

# *Bhikṣuṇī ordination*

The *Dharmaguptakavinaya*



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# Buddhist Nuns between Past and Present

1. Sources and questions
  2. Spread of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*
  3. First nunneries in China
  4. Some Dharmaguptaka regulations
  5. Conclusion
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# Sources and questions

- *ubhayasaṃgha*: twofold community
  - *bhikṣu*: monk
  - *bhikṣuṇī*: nun
  - *vinaya*: disciplinary text
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# Sources and questions

- Pāli – Theravāda *vinaya*: Southeast Asia
  - *Dharmaguptakavinaya*: East Asia
  - *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*: Tibet
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# Sources and questions

- Pāli – Theravāda *vinaya*
  - *Shisong lü* 十誦律, *Sarvāstivādavīnaya*
  - *Sifen lü* 四分律, *Dharmaguptakavīnaya*
  - *Mohesengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律, *Mahāsāṃghikavīnaya*
  - *Mishasai bu hexi wufen lü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律, *Mahīśāsakavīnaya*
  - *Genbenshuoyiqieyou bu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, *Mūlasarvāstivādavīnaya*
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# Sources and questions

## MONKS

- Pāli – Theravāda  
*vinaya*: Southeast Asia
- *Dharmaguptakavinaya*:  
East Asia
- *Mūlasarvāstivādavi-*  
*naya*: Tibet

## NUNS

- *Dharmaguptakavinaya*:  
East Asia
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# Sources and questions

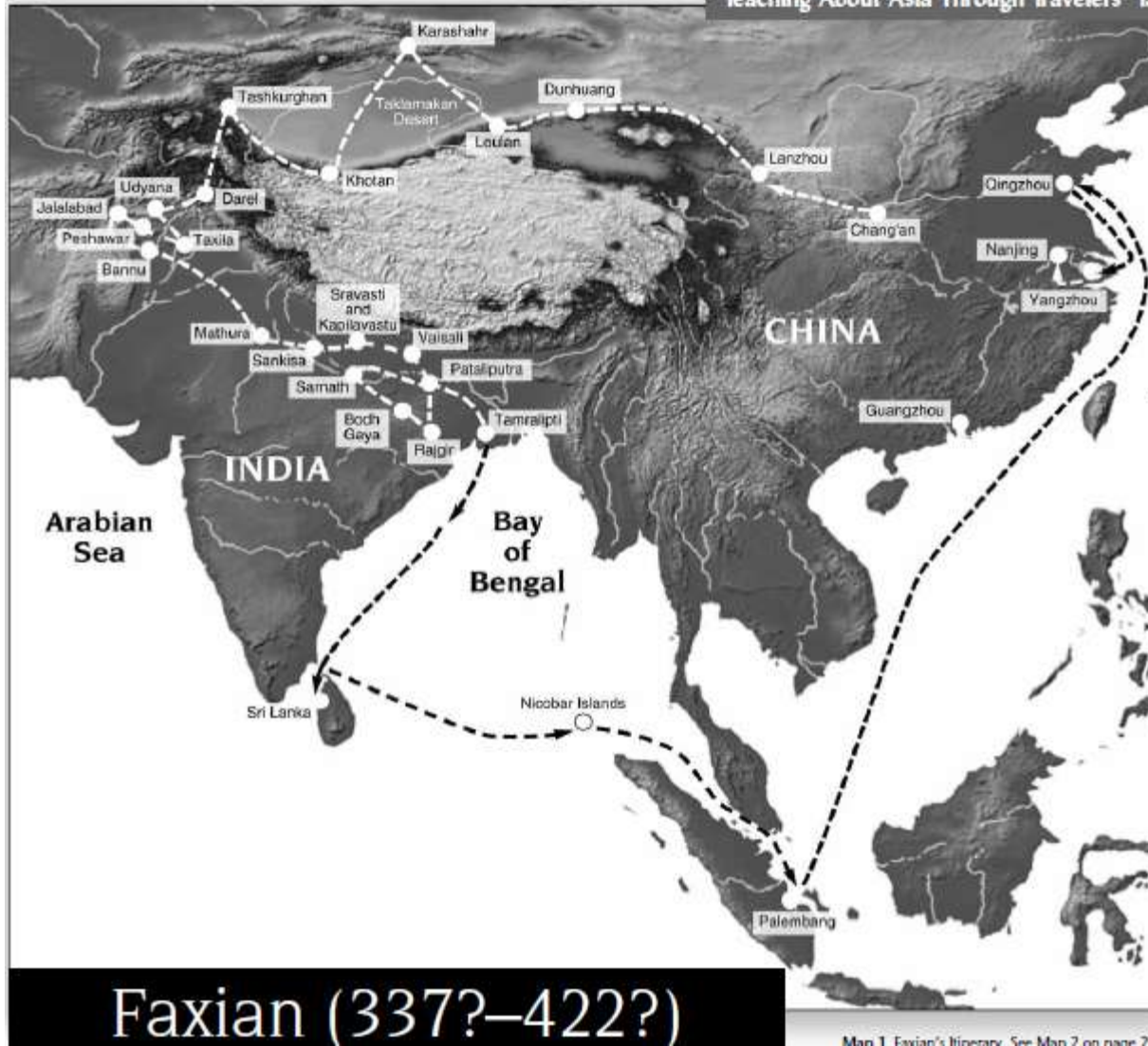
- *Dharmaguptakavinaya*: East Asia
  - How? Why?
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# Spread of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*

- The first four translations of full *vinayas* are done in the fifth century
    - *Sarvāstivādavinaya* and *Dharmaguptakavinaya* in the north (silk roads)
    - *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* and *Mahīśāsakavinaya* in the south (Faxian)
  - First ordinations? First texts?
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# Spread of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*

- Northern spread: from Northwest India through Bactria and Gandhāra; the Dharmaguptaka school was probably relatively important in the first centuries AD; decline in the later centuries

# Spread of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*

- China: how important and ‘early’ are the Dharmaguptakas?
  - Use of Gāndhārī
  - Early *vinaya* texts?
    - 250 C.E. a *prātimokṣa* text of the Mahāsāṃghika school (not extant, not mentioned in early catalogue by Sengyou, 445-518);
    - 250 C.E.: two Dharmaguptaka *karmavācanā* texts (extant texts, however, are made at the earliest in the fifth century + not mentioned in early catalogue by Sengyou)

# Spread of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*

- ❑ Biographies of Eminent Monks (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, Huijiao, ca. 530): (mostly southern monks) mostly Sarvāstivāda
- ❑ Further Biographies of Eminent Monks (*Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, Daoxuan, ca. 667): in the south, mostly Sarvāstivāda, in the north, Mahāsāṃghika and some Dharmaguptaka; the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* gains some importance
- ❑ Song Biographies of Eminent Monks (*Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, Zanning, ca. 983): first Sarvāstivāda in the south; Dharmaguptaka in the north; then prominence of Dharmaguptaka

# Spread of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*

- Biographies of Nuns (*Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (?Baochang, ca. 516):
  - mostly Sarvāstivāda; earliest ordination is the ordination of Jingjian 淨檢, in 357 (Luoyang)
  - Mahāsāṃghika (spread?)
  - only one nun is said to possess a copy of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*

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# Spread of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*

- Daoxuan (596-667): politically important in Chang'an
    - only one *vinaya*
    - First ordinations: Dharmaguptaka
    - Dharmaguptaka includes Mahāyāna
  - Emperor(s)
    - Only one *vinaya* (ordinations)
    - Edict between 705-710
    - Confirmation by travelers such as Yijing (635-713)
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律祖唐終南道宣律師



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# First nunneries in China

- Mahāprajāpatī: 8 fundamental rules (*gurudharma*):
  - 4) after a woman has been trained as a probationer (*śikṣamāṇā*) for two years, the ordination ceremony must be carried out in both orders (i.e. first in the nuns' order, and then in the monks' order) (Dharmaguptaka)





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# First nunneries in China

- *jñapticaturtha karman*
  - ordination platform/district
  - in both orders
  - ten witnesses
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# First nunneries in China

- Fourth century: in the presence of monks
  - Ca. 433: in the presence of Sinhalese nuns
    - *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (?Baochang, ca. 516)
    - *Sapoduo shi zi zhuan* 薩婆多師資傳 (Sengyou, 445-518)
    - *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Huijiao, ca. 530)
  - Which *vinaya*?
  - 8th century: *Dharmaguptakavinaya*
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# First nunneries in China: *Biqiuni zhuan*

- Ca. 433: second ordination: *chong shou* 重受, *geng shou* 更受
- Nanlin 南林 monastery (Nanjing), 300 nuns
- Permission given by Guṇavarman
- Ceremony was led by Saṃghavarman
  
- But: single ordination was not invalid in se:
  - ⇒ Nuns can follow in Mahāprajāpatī's footsteps
- One nun (Huiguo 慧果, ca. 364-433) feared that *stricto sensu* the monk who led the first ceremony committed an offense
  - ⇒ (answer) Only in case there was no training of two years

# First nunneries in China: *Biqiuni zhuan*

- Guṇavarman: second ordination can augment the value of the first ordination
- 10 witnesses
  - First group: some nuns (biography of Guṇavarman, *Gaoseng zhuan* + *Sapoduo shi zi zhuan*: 8 nuns)
  - Second group (11 nuns) led by Tiesaluo 鐵薩羅 (*Sapoduo shi zi zhuan*: 3 nuns)
  - Total number of Sinhalese nuns: ? (two groups; eleven or more)
- Nuns needed to be fluent in Chinese (*Sapoduo shi zi zhuan*: no mutual understanding)

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## First nunneries in China: Daoxuan 道宣 596-667

- *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, *An Abridged and Explanatory Commentary on the Dharmaguptakavinaya*
  - First ordination is valid, albeit an offense was committed; second ordination enhanced the value of the nuns' ordination
  - Sinhalese nuns needed to be ten and needed to learn Chinese; they arrived in two groups: 8 + 3
  - 10 nun witnesses + Tiesaluo as teacher
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First nunneries in China: Dajue 大覺 (first half eighth century)

- *Sifen lü xingshi chao pi* 四分律行事鈔批, sub-commentary on Daoxuan's commentary
  - Many doubts:
    - ⇒ There must have been foreign nuns who came to China before the fifth century: at the end of the Han, beginning of the Wei (third century), two East Indian nuns invited other nuns to China + initiated a legal ordination; tradition got lost
    - ⇒ Dajue still agrees that Chinese women could follow in Mahāprajāpatī's footsteps
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# First nunneries in China: Dajue

- ⇒ First group of Sinhalese nuns must have consisted of ten nuns; along the way, two nuns died
  - ⇒ The nuns had to master Chinese
  - ⇒ Three more nuns arrived (including Tiesaluo)
  - ⇒ Although called 'second', it should actually been seen as 'first ordination'
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Foguangshan (google)



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# Some Dharmaguptaka regulations

- First step: *śrāmaṇerī*, novice
  - Second step: *śikṣamāṇā*, probationer
  - Third step: *bhikṣuṇī*
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# Some Dharmaguptaka regulations

## ■ Novice

- ❑ Age: chase away crows (male novice)
  - ❑ Minimum quorum: four ordained nuns
  - ❑ *Samagrasaṃgha*: same *prātimokṣa*; presence of all monks and nuns in the legal district (*sīmā*); quorum obtained
  - ❑ A teacher (*upādhyāyini*) prepares the candidate for ordination
  - ❑ ten
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# Some Dharmaguptaka regulations

## □ Ten rules

- Not to kill
  - Not to steal
  - No unchaste behavior
  - No lying
  - No alcohol
  - No perfume
  - No flowers, singing, dancing, music
  - No luxury bed
  - No to eat after noon
  - Not to touch gold, silver, money
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# Some Dharmaguptaka regulations

## ■ Probationer

- Two years
  - 18 years old, unless married (10), in all probability referring to the biological age
  - Complex ceremony (compared to the novice, closer to full ordination ceremony)
  - Six rules, formulated in the same way as rules for nuns
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# Some Dharmaguptaka regulations

- Six rules
    - No sexual intercourse
    - No stealing
    - No killing (of a human being)
    - No lying about one's spiritual achievements
    - No eating after noon
    - No alcohol
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# Some Dharmaguptaka regulations

- In fact all rules for nuns (when possible) include a sentence saying that also novices and probationers need to follow these rules; the offense committed is different though
- The status of probationer was probably never fully introduced in China
- After the ceremonies of novice and probationer, there is a full ordination in a dual *saṃgha* with twice ten witnesses: dual ordination
- *Samagrasaṃgha*: same *prātimokṣa*; presence of all monks and nuns in the legal district (*sīmā*); quorum obtained









# Conclusion

- The basis for ordination is the *vinaya*
- The *Dharmaguptavinaya* became prominent (in the eighth century it was imposed); these rules became standard, with discussions on how to implement them
- Ca. 433 there was a so-called 'second ordination' for nuns (witnesses from Sri Lanka)
- The second ordination became a historical precedent
- It was never discussed (it has always been seen as a legally valid second start, sometimes called 'first')



Thank you!

and goodbye!

