

In the *Maha-parinibbāna Sutta*, the Buddha taught:

"Now, Ananda, if it occurs to any of you -- 'The teaching has lost its authority; we are without a Teacher' -- do not view it in that way. Whatever Dhamma and Vinaya I have pointed out and formulated for you, that will be your Teacher when I am gone."

The Buddha calls his teaching the Dhamma and the Vinaya, and these two cannot separate from each other. Vinaya is the disciplinary rules for monks, and there are [Patimokkha](#) .

The Vinaya is extremely important in Buddhism, as the Commentary says,

**"Vinaya nāma Buddha Sāsanassa āyu,
vinaye thite sāsanam thitam hoti."**

As expressed in the commentary, the Vinaya is the "life" of the Buddha *Sasana*. The Sasana is alive only when the Vinaya prevails, and prevalence of the Vinaya depends on those who observe and practice it strictly. That is why everyone who reveres and cares for the preservation of the Sasana should observe the Vinaya most respectfully.

A lot of modern monks think that they need to earn money, gather followers, cook, etc. (which breaches the codes of Vinaya), in order to survive and propagate the Buddha Dhamma. This is very upsidedown. In doing so, the monks are actually destroying the Buddha Sasana.

Those monks who do not observe the Vinaya rules will hold impure Buddha Dhamma because it is just like everyday people such that when they develop habits into doing certain things that are wrong, even though it is pointed out by others, they will come up with their own philosophy to say that they are right.

So it is the same with the observance of the Vinaya rules. We should take note that the Vinaya rules were established by the Buddha himself to keep the purity of the Sangha (community of monks and nuns) and purity of the Dhamma.

Therefore those who don't keep and follow the Vinaya rules cannot possibly possess purity of mind and purity of Buddha Dhamma.

In the past 2,500 years, there has been monks wanting to alter the Vinaya rules, but after the careful consideration of the Arahants in each Buddhist Council, none of the Vinaya rules has changed.

However, a lot of monks today still change the rules to suit their needs, and this is a serious disrespect to the Buddha and the Noble Dhamma.

Worshipping and Highest Reverence

In Buddhism, worshipping the Buddha image and paying reverential salutes are not the highest reverence to the Buddha, and neither do offering flowers and water.

Before the Buddha's parinibbāna, the devas (gods) revered the Buddha thus (*Maha-parinibbāna Sutta*):

"Ananda, the twin sala trees are in full bloom, though it is not the season of flowering. And the blossoms rain upon the body of the Tathagata and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And celestial coral flowers and heavenly sandalwood powder from the sky rain down upon the body of the Tathagata, and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And the sound of heavenly voices and heavenly instruments makes music in the air out of reverence for the Tathagata."

(Tathagata is another name for the Buddha)

However, the Buddha said,

"Yet it is not thus, Ananda, that the Tathagata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped, and honored in the highest degree. But, Ananda, whatever bhikkhu or bhikkhuni, layman or laywoman, abides by the Dhamma, lives uprightly in the Dhamma, walks in the way of the Dhamma, it is by such a one that the Tathagata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped, and honored in the highest degree. Therefore, Ananda, thus should you train yourselves: 'We shall abide by the Dhamma, live uprightly in the Dhamma, walk in the way of the Dhamma.'"

Therefore we emphasize the practice of the Noble Dhamma in Buddhism rather than mere worshipping.

There are also qualities of the Noble Dhamma that everyone should remember by heart, so the false Dhamma will not gain a footing. The Buddha taught,

"Gotami, the qualities of which you may know, 'These qualities lead to dispassion, not to passion; to being unfettered and not to being fettered; to self-effacement and not to self-aggrandizement; to modesty and not to ambition; to contentment and not to discontent; to seclusion and not to entanglement; to energy and not to idleness; to being unburdensome and not to being burdensome': You may definitely hold, 'This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher's instruction.'" (Cv.X.5)

Besides, the Noble Dhamma is never apart from the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path. If anything one hears is apart from these elements, one can safely conclude that this is a false Buddha Dhamma.

More importantly, if any method is not within the Eightfold Noble Path, it definitely is not the right method the Buddha preached.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!