is, a person has been given the five or eight lay precepts, and they commit any of the four serious offenses. This is called an excluding offense.

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<sup>71</sup>A servant is obligated to their master and cannot exercise their free will to go forth on their own. If they gain permission from their master or has become free, they are able to go forth. The same logic is applied to officials.

<sup>72</sup> That is, if they have repaid their debt or can repay it, they may ordain. A person may not ordain in order to avoid paying debts.

<sup>73</sup> This is because it would be difficult for them to fulfill the activities of a monastic such as reading and reciting scriptures, going on alms round, and doing manual work in the community.

- If a person from another religious path asks for ordination, according to Vinaya, they need to be observed for four months by living with the saṅgha members. If their intention is pure and sincere and their behavior complies with the hearts of the saṅgha members, they are allowed to go forth and receive the full ordination. After being fully ordained, if such a person returns to another religious path, they are said to be “wavering between the inner and outer paths.” If they come again to ask for the going-forth (in the Buddhadharma), they are not allowed to do so.
- Observe the candidate well for a period of time (at least a few months) to determine if they are mentally and emotionally stable before ordaining them. If they have a mental illness that is managed well by medication, you can consider ordaining them. If not, it helps neither the person nor the saṅgha to give them the going-forth.

The Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya says, “Tell those who want to go forth for the first time about the various hardships of monastic life: you must keep precepts strictly and cannot eat food after noon; you must meditate a lot and repose less, diligently study and practice the Dharma, and so forth. Ask [the candidate] if they can do so. If they say, ‘Yes,’ they can be ordained.” After permitting them to go forth, according to Sarvāstivāda Vinaya and *Māṭṛikā Śāstra*, first, give them the head-shaving and robes. Next give them the three refuges and five precepts. Then give them the going-forth, i.e. the ten śrāmaṇerī/a precepts.

# 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.

*Pravrajyā and Śikṣamāṇā Ordination Rites*

Source: Taishō Vol. 22, no. 1432-1434

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*Upādhyāyā/a's Discourse on the Four Aspects of the Precepts*

Source: Miao Fa Chan Temple Śrāmaṇerī/a Ordination Rite

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## Principal reference for the 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*.







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