

Speech is Silver, Silence is Golden? Speech and Silence in the Buddhist *Samgha*

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IN A BUDDHIST context, three kinds of acts are to be considered: the acts of body, speech and mind. The present research focuses on acts related to speech, and more particularly “speech” in the monastic guidelines as they spread from India to China. First, the paper examines how on the one hand speech is explicitly allowed by the Indian *vinayas*, while on the other hand the same texts also meticulously constrain it. When analyzing the underlying reasons why *vinaya* compilers decided to include rules on speech in the most basic monastic guidelines, two motives come to the fore. First, an act should not be wrongful. Second, it should not transgress proper etiquette. The second part of the paper focuses on early Chinese monastic compendia that supplement the Indian rules. Again we see that speech is explicitly allowed, though also carefully restricted. The two motives to do so remain the same: acts should not be wrongful, nor should they go against exemplary behavior. Still, as we will see, the way of implementing these motives has considerably changed.

SPEECH IN THE INDIAN *VINAYAS*

In the early fifth century, four full *vinayas*, including the *Sifen lü* 四分律 (T no. 1428, hereafter *Dharmaguptakavinaya*), were translated into Chinese.¹

¹ In chronological order, these are: *Shisong lü* 十誦律 (T no. 1435, hereafter *Sarvāstivādvīnaya*), *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, *Mohesengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 (T no. 1425, hereafter *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*), and *Mishasai bu hexi wufen lü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 (T no. 1421, hereafter *Mahīśāsakavinaya*). For details, see Yuyama 1979.

Much later, at the beginning of the eighth century, the *bhikṣu* Yijing 義淨 (635–713) translated large parts of the *vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda (T nos. 1442–1451),² as well as other *vinaya* texts belonging to the same school.³ In the meantime, however, the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* had been strongly promoted by influential Buddhist masters, and around 705–710, it was even imposed by imperial decree as the only *vinaya* to be followed in the Chinese empire.⁴ The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* consequently became the reference point for monastic discipline in China. It is for this reason that the present research focuses on the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, while comparing it to the other Chinese *vinayas* when relevant.

In the interactions among *saṃgha* members as outlined in the *vinayas*, speech plays a major role. As we will see, the Buddha wanted it to be like that and rejected a “law of silence” (*ya fa* 瘖法 or *ya fa* 啞法). Consequently, acts related to speech were included in the *bhikṣu*- and *bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣas* (list of rules for monks and nuns). These acts fall into two different categories, which we have defined as wrongful speech on the one hand, and indecent behavior on the other.

Law of Silence

As stated above, speech is an essential part of monastic life. One of the instances where this is most obvious is the *pravāraṇā* or invitation ceremony, held at the end of the rainy season retreat. At this ceremony, every *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī* invites his/her fellow *bhikṣus/bhikṣuṇīs* to point out wrongs, whether seen, heard or suspected.⁵ In the introductory story that explains the coming into being of the invitation ceremony, the *vinayas* all contain a similar account that discusses the role of speech in a monastic community. In the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* it goes as follows: Several

² Of the *vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda, a Tibetan translation as well as many Sanskrit fragments are extant. For details, see Yuyama 1979, pp. 12–33.

³ Besides the above-mentioned *vinayas*, two major *vinaya* texts have survived in an Indian language. The most important one is the Theravāda *vinaya* written in Pāli. Although at the end of the fifth century a Pāli *vinaya* was translated into Chinese, the translation was never presented to the emperor and was subsequently lost (see Heirman 2004, pp. 377–78; Heirman 2007, pp. 190–92). The second is the chapter for nuns (*bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*) of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins, preserved in a transitional language between Prākṛit and Sanskrit (Roth 1970, pp. LV–LVI). It was never translated into Chinese.

⁴ See Heirman 2002b, pp. 414, 419–423 and Heirman 2007, pp. 192–95.

⁵ On this ceremony, see Chung 1998 and Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 217–21.

bhikṣus living together during the rainy season retreat wanted to ensure that they would be able to have an “agreeable dwelling” (*an le zhu* 安樂住), which is one of the motives behind why the Buddha is said to have laid down the disciplinary rules.⁶ The term “agreeable dwelling” is not chosen arbitrarily. It is linked to the idea of a harmonious *saṃgha* and refers to the mental state of tranquility due to knowing what is correct and incorrect.⁷ The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* formulates it as such: “Honorable ones, you must be harmonious (*he he* 和合) with the *saṃgha*. If you are harmonious with the *saṃgha*, it is on friendly terms and without disputes; it is with the same teaching, just as water and milk are mixed. There is an increase in the doctrine of the Buddha, and one has an agreeable dwelling.”⁸ The use of the concept of “agreeable dwelling” in the introductory story of the invitation ceremony makes it clear that the *bhikṣus* wanted to avoid acts of speech that could disrupt the harmony of the *saṃgha*. A particular focus is put on meal-time gatherings. It is at these occasions that everyone meets, and wearisome and difficult (*pi ku* 疲苦) situations need to be avoided. Therefore, some *bhikṣus* decide to make regulations for the rainy season retreat: They will not speak to each other, greet each other, or inform each other about where they have been. The first one to go on a begging round in the village should on his return clean the eating place, spread the sitting material, and prepare all vessels. Each *bhikṣu* brings along some food. In case one has received a surplus, one should put it aside before eating. If one has received just enough, one can immediately start to eat, after which one returns to one’s room in silence. The second one who goes to the village equally should bring his food to the eating place, put aside any extra food, and silently go back to his room after the meal. In case he did not receive enough food, he can take some of the extra food left behind by fellow *bhikṣus*. Finally, the third one should do the same as the second one, but he should also distribute the leftovers to beggars or to non-human beings. In case no place for distribution is provided, he should throw the food away, but not on the grass or in water containing small creatures (so as not to damage the grass, or hurt the creatures). He should also clean the food vessels and put them back in their proper place. He is expected to store away the water vessels, the vessels used to wash the

⁶ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 835c13ff. See also Heirman 2002a, part 2, pp. 243–44.

⁷ For more details, see Heirman 2002a, part 2, p. 275, n. 24; and pp. 423–25, n. 268.

⁸ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 595a10–12.

feet, and the sitting material. Finally, he should sweep the eating place. In case he cannot handle it alone, he can gesture to a companion to help him. Silently he goes back to his room. There is no reason whatsoever to speak. In this way, the group of *bhikṣus* hoped to avoid any potential problem. When, however, the Buddha is informed, he does not agree. The Buddha considers the *bhikṣus* to be foolish and states that instead of having avoided hardship, they have created it—they were living like a family full of anger, and by introducing the law of silence,⁹ they were acting just as non-Buddhists do. Instead, the Buddha says, one should communicate and, through teachings, help one another to attain enlightenment. The communicative function of speech is clearly given a prominent role. A group of six *bhikṣus*, however, abused the right to speak, falsely accusing another *bhikṣu*. Therefore, in order to avoid these and other problems, the Buddha gave permission to hold the invitation ceremony.

As stated above, at the invitation ceremony, every *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī* invites his/her fellow *bhikṣus*/*bhikṣuṇīs* to point out wrongs, whether seen, heard or suspected. The basic aim was to insure that after the rainy season retreat, when *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* were supposed to start traveling again, they could do so without any grudges. At the ceremony, the *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī* who is criticized acknowledges the offenses and expresses regret.¹⁰ In this way, the dispute is considered to be settled.¹¹

The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* is not the only *vinaya* to discuss the role of speech in the context of the invitation ceremony. The Pāli *vinaya*, for instance, contains nearly exactly the same account.¹² Also the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* puts forward the same arguments for allowing speech, though in a much more succinct way.¹³ This *vinaya* stresses the concepts of “harmonious and agreeable [dwelling]” (*he he an le* 和合安樂) and of “living together” (*gong zhu* 共住). The Buddha is shown as explicitly demanding the *saṃgha* to use speech as part of community life. He strictly rejects the “law of silence” (also named *bu gong yu fa* 不共語法 [the rule of not speaking to each other]). The *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* relates how

⁹ Cf. *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 836a16–17.

¹⁰ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 837a4–7.

¹¹ See also Chung 1998, pp. 33–37.

¹² *Vin* vol. 1, pp. 157–59 (for a translation, see Horner 1938–66, vol. 4, pp. 208–11).

¹³ *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1421: 130c20–131a6.

bhikṣus at the start of the rainy season retreat established a “law of non-speaking” (*bu yu zhi* 不語制) in order to insure “an agreeable dwelling.”¹⁴ Again the Buddha disagrees and states that *bhikṣus* should speak to one another. Also in the *Sarvāstivādaśāstra*, *bhikṣus* coming together for the rainy season retreat decide not to use speech (*bu gong yu yan* 不共語言).¹⁵ As a consequence, they need detailed regulations for organizing meals. The Buddha disapproves of this and says that by observing silence, the *bhikṣus*, instead of having “an agreeable dwelling,” actually behave foolishly, living like non-Buddhists do, in a family full of hatred. The “law of silence” is seen as a serious transgression. A similar message is given in the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra*, which contains a passage in which some *bhikṣus* decide to perform their tasks in the monastery in silence, thus avoiding any speech or conflicts.¹⁶ The Buddha’s reaction is parallel to the one recorded in the *Sarvāstivādaśāstra*.¹⁷

Although it is clear that the Buddha wants *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* to use speech in their daily monastic life, it is obvious that this does not include the permission to start arguing or to indulge in slander or gossip, thus

¹⁴ *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T 22, no. 1425: 451a17–b6.

¹⁵ *Sarvāstivādaśāstra*, T 22, no. 1435: 165a11–b12.

¹⁶ *Genbenshuoyiqieyou bu pinaiye suiyishi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶隨意事, T 23 no. 1446: 1044c14–1045a5. For a translation into German, see Chung 1998, pp. 281–82.

¹⁷ See also *Genben sapoduo bu lü she* 根本薩婆多部律攝 (The Compendium on the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra*, T 24, no. 1458: 551a25–26), where the “law of silence” is seen as a practice of non-Buddhist ascetics. The law is equally discussed in a number of non-*vinaya* texts. In the *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經, for instance, it is listed among the “wrong views” (T 1, no. 1: 128a7–19). The Mahayana *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (*Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*) compiled during the first half of the Southern Song (420–479) by Huiyan 慧嚴, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 and others (see Demiéville et al., 1978, pp. 47, 243; Mizuno 1995, pp. 75–76), refers to it as a wrongful practice followed by brahmins (T 12, no. 375: 626b17–18). The latter passage is quoted by the *vinaya* master Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) in his *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (A Further Collection for the Propagation and Clarification [of Buddhism], T 52, no. 2103: 301b21–22), and by the Tiantai *bhikṣu* Guanding 灌頂 (561–632), prominent disciple of master Zhiyi 智顓 (538–597), in *Niepan jing hui shu* 涅槃經會疏 (The Commentary on the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, X 36, no. 659: 400c14). Also Nagārjuna rejects in the *Da zhi du lun* 大智度論 (*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, translated by Kumārajīva in the early fifth century), the “law of silence” as a method to accomplish the path (T 25, no. 1509: 64a3–9; commented upon by Jizang 吉藏 [549–606] in *Zhongguan lun shu* 中觀論疏 [Commentary on the *Madhyamakaśāstra*, T 42, no. 1824: 124c7–11]); for a translation of the *Da zhi du lun*, see Lamotte 1966, p. 66.

undermining the stability of the *saṃgha*. The invitation ceremony in fact aims at preventing these and other kinds of potential disputes. Moreover, as we will see, wrongful speech acts are considered to be offenses and are carefully dealt with in the *vinaya* texts.

Prātimokṣa Rules: Wrongful Speech

The *bhikṣu*- and *bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣas* and their respective explanatory chapters (*vibhaṅgas*) included in the full *vinayas* contain many rules aimed at preventing or settling disputes within the monastic community. A significant number of these rules deal with oral communication, as can be defined with respect to both form and content. As shown in figures 1 and 2, several formal criteria delineate the rules regarding acts of speech. First of all, most of the acts contain an explanatory passage stipulating that if the speaker does not “clearly” (*liao liao* 了了) communicate his or her message, the infraction committed is less serious.¹⁸ Second, the majority of the rules also indicate extenuating circumstances as a result of which the behavior under discussion is not to be seen as an infraction: no offense is committed if the speaker is just joking, says it in haste, says it when he or she is alone, says it in a dream, or wants to say one thing, but mistakenly says something different. All these exceptions point out that the speaker is acting unwillingly—he or she did not have the intention to harm. Consequently, according to the *vinaya*, the action cannot constitute an offense.¹⁹ While most rules focusing on oral communication have both technical indications, i.e., the clarity of the spoken message and extenuating circumstances, some rules have only one or the other. In order to be analyzed as a rule focusing on an act of speech, at least one of the criteria must be present.

An analysis of the above rules shows that they can be divided into several categories with respect to content. While all rules deal with (1) blameworthy behavior, implying that the agent is knowingly and intentionally

¹⁸ The clarity of the message seems to leave some room for doubt about the intention or the knowledge of the speaker, thus reducing the blameworthiness of the action.

¹⁹ As pointed out by P. Harvey (2000, p. 52), “the degree of unwholesomeness of an action is seen to vary according to the degree and nature of the volition/intention behind the action, and the degree of knowledge (of various kinds) relating to it. A bad action becomes more unwholesome as the force of volition behind it increases, for this leaves a greater karmic ‘trace’ in the mind.” For more details, see Harvey 2000, pp. 52–58.

Rule	Clear message	Extenuating circumstances				
		Joke	Haste	Alone	Dream	Mistake
pār. 4: To lie about one's superhuman faculties		+	+	+	+	+
saṃ. 3: To use obscene words to seduce a woman	+	+	+	+	+	+
saṃ. 4: To use false information to seduce a woman	+	+	+		+	+
saṃ. 5: To act as a go-between	+					
saṃ. 8: To falsely accuse someone of a pār.	+	+	+	+	+	+
saṃ. 9: To falsely accuse someone of a pār., referring (without any justification) to another case	+	+	+	+	+	+
saṃ. 13: To refuse to give up wrong behavior after an admonishment		+	+	+	+	+
niḥ.-pāc. 30: To incite donors to offer gifts to oneself, instead of to the <i>saṃgha</i>		+		+	+	+
pāc. 1: To deliberately lie	+					
pāc. 2: To insult another <i>bhikṣu</i>	+	+		+	+	+
pāc. 3: To speak "with a double tongue," insulting others in order to cause discord	+					
pāc. 6: To recite the doctrine with someone who is not fully ordained	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 7: To inform a non-ordained person about a grave offense committed by a member of the <i>saṃgha</i>	+					
pāc. 8: To speak about superhuman faculties to non-ordained persons	+	+		+	+	+
pāc. 9: To privately teach a woman	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 12: To evade questions			+	+	+	+
pāc. 13: To discredit an honorable <i>bhikṣu</i>	+	+		+	+	+
pāc. 23: To destroy an instructor's reputation	+	+		+	+	+
pāc. 54: To refuse to accept a warning		+		+	+	+
pāc. 55: To frighten another <i>bhikṣu</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 63: To deliberately cause doubt in another <i>bhikṣu</i> 's mind	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 66: To raise a settled matter again	+	+	+		+	+
pāc. 71: To express doubts about the knowledge of an admonishing <i>bhikṣu</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 72: To cast doubt on the bi-monthly recitation of the minor precepts	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 73: To express ignorance at the <i>poṣadha</i> ceremony		+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 74: To accuse the <i>saṃgha</i> of favoritism	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 76: To discuss a decision of the <i>saṃgha</i> after having given one's consent	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 77: To spread other <i>bhikṣus</i> ' quarrels						
pāc. 80: To falsely accuse a <i>bhikṣu</i> of a saṃ.	+	+	+	+	+	+

Figure 1. Rules on oral communication in the Dharmaguptaka *bhikṣuvibhaṅga* (+ marks show the presence of the features indicated at the top of the chart)

Rule	Clear message	Extenuating circumstances				
		Joke	Haste	Alone	Dream	Mistake
sam. 9: To incite a <i>bhikṣuṇī</i> to continue to accept the gifts of a donor who has sexual thoughts	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 87: To spread words without thinking them over	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 88: To curse another <i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 92: To annoy a <i>bhikṣuṇī</i> who has lived in the nunnery before	+	+	+		+	+
pāc. 105: To prevent gifts to be presented to the <i>saṃgha</i>		+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 117: To apply oneself to worldly magic	+					
pāc. 118: To tell others to apply themselves to worldly magic ²⁰	[+]					
pāc. 133: To express a grudge against the <i>saṃgha</i> after having been denied the permission to confer ordination	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 145: To revile a <i>bhikṣu</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 146: To reproach the <i>saṃgha</i> after having been admonished	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 149: To express jealousy with respect to a donor family	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 169: To support oneself by practicing magic	+					
pāc. 170: To teach magic to lay people	+	+	+	+	+	+
pāc. 172: To ask an unexpected question to a <i>bhikṣu</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+

Figure 2. Rules on oral communication in the Dharmaguptaka *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*²¹

doing something wrong,²² and (2) behavior that may potentially undermine the well-being and harmony of the *saṃgha* and of its individual members, relatively clear demarcations can be made among the central themes of the rules. Wrongful speech can be based on either false statements, or on statements that while being truthful, still aim at harming the self-respect of the victims. Third, it can be based on actions for which neither truthfulness nor the fate of a victim is at stake, but which show disrespect to the *saṃgha*, damaging its reputation. Among the gravest offenses based on statements known or at least believed by the speaker to be false are cases involving lies meant for a general public. Despite the fact that the speaker is not targeting

²⁰ The rule is presented as an addition to the preceding one and is given without any further information.

²¹ The Dharmaguptaka *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga* includes both the rules common to *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* and those outlined for *bhikṣuṇīs* only. The above table only contains the second group.

²² See also note 19 in this article.

a specific victim, (s)he casts serious doubt on the credibility of the *saṃgha* and its members. Closely related to general lies are actions of a more criminal nature, given the fact that the victims are induced into wrong behavior through deceitful speech. False statements also include cases of slander or calumny, which are defined as utterances of false charges or misrepresentations that defame and damage another's reputation. Slanderous words can be uttered directly to the victim, or indirectly, via a third person. A second group of wrongful speech does not involve false statements, but aims at harming someone through insults—ridiculing or humiliating a victim—or through gossip—by spreading rumors of an intimate or personal nature. Finally, in a third group of wrongful speech, the speaker does not utter false statements nor wants to destroy a victim's reputation, but consciously behaves disrespectfully, damaging the well-being of the *saṃgha* or one of its members. In the following, the above offenses will be analyzed in order to point out why and to what extent they are seen as condemnable acts for *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs*.

(1) False Statements

(a) Deliberate Lies

Lying is seen as a very disturbing matter for the Buddhist monastic community.²³ If a *bhikṣu* or a *bhikṣuṇī* deliberately lies about spiritual knowledge and superhuman faculties, it is even considered to be a *pārājika* (pār.), the highest possible offense of the *prātimokṣa*.²⁴ The wrongdoer deliberately misleads lay people and greatly damages the credibility of the *saṃgha*. Lying about less important matters is considered to be of lesser impact, yet it is still classified as a *pācittika* (pāc.) offense.²⁵ It is even the first of all *pācittika* offenses: “If a *bhikṣu* deliberately lies, he [commits] a *pācittika*.” “To deliberately lie” (*zhi er wang yu* 知而妄語, “to know but to falsely say”) is explained by the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* as falsely going against the knowledge acquired through the six senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body

²³ Conscious lies, willfully uttered, can therefore not be excused in a Buddhist *vinaya* context (see, for instance, Derrett 2006, pp. 1–6).

²⁴ Transgression of a *pārājika* offense leads to a permanent exclusion from the status of *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* (cf. Heirman 1999 and Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 119–24). On the possibility of still maintaining a certain, though minor, position within the *saṃgha*, see Clarke 2000.

²⁵ *Pācittika*, Pāli *pācittiya* and variants: an offense that needs to be expiated (cf. Heirman 2002, part 1, pp. 141–47).

and mind).²⁶ The introductory story, by describing how the act is committed in front of non-Buddhist religious specialists, shows why this kind of lying is so damaging. The Buddhist *bhikṣu*, not being consistent in his speech, damages the credibility of the *saṃgha* and attracts criticism.²⁷

When the *vibhaṅgas* refer to lying that does not involve a specific targeted victim, clearly the reliability of the *saṃgha* itself is at stake. Although no direct victims are suffering personal damage as a result of the wrongful act, the community as a whole loses credibility, and the status of Buddhist monastics is seriously undermined.

(b) Deceitful Speech

While the above lies do not target a specific victim, deceitful speech does. If the speaker incites others to commit a wrongful act, even including suicide, this is treated by the *vinayas* as murder (pār. 3): “If a *bhikṣu*, on purpose and with his own hands, deprives someone of life, or if he takes a knife and gives it to someone, or if he praises death, glorifies death or incites someone to commit suicide, shouting: ‘Man, with such a bad life, it is better to be dead than alive!’; if he has such thoughts and if he takes many actions to praise death, to glorify death, or to incite someone to kill himself, this *bhikṣu* [commits] a *pārājika*, and [is] not [allowed to] live in the community.”²⁸ Although the rule is not directly focused on speech—and as such is not included in the above list—speech is knowingly and intentionally used to commit a wrongful act, in this case to kill a human being, one of the worst possible actions.²⁹ Apart from fatally injuring a targeted victim, the wrongdoer also brings considerable harm to the reputation of the *saṃgha*. This latter aspect is particularly underlined in the two *saṃghāvaśeṣa* (*saṃ.*) rules³⁰ that concern attempts by a perverted *bhikṣu* to seduce women. In *saṃghāvaśeṣa* 3,³¹ a *bhikṣu* tries to seduce several women by the use of obscene and wicked words. In *saṃghāvaśeṣa* 4,³² a wicked *bhikṣu* incites

²⁶ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 634b3–9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 634a9–17.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 576b26–c1.

²⁹ Linked to the concept of *ahiṃsa*, “non-injury,” the rule is generally considered to be the most important Buddhist precept (Harvey 2000, p. 69).

³⁰ *Samghāvaśeṣa*, Pāli *saṃghādisesa*, an offense that leads to a temporary expulsion from the order. It is the second gravest category of offenses (cf. Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 128–38).

³¹ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 581b7–582a11.

³² *Ibid.*, 582a12–c14.

a woman to have sexual intercourse with him, an act which he describes as a supreme service to a *bhikṣu*. Although in these rules one obviously can speak of victims—the seduced women—the introductory stories particularly focus on the harm done to the reputation of the *bhikṣus*. This is aptly put into words by one of the women who says: “We originally thought that water could extinguish fire, but now fire is arising from water.”³³ She further complains that the environment which she thought to be safe has now become a dangerous place to live in. In this introductory story, these admonitions, which express her loss of trust in the *bhikṣus*, are presented as the immediate cause for laying down a new precept strongly condemning the action of seduction.

(c) Direct Slander

While the above actions are directed at a targeted victim who as recipient of the wrongful speech is intentionally induced into wrongful behavior, the category of slander does not deceive a victim, but intends to undermine his reputation. The victim can be either directly or indirectly addressed. In the latter case, he is not the recipient of the speech act, but the topic of it, and the one who is intentionally harmed. This kind of action is particularly damaging to the stability and well-being of the *saṃgha*, as it clearly aims to undermine the *saṃgha* itself, or at least some of its members.

Cases of direct slander are mostly aimed at the *saṃgha* itself. In *pācittika* 74 of the *bhikṣuvibhaṅga*, for instance, a *bhikṣu* who had previously accepted the decision of the *saṃgha* regarding the distribution of cloth later accuses the *saṃgha* of favoritism, claiming that its decision shows preferential treatment to some *bhikṣus* at the expense of others.³⁴ Also, the following case of a *bhikṣuṇī* who does not accept the decision of the *saṃgha* and therefore slanders it is based on an unresolved grudge. The *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*, *pācittika* 133, states: “If a *bhikṣuṇī*, not having been given permission by the *saṃgha* to confer ordination, says: ‘The *saṃgha* has desire (*chanda*), hatred (*doṣa*), fear (*bhaya*), and foolishness (*moha*). What it wants to allow, it allows. What it does not want to allow, it does not allow,’ she [commits] a *pācittika*.”³⁵

Aimed at a more specific victim is *pācittika* 63, which concerns the offense of deliberately causing doubt in another *bhikṣu*’s mind and upset-

³³ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 581b15–16, 582a22–23.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 686c4–687a14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 762a15–b20.

ting him.³⁶ The speaker knowingly tries to unsettle his victim by—unfoundedly—causing doubt about his date of birth, his age, the validity of his ordination, offenses he is said to have committed, or on his status as a *bhikṣu*.

(d) Indirect Slander

Cases of indirect slander, aiming at destroying the reputation of a well-respected *saṃgha* member, are classified among the *saṃghāvaśeṣa* offenses, the second most serious category of infractions against the *prātimokṣa* rules. This is not surprising since slander is seen as one of the wrong acts that has the potential to divide the *saṃgha*, a situation considered by the *vinayas* as one of the major problems to be avoided, and therefore the central theme of several *saṃghāvaśeṣa* rules.³⁷ In the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, slander is the main topic of *saṃghāvaśeṣas* 8 and 9.³⁸ *Saṃghāvaśeṣa* 8 states as follows: “If a *bhikṣu* is overcome with anger and therefore slanders a *bhikṣu* who has not committed a *pārājika* offense with an unfounded³⁹ reference to *pārājika* rules, and if he wants to spoil that person’s pure conduct, and if at another time, whether or not he has been questioned, one knows that this case is unfounded, and if he says: ‘I was angry. Therefore, I spoke in that way.’ If he speaks in that way, that *bhikṣu* violates a *saṃghāvaśeṣa*.”⁴⁰ The introductory story relates how two *bhikṣus* instigate their sister, the *bhikṣuṇī* Maitreyī, to falsely accuse the honorable *bhikṣu* Dravya Mallaputra of having raped her.⁴¹ Doing so, she accuses him of a *pārājika* offense (*pār.* 1). The Buddha does not believe her, however, and, indeed, an investigation proves Dravya Mallaputra to be innocent. Thereupon, the Buddha lays down the above precept.⁴² *Saṃghāvaśeṣa* 9 is closely related to the previous rule. It forbids transferring details from one case to another in order to falsely accuse someone of a *pārājika* offense. The introductory story describes how two *bhikṣus* notice a ram and an ewe having sexual intercourse. They decide to call them *bhikṣu* Dravya Mallaputra and *bhikṣuṇī* Maitreyī and

³⁶ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 677c24–678c8.

³⁷ For details, see Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 134–38.

³⁸ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 587a25–589b10, 589b11–590b12.

³⁹ Explained as “not based on the three foundations: to see, to hear, to suspect” (T 22, no. 1428: 588b28).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 588b22–26.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 587a25–588b22. On the Sanskrit name Dravya Mallaputra, see Karashima 2000, p. 233, n. 2.

⁴² For more details on the fate of the *bhikṣuṇī* Maitreyī, see Heirman 2000, and the in-depth study of Clarke 2008.

thereupon spread the story of their alleged sexual relationship.⁴³ Eventually they have to admit that they were only referring to two sheep. According to D. Schlingloff, this introductory story is the result of a wrong interpretation of the precept.⁴⁴ In his opinion, the precept itself stipulates that one may not enlarge a minor fact of someone's life to a *pārājika* offense in order to cause damage. The introductory story, however, describes how the facts of the life of one person are related to the life of someone else.

Of a lesser impact, but still strongly rejected, is the false accusation of a *saṃghāvaśeṣa* offense, as outlined in *pācittika* 80.⁴⁵ The examples given in the subsequent commentary all concern suspicious conduct related to sexual contact with women. Other cases of slander concern accusations of a more imprecise nature. Due to jealousy, for instance, a rumor is spread by some *bhikṣus* about a colleague who had been appointed to give instruction to the *bhikṣuṇī* community (*bhikṣuvibhaṅga*, pāc. 23).⁴⁶ The introductory story describes how the appointed instructor is well received by the *bhikṣuṇīs*, who give him shelter and food. Thereupon some *bhikṣus* are jealous and try to destroy his reputation by suggesting that he only goes to the *bhikṣuṇīs* for the sake of food.

Finally, slander is also the main topic of *pācittika* 13.⁴⁷ It is again directed against the honorable Dravya Mallaputra, who as a *bhikṣu* responsible for distributing mats and food to the *saṃgha* members is accused of having desire, hatred, fear, and foolishness.

(2) Harmful Statements

An attempt to undermine a victim's reputation can also be done by uttering or spreading all kinds of rumors. No false statements are made, but as we

⁴³ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 589b11–c12.

⁴⁴ Schlingloff 1963, pp. 540–41.

⁴⁵ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 689a7–b17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 650a27–c1. As stipulated in the sixth of the eight “important rules” (*gurudharma*) imposed upon Mahāprajāpatī, as a condition for the installment of a *bhikṣuṇī* order, every fortnight the *bhikṣuṇīs* have to ask the *bhikṣus* for instruction (*avavāda*) (T 22, no. 1428: 923b12–14; for more details, see Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 63–65). The *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga* (T 22, no. 1428: 765a11–c13) informs the reader that one should first appoint a *bhikṣuṇī* to go to the *bhikṣu* community to ask for instruction. For her safety, she must take two or three *bhikṣuṇīs* with her. After she has communicated her request, she returns to her community. The *bhikṣus* then appoint a *bhikṣu* to go and give instruction. The *bhikṣuvibhaṅga* (T 22, no. 1428: 649a1–2) makes it clear that the instruction concerns the eight important rules.

⁴⁷ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 643a13–c4.

will see in the next section, elements of the victim's life are used to ridicule or humiliate him or her. When done directly to the person, one clearly insults the targeted victim. When done behind the victim's back, the speaker rather reverts to gossip.

(a) Insults

Clear cases of insult are discussed in *pācittika* rules 2 and 3: "If a *bhikṣu* insults [someone] in several ways, he [commits] a *pācittika*," and "if a *bhikṣu* speaks with a double tongue, he [commits] a *pācittika*."⁴⁸ With "insult" the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* refers to humiliating statements, such as the following: "You were born in an inferior clan, your acts are also inferior, as well as your skills and workmanship; you are someone who commits offenses; you are someone who has many fetters; you are blind; you are bald and blind."⁴⁹ It is clear that different items are at stake, not only the issue of offenses—which could still be classified under "false accusations"—but also someone's commitment to the Buddhist life, or even very personal and worldly matters, such as origin and physical features. Obviously, the insults are meant to create discord. This is even more clear in *pācittika* 3, which deals with so-called "double tongue speech" (*liang she yu* 兩舌語),⁵⁰ explained as insulting others in order to spread discord among *bhikṣus*, *bhikṣuṇīs*, probationers, male and female novices, male and female lay disciples, kings, ministers, non-Buddhist *śramaṇas* and brahmins.⁵¹

(b) Gossip

A gossipier tries to undermine the reputation of a victim by spreading harmful rumors. His or her main concern is to unsettle the victim, thereby destabilizing the *saṃgha*. This is clearly the case in *bhikṣuvibhaṅga*, *pācittika* 77: Some *bhikṣus* hear other *bhikṣus* quarreling and they spread what they have heard.⁵² In this way, they cause disputes or prevent them from being settled. If it is in the interest of the *saṃgha*, however, the *bhikṣu* may say what he has heard. In fact a *bhikṣu* or a *bhikṣuṇī* should always act in the interest of the *saṃgha*. This is also the reason why one should reflect carefully on words said or heard. If not, one might cause misinterpretations or slander, as

⁴⁸ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 635b10, 636c16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 635b11–13.

⁵⁰ A rendering of *paiśunya*, "insult" (cf. Heirman 2002a, part 2, pp. 541–42, n. 14).

⁵¹ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 636c17–637a18.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 688a1–b11.

developed in a rule found only in the *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*. *Pācittika* 87 states that “if a *bhikṣuṇī* accepts words without thinking them over, and if she further tells them to others, she [commits] a *pācittika*.”⁵³ What happened was that the *bhikṣuṇī* Tiśyā mistakenly interpreted the words of her teacher to take a robe, an alms bowl, sitting materials and a needle box as an invitation to steal these objects. She spread the news among the other *bhikṣuṇīs*, thus causing unrest in the community.⁵⁴ It is important to note that in this case, the offense did not concern the misinterpretation, which happened by mistake, but the fact that she spread the surprising news without thinking it over. The latter act was done with full knowledge of what she was doing.

(3) Disrespectful Statements

In the rules dealing with disrespectful statements, the speaker does not utter false or harmful words, nor does he/she want to destroy the victim’s reputation. Instead the speaker knowingly and willingly either aims at annoying or challenging the victim, or chooses to carelessly neglect the interest of the *saṃgha*.

(a) Annoying Acts

Disrespectful acts often aim at unsettling targeted persons by annoying them, thus reducing their self-image and well-being. This is the case when a *bhikṣu* frightens another *bhikṣu* by, for instance, imitating the sound of a non-human being (*bhikṣuvibhaṅga*, pāc. 55).⁵⁵ Another example is when a *bhikṣuṇī* is loudly praying for a disaster to happen to another *bhikṣuṇī*, the topic of *pācittika* 88 of the *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*.⁵⁶ Very disturbing are words of jealousy uttered towards another member of the community, as described in *pācittika* 149 of the *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*: “If a *bhikṣuṇī* has jealous thoughts with respect to a [donor] family, she [commits] a *pācittika*.”⁵⁷ The introductory story makes it clear that the offending *bhikṣuṇī* is jealous of a fellow *bhikṣuṇī* who was given alms by a rich family. She harasses this *bhikṣuṇī*, insinuating that the donor only gives to her.⁵⁸ The *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*,

⁵³ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 743a20–b22.

⁵⁴ A *bhikṣu* committing the same offense is said to have done a *duṣkṛta*, “a bad deed” (T 22, no. 1428: 743b16).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 673b19–674b5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 743b23–c29. A *bhikṣu* is said to commit a *duṣkṛta* (T 22, no. 1428: 743c25).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 768b8–c8.

⁵⁸ For a *bhikṣu*, the latter offense is classified as a *duṣkṛta* (T 22, no. 1428: 768c2).

pācittika 92, also describes a *bhikṣuṇī* who annoys another *bhikṣuṇī* who used to live in the nunnery but has now returned after the pestering *bhikṣuṇī* herself entered it, designating the offense as a *pācittika*.⁵⁹ The offending *bhikṣuṇī* disturbs the well-being of the *saṃgha* by constantly standing in front of the senior *bhikṣuṇī*, asking questions, or giving instructions.

(b) Challenging Acts

While the above actions are aimed at one personal victim, other actions challenge the *saṃgha* itself. This happens, for instance, when, after having given his consent to a formal judgement of the *saṃgha*, a *bhikṣu* still disputes the decision taken. Doing so, he commits a *pācittika* (pāc. 76).⁶⁰ Related to a protest against a rightful decision of the *saṃgha* is the refusal to accept a justified admonishment. This is the theme of *saṃghāvaśeṣa* 13: A *bhikṣu* commits a *saṃghāvaśeṣa* offense if, after having undergone an admonishment based on a formal legal procedure of the *saṃgha*, he still refuses to give up the wrong behavior.⁶¹ If such a legal admonishment has not (yet) taken place, but a fellow *bhikṣu* simply warns the wrongdoer to put an end to some wrongful behavior, and if the *bhikṣu* refuses to accept the warning, he commits a *pācittika* (*bhikṣuvibhaṅga*, pāc. 54).⁶² Equally regarded as a *pācittika* offense (*bhikṣuvibhaṅga*, pāc. 71)⁶³ is a case when, while being admonished, a *bhikṣu* expresses doubts about the knowledge of the admonishing *bhikṣus*, saying that he will not study the precept in question until after having consulted a wise person who is well grounded in the *vinaya*. Also very unsettling are *bhikṣus* who show a disdainful attitude towards the *saṃgha* rules themselves. *Pācittika* 72 describes how a *bhikṣu* casts doubt on the use of the bi-monthly recitation of the minor precepts, thus creating uncertainty and instability in the community.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 745a6–b7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 687b20–c29.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 599a16–600b7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 673a24–b18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 685b7–c6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 685c7–686a18. The attempt to reduce the *prātimokṣa* to the most important rules—by the *Mahāsāṃghika*- and *Dharmaguptaka*-*vinayas* explicitly referred to as the *pārājika* and *saṃghāvaśeṣa* rules—at the expense of the minor rules (*ksudrānuksudrāṇi śikṣāpadāni*, cf. Heirman 2002, part 2, p. 642, n. 61) is mentioned in all *vinayas*. Each time it is firmly rejected. See the Pāli *vinaya*, *Vin* vol. 4, pp. 142–44; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1421, p. 41a27–c4; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T 22, no. 1425: 338c4–339a5; *Sarvāstivādavinaya*, T 23, no. 1435: 74b22–c21; *Genbenshuoyiqieyou bu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, T 23, no. 1442: 775a20–c9.

It is equally wrongful to try to get away with an infraction against the rules by evading questions,⁶⁵ thereby annoying and challenging the *saṃgha*, as raised in *pācittika* 12 of the *bhikṣuvibhaṅga*.⁶⁶ One also commits a *pācittika* offense if, during the bi-monthly recitation of the *prātimokṣa*, a *bhikṣu* claims to learn for the first time that one or the other precept belongs to the *prātimokṣa*, regardless of the fact that it is well known that he was present before at such a recitation (*bhikṣuvibhaṅga*, pāc. 73).⁶⁷

Finally, harmful to the well-being of the *bhikṣusaṃgha* in particular was an unexpected question about the Buddha's teachings asked to some *bhikṣus* by a learned *bhikṣuṇī* (*bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*, pāc. 172).⁶⁸ Since the *bhikṣus* could not answer, their authority was publicly questioned.

(c) Careless Acts

Disrespectful actions do not always directly challenge the authority of the *saṃgha*. They can just be very careless ways of behavior inside and outside of the monastery that undermine the reputation and the well-being of the *saṃgha*. Such an embarrassing practice is acting as a go-between for a wedding or a sexual meeting. In such a case, the wrongdoer even commits a *saṃghāvaśeṣa* (*saṃ*. 5).⁶⁹ Inciting donors not to offer gifts to the *saṃgha* but rather to oneself—as described in *niḥsargika-pācittika* 30⁷⁰—is a clear sign of greed, damaging the reputation of a member of the *saṃgha* and by extension the *saṃgha* itself. Similarly, when a *bhikṣuṇī* convinces an old donor who is related to her not to give robes to the *saṃgha*, but to give only some food, she prevents gifts from being offered to the Buddhist community, seemingly in order to financially help a relative (*bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*, pāc. 105).⁷¹ Other careless acts mentioned in the *bhikṣu-* and *bhikṣuṇī-**vibhaṅgas* are some imprudent practices which are potentially damaging to the image of the *saṃgha*. In this context, *pācittika* 8 forbids members of

⁶⁵ *Wang zuo yi yu* 妄作異語, “to talk about other things in a deceitful way,” *anyavāda* (cf. Heirman 2002a, part 2, p. 549, n. 35).

⁶⁶ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 642a20–643a12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 686a19–c3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 775c18–776a17.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 582c15–584a15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 633a14–c29. *Niḥsargika pācittika* (Pāli, *nissaggiya pācittiya*, and variants) precepts all concern, with the exception of one, unlawfully obtained objects that must be given up. One precept concerns a robe from which a *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī* is separated in an unlawful way (cf. Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 138–41).

⁷¹ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 750a29–c2.

the *saṃgha* to speak to non-ordained persons about superhuman faculties they truly possess.⁷² Similarly, *pācittika* 6 forbids the recitation of Buddhist teachings to someone who is not fully ordained, since such an act risks being very chaotic and disturbing, a stain on the *saṃgha*'s reputation.⁷³ The standing of the *saṃgha* is equally at stake when *pācittika* 7 warns not to inform a non-ordained person about a grave offense (*pārājika* or *saṃghāvaśeṣa*) committed by a member of the *saṃgha*.⁷⁴ Only if one has been explicitly commissioned by the *saṃgha* to openly reveal the offense, may one do so. Potentially dangerous is also the practice of privately teaching a woman by a *bhikṣu*.⁷⁵ This must be limited to a maximum of five or six sentences. If not, it might lead to rumors about suspicious personal relations (pāc. 9).⁷⁶ Rumors about personal relations, particularly of a sexual nature, might also start to circulate in a case where a *bhikṣuṇī*, despite the fact that she knows that her presence stimulates a donor's sexual thoughts, still goes to beg for food at his home. Inciting a *bhikṣuṇī* to continue to accept the donor's gifts even constitutes a *saṃghāvaśeṣa* offense (*bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*, sam. 9).⁷⁷ Finally, an item extensively discussed in the *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga* is the wrongful practice of worldly magic, which again damages the reputation of the *saṃgha*. *Pācittikas* 117 and 118 explicitly forbid a *bhikṣuṇī* to apply herself to worldly magic, or to tell others to do so.⁷⁸ More on magic can be found in *pācittikas* 169 and 170, respectively, which forbid a *bhikṣuṇī* to support herself by practicing magic or to teach it to lay people.⁷⁹

Prātimokṣa Rules: Indecent Behavior

While in the offenses analyzed above the focus is on wrongful speech, in the next part it is on speech seen as a feature of behavior, which for a *saṃgha* member should be respectful and exemplary. Not surprisingly, the *vinayas* contain a considerable number of rules on how to speak in

⁷² *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 639c14–640a13. If they do not possess these faculties, they commit a *pārājika* offense (see above).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 638c21–639a28.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 639a29–c13.

⁷⁵ Or by a *bhikṣuṇī* to a man (*bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*, pāc. 9, T 22, no. 1428: 734c23–24).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 640a14–641a10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 722a14–b22.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 754a17–b11.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 774c21–775b26. In all these cases of magic, a *bhikṣu* is said to commit a *duṣkṛta*, “a bad deed” (T 22, no. 1428: 754b5, 775a9–10, 775b19).

an exemplary way. Although these rules do not deal with transgressions involving wrongful speech—and as such they do not belong in the scheme outlined above—they do involve oral acts. These acts transgress expected proper behavior. Shouting loudly at mealtimes, for instance, is seen as a sign of an undignified attitude. Complaints regarding this issue typically appear in the context of insufficiently trained *bhikṣuṇīs*. This is the case in *pācittikas* 128–132 of the *bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*.⁸⁰ The first two of these *pācittikas* concern the period following ordination: *Bhikṣuṇīs* who do not receive further instructions from their teacher for a period of two years after their ordination show improper behavior and shout loudly during meals. *Pācittikas* 130 to 132 describe how unworthy *bhikṣuṇīs* confer ordination, but cannot prevent the undignified behavior of undisciplined newcomers. Guidelines for correct behavior are also outlined in the so-called “rules of good behavior,” *śaikṣa dharma*. This category of precepts consists of a list of rules concerning etiquette proper for both *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs*. The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* states that one who violates such rules commits a “bad deed,” a *duṣkṛta*.⁸¹ Particular emphasis is put on the proper attitude towards lay followers and decent behavior at mealtimes. Avoidance of noise is among the main guidelines. One should, for instance, quietly, and without showing disrespect, enter a layman’s house and sit down (rules 22 to 25).⁸² One should also not talk while having food in the mouth, a habit proper to animals (rule 38).⁸³ Animals also make noise when chewing food. *Bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs*, however, should avoid it (rule 42).⁸⁴

SPEECH IN EARLY CHINESE MONASTIC GUIDELINES

Once the *vinaya* texts had been translated into Chinese, several Chinese *vinaya* masters started to write extensive commentaries. One of the most influential was the *bhikṣu* Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), founder of the Nanshan lüzong 南山律宗, “the *vinaya* school of Nanshan,” a school that promoted the *vinaya* rules, and in particular the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, seen as the *vinaya* tradition on which the first Chinese ordinations were based. As the abbot of the Ximing 西明 monastery near the capital Chang’an, Daoxuan

⁸⁰ *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 760a8–762a14.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 698b8–10 et passim. See also Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 148–49.

⁸² *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 22, no. 1428: 702a5–b24.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 706b15–c9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 707b27–c19.

wrote several *vinaya* commentaries and actively promoted Buddhism at the imperial court.⁸⁵ In one of his commentaries, he briefly refers to the “law of silence.”⁸⁶ Therein, he repeats the Buddha’s opinion: One should not refrain from speaking (a practice of non-Buddhist ascetics), but instead communicate. In this way, one knows whether or not there are any offenses, a potential problem which can be solved at the invitation ceremony. With a reference to the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*,⁸⁷ Daoxuan also warns that when greeting each other one should not remain mute, but instead ask about each other’s travels.⁸⁸ Also, the later *vinaya* master Zhihong 志鴻 (eighth century), following in Daoxuan’s footsteps, refers in his *Sifen lü sou xuan lu* 四分律搜玄錄 (The Commentary on the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*) to the Buddha’s rejection of the “law of silence.”⁸⁹ Daoxuan’s and Zhihong’s comments clearly show that through the Indian *vinayas*, allowing speech became the norm in Chinese monasteries.⁹⁰

Since speech commonly belongs to the daily practices of Chinese *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs*, it is not surprising that monastic guidelines compiled in China also address it. In researching the transmission of Indian *vinaya* speech rules to the Chinese *saṃgha*, it is necessary to focus on the early guidelines that became standard for the later Chinese communities. One such guideline is undoubtedly the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (The Brahmā’s

⁸⁵ For details, see Wagner 1995, pp. 46–90; Yifa 2002, pp. 23–28.

⁸⁶ Daoxuan, *Sifen lü shanbu sui ji jiemo* 四分律刪補隨機羯磨 (An Abridged and Explanatory *Karmavācanā* of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*), T 40, no. 1808: 504c5–6. For later subcommentaries on Daoxuan’s opinion, see Shi 2000, s.v., “zizi yuanqi” 自恣緣起 (vol. 1, pp. 383–84).

⁸⁷ *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T 22, no. 1425: 510b20–21.

⁸⁸ Daoxuan, *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (An Abridged and Explanatory Commentary on the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*), T 40, no. 1804, 133b20–21. For later commentaries on this passage, see Shi 2000, s.v., “yayang buyu” 啞羊不語 (vol. 2, p. 822).

⁸⁹ *Sifen lü sou xuan lu*, X 41, no. 732: 894c13–17.

⁹⁰ This allowance of speech is also apparent in, for instance, the travel account written by the *bhikṣu* Yijing, the *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳 (An Account of Buddhism Sent from the South Seas). In this account, Yijing never refers to any “law of silence.” On the other hand, however, he warns that after a meal, *bhikṣus* should not engage in talking in order to pass the time (T 54, no. 2125: 207c6–9, maybe also in order to gossip, as interpreted by Li [2000, p. 27]). Interestingly, Yijing puts talking after a meal at the same level as not taking a jar of water or chewing “tooth wood” (and thus having an unclean mouth). In this way, internal and external decorum are linked (for more details, see the chapter, “Transmission through Buddhist Texts: Practices of Oral Hygiene,” in a forthcoming book by Ann Heirman and M. Torck).

Net Sutra, T no. 1484), compiled in the fifth century.⁹¹ This sutra contains the so-called *bodhisattva* rules intended to provide the Chinese Buddhist community with a guideline of Mahayana moral precepts. It was seen as a Mahayana supplement, a guideline for lay people as well as for *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* on their way to enlightenment. It was also introduced in the ordination ceremony. In fact, even in present-day China, the ordination based on the traditional Indian *vinaya* texts always comes first.⁹² The *Fanwang jing* contains in the second of its two fascicles a set of fifty-eight rules.⁹³ The first ten rules define *bodhisattva pārājika* offenses (*pusa boluoyi zui* 菩薩波羅夷罪). The offender loses all merit in his or her present existence and will be reborn as an infernal being, a hungry ghost or an animal. If the offender is a *bhikṣu* or a *bhikṣuṇī*, he or she loses monastic status.⁹⁴ The ten *pārājika* rules are followed by forty-eight light offenses (*qing gou zui* 輕垢罪), several of which deal with speech. Unlike the *vinaya* texts, no specific indications are given that will allow us to formally delineate categories regarding the guidelines on speech. Moreover, speech is often viewed as only part of a broader context. Still, when putting together all the instances in which a wrongful speech act is described as an offense, we see that several of the *vinaya* categories outlined above appear again:

⁹¹ Although traditionally the *Fanwang jing* is said to have been translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 406, it is in fact a text composed in China probably around the middle of the fifth century (Groner 1990, pp. 253–55, 278). It is not clear when exactly the *Fanwang jing* started to play an important role in Chinese Buddhism. According to Groner, it must have been within one or two centuries after its compilation. The second fascicle (containing the list of precepts) was circulating as an independent text by the end of the fifth century. Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554), the compiler of the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks) is said to have made the first commentary on it (Daoxuan, *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [Further Biographies of Eminent Monks], T 50, no. 2060: 471b16; Fei Changfang, *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶紀 [A Record of the Triple Jewel through the Ages], T 49, no. 2034: 100a4–5; Groner 1990, p. 255).

⁹² This does not necessarily imply that the traditional *vinaya* rules were always considered to be superior. On the contrary, some ordination ceremonies, such as the one designed by Emperor Wu (r. 502–549) of the Liang dynasty, seem to suggest that the *vinaya* ordination was just a transitory state towards the full perfection of *bodhisattva*-hood (Janousch 1999, pp. 126–33; De Rauw 2008, pp. 35–42). For more details on these texts see, among others, *Hōbōgirin*, s.v. “Bosatsukai” 菩薩戒; Groner 1990, pp. 251–57; Kuo 1994, pp. 37–58.

⁹³ For a translation, see De Groot 1893 (French) and Hankó 2003 (German).

⁹⁴ *Fanwang jing*, T 24, no. 1484: 1005a18–22. Still, repentance is always possible (see Kuo 1994, pp. 56–58).

(1) False Statements

- Deliberate lies: *pārājika* rule 4.⁹⁵
- Deceitful speech (all dealing with incitements): inciting to kill, to steal, to commit wrongful sexual intercourse, to lie, to sell alcohol, to speak about offenses committed by a *bodhisattva* or *saṃgha* member, to praise oneself while defaming someone else, to be miserly, to insult others, or to defame the Three Jewels, i.e., Buddha, *Dharma*, *Samgha* (*pārājika* rules 1–10);⁹⁶ to incite others to drink alcohol (light rule 2),⁹⁷ to make coffins (light rule 12),⁹⁸ or to seek favors from rich and influential people in an inappropriate way (light rule 17).⁹⁹
- (Indirect) slander: to praise oneself while defaming someone else (*pārājika* rule 7),¹⁰⁰ to defame the Three Jewels (*pārājika* rule 10),¹⁰¹ to falsely accuse others of having committed an offense (light rule 13),¹⁰² indirectly defaming a (lay or monastic) *bodhisattva*, or looking for fights (light rule 19).¹⁰³

(2) Harmful Statements

- Insults: *pārājika* rule 9.¹⁰⁴
- Gossip: to speak about offenses committed by a *bodhisattva* (lay or monastic) or a *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī* (*pārājika* rule 6)¹⁰⁵

(3) Disrespectful Statements

- Challenging acts: undermining Mahayana texts (light rules 15 and 16),¹⁰⁶ acting as a teacher without understanding the (Mahayana)

⁹⁵ *Fanwang jing*, T 24, no. 1484: 1004c3–12.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1004b16–1005a15.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1005b6–9.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1005c24–1006a1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1006a25–29.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1004c19–23.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1005a11–15.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 1006a2–5.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1006b6–8.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1005a5–10.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1004c13–18. In all probability, this rule needs to be understood as speaking publicly about offenses regardless of whether or not they actually took place. On the other hand, not inciting a fellow community member (lay or monastic) to repent of his or her offenses constitutes a light offense (light rule 5: 1005b17–21).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1006a10–24.

teachings (light rule 18),¹⁰⁷ refusing to teach the Mahayana texts (out of laziness for instance) (light rule 23),¹⁰⁸ speaking badly about the Three Jewels to a lay public and falsely acting as a teacher (light rule 39),¹⁰⁹ teaching the Buddhist guidelines to people who do not accept the Buddha's sayings (light rule 42),¹¹⁰ not inciting others to accept the Buddhist guidelines (light rule 45).¹¹¹

- Careless acts: wrongful magic (light rule 29).¹¹²

When examining the above rules, we see that the *Fanwang jing* particularly condemns the use of false and—to a lesser extent—harmful statements. Much more so than the *vinaya* texts, it also severely reprehends people who incite others to commit a wrongful act. Disrespectful statements that compromise the functioning of the monastic community—one of the major issues in the *vinayas*—get relatively little attention apart from a reference to possible fights as the result of slander and some warnings against the use of magic. Undermining Mahayana texts, on the other hand, is extensively dealt with.

The *Fanwang jing* contains no rules on how to preserve or improve the decorum of the *sangha*. This does not mean, however, that this aspect was neglected by the early Chinese monastic communities. On the contrary, while the *Fanwang jing* primarily focuses on false and harmful statements, other Chinese guidelines explicitly deal with exemplary behavior and the decorum of the *sangha*. This is the case, for instance, in another well-known Chinese text on discipline, the *Da biqiu sanqian weiyi* 大比丘三千威儀 (Great [Sutra] of Three Thousand Dignified Observances of a *Bhikṣu*, T no. 1470), probably compiled in the fifth century.¹¹³ The text extensively outlines the proper etiquette for all kinds of events in a monastery. On several occa-

¹⁰⁷ *Fanwang jing*, T 24, no. 1484: 1006b1–5.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1006c5–18. This is also touched upon in light rule 41 (1008c9–1009a5).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1007b4–10.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1009a6–12.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1009a25–b1.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 1007a28–b3. Also light rule 33 (1007b14–20) briefly refers to some divination methods not to be practiced by a *bodhisattva*.

¹¹³ Although the colophon to the text presents it as a Han-dynasty translation by An Shigao 安世高 (second century), the *Da biqiu sanqian weiyi* was probably compiled in China during the fifth century (Hirakawa 1970, pp. 193–96).

sions, the use of speech is limited. The text stipulates, for instance, that when entering a hall, one should not make a noise, nor should one laugh or talk.¹¹⁴ Making a noise during meals is equally not allowed.¹¹⁵ Also, when exiting the sleeping quarters, and when bathing or rinsing one's mouth, one should not talk with others, out of respect.¹¹⁶ In addition, the *Da biqiu sanqian wei yi* condemns verbal arguing and warns, for instance, not to quarrel¹¹⁷ or interfere in other people's fights by supporting one side or the other.¹¹⁸

The issue of decorum is also emphasized in the guidelines compiled by prominent early Chinese masters such as Zhiyi, founder of the Tiantaishan monastery, whose *Lizhi fa shitiao* 立制法十條 (Rules in Ten Clauses) aims at training novices. Zhiyi's list of ten rules is included at the beginning of the *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄 (One Hundred Records of the Guoqing Monastery), compiled by Zhiyi's disciple Guanding 灌頂 (561–632).¹¹⁹ The sixth rule describes the proper decorum at mealtimes and includes a few stipulations on noise: One should avoid making slurping sounds and talking to others.¹²⁰ Besides etiquette, the ten rules also emphasize proper moral behavior, condemning acts such as uttering false accusations (rule 6)¹²¹ or disturbing the harmony of the *samgha* by arguing in a loud voice (rule 8).¹²² Apart from Zhiyi, the above-mentioned *vinaya* master Daoxuan also repeatedly underscores proper etiquette.¹²³ He explicitly argues for abstaining from speech and laughter when paying respect to the Buddha, when listening to his teachings, or at gatherings of the *samgha*, during mealtimes, and in the toilet facilities.¹²⁴

The focus on decorum finally also receives a prominent place in the so-called “rules of purity,” *qinggui* 清規, which started to develop in the

¹¹⁴ *Da biqiu sanqian wei yi*, T 24, no. 1470: 919a16–18.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 922b9–10, 17–19, 25–27.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 915a24–b3, 919a5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 916a12, 19–20, c20–21, 920c13–14.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 925a18–20.

¹¹⁹ *Guoqing bailu*, T 46, no. 1934: 793b24–794a17. For a description, see Yifa 2002, pp. 20–21.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 793c27–28.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 794a9–12.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 794a5–8.

¹²³ For more details on Daoxuan's interpretation of the *vinaya* rules, see also Heirman 2008.

¹²⁴ *Jiaojie xinxue biqiu xinghu luyi* 教誡新學比丘行護律儀, T 45, no. 1897: 873a17–19. On this text, see also Yifa 2002, pp. 26–28 (on the attribution of the text to Daoxuan, see Yifa 2002, p. 226, n. 103).

eighth century, particularly among Chan *bhikṣus*.¹²⁵ These rules aim at the practical organization of large public monasteries. The oldest extant code is the *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規 (The Rules of Purity for the Chan Monastery), compiled by Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗曠 (n.d.–1107?) in 1103. These practical rules have been regularly updated and have become the standard guidelines for the organization of all Chinese public monasteries.¹²⁶ They did not replace the earlier *vinaya* rules though, but offer practical organizational guidelines. In the *Chanyuan qinggui*, the way to behave at general gatherings, and especially at mealtimes, is extensively outlined, with a detailed prescription for every act or movement,¹²⁷ which implies that one knows exactly what oneself and others are expected to do.¹²⁸ The focus

¹²⁵ This does not imply that other traditions did not write monastic guidelines. On the contrary, nearly identical rules were compiled for use in, for instance, Tiantai monasteries (see, among others, the guidelines compiled by the Tiantai master Zunshi 遵式 (964–1032), described in Yifa 2002, pp. 35–37). Still, from the Song dynasty onwards, the Chan rules prevailed in Chinese monasteries (Yifa 2002, pp. 38–52).

¹²⁶ The second oldest set of Chan monastic rules is a text entitled *Ruzhong riyong* 入衆日用 (Daily Life in the Assembly, X 63, no. 1246. For an introduction and translation, see Foulk 1995), compiled in 1209 by the Chan *bhikṣu* Wuliang Zongshou 無量宗壽. The code comprises detailed guidelines for the daily practices of the large group of *bhikṣus* who have no administrative duties but instead concentrate on meditation and study. Here again, we find several rules on silence, which are mainly based on the *Chanyuan qinggui*, but also remind us of earlier texts (themselves often a source of the *Chanyuan qinggui*). Just as in the *Chanyuan qinggui*, one should be silent during mealtimes, when entering or leaving the sleeping quarters, or while using bathing or toilet facilities (X 63, no. 1246: 556b17–c7, 557a16, 557b11–c8, 557c18–22, 558a9, 558b4, 558b10, 558c1; *Chanyuan qinggui*, W 111: 887a2–3, 896b7, 912b1–2, see also notes 130 to 132 in this article). Silence is also requested when reflecting on the Buddha’s name (X 63, no. 1246: 556c16; W 111: 914a7 [after the demise of a *bhikṣu*]). After a meal, one should not lean closely together with others and laugh or chat (X 63, no. 1246: 557c10, 558a9), a rule which reminds us of Yijing’s warning mentioned above and of a guideline in the *Chanyuan qinggui* saying that one should not congregate and talk in the hall (W 111: 887a2). Finally, the *Ruzhong riyong* also advises always lowering one’s voice when speaking, a rule partially parallel to the stipulation in the *Chanyuan qinggui* saying that when walking in the corridor, a *bhikṣu* should avoid laughing or talking too loudly (X 63, no. 1246: 558a18; W 111: 887a1–2). For more details on the *qinggui* texts and their impact, see, among others, Foulk 1987, pp. 62–99; Fritz 1994, pp. 1–111; Yifa 2002, pp. 53–111; Jia 2005.

¹²⁷ W 111: 880b11–883a5.

¹²⁸ While in the *vinayas* the exact starting point of a meal is generally not specified (although the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* has a rule saying that the abbot should prescribe the time of meals for *bhikṣus*, T 22, no. 1421: 179a27–b6; see also Yifa 2002, p. 57), this is no longer the case in the *Chanyuan qinggui*, which stipulates that all *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* should eat together at the same time. The meal gathering thus became highly formalized.

clearly is on exemplary and respectful behavior. Respect is due not only to the Buddha's teachings and to the *saṃgha*, but also to the food itself. In order to honor the food, one performs five contemplations which mainly aim at seeing food as bodily nourishment, necessary for attaining enlightenment.¹²⁹ These contemplations at the same time also lessen any feelings of greed. In addition, the *Chanyuan qinggui* refers to a whole list of mealtime rules, many of which are explicitly based on the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, including the rule that one should not talk with food in one's mouth.¹³⁰ The guidelines make it perfectly clear that during meals one should be as quiet as possible. Clinking of spoons or chopsticks and sounds of chewing, slurping, or blowing the nose are to be avoided.¹³¹ Also, speech during meals is seen as disturbing, and *bhikṣus* who have any needs at that time should make this known silently (*mo ran* 默然) by using gestures.¹³² This is exactly what several early Indian *bhikṣus* who were pleading for the "law of silence" suggested, although their maintenance of silence extended also beyond mealtimes. In large Chinese monasteries, meals were again taken in silence, apart from a few ritual phrases that were chanted at the beginning and end of each meal. At large gatherings such as mealtimes, but also in many other situations described above, the etiquette of remaining silent in concentrated contemplation was preferred over speech, although this contradicts what was advocated by the Buddha in earlier times.

CONCLUSION

With the establishment of Buddhist monastic rules, a debate arose over the use of speech within the *saṃgha*. As is clear from the introductory story to the invitation ceremony (*pravāraṇā*), the suggestion of a "law of silence" was firmly rejected and was even defined as a practice of non-Buddhists and likened to a family full of hatred. As a representative example of a moment of intense contact among *saṃgha* members, the *pravāraṇā* story chooses the meal after the begging round. The *bhikṣus* were supporting the suggestion of maintaining absolute silence and were having their meals in silence.

¹²⁹ W 111: 882a6–7. The same contemplations are still generally applied in Chinese monasteries (cf. Yifa 2002, pp. 24–25 [who traces them back to Daoxuan's commentaries] and Guggenmos 2006, pp. 147–48).

¹³⁰ W 111: 882a11–18, corresponding to the *Dharmaguptaka śaikṣa* rules 26–47, T 22, no. 1428: 702b25–709a7.

¹³¹ W 111: 882a11, 882a16, 882b1.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 882b5.

Upon hearing of this practice, the Buddha explicitly asks the *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* to communicate by speech. This story is immediately followed by a case in which speech was abused, leading to the implementation of the invitation ceremony.

Since speech was seen as an essential part of monastic life, the *vinayas* pay a lot of attention to it, and numerous rules are devoted to potential wrongful acts. All these acts have one thing in common, namely that they could destabilize the Buddhist community. When examining the content of the rules on speech, two categories stand out. In the first category, which in the *vinayas* is to a large extent also technically delineated, the focus is on rules in which speech is willingly and knowingly abused, ranging from false or harmful statements to disrespectful ones. In the second category, the focus is on speech as one of the aspects of exemplary etiquette expected from a monastic community.

When the *vinayas* were translated into Chinese, these monastic guidelines were introduced into the early Chinese communities together with the later Mahayana moral codes, i.e., the *bodhisattva* rules. These guidelines were commented upon and interpreted within a Chinese context. Most influential was the fifth-century compilation of Mahayana rules, the *Fanwang jing*. Given its focus on moral guidelines, it is not surprising that this code particularly emphasizes false or harmful statements. Still, the *Fanwang jing* does not run completely parallel to the Indian *vinayas*. It warns against inciting other people to commit wrongful acts, a point which in the *vinayas* is only touched upon in passing. Striking also is its condemnation of all acts that undermine Mahayana teachings. While speech is not discussed in the *Fanwang jing* as an aspect of etiquette, this perspective prominently returns in the commentaries and guidelines of early Chinese *vinaya* masters. On the one hand, the implementation of a “law of silence” was clearly not an option, since it was directly criticized by the Buddha in the *vinayas*. However, on the other hand, a relatively silent way of living gradually became more emphasized within Chinese monastic rules as a sign of proper etiquette, and of exemplary behavior for the monastic community. This was especially so for meal gatherings. The so-called “rules of purity” (*qinggui*) even imposed a new kind of silence that was not focused on avoiding potential wrongful utterances by people attending the meal, but on noise that deviates from proper etiquette or that might lead one away from proper thoughts on the Buddhist teachings, which were to be continuously maintained.

To conclude, it is clear that in early China, the two *foci* of the Indian *vinaya* speech rules were treated in two different genres. The *bodhisattva* rules emphasized the moral aspects of speech, paying—compared to the *vinayas*—more attention to inciting other people to do wrong and to the potential undermining of the Buddhist teachings, especially Mahayana teachings. The guidelines of *vinaya* masters, and especially the so-called “rules of purity,” however, emphasize speech as an aspect of decorum and as a potential diversion from the teachings of the Buddha. In this way, they introduced a new “law of silence,” encouraging a silent way of living, especially at large gatherings such as at mealtimes.

ABBREVIATIONS

- niḥ-pāc. *niḥsargika pācittika* or variants.
 pāc. *pācittika* or variants.
 pār. *pārājika*.
 saṃ. *saṃghāvaśeṣa* or variants.
 T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 100 vols., ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–34.
 Vin *Vinaya Piṭakaṃ: One of the Principal Buddhist Holy Scriptures in the Pāli Language*. 5 vols, ed. H. Oldenberg. 1879–83. Reprint, London: Pali Text Society, 1969–93.
 X *Shinsan dainihon zokuzōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經. 90 vols., ed. Kawamura Kōshō 河村孝照. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975–89.
 W *Wan xuzang jing* 卍續藏經. 150 vols., ed. Xinwenfeng Bianshenbu 新文豐編審部. Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chuban.

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