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Yijing's View on the *Bhikṣunīs*' Standard Robes

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Abstract

From the very beginning of the establishment of Buddhist communities, guidelines for the monastic life were set up. Among these guidelines, the rules for food and clothing occupy a particular position. Food and clothing became the symbols of a monastic identity, and the outward sign of an exemplary life, for *bhikṣus* as well as for *bhikṣunīs*. Given the fact, however, that women were perceived differently from men, it was felt necessary to have some special rules regarding the *bhikṣunīs*' standard clothing. The present research focusses on the latter aspect. It shows which robes were seen as standard by the different extant Vinayas, and how these guidelines for standard clothing were examined and interpreted by the Vinaya master, Yijing 義淨 (635-713).

Keywords:

bhikṣunī, Vinaya*,* Monastic Clothing, Yijing

義淨對比丘尼制衣的看法

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從佛教僧團最開始的建立時，寺院生活的指導準則便已建立。在這些準則中，衣食的規定佔有一特定地位，而對於比丘與比丘尼而言，這些衣食的特色成爲出家身份的象徵，以及崇高生活方式的外在表徵。然而，在此情況下，女性被視爲與男性不同，而需要對比丘尼的制衣有一些特殊的規定。此篇研究著重在後者的主題上，說明哪些僧服在不同的現存律藏中被視爲制衣，以及義淨法師如何檢視並詮釋這些對制衣的準則。

關鍵字：比丘尼、律藏、出家眾之衣、義淨

Introduction

When women were allowed to enter the *saṃgha* as fully ordained *bhikṣunīs*, rules had to be made for the newly created *bhikṣunīsaṃgha*. On the one hand, *bhikṣunīs* wanted to identify themselves as full members of the *saṃgha*, and adopted the rules of the *bhikṣu*s. They left their family life and embraced an ascetic alternative. On the other hand, women are, at least physically, different to men. Their daily life can therefore not be an exact copy of the way of life in the *bhikṣusaṃgha*, so additions to or adaptations of the rules were deemed necessary. A key issue in this process was how to avoid opposition to the presence of women in the Buddhist community.

One of the most visible signs of a monastic identity is the clothing of the *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣunīs*. By wearing the monastic robes, members of the *saṃgha* clearly show themselves to the lay community as people who have gone forth, and who want to and are expected to follow a well-defined set of lifestyle principles, including many rules of decorum. As a result of its visibility, clothing receives a lot of attention. It is on this aspect that the present research focuses. What differences did the Vinayas introduce regarding the *bhikṣunīs*' standard clothing? And how were these differences perceived by the Chinese monk Yijing 義淨 (635-713) when he visited India many centuries later?

The Standard Robes of *Bhikṣunīs* According to the Extant Vinayas

In the first centuries of Chinese Buddhism, many monastics felt that there was a lack of Vinaya texts. This prompted the monk Faxian 法顯 to leave China in 399 for India in search of monastic rules. While he was away, two complete Vinayas were translated into Chinese in the north of China; firstly the *Shisong lü* 十誦律 (T 1435), *Sarvāstivādavinaya*, and, secondly, the *Sifen lü* 四分律 (T 1428), *Dharmaguptakavinaya*. On Faxian's return, two further Vinayas were translated, this time in Jiankang, the capital of the Southern Song dynasty. These were the *Mohesengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 (T 1425), *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, translated by Faxian himself together with the Indian master Buddhabhadra, and the *Mishasai bu hexi wufen lü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 (T 1421), *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, translated shortly after Faxian's death. Much later, at the beginning of the eighth century, the monk Yijing 義淨 translated large parts of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* (*Genbenshuoyiqieyou bu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, T 1442-T 1451), as well as other Vinaya texts belonging to the same school.[1]

Besides the above mentioned Vinayas, two major Vinaya texts have survived in an Indian language. The most important of these is the Theravāda Vinaya, written in Pāli. Although, at

1 For details, see Yuyama (1979), and Heirman (2007, 169-181). Of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, a Tibetan translation as well as many Sanskrit fragments are extant (Yuyama 1979, 12-33).

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.[2] The second text to have survived in an Indian language only is the chapter for *bhikṣunīs* (*bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*) of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins (henceforth Mā-L.), which is preserved in a transitional language between Prākrit and Sanskrit (Roth 1970, lv-lvi), and has never been translated into Chinese.

All Vinayas state that a *bhikṣunī* must have five robes as a standard set. She has to have the robes for her ordination ceremony and she can never abandon them. The robes mark her *bhikṣunī* identity, and thereby acquire a high symbolic meaning. A *bhikṣu* has a standard set of three robes: the *antarvāsaka* (inner robe), the *uttarāsaṅga* (upper robe), and the *saṃghāṭī* (outer cloak).[3] For *bhikṣunīs*, all Vinayas add two more robes in order to make a set of five. These two robes, however, are not the same in every Vinaya tradition. Moreover, there seems to be much confusion regarding the exact use of these robes.[4]

Let us first consider what the Vinayas indicate regarding the two additional robes for female monastics:

- Pāli Vinaya (Vin, Vol.II, 272):

  (1) *saṃkacchika* (see below).

  (2) *udakasāṭikā*, a bathing cloth.

  Contrary to most other Vinayas, the Pāli Vinaya does not mention any robe to be worn in combination with the *saṃkacchika*.

2 See Heirman (2004, 377-378; 2007, 190-192).

3 See, for instance, Horner, BD, Vol.II, l, 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 *saṅghāṭi* 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". See also Kieschnick (1999, 12-14 and 2003, 90-92).

4 All Vinayas refer to many different robes that a *bhikṣu* or a *bhikṣunī* can wear, in all kinds of circumstances. The interpretation of these robes can vary from Vinaya to Vinaya, given the fact that Vinayas, on the one hand, developed in symbiosis with each other, but, on the other, also show several regional differences. When, in China, the translators were confronted with the richness of the robe names in the several Vinayas, they must have found difficulties in interpretation, as it is explicitly expressed by Yijing (see further). In the scope of the present research, it would lead us to far to examine all possible ways of interpretation of the different robes, but it remains important to point out that Vinaya masters such as Yijing, in their attempt to be as 'correct' as possible, strove to provide clear guidelines. According to Yijing, such guidelines were lost. He therefore recommends to return to the Indian texts (*in casu*, the Mūlasarvāstivāda texts) and to avoid mixing the precepts of different schools (T 2125, 205b28-c6 and 205c20-206a4; for more details, see Heirman (2007, 177-179).

• *Mahīśāsakavinaya* (T 1421, 187c19-20):

(1) *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣, a robe that covers the shoulder.

(2) *shui yu yi* 水浴衣, a bathing cloth.

In addition, *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* (98a11-17), says that a *bhikṣunī* must wear a *saṃkakṣikā* (*sengqizhi* 僧祇支, see further) when entering the house of a lay follower.

• *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* (T 1425, 472b21-22 and 52la25-26):

(1) *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣 a robe that covers the shoulder (472b22), or a *saṃkakṣikā* (*sengqizhi* 僧祇支, 521a26).

(2) *yu yi* 雨衣 (472b22), *yu yi yi* 雨浴衣 (521a26), a bathing cloth. In addition, *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga*, 546b25-c2, says that a *bhikṣunī* must wear a 'robe that covers the shoulder' over a *saṃkakṣikā* (僧祇支).[5]

• In the *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* of the Mā-L., we find the same information as in the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* (Roth 1970, l46, §165):

(1) *kaṇṭhapraticchādana*,[6] a robe that covers the rounding (of the breasts).

(2) *udakaśāṭikā*, a bathing cloth. In addition, *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga*, 313, §277, says that a *bhikṣunī* must wear a *gaṇḍapraticchādana* (*paṭa*) over a *saṃkakṣikā*.

• *Dharmaguptakavinaya* (T 1428, 757a17-19 and 924c13-14):

(1) a *saṃkakṣikā* (*sengqizhi* 僧祇支 757a19; *sengjiezhi* 僧竭支 924c14).

(2) *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣, a robe that covers the shoulder.

In addition, *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* (748c14-749a18), says that a *bhikṣunī* should not show her nakedness when bathing. She is advised to either bathe in a screened-off area or to wear a bathing cloth (*yu yi* 浴衣). The latter option allows more freedom.

• *Sarvāstivādavinaya* (T 1435, 335c12-13):

(1) *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣, a robe that covers the shoulder.

(2) *juxiuluo* 俱修羅, *kusūlaka* (see further).[7]

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5 Satō (1963, 694), points to the fact that, since a 雨(浴)衣 belongs to the five daily robes of a *bhikṣunī*, it has to be interpreted as 'a bathing cloth,' and not as 'a robe for the rainy season', in spite of the character 雨, rain. This is confirmed by a comparison with the *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* of the Mā-L.: the term 雨(浴)衣 coincides with the term *udakaśāṭikā*, a bathing cloth.

6 According to Nolot (1991, 138, note 174), this should be *gaṇḍapraticchādana*.

7 The word *saṃkakṣikā* appears in the *Sarvāstivādavinaya* only twice, on both occasions in relation to *bhikṣu*s (T 1435, 466a23 and 469b12). In the latter passage, the Buddha orders *bhikṣu*s to wear a *saṃkakṣikā* in order to cover their breasts when entering a village for the alms

In addition, *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* (335a1-25), says that a *bhikṣunī* must wear a bathing cloth when bathing in a public area (*yu yi* 浴衣).[8]

• *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* (T 1443, 944b8-9 and 964a10-12):

(1) *jusuluojia* 俱蘇洛迦 (944b10) / *juesuluojia* 厥蘇洛迦 (964a12), *kusūlaka*,

(2) *sengjiaoqi* 僧腳崎, *saṃkakṣikā*.

In addition, *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* (T 1443, 1011a3-9), says that a *bhikṣunī* should have a bathing cloth (*xi qun* 洗裙).

From the above overview, we learn that all Vinayas refer to a bathing cloth,[9] and that, except for the Pāli Vinaya, the other Vinaya texts all mention three robes that seem to qualify for inclusion in the standard set of five. This implies that, when seen together, the Vinayas, in fact, put forward six robes that can be part of the standard clothing set of a *bhikṣunī*: an inner robe, an upper robe, an outer cloak, a bathing cloth, and two more special garments. The latter garments are called by the Vinayas *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣, *kusūlaka*, or *saṃkakṣikā* (Pāli *saṃkacchika*). While the term *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣 is relatively easy to understand – it refers to a robe that covers the shoulder (probably Skt. *gaṇḍapraticchādana* (*paṭa*)) – the two other terms remain largely unclear. The term *kusūlaka* appears in the *Sarvāstivāda* and *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*s. When discussing the *bhikṣunīs*' robes, the *Sarvāstivādavinaya* always mentions the *kusūlaka* next to 'a robe that covers the shoulder'. On the other hand, the *Sarvāstivādavinaya* (T 1435, 347b14-17) also mentions a *kusūlaka* for *bhikṣu*s. In this context, the term probably refers to a kind of undergarment.[10] It is therefore possible that the *kusūlaka* for *bhikṣunīs* is also to be understood as a kind of undergarment. *The Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* further complicates the picture, since it mentions both the *kusūlaka* and *saṃkakṣikā* without indicating exactly to what these terms refer, or how they relate to each other. As we will see below, this information from the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* remained puzzling also to its Chinese translator, the monk Yijing.

The term *saṃkakṣikā* has been studied by Oscar von Hinüber (1975). On the basis of a comparative study of several texts, dictionaries and ancient Indian images, he concludes that a *saṃkakṣikā* was originally a small band worn to support the breasts, so that they do not

round.

8 See, in particular, T 1453, 335a9-10: '從今聽比丘尼畜浴衣著露地洗', 'From now on I allow (聽) *bhikṣunīs* to have a bathing cloth and to wear it when bathing in a public area'. The term 聽, 'I allow that' (Skt. *anujānāmi*) in all likelihood should be interpreted as 'I order that', as argued by Bechert (1968, 321).

9 Also, *bhikṣu*s wear a bathing cloth, but the robe is not part of the symbolic standard set; see Wijayaratna (1990, 43) and Kieschnick (1999, 10; 2003, 88).

10 It is unclear which kind of undergarment it is exactly, but it seems to be a garment made from poor quality cloth; for details, see Heirman (2002, Part II, 804-805, note 199).

catch the eye.[11] He further explains that, over the *saṃkakṣikā*, one used to wear another robe, a *gaṇḍapraticchādana* (*paṭa*), lit. 'a robe to hide the rounding (of the breasts).'[12] The Sanskrit term *gaṇḍapraticchādana* (*paṭa*) coincides with the Chinese term *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣 (lit. 'a robe that covers the shoulder') in the Chinese *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* of the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* (T 1425, 546b28). From this, we can conclude that, over the *saṃkakṣikā*, one wore a *fu jian yi* 覆肩衣 to hide the rounding of the breasts and to cover the shoulder. It is unclear whether this robe was originally intended to cover both shoulders, or only one. Oscar von Hinüber (1975, 138) also points out that, relatively early in the history of the Buddhist monastic community, the *saṃkakṣikā* and the *gaṇḍapraticchādana* (覆肩衣) merged into one robe, as can be noted in the Pāli tradition, as well as in Yijing's observations (see below).

In addition, it is interesting to note that, besides the *saṃkakṣikā* worn by women, the Chinese Vinayas all equally refer to a *saṃkakṣikā* used by men[13]. From the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* (T 1421, 138b12-17), the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* (T 1428, 855c1-3) and the *Sarvāstivādavinaya* (T 1435, 469b9-12), we can conclude that, according to these three traditions, a *saṃkakṣikā* is worn to cover the breast.

We may conclude that the extant Vinayas impose upon a *bhikṣunī* the three standard robes of a *bhikṣu*, to which are added one or two robes used to hide the rounding of the breasts while covering the shoulder(s), a bathing cloth, and/or an undergarment (*kusūlaka)*. The terms used for the robes fail to reveal, however, all of the details necessary for a full understanding of the shape of the monastic garments. As we will see in the second part of our research, this caused some problems for the Chinese translators and Vinaya masters, who were eager to define guidelines in accordance with the standard recommendations given by the Buddha.

Yijing's Interpretation of the Standard Robes for *Bhikṣunīs*

Yijing's Attitude Towards the Vinaya Rules

When the Chinese monk Yijing, leaves China for India in 671, he does so out of concern about the Chinese Vinaya situation. In his travel account, *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳, *Account of Buddhism Sent from the South Seas* (T 2125,[14] 205c20-206a4), he explains

11 This is indeed also the reason given by some Vinayas for imposing a *saṃkakṣikā*: see Pāli Vinaya, Vin, Vol.IV, 344-345; *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T 1421, 98a11-17; *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T 1428, 771c10-772a6.

12 This is based upon a passage of the *bhikṣunīvibhaṅga* of the Mā-L., Roth (1970, 3l3, §277).

13 *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, T 1421, 138b12-17 et passim; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T 1425, 311b19-20 et passim; *Dharmaguptakavinaya,* T 1428, 801c17 et passim; *Sarvāstivādavinaya*, T 1435, 466a23 and 469b12; *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, T 1442, 667b7 et passim.

14 For an English translation, see Takakusu (1896) and Li (2000).

why the Vinaya situation in China, he feels, is like a deep well, the water of which has been spoilt after a river has overflowed. This is what, according to Yijing, happens when many misinterpretations are added to the pure, original Vinaya texts. He also insists that Vinayas should never be intermingled. The only way to solve this situation is to visit India in order to find an unspoilt Vinaya. In India, he remains for ten years in Nālandā, where he becomes an expert of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*. Back in China, he logically promotes the latter Vinaya, while trying to convince his fellow *bhikṣus* to live by the Vinaya rules.

Yijing's motivation clearly shows that a link to the original Indian texts and the original intention of the Buddha was considered essential. A correct Vinaya was, in the first place, a Vinaya linked to India.[15] This applies to all aspects of monastic life, not least to the key components of a monastic identity, such as the monastic robes, that clearly delineate *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣunīs* from lay people, or the abstention from sex, impure meat or alcohol.[16] It is therefore unsurprising that Yijing warns his readers that, if the use of food and clothing goes against the proper rules, one causes wrongfulness with every step (T 2125, 212a27-28). The rules are those of the Vinaya (212b3-5).

The argument about identity is closely linked to that regarding decorum. *Bhikṣu*s and *bhikṣunīs* lead an exemplary life, and should never give rise to laughter, shame or contempt. In some situations, however, the arguments about identity and decorum can conflict. A clear example of such a conflict is the discussion that arose in the Chinese Buddhist monasteries regarding the practice of begging for food. Begging is, in fact, one of the four supports (*niśraya*) on which the monastic life is based.[17] It is, however, permissable to receive more than the basic requirements, provided that one does not request this.[18] A *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣunī* may thus accept an invitation by a lay benefactor. In China, the ideal of a mendicant life was certainly present, but *bhikṣu*s who sustained themselves on alms food were rare and were in fact treated with a particular reverence that was reserved for strict ascetics (Mather 1981, 418-419; Kieschnick 1997, 33-35). In addition, Chinese public opinion was certainly not favourable towards beggars, making the tradition of alms food unworkable in a Chinese context. The lay devotee, Shen Yue 沈約 (441-513),[19] in his essay *Shu seng shehui lun* 述僧

15 See, among others, also Yifa (2002, 3-98).

16 See Kieschnick (1997, 16-32; 1999, 9-23; 2003, 86-107). On 'meat,' see also Kieschnick (2005) and Heirman (2006).

17 The other three supports state that one should dress in refuse rags, that one should dwell at the root of a tree, and that one should use medicine made of putrid elements (*pūtimuktabhaiṣajya*, cf. Edgerton 1985, 350, s.v. *pūti-mukta*: a medicinal decoction).

18 Pāli Vinaya, Vin I, 58; Mahīśāsakavinaya, T 1421, 120b12-22; Mahāsāṃghikavinaya, T 1425, 413c12-414b7; Dharmaguptakavinaya, T 1428, 815c18-816a3; Sarvāstivādavinaya, T 1435, 156c5-157a4; Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya, T 1453, 458a21-b27. For *bhikṣunīs*, most Vinayas mention only three supports; the support of the root of a tree as a dwelling place is usually omitted. For more details, see Heirman (2002, Part I, 105, note 71).

19 Shen Yue was a Buddhist lay follower, and one of the chief advisors on ritual matters of Emperor

設會論, *On Keeping the Tradition of Maigre Feast*, preserved in Daoxuan's *Guang hongming ji* 廣 弘 明 集, *Amplification of the Record of Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism* (T 2103, 273b10-c4), fully recognises this and pleads that the daily begging rounds should be substituted with 'maigre feasts' (*zhai* 齋), a kind of special festival at which lay followers could feed large groups of *bhikṣu*s simultaneously. Begging itself is considered to be shameful and therefore 'everyone assumes that the practice of begging is no longer workable' (T 2103, 273b24).[20]

The monk Yijing, although sometimes confronted with a different reality, is certainly not in favour of any changes being made to the Vinaya practices.[21] It is therefore logical that, in the context of his chapter on the *bhikṣunīs*' robes, he states that one 'should reject any garment which is against the rules and wear one which is strictly according to the teaching' (T 2125, 216b3-4). On the other hand, on several occasions, Yijing also shows that he can be pragmatical while still adhering to a strict interpretation of the Vinaya rules. He therefore often makes use of the concept of *lüe jiao* 略教, 'abridged teaching,' as it is explained in several texts of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition. T 1451, *Genbenshuoyiqieyou bu pinaiye za shi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事, *Kṣudrakavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, 293a1-8, for instance, relates how, on his deathbed, the Buddha gives the *bhikṣu*s a final teaching on Vinaya: he tells them that, having expounded the full Vinaya, he still has to explain the *lüe jiao* 略教, 'the abridged teaching'. If, in the future, *bhikṣu*s are confronted with a matter that, in the Vinaya as laid down by the Buddha, has been neither prohibited nor permitted, they should always consider whether or not this matter conflicts with purity (*qing jing* 清淨). In my opinion, the latter statement should be interpreted as a recommendation to verify whether or not a new practice is in accordance with the pure essence or spirit of the Vinaya rules.[22] This verification process is called *lüe jiao* 略教, and allows Yijing to permit, for instance, the use of chopsticks in Chinese monasteries.[23] He explains that the Buddha has never permitted nor forbidden the use of chopsticks. So, following the *lüe jiao* 略教 principle, one can use them (T 1453, *Genbenshuoyiqieyou bu baiyi jiemo* 根本說一切有部百一羯磨, [Mūlasarvāstivāda] *ekaśatakarman*?[24], 498c21-22). In addition, Yijing also admits that, in extreme situations, *bhikṣu*s may have no other choice than to break the proper rules, although this should be avoided as far as possible. As an

Wu (r. 502-557) of the Southern Liang dynasty (see Mather 1988).

20 See also Mather (1981, 419-420; 1988, 154-161).

21 The descriptive norms proposed by Yijing and the practical realities can show major differences. As shown by Kieschnick (1999, 17), for instance, *bhikṣunīs* depicted in the painting and sculptures of the Tang and Song dynasties wear either sleeved gowns or a high skirt that covers the breasts. This would not please Yijing, who favours a more traditional (i.e. Indian) style. See also Heirman, forthcoming.

22 See also a note by Yijing in T 1458, 615a24-25: one has to interpret the Vinaya on the basis of its *yi* 義, 'the meaning', 'the essence'.

23 See Heirman (forthcoming).

24 Cf. Demiéville et al. (1978, 124).

example, he refers to the Chinese winters which can be so cold that, in order to survive, one sometimes needs to wear more robes than allowed (T 2125, 214b25-28, 214c17). However, despite the few exceptions provided by Yijing, his general statements continuously insist on a strict interpretation of the Vinaya rules. Especially with regard to items of clothing, Yijing regrets that the Chinese custom of wearing monastic robes, because of its wrongfulness, only stimulates laughter in India (T 2125, 214a25-27).

The Five Robes of a *Bhikṣunī*

Returning our attention to the five robes of a *bhikṣunī*, we see that most of Yijing's arguments reappear: his strict interpretation of the Vinaya rules, his focus on the monastic identity and on an exemplary way of life, his more pragmatic attitude (albeit without making use of the concept of *lüe jiao* 略教) when confronted with garments that, although not explained in the Vinaya, do not go against the essence of the monastic rules, and, finally, his resignation when confronted with circumstances that impose some adaptation of the original rules.

Yijing devotes one of the chapters of his travel account to the rules concerning the robes of a *bhikṣunī* (T 2125, 216a9-c21). He starts with the complaint that, in China, *bhikṣunīs* wear similar clothes to lay women, which is clearly a violation of the Vinaya rules. It is obvious that this is not permissible in Yijing's view, the more so since this item concerns a crucial aspect of monastic identity. Yijing therefore enumerates the five standard robes as he saw them in India, following the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition: the three robes of a *bhikṣu*, to which are added a *saṃkakṣikā* and a 'skirt' (*qun* 裙) or *kusūlaka*. According to Yijing, a *saṃkakṣikā* for *bhikṣunīs* does not differ from that used by *bhikṣu*s. He describes the latter garment as a robe that covers the arm-pits (*ye* 腋, 212b25-26) or the shoulder (*bo* 膊, upper arm/shoulder, 215b26-27).[25] Yijing further suggests (215b26-c29) to his fellow (Chinese) *bhikṣu*s that they should make the *saṃkakṣikā* slightly longer (than they do now). He tells them to leave the right shoulder bare and cover the left shoulder. While a *bhikṣu* is in his own room, he usually only wears this

25 This information indicates that a saṃkakṣikā covers both the arm-pits and the shoulder. If applied to *bhikṣunīs*, the robe thus combines the functions of the original *saṃkakṣikā* (a band worn to conceal the breasts) and of the 'robe that covers the shoulder'. This is confirmed by a note of Yijing (T 2125, 216b2-3) in which he says that, in his study of the Indian (probably Mūlasarvāstivāda) texts, he never saw an Indian term meaning '覆肩衣', 'a garment that covers the shoulder'. Instead, he frequently saw the term *saṃkakṣikā*, of which he states that the original function was to cover the shoulder. According to Yijing, 覆肩衣 is therefore merely a translation of the term *saṃkakṣikā*, also transliterated as *qizhi* 祇支. Referring to the Pāli tradition, von Hinüber (1975, l38) also suggests that a combination of the two covering functions (of the breasts and of the shoulder) led to the habit of wearing only one robe, called the *saṃkacchika* (Skt. *saṃkakṣika*).

saṃkakṣikā together with a skirt (*qun* 裙), which Yijing describes as an undergarment (T 2125, 215b29-c18).[26]

As for the *bhikṣunīs*' *kusūlaka*, which Yijing translates as 'skirt' (*qun* 裙), he underlines that it differs from the 'skirt' used by *bhikṣu*s. He also presents an alternative translation, 'basket robe' (*chuan yi* 篇 衣, T 2125, 216a14), which, according to Yijing, is the literal translation of *kusūlaka*.[27] He adds that the *bhikṣunīs*' robe indeed somehow resembles a basket. Both its ends are sewn together.[28] It covers the body as far up as the navel, and comes down as far as four finger-widths above the ankles. In order to wear it, one should step into it and pull it up until it covers the navel. One contracts the robe and ties it behind one's back.

Besides being a outward sign of monastic identity, the monastic robes also stand for exemplary behaviour, a symbol of correctness.[29] In addition, for *bhikṣunīs*, the extra robes prevent any feeling of shame or any disapproving reaction by other people. Therefore Yijing recommends carefully covering one's body,[30] especially when going out (T 2125, 216b6-7).

The above clearly shows how Yijing insists both on correctness as a symbol of identity, and on the necessary decorum. Still, while he will not give way regarding moral behaviour, he seems to be less strict with regard to 'correctness'. Although 'correct' means, for him, strictly according to the teaching (T 2125, 216b3-4) (*zhuo shun jiao zhi yi* 著順教之衣, 'one (should) wear clothes in accordance with the teaching'), he allows *bhikṣunīs* to wear a different style of *saṃkakṣikā*, which he has seen in the countries of the Southern Sea of Southeast Asia, but which does not correspond to the Indian style (nor to any Vinaya text) (216a24-b1). The robe covers the body from the shoulder to the knees. Both ends of the robe are sewn together. In order to wear it, one has to hold it up and put one's head and shoulder through, keeping the right shoulder wholly outside it. As Yijing describes the robe, it seems to be a combination of an Indian style *saṃkakṣikā* and the above described 'basket robe'. He states that wearing it can be done without fault (216a28).[31]

Finally, Yijing also briefly seems reluctantly to grant that, in autumn and winter, one can wear clothing that is warmer than a *saṃkakṣikā*: '*chun xia zhi jie ci ke chong qu qiu dong zhi*

26 For more details on undergarments, see Heirman (2002, Part II, 515-517, note 197).

27 A *kusūla* is a granary, or store-room.

28 According to my understanding, this explanation refers to a skirt that is only open at the bottom and at the top, and thus cannot be wrapped around the body. In order to wear it, one has to step into it, and pull it up.

29 See, for instance, T 2125, 212b11, where Yijing states that the regulations about clothing are among the most important rules for one who has gone forth.

30 形 *xing*, 'shape,' here probably referring to those parts of the body that can attract unwanted attention. Compare T 2125, 216a29: a robe should hide the *xing chou* 形醜, 'shameful parts of the body'.

31 Yijing's willingness to accept this robe is possibly influenced by the fact that he saw it in countries that he considers to be close to the Buddha because of their many contacts with India.

shi ren qing nuan zhuo 春夏之節此可充軀秋冬之時任情煖著' 'in spring and summer, it (the *saṃkakṣikā*) is enough to protect the body. In autumn and winter, one follows one's feelings and one wears a warmer cloth' (T 2125, 216b7-8).

Conclusion

We may conclude that, with the exception of the Pāli Vinaya, all of the Vinayas indicate three robes that potentially could be included in the *bhikṣunīs*' standard set of clothing: a bathing cloth, and two robes that cover sensitive parts of the body, be it as an undergarment or a robe to cover the breast and shoulder. Yijing, who follows the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, pleads with his Chinese readership to follow the Indian, Mūlasarvāstivāda, guidelines. Only then, he states, can one truly claim to live up to the correct standards, respecting one's monastic identity and moral exemplary behaviour. He himself, however, is unsure about the exact interpretation of some of the detailed guidelines of the Vinaya. The exact shape of the robes thus remains partially unclear. In addition, Yijing also allows some small deviations from the guidelines, provided that these do not conflict with the identity or decorum expected of a *bhikṣunī*. Dresses that are similar to the lay women's garments – as according to Yijing was the habit in China – are to be strongly rejected. A robe covering the body from the shoulder to the knees, which he has seen in the countries of the Southern Sea, is permissible, even though it does not correspond to the Indian style. In this context, identity and decorum thus prevail over the exact shape of the robe. In other passages, however, Yijing is less flexible and insists that only robes that are made exactly in accordance with the Vinaya guidelines are acceptable. This is certainly the case when he is confronted with situations that he only accepts with reluctance, such as the habit of wearing many robes in cold weather. This shows how Yijing balances between his insistance on correctness, interpreted as a strict following of the Vinaya prescriptions, and his more pragmatic attitude based on respect for the pure essence or spirit of the Vinaya.

Abbreviations

BD:	Horner, I.B., *The Book of Discipline*
Mā-L.:	Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda/in(s)
T.:	Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經. Ed. J. Takakusu, K. Watanabe. Tōkyō
Vin:	*The Vinaya Piṭakaṃ*, H. Oldenberg, ed. London: Pali Text Society

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