

# Sleeping Equipment in Early Buddhism From India to China

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## Abstract

Sleeping constitutes an important part of our daily routine, and this is no different for Buddhist monks (*bhikṣu*) and nuns (*bhikṣuṇī*)<sup>1</sup> Still, while sleeping is often perceived as an innocent time during which one cannot incur any guilt, it is not as harmless as one might think. During sleep, one can unwittingly cause a loss of respect or self-respect and damage one's reputation or, by extension, the reputation of one's community. As a result, the community tries to impose strict control over all aspects of sleeping, including the nature of beds and mats.<sup>2</sup> It is on this material aspect that the present research focuses. How is sleeping equipment described in early (Indian) Buddhist disciplinary texts? Which guidelines have to be taken into account? What may we learn from them? And how have these Indian guidelines been interpreted in China?

## Introduction

In Buddhist disciplinary texts, the principal focus is on the *prātimokṣa*, a list of rules that is to be recited every two weeks at the *poṣadha* ceremony.<sup>3</sup> These rules

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<sup>1</sup> Indian words in this article are Sanskrit unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> For sleeping practices in Buddhist disciplinary rules, see in particular Heirman, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> A ceremony that is attended by all monks and nuns of the monastery district (*sīmā*), so that the unity of the community is reaffirmed.

are extensively commented upon in *vinaya* texts, which provide the community with many explanatory details. In addition, the *vinayas* offer extra guidelines in chapters named *skandhakas* or *vastus*, which cover a variety of monastic business, including legal procedures and material aspects of monastic life. Extra information on sleeping equipment and practice is given especially in the chapter on lodging and furniture (Pāli *senāsanakkhandhaka*, Skt. *śayanāsanavastu*).<sup>4</sup> The *vinayas* thus outline precisely what an ideal monastic setting should provide.

It is hard to know the extent to which monks and nuns observed all of the rules prescribed by disciplinary and thus normative texts. Yet the equipment and practices mentioned in these texts are at least conceivable, and as such they help us to understand the monastic ideal. As for material equipment, the *vinayas* shed light on which objects should be available in a monastery and how to utilise them.

Sleeping equipment is generally referred to as ‘lying material’ (*wo ju* 卧具, *śayyā* or *śayanāsana/śayyāsana*). More specifically, monks and nuns are instructed to sleep on a bed (*chuang* 床, *mañca*), fitted with a bottom sheet (*ru* 褥, *āstarāṇa*) and a covering (*bei* 被, *prāvaraṇa*), and to use a pillow (*zhen* 枕, probably *brsī*) and possibly also a footrest (*zhi zu* 椅足), as mentioned in the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*.<sup>5</sup>

The correct use of sleeping (and sitting) equipment is a sensitive issue, as is obvious from two prime examples. When, according to tradition, the Buddhist community split into two groups – the Sthaviravādins and the Mahāsāṃghikas – in the second century after the demise of the Buddha, the Mahāsāṃghikas were accused of using a mat (Pāli *niṣīdana*) without a border, along with nine other offenses.<sup>6</sup> So, at least for the Pāli chronicle that issued this reproach – the *Dīpavaṃsa* – the size of sleeping and sitting equipment contributed to a profound schism in the Buddhist community. The second example relates to the first step that every candidate for ordination must undergo, namely the ‘going

<sup>4</sup> For a description, see Frauwallner 121–124.

<sup>5</sup> *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425: 392b7–8.

<sup>6</sup> *Dīp*, vol. 5, 41. The *Dīpavaṃsa*, a fourth-century Sinhalese chronicle (cf. von Hinüber 89), is one of the many different sources on the split between the Sthaviravādins and the Mahāsāṃghikas. It pays particular attention to the alleged *vinaya* laxity of the latter school (see, among others, Nattier and Prebish). Other sources hold different opinions. Still, the impact of the *Dīpavaṃsa* was quite extensive. As further shown by Nattier and Prebish 241–246, the ten points of laxity cannot be verified in the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* and seem to be unfounded. In the context of the present research, the fact that is most striking is the immense importance attached to the use of proper sitting material, to such an extent that – together with nine other claims – it can be considered as a basis for the split between the rival Buddhist groups.

forth' (*chu jia* 出家, *pravrajyā*). At this moment, he or she accepts the ten rules of the novice – *śrāmaṇera* (f. *śrāmaṇerī*). One of these rules stipulates that the monk or nun may not use a 'high', 'large' or 'big' bed.<sup>7</sup> So the use of modest sleeping equipment is stipulated at the very outset of monastic life.

These two examples highlight the importance of rules relating to sleeping equipment for all Buddhist monastics. This is also obvious in the disciplinary texts, which go into some detail about the equipment that should be used. Moreover, they stipulate how monastics should behave during sleep. The main sources for these disciplinary rules are, as mentioned above, the *vinayas*, six of which are fully extant. Of these six, one is preserved in an Indian language – the Pāli *vinaya*. Although a Pāli *vinaya* was translated into Chinese at the end of the fifth century, the translation was never presented to the emperor and was subsequently lost.<sup>8</sup> The five other *vinayas* are extant only in their Chinese translations. The most active translation period was the beginning of the fifth century, when four Chinese *vinayas* appeared. In chronological order, these are: *Shisong lü* 十誦律 (T no. 1435, hereafter *Sarvāstivādivinaya*); *Sifen lü* 四分律 (T no. 1428, hereafter *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*). Much later, at the beginning of the eighth century, the *bhikṣu* Yijing 義淨 translated large sections of the *vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda school (T nos. 1442–1451, hereafter *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*), as well as other *vinaya* texts belonging to that school.<sup>9</sup> In the meantime, however, the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* had been

<sup>7</sup> Pāli *vinaya*, Vin vol. 1, 83–84; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T.1421: 117a2–3; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425 (a detailed exposition of the ten rules is lacking); *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T.1428: 810b25–27; *Sarvāstivādivinaya*, T.1435: 150a27–28; *bhikṣukarmavācānā* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, T.1453: 456b27.

<sup>8</sup> See Heirman 2004, 377–378; Heirman 2007, 190–192. In addition, the chapter for nuns (*bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*) of the Mahāsāṃghika–Lokottaravādins has been preserved in a transitional language between Prākṛit and Sanskrit (Roth LV–LVI). It was never translated into Chinese.

<sup>9</sup> A Tibetan translation as well as many Sanskrit sections of the *vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda school are also extant. The Chinese titles of the *vinaya* texts show considerable variety in the way they were composed. Some traditions have a specific Chinese title, such as *Shisong lü* 十誦律, *Ten-Recitation Vinaya* (*vinaya* of the Sarvāstivāda school) and *Sifen lü* 四分律, *Four-Part Vinaya* (*vinaya* of the Dharmaguptaka school). The title *Mohesengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 is based on a transliteration of the name Mahāsāṃghika followed by *lü* 律, *vinaya*. *Mishasai bu hexi wufen lü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 (the *vinaya* of the Mahīśāsaka school) is composed of *Mishasai* (in all probability a transliteration of Mahīśāsaka), *bu* (school), *hexi* (exact meaning unclear), *wufen*

strongly promoted by influential Buddhist masters, and around 705–710 the emperor insisted that no other *vinaya* should be followed in the Chinese Empire.<sup>10</sup> The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* consequently became the principal reference point for monastic discipline in China. That is why the present research focuses on this text, although it is compared to the other *vinayas* when relevant.

## 1. Sleeping equipment in *vinaya* texts

The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* refers to sleeping equipment as ‘lying material’, *wo ju* 臥具, explained as something on which one either lies or sits.<sup>11</sup> A more detailed description (T.1428: 644c9–10) defines the term ‘lying material’ as a rope bed (*sheng chuang* 繩床, *chuang*: *mañca*),<sup>12</sup> a wooden bed (*mu chuang* 木床), a bottom sheet to lie on (*wo ru* 臥褥, *āstarāṇa*),<sup>13</sup> sitting material (*zuo ju* 坐具, *niṣīdana*),<sup>14</sup> a pillow (*zhen* 枕, probably *brsī*),<sup>15</sup> a floor mat (*di fu* 地敷, possibly equivalent to the Pāli *bhummattharaṇa*)<sup>16</sup> or a mat to lie on (*wo zhan* 臥氈, possibly *goṇikā*).<sup>17</sup> In a commentary on a dispute between two monks or two groups of monks over a dwelling place (T.1428: 645b27–28), the term is further clarified as a mat made out of grass (*cao fu* 草敷, *trṇasamstara*),<sup>18</sup> a mat made out of leaves (*ye fu* 葉敷, *parṇasamstara*),<sup>19</sup> a floor mat (*di fu* 地敷) or a mat to

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(‘in five parts’, a Chinese reference to the *vinaya* of the Mahīśāsakas) and *lū*, *vinaya*. Finally, the title *Genbenshuoyiqieyou bu pinaie* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶 is a translation of the title *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*. For the sake of clarity and consistency, I have followed the convention of referring to the *vinayas* by the name of their tradition. However, it is important to note that these titles should not be seen as reconstructions of original Indic titles. For details, see Yuyama; Clarke.

<sup>10</sup> See Heirman, 2002b, 414, 419–423; Heirman, 2007, 192–195.

<sup>11</sup> T.1428: 644a4–5. Sanskrit equivalents are *śayyā*, *śayanāsana*/*śayyāsana*; cf. Wogihara 1313; Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 552, note 46.

<sup>12</sup> *Chuang* 床 is a translation of *mañca*, ‘bed’ (Wogihara 985).

<sup>13</sup> *Ru* 褥 is a translation of *āstarāṇa*, ‘a carpet, a rug’ (cf. Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 721–722, note 61).

<sup>14</sup> Wogihara 700, s.v. *niṣīdana*; Ciyi, vol. 3, 2836–2837, s.v. 坐具. Sitting material (*zuo ju* 坐具 or *nishitan* 尼師檀, *niṣīdana*; cf. Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 309, note 175) forms part of each monk’s standard objects (*nishitan* 尼師檀, T.1428: 619c1–2 *et passim*; *zuo ju* 坐具, T.1428: 619c17–18 *et passim*).

<sup>15</sup> Wogihara 931, s.v. *brsī*.

<sup>16</sup> Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 552, note 46.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Wogihara 436, s.v. *goṇikā*: *xi zhan* 細氈, ‘fine mat’, *bai zhan* 白氈, ‘white mat’. See also Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 672, note 354.

<sup>18</sup> Wogihara 548, s.v. *trṇasamstara*.

<sup>19</sup> Wogihara 762, s.v. *parṇasamstara*.

lie on (*wo zhan* 臥氈). These objects may belong to an individual monk or to the *saṃgha*,<sup>20</sup> but two *pācittika* rules clearly indicate that the *saṃgha* is collectively responsible for them.<sup>21</sup>

T.1428 (643c26–28): If a *bhikṣu* takes a rope bed, a wooden bed, lying material, or a bottom sheet of the *saṃgha*, and spreads it out himself in the open air or tells someone else to spread it out, and if he then goes away and does not collect it himself or does not tell someone else to collect it, he commits a *pācittika*.<sup>22</sup>

The introductory story relates how a householder invites the *saṃgha* to eat and drink with him. A group of monks accepts the invitation and then leaves sitting material belonging to the *saṃgha* out in the open. During their absence, wind, dust and animals soil the material. The monks' carelessness fills other monks with indignation as there has been clear neglect of collective responsibility for the *saṃgha*. Moreover, the community's reputation has been damaged as it may now be linked to negligence and filth.

T.1428 (644c6–8): If a *bhikṣu*, in a dwelling of the *saṃgha*, takes lying material of the *saṃgha*, spreads it out himself or tells someone else to spread it out, and then sits or lies on it, but when he leaves the place does not collect it or does not tell someone else to collect it, he commits a *pācittika*.<sup>23</sup>

The introductory story for this rule again relates to the spoiling of *saṃgha* property. This time visiting monks do not collect their lying material when

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<sup>20</sup> In the *skandhaka* on lodgings and furniture, the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* indicates that private use of lying material belonging to the *saṃgha* is prohibited. *Saṃgha* property and personal property should be clearly distinguished; to avoid confusion, marks should be used to identify the owners of pieces of furniture. In addition, furniture that has been assigned to one room may not be moved to another room. Its designated place should be indicated with clearly visible marks (T.1428: 937c18–938a4). For a discussion on private and monastic property, see, in particular, Schopen.

<sup>21</sup> *Pācittika* and variants: offences that must be expiated (cf. Heirman, 2002a, part 1, 141–147).

<sup>22</sup> All other *vinayas* have a parallel rule: Pāli *vinaya*, Vin vol. 4, 39–40; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T.1421: 42b27–43b4; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425: 341c14–342b29; *Sarvāstivādavinaya*, T.1435: 76c24–77b27; *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, T.1442: 779c12–783c10.

<sup>23</sup> All other *vinayas* have a parallel rule: Pāli *vinaya*, Vin vol. 4, 41–42; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T.1421: 43b5–17; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425: 342b29–343a11; *Sarvāstivādavinaya*, T.1435: 77c6–78b6; *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, T.1442: 783c11–785c21.

leaving the monastery. Instead, they just leave it in the room where they stayed, where it rots, is eaten by insects and fades. When other monks discover it, they criticise the visiting monks. Again, collective responsibility for the *saṃgha*'s property has been neglected, this time inside a monastery. Clearly, then, the community's reputation must be upheld in dealings with the outside world *and* among fellow monastics.

Besides general regulations relating to lying material, the *vinayas* pay a great deal of attention to individual pieces of sleeping equipment. The most important of these are the bed, the bottom sheet and the bed covering, followed by the pillow.

### 1.1. Bed, *mañca*

With respect to the proper manufacture of sleeping equipment, most attention is paid to the bed (*chuang* 床, *mañca*), which clearly has to be a practical object while also conforming to the expectations of monastic life. The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* (T.1428: 644a2–4) enumerates five different types of rope and wooden beds. The differences all relate to the beds' legs, with spiral-shaped legs (*xuan jiao* 旋脚), straight legs (*zhi jiao* 直脚), curved legs (*qu jiao* 曲脚), legs that fit within the bed's frame (*ru bi* 入陛)<sup>24</sup> and no legs (*wu jiao* 無脚) all mentioned.<sup>25</sup> The importance of a bed's legs is also highlighted by the fact that two *pācittika* rules are devoted to this issue:

T.1428 (646b14–15): If a *bhikṣu* on the upper floor of a room with different levels sits or lies on a rope bed or on a wooden bed with removable legs, he commits a *pācittika*.

The introductory story tells of a bed leg falling through a crack in the floor and striking the head of a monk one storey below. The focus here is on irresponsible behaviour: the monk on the upper floor's lack of caution has caused him to injure a fellow member of the monastery. It was dangerous for him to use 'removable legs', *tuo jiao* 脫脚, explained as legs that fit within the frame of the bed (T.1428: 646b17). This term corresponds to the Sanskrit

<sup>24</sup> The term *bi* 陛, 'steps, stairs', in all probability should be interpreted as *gai* 楷, 'model, frame', as indicated in three variant readings (cf. T.1428: 646b17). On these variant readings, see Heirman, 2002a, part 1, 60–61, note 165.

<sup>25</sup> For more details see also Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 551, note 40 and 555–556, note 56.

word *āhāryapādaka*, ‘having removable (or more literally insertable?) legs’.<sup>26</sup> Given the above *Dharmaguptakavinaya pācittika* rule and a further one mentioned below, it seems that it was not uncommon to make holes in a bed frame in order to insert removable legs. This is further corroborated by the other *vinayas*, which contain the same story with a similar focus on the care that is expected from a monk.<sup>27</sup> The Pāli *vinaya* (Vin vol. 4, 39–40, 45–46) provides further clarification on what is meant by ‘a removable leg’. Using the term *āhaccapādaka*, ‘removable leg/foot’, it explains that the ‘limbs’ (*aṅga*) of the bed have been pierced. The *Samantapāsādikā*, a commentary on the Pāli *vinaya*, probably compiled in the fourth or fifth century,<sup>28</sup> explains that the *aṭṭanī* is pierced before the top of a foot (*pādasikha*) is pushed into the hole. Then a ‘pin’ (*āṇi*) is placed on top.<sup>29</sup> As Isaline Blew Horner points out, it is logical to assume that the leg may be removed after first removing this retaining pin.<sup>30</sup> However, the meaning of *aṭṭanī* is less clear. Horner translates it as ‘notched end’, whereas Thomas William Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg suggest ‘lowermost piece of the bed frame’.<sup>31</sup> Finally, *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary* defines it as ‘a support, a stand inserted under the leg of a bedstead’.<sup>32</sup> To me, certainly in this context, it seems unlikely that *aṭṭanī* would refer to a support that rests on the floor and into which a leg is inserted. In the latter case, even if the pin were removed and the leg were loosened from the support, the leg would not fall through a gap in the floor, as it would remain attached to the bed frame. So it is more likely that the *aṭṭanī* is indeed the ‘lowermost piece of a bed frame’ into which a hole is bored for the purpose of inserting a leg. This interpretation

<sup>26</sup> Edgerton 112, s.v. *āhārya-pādaka*. For more references to Sanskrit and Prākṛit equivalents, see Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 555–556, note 56.

<sup>27</sup> The term used is either ‘sharp legs’ or ‘removable legs’: Pāli *vinaya*, Vin vol. 4, 39–40: *āhaccapādaka*, ‘removable legs’; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T.1421: 44b29: *jian jiao* 尖脚, ‘sharp legs’; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425: 344c17: *jian jiao* 尖脚, explained (344c19) as legs that resemble a stake; *Sarvāstivādinaya*, T.1435: 79b9: *jian jiao* 尖脚; *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, T.1442: 789a26: *tuo jiao* 脫脚, ‘removable legs’.

<sup>28</sup> See von Hinüber 104.

<sup>29</sup> Sp vol. 4, 774. With many thanks to Dr Claire Maes (University of Texas, Austin) for help with deciphering this passage.

<sup>30</sup> Horner, vol. 2, 240.

<sup>31</sup> Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, part 1, 53.

<sup>32</sup> Rhys Davids and Stede, 14–15, s.v. *aṭṭanī*.

corresponds closely to another *Dharmaguptakavinaya pācittika* rule and to parallel rules outlined in other *vinayas*:

T.1428 (693a29–b1): If a *bhikṣu* makes a rope or a wooden bed, the legs (zu 足) should be eight finger breadths of the Buddha high. If, after shortening, they are longer than that, he commits a *pācittika*.

The parallel rule for nuns provides more guidance on how the leg should be measured:

If a *bhikṣuṇī* makes a rope or a wooden bed, the legs should be eight finger breadths of the Buddha high, with the exception of the upper part that fits in the hole of the frame (*ru bi kong shang* 入陛孔上).<sup>33</sup> If, after having shortened them, they are longer than that, she commits a *pācittika*.<sup>34</sup>

A few details are added in the chapter on lodgings and furniture: after stipulating that a bed may have legs to protect the monk from snakes, scorpions, centipedes or poisonous insects, the text specifies that these legs should be one foot and ‘five’ (*chi wu* 尺五)<sup>35</sup> or one hand span of the Buddha (*jie* 揲, *vitasti*) high.<sup>36</sup> Although it is impossible to say precisely what is meant

<sup>33</sup> On 陛, see note 23.

<sup>34</sup> T.1428: 736b29–c1.

<sup>35</sup> Presumably ‘five’ refers to five thumbs (*cun* 寸), which would be half a foot if we follow the decimal system (see next note).

<sup>36</sup> T.1428: 937b15–18. When measures are mentioned in the *vinayas*, they are usually based on *sugata* measures, interpreted as measurements of the Buddha (see, for instance, Schlingloff 544–545). It is unclear, however, how exact values may be calculated. The influential Chinese *vinaya* master Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) says in a commentary compiled in 626 CE (*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.1804: 108c5–8) that there is no consensus on the size of a hand span. He prefers the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* interpretation (T.1421: 35c23), which says that a hand span corresponds to two feet (*jie shou zhe fang er chi* 揲手者方二尺), as opposed to the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*’s definition, mentioned above. Daoxuan then adds that two Indian feet corresponds to the one foot, six thumbs and a bit of the standard Chinese Tang foot measure (*zhun Tang chi* 準唐尺). This is the so-called Ji Zhou measure (*Ji Zhou* 姬周; Ji is the clan name of the rulers of the Zhou dynasty), which dates back to the late Zhou dynasty. One Ji Zhou foot equates to approximately 23.1 centimetres and follows a decimal system: one foot = ten thumbs (cf. Ferguson). So, the length of a hand span and the maximum length of bed’s leg is about 23.1 + 13.86 (and a bit) = 36.96 (and a bit) centimetres. Interestingly, a note (T.1804: 108c8) adds that the Tang rulers changed the standard measure in order to make one (new) Tang foot equivalent to one

by the hand span of the Buddha, the implication is clear: a bed's legs should not be too high.

In the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*'s introductory story, a monk proudly shows the Buddha his bed, which has very high legs. The Buddha is unimpressed, however. He views such a high bed as an indication of evil or at least foolish practice.<sup>37</sup> In this sense, the monk's behaviour clearly fails to conform to the modesty that is expected from a member of the monastic community.

Interestingly, according to the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, when a leg is measured, the part that fits into the hole in the bed frame is not included in the calculation. Moreover, the other *vinayas*' parallel rules all say something similar.<sup>38</sup> Invariably, each *vinaya* stipulates that a bed's legs may be a maximum of eight finger breadths in length, but this does not include the portion that fits into the *aṭaṇī* (in the Pāli *vinaya*); the section that slots into the *bi* 髀, literally 'buttocks', 'thigh', here possibly meaning the underside of the bed frame (in the *Mahīśāsakavinaya*); or the part that fits into the *bi* 柱, literally 'stockade', probably meaning the frame (in the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*,<sup>39</sup> the *Sarvāstivādavīnaya*<sup>40</sup> and the *Mūlasarvāstivādavīnaya*<sup>41</sup>). On the one hand, these rules indicate that monastic furniture could be relatively sophisticated; on the other, they demonstrate that the monks were expected to project an image of modesty through the strict and precise regulation of the height of their beds' legs.

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Ji Zhou foot and two thumbs (which Daoxuan seems to regret, since he states that rulers had never previously changed their standards), which means the new Tang foot measures 27.72 centimetres. Daoxuan himself acknowledges this measurement in another passage of his commentary (T.1804: 89b2–3), where he calculates the length of a 'finger breadth' (*aṅgula*). First he refers back to the Ji Zhou standard, stating that one finger equals two thumbs, and eight fingers equal one foot and six thumbs (about 36.96 centimetres, as one finger breadth equals about 4.62 centimetres). Then he adds that according to the new Tang standard measure this equals one foot, three thumbs and a bit.

<sup>37</sup> T.1428: 693a20–21.

<sup>38</sup> On *bi* 柱, see note 23.

<sup>39</sup> Pāli *vinaya*, Vinvol. 4, 168–169; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T.1421: 70b20–21; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425: 391c18–20; *Sarvāstivādavīnaya*, T.1435: 127b29–c2; *Mūlasarvāstivādavīnaya*, T.1442: 895b16–17.

<sup>40</sup> Compare Sarvāstivāda Sanskrit fragments in Rosen (211) and von Simson (233): 'with the exception of the *araṇī*', translated by Valentina Rosen as '[ohne den] Teil, der zum Rahmen gehört' ([with the exception of ] the part that belongs to the frame), and by Georg von Simson (300) as 'Rahmenstange' (stick of the framework). See also von Simson et al. 141, s.v. *araṇī*: 'Rahmenstange, Rahmen (eines Schemels oder eines Bettgestells)' (stick of the framework, framework (of a seat or of a bed)).

<sup>41</sup> In the Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda *prātimokṣasūtra*, an exception is made for the *aṭaṇī*/ī (cf. Banerjee 44).

Three of the other *vinayas* – the Pāli *vinaya*, the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* and the *Sarvāstivādavinaya* – include similar introductory stories to the one found in the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, with a monk attempting to show off in front of the Buddha.<sup>42</sup> The story in the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* is rather different.<sup>43</sup> One day a prince goes to worship with two monks. When he arrives at their dwelling place he notices that they own a number of impressive objects, including a large, high bed. He argues that such a display of material wealth is inappropriate for monks as it resembles the lifestyle of a royal family – precisely what the Buddha abandoned in order to search for the path to enlightenment. The monks reply that the Buddha became a wheel-turning king (*fa lun wang* 法輪王) after giving up his royal life. Hence, all of his disciples are princes, so they are entitled to possess regal wealth. The prince feels deep shame for questioning the two monks, but other monks then criticise them strongly for their ostentation. This story suggests that luxury goods may have been quite prevalent in some monasteries. Nevertheless, monks would attempt to avoid criticism of their lifestyles, especially from lay donors.

Two further stories focus on the health and safety aspects of beds. The *Mahīśāsakavinaya* briefly mentions old or sick monks who may injure themselves when climbing onto or out of a high bed.<sup>44</sup> One might expect this story to be followed by a comment on the safety of sleeping furniture, but instead the *vinaya* refers to the frequently used *topos* of indignant lay people, who criticise the monks for behaving like rich people, with no modesty whatsoever. Two instructions are thus delivered in a single story: one should take care not to injure oneself or others; and one should maintain modesty at all times. Finally the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* insists that sleeping on a very low bed is dangerous because a poisonous snake might kill the monk during his sleep.<sup>45</sup> Therefore the Buddha permits a higher bed. Unfortunately some monks use this concession as an excuse to construct extraordinarily high beds, which has the potential to fill lay followers with indignation.

In conclusion, we can say that the *vinayas* have myriad reasons to regulate a bed's dimensions. On the one hand, a high, large bed may be seen as inappropriately luxurious. In this sense it will attract criticism, especially

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<sup>42</sup> Pāli *vinaya*, Vin vol. 4, 168–169; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T.1421: 70b13–18; *Sarvāstivādavinaya*, T.1435: 127b22–27.

<sup>43</sup> T.1425: 391b18–c15.

<sup>44</sup> T.1421: 70b11–13.

<sup>45</sup> T.1442: 894b18–895b10.

from lay followers, who are likely to emphasise that monks should conduct themselves with more modesty. Such criticism should be avoided, and a monk should certainly never boast about a particularly lavish bed. On the other hand, a monastery should be a safe place for all its members. Therefore a bed should be neither too high nor too low. Moreover, potentially dangerous furniture should be avoided in order to reduce the risk of injuring other members of the community.

## 1.2. Bottom sheet, *āstarāṇa*

The bottom sheet (*ru* 褥, *āstarāṇa*) is used as a kind of mattress and should not be too luxurious:

T.1428 (693b25–26): If a *bhikṣu* covers a rope bed or a wooden bed, or a small or big bottom sheet (*ru* 褥), with cotton, then, upon finishing it, he commits a *pācittika*.<sup>46</sup>

A monk may sit upon a small bottom sheet, and sit or sleep upon a big bottom sheet.<sup>47</sup> In its chapter on lodgings and furniture, the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* recommends the use of a sheet for health reasons, as not using one may induce illness.<sup>48</sup> One is allowed to add a covering or stuffing of grass, down (or fine wool) or *karpāsa* (*jiebei* 劫貝, a kind of cotton).<sup>49</sup> The *vinaya* also offers guidance on how to use and repair the sheet: if it is small, it should be stitched to the four sides of the bed; if the hem is torn, it should be mended; if the covering or stuffing sticks to one place, this should be rectified; if the sheet is dirty or oily, another layer should be added; and if the additional layer gets dirty, a sleeping mat (*wo zhan* 臥氈)<sup>50</sup> should be placed on top of it.

There is a quite detailed discussion of the material that is suitable for covering or stuffing. From the introductory story to the above *pācittika*, it is clear that cotton (referred to as *douluo mian* 兜羅綿, *tūla*) is considered a luxury item.<sup>51</sup> From the text of the *vinaya*, it is obvious that the term *tūla* can refer to more

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<sup>46</sup> The Chinese expression translated as ‘to cover’ can equally imply the idea of ‘stuffing’ (see Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 656–657, note 117).

<sup>47</sup> T.1428: 693b29–c1.

<sup>48</sup> T.1428: 937b1–10.

<sup>49</sup> See Ciyi, vol. 3, 2815, s.v. 劫貝樹: *jiebei* tree, a kind of cotton tree.

<sup>50</sup> See note 16.

<sup>51</sup> T.1428: 693b9–25.

than just cotton: the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* uses it when discussing flowers of the aspen or the willow, and rushes.<sup>52</sup> Notwithstanding this broad definition of the word, however, lay followers severely criticise monks' use of *tūla*:

The *śramaṇas*, sons of the Śākya, do not know shame. They do not have a compassionate heart and kill living beings. To outsiders they say that they practise the truthful law, but then they cover a wooden bed, a rope bed, or small and big bottom sheets with cotton, just like a king or an important minister.<sup>53</sup>

Clearly, monks lose credibility not only because of their possession of a luxury but with respect to other essential aspects of Buddhist law. The use of *tūla* is thus generalised as a sign of improper behaviour. Yet *tūla* is not fully prohibited: it can be used to make a shoulder strap or a pillow for use in a carriage.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, stuffing or covering a bed or bedding material is allowed and even encouraged. The *Dharmaguptakavinaya* may ban the use of *tūla* for this purpose, but it recommends the use of materials such as *jiuluoye cao wen* 鳩羅耶草文, possibly a fabric (*wen*) made of *kulāya* grass (*jiuluoye cao*),<sup>55</sup> *cao suopo cao* 草娑婆草, an unidentified species of grass, and *yi cui jiebei sui bi wu* 以毳劫貝碎弊物, possibly silk (*bi wu*) objects with (*yi*) additional pieces (*sui*) of down (*cui*) and *karpāsa* (*jiebei*) cotton.

The other *vinayas* mention the same rule, albeit sometimes with different introductory stories. For instance, the Pāli *vinaya* and the *Sarvāstivāda* *vinaya* criticise the use of *tūla* as a sign of luxury.<sup>56</sup> The *Mūlasarvāstivāda* *vinaya* rejects the use of several kinds of cotton (and of sheep's wool) without offering any explanation.<sup>57</sup> In the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, the introductory story is similar to the one that introduces the precept on high beds: once again, a prince condemns the material wealth of a monk, this time focusing on a covering or stuffing made from various types of cotton.<sup>58</sup> However, exceptions are allowed for a pillow and for a foot support for a sick monk. The *Mahīśāsakavinaya*'s introductory

<sup>52</sup> T.1428: 693b27–28.

<sup>53</sup> T.1428: 693b11–14.

<sup>54</sup> T.1428: 693c7.

<sup>55</sup> See Monier-Williams 295, s.v. *kulāya*: a woven texture.

<sup>56</sup> Pāli *vinaya*, Vin vol. 4, 169–170; *Sarvāstivāda* *vinaya*, T.1435: 127c17–128a10.

<sup>57</sup> T.1442: 895b27–c16.

<sup>58</sup> T.1425: 392a8–b18.

story stands in marked contrast to all of these.<sup>59</sup> Here, monks use *tūla* that is malodorous, dirty and infested with small insects, which generates criticism among their lay followers. The types of *tūla* that are forbidden by this *vinaya* are almost identical to those that are banned by the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, but the reason for the prohibition is entirely different.

Clearly, then, there is a lack of consensus over why cotton should not be used as stuffing or a covering. While one *vinaya* condemns it as a sign of luxury, another prohibits its use largely on the basis of hygiene. Cotton was probably also used to soften the surface of a bed, so the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* permits its use on sickbeds. For most traditions, an important point to note is that *tūla* seems to have symbolic value, so its use is generally forbidden to preserve the status of the monastic community. However, the *vinayas*' guidance on how and why monks should protect this status varies and can even be quite contradictory.

### 1.3. Bed covering, *prāvaraṇa*

In addition to a bottom sheet, monks and nuns could make use of a bed covering (*bei* 被, *prāvaraṇa*),<sup>60</sup> as can be deduced from a rule for nuns:

T.1428 (744c25–26): If *bhikṣuṇīs* sleep together with the same bottom sheet (*ru* 褥) and with the same covering (*bei* 被), they commit, except in particular circumstances, a *pācittika*.

The commentary that follows this precept clearly distinguishes between two pieces of sleeping equipment. If *bhikṣuṇīs* sleep together with the same *bottom sheet* and the same *covering*, they commit a *pācittika*. If they use the same bottom sheet but separate coverings, they commit a *duṣkṛta*.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, if they use the same covering but separate bottom sheets, they also commit a *duṣkṛta*. Most of the other *vinayas* include the same rule, although the distinction between the sheet and the covering is sometimes less clear.<sup>62</sup> The introductory story does not

<sup>59</sup>T.1421: 70a25–b10. In addition to the types of *tūla* banned by the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* forbids one more – *shanpo hua* 睽婆花, possibly a rendering of *śaṇaphalā* (cf. Monier-Williams 1048, s.v. *śaṇa*: -*tūla*, fibres of hemp; -*phalā*, species of plant).

<sup>60</sup> On this term, see Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 721–722, note 61.

<sup>61</sup> *Duṣkṛta*, literally 'a bad deed', is a minor offence (see Heirman, 2002a, part 1, 160).

<sup>62</sup> Pāli *vinaya*, Vin vol. 4, 289; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T.1421: 95b4–27 (four *pācittika* rules dealing with either the same bed sheet or the same covering, and with sleeping with monastic or non-monastic partners); *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425: 538b18–c2; *Sarvāstivādinaya*, T.1435:

focus on the bedding, but on the sleeping practices of members of the monastic community: any suspicion of inappropriate behaviour should be avoided.<sup>63</sup>

#### 1.4. Pillow, *bṛsī*

At the very start of its chapter on lodgings and furniture, the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* provides a short description of the pillow (*zhen* 枕, probably *bṛsī*).<sup>64</sup> Although there is no accompanying *prātimokṣa* rule, the *vinaya* still presents some interesting information on why a pillow should be used. For instance, it suggests that monks who sleep without a pillow or a headrest suffer from pain. Hence the Buddha permits their use, with the proviso that they should be made out of stone, mud bricks or wood. One or more of ten fabrics – including silk, wool, linen and some types of cotton – may be used for the ‘arms of the headrest’ (*zhen bei* 枕臂), perhaps meaning the sides or the ends.<sup>65</sup> The headrest itself may be square, round or triangular.<sup>66</sup>

#### 1.5. Some concluding remarks

In conclusion, it is clear that when the *vinayas* discuss sleeping equipment, the principal focus is on maintaining exemplary standards of behaviour, in part to ensure that the lay community perceives monks and nuns in a positive light. Criticism – especially from the outside world but also from inside the walls of the monastery – should be avoided at all times. Hence, luxury items are condemned because they signal a lack of modesty and invoke disapproval from the lay community. However, the *vinayas* are highly selective in terms of their rules on this subject. For instance, they go into considerable detail about the appropriate height of a bed, yet seem uninterested in other features that could be considered purely decorative – and therefore luxurious – such as elaborate carving of the bed’s legs. By focusing on relatively minor details – such as not including the portion of a bed’s leg that slots into the frame when measuring the leg’s length – the *vinayas* reveal a shift from a general concern for modesty to a more symbolic, but still highly relevant, outward expression of it.

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320c25–321b7 (three *pācittika* rules concerning sleeping on the same bed with the same sheet or the same covering).

<sup>63</sup> For more on this issue, see Heirman, 2012, 431–435.

<sup>64</sup> T.1428: 936b29–c2. For the term *bṛsī*, see note 14.

<sup>65</sup> For details, see Heirman, 2002a, part 2, 518–522, note 207.

<sup>66</sup> T.1428: 937b10–11.

A secondary concern for the *vinayas* is the health and safety of the monastic community. For instance, removable bed legs are forbidden in the interests of safety, not because they are considered luxurious. Similarly, the use of a pillow or headrest is advocated because this promotes a healthy sleeping position.

As we will see, both of these concerns – following a modest communal life in order to preserve a high reputation among lay followers, and caring for the health and safety of monks and nuns – are equally important in the commentaries of the Chinese masters who strove to establish a Chinese monastic community.

## 2. From India to China

In the first centuries of Chinese Buddhism, disciplinary and organisational guidelines were often lacking, as is clear from the testimony of the traveller monk Faxian 法顯. At the end of the fourth century, he ventured from Chang'an to India with the primary intention of obtaining an original version of a *vinaya* text.<sup>67</sup> Shortly afterwards, four full *vinayas* were translated into Chinese, presenting the Chinese community with a quite sudden and overwhelming wealth of source material. This prompted Chinese *vinaya* masters to write extensive commentaries and compile new anthologies for the Chinese monastic community. In addition, traveller monks such as Yijing 義淨 (635–713) continued to produce personal accounts of organisational and disciplinary matters as practised in India. These texts became the basis for monastic guidelines in the new environment of China.

### 2.1. First commentaries on *vinaya* rules

Buddhist rules and guidelines were widely disseminated in China after the translation of four complete *vinayas* in the early fifth century, which in turn led to a series of commentaries and additions by local *vinaya* masters.<sup>68</sup> One

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<sup>67</sup> *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳, T.2085: 857a6–8, 864b17, 864c1–3. On the dates of Faxian's life and travels, see Deeg, 2005a, 22–30.

<sup>68</sup> In addition to the commentaries, the fifth century witnessed significant growth in the popularity of so-called *bodhisattva* rules, which were intended to provide the Chinese Buddhist community with guidelines of Mahāyāna moral precepts. The most influential of these texts was the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (T.1484; literally *Brahmā's Net Sūtra*), which contains a set of fifty-eight precepts in the second of its two fascicles. Although, traditionally, it was said that Kumārajīva translated the *Fanwang jing* from Sanskrit into Chinese in 406, in fact it was probably composed in China around the middle of the fifth century (Groner 253–257, 278; Funayama 111). It is not known precisely when the text started to play an important role in Chinese Buddhism, although Paul Groner argues that it must have been within one or two centuries of its compilation.

of the most influential of these masters was Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), who is considered to be the founder of the Nanshan lüzong 南山律宗, ‘the *vinaya* school of Nanshan’. This school promoted the *vinaya* rules, and in particular the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, the tradition on which the first Chinese ordinations were based. Daoxuan himself wrote several *vinaya* commentaries, and actively promoted Buddhism at the imperial court.<sup>69</sup> In his *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.1804), he comments on the *pācittika* rules for monks and nuns. With respect to the rules on sleeping equipment, he offers sometimes detailed analysis of the information provided by several *vinayas*, but adds no new ideas of his own. For instance, he discusses the rules relating to abandoning ‘lying material’, the use of removable legs, the proper length of a bed’s legs and the use of cotton (*tūla*).<sup>70</sup> On the length of a bed’s legs, Daoxuan takes great care to convert the *vinaya* guidelines into contemporary Chinese measurements, so the eight finger breadths stipulated by the *vinayas* correspond to one foot and six thumbs in the Ji Zhou 姬周 system (approximately 36.96 centimetres) or one foot, three thumbs and a bit in the (new) Tang system.<sup>71</sup> He adds that this stipulation is valid for monks and for lay people who follow the eight rules.<sup>72</sup> Referring to the *vinayas*, he highlights the risk of incurring criticism from lay donors if monks display a lack of modesty by neglecting to follow the rule.<sup>73</sup>

The symbolic importance of furniture legs is also evident in a lengthy comment by one of the most famous early Chinese traveller monks, Yijing, who discusses the manufacture of a bed or a couch.<sup>74</sup> In much the same way as Daoxuan, Yijing focuses on the length of the legs, and stipulates that this

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The second fascicle was certainly circulating as an independent text by the end of the fifth century. While the *Fanwang jing* does not provide guidelines on the use of sleeping equipment, it does include a rope bed in its list of a monk’s eighteen essential possessions (T.1484: 1008a15). It also states that a travelling monk should be provided with a rope or wooden bed (1007a6). Little is said on the precise nature of sleeping equipment. The text merely states that, as with monastic robes, faded colours (1008b25–26) should be used as an expression of modesty.

<sup>69</sup> For details, see Wagner 46–90; Yifa 23–28.

<sup>70</sup> T.1804: 77c17–78a18.

<sup>71</sup> See also note 35.

<sup>72</sup> The eight rules that lay people follow during a period of retreat are identical to the first eight rules for novices. One of these is the prohibition against the use of a high, large or big bed.

<sup>73</sup> T.1804: 89b4–5.

<sup>74</sup> T.2125: 206c22–207a16.

should be eight finger breadths of the Buddha, following the *vinayas*' traditional guideline. He explains that this corresponds to twenty-four ordinary fingers, or one and a half standard feet.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, he complains that couches are more than two feet high in many Chinese monasteries, although some adhere to the stipulated height restriction. Yijing stresses that those who exceed the height limit are committing an offence and should change their habits. The length of a couch's leg is thus perceived as an outward symbol of the moral standards of a monastery and its members.<sup>76</sup>

## 2.2. New monastic guidelines

In addition to the commentaries, increasing appreciation of the value of disciplinary rules gave rise to extensive new compilations written by Chinese *vinaya* masters, with the intention of providing guidance for the burgeoning Chinese monastic community. One well-known disciplinary text is the *Da biqu sanqian weiyi* 大比丘三千威儀, *Great (Sūtra) of Three Thousand Dignified Observances of a Monk*, probably compiled in China in the fifth century (T.1470).<sup>77</sup> The text discusses many aspects of everyday life, including the correct protocols to follow during sleeping hours.<sup>78</sup> The avoidance of noise plays an essential role here. Life in the monastery should be relatively quiet at all times, and especially when the monks are asleep.<sup>79</sup> A monk should be as quiet as possible when stepping into or out of bed, wiping the top of his bed, or opening the door to the sleeping room. He should equally avoid noisy yawning

<sup>75</sup> T.2125: 206c28–29. For Yijing, twenty-four fingers correspond to one and a half standard feet (*hu chi chi ban* 笏尺尺半, 'standard foot, one foot and a half'. The character *hu* 笏 refers to a ceremonial tablet used by state administrators to identify them as properly appointed officials; in this context, I have interpreted this as 'standard' (i.e. officially recognised by the state). The precise length of the foot (*chi* 尺) to which Yijing refers is unclear, but it might be the standard measurement mentioned in note 37 (approximately 27.72 centimetres). This would make the proper length of a bed's leg approximately 41.58 centimetres, which is slightly longer than Daoxuan's calculation.

<sup>76</sup> On Yijing's attitude to the *vinaya* rules, see also Heirman, 2008, 266–271. For a detailed study on the impact of Buddhism on the construction of chairs in China, see Kieschnick, 2003, 222–249.

<sup>77</sup> Although the colophon to the text presents it as a Han translation by An Shigao (安世高; second century), the *Da biqu sanqian weiyi* was probably compiled in China in the course of the fifth century (Hirakawa 193–196).

<sup>78</sup> T.1470: 915a24–28, 915c11–17 and 915c24–27.

<sup>79</sup> For a discussion on silence, see Heirman, 2009.

or sighing (while thinking of daily business). The text also recommends some precautions: a monk should always shake his shoes before putting them on (probably to ensure no creatures are inside) and should snap his fingers three times before opening a door (to avoid injuring someone who might be standing on the other side). Finally, some stipulations underscore the proper use of sleeping furniture and the correct sleeping position: a monk should never crawl onto the bed, nor lean against or even face the wall while sleeping. Nor should he lie on his stomach or assume an improper position, such as lying with his knees tucked up.<sup>80</sup> He should dry his feet before going to bed, and should get dressed before leaving the sleeping place.

Clearly, then, the *Da biqu sanqian weiyi* expands on the *prātimokṣa* rules by focusing much more closely on decorum. This pattern is followed in another text that had a similarly profound influence on the organisation of the growing Chinese monastic community, the *Jiaojie xinxue biqu xinghu lüyi* 教誡新學比丘行護律儀, *Exhortation on Manners and Etiquette for Novices in Training* (T.1897), compiled by the aforementioned *vinaya* master Daoxuan.<sup>81</sup> In this very instructive text on the teaching of disciplinary rules to new members of the monastic community, Daoxuan discusses suitable sleeping equipment and also offers a number of guidelines relating to correct behaviour in the dormitory.<sup>82</sup> He stresses that a monk should never allow his bed to become dirty, and that bedclothes should be dried in the sun during the summer months. The dormitory should be kept clean, too. When taking care of his attire, a monk should fold up his *uttarāsaṅga* and place it on the bed, and he should use his *saṃghāṭī* as a pillow.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> On the proper sleeping posture, see also Heirman, 2012, 438–439.

<sup>81</sup> On the influence of this text, see, in particular, Yifa 26–28 (on the attribution of the text to Daoxuan, see Yifa 226, note 103).

<sup>82</sup> T.1897: 871a5–b2.

<sup>83</sup> A monk has a standard set of three robes: the *antarvāsaka* (inner robe), the *uttarāsaṅga* (upper robe) and the *saṃghāṭī* (outer cloak). See, for instance, Horner, vol. 2, 1–2, note 2: ‘The *antaravāsaka* is put on at the waist, and hangs down to just above the ankles, being tied with the *kāyabandhana*, a strip of cloth made into a belt or girdle ... The *uttarāsaṅga* is the upper robe worn when a monk is in a residence. It covers him from neck to ankle, leaving one shoulder bare ... The *saṃghāṭī* is put on over this when the monk goes out. It may be exactly the same size as the *uttarāsaṅga*, but it consists of double cloth, since to make it two robes are woven together.’ For the significance of these robes in China, see, in particular, Kieschnick, 1999, 12–14 and 2003, 90–92. For an extensive study of Chinese monastic guidelines on robes, see Guo.

### 2.3. Yijing's travel account

As mentioned above, the traveller monk Yijing, who resided in India and South Asia between 671 and 695, recorded his experiences in an account entitled the *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳, *Account of Buddhism Sent from the South Seas*, T.2125. Although it would be foolhardy to interpret this account as an objective eyewitness report, it still provides the reader with valuable information on how an eminent Chinese monk perceived monastic life. In this sense, it is often similar to a normative text, presenting the (Indian) ideal as a kind of mirror for the public back home in China.<sup>84</sup>

In his account, Yijing discusses several guidelines relating to how to use sleeping equipment.<sup>85</sup> He describes Indian monastic dormitories as quite narrow rooms that are also used as study quarters. Beds and mattresses (*ru xi* 褥席)<sup>86</sup> are two 'elbows' (*zhou* 肘) wide and four and a half elbows long.<sup>87</sup> Yijing does not offer any opinion on whether these dimensions are proper or improper, but he does insist that the bed should always be covered, as stipulated by the Buddha. If a monk fails to do this, he might end up with a black back. The sitting cloth (*zuo ju* 坐具), one of a monk's essential items,<sup>88</sup> may be used for this purpose.

Aside from his detailed discussion of the correct length of a bed's legs (see above), Yijing pays most attention to the use of a pillow (*zhen* 枕). He remarks that the Chinese custom is to support the head on a wooden headrest during sleep, whereas in India and the islands of the South Seas this function is performed by a pillow in the form of a cotton or silk bag that is one and a half elbows long and half an elbow wide. The pillow is stuffed with whatever wadding is available locally, such as wool, fibres, leaves, moss or cassia,

<sup>84</sup> For a discussion, see, in particular, Deeg, 2005a, 37–39 and 2005b, 101–103.

<sup>85</sup> T.2125: 221a18–b20. For a translation into English, see Li 105–107.

<sup>86</sup> In his translation of Yijing's travel account, Li (105) interprets *ru xi* 褥席 as two different items. However, since both *ru* and *xi* refer to a kind of covering or mattress, I have interpreted these characters as indicating one and the same object.

<sup>87</sup> It is impossible to give precise conversions for these measurements. The monk Xuanzang, who travelled to India about forty-five years before Yijing, states that an 'elbow' (*zhou* 肘) is usually divided in twenty-four 'fingers' (*zhi* 指; T.2087: 875c10) in India. As we saw earlier, for Yijing, twenty-four fingers correspond one and a half standard feet (approximately 41.58 centimetres; see note 74).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Yijing, T.2125: 212b25, where a *ni-shi-dan-na* 尼師但那 (*niṣīdana*) is mentioned as one of the essential items. A *niṣīdana* may be translated as *zuo ju* 坐具 (Wogihara 700, s.v. *ni-ṣīdana*).

and its depth depends on the season. Most importantly, it must provide a comfortable night's sleep and should never be hard or stiff. Yijing suggests that such a pillow has several health advantages over a wooden headrest: for instance, it keeps the head warm at night and so prevents diseases caused by the cold; and it is beneficial for the user's eyesight. The use of a headrest is not explicitly condemned, but Yijing does warn his fellow monks of potential drawbacks: for instance, he says the hard wooden surface allows draughts to pass across the neck, which could cause headaches; and the greater exposure to the cold may result in fever. Finally, he questions the wisdom of the Chinese proverb *dong ding wen zu* 凍頂溫足, 'keep the head cold, but keep the feet warm'.

Aside from his aforementioned guidelines on the length of a bed's legs, Yijing does not attach any sense of morality to his instructions on the use of sleeping equipment. Yet he does advise everyone to follow the Buddha's rules in order to avoid unnecessary problems. Decorum may have been on his mind when he stated that a bed covering should always be used to avoid a black back, but equally he may have considered this no more than a piece of sensible, practical advice. And the maintenance of good health, rather than propriety, is certainly paramount when he lists the numerous benefits of a soft pillow. His account therefore stands in stark contrast to the previously discussed early Chinese disciplinary texts and their overriding concern with proper behaviour.

### 3. Conclusion

The Indian *prātimokṣa* rules focus on collective responsibility and modesty, often with the intention of safeguarding the reputation of the *saṃgha*. Decorum is essential for Buddhist monks and nuns, and, by extension, for the wider Buddhist community. A subsidiary issue in the *vinayas*' guidelines on sleeping equipment relates to preserving the health and safety of members of the monastic community, which again helps to promote the image of a vigorous and exemplary *saṃgha*. When the guidelines spread from India to China, these two principal issues – decorum and health – remained.

Normative texts offer detailed insights into the material aspects of sleeping behaviour. We learn that Indians tend to sleep on beds covered with sheets and with their heads resting on cotton or silk pillows. Chinese beds are similar, although the dormitories are larger than those in India, and a wooden headrest

is used, rather than a soft cloth pillow. Strikingly, in both countries sleeping equipment seems to play a crucial symbolic role. This is most obvious in the meticulous guidelines relating to the appropriate length of a bed's legs. Adhering rigidly to these precise measurements provides the lay community with irrefutable evidence of proper behaviour among the monastics, and as such their beds symbolise a perfect community that does not allow any flaws.

### Abbreviations

Dīp	<i>Dīpavaṃsa: The Chronicle of the Island of Ceylon or the Dipavamsa.</i> Ed. Bimala Churn Law. Maharagama: Saman Press, 1959.
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā.</i> Ed. Takakusu Junjirō and Nagai Makoto [1927–1947]. Reprint, London: Pali Text Society, 1966–1975.
T	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i> 大正新修大藏經. 85 Vols. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934.
Vin	<i>Vinaya Piṭakam: One of the Principal Buddhist Holy Scriptures in the Pāli Language.</i> 5 Vols. Ed. Hermann Oldenberg [1879–1883]. Reprint, London: Pali Text Society, 1969–1993.

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