

# Anagáriká Training Handbook

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*Dedicated to all our Dhamma teachers  
- past, present, and those to come*

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*"To do good, to refrain from doing evil, and to purify the mind.  
This is the teaching of the Buddhas."*



# INTRODUCTION

The first version of this Vinaya reference booklet was compiled in the late 1990's for women aspiring to join the Sīladharā Nuns' community of Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in the U.K. Originally adapted from an older manuscript for western male postulants of Ajahn Chah's Forest Saṅgha, it provides ethical guidelines and instructions on monastic etiquette and conventions.

Since that time, the new millennium has seen ground-breaking changes: bhikkhunī ordination has been restored in the Theravada tradition and monasteries for the training of Theravada bhikkhunīs are emerging across the world. This revised anagārikā handbook reflects, in particular, adaptations to the anagārikā form in relationship to the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha and refinements relevant to those interested in higher ordination themselves.

With head shaved, wearing white robes, eating from a bowl, and renouncing worldly ways, an anagārikā has a unique opportunity to try out the holy life. She enters into a process that requires dramatic changes in her external appearance but is also internally transformative. In a gradual and almost indiscernible way, this brings forth a great purification and deepening of wisdom proportionate to her ability to surrender and serve, tread mindfully, listen well, and practise with joy and gratitude to the Triple Gem.

Among the new bhikkhunī monasteries in the West, variations of training style and focus are developing. Just as community members who train together become mirrors for each other, these differences can refresh and strengthen us – as long as we are open to learning from one another, making adjustments to improve, or letting go what warrants letting go while sustaining the integrity of our practice.

In that spirit, this document is offered as a working draft, still to be edited and updated. We are grateful for corrections and revisions that would better convey and uphold the Dhamma-Vinaya for present and future generations of Buddhist women on the path to awakening.

# I. ORDINATION

## I.1 AIM AND SPIRIT OF LEAVING HOME

The Buddha exhorted those with little dust in their eyes to 'go forth' from home to homelessness for the deliverance from *dukkha*. We are still able to do that in the monastic tradition he founded more than two and a half millennia ago. To the rationalist, sceptic or philosopher, many aspects of Theravada Buddhist monasticism can seem overly austere and some of the rules strange or illogical, but for those intent on pulling out the arrow of suffering, the homeless life leads in one direction only – virtue, wisdom, and a peace unobtainable through the way of rationality or materialism.

Ordination is the first step in the transition from lay life to a monastic training that gradually prepares an *anagārikā* for 'going forth' as a *sāmaṇerī* and, later on, *vuṭṭhāpana-upasampada*, *bhikkhunī* ordination – if she is so inclined. Once ordained, the landscape of practice is daily living. We learn to use the tiniest nuance of the monastic form in the way we would learn to play a violin – taking great care to create harmonious sounds rather than a dissonance that would erupt from haphazardly tuning or bowing the strings. In the same way, we train ourselves to be mindful, patiently studying how to live with wisdom rather than being driven by rash impulse.

An *anagārikā*'s commitment to the holy life – usually a one year period – is founded on the Eight Precepts and Seventy-Five *Sekhiya* rules of deportment as her *Vinaya* standard, the ethical code of rules or precepts that govern every aspect of her conduct. Though far simpler than the *Bhikkhunī Vinaya*, her rules share the high value placed on renunciation, service to the community above one's own needs, and turning away from habitual worldly attitudes.

Invaluable for her initiation into monastic culture is the personal guidance and advice she receives from an experienced *bhikkhunī* who can answer her questions, address difficult points of *Vinaya*, and encourage her to investigate doubts that may arise rather than blindly conforming to monastic discipline. By engaging in such open and dynamic communication, the training can be attuned to each individual's qualities and capabilities.

To the new initiate, many small details may seem unimportant when, in fact, they are. She should not be shy to ask advice from a *Saṅgha* member who will appreciate the need for guidance and happily help out. However, when she does, it's also good to be aware of personal opinions or preferences that could slip in disguised as fixed norms.

For one who leaves home to awaken to truth, meditation is pivotal, but to further our understanding of human conditioning, we need to step out of the meditation hall. While performing our daily activities – studying, memorizing chants, cooking, cleaning or driving on errands – with heightened awareness, we can observe the mind's tendency to cling, attach, and identify; and we learn to use the monastic conventions skilfully so as to abandon the mind's habits of following personal desire. Applying mindfulness in performing our monastic duties also perfects our *dāna pārami*. We create a great field of merit with the generous acts of caring for the community and serving the *Saṅgha*.

The relentless containment in community and conformity to the many facets of

monastic culture are bound to test one's patience and stamina. If we find ourselves struggling with the discipline, frustrated, or feeling negative, it is always good to contemplate the teachings on the Four Noble Truths and investigate the origins of suffering in our own mind's habitual attachments. Whether preparing a meal or meditating on the cushion, the best antidote is to let go little by little using the simple practice of mindfulness and reflecting with a heart of gratitude on the opportunity to train in this way.

There are no short-cuts to the rigors and demands of this monastic passage. One who undertakes it with selfless devotion, patience, living mindfully and in accordance with Vinaya – has the opportunity to discover its profound treasures and experience incomparable contentment, resilience, and joy.

## I.2 TAKING THE THREE REFUGES AND THE EIGHT PRECEPTS

Foremost in the anagārikā training are the Eight Precepts, taken at the time of her ordination [see section XII.5] and then re-determined on the Lunar Observance Days approximately every two weeks thereafter. She is expected to learn how to ask for and recite these in Pali.

Approaching the senior bhikkhunī, the anagārikā kneels, bows three times, and with palms together in añjali [see section V.2], she begins by requesting the Three Refuges together with the Eight Precepts. Depending on the seniority of the presiding bhikkhunī, she would use **ayye, therī** or **mahātherī** as she recites the following lines:

**Ahaṃ\* ayye, tisaraṇena saha aṭṭha sīlāni yācāmi.\*** \*plural: **mayāṃ / yācamā**  
I, Venerable, request the Three Refuges and the Eight Precepts.

**Dutiyampi ahaṃ ayye, tisaraṇena saha aṭṭha sīlāni yācāmi.**  
For the second time, Venerable, I request the Three Refuges and the Eight Precepts.

**Tatiyampi ahaṃ ayye, tisaraṇena saha aṭṭha sīlāni yācāmi.**  
For the third time, Venerable, I request the Three Refuges together with the Eight Precepts.

She then takes the Triple Refuge, repeating in Pāli line by line:

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.** (3 times)  
Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

**Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**  
To the Buddha I go for refuge.

**Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**  
To the Dhamma I go for refuge.

**Sanḥamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**  
To the Saṅgha I go for refuge.

**Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**  
For the second time, to the Buddha I go for refuge.

**Dutiyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**





Anagārikā: **Imāni aṭṭha sikkhāpadāni samādiyāmi.** (3 times)

I undertake these Eight Precepts.

The anagārikā then bows three times and sits down on her sitting cloth. She may choose to use the ‘polite’ posture – called *phap phiap* in Thai, or ‘folded entirely’, neatly. It may provide welcome relief from sitting in a full or half lotus. To do this, while sitting cross-legged, shift one leg back so that both knees face forwards and both legs are literally ‘folded entirely’ back. The sole of one foot now rests against the inside of the opposite thigh, while the other foot and shin slide out slightly so that the buttocks rest on the floor.

## II. APPLYING THE PRECEPTS TO OUR PRACTICE

Taking the precepts means voluntarily undertaking a moral training that penetrates to the marrow of our conduct, speech and thought. An anagārikā commits to the training having sensed the emptiness and pain of worldly life. She has chosen to be 'homeless', to abide in the qualities of wisdom, truth and virtue, and she goes to the Triple Gem for refuge and for freedom from suffering.

The practice always begins with oneself. To have gone from home is to have left behind a lot of unnecessary possessions. We can reflect on what we really need to live in the Triple Refuge. Every day we can contemplate the four requisites that the Buddha deemed as necessary supports for the spiritual life – food, clothing, shelter and medicine. Three of the eight precepts deal specifically with cutting out any unnecessary indulgence in these requisites. The Bhikkhunī Vinaya goes into meticulous detail about the proper means of acquiring, using and maintaining these requisites with mindfulness.

The training promotes acquiring skill in speaking graciously, in relating to people, in seeing what help one can offer; learning to sit, walk and stand in a composed and careful way; realising how little one needs, and the benefits of a simple orderly life – these are all great blessings in anyone's life.

It can be said that a vigilant practise of mindfulness is really a way of co-existing peacefully with the mortal condition and learning to use the conventions of body and mind wisely rather than being used by them.

*"Heedfulness is the path to the Deathless,  
Heedlessness is the path to death."*

*(Dhammapada.1.v.1)*

### II.1 HARMLESSNESS

The first precept is to refrain from destroying living creatures. It exhorts us to be non-violent and harmless towards all beings, including humans, animals, and even insects. By caring for all forms of life, we refrain from intentionally taking the life of any being. There will be instances in the most ordinary and seemingly benign activities when causing injury is unavoidable, for example, walking along a path where we accidentally and unknowingly

tread on unseen insects, but we can make efforts to minimise this through mindfulness.

When washing laundry, dishes, or bathing, we check to see if any insects would be harmed by the running water; when walking outside, on a rainy night, if possible, we can carry a flashlight to avoid stepping on spiders or other creatures that may wander in our way. We begin to look out for all forms of life with the intent to rescue and save living beings rather than treat them with carelessness or disdain that may result even in the slightest harm.

Another important aspect of harmlessness is how we relate to each other, in particular, the practice of right speech: not lying; not using harsh or malicious speech, or unkind words, even if what we are saying is true; not gossiping about others; and not causing dissension or conflict in the community. This is a very difficult training to fulfill, so much compassion is needed for ourselves and others as we endeavour to live together skilfully.

## **II.2 TRUTHFULNESS**

Morality, *sīla*, is the cornerstone of the practice on which all other aspects of this path of purification depend. When it shapes the way we act and speak, we protect ourselves and each other, not to mention the integrity of the whole community, from the undermining effects of heedlessness. More than just reigning in blind impulse, refining *sīla* becomes a cause for wise reflection on our actions and speech, and more importantly, the motives behind them.

The training to refrain from both false and harmful speech and the training to refrain from taking things that have not been given help us to cultivate an attitude of honesty, gentleness, and respect for ourselves and others. We nurture an inner harmony and serenity born of wholesome intentions. With regards to speech, this means being upright about what and how we speak, taking care not to lie or misrepresent the truth in our communications with others, and to speak in a way that brings no harm to anyone. Sometimes in keeping silent, we unwittingly compromise our integrity through fear, weakness or complacency with regard to this precept. These less obvious breaches of this precept are worthy of astute reflection.

To refrain from taking things that are not given means we cultivate an attitude of respect for the property of others as well as for communal things. Just as we should ask to use another's belongings, we should request permission from the appropriate person in charge to take things from the kitchen, communal stores, or use furnishings from any part of the monastery for our own needs.

Mindfulness in every area of community living and work is the kernel of care and respect. In the kitchen, for example, we should not snack while cooking nor between meals without permission, nor should we eat leftovers while clearing up just to finish them as we may have done in lay life. When using monastic facilities such as telephones or computers, permission should be requested, a record kept of the transaction, and any costs reimbursed if incurred, for example, when making a long distance phone call.

### II.3 CELIBACY

Giving up any form of sexual activity is a defining practice of monasticism – 'mono' means single, one, being alone or separate. It is not an ethical pronouncement on sexual union or its pleasures but a renunciation and restraint of physical gratification that frees us to develop a communion or union that is transcendent rather than physical. We do so by devoting our full attention and energy to spiritual investigation and contemplation. Properly understood and practised, celibacy strengthens and refines our ethical conscientiousness in our relationships with others as well as within our own minds by enhancing our ability to know what undermines or supports mindfulness and wisdom.

An anagārikā should completely avoid physical contact with men and any kind of romantic liaison, interest or lustful interaction with anyone, male or female. Unnecessary conversations and correspondence are discouraged, as are private or social engagements with laymen or male monastics visiting the community. We should try to be mindful and reflect on every interaction: is it necessary, is it suitable, is it the right time or place, what is our true intention?

Situations may come up where an anagārikā finds herself working in close proximity in the kitchen or garden with a layperson, for example, a plumber, carpenter or visitor coming to help with a project. Being mindful of her thoughts, attitude, intention, speech, and body language can make such situations fruitful for performing communal work, developing a wholesome community spirit, and being helpful to lay supporters who have come to volunteer in the running of the monastery or to offer dāna. If she is aware of any concern arising, she should seek the advice of a bhikkhunī.

Similarly, she should follow the observances of the bhikkhunī training rules regarding any kind of body work, including massage, reiki, stretching, etc. It should not be undertaken just for pleasure but only in the case of tension, tiredness, or physical pain. It is good practice to mention to a bhikkhunī if she is to receive or give a massage, for example, and to discontinue it and immediately consult the bhikkhunī should she experience any doubt about the contact.

This precept requires refraining completely from gratifying or creating an outlet for sexual desire; not to self-stimulate in any way such as masturbation, reading romantic novels, looking at provocative photos or other unsuitable materials in electronic or printed form. She should refrain from stimulating erotic thoughts or sexual desire caused by attraction or attachment to the bodily form. Even looking at herself in the mirror should only be for the purpose of monitoring an injury, head-shaving, or when sewing or repairing robes.

Despite some immediate gratification, the longer term effects of activities that indulge in sensual desires are feeling ill at ease with oneself, wasting time, and dispersing energy that could be better used to transform consciousness and let go of worldly conditions. Although it is a practice of restraint, celibacy is not a shutting down, denial or repression of sexual energy, but rather a way of learning to understand it and provide a skilful container for its transformation.

## II.4 RENUNCIATION

The remaining precepts clearly underline the importance of the renunciation of worldly habits to strengthen our practice. We should use the food that the monastery provides, and avoid keeping food in our room. Adjusting to eating one to two meals a day and not eating in the afternoon may take some time and patience. If an anagārikā is not getting enough to eat, she should inform a bhikkhunī.

Each day we reflect on the meal we receive as alms food that gives us enough strength to lead the holy life, not to beautify the body or simply for a pleasurable experience. This is not to exclude enjoying the good taste of food, but to be mindful of any attachment that may arise and to emphasize the practice of gratitude for what we eat. We acknowledge the kindness of those who offer the food while sharpening wisdom through contemplation of the true nature of the body.

Wearing robes, shaving the head, eating alms food, eating only until midday, abstaining from intoxicants and giving up our personal freedom in spiritual community are all aspects of living as a renunciant. This means not only living simply and harmlessly, having few possessions, and refraining from using food for emotional sustenance. It also means giving up adornments, jewellery, perfumes, cosmetics, and old habits of trying to beautify or attract attention to oneself, focusing instead on simplicity and non-attachment to one's appearance.

Our energies are harnessed to the work of calming, clearing and stilling the mind rather than exciting the senses through external forms of gratification. Nevertheless, out of care and self-respect, we are encouraged to eat wisely for our physical health and well-being and to maintain a pleasant and clean personal appearance. We are also urged to be mindful in the care of our robes, personal belongings, and accommodation as well as communal living areas.

Renunciation is also reinforced by the monastic environment itself which excludes the usual entertainments and distractions of worldly life such as watching television; going to films, theatre, dances, or sporting events; reading fiction; playing with electronic gadgets; indulging in food for sense pleasure; and excessive chatting in social situations, by phone, or by electronic means. We voluntarily give up these activities not because they are inherently wrong or unethical but because we know that this will be conducive to purifying and stilling the mind to realize the higher blessings of spiritual contemplation.

## II.5 FOCUS AND COMMITMENT

The eighth precept encourages an attitude of wakefulness – not using our sleeping place to lounge about in or to indulge in excessive comfort and leisure. Rising early, we begin the day with meditation, and focus on being awake to what we are experiencing, attending to the present moment, and calling up all of our energy to clear the mind and lift it out of its old habits.

Each fortnight, on the Uposatha day, anagārikās request the Three Refuges, the Eight Precepts, and feedback as a way of re-establishing and reaffirming their commitment to the training. This practice should be given priority. If an anagārikā is finding it difficult to observe

any of the precepts, is in doubt, or has broken a precept, she should ask for guidance from the bhikkhunī responsible for her training as soon as possible. Usually this can be rectified by re-determining the precept, and openly discussing and clarifying the spirit of the training and her own aspirations.

The process of acknowledging an error or omission to a Dhamma sister, asking for and receiving forgiveness, and restoring right relationship to the precepts is quintessential to the integrity of Vinaya. It is natural to make mistakes, but we must weed out habits that detract from our well-being. Over time, as we mature in perseverance and understanding, we begin to experience the fruits of the training.

### III. THE RELATIONSHIP OF DEPENDENCE

The Bhikkhunī Saṅgha is a refuge for the laity, anagārikās, sāmaṇerīs, and bhikkhunīs alike. Living in spiritual community is also a source of strength and comfort when one is struggling, discouraged or even depressed. Similarly, the way that an anagārikā acts and her receptivity to other people affect the community as a whole. We begin to see that to practise for the welfare of all beings is to practise for oneself and to practise for oneself is to practise for the welfare of all beings.

So an important aspect of Saṅgha life is how we relate to other monastics and lay visitors and how we care for and respect each other within the hierarchical convention. Though only a convention, it can be of great benefit when Saṅgha members practise to be worthy examples and sources of inspiration and anagārikās practise to be receptive and attentive to their needs.

#### III.1 REQUESTING DEPENDENCE AND FORGIVENESS

The monastic relationship of dependence is formalised in the request for dependence which all members of the community make to the senior bhikkhunī. One takes dependence when first joining the community, at the time of ordination, before the Rains Retreat (Vassa), or when returning from a long trip away. Bow three times, kneel with hands in añjali, and chant the Pāli phrases:

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.** (3 times)

Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

**Ācarinī me ayye hohi, ayyāya\* nissāya vacchāmi.** (3 times)

May you, Venerable Lady, be my teacher.

I shall live in dependence on the Venerable One.

Ayyā chants:

Anagārikā responds:

**Opāyikaṃ.** It is proper.

**Sādhu ayye.** Yes, I agree, Venerable Lady.

**Paṭirūpaṃ.** It is suitable.

**Sādhu ayye.** Yes, I agree, Venerable Lady.

**Pāsādikena sampādehi.** Strive on with faith.

**Sādhu ayye.** Yes, I agree, Venerable Lady.

Anagārikā: (bowing 3 times)

**Ajjataggeḍāni ayye\* mayhaṃ bhāro.** \*(for 10 vassa bhikkhunī use 'therī';  
**Ahampi ayyāya\* bhāro.** & 'theriyā')

From this day onwards the Venerable Lady's burden will be mine,  
And I shall be the burden of the Venerable Lady.

She concludes with three bows.

During the period of the Rains Retreat, which usually begins on the full moon of July and ends on the full moon of October, the monastic community remains within the monastic boundary. On certain occasions, a member of the Saṅgha may leave for up to seven days to fulfil certain duties such as teaching Dhamma or attending a formal meeting of the Saṅgha in another monastery. Often, the sense of spiritual community is most developed during this period of the monastic calendar.

In Asia, the rainy season corresponds to our summer, which in the West is our busiest time of year. Still, we keep to the spirit of traditional training by focusing on monastic discipline during the Vassa while devoting our winter season to greater interior focus, solitude, and meditation.

Customarily, the community avows the Vassa one by one in order of seniority, first chanting:

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.** (3 times)  
Homage to the Blessed, Noble, and Perfectly Enlightened One.

Then each recites as follows three times (for additional chants, see Appendix XII.1.5):

**Imasmim āvāse imaṃ te māsaṃ Vassaṃ upemi.\*** \*upema for two or more  
I enter the Rains in this monastery for three months.

The community then collectively asks for forgiveness from the senior bhikkhunī for any wrongs committed by body, speech or mind:

**Ayyāya\* pamādena dvārattayena kataṃ** \*theriyā /for elder bhikkhunīs  
**Sabbaṃ aparādhaṃ khamatu no\* ayye.** \*me for one person

Forgive us (me), Venerable Lady, for all wrongs carelessly done to the Venerable One by body, speech or mind.

Ayyā: **Ahaṃ khamāmi tumhehi\* pi me khamitabbaṃ.** \*tayā for one person  
I forgive you, may you all also forgive me.

All reply: **Khamāma / khamāmi ayye.**  
We / I forgive you, Venerable Lady.

The ācarinī or senior bhikkhunī chants a blessing after which all respond:

**Sādhu ayye.**  
Yes, Venerable Lady.

This is followed by the 'Request for Dependence' as above.

An anagārikā, like every member of the monastic community, also asks for forgiveness before leaving the monastery overnight, or if the senior bhikkhunī leaves for a period of time. As is implicit in the above, the relationship of ācarinī goes a little further than what the English word ‘teacher’ conveys since the relationship and the teacher’s response to it are as much a part of the teaching as her sermons. The ācarinī can teach by listening, responding, or even not responding, as well as by her example of attending to different aspects of practice with patience, joy, discernment and thoroughness.

The training is to practice obedience and acceptance of feedback from one’s teacher without trying to respond or justify one’s conduct. During the fortnightly precept ceremony, the anagārikā formally asks for admonishment or feedback from the senior bhikkhunī. Opening oneself in this way requires trust, restraint, receptivity, and humility. As with many aspects of the lifestyle, it encourages patient attention and awareness of, rather than indulgence in, one’s reactions. Seeing the impermanent nature of highly charged opinions, likes, and dislikes helps to free one from their grip so that one can respond more and more from wise insight into one’s conditioning.

## **IV. DEVELOPING A SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY**

In becoming part of a spiritual community, the Vinaya, the form, the daily routine, and the renunciant lifestyle are all used to relate to something beyond our personal condition. As individuals we are separate and in conflict, but from the perspective of Dhamma, we are no longer inclined to function as separate unrelated beings. We practise sharing, eating, working, meditating and chanting together, not just for our own understanding and welfare, but for all beings.

Our life is sustained through the gifts of others – alms food and requisites that we receive. The clothes, toiletries, and medicines that we use are kept in communal stores. Fortnightly, we reaffirm our precepts, confess our transgressions, and make ourselves open and available for feedback and guidance in face to face encounters with our peers and spiritual teachers.

These practical aspects of our life provide the conventions and the context in which we practice letting go our attachments and deepening our understanding. As wisdom, clarity, and kindness mature, we see the vipāka of our individual lives from the perspective of an enlightened tradition that continually nourishes us and offers us a source of reflection.

### **IV.1 PRESENCE AND ABSENCE**

Taking refuge in Saṅgha, we also give ourselves to community life, join in communal activities and make ourselves available to care for and assist each other. It becomes very natural to inform the Saṅgha of our comings and goings. In a way, all of our actions are public acts.

When there is a need to be absent from morning or evening meditations, the almsgiving ceremony, breakfast, or a work project due to illness or tiredness, an anagārikā should always ask permission from and inform the senior bhikkhunī why she is unable to



participate; likewise with the person organising any work she may have undertaken. If the person responsible is not immediately available, she should write a note or send her apologies through someone else in the community.

The mendicant life demands a degree of physical and emotional resilience and one should know, or at least investigate, the difference between discomfort and illness. We can usually handle a lot more than we think. At the same time, we should respect our health and not take on more than we are able.

Attending daily meditations and being present at the meal to receive the alms food should always be given priority. If one is not yet sick – or not really sick – it's important to try to know our own nature, to avoid dwelling in negative states, and to be as truly honest with oneself when feeling a need to be absent.

During the fifteenth century, St. Therese of Avila described how undue attachment to oneself, to one's aches and pains, could be a source of endless agitation. "Hardly does our head begin to ache than we stop going to choir, which won't kill us either. We stay away one day because our head ached, another because it was just now aching, and three more so that it won't ache again! "

In the case of over-tiredness or sickness, it's good to rest. Since others cannot necessarily be aware of our state of health, we should try to communicate any health problems; and when ill, be easy to look after rather than complaining. Special foods, medicines or other items may be needed. If special needs cannot be obtained from the monastery kitchen or Saṅgha stores, these can usually be purchased. An anagārikā who has money and requires extra medicine or special items should pay for or reimburse any purchases made on her behalf.

During illness, it sometimes helps to find something to do such as learn some chants. Too much self-disparagement can slow recovery. Being ill also provides an opportunity for insight to arise. We can learn about old emotional habits just by allowing ourselves to observe and contemplate our tendency to indulge moods easily or to feel self pity and demand a lot of attention in order to receive sympathy.

Other reasons why an anagārikā might be absent from community meetings or pujas is her need to leave the monastery, whether it be for an errand, a short trip such as a doctor's appointment, or a long journey. In each case, she should check first with a bhikkhunī. If she goes for a walk in the forest on the monastery property, she need only mention this to a resident – for safety in case she gets lost – and make sure there is no conflict with the scheduled work time or her other duties.

For long periods of absence, the senior bhikkhunī should be consulted. This helps to clarify one's relationship to the community and the reasons why and where one is going. It is also considerate to the community to facilitate passing on one's chores and responsibilities to someone else during one's absence. Such sensitivity and deference to the needs of the community as a whole brings forth a generosity of heart while establishing right relationship to the Saṅgha.

Before leaving the monastery overnight, one should take proper leave from the senior bhikkhunī with three bows. For extended absences, it is customary to ask forgiveness and offer a tray with candles, incense and flowers. Rather than just a formality, this can be a

time of putting down difficult feelings that may have been held and expressing gratitude.

## **IV.2 ATTITUDE OF SERVICE**

An attitude of service and commitment helps to foster a group consciousness which in turn supports both the harmony of the community and one's own progress in the holy life. This becomes evident in large and small ways through the extent and manner of one's participation in the monastic routine. A conscious determination and resolution to arouse extra effort may be needed, for example, in regular attendance at pujas and one's readiness to join in the work.

The spirit of well-being in the community also depends largely on each person's sense of responsibility in upholding the moral standards and hierarchical conventions of our monastic way of life and in helping to use and maintain the community's facilities and resources with care and consideration. Living in community means a balanced and skilful use of one's energy in other ways too, such as observing silence at appropriate times; chanting wholeheartedly in meal blessings and other gatherings; volunteering to help when there is a need and also resting at the right times; requesting permission according to the conventions observed in the Saṅgha; and making oneself easy to train.

## **V. DEPARTMENT**

### **V.1 MODESTY AND COMPOSURE**

The way we interact in community can reverberate and affect everyone present. In spiritual community, we aim to develop greater sensitivity, mutual respect, and openness through skilful behaviour and using appropriate conventions of bodily posture and speech. For her own benefit, it is helpful for an anagārikā to make every effort to conduct herself in a gentle and composed manner. Mindfulness and a peaceful life will naturally bring this about, but the following observances offer good reflections.

An anagārikā should:

- refrain from shouting. It is more skilful to go near to speak to someone rather than shouting across distances, especially in a building or a room where others are speaking. This allows us to reflect on the impulses behind speech;
- not go about laughing loudly, bellowing or guffawing - familiar ways of expressing joyful exuberance outside the monastery. This is not to proscribe joy but rather to reflect on the way we unleash its energy, in particular, when it leads to careless, immoderate, or foolish behaviour in oneself and others;
- dress modestly, properly covering herself just above the elbows and below the knees; not to wear the robes so that they can be seen through; not lying down in public view; and not going around in undergarments,

especially outside one's living quarters. Nudity is to be avoided in the presence of any other person, including anagārikās, bhikkhunīs or sāmaṇerīs – even in private areas.

These principles may seem quaint or fussy at first, but they are useful tools to refine all that is ungracious and coarse in our worldly conditioning.

## V.2 BOWING AND DEFERENCE

When we first enter the monastery, we bow at the main shrine. In the same way, when meeting another samana, especially an elder, we make añjali, especially when returning to the monastery after being away.

In bowing, make three prostrations, one to the Buddha, one to the Dhamma, and one to the Saṅgha. If we visit or stay in another monastery – even for a short time – or return from an overnight trip, when it is convenient for the senior bhikkhunī in the monastery we can pay respects, that is, bow three times. Bowing is the attitude of respect that characterises the monastic life, a voluntary submission of the self to that which is beyond the self, and the symbol of spiritual aspiration. If we cannot learn to bow willingly in body, speech and mind, we may be unable to open to the immortal and let go of the encrusted drives and aversions that cause suffering and keep us in our ignorance.

We bow physically many times daily – to the Triple Gem on entering or leaving the shrine room; to the senior bhikkhunī at the beginning and end of the day; and as a regular part of morning and evening meditations. Saṅgha members bow to their senior when making confession, on entering or leaving one's own meditation cell or kuti, before sleep at night, and when rising in the morning.

A suggestion for how to bow:

- kneel with the back straight, press palms together, fingers pointing upwards and forehead inclining towards them until they touch;
- bring the hands down in front of the body, separate the palms at waist level, turn them down and forward to touch the floor at arm's length directly in front of the knees;
- at the same time, rest the elbows on the floor and bend the torso until the forehead touches the floor on the small space between the palms;
- rise, bringing palms together at the forehead;
- repeat three times, ending the third bow by inclining the forehead to meet both hands as they ascend.

In some situations, if one is uncertain, one can ask: “Is it appropriate to bow?” for example, in wet conditions, traffic, or crowds. In such cases, one can greet and take leave of Saṅgha by raising the palms together in añjali. The gesture of añjali is a graceful expression of deference and respect. Aside from greeting and taking leave, it is used when speaking to a Saṅgha member during formal occasions. It serves as a tool of mindfulness that can help guard against any mannerism or words that might be ill-considered, flippant, or abusive.

We make añjali when passing an item to someone senior, when juniors address their seniors, when samanās greet each other, while chanting and bowing, or when receiving

something which has been offered, especially from a senior member of the Saṅgha. Samanas do not generally make añjali to lay people although this restriction has been relaxed in some communities.

Visually, the gesture of añjali conveys not only respect and a feeling of welcome, but also a sense of mindfulness around one's actions, an ability to stop. In Asian countries, it is not uncommon to see samanas holding their palms together in añjali for the entire length of a talk being given by their teacher or to a great Dhamma master. In the West, it is considered sufficient to listen to reflections with hands down and make añjali for the introductory and concluding announcement; or during a meeting, one can make añjali from time to time to the senior person or to those assembled while addressing them.

In formal conversations, the gesture of añjali is also used to indicate a wish to ask a question, which can be expressed when the senior person acknowledges the gesture. One should not interrupt a Saṅgha member who is giving a desana – even if she says something wrong – unless she asks for input. Any concerns or disagreements are best brought up with her in private. One should also refrain from interrupting Saṅgha members who are conversing, unless it is something urgent. Likewise, one should refrain from getting up when a senior Saṅgha member is addressing a group except by prior arrangement, asking permission, or mentioning it afterwards if she left to attend to urgent matters.

An anagārikā should defer to Saṅgha members when walking through doorways or approaching an area at the same time. She should also be mindful not to tread on their seats in the shrine room or walk in front of them or otherwise put herself physically higher – unless she needs to sit on a chair for health reasons. If she has to cross in front of a seated bhikkhunī or sāmaṇerī (or a visiting bhikkhu or sāmaṇera) she should bend slightly, especially if they are talking or addressing someone. It's very simple, but has the effect of negating whatever impression the abrupt appearance of an anagārikā in full flight might create, especially in the middle of a Dhamma talk.

Seated Saṅgha members should also be given a respectful distance so as not to stand over them but rather come down to their level, in particular, if one wants to speak to them. In respect of the bhikkhunī rule, an anagārikā should not sit on a bench with her unless invited to do so. Vigilant mindfulness will also help her to avoid contact with or brush against the robes or clothing of visiting male monastics or lay visitors in narrow places such as the kitchen.

The posture we use reflects our attitude towards Saṅgha. In Buddhist countries, it is considered disrespectful to touch the head of or point one's feet at a Saṅgha member or a shrine. When listening to a desana, chanting parittas or blessing chants, or sitting with samanas on formal occasions, one can adopt the polite posture (see section 1.2, page 8).

## **VI. PRACTICES AROUND ALMS FOOD AND THE MEAL**

The alms giving ceremony is an opportunity for alms food to be offered to the Saṅgha by the lay community. The offering of alms food to the Saṅgha by the laity and the Saṅgha's receiving of food offerings each day is the essence of the interdependent

relationship established by the Buddha between the monastic and lay communities.

Anagārikās are not yet alms mendicants but train in this way of eating just like bhikkhunīs and sāmaṇerīs. They practice receiving what is offered and eating the one main meal of the day from the bowl gratefully and in a composed manner. Chanting blessings before eating the meal is a way of expressing that sense of gratitude. In the same spirit, they eat meditatively, reflecting on the alms food as one of the four requisites of the holy life.

When a monastery is located in a more remote area where there are few inhabitants, pindapat is often conducted indoors. If there are no lay people offering dāna on a given day, the kitchen steward or anagārikā offers the meal to the resident Saṅgha. She may then help herself to the food once each member of the Saṅgha has received the offerings. This should be done with care and sensitivity.

Before going to collect food from the serving area, conventionally, she bows three times to the shrine along with the resident Saṅgha. Then, with bowl in hand, she approaches the serving area in order of ordination seniority. She should train herself to take only as much food as she needs from what has been offered and try to receive the food without too much hesitation, procrastination or looking around to see what else is available.

The key is mindfulness, that is, not to indulge one's preferences and get the dish one likes, avoiding things one does not like, but rather receiving the food with gratitude, in a balanced way. It's important to take enough, but at the same time, not to indulge habits of greed or strong views; not changing one's mind – once an item has been picked up she should place it in her bowl and not return it to the serving dish; move along at an even pace out of consideration for those behind; and take care not to rush or crowd those in front.

Returning to her seat, she bows again to the shrine and sits down, using the time between receiving her meal and eating for stilling the mind and stopping. She should learn the blessing chants and chant them with the Saṅgha, for this is the samana way of expressing gratitude to the laity for their offerings. Before beginning to eat, she waits and, again, begins eating according to seniority. The meal is eaten in silence.

This entire exercise is an excellent opportunity to contemplate hunger, excitement and greed. One can also use this occasion to see through these impermanent conditions, rather than indulge in desires and aversions, or complaints over the quantity or quality of what is offered. While contemplating the appearance of the food, one can reflect that it is offered out of kindness and the laity's wish to support one's practice; and contemplate what happens even to the most appetising food after it enters the body. This helps promote an attitude of eating the food with wisdom, cutting through the habitual gratification of the senses that attaches us to desire.

Observances that help maintain mindfulness throughout the meal include: (see Sekhiya Rules, Appendix XII.1.2):

- taking bite size portions on the spoon
- eating quietly without chomping or slurping
- eating in silence
- refraining from licking one's fingers
- paying attention to the contents of one's own bowl, not looking at another's
- not gobbling or cramming the mouth with food

- not flicking or throwing food around
- not scraping or digging the bowl with the spoon to get the last rice grain.

Another observance around eating is not to consume anything – whether food, medicinal allowances, or a beverage – while standing up but to pause and sit down, if possible. Stopping intentionally creates an opportunity to mindfully focus on the item itself and the process of consuming it rather than being distracted with other tasks.

Eating is one of the only sensory outlets of the samana life, so it is natural that meal times can bring up a range of sensory stimulation, sometimes leading to a sudden plunge into heedlessness, envy, guilt, and indigestion. These observances and reflections are good tools to work with. Gradually, with mindfulness, we learn how much the body needs while seeing how much the mind wants.

After the meal, one bows to the shrine, and cleans up in silence, helping to tidy up communal items as well as one’s own belongings in the shrine room. Each anagārikā should look after her own bowl and spoon, clean and dry them properly and return them to their assigned place. She should also familiarise herself with how to clean, care for, and store a bhikkhunī or sāmaṇerī alms bowl so that she can offer proper support in case one of them has to teach, meet the laity, or attend to other duties directly after the meal.

When setting up the alms bowl for the main meal, remove its cloth cover, rinse it with a little warm water and place it on the stand with the lid on top. This cleans out any dust, insects that may have strayed inside, or food residue from the previous day’s meal (in keeping with two Bhikkhunī rules: not to store food overnight nor take food that has not been offered that morning).

Next to the alms bowl, place the lap cloth and spoon and spread the samana’s sitting cloth on her mat with the ‘open border’ facing forward (see Appendix XII.3).

## **VII. OTHER AREAS OF PRACTICE**

### **VII.1 WORK**

Participation in community life extends not only to meditations, chanting and pujas, but also to playing an active role in the monastery work, maintenance chores and community projects. A helpful attitude is to remember that we are the caretakers, rather than the owners, of the monastery.

When one sees something that needs to be done or attended to, it is good to take the initiative either to do it oneself, such as changing an overfull bag on a vacuum cleaner, disposing rubbish that has been neglected, making small repairs like tightening a screw or taping a torn book, or cleaning an area that has been overlooked. One can also inform the appropriate person what one has observed.

Anagārikās, together with lay guests, form the mainstay of support for the monastery, especially in meal preparation and offering. Much of their work time will be spent in the kitchen but there is also seasonal outdoor work: clearing paths of detritus or snow in winter, gardening, watering; and indoor cleaning in the shrine area, bathrooms,

floors and windows, as well as repairs or special work projects that arise from time to time.

An anagārikā's daily duties may include:

- performing a morning chore, usually cleaning in a given area
- preparing breakfast and the main meal
- setting up for the main meal, i.e. jugs of water and spittoons;
- setting up bhikkhunī and sāmaṇerī alms bowls and accessories; also, wash, cover, and store these (see IX.2 'Care of the Alms Bowl')
- washing up and tidying the kitchen after breakfast and the meal
- helping to set out and remove meditation cushions for daily pujas
- offering allowable tonics and medicines if needed in the late afternoon
- handling monastery money when required
- driving and running necessary errands in town

## VII.2 WEARING ROBES

An anagārikā's appearance is a good reflection of her practice and that of her Dhamma community. The symbol of a samana in robes as one of the heavenly messengers is enhanced when the robes are worn neatly and kept clean. This can be quite a practice of mindfulness, especially for the white anagārikā robes including the sarong, jacket, and *pavian* – a modified version of a nun's robe.

All indoor accessories which she uses for formal occasions are white. For informal occasions and work, especially outdoors within the monastery grounds or driving on a shopping trip, she may use a brown or grey sarong, and a dark-coloured outdoor vest, coat, or jacket. Clothing or accessories should be simple, plain, modest, not tight-fitting, avoiding fashionable looks or luxurious fabrics such as velvet or silk to minimize attention to one's physical appearance. In keeping with the Seventh Precept to refrain from using adornments, instead of wearing a wristwatch on her arm, the anagārikā can fasten a watch to her belt.

White sarong and jacket should be worn with *pavian* at formal community meetings, the daily almsgiving, ordinations, blessing ceremonies, accompanying a teaching bhikkhunī, or attending dānas and other functions elsewhere. At meal times, the anagārikā would use a white lap cloth and a sitting cloth to protect the robes. Her sitting cloth is used at all formal occasions. When leaving the monastery, it is wise to consult the bhikkhunī or sāmaṇerī she is accompanying regarding appropriate dress.

An anagārikā should wear a thin under-sarong. Tights or long-johns are kept shorter than the sarong hem so as not to be seen, or covered by socks over. She should always wear a robe jacket inside the monastery, in particular, when visitors are present; and outside the monastery even if she is alone. But in her own room, kuti, or inside the nuns' private quarters it is acceptable wear a sweater or long sleeve shirt instead. It is good to have one or two extra jackets for work.

In cold weather, an anagārikā may wear a white blanket or shawl over her robes for formal occasions. Grey or dark-coloured rainproof or down jackets, woollen hats, gloves, socks and undergarments such as tights, long-johns, t-shirts, and sweaters can be worn at

other times inside the monastery. For example, while working, a grey sweater or outdoor jacket may be used on top of one's robes. She need not wear the *pavian* in forested areas or while driving or shopping. Shoes ranging from sandals to boots are worn according to the climate. Slip-on shoes of a plain dark colour are convenient for day-to-day use.



## VIII. CARE OF REQUISITES

Caring for our requisites is foundational to the training. It helps develop patience and gratitude for all that is given in kindness by those wishing to support the monastic life. Gratitude for this generous support, in turn, teaches us to observe things with non-discriminating attention rather than personal preference or inclination. In this way we also cultivate an attitude of being responsible for our requisites that counteracts the tendency to take things for granted or only as a means to an end.

In this section, we will review care of the lodgings and other requisites. Care of the robe and alms bowl are discussed under section IX - Duties to the Saṅgha. The entire training in how to use our requisites, communicate, conduct ourselves and purify our minds is strengthened by a pervasive attitude of care and respect. We also reflect that in the material world nothing is ever complete or 'perfect'. It is all *anicca* and *dukkha*. In the spiritual world, perfection is in the way we are with, or respond to, the moment – the quality of our speech, action and thought – rather than the result thereof.

### VIII.1 LODGINGS

Care of our living space is important. How does the mind feel in a messy room with things strewn about or even in a clean and tidy room filled with gadgets and trinkets that stimulate the mind? Is there a sense of burden in owning many possessions that involve maintenance and evoke memories? Observing in this way helps us to see the effect of untidiness or clutter on the mind and how keeping a simple and neat room can empty the mind and bring a sense of calm and composure.

Lodgings should be seen as a shelter for one night, not a permanent or personal possession. This attitude is a change from the household life where the home is often an extension of one's personality, full of memories, and decorated according to personal taste. Ideally, our lodging, no matter how humble and modest, should be used not as a bedroom but as a shrine and a place both for practice and rest. Choose a suitable spot to set up a shrine with a Buddha image or a photo of a teacher for whom one feels a deep respect.

One should strive to have few things but enough to keep warm and to support daily monastic life. Hoarding allowables in our lodging is discouraged and food should be kept in the kitchen store as designated by the Saṅgha.

It is good to keep a standard of silence in the lodgings – especially after evening meditation and until breakfast the next day. When there is a need to speak, an *anagārikā* should do so quietly, whether in her room or in communal areas, to avoid disturbing others who may be meditating, studying, or resting. Mindfulness of closing and opening doors softly and walking gently in corridors are also considerate practices for community life.

Wherever an *anagārikā* stays, it is good to try to improve the condition of that room or space before moving to another room or leaving the monastery. Whether in her own room or in communal areas such the kitchen, shrine room, or bathroom, when she sees something that needs to be done, it can serve as an opportunity to use her own initiative and do it if possible.

## VIII.2 OTHER REQUISITES

Whatever the Saṅgha has been given for use in the monastery, from bedding to tools and equipment, has been offered in faith, and should be used with attention and respect for its intended purpose. These offerings have been made to the community as a whole rather than to any one individual.

The images of the Buddha in the shrine room are a special kind of 'property' to be treated with respect. We never point our feet towards them. When cleaning or otherwise moving a Buddha image, this should be borne in mind. It should not be grasped by the neck or head and never brushed with a mop or kitchen broom; instead, each one should be lifted carefully with both hands under the base, set down on a clear space on a cloth, not directly on the floor – washed, and polished with a soft cloth.

Dhamma books are to be treated with the respect that their contents inspire. With this in mind, they should be placed higher than the floor away from clothes and belongings, and not be left where they can get wet or damaged. Avoid using a Dhamma book to prop up another item or setting a teacup on it.

A good way to take care of any equipment, tools, and utensils is to ensure that they are properly cleaned, maintained and put away in the right place. Anagārikās who drive a monastery vehicle should make sure that it is clean, serviced, and kept ready for use. If possible, try to ensure that the gas tank is adequately replenished for the next trip.

Usually an anagārikā would be expected to provide her own clothing, pay for stamps, telephone expenses, personal transport, and any special medicines or toiletries. However, she is welcome to use whatever clothing, footwear, bedding and toiletries are offered by the Saṅgha for her use. These are usually kept in a communal store as a way of accounting for what we have and what people need.

Should an anagārikā need medicines or any designated items from monastery stores, it is proper to mention it to the bhikkhunī responsible. If she borrows blankets, tools or other furnishings, it is simple mindfulness to return them in good condition, and if damaged, inform the bhikkhunī in charge of communal property.

It is surprisingly easy not to return things, so we make it a simple practice to do so, especially in the case of tools or special equipment that have been borrowed for a specific task. These can be returned at the end of the working day, whether the job is finished or not. It is also good practice not to dump furnishings or other items that we are no longer interested in using in a communal cupboard or closet, but to return them to their proper place, for example, cups or plates to the kitchen, yarn or needles to the sewing box.

General medicines and toiletries are usually available for the use of anagārikās, unless there is a shortage of a particular item. If an anagārikā is not able to address her personal needs, she should discuss this with the bhikkhunī responsible for her training to see what community support might be available. For example, if she needs to travel somewhere nearby, arrangements can sometimes be made to give her a lift if a supporter's vehicle is making a trip in that direction.

## IX. DUTIES TO THE SAṄGHA

The Saṅgha is a spiritual refuge. Taking refuge in Saṅgha has a reciprocal effect; practising mindfulness, care and receptivity strengthens the community, and the community, in turn, upholds us in our practice. A large part of the anagārikā training is to serve the community and look after her seniors with care and respect.

There are many small ways of serving and giving general support that express the spirit of dāna such as offering to do a busy samana's washing, clean their room or kuti, or organize transport to a Dhamma talk. An anagārikā is likely to have the opportunity to look after the particular needs of the Saṅgha, such as allowables or medicines in the afternoon, and so it is important to be very familiar with more detailed requirements of their Vinaya.

For the most part, as samanas are unlikely to make any demands or requests, it is up to the anagārikā to be aware. For example, when a bhikkhunī is receiving guests after the meal, the anagārikā should ensure that her bowl and other requisites are put away and offer her a beverage. It is appropriate to ask, "Ayyā, may I offer you a cup of tea?" rather than "Do you want a cup of tea?" Not only is this approach more polite but removing the word 'want' avoids her having to state a preference. It also demonstrates a willingness to support and serve – one of the benefits of a respectful relationship.

### IX.1 PREPARING AND OFFERING FOOD, DRINKS AND MEDICINES

There are several ways that food may be offered to the monastic community by the lay supporters: on alms round, by bringing a meal to the monastery, or by bringing food items which can be prepared by anagārikās, stewards, lay guests, or sāmaṇerīs. So the principal duties of an anagārikā are to cook raw food that has been given and to purchase medicines when necessary. In this way she helps to fulfil the spiritual covenant between the Saṅgha and the laity.

Bhikkhunīs and sāmaṇerīs practise acceptance of what is given without debate, complaint, or demand unless ill. They contemplate likes and dislikes and live in faithful dependence. An anagārikā should reflect on this and avoid engaging a Saṅgha member in discussions about the taste of the food or making comments about its quality unless the samana is ill or did not receive enough to eat.

She should make sure offerings comply with Vinaya as well as individual dietary or medical restrictions. The way that the food is given rather than the nature of the food is the key. Other than water, a bhikkhunī cannot put anything into her mouth that has not been properly offered, including toothpaste and aspirins. This means that the layperson or anagārikā should come within a forearm's distance of a bhikkhunī and place the offering directly into her hands, or into her alms bowl or cup.

Dawn is technically defined as the time when there is enough light in the sky to see the lines in the palm of the hand at arm's length. An anagārikā should not offer food to bhikkhunīs or sāmaṇerīs after noon or before dawn as that would contradict their training, and for bhikkhunīs it is an offence to handle food outside of these limits. So she should also make sure that bhikkhunīs don't come into contact with food in bags left lying around or

unmarked parcels or care packages that relatives or friends have sent.

An anagārikā should also refrain from offering animal flesh including the meat of horses, dogs, snakes, and any animal that has been especially killed for the Saṅgha. Raw meat and fish are also prohibited. When serving fruit, seeds, sprouted peas, or alfalfa sprouts, if there is a chance that the bhikkhunī may eat the seeds, they must be symbolically rendered incapable of growth by making them 'allowable' (i.e. cutting, damaging).

If the anagārikā does not initiate damaging a piece of fruit that she is offering, the bhikkhunī will say 'kapiyaṃ karohi' - 'Make it allowable'. Place the fruit so that they are all touching and then, using a sharp knife or fork, cut or stab one piece per serving dish and say 'kapiyaṃ ayye'. This means, 'It is allowable, Ayyā'. In some communities, every piece is cut. Spoiling by flame is also acceptable. Therefore, cooked or dried fruit do not need to be cut or 'damaged' to make them allowable.

Any items classified as 'yāvakālika', the Pāli word for 'before noon' may be taken between dawn and noon of the same day. Between noon and dawn of the next day, the Buddha allowed certain medicinal allowances and tonics, such as:

1. 'Yāmakālika' - fruit juice, strained to remove any pulp except the juice of any of the nine 'great fruits': palmyra, coconut, jackfruit, breadfruit, bottle gourd, white gourd, muskmelon, watermelon and squash. Juice, properly offered, can only be kept and used until dawn of the next day.

2. 'Sattāhakālika' - this includes sugar, honey, butter, vegetable oils and margarine, cheese (in some communities), maple syrup, molasses, pure sugar candy without added fruit or nuts, and plain dark chocolate (without milk ingredients). A bhikkhunī may keep and use any of these allowables for seven days and must relinquish them before the seventh dawn.

3. 'Yāvajīvika' - lifetime allowances. Once offered, a bhikkhunī can use the following items for life: tea, coffee, cocoa, miso (made of soy, not rice), salt, pepper, herbs, spices, vitamins, and medicines such as aspirin.

This category also includes toothpaste but does not include grain coffee, malted milk drinks or any ingredient from the other two categories. Even placing a spoon in a bowl of sugar after it has been used to stir a milk-drink changes that sugar into 'yāvakālika', like the milk. In such a case, it should be labelled or kept separately so as not to be used after 'noon'.

In practice, these procedures call for vigilant mindfulness. Their precision encourages an inclination to use food and drink in moderation, with clear awareness and gratitude. Once offerings are made to the bhikkhunīs, then one can withdraw to a respectful distance.

## IX.2 CARE OF THE ALMS BOWL

The alms bowl is a symbol of the mendicant samana life. Therefore, it should be given special treatment and not handled just as an eating bowl or a cooking pot. Formerly, alms bowls were made of brittle clay or iron that was liable to rust and corrode. Though the modern bowl is usually made of a durable stainless steel, we adhere to the rules for the meticulous care of the bowl as a training in mindfulness.

When a bhikkhunī returns from an alms round, the anagārikā can help set up her bowl for the meal and bring any items offered on the pindapat to the kitchen. She should be

familiar with the correct way to carry the bowl. The proper way to carry it is with the strap around the neck or with the folded strap firmly grasped, holding the bowl in its cover. Remove the cover, rinse the bowl, and set it on its stand in preparation for the meal.

After eating, it is customary for an anagārikā to wash out the alms bowl of the senior bhikkhunī unless another nun has been asked to do so. If another bhikkhunī is meeting with a guest, it is appropriate for an anagārikā to offer to wash her bowl as well.

The bowl must never be knocked by hard objects such as the water tap or metal objects inside it. Never drop or knock it over. Always carry it in such a way as to protect it, especially when going through doorways. Never be overloaded with other items when carrying a bowl – better to make several trips than to balance a couple of bowls in one hand, spittoons in the other, and a water-pouring jug under the arm!

The bowl should be held by the rim with the thumb while at the same time gripping the stand with the other four fingers. Never use that hand to simultaneously open a door. Carry the lid under the arm to leave one hand free for opening a door. Never place the bowl on a hard surface. Rest it either on its stand or inverted on a towel, but always more than a forearm's distance from a door or the edge of a shelf or a table from which it might fall off.

There is also a correct way to wash the bowl. First, empty it of any waste food by hand or by rinsing with water. Dispose of the leftovers in a pail or into a designated area such as a compost bucket rather than casually throwing them over grass or under a hedge. Removing food particles by hand is more efficient and less risky than using a spoon which could scratch the bowl. For this reason, only carry knives or metal spoons inside the bowl if they are well-wrapped.

Rinse the bowl with hot water and a little soap or mild detergent. Harsh industrial cleaners, scouring powder or cleaners containing ammonia or a caustic ingredient should not be used as they may taint the bowl. Repeat the washing process.

When drying the bowl, squat or sit down in case it slips out of one's hands. It can also be set out in the sun for a few minutes, or in cold climates, near a stove, to dry fully. Store the spoon in its holder or wrapped in a lap cloth, and any other accessories inside the bowl, and return the bowl and bowl stand to their designated place.

The bowl should be stored in a way that prevents it from being knocked by a door or kicked. When using the bowl cover, fold the shoulder strap on top of the bowl lid so that it doesn't trail down where it might hook someone's foot. Position the lid so that air can circulate freely, leaving the bowl fresh for the following day.

### **IX.3 CARE OF BHIKKHUNĪ ROBES**

Bhikkhunīs and sāmaṇerīs generally look after their own robes, but if an anagārikā offers to wash robes for a bhikkhunī or is asked to wash them, she should treat them with care and respect. Use a gentle detergent and cold water. Remember that a samana's discipline is to be with the five robes at dawn. If they are not dry in time, be sure to inform her so that she can avoid committing an offence.

This attitude of looking after things may seem odd in a community that seeks to know impermanence and tends towards not possessing things, but actually it is because of

these principles of mendicancy that we encourage careful maintenance of our requisites and equipment. It is a training not only in mindful conduct, but in not taking things for granted.

Accustomed to convenience and plenty, Westerners rarely have to face inconvenience and scarcity. Rather than fostering a possessive attitude, this is an opportunity to become aware of what we are responsible for, and to be mindful while wearing, washing, mending, storing, and caring for our requisites.

It is also a time to reflect with gratitude on that which has been freely offered to the Saṅgha (robe fabric for bhikkhunīs and sāmaṇerīs is generally offered as dana prior to ordination, and at the end of the Vassa during the Kathina ceremony). Impermanence is directly experienced by having little – we mindfully watch the mutation of a sweater from fluffy white to threadbare grey, for example. Looking after our own requisites as well as those of others is a way of learning to use impermanent conditions skilfully.

#### **IX.4 ACCOMPANYING BHIKKHUNĪS OUTSIDE THE MONASTERY**

On teaching engagements, overnight visits or dānas outside the monastery, the main duty of the Saṅgha is to chant blessings, offer Dhamma reflections, give precepts, and generally uplift and encourage the laity in their practice. Often, an anagārikā will accompany and/or drive a bhikkhunī to a meal offering or teaching engagement. In either case, she can act as a facilitator by dealing with the practical aspects of the visit.

Prior to the actual trip, she can offer to contact the host to confirm travel arrangements or arrival times, get necessary timetable information, directions, and some petty cash. She should consult with the bhikkhunī to be sure about the appropriate time and method of travel.

While at a dāna outside the monastery, it is best to leave the talking to the bhikkhunī unless spoken to directly. Upon arrival, an anagārikā can check with her about the seating arrangements. At times, she may need to explain basic monastic conventions or practical logistics such as how to invite the Saṅgha or how to make the offerings.

She can also assist the host in preparing whatever is needed, for example, drinking water, napkins, receptacles for waste, etc. Her best guideline is to strike a balance; be attentive to the Saṅgha protocol and considerate of the host's offering; at the same time bear in mind our aim to set an example in simplicity of needs.

When accompanying a bhikkhunī on a teaching engagement, or an overnight stay away from the monastery, she can offer to carry her bowl when travelling, and care for it in the right way throughout the journey (see 'Care of the Alms Bowl' above).

If any requisites or food items are offered as dāna to a bhikkhunī or sāmaṇerī on a visit, apart from the alms food they receive in their bowls, an accompanying anagārikā should take responsibility for dealing with it. This can be done simply by carrying it back to the monastery. If a cash or cheque donation is offered, she should accept it on behalf of the Saṅgha member and deal with it appropriately.

#### **IX.5 SPECIAL DUTIES TOWARDS THE SICK**

When a Saṅgha member or an anagārikā does attend the morning meditation, it is

her duty to let someone know if she is sick. Someone will check to see how she is and the senior bhikkhunī is then informed and kept up-to-date of her condition. If an anagārikā is asked to attend to a samana, she should make sure that food is brought in good time to be eaten before midday. She may also need to liaise with the senior bhikkhunī if special items are required.

When looking after someone who is ill, it is good practice to help them keep their room clean and bright, and their clothes laundered if needed. Maintaining a calm and mindful presence when in their company is a Dhamma medicine. It is also good to be aware of the effects of bright light, sudden movements or noise and excited speech on ill people.

It is good not to overload a patient with different views and opinions on symptoms and treatment, however well-intended. This can add to their distress, when often they are the ones who intuitively know what's best.

## **X. DUTIES TO LAY VISITORS AND GUESTS**

Apart from being a cook, gardener, driver, shopper and chaperone, anagārikās play a vital part in the Saṅgha's relationship with the lay community. An anagārikā acts as an intermediary, giving advice and information about monastic form and discipline, religious observances and rituals, and also creating opportunities for contact with senior Saṅgha members.

### **X.1 GREETING VISITORS**

When a guest arrives, an anagārikā can greet them warmly and inform a Saṅgha member as soon as appropriate. When meeting a newly-arrived overnight guest, she can attend to their immediate needs – inquiring if they wish to use the toilet, offering them a place to sit, and a cup of tea or a glass of water if they have come a long way. Taking time to give an unhurried and friendly welcome is as important as any other work in which one might happen to be engaged.

Though an attitude of warmth and friendliness is appropriate, keen sensitivity and mindfulness will help to gauge how familiar a visitor or guest is with monastic culture and how much guidance – if any – they may need. At the same time, an anagārikā should be aware of the inclination to become too friendly, and to refrain from seeking out contact or intimate speech. Although such closeness may appear to be the kindest thing, it is not conducive to mindfulness for either the anagārikā or the layperson. An anagārikā's most valuable offering is actually her calm reflection and her example of dedication and service to the teaching and to the Saṅgha.

### **X.2 ADVISING ON FORM**

During their stay, lay visitors are part of the community, so it's important to allow space for them to learn by observing, to make mistakes, and to assist them in blending in with daily life. For many lay people, the initial encounter with the monastic form can be quite

daunting. There can be fear and anxiety about getting things wrong. So initially it's more important to put them at ease than to press matters of etiquette.

Also there may be times when according to the nature of the person, it would not be appropriate to insist on the form – such as belabour to sit on chairs while the senior bhikkhunī is seated on the floor or curtly suggesting that a local dignitary not sit with his feet pointing towards the shrine.

Helpful advice might include removing shoes inside, where to sit, or how to address members of the Saṅgha. An anagārikā may need to explain to a man not to come into physical contact with bhikkhunīs and sāmaṇerīs, and that a bhikkhunī cannot talk about Dhamma at any length with him unless another woman is present.

### **X.3 ADVISING ON DĀNA**

Offering and receiving dāna is core to the reciprocal relationship between the lay and monastic communities. Since anagārikās work in the kitchen and also live with the Saṅgha, they are in a good position to advise lay people who wish to offer dāna but are unsure about what kind of offerings would be suitable. When asked, an anagārikā should respond with care and consideration, reflecting a sense of gratitude and thoughtfulness.

She can refer to the monastery dāna list as a guideline, suggesting a choice of basic items which are easy to purchase in small or large quantities without specifying a preferred brand of soap or quality of food (such as 'organic'). It is not mendicant practice to be choosy about what offerings are needed. This is in keeping with the spirit of the bhikkhunī rule not to accept an almsgiving invitation if the layperson specifies the kind of food that they intend to offer.

In the case of a more specific pavāraṇa, an invitation for a bhikkhunī to request requisites, it takes skill and delicacy to ascertain what the person who is offering has in mind. For example, they might say, "If you need any equipment for the kitchen, let me know." Do they mean a spatula, frying pan, or food processor? It is also good to clarify for how long the offer stands.

If diplomatic probing doesn't clarify their intention, it is best to suggest something small, such as a kitchen knife, a dozen teaspoons, within a few weeks; or, to let it pass. In any case, such offers, unless specifically stated, should be taken up within four months of being made. When someone expresses the wish to make an offering, it is good to let them know about precept restrictions, or, if relevant, health issues of individual Saṅgha members – and suggest useful options to consider.

When lay people bring groceries to prepare for the Saṅgha, an anagārikā can help familiarise them with the kitchen and its workings, and the correct procedure for offering. It's good to ascertain what kind of ceremony, if any, they would like, or better still, introduce them to the senior bhikkhunī and let her guide them.

### **X.4 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET SAṄGHA**

In a small vihāra, though it may be quite easy to speak to members of the Saṅgha, newcomers sometimes feel shy or uncertain as to how to approach or talk them. An



anagārikā can inquire if they are interested in speaking with the senior bhikkhunī, in particular, when they have a question about Dhamma, and encourage them to do so.

When a visitor expresses an interest in being shown around the monastery, an anagārikā should make herself available or find a member of the community who can help.

## **XI. SETTING FOOT ON THE PATH**

These guidelines do not fully cover the wide spectrum of observances and training rules that make up the fabric of monastic life. For this reason, anagārikās are encouraged to read the bhikkhunī Vinaya and to consider how the Buddha's teachings are woven into and reflected in the monastic conventions that he established.

In these pioneer days of the Saṅgha developing in the West, the anagārikā form continues to be redefined and refined. This evolution is a natural outcome of integrating the experience gained in trying to bring to life this ancient Theravada monastic tradition and to make it workable for women in a Western context.

Once the rules, standards and precepts are read and thoroughly known, it is only by diving into the monastic water that we truly come to know it for ourselves. Then we can experience directly the blessing of surrendering to this way of life, the richness of that which seems most ordinary, and the rare companionship of good spiritual friends. When we can relate to it all, whether welcome or difficult, with patience, interest and openness of heart, then we are truly setting foot on the path of liberation.

*"Friends, rooted in desire are all things;  
born of attention are all things;  
arising from contact are all things;  
connected to feelings are all things;  
directed by concentration are all things;  
overseen by mindfulness are all things;  
surmountable by wisdom are all things;  
yielding deliverance as essence are all things;  
merging in the deathless are all things;  
ceasing in Nibbana are all things."*

*Anguttara Nikāya V.107*

## **XII. APPENDICES**

### **XII.1 THE SEKHIYA RULES**

Many of these rules are relaxed in the case of illness, but it need not be extreme illness. For example, older people may be allowed to sit in a chair to hear a desana.

#### **1.1 The Group of Twenty-Six Rules on Proper Dress and Deportment**

1. I shall wear the lower robe even all around. This is a training to be done.
2. I shall put on the upper robe even all around. This is a training to be done.
3. I shall dress modestly walking in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
4. I shall dress modestly sitting in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
5. I shall walk with restraint in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
6. I shall sit in a restrained manner in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
7. I shall walk with eyes downcast in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
8. I shall sit with eyes downcast in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
9. I shall not walk in inhabited areas with the robes hitched up. This is a training to be done.
10. I shall not sit in inhabited areas with the robes hitched up. This is a training to be done.
11. I shall not walk laughing loudly in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
12. I shall not sit laughing loudly in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
13. I shall walk speaking with a lowered voice in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
14. I shall sit speaking with a lowered voice in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
15. I shall not walk swaying the body in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
16. I shall not sit swaying the body in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
17. I shall not walk swinging the arms in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
18. I shall not sit swinging the arms in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
19. I shall not walk swinging or drooping the head in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
20. I shall not sit swinging or drooping the head in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
21. I shall not walk with the hands on the hips in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
22. I shall not sit with the hands on the hips in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
23. I shall walk with the head uncovered in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
24. I shall sit with the head uncovered in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
25. I shall not walk on toes or heels in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.
26. I shall not sit clasping the knees in inhabited areas. This is a training to be done.

#### **1.2 The Group of Thirty Rules on Food**

27. I shall accept alms food appreciatively. This is a training to be done.
28. I shall accept alms food with attention on the bowl. This is a training to be done.
29. I shall accept alms food with curries in proportion. This is a training to be done.

30. I shall accept alms food level with the edge of the bowl. This is a training to be done.
31. I shall eat alms food appreciatively. This is a training to be done.
32. I shall eat alms food with attention on the bowl. This is a training to be done.
33. I shall eat alms food evenly. This is a training to be done.
34. I shall eat alms food with curries in proportion. This is a training to be done.
35. I shall not eat alms food working down from the top. This is a training to be done.
36. I shall not hide curries and foods with rice out of desire to get more. This is a training to be done.
37. I shall not, unless ill, ask for and eat curry or rice for my own benefit. This is a training to be done.
38. I shall not look finding fault with another's bowl. This is a training to be done.
39. I shall not take up an extra-large mouthful. This is a training to be done.
40. I shall make up a round mouthful. This is a training to be done.
41. I shall not open the mouth when the mouthful is not brought to it. This is a training to be done.
42. I shall not insert the whole hand into the mouth when eating. This is a training to be done.
43. I shall not speak with the mouth full. This is a training to be done.
44. I shall not eat lumps of food tossed into the air. This is a training to be done.
45. I shall not eat nibbling at mouthfuls of food. This is a training to be done.
46. I shall not eat stuffing out the cheeks. This is a training to be done.
47. I shall not eat shaking (food off) the hand. This is a training to be done.
48. I shall not eat scattering lumps of rice about. This is a training to be done.
49. I shall not eat sticking out the tongue. This is a training to be done.
50. I shall not eat smacking the lips. This is a training to be done.
51. I shall not eat making a slurping sound. This is a training to be done.
52. I shall not eat licking the hand. This is a training to be done.
53. I shall not eat licking or scraping the bowl. This is a training to be done.
54. I shall not eat licking the lips with the tongue. This is a training to be done.
55. I shall not accept a water vessel with a hand soiled by food. This is a training to be done.
56. I shall not throw away bowl-rinsing water containing rice grains in an inhabited area. This is a training to be done.

### **1.3 The Group of Sixteen Rules on Teaching Dhamma**

57. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person with an umbrella who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
58. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person with a stick who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
59. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person with a knife who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
60. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person with a weapon who is not ill. This is a training to be done.

61. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person wearing non-leather footwear who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
62. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person wearing leather footwear who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
63. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person in a vehicle who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
64. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person lying down who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
65. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person who sits clasping the knees and is not ill. This is a training to be done.
66. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person wearing a hat (or turban) and is not ill. This is a training to be done.
67. I shall not teach Dhamma to a person whose head is covered (with a scarf or robe) and is not ill. This is a training to be done.
68. I shall not teach Dhamma while sitting on the ground to a person sitting on a seat who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
69. I shall not teach Dhamma while sitting on a low seat to a person sitting on a high seat who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
70. I shall not teach Dhamma while standing to a person sitting down who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
71. I shall not teach Dhamma while walking behind to a person walking ahead who is not ill. This is a training to be done.
72. I shall not teach Dhamma while walking beside a path to a person walking on the path who is not ill. This is a training to be done.

#### **1.4 The Three Miscellaneous Rules**

73. I shall not defecate or urinate while standing up when not ill. This is a training to be done.
74. I shall not defecate, urinate or spit on (cultivated) living plants when not ill. This is a training to be done.
75. I shall not defecate, urinate or spit in water when not ill. This is a training to be done.

## XII.2 PĀLI CHANTING

Chanting is an important way to bring forth right effort and the devotional heart in our meditation practice. It is also an excellent way to cultivate sensitivity to and support for the group. Many of the Pāli chants contain ancient teachings derived from the Pāli suttas themselves or verses of praise and homage to the Three Jewels.

When the mind is focused on the meaning of the words, and attentive to the sounds and rhythm of the group chanting, it is inspirational to those listening and becomes true homage and praise to the Blessed One, the Teaching, and the Ariya Saṅgha. The chants work as skilful means, helping the mind shift out of worldly perspectives to a purity and wakefulness that are truly conducive to right mindfulness and right concentration; and they encourage us to be resolute in our aspirations for the Holy Life.

For these reasons, chanting is a great support for the laity. It is the Saṅgha's profound expression of gratitude; an offering of blessings and sublime reflections on wise action, speech and livelihood, and the noble fruits of a virtuous life. The many chants to be learned take time. Priorities to begin with are:

- Requesting and reciting the Precepts
- Requesting a desana
- Morning and evening chanting in Pāli and English
- Anumodanās
- Parittas
- Funeral Chants
- 3 Cardinal Suttas
- Special chants: entering Vassa and Pavāraṇa Ceremony at Vassa's end

In morning and evening pujas, we practice mindfulness of breathing and chanting, two complimentary and meaningful images of the monastic life. To watch the breath is to become calm and centred, to chant is to draw energy from the centre where we all meet in homage to wisdom, truth, and virtue. Chanting is also a way of harmonising with everyone, so it is important to listen to the pitch and rhythm of whoever leads the chant and follow that rather burst out in loud tones, however devout one might feel.

Traditionally, three tones are used in the chanting, though variations of tone and inflection can be heard in different communities. Once we learn the basic rhythm and words, it is easy to adapt to these different nuances.

One suggestion when chanting is to breathe from the belly, using its muscles to control the airflow so that the sound resonates in the chest. Concentrate on the vowels, keeping them long and pure, and be aware of the tendency of the voice to drop after a period of time.

Rhythm, harmony, and pitch may count more than precise pronunciation. Though much can be gleaned from reflecting on the meaning of the chants, a composed and harmonious expression of sound can uplift and purify both body and mind.

## XII.2.1 Notes on Pāli Pronunciation

### 2.1.1 Pāli Vowels

Pāli vowels are of two types, short or long: **a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, o**

**e** and **o** are generally long but they change to short sounds in syllables ending in consonants. They are then pronounced as in ‘get’ and ‘ox’.

Pāli, like other Indic languages, distinguishes between short and long vowels not by pitch or stress or a change of pronunciation, but rather by lengthening the vowel sound itself, viz:

<b>a</b>	as in pop – <i>at the beginning</i> or <i>middle</i> of a word as in but – <i>at the end</i> of a word
<b>ā</b>	as in father
<b>i</b>	as in pin
<b>ī</b>	as in seed
<b>u</b>	as in put
<b>ū</b>	as in rule
<b>e</b>	as in grey
<b>o</b>	as in for

### 2.1.2 Pāli Consonants

Pāli consonants function as in other languages with the following added rules:

<b>c</b>	as in ancient (like <i>ch</i> but not aspirated)
<b>ṃ, ṅ</b>	as in <i>ng</i> or <i>sang</i>
<b>ṅ</b>	as in <i>ny</i> or <i>canyon</i>
<b>v</b>	as in <i>warm</i> , softer than in English almost like <i>w</i>
<b>ḍ, ḍh, ḷ</b> }	retroflex or palatal consonants - no English equivalent - to
<b>ṇ, ṭ, ṭh</b> }	sound these, curl the tip of the tongue back against the palate
<b>d, l, n, t</b>	lingua-dental consonants, touch the tongue to the teeth

All other consonants are pronounced like their hard English equivalents:

<b>g</b>	as in <i>green</i>
<b>s</b>	as in <i>sun</i>

### 2.1.3 Consonants Followed by H

Two lettered consonants combined with an ‘h’ - bh, ch, dh, ḍh, gh, jh, kh, ph, th, ṭh - denote an aspirated, airy sound distinct from the hard, crisp sound of single consonants. They are considered as one unit. However, the other combinations with ‘h’ - lh, mh, ṅh, and vh - count as two consonants.

Examples: **th** as t in *tongue* – never pronounced as in *the*  
**ph** as p in *palate* – never pronounced as in *photo*

#### 2.1.4 Full and Half-length Syllables:

Full-length syllables contain long vowels – **ā, ī, ū, e, o** – or end with **m̐** or having ended in a consonant, are followed by a syllable beginning with a consonant, e.g., mag-ga, hon-ti, Bud-dha. Remember that **bh, dh**, etc. count as single consonants, thus:

am-hā-kaṃ; *but* sa-dha-maṃ *not* sad-ham-maṃ

Half-length syllables end in short vowels.

## XII.2.2 IMPORTANT PĀLI CHANTS

At times, an anagārikā will be invited to accompany a bhikkhunī on a teaching trip or find herself representing the monastic community when visitors come. She can prepare for these occasions by learning the chanting responses and the chants themselves well enough to keep up with the leader and to chant with a tone that the lay people can easily follow.

### 2.2.1 Requesting and Giving Thanks for a Desana

Bhikkhunīs are not permitted to teach Dhamma when respect or receptivity to the teachings are lacking. Accordingly, learning to request a teaching in the traditional way shows an eagerness to hear the Dhamma. Before chanting the request, an anagārikā bows and pays homage to the Buddha, and then recites the following verse, Brahma Sahampati's original request to the Buddha immediately after His enlightenment:

**Brahmā ca lokādhipatī sahampati,**

The Brahma Sahampati, Lord of the world,

**Katañjali anadhivaraṃ ayācatha:**

With palms reverently pressed together, requested a blessing;

**Santīdha sattāpparajakkha jātikā.**

There are beings here with but little dust in their eyes,

**Desetu dhammaṃ anukampimaṃ pajaṃ.**

Please teach the Dhamma out of compassion for them.

After the sermon or *desana*, in the absence of other bhikkhunīs or sāmaṇerīs, the anagārikā who is next in line can chant the following as an expression of thanks:

**Handamayam ovāda dhamma kathāya sādukaram dadāmasa.**

Now let us express our appreciation for the exhortation/discourse.

All those present respond:

**Sādhu sādhu sādhu anumodāmi.**

Well spoken indeed, we are thankful.

## 2.2.2 Requesting Paritta Chants

When visitors wish the Saṅgha to help dispel illness or bless an auspicious occasion such as the birth of a child, the following request is made for blessing and protection chants known as Parittas:

**Vipatti paṭibāhāya sabba sampatti siddhiyā**

For warding off misfortune and achieving all good fortune,

**Sabba dukkha vināsāya parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ**

For destroying pain and misery, may the Venerables chant the blessed Parittas.

**Vipatti paṭibāhāya sabba sampatti siddhiyā**

For warding off misfortune and achieving all good fortune,

**Sabba bhaya vināsāya parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ.**

For dispelling all fear, may the Venerables chant blessed verses of protection.

**Vipatti paṭibāhāya sabba sampatti siddhiyā**

For warding off misfortune and achieving all good fortune,

**Sabba roga vināsāya parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ.**

For dispelling all illness, may the Venerables chant blessed verses of protection.

## 2.2.3 Vassa ‘Going-Out’ Formulae

When leaving the Vassa boundary and returning, chant one of the following in our own language or in Pāli:

1. If returning the same day:

**Ayaṃ vassano kalo.**

Thus I fulfil the Vassa.

2. If returning a day later or within the seven-day allowance:

**Sace me antarāyo na bhavēyya sattāha bhayantare patinivattisāmi.**

Unless injured I shall return within seven days.

3. If returning within the seven-day period:

**Sattāha karaṇīyaṃ kiccaṃ me vatthi tasmā mayā gantābbaṃ.**

**Imasmiṃ sattāh’abbhantare nivattisāmi.**

Having to fulfill an obligation within seven days, I must go.

I shall return within seven days.

The Vinaya (I.139) makes allowance in certain cases, such as those listed below, to leave the Vassa boundary for one week as long as one returns before the seventh dawn:

- nursing an ill samana or our parents
- supporting a samana in danger of disrobing
- aiding another monastery, e.g., attending an ordination
- upholding the faith of lay supporters



## XII.3 SEWING ANAGĀRIKĀ ROBES

The white robes of anagārikās consist of four main pieces: a *pavian*, jacket and sarong (long skirt), and sitting cloth to sit on during formal occasions. The following section will include instructions with diagrams for sewing these 4 items. White is hard to keep clean so if possible, sew two white jackets and sarongs. Other jackets and sarongs may be sewn in dark colours, such as grey or brown, to be worn while working in the monastery (see VII.2).

Undergarments such as tights, socks, t-shirts, and sweaters can be worn in white, grey, black or brown. If they are used during community meetings or on formal occasions, they should be worn under the white jacket and sarong so as not to be seen.

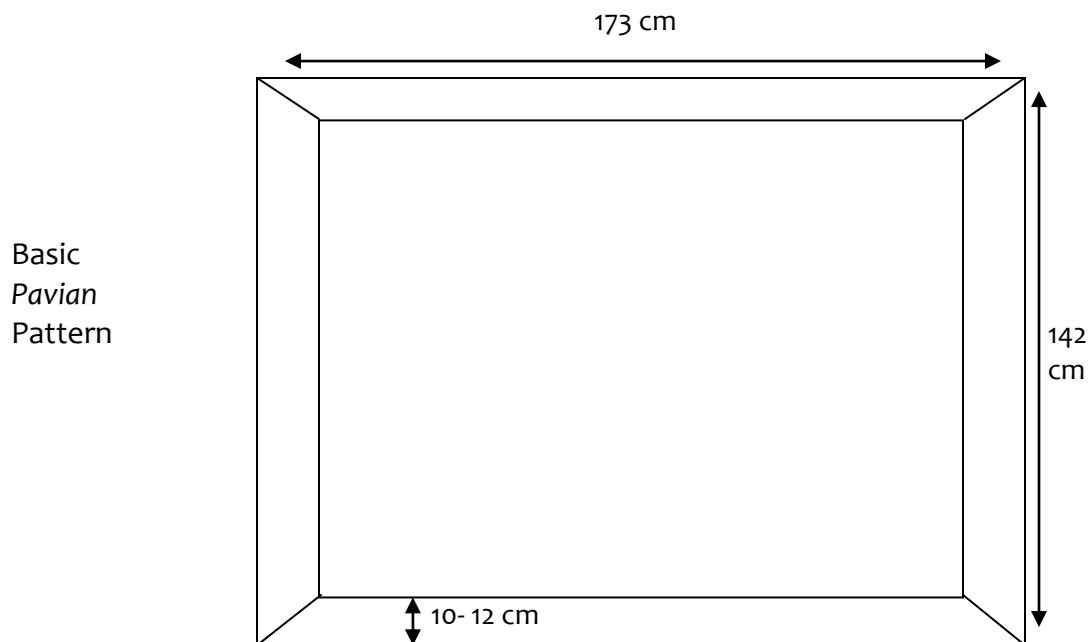
The robes should be sewn neatly and evenly, if possible, but without being overly fussy if a seam is not perfect. Take time, relax, measure well, and do the best you can.

### 3.1 Sewing a *Pavian*

The *pavian* is a simple rectangular robe, worn over the jacket and sarong. It is wrapped around the body with one end pulled under the right arm, then across the chest and draped over the left shoulder. The other end is folded over it also on the left shoulder.

Cotton or poly-cotton fabric of a light to medium weight, such as bed sheet material, last long and wear well for this robe. Avoid using polyester fabrics that easily slip off the shoulder when draped and have to be adjusted constantly. Approximately 4 – 5 metres of cloth and one large spool of white thread are needed.

The measurements of the *pavian* are proportionate to one's height and body size so that it reaches down in front approximately to the length of the sarong, allowing for the draped end to be comfortably stretched over the left shoulder. Sew a border of 10-12 cm around all the edges as shown.



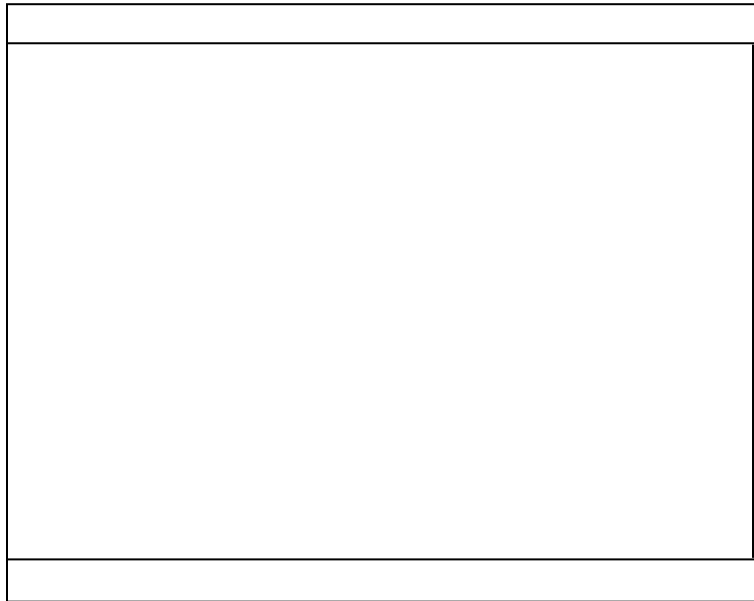
### 3.2 Sewing a Sarong

The anagārikā sarong is made like a straight skirt or tube sewn from a rectangular cloth with its two ends stitched together. It should be wide enough to stretch out to one side at least one arm's length so that you can then fold it in midway at the waist to create a pleat and fasten it with a belt around the waist. Approximately 1 spool of thread and 2.5- 3 metres of cloth are needed.

To calculate the width of the sarong, sit comfortably in the cross-legged position and measure the distance from knee to knee. Add 10 - 20 cm; **too narrow** restricts sitting, **too wide** hinders walking.

To calculate the length, measure from the waist to the mid-calf and add 10- 15 cm to overlap the belt when the sarong is bent over it and to allow for seams of 5-8 cms at the top and bottom hems.

Cut to size and join the two ends in the length effectively forming a wide tube. When worn, this seam can be folded into the centre front of the sarong so that it does not show. Hem the two edges at the waist and the bottom end.



Basic Sarong Pattern

### 3.3 Sewing a Jacket

The 'jacket' is the most complicated piece to sew. You need 3 metres of cotton or polycotton and 2 spools of white thread. Use a 2 cm seam allowance. Allow 5 cm for hems.

#### Sewing the sleeves

- Sewing sleeves designed with a straight section simplifies the cut and sewing. Begin by sewing the sleeves to the main body, right sides facing each other.
- Start and finish seams 2 cm from each end of fabric.
- Iron under and sew down raw edges.
- Close sides and sleeves with 2 cm seam allowance - starting at armpits. Leave unsewn slits about 20-25 cm from the lower hem depending on jacket length.
- Iron under and sew down raw edges including sides of unsewn slits.
- Sew on a small square of cloth at the top of side slits for reinforcement.

#### Cutting the Neckline

- Cut 8 cm opening for neck (4cm either side of the mid-point of neckline).
- Sew on front panels.
- Finish off edges of front panels before sewing on collar.
- **Cut collar line with a lot of mindfulness.**
- When collar is sewn on, use a 1 cm seam to widen the neck opening and lower the height of the collar.
- Cut straight section from armpit to neck first.
- Cut the neckline **slowly**. Try on the jacket again during the cutting to check. If you cut too wide, it will gape. The final neck slit should be 12-14 cm.

#### Attaching the Collar

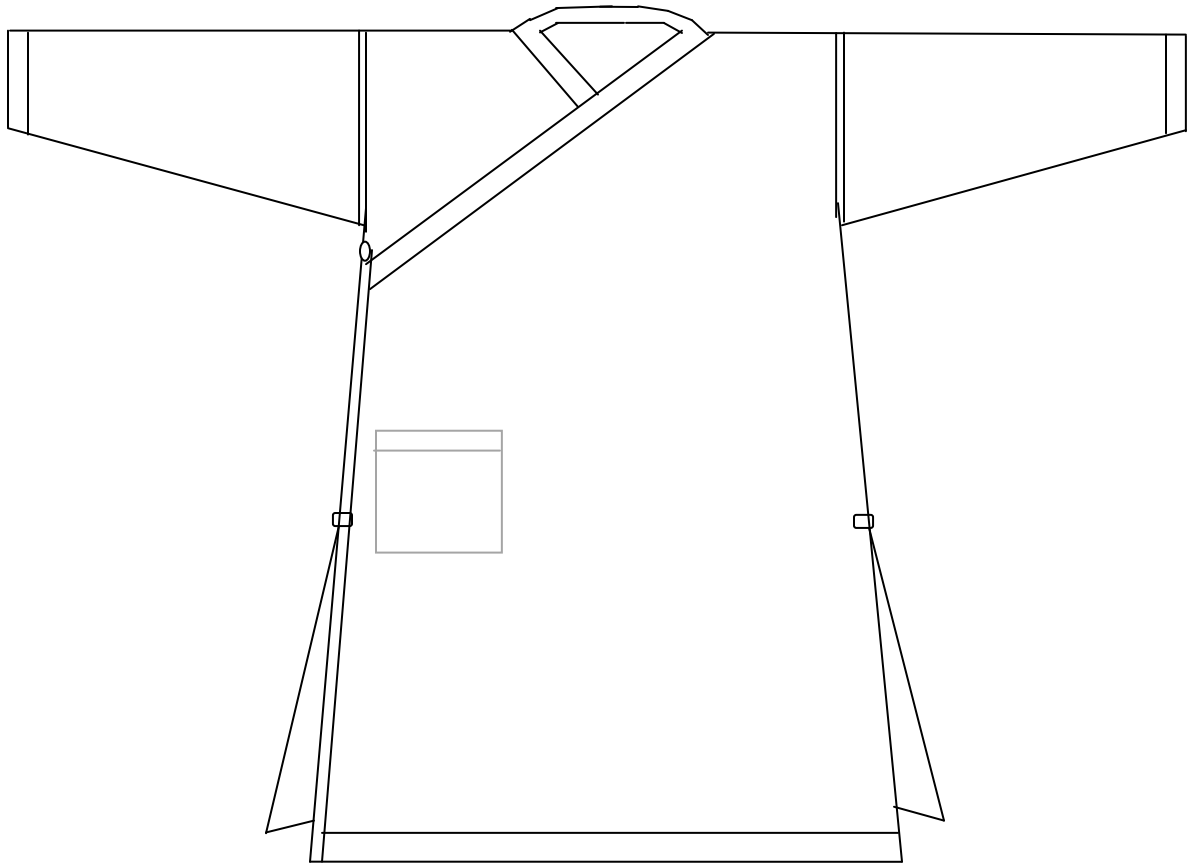
- Iron 1- 2 cm seam allowance along one edge of collar strip.
- Start sewing from centre of neck outwards, inside neckline, right side of collar on wrong side of body fabric, use edge of strip without ironed seam allowance.
- Fold strip over and with the seam allowance tucked under, sew the strip on the outside of neckline - be **very careful to even out slack** material!
- Leave 5-10 cm extra length to finish off at each end of the collar, or bend in the fabric at both ends of the collar strip and sew down. At this point you could insert one tie at each end or use a snap or Chinese button.

#### Attaching Ties or Chinese Buttons

- Finished width of ties is approximately 1 cm. Place under armpits and above slits.

#### Pocket and Hems

- Finish off upper edge first.
- Sew on inside panel.
- Finish sleeve hem. Lower hem should fall below the buttocks.

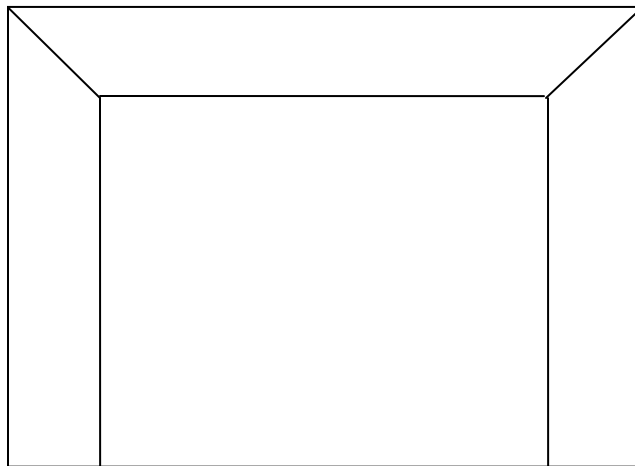
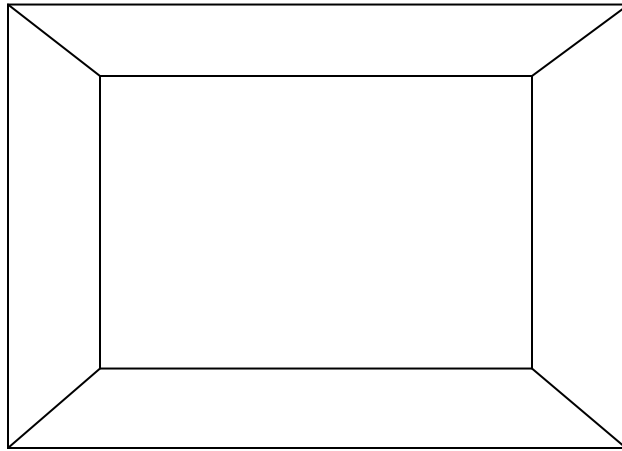


Basic Jacket Outline

### 3.4 Sewing a Sitting Cloth

The sitting cloth is a simple rectangle made from 4 or 5 pieces of cloth. Either style puts off-cuts and old robe cloth to good use. Choose sturdy cotton or poly-cotton fabric that will last longer. You need approximately .7 of a metre for a 70 x 65 cm rectangle. Be sure to add 1 or 2 cm seam allowance to all measurements.

Cut pieces to size and sew panels together folding corners neatly. Iron and fold raw edges under. Then iron and hem outer edges.



Two Basic Styles of Sitting Cloth

## XII.4 GLOSSARY OF PĀLI WORDS

Ācarinī:	a senior bhikkhunī who is also regarded as a teacher
Anagārika:	a male postulant living the homeless life of a renunciant
Anagārikā:	a female postulant living the homeless life of a renunciant
Anicca:	impermanence, the truth or law of impermanence
Añjali:	a gesture of respect; palms together, raised in front of the chest with fingers aligned and pointing upwards
Anumodanā:	a blessing of appreciation
Ayyā:	respectful way of addressing a bhikkhunī, 'Venerable Lady'
Bhikkhu:	a fully-ordained Buddhist monk who lives as an alms mendicant
Bhikkhunī:	a fully-ordained Buddhist nun who lives as an alms mendicant
Dāna:	the quality of generosity; an alms meal; an offering(s) made to the Saṅgha
Desana:	a Dhamma sermon or teaching
Dukkha:	suffering, the first Noble Truth
Kamma:	actions of body, speech and mind; intention or volition; the wholesome or unwholesome that govern thoughts, words and deeds according to the laws of cause and effect, and their results manifesting in this or future births
Kathina:	a Buddhist festival held at the end of Vassa; traditionally an opportunity for the laity to express gratitude to the Saṅgha, and a time of giving requisites, in particular, offering robe cloth
Kuti:	a simple individual monastic dwelling such as a hut or small cabin for secluded meditation practice
Pabbajja:	'to go forth'; sāmaṇerī ordination
Pācittiyā:	a confessable offense for bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs
Pāli:	original scriptural language of Theravāda Buddhism closely related to Sanskrit, spoken during the time of the Buddha, without its own written script
Pārami:	a noble quality of the heart to be developed and perfected
Paritta:	verses of blessing and protection traditionally chanted by the Saṅgha
Pavāraṇa:	an invitation to receive requisites for a monastic
Pavian:	the outer robe used by anagārikās, usually white in colour
Pindapat:	the monastic tradition of walking for alms food
Puja:	a meditation time with chants of praise to the Triple Gem and often Dhamma reflections
Rūpa:	image, such as of the Buddha on a shrine, body form, statue
Samana:	a monastic living the holy life of renunciation, virtue, meditation and cultivating wisdom
Sāmaṇera:	a novice monk training in the ten monastic precepts
Sāmaṇerī:	a novice nun training in the ten monastic precepts
Saṅgha:	the order of monks and nuns, monastic disciples of the Buddha; enlightened disciples of the Buddha; the third Refuge of the 'Triple Gem'
Sarong:	lower robe or long wrap-around skirt-like robe worn by samanas

Sekhiya:	one in training; 75 Vinaya training rules or observance that incur no penalty
Sīla:	morality, virtue
Sīladharā:	upholders of virtue; the nuns who train in Ajahn Chah's western monasteries
Sutta:	verses or a discourse of the Buddha
Theravāda:	the tradition of the 'Elders', following the original form of practice established by the Buddha
Therī:	a bhikkhunī of at least twelve Vassas (years of rains retreats)
Tisarana:	the Three Jewels or the Triple Gem: the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha
Vinaya:	the monastic discipline established by the Buddha
Vassa:	the annual three month rains retreat when members of the Saṅgha must remain in a single residence between the full moons of July and October
Uposatha:	the fortnightly Lunar Observance day, on new and full moons, when formal recitations of the respective bhikkhunī and bhikkhu Patimokkha take place and the Saṅgha devote time to meditation and reflecting on Dhamma
Vuṭṭhāpana-upasampada:	bhikkhunī ordination conducted by a dual Saṅgha
Vinaya:	the monastic code of moral discipline: 311 rules for bhikkhunīs, 227 rules for bhikkhus; collected volumes of the Pāli Canon containing these rules and their commentaries.
Vipāka:	the lawful result or effect of actions due to previous, present or future kamma

## XII.5 ANAGĀRIKĀ ORDINATION CEREMONY

The candidate for ordination approaches the shrine and prostrates three times to the Triple Gem. Then she pays respects to the senior bhikkhunī with three bows and offers her a tray with flowers, incense and candle. Still kneeling, with hands in añjali, she requests the anagārikā precept training as follows:

**Okāsa ahaṃ ayye ajjatagge yāva pabajjaṃ anagārikā sīlam samādiyāmi.  
Dutiyampi okāsa ahaṃ ayye ajjatagge yāva pabajjaṃ anagārikā sīlam samādiyāmi.  
Tatīyampi okāsa ahaṃ ayye ajjatagge yāva pabajjaṃ anagārikā sīlam samādiyāmi.**

Venerable Lady, from this day onwards please permit me to undertake the anagārikā training.

For the second time, Venerable Lady, from this day onwards please permit me to undertake the anagārikā training.

For the third time, Venerable Lady, from this day onwards please permit me to undertake the anagārikā training.

Ayyā: **Yaṃ ahaṃ vadāmi taṃ vadetha.**

Repeat what I say.

Anagārikā: **Āma ayye.**

Yes, Venerable Lady.

Ayyā: (*anagārikā repeats the homage to the Buddha 3 times*)

**Namo tassa Bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.**

Ayyā: (*anagārikā repeats the Three Refuges line by line*)

**Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.** (See section I.2 for translation)

**Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

**Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

**Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

**Dutiyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

**Dutiyampi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

**Tatīyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

**Tatīyampi Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

**Tatīyampi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.**

Ayyā: **Saraṇagamaṇaṃ sampuṇṇaṃ.\***

**\*or Tisaraṇa gamaṇaṃ niṭṭhitaṃ.**

Anagārikā: **Āma ayye.**

Ayyā: (*anagārikā repeats the Eight Precepts after her line by line*)

**Paṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**

**Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**

**Abrahmacariyā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**

**Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**



**Surāmerayamajja pamādāṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**  
**Vikālabhojanā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**  
**Naccagīta vādita visūkkadassanā mālāgandha vilepana dhāranamaṇḍana**  
**vibhūsanāṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**  
**Uccāsayana mahāsayanā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.**

Ayyā: (*anagārikā repeats after her 3 times*)

**Imāṃ anagārikā silaṃ samādiyāmi.** Thus I undertake the anagārikā precepts.

Ayyā: **Tisaraṇena saddhiṃ anagārikā silaṃ dhammaṃ samādayitvā**  
**sādhukaṃ surakkhitaṃ katvā appamādena sampādeṭha.**

With faith in the Triple Refuge and having undertaken the anagārikā training,  
strive on with diligence for your welfare and protection.

Anagārikā: **Āma ayye.**

Yes, Venerable Lady.

Ayyā: **Sīlena sugatiṃ yanti.**  
**Sīlena bhogasampadā.**  
**Sīlena nibbutiṃ yanti.**  
**Tasmā silaṃ visodhaye.**

By virtue a good rebirth is attained.  
By virtue one gains wealth.  
By virtue one attains Nibbāna.  
Therefore, one should purify oneself.

Anagārikā: **Sadhu sadhu sadhu!**

*She concludes with three bows.*



This is a Dhamma-Vinaya book – please treat it with care and respect.

