

## Dual Saṅgha Ordination Rites

By Shuyu

### Editions Consulted

An annotated critical edition of the rite was prepared based on the following editions:

1. *Shinsan Dainihon Zokuzokyo (Wanzi Xinzuan Xuzangjing)*, volume 60, no. 1134. Digital input by the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA): <http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/ja/X60n1134>. (abbr. CBETA)
2. *Jiaxing Tripiṭaka Xuzang*, case 304, volume 8. (2008). Beijing: Publishing House of Minority Nationalities (*Minzu Chubanshe*). (abbr. Jiaxing)
3. *Dual Saṅgha Ordination Rite*. (2013). Nanjing: Jinling Buddhist Scriptures Publishing (*Jinling Kejing Chu*). (abbr. Jinling)

The CBETA and Jiaxing editions are the same. The Jinling edition is based on a 1980 publication by the Hong Kong Avatamsaka Buddhist Lotus Society (*Huayan Lian She*) that follows a privately published edition of the rite from Bhikṣuṇī Tongyuan's (1913-1991) collection. The Jinling edition corrects errors in the CBETA edition and has been edited for a modern context.

### Origin of the Dual Saṅgha Ordination Rites

Recounted by Shuyu,<sup>1</sup> a renunciate who transmits the Vinaya, Zhaoqing Monastery, old Hangzhou, Qing Dynasty.<sup>2</sup>

The Vinaya says that after a śikṣamāṇā has learned the precepts, she should request to receive the full precepts from the bhikṣu saṅgha. This is the fourth of the eight heavy dharmas (*gurudharma*) uttered from the precious mouth of the Tathāgata himself when he ordained Mahāprajāpatī and others fourteen years<sup>3</sup> after accomplishing the path to awakening. Therefore, after a śikṣamāṇā has learned the precepts, an assembly of twenty pure bhikṣus and bhikṣuṇīs should assemble to give the full ordination. If there is one person fewer, the karman is not valid, and the preceptors commit an offense. As the assembly does not fulfill the quorum, they are unable to inspire the śikṣamāṇā to generate the higher precepts.

All the regulations for the ordination rite have been compiled in the Vinaya Piṭaka. Vinaya Master Daoxuan<sup>4</sup> of the Nanshan Vinaya School removed duplications and extracted essentials to assemble a practice text entitled [*Removing Duplications and Supplementing the Missing*] *Important Karmans of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (Suiji jiemo)*, which is still used at present. Later, he wrote *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya (Xing shi chao)* to explain<sup>5</sup> this text. Over a

---

<sup>1</sup> Vinaya Master Yijie Shuyu, 1645-1721. Abbot of Zhaoqing Monastery who conferred the precepts twice a year and is said to have ordained over 10,000 monastics during his lifetime. (*Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia*)

<sup>2</sup> 1644-1912.

<sup>3</sup> The *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya Vibhāṣā (Sapoduo lun)* says, “The Buddha sent Ānanda to give Mahāprajāpatī the eight heavy dharmas to receive the precepts. Fourteen years later, he allowed ordination through a one-motion three-proclamations karman.” (CBETA, T23, no. 1440, p. 511a25-26) Shuyu's explanation of *The Essentials of the Śrāmanera Precepts and Rules of Comportment (Shami lüyi yaolüe shu yi)* offers the more commonly accepted reading that fourteen years after his awakening, the Buddha gave bhikṣuṇī ordination through the first group of nuns accepting the eight heavy dharmas, while subsequent bhikṣuṇīs were ordained by karman.

<sup>4</sup> 596-667. The first patriarch of the Nanshan Vinaya School.

<sup>5</sup> CBETA edition has “to know” (悉), corrected in the Jinling edition as “to explain” (釋).

thousand years have passed since the Tang Dynasty, and the publication of *Guidelines for Practicing Vinaya* has been lost. Only *Important Karmans* has been preserved, and it is very difficult to put into practice. My late teacher, the Elder Master Jianyue,<sup>6</sup> revived the practice of the proscriptive and prescriptive precepts and revised and explained this text, revealing its hidden meaning, augmenting rites, and standardizing its contents to provide order and clarity.

In the spring of the Ding Wei year (1667), Bhikṣuṇī Master Mizhao from Kunshan and Lady Xu came to Baohua Mountain to make offerings, followed by an assembly of śikṣamāṇās who came to request full ordination. They had practiced [the ordination rite] for half a month and become slightly familiar with the rules of comportment. Elder Master Jianyue appointed Bhikṣuṇī Mizhao as the upādhyāyā, Bhikṣuṇī Chaochen from Yangzhou as the karman ācārya, and Bhikṣuṇī Yuanzheng from Zhenzhou as the instruction ācārya, and selected virtuous elder bhikṣuṇīs as the seven witnesses. In total there were over forty nuns requesting the full ordination.

They left the territory for Yiye Nunnery<sup>7</sup> in the south where the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha assembled. First, they conferred the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone. That day,<sup>8</sup> the bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā made a signal to gather the assembly. After declaring to everyone the instructions laid down by the Tathāgata, she and the nine other teachers led the assembly of nuns to Baohua Mountain to request to receive the full precepts. The Elder Master then assembled the dual bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī saṅghas to carry out the karman to complete the full ordination.

This was the ceremony carried out by my late master for a dual saṅgha to confer the precepts on nuns. While I was not among the ordaining masters, I inevitably witnessed the ordination as a close attendant to my late master. Thereafter, teachers and students have not met with opportune conditions and the nuns have received the precepts only from the bhikṣu saṅgha, which is also due to their high regard for my late teacher's kindness in ordaining them. As the saying goes, the practice of giving the Dharma has to suit the circumstances, it cannot be forced. Hence, among the later generations of disciples who received ordination, few have witnessed this rite.

My Dharma nephew Vinaya Master Songyin,<sup>9</sup> emulating the noble disposition of the Venerable Master Shandao,<sup>10</sup> diligently practiced virtuous deeds. When causes and conditions were ripe, his path aligned with that of the populace. There was a bhikṣuṇī master named Juyuan who was a Dharma heir of Master Zhenhuan of Tanzhe Monastery. With adamant and firm resolve, she engaged in ascetic practices to shake off the afflictions over thirty years, which passed like a day. Her brother, the upāsaka Zhou Hanping, was just like the householder Sudatta (Anāthapiṇḍada) and had sincere faith in the Vinaya and strong conviction in the Dharma. Both of them practiced under the Master Canglin. They observed how Master Songyin constantly upheld the Vinaya and comportment rules wherever he went. Subsequently, they convened lay donors and supporters and invited him to Jigu Monastery to transmit the Triple Platform Ordination.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Vinaya Master Jianyue Duti, 1601-1679. Fifth abbot of Longchang Monastery on Baohua Mountain, Nanjing and the second patriarch of the Baohua Vinaya lineage.

<sup>7</sup> Built by Vinaya Master Jianyue in 1665 about three-quarters of a mile south of Longchang Monastery.

<sup>8</sup> CBETA edition has “the next day” (次日), corrected in the Jinling edition as “that day” (當日). Lapse 133 for bhikṣuṇīs: If a bhikṣuṇī gives someone the full precepts but waits until the next day to bring her to the bhikṣu saṅgha, she commits a lapse. According to Vinaya Master Lingzhi Yuanzhao, the nuns do not lose the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone but should relinquish and retake it before going to the bhikṣu saṅgha within the same day.

<sup>9</sup> Vinaya Master Zhenyi Songyin, dates unknown. Fourth patriarch of the Baohua Vinaya lineage.

<sup>10</sup> Venerable Master Shandao Zhongnan, 613-681. Third patriarch of the Chinese Pure Land School.

<sup>11</sup> Introduced by Vinaya Master Guxin Ruxin in the Ming Dynasty, the Triple Platform Ordination involves three consecutive stages or “platforms” of giving the śrāmaṇerī/a, bhikṣu/ṇī, and bodhisattva precepts in succession within a short time.

The ordination platform was wonderful and everything was magnificent. The four assemblies gathered like clouds and praised it for being exceptional. After Master Songyin had conferred the bhikṣu precepts, he assigned Bhikṣuṇī Juyuan to be the upādhyāyā and appointed nine other bhikṣuṇī teachers. Thus, a dual saṅgha was formed to give the bhikṣuṇī ordination. Indeed, Master Songyin is a Dharma heir of my fellow monastic Master Ding'an,<sup>12</sup> managing affairs and assisting him for many years. Although he had never seen his own teacher perform an ordination, the procedures he carried out were surprisingly in line with the conventions established by my late teacher. What can this be but a sign that he will inherit the abbot's seat at Baohua Mountain?

In the winter of the Ren Wu year (1702), Master Juyuan and the upāsaka Zhou Hanping traveled south to pay homage to Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. They first came to Zhaoqing Monastery to admire and pay respect to the ordination platform of the ancient Buddhas.<sup>13</sup> They extended their warm and sincere greetings and explained the matters recounted above. They had deep admiration for my late teacher's practice of the karmans and monastic regulations, and regretted that they had not witnessed this themselves. They requested me to describe the dual saṅgha ordination ceremony as a record for the future, for they wished to provide the monastics who were going to receive full ordination the opportunity to collectively witness the extent of the rigor of the Vinaya established by the Tathāgata. I could not turn down their earnest, sincere, and repeated requests. Therefore, I have recorded the ritual that I saw in the past into a volume to offer for perusal. The affairs of the rites and Dharma instructions within are all based on *A Proper Model for the Transmission of the Triple Platform Ordination* (Santan Chuanjie Zhengfan) and *Further Explanation of Karmans in the Vinaya* (Pini Zuochi Xushi) [by Vinaya Master Jianyue]. As the poet Su Dongpo said, "I do not know whether the blossoms will fall or not."

Time: The auspicious 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the Gui Wei year, the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1703).

### **General Regulations for the Dual Saṅgha Ordination Rite (12 items)**

1. The Buddha laid down the rule that wherever monastics reside, they must first establish a territory. If they do not establish a territory, all karmans and other saṅgha matters are unable to be accomplished or to be of benefit, and the saṅgha assembly incurs an offense. The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya also says, "It is right to allow bhikṣuṇīs and bhikṣus to establish their own territories to guard against being separated from the assembly."
2. The ten teachers from each of the two saṅghas must be bhikṣus and bhikṣuṇīs who are knowledgeable about the Vinaya and are excellent, dignified, and behave in accord with the Dharma; it is not a matter of merely fulfilling a headcount. The master presiding over the ordination should first assess their suitability.
3. The dual saṅghas each have their respective responsibilities; these should not be mixed up. The ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone solely involves bhikṣuṇī teachers.<sup>14</sup> The bhikṣus manage the procedures only when the disciples go to the bhikṣu saṅgha.

<sup>12</sup> Vinaya Master Ding'an Deji, 1634-1700. Third patriarch of the Baohua Vinaya lineage.

<sup>13</sup> In 978, an ordination platform was built at Zhaoqing Monastery where ordinations were given annually.

<sup>14</sup> CBETA edition has "to be in charge" (司), corrected in the Jinling edition as "teachers" (師).

4. The important part of the dual saṅgha ordination takes place in the bhikṣu saṅgha. When the bhikṣuṇīs confer the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, they should follow entirely the ceremony done in the bhikṣu saṅgha. They must not follow any worldly practices that go against what the Buddha established.
5. The nuns must receive the full ordination from a dual saṅgha for their ordination to be considered in accord with the Dharma. They first go to their own saṅgha to be examined and confess and repent. They should be pure in their practice of the ten śrāmaṇerī precepts or the six śikṣamāṇā trainings that they have received, and generate the mind that wishes to progress in their practice. Next they receive the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, then they go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to request the full precepts and become members of the Three Jewels. At present, although many receive the precepts in an expedient manner, they must still know the strict requirements of the Vinaya.
6. As the Vinaya states clearly, there is no such thing as a disciple receiving the full ordination without receiving the ten śrāmaṇerī precepts first. Therefore this text uses the term “śrāmaṇerīs”<sup>15</sup> to ensure that there is no confusion about the status of the disciples.
7. In the original procedure to confer precepts on a single disciple, the term “and others” was not used. With three disciples in each platform, it is difficult to list individual names. Therefore the term “and others” has been added to include the other two disciples.
8. When the bhikṣuṇīs confer the bhikṣuṇī precepts, they go to a screened place to ask the disciples about the obstacles and hindrances. When the bhikṣus give the bhikṣuṇī precepts, they are not allowed to go to a screened place to ask the disciples about the obstacles and hindrances. They can only ask about these before the ten teachers at the ordination platform.
9. The karman for ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone is only carried out as a preliminary. It is not the time to explain the precepts, therefore the characteristics of the precepts are not spelled out. There are two reasons for this: one, the disciples have not officially received the full precepts. Second, they have not received ordination from a full quorum of twenty teachers from the two saṅghas.
10. When the disciples receive the precepts from the bhikṣu saṅgha, they are called “nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone” so as not to diminish their status. They are not called “śrāmaṇerīs” as they have already received the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone. They are not called “bhikṣuṇīs” as they have not yet received the full precepts.
11. The Vinaya regulations were established by the Tathāgata, and the spoken directions [by the guides] are rules that bring the disciples together. These have been written in large font starting from the top of the page. The descriptions of the rites are in a smaller font starting one space lower for ease of perusal.

---

<sup>15</sup> This translation follows the Jinling edition that uses “śikṣamāṇās” instead of “śrāmaṇerīs” throughout the rite.

12. The Vinaya makes the exception that the dual saṅgha can be reduced in half when giving full ordination in a marginal area, as it is difficult to gather a saṅgha assembly. The rite and procedure for giving the precepts is no different from what is here.

### **Dual Saṅgha Ordination Rites Fascicle One**

Recorded by Shuyu, a renunciate who transmits the Vinaya, Zhaoqing Monastery, Old Hangzhou Qing Dynasty.

There are altogether 18 procedures for the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone.

#### **1. Purify the Platform and Set Up Seats**

When śikṣamāṇās or śrāmaṇerīs who have fulfilled the [two] years of training in the precepts wish to receive the full ordination, they first go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to declare this to the upādhyāya. After the upādhyāya gives permission, he first assigns ten teachers from the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha. These ten teachers from the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha first go to pay respect to the upādhyāya, then they lead the nuns requesting the precepts to bow three times sincerely. Then they leave the territory to carry out the karman.

When they arrive in their own saṅgha, they must carry out the rites in accord with the Dharma and be skilled and familiar with their order. The bhikṣuṇī chant leader assigns people to sweep and clean the ordination platform. If there is no ordination platform, one must be set up. On the platform, set up the main seat in the center. Place a small table to the right of the main seat. Set up a second seat in the middle. For the other eight seats, place four on the left and four on the right facing each other.

On the day of the full ordination, hang streaming banners, precious parasols, and jewels. Below the platform, set up an incense burner table in the middle. Light candles and offer flowers. In a screened place, set up a small seat for questioning the disciples about obstacles and hindrances. Then carry out the procedures of requesting the precepts and confession and repentance. After they have restored their purity and are stainless, await the time to ascend the ordination platform.<sup>16</sup>

#### **2. Make a Signal to Gather the Assembly**

*The assigned people enter the Dharma Hall first to arrange the ten teachers' seats. Place the first seat in the center. For the other nine seats, place five on the left and four on the right, spread out like the Chinese character for "eight." (八)*

*Each of the nuns requesting precepts puts on the five and seven-strip robes, slings their alms bowl [in a bag], holds their sitting cloth, and bears the nine-strip robe in hand. The assigned person gives the instruction to ring the large bell three times. When the nuns requesting precepts hear the signal, they process in single file to assemble in the Dharma Hall and stand in rows on the left and right sides facing the central aisle. A bhikṣuṇī guide first leads two disciples to the Dharma Instrument Hall to bow to the Buddha once and stand.*

**Bhikṣuṇī guide:** The disciples invite the bhikṣuṇī guides.

---

<sup>16</sup> This refers to engaging in the formal procedure of receiving the bhikṣuṇī precepts. The Triple Platform Ordination ceremony was traditionally given on a platform with two levels, such that ordination disciples literally ascended the ordination platform to receive the precepts.

*The disciples bow once and make a half-bow, then return to their places in the Dharma Hall. The other bhikṣuṇī guides follow them into the Dharma Hall. One bhikṣuṇī guide collects the nine-strip robes from the disciples and places them on a table.*

**Bhikṣuṇī guide:** Everyone face the Buddha.

**Bhikṣuṇī guide on the right (Right):** Bow to the great assembly three times.

**Bhikṣuṇī guide on the left (Left):** Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Left:** Pick up the sitting cloth.

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Face the central aisle.

*Together with the disciples, two guides make a half-bow to the Buddha and lead four disciples to invite seven teachers to the Dharma Hall. After the disciples return to their places:*

**Left:** Everyone face the Buddha.

**Right:** Bow to the teachers three times.

**Left:** Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Foremost of the seven teachers:** One bow.

**Left:** Pick up the sitting cloth.

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Face the central aisle.

*Two guides step out of the assembly again. Together with four disciples, they make a half-bow to the Buddha and each lead two disciples each to two rooms. First they should go to the karman ācārya, spread the sitting cloth and bow, and invite the karman ācārya. Speak as follows:*

**Guides:** Bow to the karman ācārya three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl.

**Karman ācārya:** One bow.

**Guides:** Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*Invite the instruction ācārya in the same manner. Having done so, the disciples walk first and the instruction ācārya follows behind.*

*The guides coordinate with each other such that the two teachers arrive at the Dharma Hall at the same time. The disciples return to their places. The guides return to their places. The nine teachers bow once to the Buddha, then stand in order on the left and right sides.*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha.

**Right:** Bow to the two teachers three times.

**Left:** Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Karman ācārya:** One bow.

**Left:** Pick up the sitting cloth.

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Face the central aisle.

*Two guides ring the hand-bell to gather six or four disciples. They make a half-bow to the Buddha together, then go to the abbess' room to invite the upādhyāyā. The two guides lead the entourage. The nine teachers stand facing each other.*

*The guides ring the hand-bell and lead the disciples to enter the abbess' room through the left and right side doors. They stand facing each other in front of the abbess' seat. The leaders of the entourage remain outside the doors. The guides inform the attendant to invite the upādhyāyā.*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha.

**Right:** At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times.

**Left:** Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Upādhyāyā:** One bow.

**Left:** Pick up the sitting cloth.

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Face the central aisle.

**Right:** The last in line goes first. (*The guides lead the disciples to exit.*)

*The two guides walk in front of the upādhyāyā. The attendant follows behind the upādhyāyā. They arrive at the Dharma Hall and the disciples return to their places. The guides return to the assembly. The upādhyāyā takes her seat. The nine teachers face the Buddha, spread the sitting cloth, and bow three times.*

**Upādhyāyā:** No need to spread the sitting cloth. One bow. (*nine teachers bow*) Take your seats in proper order. (*nine teachers sit*)

**Bhikṣuṇī guide:** Śikṣamāṇās, face the Buddha.

**Right:** Half-bow. Spread the full sitting cloth.

(*If there are many disciples, the upādhyāyā says, "No need to spread the sitting cloth."*)

**Left:** At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times.

**Right:** Lift your robe.

**Left:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Kneel.

**Right:** Palms joined. (*For these three bows, the nine teachers do not need to join their palms.*)

**Left:** When a clear mirror is mounted on its stand, it reflects whatever form it meets. When a large bell is mounted on its frame, it rings whenever it is struck. To completely receive the three sets of pure precepts,<sup>17</sup> you must rely upon the three main teachers. To identify the seven cases of invalid

---

<sup>17</sup> The three sets of pure precepts are (1) the precepts and comportment rules in the Vinaya that restrain nonvirtuous conduct, (2) the practice of all types of virtuous deeds, and (3) practices to work for the welfare of all beings.

karmans,<sup>18</sup> you must rely upon the seven witnesses. Now, in this great assembly, we have respectfully invited the ten teachers from the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha on your behalf, so that you may ascend the platform and receive full ordination. Śikṣamāṇās, raise your heads and look at your teachers. You should know and remember the faces and names of your upādhyāyā and all these teachers before you. Do not forget them. The first is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. She is your bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā for the full ordination.

**Right:** The second is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. She is your bhikṣuṇī karman ācārya.

**Left:** The third is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. She is your bhikṣuṇī instruction ācārya.

**Right:** The fourth is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. She is your bhikṣuṇī witness ācārya.

*In this sequence till the tenth teacher, the guides on the left and right announce their names and introduce them so that those requesting full ordination are able to clearly recognize and remember them.*

**Left:** Everyone stand.

**Right:** At the sound of the bell, bow three times.

**Left:** Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Left:** Kneel.

**Right:** Palms joined.

### 3. Request the Teachers

The Vinaya says that without instruction from a teacher, a disciple will commit deeds that are against the Dharma. The Buddha said it is necessary to have an upādhyāyā. Disciples should regard the upādhyāyā like their parent and respect and care for her. The upādhyāyā should regard disciples like her children and nurture, educate, instruct, and advise them. The *Samantapāsādikā* says, as disciples did not request their teachers initially, they later went against their instructions. Therefore, the Buddha established that the disciples should request the teachers.

**Left:** Śikṣamāṇās, now on your behalf I will request Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ Hall to be your bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā for the full ordination. You are supposed to make the request yourself. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you. State your Dharma name. (*after they state their names*) Repeat after me:

Virtuous one, please listen wholeheartedly. I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others now request the virtuous one to be our upādhyāyā for the full ordination. May the virtuous one be our upādhyāyā for the full ordination. By relying on the virtuous one, we will receive the full ordination. Please accept our request with (great) compassion. (*In this way, make the sincere request three times. Bow three times.*)

**Upādhyāyā:** Śikṣamāṇās, since you have earnestly requested three times, I will agree to be your

---

<sup>18</sup> These are cases where a karman does not meet requirements for validity in terms of (1) people, (2) transaction, (3) matter, (4) people and transaction, (5) people and matter, (6) transaction and matter, and (7) people, transaction, and matter.



upādhyāyā for the full ordination. After you receive the precepts, each of you must observe them purely. Do not transgress them.

**Disciples:** We shall observe them with utmost respect.

**Guide:** Everyone stand.

**Right:** At the sound of the bell, bow three times.

**Left:** Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Left:** Half-bow.

**Right:** Kneel.

**Left:** Palms joined.

**Right:** Śikṣamāṇās, now on your behalf I will request all the teachers present to be the karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. You are supposed to make the request yourself. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you. State your Dharma name. (*after they state their names*) Repeat after me:

Virtuous ones, please listen wholeheartedly. I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others now request the virtuous ones to be our karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. May the virtuous ones be our karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. By relying on the virtuous ones, we will receive the full ordination. Please accept our request with (great) compassion. (*Make three requests and three bows. On the third request, say “great compassion.” Do the same above.*)

**Karman ācārya:** Śikṣamāṇās, since you have earnestly requested, all the teachers present and I will be your karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. After you have received the precepts, each of you must be pure in your conduct, do not let yourself be uncontrolled.

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

**Guide:** Everyone stand.

**Right:** At the sound of the bell, bow three times.

**Left:** Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*)

**Left:** Pick up the sitting cloth.

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Face the central aisle.

*The bhikṣuṇī guides return the nine-strip robe to each disciple in order and have them hold the robe themselves. The ten teachers rise and the upādhyāyā chants:*

Homage to our fundamental teacher Śākyamuni Buddha.

*When the chanting begins, sound the Dharma drum loudly. The entire assembly recites in unison. Two guides ring hand-bells alternately and lead the front of the procession. After the resident bhikṣuṇīs have processed, another two guides ring hand-bells alternately and lead the disciples to follow in order. One person bears incense and walks in front of the tenth teacher. Another person bears incense and walks in front of the three main teachers. Another two guides ring hand-bells alternately. Another person bears incense and walks in front of the upādhyāyā. The attendant follows behind.*

*The great assembly and the disciples arrive at the platform and stand in rows on the left and right facing the central aisle. The three incense bearers stand sideways on the left side of the terrace. The guides take their places. The nine teachers go before the incense burner table and divide into two lines in order.<sup>19</sup> When the upādhyāyā arrives, she faces the Buddha in the middle of the assembly. Stop the Dharma drum and chanting.*

#### **4. Prayers for Longevity**

According to the ancient ordination rites, at the start of ascending the ordination platform, there is a section of prayers for longevity. For the saṅgha to propagate the Buddhadharma, they must rely on external support. Therefore at the Vulture's Peak assembly, the World-honored One advised and urged this. If we go against the Buddha's words and fail to repay the nation's kindness, it may be difficult for the teachings to flourish. At present we still follow the ancient ordination rites.

*The chant leader leads the "Praise for the Incense of Longevity" and the assembly joins in together:*

The best incense is burning in the precious censer; its perfume pervades the ten directions.

With sincerity we offer it to the Buddhas, monarchs of the Dharma.

May the people have happiness and long life,<sup>20</sup> like the enduring earth and endless sky.

May the people have happiness and long life, like the enduring earth and endless sky.

Homage to the Perfumed-Cloud-Canopy Bodhisattva Mahāsattva. (3x)

*The upādhyāyā sincerely offers incense, bows three times, and silently prays for the people's longevity.*

#### **5. Praise and Pay Respect to the Three Jewels**

*At the start of performing the karmans, first bow to pay respect to the Three Jewels in order to request their support. When reciting the homage to the bodhisattvas for the second time, the nine teachers turn and form a single row behind the first teacher. They spread the full sitting cloth and praise and bow to the Three Jewels. The upādhyāyā leads the chant, then the nine teachers join in together:*

We bow down to all Buddhas, the Dharma, and the virtuous Ārya Saṅgha. *(The ten teachers bow once and the assembly repeats the same line in unison.)*

By spreading the Vinaya today, we sustain the saṅgha's lifeblood. *(as above)*

May the true Dharma remain for a long time. May the fruits of the three vehicles never cease. *(The assembly repeats the line in unison. The teachers bow once and pick up the sitting cloth.)*

We are about to ascend the pure platform. Please bear witness to what we say. *(The ten teachers hold the sitting cloth and make a half-bow.)*

#### **6. Ascending the Platform and Announcement to the Assembly**

<sup>19</sup> The teachers stand in this order: 9, 7, 5, 3, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10.

<sup>20</sup> CBETA edition has "may the emperor have great longevity" (皇王祝聖壽). This follows the Jinling edition that is updated for modern times (民眾祝福壽).

*After the ten teachers have praised and bowed three times, the chant leader begins to chant the Great Compassion Mantra. The assembly chants in unison. First, the tenth teacher turns around and circumambulates the platform from the southeast going to the west, followed by the ninth, eighth, and up to the upādhyāyā in procession. Circumambulate three and a half times. After the second recitation of the mantra, the teachers take off their shoes, ascend the middle step and circumambulate one and a half times. They ascend the platform from the southeast corner.*

*The tenth teacher stands at the end of the row on the left, facing where the first teacher will enter from. The ninth teacher stands on the right side and the eighth teacher on the left side, facing where the upādhyāyā will enter. The seventh teacher stands on the right side, the sixth teacher on the left side, and the rest in the same way, until the upādhyāyā ascends the platform and stands facing the south.*

*After the third recitation of the mantra, hit a stop on the bell and wooden fish. The nine teachers face the Buddha, five standing in front and four behind. The upādhyāyā leads the chant, then the nine teachers join in together:*

Observing the precepts perfectly just like a full moon (*The nine teachers bow once to the upādhyāyā*<sup>21</sup> and the assembly repeats the same line in unison, similar to the chant above.)

Both body and speech are crystal clear without any defect (*as above*)

Only when the saṅgha is in harmony (*The nine teachers bow and pick up the sitting cloth.*)

Is it allowed to give ordination (*The nine teachers hold the sitting cloth and make a half-bow.*)

*After the ten teachers have bowed three times in harmony and finished the chant, hit a stop on the bell and wooden fish. The ten teachers take their respective seats.*

**Upādhyāyā** (*hits block*): It is hard to go forth; it is even harder to receive precepts. Without striving with sincerity and perseverance, how can we reach the second place<sup>22</sup> in the saṅgha? Since we have cut ties with worldly circumstances, we must have a firm resolve and be vigilant [in our practice] from start to finish, only then can we become liberated. When Gotami first requested to go forth, the Buddha did not allow her to do so. Only after she strove with perseverance and a firm, unwavering resolve, did the Buddha give his kind consent. By observing and practicing the eight heavy dharma, the true Dharma will exist for a long time. Through strict discipline in the four states—walking, standing, sitting, and lying down—the saṅgha order will flourish and be revered.

When we ascend the platform to preside over the full ordination, verifying that the disciples have robes and an alms bowl is foremost. When examining the disciples about obstacles and hindrances, ensure that they answer truthfully. Today, we will first confer the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone as the foundation for entering the spiritual path. Then, we will respectfully go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to obtain the root of liberation. I sincerely ask all the virtuous ones who are about to approach the ordination platform to generate the same motivation to perform the karmans together and not allow your minds to wander to other objects. (*hits block*)

---

<sup>21</sup> According to the Vinaya, four or more monastics constitute a saṅgha and should not bow to an individual monastic. The rite follows the Rules of Purity (*qinggui*) adopted by the Chan tradition here.

<sup>22</sup> Among the seven groups of Buddhists, bhikṣuṇīs come after bhikṣus who are seen as the head of the saṅgha community.

**Guide:** Śikṣamāṇās, line up in order. *(The head śikṣamāṇās on the right and left lead the other śikṣamāṇās in order of seniority in single file to the front of the platform. They stand in order and face the central aisle.)*

**Guide:** Offer incense.

*Three incense-bearers raise incense to their brows in unison. They turn and stand facing the Buddha and raise the incense again. They advance with good comportment. The first enters through the central door and the other two through the side doors. They go before the incense burner table and raise the incense again. They lift their robes with the right hand and kneel. Two guides stand behind the incense burner table. The first incense bearer places incense into the burner herself. The other two act as if they are placing incense into the burner, and the two guides receive incense from them and place it into the burner.*

**Guide:** Stand.

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Return to your places.

**The instruction ācārya on the platform says:** Virtuous guides, please temporarily hold the robes for the śikṣamāṇās so it is easier for them to bow. *(The guides step out of the assembly and collect the robes.)*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha.

**Right:** Half-bow. Spread the full sitting cloth.

**Upādhyāyā:** No need to spread the sitting cloth.

**Left:** At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times.

**Right:** Lift your robe.

**Left:** Protect your bowl. *(disciples bow)*

**Right:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Kneel.

**Right:** Palms joined.

## 7. Request Compassion and Further Protection

**Upādhyāyā** *(hits block):* Śikṣamāṇās, now the saṅgha is assembled and you will ascend the ordination platform. You will receive the full ordination in accord with the Vinaya. We should first request the Three Jewels to guide and support us with the light of compassion. Then, request myriad spirits and powerful gods to safeguard this place. Say your Dharma name. *(after they state their names)* Visualize attentively and follow me to make these requests.

**Guide:** Śikṣamāṇās, stand up together.

*The ten teachers rise from their seats. The head of the ordination platform [the upādhyāyā] raises the incense plate to her brow and begins chanting. The nine teachers follow in unison. An attendant stands with palms joined facing the karman ācārya. An attendant stands in front of the platform on the second step. Two guides stand behind the incense burner table with palms joined to make*

*the requests.*

**Upādhyāyā:**

With incense and flowers<sup>23</sup> we welcome you.

With incense and flowers we request you.

I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request you wholeheartedly:

supreme teacher of the Sahā world, fundamental teacher Śākyamuni Buddha;

guide to the Western Pure Land, Amitābha Buddha;

next Buddha to come, Maitreya Buddha;

all the Buddhas who pervade the limits of space and the sphere of reality,

may you never break your fundamental resolve,

and illuminate us with the light of your compassion.

Please bear witness to our ordination.

*The upādhyāyā picks up a piece of incense and passes it to the attendant, who passes it to the attendant on the second step. The attendant passes the incense to the guide, who places it in the burner. The śikṣamāṇās seeking full ordination follow the upādhyāyā to make the request, then bow and stand. They should know that subject [the mind making the request] and object [the Buddhas and bodhisattvas] are empty and quiescent. When sentient beings' sincere requests connect with the compassion of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, they receive support.*

**Upādhyāyā:**

With incense and flowers we welcome you.

With incense and flowers we request you.

I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request you wholeheartedly:

the teachings of the Fundamental and Great Vehicles;

the Vinaya Piṭaka, the five categories<sup>24</sup> and three sets of precepts, the *prātimokṣa*;<sup>25</sup>

the twelve divisions of scripture,<sup>26</sup> the collection of provisional and definitive teachings;

the profound Dharma Jewel that brings true purity and liberation from desire,

we sincerely and wholeheartedly entrust our lives to you and bow down.

*The rite is as before.*

**Upādhyāyā:**

With incense and flowers we welcome you.

With incense and flowers we request you.

I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request you wholeheartedly:

Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra,

the pure, vast ocean assembly of all great bodhisattvas;

Venerable Upāli who presided over the compilation of the Vinaya Piṭaka;

---

<sup>23</sup> CBETA edition has “smoke” (煙) corrected in the Jinling edition to “flowers.” (花)

<sup>24</sup> The five categories of offenses are defeats, remainders, lapses expiable by confession, confessable offenses, and wrongdoings. The seven groups add infractions and wrong speech to the above list.

<sup>25</sup> The precepts for fully ordained monks and nuns.

<sup>26</sup> Discourses, aphorisms in mixed prose and verse, prophecies, verses, meaningful expressions, framing stories, expanded teachings, tales of past lives, marvelous events, narratives, fables, and instructions. (*The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*)

generations of past patriarchs in India and China;  
great Vinaya Masters of the Nanshan School;  
reviver of the Vinaya, Venerable Master Huiyun Ruxin;<sup>27</sup>  
propagator of the precepts, Venerable Master Sanmei Jiguang;<sup>28</sup>  
reviver of the prohibitive and prescriptive practices, Venerable Master Jianyue Duti;  
(subsequently add the names of the ordination masters of the preceptors on the platform),  
may you never break your fundamental resolve,  
and illuminate us with the light of your compassion.  
Please bear witness to our ordination.  
*The rite is as before.*

### **Upādhyāyā:**

With incense and flowers we welcome you.

With incense and flowers we request you.

I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request you wholeheartedly:

the Golden Light assembly of devas<sup>29</sup> that are bodhisattvas' manifestations;

Brahmā, Śakra, and the four guardian kings;

devas, nāgas, and the rest of the eight groups of beings;<sup>30</sup>

Protector Saṅghārāma<sup>31</sup> and celestial kings who protect the ordination platform;

powerful Vajrapāṇibalin<sup>32</sup> and various deities,

may you never break your fundamental resolve

to guard the platform and protect the ordination.

*Having completed the requests in this way, the ten teachers return to their seats and sit in the vajra position. The attendants descend from the platform. The guides return to their places. After the disciples have bowed.*

**Guide:** Half-bow.

**Right:** Kneel. (*lift the robe with both hands to avoid kneeling on it on the sitting cloth*) Palms joined.

## **8. Station the Disciples in a Waiting Area**

The Buddha said that those receiving ordination should not be in the sky, hidden from sight, away from the place where they can see but cannot hear, or outside the territory [during the formal

---

<sup>27</sup> Vinaya Master Guxin Ruxin (1541-1615) revived the Vinaya School in the late Ming dynasty following its decline after the 12<sup>th</sup> century. He was given the title of Vinaya Master Huiyun (Clouds of Wisdom) as it is said that five-colored clouds arose when he was recognized by the Wanli Emperor and gave the bodhisattva precepts at Wutai Mountain in 1613. (*Chinese Encyclopedia of Buddhism*)

<sup>28</sup> Vinaya Master Sanmei Jiguang (1604-1654) was a chief disciple of Vinaya Master Huiyun Ruxin who founded the Baohua Vinaya lineage.

<sup>29</sup> In the *Golden Light Sūtra*, various devas (celestial beings) promised to protect the Buddhadharma. It is said that they were bodhisattvas manifesting in the form of devas.

<sup>30</sup> These are devas, nāgas, demons (*yakṣas*), demigods (*asuras*), divine musicians (*gandharvas*), mythical birds (*garuḍas*), half-horse half-humans (*kiṃnaras*), great snakes (*mahorāgas*).

<sup>31</sup> In Chinese Buddhism, Saṅghārāma Bodhisattva refers to the general Guan Yu (160-220), deified and revered as a heavenly Dharma protector. The term “Saṅghārāma” can also refer to a group of devas who guard the Dharma and Buddhist monasteries.

<sup>32</sup> Warrior who guards the celestial realm who is also a follower of the Buddha.

ordination karman]. The same applies to the upādhyāyā and others in the quorum, namely the nine teachers on the platform. Move the disciples to a place where they can see but cannot hear.

**Upādhyāyā** (*hits block*): We have finished requesting the Three Jewels together. Virtuous guides, please station the śikṣamāṇās in a place where they stand and can see but not hear us.

**Guide**: Bow once and pick up the sitting cloth.

**Right**: Half-bow.

**Left**: Face the central aisle.

*The guides distribute the nine-strip robes to the disciples and have them hold it themselves. Two guides stand [in the central aisle], each facing the assembly of śikṣamāṇās [on either side].*

**Guide**: Śikṣamāṇās, follow me and chant the homage to the Buddha together as you leave the platform: Homage to our fundamental teacher Śākyamuni Buddha.

*The two guides in front ring hand-bells alternately and chant the homage to the Buddha. They leave the platform and go to a screened place. Stop chanting the homage to the Buddha. The guides return to the platform to assemble with the saṅgha in harmony.<sup>33</sup> If there is a subsidiary territory for performing the karman, the saṅgha required to assemble only includes the ten teachers on the platform. Others should all leave the [subsidiary territory].*

## 9. Assembling the Saṅgha Within the Territory

**Head of the platform**:<sup>34</sup> Is the saṅgha assembled?

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher**: It is assembled.

**Head of the platform**: Is it in harmony?

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher**: It is in harmony.

**Head of the platform**: Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher**: They have left.

**Head of the platform**: Are there any absent bhikṣuṇīs who cannot participate and have given their consent?

**Conveyor of consent**: Yes. (*Steps out of the assembly, bows to the Buddha once and makes a half-bow. Kneels with palms joined.*) Virtuous saṅgha, please listen attentively. I Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_ have received consent from Bhikṣuṇī \_\_\_\_\_. She gives her consent for the karmans and saṅgha matters in accord with the Dharma.

**Head of the platform**: Good.

**Conveyor of consent**: Yes. (*Bows once and stands. Half-bow and returns to her place. If the karman takes place in a subsidiary territory or small territory, there is no need to ask if anyone has given consent.*)

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

<sup>33</sup> All the bhikṣuṇīs in the territory must gather for the karman unless there is a subsidiary territory.

<sup>34</sup> This could be the upādhyāyā or karman ācārya.

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher:** To perform the karmans to confer the full ordination.<sup>35</sup>

**Upādhyāyā:** Please step forward to assign the instruction ācārya. (*The karman ācārya steps out from her place and bows to the Buddha once. She returns to her seat and speaks with palms joined.*)

## 10. Assigning the Instruction Ācārya

**Karman ācārya:** Virtuous ones, please listen attentively. Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request the full ordination from Upādhyāyā \_\_\_\_\_. If the saṅgha is ready,<sup>36</sup> may the saṅgha agree to assign \_\_\_\_\_ to be the instruction ācārya. This is the motion. [Is this motion acceptable?

**Seven witnesses** (*palms joined, in unison*): Yes.]<sup>37</sup>

## 11. Instruction Ācārya Leaves the Assembly to Examine the Disciples

*The instruction ācārya steps out of the assembly and bows to the Buddha once. She descends from the right side, turns left, goes to the incense burner table and makes a half-bow. She leaves from the door on the right and goes to the screened place. A guide first leads the ordination disciples to stand before the incense burner table in the screened place. The third person stands on the left, the second on the right, and the first person to the right of the third person. Another guide places their nine-strip robes on a table, takes their ordination group slip<sup>38</sup> and places it in front of the instructor. The instruction ācārya arrives at her seat.*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. (*The first of the group is in the middle. The other two turn to face the Buddha together.*)

**Guide:** Bow to the instruction ācārya three times.

**Left:**<sup>39</sup> Lift your robe.

**Right:** Protect your bowl.

**Instruction ācārya:** One bow.

**Guide:** Half-bow.

**Left:** Kneel.

**Right:** Palms joined.

<sup>35</sup> These are the (1) one-motion karman to assign the instruction ācārya, (2) one-motion karman to call in the disciples, (3) one-motion karman to ask for permission from the saṅgha to examine the disciples, (4) one-motion three-proclamations karman to confer the ordination. According to Vinaya Master Daoxuan, to facilitate the full ordination procedure, the preliminaries can be done once for the four karmans collectively, and will remain valid until nighttime even if there is a break in between the karmans. Subsequently, only the ten teachers are allowed to be present in the subsidiary territory for the karmans. If the ordaining saṅgha wishes, they may perform the preliminaries again after the instruction ācārya returns or they return after taking a break.

<sup>36</sup> The Chinese literally says, “If the saṅgha and time have arrived.” Vinaya Master Daoxuan explains that this refers to how the saṅgha within the territory has gathered in one place in harmony and it is the designated time to carry out the karman.

<sup>37</sup> According to the Vinaya, a one-motion karman is stated without any need to whether it is acceptable. The question and reply in the original text marked in brackets is extraneous.

<sup>38</sup> A piece of paper with the names of the three disciples belonging to the same ordination group listed in order.

<sup>39</sup> CBETA edition does not have “left” and “right” designated for the guides here. These have been added based on the Jinling edition.



**Instruction ācārya** (*hits block*): Śikṣamāṇās, the teachers on the ordination platform have performed a procedure to assign me to question you about obstacles and hindrances. Do not be afraid. In an instant, we will help the three of you to ascend the precious platform, receive the full ordination, and become full-fledged bhikṣuṇīs, becoming members of the Three Jewels. This is not a small matter. You should rejoice. This is the *antarvāsas* (five-strip robe), this is the *uttarāsaṃga* (seven-strip robe), this is the *saṃghāṭī* (nine-strip robe).

Monastics in India did not wear inner garments, thus the bhikṣus were allowed to keep three robes and the bhikṣuṇīs five robes to cover the body, shoulders, and armpits. In China, we wear inner garments and do not reveal the body, therefore it is fine not to ask the disciples whether they have a saṃkakṣikā or the robe to cover the shoulder.

**Instruction ācārya**: This is the *pātra* (alms bowl). Do these robes and alms bowl belong to you?

**Disciples**: Yes.

**Instruction ācārya**: Since they belong to you, receive and keep them and put them on.<sup>40</sup>

*A guide distributes the nine-strip robe and asks the disciples to say:*

**Disciples**: Virtuous one, please listen wholeheartedly. I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ receive and keep this saṃghāṭī, a robe cut and sewn from 25 strips, each made of four long pieces and one short piece of cloth. (3x)

**Instruction ācārya**: You have received and will keep the robe in accord with the Dharma.

**Disciples**: Yes.

*The three disciples rise and stand in order as before. The guides help them to put on their nine-strip robe and ask them to kneel.*

**Instruction ācārya** (*hits block*): Śikṣamāṇās, listen attentively. Now is the time to be sincere and honest. I will now question you. Say “yes” or “no” truthfully.

Have the three of you committed an excluding offense?<sup>41</sup> **Disciples**: No.

Have you ruined the pure conduct (chastity) of a bhikṣu? **Disciples**: No.

Have you taken “affiliation by theft”?<sup>42</sup> **Disciples**: No.

Are you wavering between Buddhist and non-Buddhist paths? **Disciples**: No.

Are you a *paṇḍaka*?<sup>43</sup> **Disciples**: No.

<sup>40</sup> The disciples would have received and kept their five-strip and seven-strip robes and alms bowl during the śikṣamāṇā ordination. They are only receiving and keeping the nine-strip robe for the first time.

<sup>41</sup> People who have taken the five or eight lay precepts and broken one of the first four—sexual misconduct or celibacy, 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 the full ordination. If the misdeed is of an intermediate or minor level, the disciple must have confessed and purified it before the ordination ceremony.

<sup>42</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 theft by affiliation include taking the precepts even though you have one of the thirteen major hindrances.

<sup>43</sup> A person who has physiological or psychological irregularities related to sex. There are five types of female paṇḍakas: their vagina is shaped like a conch, muscle, drum, horn, or vein. It is said these five are not women as these are signs of a barren woman. They are unable to engage in sexual activity and their disposition is unstable, therefore this is a hindrance to receiving ordination.

Have you committed patricide? **Disciples:** No.  
Have you committed matricide? **Disciples:** No.  
Have you killed an arhat? **Disciples:** No.  
Have you caused schism in a harmonious saṅgha? **Disciples:** No.  
Have you maliciously caused the Buddha to shed blood? **Disciples:** No.  
Are you a non-human? **Disciples:** No.  
Are you an animal? **Disciples:** No.  
Are you a person with both male and female organs? **Disciples:** No.  
What is your name? **Disciples:** (state name)  
Who is your upādhyāyā? **Disciples:** Bhikṣuṇī<sup>44</sup> Master \_\_\_\_\_.  
Do you meet the age requirement? **Disciples:** Yes.  
Do you have robes and an alms bowl? **Disciples:** Yes.  
Do you have permission from your parents or husband? **Disciples:** Yes.  
Are you in debt and not intending to repay it? **Disciples:** No.  
Are you a servant? **Disciples:** No.  
Are you a woman? **Disciples:** Yes.

A woman could have such illnesses as leprosy, carbuncles, vitiligo, diabetes, or insanity. She may have both male and female organs, joined lower orifices, underdeveloped genitalia, or lose control of discharge of urine, feces, mucus [from the nose], or saliva. Do you have any of these illnesses?  
**Disciples:** No.

Since you do not have these major obstacles and minor hindrances, you may receive the precepts. The saṅgha will question you in the same way as I just have about these matters. You should respond to the saṅgha in the same way as you have responded to me. Bow once and pick up the sitting cloth. Follow me to ascend the platform. (*Follow after the instructor in order.*)

## 12. Calling in the Disciples

The Buddha said that after the instruction ācārya has questioned the candidates, she should return to the assembly and have the śikṣamāṇās stand and observe the ordination platform.<sup>45</sup>

*The instruction ācārya stands in the center facing the ordination platform, puts her palms together, and makes a half-bow.*

**Instruction ācārya:** Virtuous ones, please listen wholeheartedly. Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request the full ordination from the bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. If the sangha is ready, may the saṅgha agree that I have completed advising and instructing them, and they are allowed to come forward. This is the motion.

**Upādhyāyā:** Call them forward.

*The instruction ācārya makes a half bow, turns, faces the śikṣamāṇās, and gestures towards them.*

**Instruction ācārya:** Śikṣamāṇās, please come.

<sup>44</sup> CBETA edition has “Great” (大) This translation follows the Jinling edition that has “Bhikṣuṇī.” (尼)

<sup>45</sup> They should stand in a place where they can see but cannot hear the instruction ācārya make the motion.

*The śikṣamāṇās hear this and walk with good comportment into the platform. The instruction ācārya moves and stands on the right side of the incense burner table.*

**Instruction ācārya:** Śikṣamāṇās, come close to the front of the incense burner table. (*after they arrive*) Half-bow.

**Left:**<sup>46</sup> Kneel.

**Right:** The person in the middle offers a piece of incense to all the teachers on the platform. (*after the incense has been offered*)

**Instruction ācārya:** Bow once and stand. Half-bow again. Follow me to ascend the platform to request ordination.

### 13. Requesting the Precepts from the Saṅgha

*The instruction ācārya walks in front, the śikṣamāṇās follow behind. They walk to the west and circumambulate to the back of the platform. They take off their shoes and ascend to the second step. They walk from the northeast corner to the southeast corner and ascend to the third step. The instructor goes to her place and stands with palms joined. The śikṣamāṇās ascend the platform in order and face the upādhyāyā, standing side by side.*

**Instruction ācārya:** Half-bow. Spread the full sitting cloth. Sincerely bow three times. Lift your robe and protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*) Half-bow. Kneel. (*Lift the robe with both hands and kneel down.*) Palms joined.

Daughters of a good family, with sincerity and respect, seek reliance upon the pure assembly and request to receive the full ordination. You are supposed to make the request yourself. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you. State your Dharma name. (*after they state their names*) Repeat after me:

Virtuous ones, please listen wholeheartedly. I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ sincerely request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ for the full ordination. I Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ now request the full ordination from the saṅgha with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as my bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. May the saṅgha support me. Please accept my request with compassion. (3x)

Bow once. (*The instruction ācārya returns to her seat and sits down.*)

### 14. One-motion Karman by the Karman Ācārya

*The karman ācārya joins her palms at her seat. She first makes a one-motion karman, then examines the candidates about the hindrances.*

**Karman ācārya:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen wholeheartedly. Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ for the full ordination. \_\_\_\_\_ and others now request the saṅgha to confer on them the full ordination with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their

---

<sup>46</sup> CBETA edition does not have “left” and “right” designated for the guides here. These have been added based on the Jinling edition.

upādhyāyā. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to allow me to examine them about the obstacles and hindrances. This is the motion. [Is this motion acceptable?

**Seven witnesses:** Yes.]<sup>47</sup>

## 15. Formal Examination of Obstacles and hindrances

**Karman ācārya:** Three of you, listen attentively. Now is the time to be sincere and honest. Say “yes” or “no” truthfully.

Have you committed an excluding offense? **Disciples:** No.

Have you ruined the pure conduct (chastity) of a bhikṣu? **Disciples:** No.

Have you taken “affiliation by theft”? **Disciples:** No.

Are you wavering between Buddhist and non-Buddhist paths? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a paṇḍaka? **Disciples:** No.

Have you committed patricide? **Disciples:** No.

Have you committed matricide? **Disciples:** No.

Have you killed an arhat? **Disciples:** No.

Have you caused schism in a harmonious saṅgha? **Disciples:** No.

Have you maliciously caused the Buddha to shed blood? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a non-human? **Disciples:** No.

Are you an animal? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a person with both male and female organs? **Disciples:** No.

What is your name? **Disciples:** (state name)

Who is your upādhyāyā? **Disciples:** Bhikṣuṇī Master \_\_\_\_.

Do you meet the age requirement? **Disciples:** Yes.

Do you have robes and an alms bowl? **Disciples:** Yes.

Do you have permission from your parents or husband? **Disciples:** Yes.

Are you in debt and not intending to repay it? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a servant? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a woman? **Disciples:** Yes.

A woman could have such illnesses as leprosy, carbuncles, vitiligo, diabetes, or insanity. She may have both male and female organs, joined lower orifices, underdeveloped genitalia, or lose control of discharge of urine, feces, mucus [from the nose], or saliva. Do you have any of these illnesses?

**Disciples:** No.

## 16. Teaching on Generating Motivation

Vinaya Master Jianyue Dutī’s *Further Explanation of “The Practice of the Vinaya”* (Pini zuochi xushi) says that the upādhyāyā should teach according to the disciples’ capacity to cause them to generate a mind that seeks to progress on the path, and thereby receive a higher level of precepts.

**Upādhyāyā:** Daughters of a good family, you should know that the precepts are worthy of respect. The majority of the six classes of sentient beings face hurdles to receiving the precepts; only humans may receive them. Still, there are humans who have obstacles and hindrances. The three

---

<sup>47</sup> The question and reply marked in brackets is extraneous.

of you are fortunate to have neither major obstacles nor minor hindrances. You are pure vessels and it is appropriate to give you the precepts. However, these most profound and excellent precepts encompass the sphere of reality and are as vast as space. Therefore, to receive the uncontrived precept-body, you must generate an expansive motivation and bring to mind all objects till your mind is concomitant with them.

There are two types of objects, the first are sentient objects, the second are non-sentient objects. Those with consciousness are called sentient objects. Those without consciousness are called non-sentient objects. Since beginningless time, you have committed all nonvirtues toward these objects, therefore you continue to take rebirth in cyclic existence. Now, our Buddha, the Tathāgatha, established all precepts in relation to these objects for the purpose of liberation and nirvāṇa. As objects are boundless, likewise nonvirtues are boundless. As the precepts are inexhaustible, likewise merit is inexhaustible.

There are three levels of motivation. If you generate a low motivation, you will only receive a low level of precepts. If you generate a medium motivation, you will only receive a medium level of precepts. You must generate a high motivation so as to receive a high level of precepts. What are medium and low motivations? Generating a motivation for fame and gain, to surpass others, or for the bliss of the human or heavenly realms—these are called medium and low motivations. These motivations are weak, of inferior quality, and unstable. What are high motivations? To attain the fruits of stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, arhat, or solitary realizer. To attain the three knowledges and six supernormal powers, meditative stabilization and liberation, and immeasurable merit. Generating such motivations are high motivations. The highest motivations lead to great nirvāṇa and complete liberation from cyclic existence; you will not take another rebirth. As the commentaries say, “If the precepts had shape and color, when they enter your body, it would sound as if the sky were collapsing and the earth were splitting open. Since they are not physical phenomena, you will not feel this.” How can your limited, inferior bodies and minds encompass these wondrous, virtuous precepts?

*(hits block)* Daughters of a good family, you should bring to mind all sentient and non-sentient objects and generate the highest level of motivation wholeheartedly, so as to receive the pure and wondrous precepts of the Tathāgata. When it is time for us to perform the one-motion three-proclamations karman to confer the bhikṣuṇī ordination on you, you should focus your eyes on the procedures of the platform, your ears on the karman, contemplate silently in your mind, and do not respond verbally. You will receive the precepts naturally. The karman ācārya will first make a motion to inform the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha about the full ordination. Then she will carry out the karman for the teachers to assess whether they approve of your ordination.

## 17. Formally Conferring the Precept-body

**Karman ācārya** (*palms joined*): May the upādhyāyā and the great assembly be unstinting in your kindness and compassion, and generously offer these precepts. Let us generate the same motivation to perform the karman together and not allow our minds to wander to other objects. In order to help these three disciples generate the complete and ideal precept-body, I will now perform the karman. Listen as I make the motion:

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen wholeheartedly. Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ for full ordination. They now request the saṅgha to confer on them the full ordination with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. \_\_\_\_\_ and others

have declared their purity, they do not have any obstacles or hindrances, they are over 20 years old, and they have robes and an alms bowl. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to confer the full ordination on \_\_\_\_\_ and others with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. This is the motion. Is this motion acceptable?

**Seven witnesses:** Yes.<sup>48</sup>

**Karman ācārya:** Virtuous saṅgha, please listen wholeheartedly. Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ for full ordination. They now request the saṅgha to confer on them the full ordination with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. \_\_\_\_\_ and others have declared their purity, they do not have any obstacles or hindrances, they are over 20 years old, and they have robes and an alms bowl. Those who agree that the saṅgha confers the full ordination on \_\_\_\_\_ and others with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up. This is the first (second, third) proclamation.<sup>49</sup> Is this proclamation acceptable?

**Seven witnesses:** Yes.

**Karman ācārya:** The saṅgha has agreed and completed conferring the full ordination on \_\_\_\_\_ with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this matter will proceed as decided.

**Upādhyāyā:** The one-motion three-proclamations karman is now complete. The three of you have received the precept-body of the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone. Bring forth a mind that seeks to progress, generate a firm determination, and go to the bhikṣu saṅgha to request the full ordination so that you can become full-fledged bhikṣuṇīs, in order to liberate sentient beings extensively and transform them unceasingly. Bow once and pick up the sitting cloth. Go to the Buddha Hall and bow to the Buddhas.

*The disciples pick up the sitting cloth, make a half-bow, and leave the ordination platform from the steps on the right. The second group receives the precepts as above. After each group has received the precepts, the newly ordained pick up the sitting cloth and make a half-bow.*

**Upādhyāyā:** The ordination is complete. Everyone recite the homage to the Buddha and dedicate the merit together.

**Guide:** Face the Buddha.

**Right:** At the sound of the bell, bow three times.

**Left:** Lift your robe. (*disciples bow*)

**Right:** Pick up the sitting cloth.

**Left:** Half-bow.

---

<sup>48</sup> According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, it is enough to assent through silence. Vinaya Master Daoxuan added the question and answer according to the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya. He cites the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya to explain that this is to ensure that the teachers remain alert for an important karman that would be invalidated if any member of the quorum were to fall asleep, enter a state of meditative concentration, or speak nonsensically, etc. This footnote also applies to the three proclamations below.

<sup>49</sup> This section is repeated three times, with the ācārya saying “first,” “second,” or “third” in the last sentence according to which repetition it is.

**Right:** Face the central aisle.

*The nine teachers on the platform line up in order as before, face the Buddha, and bow three times. The upādhyāyā may say, “One bow.” After they have made a half-bow, the ten teachers descend the platform from the steps on the right, the last in line going first. They circumambulate to the left until they reach the front of the platform and stand side by side in a row. The upādhyāyā stands as before [in the middle].*

**Chant leader** (leads and the assembly joins in):

Ordination is a virtuous wonderful deed.

We dedicate the boundless, magnificent merit. (ten teachers bow once)

May all sentient beings submerged in suffering

Quickly go to the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Light. (as above)

Homage to all Buddhas in ten directions and three times,

To all bodhisattvas mahāsattvas, (as above)

And to the great Prajñāpāramitā. (ten teachers make a half-bow)

*After the ten teachers have finished bowing and the dedication chant has ended, the upādhyāyā turns to the south and stands while the nine teachers divide into two lines. Two guides lead the newly ordained with the last in line going first. The tenth teacher follows after the disciples, then the ninth, the eighth, up to the second. Two guides ring hand-bells alternately and walk in front of the upādhyāyā. The disciples arrive before the upādhyāyā’s room and stand on both sides of the path. They kneel with palms joined facing the path, wait for the ten teachers to file past them, then rise and walk in two rows until they reach upādhyāyā’s room and line up in rows facing the central aisle. The upādhyāyā goes to her seat and stands facing south. The nine teachers bow to the upādhyāyā three times or once, and then stand in the shape of the Chinese character for “eight.”*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. At the sound of the bell, bow in gratitude three times. (The ten teachers join their palms.) Lift your robe. (disciples bow) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle. (The upādhyāyā enters her room. The nine teachers each return to their rooms.)

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. Bow to thank the guides three times.

**Head guide:** One bow. Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle. (The guides disperse and the disciples return to the hall.)

## **18. Nuns Ordained by the Bhikṣuṇīs Alone Go To the Bhikṣu Saṅgha to Receive the Precepts**

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “When the karman for the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone is complete, gather the ten bhikṣuṇī teachers to bring the disciples to the bhikṣu saṅgha to request the full ordination.” According to protocol, this rite should be added as there is no reason to go discreetly. On the same day or the next morning,<sup>50</sup> make a signal to gather the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha in the territory. The bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā should make an announcement to the entire assembly.

**Bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā:** The World-honored One established the eight heavy dharmas for us. The fourth says that a śikṣamāṇā who has fulfilled her training in the precepts should request full

---

<sup>50</sup> The nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone should be brought to the bhikṣu saṅgha on the same day.

ordination from the bhikṣu saṅgha. This rule should be respectfully observed for life without transgression. Now, the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha has examined Śikṣamāṇā \_\_\_\_\_ and others about the obstacles and hindrances and completed the karmans to confer ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone in accord with the Vinaya. The ten bhikṣuṇīs who performed the karman will bring these disciples seeking full ordination to the bhikṣu saṅgha to request the full precepts. Does the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha agree to this in harmony?

**Bhikṣuṇīs** (*in unison*): Yes.

*After the announcement, the ten bhikṣuṇīs who performed the karman and all the guides take the newly ordained to the bhikṣu saṅgha within the same day to request to receive the full ordination.*

### **No. 1134 Dual Saṅgha Ordination Rites Fascicle Two**

Recorded by Shuyu, a renunciate who transmits the Vinaya, Zhaoqing Monastery, Old Hangzhou, Qing Dynasty.

**There are altogether 18 procedures to confer full ordination on the nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone.**<sup>51</sup>

#### **1. Requesting Precepts Before the Ordination**

*The nuns arrive at the bhikṣu monastery and meet the guest master, who informs the bhikṣu guides to assemble and go to the abbot's room to invite the upādhyāya to ascend his seat. Then, they lead the bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā to go before the upādhyāya's seat and stand facing the Buddha. The nine teachers line up in a row behind her. They make a half-bow, spread the full sitting cloth, sincerely bow three times, half-bow, and kneel with palms joined.*

**Bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā:** I \_\_\_\_\_ have fulfilled the assignment that the upādhyāya has entrusted to me with compassion. I have conferred the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone on the śikṣamāṇās. They \_\_\_\_\_ and others have declared their purity themselves, they do not have obstacles or hindrances, they meet the age requirement, and they have robes and an alms bowl. Others and I have completed giving the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone in harmony. Now they come before your seat to request the full ordination. I entreat you very strongly [to grant their request].

*The teachers stand, bow three times and pick up the sitting cloth, half-bow, and stand facing the central aisle. Next the bhikṣuṇī guides also face the Buddha, bow three times and pick up the sitting cloth, half-bow, and stand to the side.*

**Bhikṣu guide:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, face the Buddha. Half-bow and spread the full sitting cloth. At the sound of the bell, bow three times. Lift your robe. (*disciples bow*) Half-bow. Kneel with palms joined.

**Upādhyāya:** The Vinaya strictly establishes that only a dual saṅgha can confer the full ordination. The pure saṅgha with ten monastics on both sides must be assembled; only when the conditions

---

<sup>51</sup> The bhikṣuṇī saṅgha should establish its own large territory that is the same as the bhikṣu large territory to prevent anyone from being apart from the assembly.



are complete can the ordination be given and received. If there are slight deviations, the karmans are said to be invalid. Although the quorum of elders is complete, I am concerned that you may have obstacles or hindrances that prevent you from receiving the precepts. Since your physical vessel is pure and you have received the ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, you have the capacity to hold the full precepts. You will soon ascend the platform.

**Bhikṣu guide:** Everyone stand. At the sound of the bell, in gratitude, bow three times. Lift your robe. (*disciples bow*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*The bhikṣuṇī guides bow to the Buddha once. The ten bhikṣuṇī teachers also bow to the Buddha once. Then they retire to wait to give the ordination.*

## 2. Set Up the Ordination Platform

The guides instruct people to sweep and clean the ordination platform. Around the platform, hang streaming banners and jewels. Set up the upādhyāya's seat in the center of the platform. To the side of the seat, place a small stand with an incense burner. To the side of the center, set up a seat for the karman ācārya. On both sides, set up seats for the instruction ācārya and witnesses. In the center below the ordination platform, place an incense burner table with offerings of flowers and incense. On the left and right sides near the ordination platform, place high podiums at the same level as the second step of the platform. The bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā sits facing the south while the rest face the platform. Also set up a seat in the center of the Dharma hall for the upādhyāya, with five seats on the left and four on the right. Arrange the nine teachers' seats in the shape of the Chinese character for "eight." The guides request the upādhyāya to set a time for the rites so that they can make a signal to gather the assembly.

## 3. Make a Signal to Gather the Assembly

*At the appointed time, a guide gives the instruction to ring the large bell three times. Illuminate the ordination platform with candles. The nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone each put on their three robes, sling their alms bowl [in a bag] and hold their sitting cloth. The bhikṣuṇī guides lead them out in single file to the Dharma Hall where they line up in order. After the bhikṣus inside and outside the territory have gathered:*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. Bow to the bhikṣu saṅgha three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*Two bhikṣuṇī guides step out into the center, face the Buddha, and make a half-bow together with four disciples. They lead them to invite the ten bhikṣuṇī teachers to the Dharma Hall. The ten teachers first bow to the bhikṣu saṅgha once, then stand lined up on the left and right sides.*

**Bhikṣu guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. Bow to the bhikṣuṇī teachers three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*Bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā says, "One bow."*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*The ten bhikṣuṇī teachers divide and stand on both sides. Two bhikṣu guides step out into the center, face the Buddha, and make a half-bow together with four disciples. They turn to invite the*

*seven bhikṣu teachers to the Dharma Hall. The disciples return to their row and the guides resume their places. The seven bhikṣu teachers separate themselves.*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. Bow to all the teachers three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*The foremost of the seven bhikṣu teachers says, “One bow.”*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*Another two guides step out of the assembly, face the Buddha, and make a half-bow. They lead four disciples to go to the rooms of the karman ācārya and instruction ācārya and invite them to the Dharma Hall. When they arrive at the Dharma Hall, the disciples return to their row, and the guides return to their places. The nine teachers meet, bow once, and then stand in their places on the left and right sides.*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. Bow to the two teachers three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*Karman ācārya says, “One bow.”*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*Two guides ring hand-bells alternately. Together with six disciples, they go to the abbot’s room to invite the upādhyāya. Two guides follow behind. At the abbot’s room, the guides inform the attendant to invite the upādhyāya.*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*Upādhyāya says, “One bow.”*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle. The last in line goes first.

**Guide leading the escorting party:** Follow me.

*The guide turns and leads the disciples to walk first. The guide with the hand-bell walks in front of the upādhyāya and goes to the Dharma Hall where the nine teachers stand facing each other. The disciples return to their row and the guides resume their places. When the upādhyāya arrives, the nine bhikṣu teachers face the Buddha, spread the sitting cloth, and bow three times.*

**Upādhyāya:** No need to spread the sitting cloth. Bow once. Everyone, please take your seats.

*Then the ten bhikṣuṇī teachers line up facing the Buddha, make a half-bow, spread the sitting cloth, and bow three times. The nine bhikṣu teachers stand.*

**Upādhyāya:** No need to spread the sitting cloth. Bow once. Half-bow. Take your seats.

#### **4. Formally Introducing and Requesting the Teachers**

As the Vinaya states, the nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone only formally request the karman ācārya, there is no need to request the other teachers. Nonetheless, the disciples must rely on the upādhyāya for instructions on how to receive the precept-body and the transmission of the sacred teachings. They also rely on the instruction ācārya for guidance on the Vinaya and comportment

rules. The seven bhikṣu teachers are crucial in determining whether the ordination karman is valid or invalid. Based on this reasoning, the disciples should request all these teachers.

**Guide:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, turn and face the Buddha. Half-bow, spread the full sitting cloth. At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*) Half-bow. Kneel with palms joined.

**Guide (palms joined):** When a clear mirror is mounted on its stand, it reflects whatever form it meets. When a large bell is mounted on its frame, it rings whenever it is struck. To completely receive the three sets of pure precepts, you must rely upon the three main teachers. To identify the seven cases of invalid karmans, you must rely upon the seven witnesses. Today, we have respectfully invited the ten teachers from the bhikṣu saṅgha on your behalf, so that you may ascend the platform and receive full ordination. Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, raise your heads and look at your teachers. You should know and remember the faces and names of your upādhyāya and all these teachers before you. Do not forget them. The first is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. He is your upādhyāya for the full ordination.<sup>52</sup>

**Guide on the right:** The second is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. He is your karman ācārya.

**Guide on the left:** The third is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. He is your instruction ācārya.

**Guide on the right:** The fourth is Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_. He is your witness ācārya.

*In this sequence till the tenth teacher, the guides on the left and right announce their names and introduce them so that those requesting full ordination are able to clearly recognize and remember them.*

**Guide on the left:** Everyone stand. At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. Kneel with palms joined.

**Guide on the left:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, now on your behalf I will request Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ to be your upādhyāya for the full ordination. You are supposed to make the request yourself. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you. State your Dharma name. (*after they state their names*) Repeat after me:

Virtuous one, please listen wholeheartedly. I, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, \_\_\_\_\_ and others now request the virtuous one to be our upādhyāya for the full ordination. May the virtuous one be our upādhyāya for the full ordination. By relying on the virtuous one, we will receive the full ordination. Please accept our request with compassion. (3x) (*In this way, sincerely request three times and bow three times.*)

**Upādhyāya:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, since you have earnestly requested three times, I will agree to be your upādhyāya for the full ordination. After you receive the precepts, you must observe them purely. Do not transgress them.

**All:** We shall do so with utmost respect.

---

<sup>52</sup> The nuns receive the formal bhikṣuṇī ordination during the one-motion three-proclamations karman with the twenty monastics from both saṅghas. Their actual preceptor is the bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā whom they would live and train with following their ordination.

**Guide:** Everyone stand. At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*) Half-bow. Kneel with palms joined.

**Guide on the right:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, now on your behalf I will request all the teachers present to be the karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. You are supposed to make the request yourself. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you. State your Dharma name. (*after they state their names*) Repeat after me:

Virtuous one, please listen wholeheartedly. I \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone and others now request the virtuous ones to be our karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. May the virtuous ones be our karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. By relying on the virtuous ones, we will receive the full ordination. Please accept our request with compassion. (3x) (*Make three requests and bow three times.*)

**Karman ācārya:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, since you have earnestly requested, all the teachers present and I will be your karman ācārya, instruction ācārya, and witness ācāryas. You must be pure in your conduct; do not let yourself be uncontrolled.

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

**Guide:** Everyone stand. At the sound of the bell, bow three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

**Upādhyāya:** Everyone chant the homage to the Buddha and ascend the ordination platform.

**Guide:** Homage to our fundamental teacher Śākyamuni Buddha.

*When the homage to the Buddha begins, sound the Dharma drum loudly. Two guides ring hand-bells alternately and lead the procession with the resident bhikṣus going first. Another two guides ring hand-bells alternately and lead the newly ordained to follow after them. After the disciples, the ten bhikṣuṇī teachers follow with the last in line going first. One person bears incense in front of the seven teachers. One incense-bearer walks in front of the instruction ācārya. Two guides ring hand-bells alternately and with another incense-bearer, walk in front of the upādhyāya. The attendant follows behind. The bhikṣu saṅgha and disciples arrive at the ordination platform and stand in rows on the left and right. The guides resume their places. The bhikṣuṇī teachers stand facing each other in front of the steps. The three incense bearers stand next to them. When the upādhyāya approaches the incense burner table, stop the homage to the Buddha and the drums at the same time.*

## 5. Prayers for Longevity

**Chant leader** (*begins the praise and the assembly joins in unison*):

The best incense is burning in the precious censer; its perfume pervades the ten directions.

With sincerity we offer it to the Buddhas, monarchs of the Dharma.

May the people have happiness and long life, like the enduring earth and endless sky.

May the people have happiness and long life, like the enduring earth and endless sky.

Homage to the Perfumed-Cloud-Canopy Bodhisattva Mahāsattva. (3x)

*The upādhyāya offers incense, bows three times, and makes a half-bow. When the phrase “Perfumed-Cloud-Canopy” is chanted for the second time, the nine teachers in a row behind the upādhyāya spread the full sitting cloth. They take off their shoes. The ten bhikṣuṇī teachers stand in the next row and also spread the full sitting cloth. After the third recitation of the homage to the bodhisattvas, hit a stop on the bell and fish.*

## **6. Praise and Pay Respect to the Three Jewels**

We bow down to all Buddhas, the Dharma, and the virtuous Ārya Saṅgha. *(The ten teachers bow once and the assembly repeats the same line in unison.)*

By spreading the Vinaya today, we sustain the saṅgha’s lifeblood. *(as above)*

May the proper Dharma remain for a long time. May the fruits of the three vehicles never cease. *(The assembly repeats the line in unison. The teachers bow once and pick up the sitting cloth.)*

We are about to ascend the pure platform. Please bear witness to what we say. *(The teachers chant holding the sitting cloth and make a half-bow.)*

## **7. Ascending the Platform and Announcement to the Assembly**

*After praising and paying respect to the Three Jewels, the chant leader begins the Great Compassion Mantra. The assembly chants in unison. The tenth teacher turns around and circumambulates the platform from the southeast going to the west, followed by the ninth, eighth, and up to the upādhyāya in procession. The ten bhikṣuṇī teachers move close to the threshold, stand facing each other and recite the mantra with palms joined. There is no need for them to follow and circumambulate the platform.*

*The ten teachers on the platform circumambulate three and a half times. After the second recitation of the mantra, they take off their shoes, ascend the middle step and circumambulate one and a half times. They ascend the platform from the southeast corner. The tenth teacher stands at the end of the row on the left, facing where the upādhyāya will enter from. The ninth teacher stands at the end of the row on the right and the eighth teacher on the left side, facing where the upādhyāya will enter from. The seventh teacher stands on the right side, the sixth teacher on the left side, and the rest in the same way, until the upādhyāya ascends the platform and stands facing the south. After the third recitation of the mantra, hit a stop on the bell and wooden fish. The nine teachers face the Buddha, five standing in front and four behind. The bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā stands close to the incense burner table and the other nine bhikṣuṇī teachers line up in a row behind her. They face the upādhyāya and recite together with palms joined:*

Observing the precepts perfectly just like a full moon, *(The nineteen teachers bow once to the upādhyāya and the assembly repeats the same line in unison, similar to the chant above.)*

Both body and speech are crystal clear without any defect. *(as above)*

Only when the saṅgha is in harmony *(The nineteen teachers bow and pick up the sitting cloth.)*

Is it allowed to give ordination. *(The nineteen teachers chant while holding the sitting cloth and make a half-bow.)*

*After the teachers have chanted in harmony and bowed three times, hit a stop on the bell and wooden fish. The ten teachers take their respective seats. The bhikṣuṇī teachers ascend the platform and also take their seats.*

**Upādhyāya** (*hits block*): It is rare to hear teachings on the Dharma, and the merit generated from observing precepts is inconceivable. They enable us to transcend the filthy stream of the mundane and vulgar and enter the precious seat of the virtuous āryas.

Being a teacher can be said to be easy or difficult; you have to forge disciples in a furnace and assess them according to their dispositions. When giving the full ordination, you should check strictly that the disciples have robes and an alms bowl. If they do not have robes and an alms bowl, they are not allowed to borrow them temporarily. First, there are thirteen major obstacles to ordination, followed by sixteen minor hindrances. When questioned about these, if the disciples do not understand or know what they are being asked, it will be a waste of your diligent efforts. It is the result of proper guidance that we can trust that they will speak and respond truthfully.

You should enable the disciples to generate the highest and most sincere motivation by having them contemplate all objects of this world. The purpose of this is to enable all virtuous phenomena of the ten directions to assimilate into their bodies and minds. They have already accomplished the foundation of the fivefold qualities of the Buddha's truth body (*dharmakāya*),<sup>53</sup> and are endowed with the three bodies of a Buddha.<sup>54</sup> I sincerely ask all the virtuous ones who are about to approach the ordination platform to generate the same motivation to perform the karmans together, and not allow your minds to wander to other objects. (*hits block*)

**Guide:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, line up in order.

*The head of the nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone on the left and right sides walk from the front to the back, and the rest follow them in single file. They walk to the front of the platform, divide and face the central aisle, and stand in order.*

**Guide:** Offer incense.

*Three incense-bearers raise incense to their brows. They turn and stand facing the Buddha and raise the incense again. They advance with good comportment. The first enters through the central door and the other two through the side doors. They go before the incense burner table and raise the incense again. With their right hand, they lift their robes and kneel. Two guides stand behind the incense burner table. The first incense bearer places incense into the burner herself. The other two act as if they are placing incense into the burner, and the two guides receive incense from them and place it into the burner.*

**Guide:** Stand. Half-bow. Return to your places.

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. Half-bow. Spread the full sitting cloth.

**Upādhyāya:** No need to spread the sitting cloth.

**Guide:** At the sound of the bell, sincerely bow three times. (*The teachers from both saṅghas join their palms in recognition of the bows.*) Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*) Half-bow. Kneel with palms joined.

---

<sup>53</sup> According to the Tiantai school, these are ethical conduct, concentration, wisdom, liberation, knowledge of the destruction of all pollutants, also known as the five uncontaminated aggregates.

<sup>54</sup> The truth body, enjoyment body (*sambhogakāya*), and the emanation body (*nirmānakāya*).

## 8. Request Compassion and Further Protection

**Upādhyāya** (*hits block*): Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, now the saṅgha is assembled and you will ascend the ordination platform. We will give you the full ordination in accord with the Vinaya. We should first request the Three Jewels to give us added protection. Say your Dharma name. (*after they state their names*) Visualize attentively and follow me to make these requests.

**Guide:** Everyone stand.

*The ten teachers rise from their seats. The head of the ordination platform [the upādhyāya] raises the incense plate to his brow and begins chanting. The nine teachers join in the requests. An attendant stands with palms joined facing the karman ācārya. Another attendant stands in front of the platform on the second step. Two guides stand at the incense burner table with palms joined to make the requests. The ten bhikṣuṇī guides do the same.*

**Upādhyāya:**

With incense and flowers we welcome you.

With incense and flowers we request you.

I \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone and others, request you wholeheartedly:  
supreme teacher of the Sahā world, fundamental teacher Śākyamuni Buddha;  
guide to the Western Pure Land, Amitābha Buddha;  
next Buddha to come, Maitreya Buddha;  
all the Buddhas who pervade the limits of space and the sphere of reality,  
may you never break your fundamental resolve,  
and illuminate us with the light of your compassion.  
Please bear witness to our ordination.

*The upādhyāya picks up a piece of incense and passes it to the attendant, who passes it to the attendant on the second step. The attendant passes the incense to the guide, who places it in the burner. The nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone requesting full ordination follow the upādhyāya to make the request, then bow and stand. They should know that subject and object are empty and quiescent. When sentient beings' sincere requests connect with the compassion of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, they receive support.*

**Upādhyāya:**

With the incense and flowers we welcome you.

With the incense and flowers we request you.

I \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone and others, request you wholeheartedly:  
the teachings of the Fundamental and Great Vehicles;  
the Vinaya Piṭaka, the five classes and three sets of precepts, the *prātimokṣa*;  
the twelve categories of scripture, the collection of provisional and definitive teachings;  
the profound Dharma Jewel that brings true purity and liberation from desire,  
We sincerely and wholeheartedly entrust our lives to you and bow down.  
*The rite is as before.*

**Upādhyāya:**

With incense and flowers we welcome you.

With incense and flowers we request you.

I \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone and others, request you wholeheartedly:  
Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra,  
the pure, vast ocean assembly of all great bodhisattvas;  
Venerable Upāli who presided over the compilation of the Vinaya Piṭaka;  
generations of past patriarchs in India and China;  
great Vinaya Masters of the Nanshan School;  
reviver of the Vinaya, Venerable Master Huiyun Ruxin;  
propagator of the precepts, Venerable Master Sanmei Jiguang;  
reviver of the prohibitive and prescriptive practices, Venerable Master Jianyue Dutī;  
(subsequently add the names of the ordination masters of the preceptors on the platform)  
may you never break your fundamental resolve  
and illuminate us with the light of your compassion.  
Please bear witness to our ordination.  
*The rite is as before.*

### **Upādhyāya:**

With incense and flowers we welcome you.

With incense and flowers we request you.

I \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone and others, request you wholeheartedly:  
the Golden Light assembly of devas that are bodhisattvas' manifestations;  
Brahmā, Śakra, and the four guardian kings;  
devas, nāgas, and the rest of the eight groups of Dharma protectors;  
Protector Saṅghārāma and celestial kings who protect the ordination platform;  
powerful Vajrapāṇibalin and various deities.  
may you never break your fundamental resolve  
to guard the platform and protect the ordination.

*Having completed the requests in this way, the ten teachers return to their seats. The attendants descend from the platform. The guides return to their places. After the disciples have bowed.*

## **9. Station the Disciples in a Waiting Area**

The Buddha said that those receiving ordination should not be in the sky, hidden from sight, away from the place where they can see but cannot hear, or outside the territory [during the formal ordination karman]. The same applies to the upādhyāya and others in the quorum, namely the ten teachers on the platform. Move the disciples to a place where they can see but cannot hear.

**Guide:** Half-bow. Kneel. (*lift the robe with both hands*) Palms joined.

**Upādhyāya** (*hits block*): We have finished requesting the Three Jewels together. Virtuous guides, please station them in a place where they stand and can see but not hear us.

**Guide:** Bow once and pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*Two guides stand [in the central aisle], each facing the assembly of śikṣamāṇās [on either side].*

**Guide:** Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, follow me and chant the homage to the Buddha together as you leave the platform.



*The two guides face the Buddha and make a half-bow. They ring hand-bells alternately and chant the homage to the Buddha.*

**Guide** (*leads chant*): Homage to our fundamental teacher Śākyamuni Buddha.

*In this way, lead the nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone to the screened instruction area. The guides return to the saṅgha.*

As the Vinaya says, the ordination platform is a place where those who are not teachers are not allowed to participate. Only the ten teachers can be on the platform to carry out the karmans together, and only when it is time to confer the bhikṣuṇī precepts. Members of the saṅgha assembly are not prohibited [from being in the ordination hall]; as long as they are fully ordained, they are allowed [to be present] and rejoice.

## 10. Assembling the Saṅgha to Ask If It Is in Harmony

**Head of the platform:**<sup>55</sup> Is the saṅgha assembled?

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher:** It is assembled.

**Head of the platform:** Is it in harmony?

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher:** It is in harmony.

**Head of the platform:** Have all those who are not fully ordained left?

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher:** Everyone here is fully ordained. (*It can be said the nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone have already received the full precepts.*)<sup>56</sup>

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

**10<sup>th</sup> teacher:** To perform the karmans to confer the bhikṣuṇī full ordination.

*Having completed assembling the saṅgha, the guides go to the screened instruction area and lead three disciples close to the ordination platform. They ask the nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone to stand still, observe the platform, contemplate how difficult it is to meet this opportunity, and generate a mind of respect. A guide makes a half-bow to the Buddha in the center, and speaks with palms joined.*

## 11. Announcement to Request the Precepts

**Guide:** Virtuous ones, please listen attentively. These nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone \_\_\_\_\_ and others now request the full ordination from the bhikṣu saṅgha. (*half-bow*)

**Head of the platform:** Ask them to come forward.

**Guide** (*turns and gestures*): Nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, come forward.

<sup>55</sup> This could be the upādhyāya or the karman ācārya.

<sup>56</sup> This explanation is inaccurate as the nuns receive the full ordination during the one-motion three-proclamations karman involving the twenty monastics from two saṅghas.

*Hearing the signal, the nuns walk with proper comportment to the front of the ordination platform. The guide walks to and stands to the side of the incense table.*

**Guide:** Come close to the incense table together. (*when they arrive*) Half bow. Kneel. The person in the middle offers a piece of incense to all the teachers on the platform. (*after the incense has been offered*) Bow once and stand. Half-bow again. Follow me to ascend the platform to request ordination.

*The guide goes first and the three disciples follow in order. They arrive at the back of the platform and take off their shoes. The bhikṣuṇī instruction ācārya leads them to ascend the platform. The three disciples stand together on the platform. The bhikṣuṇī instruction ācārya stands to the side.*

**Bhikṣuṇī instruction ācārya:** Half-bow and spread the full sitting cloth. (*disciples spread the sitting cloth*) Sincerely bow three times. Lift your robe. Protect your bowl. (*disciples bow*) Half bow. Kneel. (*lift the robe with both hands*) Palms joined.

**Bhikṣuṇī instruction ācārya** (*palms joined*): Daughters of a good family, with sincerity and respect, seek reliance upon the pure assembly and request to receive the full ordination. You are supposed to make the request yourself. I am concerned you might not know how to do this, so now I will guide you. State your Dharma name. (*after they state their names*) Repeat after me:

Virtuous ones, please listen. I \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, sincerely request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ for the full ordination. I \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, now request the full ordination from the saṅgha with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as my bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. May the saṅgha support me. Please accept my request with compassion. (3x)

**Bhikṣuṇī instruction ācārya:** Bow once. Raise your heads.

Vinaya Master Jianyue Dutī's *Further Explanation of "The Practice of the Vinaya"* by Vinaya Master Daoxuan (*Pi Ni Zuo Chi Xu Shi*) says that after the bhikṣuṇī instruction ācārya has led the request for precepts, she should descend the platform and return to her seat.

## 12. One-motion Karman to Examine the Disciples About Obstacles and Hindrances

**Karman ācārya** (*at his seat, palms joined*): Virtuous saṅgha, please listen attentively. \_\_\_\_\_, a nun ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, and others request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ to give the full ordination. \_\_\_\_\_ and others now request the saṅgha to confer on them the full ordination with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to allow me to examine them about the obstacles and hindrances. This is the motion. [(asks) Is this motion acceptable?

**Seven witnesses** (*palms joined*): Yes.]<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> The question and reply marked in brackets is extraneous.

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “You should assure the disciples by saying ‘Disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha, listen attentively. Don’t be afraid; in an instant we will cause the three of you to practice the pure precepts, become great bhikṣuṇīs, and become members of the Saṅgha Jewel.’”

**Karman ācārya** (*palms joined*): Three of you, listen attentively. Now is the time to be sincere and honest. I will now question you. Say “yes” or “no” truthfully.

Have the three of you committed an excluding offense? **Disciples:** No.

Have you ruined the pure conduct (chastity) of a bhikṣu? **Disciples:** No.

Have you taken “affiliation by theft”? **Disciples:** No.

Are you wavering between Buddhist and non-Buddhist paths? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a paṇḍaka? **Disciples:** No.

Have you committed patricide? **Disciples:** No.

Have you committed matricide? **Disciples:** No.

Have you killed an arhat? **Disciples:** No.

Have you caused schism in a harmonious saṅgha? **Disciples:** No.

Have you maliciously caused the Buddha to shed blood? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a non-human? **Disciples:** No.

Are you an animal? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a person with both male and female organs? **Disciples:** No.

*(Make sure they understand these characteristics and answer clearly. If they do not understand the questions, they do not receive the precepts.)*

What is your name? **Disciples:** (*say your name*)

Who is your upādhyāyā? **Disciples:** Bhikṣuṇī Master \_\_\_\_.

Do you meet the age requirement? **Disciples:** Yes.

Do you have robes and an alms bowl? **Disciples:** Yes.

Do you have permission from your parents or husband? **Disciples:** Yes.

Are you in debt and not intending to repay it? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a servant? **Disciples:** No.

Are you a woman? **Disciples:** Yes.

A woman could have such illnesses as leprosy, carbuncles, vitiligo, diabetes, or insanity. Do you have any of these illnesses? **Disciples:** No.

*(According to the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, there is no need to ask whether they have both male and female organs, joined lower orifices, underdeveloped genitalia, or lose control of discharge of urine, feces, mucus [from the nose], or saliva, as that has been covered in the obstacles and hindrances.)*

Have you received training in the precepts? **Disciples:** Yes, I have.

Are you pure in this regard? **Disciples:** Yes, I am pure.

*The following questions are directed to the bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā.*<sup>58</sup>

Have \_\_\_\_ and others received training in the precepts? **Bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā:** Yes, they have.

Are they pure in this regard? **Bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā:** Yes, they are pure.

<sup>58</sup> CBETA edition has “other nuns.” This follows the Jinling edition that has “bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā.”

### 13. Teaching on Generating Motivation

**Upādhyāya:** Daughters of a good family, you have neither major hindrances nor minor obstacles. You are pure vessels worthy of receiving precepts. The entire saṅgha assembly rejoices to confer the ordination on you. However, these most profound and excellent precepts encompass the sphere of reality and are as vast as space. Therefore, to receive the uncontrived precept-body, you must generate an expansive motivation and bring to mind all objects till your mind is concomitant with them.

The *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya Vibhāṣā* says, “For all those who wish to receive the precepts, first teach them the Dharma and guide them to remove obstacles to their understanding.” Since beginningless time, the three of you have committed nonvirtuous actions toward all sentient beings and non-sentient objects; your nonvirtues pervade the sphere of reality. Now that you wish to receive the precepts, you must transform your past nonvirtuous circumstances and generate a virtuous mind. To create the causes for receiving the precepts, [your mind] must engage the entire sphere of reality.

Therefore, our teacher, the Tathāgatha, established boundless precepts according to the boundless karma that sentient beings’ minds create. Since the precepts were established in relation to boundless objects, they are obtained in dependence on boundless objects. Although the number of objects is numerous, in essence they do not exceed two types: the first are sentient objects, the second are non-sentient objects. The range of sentient objects extends upwards to all the Buddhas and downwards to all sentient beings, all the ten realms of resultant rebirths,<sup>59</sup> and sentient beings in the intermediate state. As long as it has a mind, it is called a sentient object.

Non-sentient objects include environmental results in the ten realms, all the world systems, mountains, rivers, land, grass, trees, forests, boats, vehicles, houses, buildings, jewels, fields, the earth, water, fire, wind, and even space, the excellent teachings spoken by the Buddha, the writings left by Confucian scholars, statues, stūpas, and temples, and so forth, are all called non-sentient objects.

Daughters of a good family, since you know that the extent of objects is so vast, you should generate your motivation in dependence upon these objects. There are three levels of motivation, the medium and lower motivations are weak and inferior. They can only benefit yourself but not liberate others from cyclic existence.

I will now instruct you on how to generate the highest level of motivation, to seek the highest level of precepts. What is the highest motivation? Now before the seats of all the teachers and myself, make three types of resolve:

First, I resolve to eliminate all nonvirtues, there is no nonvirtue that I will not eliminate!

Second, I resolve to cultivate all virtues, there is no virtue that I will not cultivate!

Third, I resolve to liberate all sentient beings, there is no sentient being that I will not liberate!

After generating these three types of great resolves, when the one-motion three-proclamations karman is being performed, you can advance to receive the full bhikṣuṇī ordination. Do not do this merely to attain the small fruits of the hearers; but out of the wish to accomplish the three sets of pure precepts and advance toward the three doors of liberation, strive to attain Buddhahood and ultimate nirvāṇa, so that the true Dharma can remain for a long time. By generating a mind like this, you will receive the precepts with the highest level of motivation.

Next, you should expand your mind. Indeed, the essence of the precepts pervades the entire

---

<sup>59</sup> According to the Tiantai School, these are the six realms in saṃsāra—hells, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras, humans, and devas; and the four realms of awakened beings—hearers, solitary realizers, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas.

sphere of reality, and the precepts are as numerous as the grains of sand in it.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, they cannot be assimilated through the limited and inferior bodies that the three of you have, which are born from your parents of this life and obtained through [polluted] rebirth. Only by visualizing that your body has the capacity of the entirety of space, can you receive the precepts numerous as grains of sand. Hence the commentaries say, “If the precepts had shape and color, when they enter your body, it would sound as if the sky were collapsing and the earth were splitting open. Since they are not physical phenomena, you will not feel this.” You should have a sense of vigilance, and generate the highest level of motivation wholeheartedly, so as to assimilate the pure and wondrous precepts of the Tathāgata. (*hits block*)

Now we will perform the one-motion three-proclamations karman to confer the full bhikṣuṇī ordination on you. You should focus your eyes on the procedures of the platform, your ears on the karman, and receive the precepts attentively with one-pointed mind. Do not think of other matters. The karman ācārya will first make a motion to inform the bhikṣu saṅgha about the full ordination. Then he will make three proclamations for the teachers to assess whether they approve of your ordination.

#### 14. Formally Receiving the Precept-body

**Karman ācārya** (*palms joined*): May the upādhyāya and the great assembly be unstinting in your kindness and compassion, and generously offer these precepts. Let us generate the same motivation to perform the karman together, and not allow our minds to wander to other objects. In order to help these disciples generate the complete and ideal precept-body, I will now perform the karman. Listen as I make the motion:

Virtuous saṅgha, please listen attentively. These nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, \_\_\_\_\_ and others, request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ for the full ordination. They now request the saṅgha to confer on them the full ordination with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. \_\_\_\_\_ and others have declared their purity, they do not have any obstacles or hindrances, they meet the age requirement, they have robes and an alms bowl, and they have received training in the precepts [and kept them] purely. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to confer the full ordination on \_\_\_\_\_ and others with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. This is the motion. Is this motion acceptable?

**Seven witnesses** (*palms joined, in unison*): Yes.<sup>61</sup>

**Karman ācārya** (*palms joined*): Virtuous saṅgha, please listen attentively. These nuns ordained by the bhikṣuṇīs alone, \_\_\_\_\_ and others, request bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ for the full ordination. They now request the saṅgha to confer on them the full ordination with Vinaya

<sup>60</sup> The *Bhikṣuṇī Prātimokṣa Sūtra* says, “The precepts are as limitless as the ocean, like jewels that can be sought tirelessly.” Bhikṣuṇīs have 348 precepts according to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, but each main precept also has subsidiary lower level offenses that are laid out in *A Compendium of Tables on the Characteristics of Offenses in the Dharmaguptaka Bhikṣuṇī Precepts*, a compilation of many Vinaya commentaries studied by Chinese monastics. Ven. Hengchong adds that the precepts here can also refer to lay precepts and bodhisattva precepts; whatever precepts exist that support the practice of virtue.

<sup>61</sup> According to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, it is enough to assent through silence. Vinaya Master Daoxuan added the question and answer for an important karman. This footnote also applies to the three proclamations below.

Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. \_\_\_\_\_ and others have declared their purity, they do not have any obstacles or hindrances, they meet the age requirement, they have robes and an alms bowl, and they have received training in the precepts [and kept them] purely. If the saṅgha is ready, may the saṅgha agree to confer the full ordination on \_\_\_\_\_ and others with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. Those elders who agree that the saṅgha confers the full ordination on \_\_\_\_\_ and others with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā remain silent. Those who do not agree speak up. This is the first (second, third) proclamation.<sup>62</sup> Is this proclamation acceptable?

**Seven witnesses** (*palms joined, in unison*): Yes.

**Karman ācārya:** The saṅgha has agreed and completed conferring the full ordination on \_\_\_\_\_ and others with Vinaya Master \_\_\_\_\_ as their bhikṣuṇī upādhyāyā. Since the saṅgha has shown its silent approval, this matter will proceed as decided.

## 15. Announcing and Noting the Time of the Ordination

Vinaya Master Jianyue Dutī's *Further Explanation of "The Practice of the Vinaya"* (*Pi Ni Zuo Chi Xu Shi*) says that the karman for ordination by the bhikṣuṇīs alone is only a preliminary. It is not the time to explain the precepts as the disciples have not officially received the full precepts. Also, they have not received ordination from a full quorum of twenty teachers from the two saṅghas.

**Upādhyāyā:** The one-motion three-proclamations karman is now complete. The three of you have received the bhikṣuṇī precept-body. Remember the year, month, date, and time when you received the precepts so that it is easy to distinguish your place in the bhikṣuṇī saṅgha according to seniority. The three of you received the precepts on \_\_\_\_\_ lunar year<sup>63</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ month \_\_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ time. You are the \_\_\_\_\_ group that received the full ordination.

## 16. Transmitting the Characteristics of the Precepts

**Karman ācārya:**<sup>64</sup> Disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha, listen attentively. The Tathāgata, Arhat, Fully Awakened One, explained these eight defeats (*pārājika*). If a bhikṣuṇī commits any of these, she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha.

First, do not engage in the impure conduct of sexual activity. If a bhikṣuṇī delights in engaging in the impure conduct of sexual activity, even with an animal, she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

---

<sup>62</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>63</sup> CBETA edition has "year in the reign of the Kangxi Emperor," which the Jinling edition updates to "lunar year."

<sup>64</sup> The rite does not specify the speaker for "Transmitting the Characteristics of the Precepts" and "Explaining the Four Reliances." According to the *Bhikṣuṇī Skandhaka*, this is done by the karman ācārya. In modern times, this is usually done by the upādhyāyā.

Second, do not steal, even a blade of grass. If a bhikṣuṇī 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], she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

Third, do not deliberately take a sentient being's life, even that of an ant. If a bhikṣuṇī kills a human being herself, gives a weapon to someone [for that purpose], advises death, praises death, gives someone [poison or] the wrong medicine, 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 bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

Fourth, do not lie, even in jest. If a bhikṣuṇī lacks [spiritual attainments] but falsely claims that she has attained superhuman faculties, meditative stabilization (*dhyāna*), liberation (*vimokṣa*), concentration (*samādhi*) or [other] attainments (*samāpatti*); or the result of stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, or arhat; or claims that devas, nāgas, ghosts, or spirits come to make offerings to her, she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

Fifth, do not have [improper] physical contact with others, even with an animal. If a bhikṣuṇī with a lustful mind has physical contact with a man with a lustful mind in the area between her armpits and knees, by touching, stroking, pulling, pushing, rubbing up or down, lifting or lowering her, grasping, or pressing, she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

Sixth, do not engage in the eight transgressions, even with an animal. Suppose a bhikṣuṇī knows a man has a lustful mind, yet allows him to hold her hand, grasp her clothes, and lead her to a secluded place, where they stand together, talk together, walk together, lean on each other, and make an appointment to meet [to have intercourse]. If a bhikṣuṇī engages in these eight transgressions, she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

Seventh, do not conceal another's offense, including even wrongdoings (*duṣkṛta*) and wrong speech (*durbhāṣita*). Suppose a bhikṣuṇī, knowing that another bhikṣuṇī has committed a defeat, does not point out the offense, report it to the saṅgha, or make it known to others. Later, after that bhikṣuṇī has abandoned the path, been expelled by the saṅgha, been prohibited from participating in saṅgha matters, or joined a non-Buddhist sect, if she says, "I knew that she had previously committed such a transgression," she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

Eighth, do not associate with a bhikṣu—even the guardian of the *ārāma*<sup>65</sup>—or śrāmaṇera who has been suspended by the saṅgha. Suppose a bhikṣuṇī continues to associate with a bhikṣu whom she knows has been suspended by a saṅghakarman according to the Dharma, the Vinaya, and the Buddha’s teaching and has not yet been absolved through a karman because of his refusal to cooperate and repent. The other bhikṣuṇīs advise her, “Venerable, do you know that bhikṣu has been suspended by a saṅghakarman according to the Dharma, the Vinaya, and the Buddha’s teaching and has not yet been absolved through a karman because of his refusal to cooperate and repent? Do not associate with him.” When the other bhikṣuṇīs advise this bhikṣuṇī, if she persists in her misconduct, the bhikṣuṇīs should admonish her up to three times so that she can repent. If she repents upon the third admonition, good. If not, she is not a bhikṣuṇī or a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha due to associating with a bhikṣu suspended by a karman. You must observe this precept for life without transgression. Can you keep it?

**All:** Yes, I can.

The Mahīśāsaka Vinaya says, “After explaining the eight defeats, explain the four similes in general. You should speak to them in this way, ‘Disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha, listen. After the Tathāgata, the Arhat, established the eight defeats, he also explained four similes: Committing any of the eight defeats is like a person’s head being cut off; she can no longer survive. It is also like cutting through the core of a tall *tāla* (palm) tree; it can no longer grow. It is also like a needle missing its eye; it is no longer useful. It is also like splitting a boulder into two; it can no longer be made whole.’” If a bhikṣuṇī commits any of the eight defeats, she can no longer return to practice as a bhikṣuṇī. You must observe these precepts for life without transgression. Can you keep them?

**All:** Yes, I can.

## 17. Next Explain the Four Reliances

**Karman ācārya** (*continues*): Disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha, listen attentively. The Tathāgata, Arhat, Fully Awakened One, established the four reliances. By relying on these, bhikṣuṇīs obtain the going forth and receive the full ordination. This is how you become a bhikṣuṇī.

**Karman ācārya:** First, bhikṣuṇīs rely on rag-robes. By relying on this, bhikṣuṇīs obtain the going forth and receive the full ordination. This is how you become a bhikṣuṇī. Can you observe this for life?

**All:** Yes, I can.

**Karman ācārya:** If you receive such extra offerings as a robe given by a donor or a robe cut and sewn from strips, you may accept them.

**Karman ācārya:** Second, bhikṣuṇīs rely on going for alms food. By relying on this, bhikṣuṇīs obtain the going forth and receive the full ordination. This is how you become a bhikṣuṇī. Can you observe this for life?

**All:** Yes, I can.

---

<sup>65</sup> An enclosed area, often in or near a city, which contained permanent dwellings for the use of monastics during the annual rains retreat. (*Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*)



**Karman ācārya:** If you receive such extra offerings as being assigned by the saṅgha to receive a meal at a donor's home; food delivered by a donor; food offered on the eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, or new moon day of the month; food that is regularly offered to the saṅgha; or an invitation to a meal from a donor, you may accept them.

**Karman ācārya:** Third, bhikṣuṇīs rely on dwelling under a tree. By relying on this, bhikṣuṇīs obtain the going forth and receive the full ordination. This is how you become a bhikṣuṇī. Can you observe this for life?

**All:** Yes, I can.

**Karman ācārya:** If you receive such extra offerings as a lodging for personal use, a house with a pointed [thatched] roof, a small house, a room made of stone [i.e. a cave], a two-room house, you may accept them.

**Karman ācārya:** Fourth, bhikṣuṇīs rely on discarded medicine.<sup>66</sup> By relying on this, bhikṣuṇīs obtain the going forth and receive the full ordination. This is how you become a bhikṣuṇī. Can you observe this for life?

**All:** Yes, I can.

**Karman ācārya:** If you receive such extra offerings as ghee, oil, butter, honey, or crystallized sugar, you may accept them.

In the Vinaya it is recorded that because bhikṣuṇīs lived alone in forest dwellings (*araṇya*), obstacles [to the holy life] arose, therefore the Buddha prohibited them from dwelling under a tree.<sup>67</sup> Here it is still explained according to the original text so that you are aware of the four reliances.

**Karman ācārya:** The three of you have received the full ordination. The one-motion three-proclamations karman has been performed in accord with the Dharma. The territory established for you to obtain the precepts and the upādhyāyā were in accord with the Dharma. The ācāryas were in accord with the Dharma. The quorum of a qualified dual saṅgha was fulfilled.

You should receive the Buddha's teachings well, encourage lay followers to make merit, erect stūpas, and make offerings to the saṅgha. Do not violate or rebel against teachings from your upādhyāyā and ācāryas that are in accord with the Dharma. You should become learned, recite sutras, and diligently engage in the preliminary practices. Through practicing the Buddhadharma, you will obtain the fruits of a stream-enterer, once-returner, nonreturner, and arhat. Now that you have generated the motivation to go forth, your efforts will not be wasted, and the fruits of your practice will never be exhausted. If there is anything else you do not know, you should ask your upādhyāyā or ācāryas.

Bow once and pick up the sitting cloth. Go to the Buddha Hall and bow to the Buddhas.

*The newly ordained carry the sitting cloth and descend the platform from the southwest corner in the back. The second group until the final group also receive the ordination in this manner.*

<sup>66</sup> Ven. Jendy: This has several meanings, one of which is to use urine therapy. Another is to use the herbs that has been discarded which may still have some healing ability.

<sup>67</sup> The Buddha did not prohibit bhikṣuṇīs from dwelling under trees, but prohibited them from doing so alone.

**Upādhyāya:** The full ordination is complete. Let us recite the homage to the Buddha in unison and dedicate the merit.

*The newly ordained carry the sitting cloth and descend the platform. The ten bhikṣuṇī teachers descend first and divide and stand on both sides.*

## **18. Dedication of Merit and Leaving the Platform**

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. At the sound of the bell, bow three times. Lift your robe. (*disciples bow*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

*The nine teachers on the platform divide into two rows, five in front and four behind. The ten bhikṣuṇī teachers also face the Buddha and form rows, one in front and nine behind. They face the Buddha and bow three times or one time. After making a half-bow, the ten bhikṣuṇī teachers retreat outside the ordination hall [i.e. to the terrace]. The ten teachers on the platform descend the platform from the stairs on the right, the last in line going first. They circumambulate from the northeast corner to the front of the platform. The foremost teacher stands in the first row, followed by the nine teachers and the ten bhikṣuṇī teachers.*

### **Chant leader:**

Ordination is a virtuous wonderful deed.

We dedicate the boundless, magnificent merit. (*teachers bow together*)

May all sentient beings submerged in suffering

Quickly go to the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Light. (*as above*)

Homage to all Buddhas in ten directions and three times,

To all bodhisattvas mahāsattvas, (*as above*)

And to the great Prajñāpāramitā. (*twenty teachers half-bow and stand facing each other*)

*The upādhyāya turns and stands facing the south. Two guides lead the newly ordained, the last in line going first. After the newly ordained, the ten bhikṣuṇī teachers follow, the last in line going first. The nine bhikṣu teachers follow, the last in line going first. Two guides ring hand-bells alternately and walk in front of the upādhyāya. The newly ordained arrive at the abbot's room, form two columns facing each other, and kneel with palms joined. After the teachers have processed in front of them, they rise and follow in two lines and stand in rows before the abbot's room. The upādhyāya faces south. The nineteen teachers face the Buddha in their rows and bow three times or one time, and divide in the shape of the Chinese character for "eight."*

**Guide:** Everyone face the Buddha. At the sound of the bell, bow three times in gratitude. (*teachers join their palms*) Lift your robe. (*disciples bow*) Pick up the sitting cloth. Half-bow. Face the central aisle.

The upādhyāya enters his room and the other teachers disperse. The newly ordained bow to thank the guides, then return to their rooms in order.

End of the Dual Saṅgha Ordination Rite

## Afterword

This rite appears to be extremely easy, but it is truly difficult to put into practice. If you do not possess great capacity and great forbearance, you will not have faith in this procedure. The Buddha said that women are deluded and have many afflictions. Due to anger arising, they have obstacles to diligent practice. Due to arrogance arising, they have obstacles to conferring and receiving the precepts in accord with the Vinaya. As these afflictions delude the mind, they obstruct the attainment of the noble path.

For this reason, when the Buddha's stepmother Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, together with five hundred women from the Śākya clan, arrived outside his gate at Jetavana and requested the going-forth, the Buddha did not give his permission. Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, her feet cracked from walking, her body covered in dust, wept and refused to leave. Seeing this, Ānanda felt sympathy and requested the Buddha three times. With compassion, the Buddha established the eight heavy dharma for them and said, "If you can observe these without transgression for life, I will allow you to go forth." Ānanda conveyed the Buddha's instruction and Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and others responded thrice that they would uphold the eight heavy dharma with utmost respect. Thus, the bhikṣuṇī order was established.

Later, the Buddha established that the full ordination could be received through twenty bhikṣus and bhikṣuṇīs performing a one-motion three-proclamations karman. As the commentaries say, due to bhikṣuṇīs upholding the eight heavy dharma, they are able to prevent the Buddha's true Dharma from diminishing. Alas, in this degenerate age, fully ordained nuns abound like jute and millet, yet if you seek to find one who knows the eight heavy dharma, there is none, let alone those who put them into practice.

The *Brahmā Net Sūtra* says, "All sentient beings have buddha nature. Whoever has buddha nature can become a buddha."

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says, "Although all sentient beings have buddha nature, they have to observe precepts, then their [buddha nature] can be revealed." It also says, "Women who realize their buddha nature are great beings amongst women."

At present, the Venerable Master Juyuan is such a person. She is able to practice the eight heavy dharma and learn from others in accord with the Vinaya. Further, together with her brother, the layperson Zhou Hanping, they have requested me to compose this rite so they may publish it for circulation. I know that the two masters did not do this for their own benefit, but out of the wish that everyone may know how to confer and receive the bhikṣuṇī precepts in accord with the Vinaya, so that the Vinaya will remain for a long time in this world! Their motivation to support the Dharma should also continue to be passed down and never deteriorate.

On the second day of the second month, I set my pen down with this afterword.

### Credits

Translated by Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Damcho, Sravasti Abbey, USA.

Based on the annotated critical edition by Bhikṣu Xianshi Shih, Longquan Monastery, China.

With revisions by Alice Cheng, Longquan Monastery, China, and Bhikṣu Jinyong Shih, City of 10,000 Buddhas, USA.