

學佛行儀 (續)

Deportment Guidelines for Buddhist Practitioners (continued)

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若於各處，遇見有「佛」像、佛經、或一佛字，在不潔淨處，急宜兩手捧持，安於淨處。若見他人對佛經像有不恭敬者，宜於二人共坐時，細細以正義勸之。凡佛像，不得安於臥室內；若安臥室內，則須常坐不臥，縱臥亦不得久臥。更不得並置溺器於臥室內，蓋像在即如佛在也，安得不敬？

常見世人，於佛經義，則極其深慕讚歎，而於經像，則多視若尋常，以為佛法不在經像。殊不知敬佛經像，原為成就自己品行、德行。若於經像不敬，則其佛法妙理，又奚從來哉？是故無論何人，皆應敬佛經像也。

敬法第二

凡沙門、居士，讀佛經律，必焚香正坐，如見佛然。不得依靠，不得污手持經像。欲讀經，必先靜坐少時，默念偈云：

Whenever one encounters a Buddha image, a sutra, an object or a piece of paper inscribed with the word “Buddha” that was put in a defiled place, one should quickly pick it up with both hands and place it somewhere clean. When seeing someone behaving disrespectfully towards Buddha images or sutras, one should wait for an appropriate occasion to sit down alone with that person, and then gently explain and advise them on proper conduct. Buddha images should not be placed in a bedroom. If one does put a Buddha image in one’s bedroom, then one should remain sitting rather than lying down when in the room; if one has to lie down, it should not be for long, much less should one place a chamber pot inside the room. Because wherever there is a Buddha image, there is a Buddha, therefore, how could we possibly be disrespectful?

Usually we see that worldly people show great respect for and are awe-inspired by the principles of sutras, however, they often have little regard for Buddha images or sutras because they assume that the Buddhadharma is something separate from Buddha images and sutras. They do not realize that by respecting Buddha images and sutras they are developing their own virtuous conduct and character. Unknowingly, they disrespect Buddha images and sutras; where do they think these wondrous principles of the Buddhadharma come from? Hence everyone, no matter who it is, should show respect for Buddha images and sutras.

2. Respecting the Dharma

Any monastic or layperson should light and offer incense before reading sutras or the vinaya, then sit upright as if face-to-face with the Buddha. One should not hold a sutra or touch a Buddha image with unclean hands. Before reading a sutra, one should meditate for a short while, then silently recite the following verse for opening a sutra:

無上甚深微妙法，
百千萬劫難遭遇，
我今見聞得受持，
願解如來真實義。

念完，方合掌舒經。讀經必字字理會義解，與心相應，不得草草涉躐。

凡讀經，須著方袍或長褂。桌上除經與香爐燈光外，不得置諸茶果雜物，即筆硯亦須另處置之。經上有塵，須用淨紙掃之，不得口吹。讀畢或休息，必將經籍關合端正。讀至何處，須用黃紙為條，夾入經內，露少許於頭，不得屈摺經角，不得狼籍。讀至中間，若生雜念，亦必將經關合，念去再舒。

若客來，或上座、同學來，俱應將經關合，然後言談。有經在案，不得談世諦語言，不得笑，不得高聲，不得涕唾。若咳嗽，須以袖掩口。若讀經稍有心印，俟讀畢後，另以紙筆記之，不得記於頭上。若書寫經律，須端楷正字，筆跡鮮潔，不得隨意草書，又不得前後參差脫訛。

凡諸經籍，應如法供奉。《梵網經》云：「若佛子……常以七寶，無價香華，一切雜寶為箱囊，盛經律卷。若不如法供養者，犯輕垢罪。」若經籍損壞，宜速修補，令恆常如新。

*The supreme and wondrous Dharma,
Subtle and profound, rarely is encountered,
Even in billions of eons.
But now we see and hear it, and accept it reverently,
May we truly understand the Buddha's actual meaning.*

After reciting the verse, release the palms, gently open the sutra, and then start reading. When reading, one should strive to understand the meaning of each and every word, and to absorb them — into the heart; one should not be careless or casual, nor skip or skim through the texts, and end up with a shallow understanding.

When reading or reciting sutras, dress properly, preferably in Buddhist attire, such as a “hai qing” (black robe). Except for the sutras, incense burners, and a reading lamp, the table for reading should be cleared of all miscellaneous items such as tea or fruit. Writing implements such as pens, brushes, and inkstone should be set aside and placed elsewhere. When there is dust on a sutra, one should not use one's mouth to blow it away. Instead one should wipe it off with a piece of clean cloth or tissue. After reading, close the sutra properly and put it away neatly. When taking a pause, bookmark the page (with a slip of paper or other bookmark) with one end of the bookmark slightly protruding; do not fold the corner of the pages. Do not read in a messy place. If one has distracting thoughts, one should close the sutra properly, and take a break. Only when the distracting thoughts are gone, should one open the sutra again.

When guests, senior monastics, or fellow practitioners come to visit, one should first close the sutra if one is reading one before offering any greetings or starting any conversations. With a sutra still on the table, avoid talking about mundane matters, laughing, telling jokes, speaking loudly, spitting, blowing or wiping one's nose. If coughing, one should cough into the elbow. When one gains insight from reading sutras, wait until the reading or recitation is over to take notes if needed. One should not write in the margins of sutra texts. When hand-copying sutras or Vinaya texts, use a print-writing style and apply fine penmanship. One should not scribble or scrawl out lines from sutras in messy handwriting however one pleases. When copying out sutras, one should avoid omissions, inconsistencies, and errors.

One should make offerings to sutras or other canonical texts in accord with the Dharma. The twenty-fourth minor precept of the *Brahma Net Sutra* says, “A disciple of the Buddha... should use the seven precious things, priceless incense and flowers, and other precious treasures to make and adorn covers and cases to store the Sutras and Moral Codes. Hence, if he fails to make offerings to the Sutras and Moral Codes in accordance with the Dharma, he violates this Minor Precept and commits a defiling offense.” Upon seeing any damaged sutras, one should quickly restore it to a good or like-new condition.



待續