



THE PRACTICE BOOK

Etiquette & Codes of Conduct

For Buddhist temples and Dharma centers



© VENERABLE SOOSEONG 2026



Etiquette and Codes of Conduct for Buddhist Temples & Dharma Centers



Here are 10 essential guidelines to observe when visiting a Buddhist temple or Dharma center:

1. **Pay Respect to the Triple Gem:** When visiting a monastery or Dharma center, always go to the main Buddha Hall where the Buddha statue is and offer three bows/prostrations to show respect to the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha).
2. **Half-Bow When Entering/Exiting:** When entering and exiting the Buddha Hall, offer a half-bow with palms together to show reverence to the hall and the sacred space within.
3. **Address Ordained Monastics (Venerables) properly:** When addressing an ordained monk (Bhikkhu) or nun (Bhikkhuni), whether in person or in correspondence, refer to them by their title “Venerable.” While they might use cultural titles like “Bhante,” “Sunim,” or “Thay” depending on their country of origin, “Venerable” is always appropriate when speaking or writing in English. Also, when greeting a Venerable, offer a half-bow with palms together.
4. **No Strong Perfumes or Makeup:** Refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes, or makeup with strong odors. This helps

maintain a serene and respectful environment, especially for those who may be sensitive to scents or are engaged in meditation.

5. Maintain Modest Dress: Wear clothing that is modest and respectful. This generally means covering your shoulders, chest, stomach, and knees. Avoid revealing attire to show respect for the sacred space and the community. Always wear socks since you have to take your shoes off at the temple.

6. Offering Etiquette: If you bring offerings (flowers, incense, food), place them gently and respectfully. Often, there are designated areas for offerings. Do not consume offerings that have been placed on the altar unless instructed by a monk or nun.

7. Respect Sacred Objects: Treat all statues, scriptures, and other religious artifacts with utmost respect. Do not point your feet towards them, step over them, or place personal items on them. Treat all temple property with care and respect. This includes religious artifacts, books, and general facilities. Volunteer to maintain cleanliness and order in the temple environment.

8. Silence and Mindfulness: While inside the temple or Dharma center, especially in meditation halls or the main shrine room, maintain silence or speak in very low, respectful tones. This helps preserve the peaceful energy in the hall.

9. No Public Displays of Affection: Refrain from public displays of affection, such as hugging or kissing, out of respect for the spiritual environment and those practicing within it.

10. Mindful Eating: When partaking in meals at the temple, practice mindful eating. Take only what you can reasonably consume and avoid wasting food. It's a practice of humility and gratitude for the offerings.



This Practice Book gathers the practice materials of the Bodhicitta Sangha for those newly arrived. Every prayer, sutra, and teaching within is reproduced in the Venerable's own words. May it be of benefit to all who begin here.



© VENERABLE SOOSEONG 2026

