

不非時食戒十大益論

Ten Great Benefits of Avoiding Meals at Inappropriate Times

摘自《沙彌十戒威儀錄要》

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An Excerpt from *Recompiled Essentials of Śrāmaṇeras' Ten Precepts and Codes of Deportment*

By Śrāmana Zhixu Ouyi (1599-1655) of the Ancient Wu, who Re-edited in Accordance with the Vinaya Texts

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【原文】制意：凡食資身，事須節約，數則致患。故限之令定，始於清旦，終至中前，事順應法，不生過罪，名之為時。過則非儀，長貪妨道，招譏納謗，事不應法，故所以制。（戒本疏）

【白話】制戒目的：飲食是為了維持我們的身體，所以適量進食以維持身體健康很重要，吃多了會生病。因此，進食時間按規定應該是從清晨到中午之前，我們應該順應並遵守這個法則，不要生出過失。這就是所謂的「適時性」。飲食過量——比如暴飲暴食，或超過一定時間的飲食都會增長一個人的貪心，障礙一個人的道業，從而招致他人的譏嫌。飲食過量這種行為不如法，因此佛陀制這條戒。

【原文】經中說云：早起諸天食，日中三世諸佛食，日西畜生食，日暮鬼神食。佛制斷六趣因，令同三世佛故。靈芝釋云：欲超三界，必斷六因，故制比丘，不同彼食，令依極聖，出離可期。嗟彼愚人，多滄(cān)晚食，肯馱(xiào)諸佛，而甘同鬼畜，不知何意乎?!（南山行事鈔資持記）

【白話】佛經中提到：早晨是天人進食的時間；中午是過去、現在、未來三世諸佛進食的時間；下午是畜生進食的時間，晚間是鬼神進食的時間。所以佛陀制定過午不食，是為了幫助

Purpose: Eating is to sustain our body, so it's important to eat in moderation to avoid health issues. Therefore, meal times are specified from early morning until before noon, and one must follow the rules without making mistakes or incurring offenses. This is called "timeliness." Overeating or eating beyond the specified timeframe increases one's greed, hinders one's cultivation, and invites ridicule and criticism from others. Such behavior is not in line with the Dharma, hence the establishment of this rule (Excerpt from the *Commentary on the Pratimokṣa*).

It is said in sutras: morning is the time when devas eat, noon is the time when Buddhas of the three periods of time eat, afternoon is the time when animals eat, and evening is the time when ghosts and spirits eat. The Buddha laid down this precept so as to help beings sever the causal links of the Six Paths of existence and to enable them to join the ranks of Buddhas of the three periods of time.

Vinaya Master Lingzhi said, to transcend the Three Realms, one must definitely sever the causal links of the Six Destinies. Therefore, the mealtime rules for bhikshus differ from those of other beings, and are based on the Ultimate Sage's teachings. By observing this precept, they can attain liberation.

Alas, foolish ones indulge in evening meals, unwilling to emulate the way of Buddhas and willingly be like ghosts and animals. What do they have in mind?" (*Record of Observances and Guidelines at Mount Nan*)

眾生斬斷繼續輪迴六道的因，而與三世諸佛同因。律宗靈芝大師說，要想超越三界，就必須斬斷六道輪迴的因。因此，比丘的進食的時間是基於聖人的教導，而與其他眾生不同。他們通過遵守這條戒律，可以獲得解脫。可憐憫世間愚痴的人沉溺於晚間飲食，心甘情願地效仿惡鬼及畜生，卻不願走佛陀聖賢之道。他們心中究竟在想些什麼？

【原文】古之高德，奉敬律儀，一食卯齋，用為常務。今時濁惡，噉食無時，設有營齋，遲留至暮，禪師講匠，坐受安然。

【白話】古時大德致力於遵守寺院清規，並高度重視日中一食，認為這應是日用平常。然而，現在這個五濁惡世，人們基本上不再遵守時間，隨心所欲地飲食。在有餐飲的地方，一些修道人也會滯留到晚上，甚至連一些禪師和講經的法師，竟也安然接受晚餐的供養。

【原文】客問杜多子曰：吾聞殺盜淫妄名為性罪，飲酒昏迷失智慧種，食眾生肉斷大慈悲。是以如來制戒，七眾同遵，固無惑焉。至於常食養身，有何過咎？而非時食戒，如此嚴耶？！願聞其旨。杜多子曰：吾正欲申齋法之要，以軌行人，時哉問也。夫齋法是十方三世諸佛弟子通行大道，出生死法之要津也。

【白話】有人問修頭陀行的法師：「我聽說殺、盜、淫、妄是性罪；飲酒（服用麻醉品）使人失去理性；吃眾生肉會斷大慈悲的種子。所以佛陀制了這些戒律，七眾都要遵守，這一點我毫不懷疑。然而，規律飲食滋養身體有什麼過患呢？為什麼不非時食的戒律如此嚴格？我想聽聽您的解答。」法師回答說：我正要解釋遵守戒律的重要性，以引導人們走上正確的道路。你的問題提得非常及時。中午以後（非時）不吃飯的戒律，是所有佛陀及佛弟子在十方三世中普遍遵循的大道，是脫離生死輪迴的關鍵渡口。

【原文】愚夫逐逐口腹，甘為飲食之人，既畏此

In ancient times, the eminent ones were devoted to observing monastic discipline and held in high regard the practice of having only one meal a day, considering it a regular routine. However, in the turbulent and evil times of today, people no longer adhere to proper timing for meals, essentially eating whenever they please. In places where meals are provided, some monastics linger well into the evening, and some Chan practitioners and Dharma lecturers even sit calmly accepting offerings of a meal with ease, unaffected (by the concern for the precept).

A guest inquired of Master Dhūta (Ascetic Practice): “I heard that killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and false speech are fundamental offenses, that taking intoxicants (including consuming alcohol) befuddles practitioners, causing them to go astray and lose the seed of wisdom, and that eating the meat of sentient beings severs the path of great compassion. The Tathāgata thus established the precepts for all the sevenfold assembly to observe; this I have no doubt. However, what fault is there in regular eating to nourish the body? Why is the precept against eating at improper times so strict? I’d like to hear from you about its principle.”

Master Dhūta replied: “I was just about to explain the importance of observing the precept to guide people onto the correct path. Your question is very relevant and timely. The precept of not eating after noon (at improper times) is the great path universally followed by all Buddhas and Buddhist disciples throughout the ten directions and three periods of time, and it is a crucial ferry point out of the cycle of birth and death.”

Foolish ones solely pursue the gratification of the mouth and belly, willing to remain a person preoccupied with food and drink. Since they are afraid of being restricted and scrutinized by such precepts, how can they understand the benefits from observing them? Now I will reveal the original purpose of the Tathagata’s establishment of this precept, which is perfect and flawless; how could they be fully explained? Briefly, there are ten immense benefits to mention:

1. Severing the karmic ties of birth and death

The sutra says, “All sentient beings become each type

律檢，豈辨其利益？！今原如來立制本意，盡善盡美，何能殫述？略而舉之大益有十：

【白話】愚人只追求口腹的滿足，沉溺於飲食的人，既然害怕被這些戒律所限制，又怎能理解持戒的益處呢？現在我講一講佛陀制這條戒律的初衷，這條戒律如此完美無瑕；如何才能充分解釋它們？簡而言之，有十個大裨益值得一提：

【原文】一、斷生死緣。經云：「一切衆生，皆因淫慾而正性命。」又云：「三界衆生，皆依飲食而得存活，所謂段食、觸食、思食、識食。」由此觀之，淫慾固生死正因，飲食乃生死第一增上緣也，均為五欲所攝。特資此毒身，借之修道，不能全斷。然設得時食，尚作曠野食子肉想，何容恣意於非時耶？

【白話】一、斷生死緣。佛經說：「一切眾生，因為淫欲的緣故而得以成為各類眾生。」此外，佛經中也提到，「三界眾生都依止飲食而續命。有四種類型的飲食方式：所謂段食、觸食、思食、識食。」這樣看來，淫欲固然是生死輪迴的根本，而飲食卻是其第一增上緣。都被五欲所攝持。現在我們借助飲食來維持著這個「有毒」的身體，並借用它來修道，所以現在不能全斷飲食。然而我們在得到食物時，尚應心生慚愧，這就好像在沒有食物的曠野中吃自己孩子的肉一樣，更何況在非食時恣意飲食呢？

【原文】二、表中道義。台宗云：「午前進食，表方便道，猶似有法可得。過中不食，表除中道外更無所需。」此之理觀，全託事境。倘粗戒尚不自持，非同俗人夜猶飲食放縱之不及，即同外道日啖一麻一麥之太過。行不適中，妙理何由契會？

【白話】二、表中道義。根據天臺宗的教義：「午前飲食權宜之法，表示好像還有法可得。過午不食表示除中道了義之外，再無所需之法了。」由事顯理。如果修行人連基本的戒律都不能自持，則很容易走向非中道的兩個極端。或者如同俗人放縱飲食到深夜，或者如外道無益苦行一日

of living beings due to the very cause of sexual desire.” Furthermore, it is also mentioned in the sutra, “All beings in the Three Realms rely on food and drink for their sustenance.” That is to say, there are four types of consuming food: sequential, sensory, cognitive, and consciousness-based. From this perspective, it is evident that sexual desire serves as fundamental causes for the cycle of birth and death. Food, in particular, stands as the primary and foremost contributing factor that binds individuals to the cycle of samsaric existence. Both of these aspects fall under the category of the five desires.

Now we are sustaining this very ‘poisonous’ body to use it for cultivating the Way, and are still unable to entirely cut off the food intake. So, even if we obtain food and are to eat it at proper times, we are urged to contemplate as if we were wandering in hunger through a wilderness without food, so we have to eat the flesh of our own children. Thus, we dare not indulge in eating. How much more should we abstain from eating at improper times?

2. Embodying the Meaning of the Middle Way

According to the doctrines of the Tiantai School: “Eating before noon is to embody the expedient path, suggesting that there are still Dharmas to attain. No eating after noon embodies nothing more than the Middle Way—there is no need for anything else.” Contemplation of such a principle is entirely manifested through these particular states of phenomena (deeds or actions).

If one cannot even uphold the most basic precepts, one will likely fall to either of the two extremes: indulgence in food and drink like mundane people well into the night, or eating as little as only one grain of wheat or sesame seed a day — which is too stringent. Unable to achieve a state of balance in cultivation, how can one possibly comprehend the profound teachings of Buddhism?

3. Maintaining Physical Health and Reducing Chances of Illness

The spleen is an organ associated with the virtue

吃一麻一麥。既然不能保持中道，又如何能契入佛法甚深微妙的道理呢？

【原文】三、調身少病。脾主信，數數食，最能傷脾。故玄門以戒晚食為養生善術，豈名忍餓？

【白話】三、調身少病。脾在五常中主「信」。頻繁飲食對脾的傷害最大。因此，佛教提倡晚上戒飲食以養生，這怎麼能稱為受餓呢？

【原文】四、道業尊崇。趙州云：「二時粥飯，是雜用心處。」二時已雜，況三、四耶？儒曰：「飲食之人，則人賤之。」今恪守齋法，專精辦道，道業自隆。

【白話】四、道業尊崇。趙州和尚說：「早、中兩頓飯是雜用心處」兩頓飯已雜用心，更何況三頓、四頓？儒家（孟子）有句話說：「只講究吃喝的人，會被他人輕視」。今天，凡是能遵守過午不食這條齋法的人，專心修道，道業自隆。

【原文】五、堅固戒品。晚食助火助氣，增長淫心。今寂爾清淨，戒體堅牢。

【白話】五、堅固戒品。晚上飲食令人易上火、亂想叢生，淫心增長。現在因為修道人持這條齋法，身心平和清淨，戒品也因此堅固。

【原文】六、堪能修定。斷其雜食亂想，身心輕利，取定不難。

【白話】六、堪能修定。因為斷了雜亂的飲食及亂想，人的身心都會變得輕安敏銳，再修定就不難了。

【原文】七、出生智慧。晚餐助昏蓋，今清淨惺寂，不障觀慧。又於四種食，如法作厭離想，即能斷三界惑。

【白話】七、出生智慧。晚上進食容易讓人感到昏沉想睡（五蓋之一）。當在修行止觀時，因為沒有外界的干擾，修道人的心則更容易清淨、敏銳。此外，如果一個人對食物修行厭離觀，他即能夠了斷三界的妄想。

of trustworthiness and frequent eating is most harmful to the spleen. Therefore, Buddhism advocates refraining from eating in the evening as a wholesome Dharma of nourishing the body. How can this be called enduring hunger?

4. Honoring and Revering the Path

Master Zhaozhou once said, “During two meal time periods, one has no focused mind with many random thoughts; even the two mealtimes are periods of scattered or chaotic mind. How much the more when one eats three or four meals?” A Confucian saying goes, “As for those who are dedicated to eating and drinking, people regard them as of little worth.” Today, anyone who can abide by the precept of not eating after noon and concentrate on practice will naturally flourish in the cultivation of the Way.

5. Solid Foundation of Precepts

Eating at night can easily boost the fiery energy within and flare up sexual desire (foster the growth of lustful thoughts). Since one is now upholding this precept, one becomes tranquil inside and has built a solid foundation of precepts (stabilized the essence of the precepts).

6. Ability to Cultivate Samadhi

Since one has cut off random food intake and confused thoughts, both body and mind become nimble and keen, making samadhi attainable without having to exert much effort.

7. Unfolding of Wisdom

Eating at night can make people feel sleepy (as it increases dullness, one of the five hindrances 五蓋). If one cuts off the evening meal, one will have a clear, pure, and keen mind unhindered by external factors when engaging in contemplation of wisdom. In addition, if one practices weariness contemplation on food, one will be able to cut off the delusions of the Three Realms.

【原文】八、離鬼畜業。畜生午後食，鬼夜食。不持齋法，鬼畜無異，牽入其類。持此齋法，遠離二趣生緣。

【白話】八、離鬼畜業。畜生在下午進食，餓鬼在晚上進食。不遵守這條戒律的人則與畜生餓鬼無異，同類相聚。修行人因遵守這條齋法，避免了種畜生、餓鬼的因，而免於投生這個兩個惡道。

【原文】九、不惱檀信。謂長乞食者，設午後更復持鉢，則終日但見沙門往還，必令施主生惱。今午後惟晏坐修道，能令僧俗皆安。

【白話】九、不惱檀信。如果僧侶們在下午繼續應供，布施飲食的信眾一整天都看到僧侶們來來往往，這肯定會引起他們的不滿。遵守了這條戒律後，出家人在下午就會專注於坐禪和修行，這樣僧俗都會感到平靜。

【原文】十、不擾行人。今時叢林晚餐，廚人惟事炊爨，終身碌碌，不異佣工。齋法若明，則無此煩擾，共修道業。是以諸佛出世，必立此制。

【白話】十、不擾行人。在當今有晚餐供應的寺廟裡，廚房工作人員總是忙著做飯，他們的整個生活就像傭工一樣忙碌。一旦戒律建立，就不會有這樣的干擾，所有人都可以專注於一起修行道。因此，每當有佛陀出現在世間，他一定會制這條戒。

【原文】乃至在家居士，猶令於月六齋日，受八關齋法，以種永出因緣，況沙彌比丘，可無慚無愧，非時受食耶?!設有病苦因緣，佛自立非時漿、七日藥以濟之，斷無以晚食為藥石之理也。願高明者，深信而力行之。（蕩祖非時食戒十大益論）

【白話】即使是在家居士，也鼓勵在每個月的六齋日受持八關齋戒，以種出世因緣，更何況沙彌比丘非時飲食能不生慚愧嗎？如果有病苦因緣，佛陀制定了一些開緣：比如非時漿、七日藥以作飲食治療，這駁斥了將晚餐視為藥用的理由。我希望有智慧的人能深信這個道理並實踐之。 ❀

8. Avoidance of the Karma of Ghosts and Animals

Animals eat in the afternoon, and ghosts eat at night. Not adhering to this precept makes one no different from them, leading one into their category. By observing this precept, one stays far from the causes of being born into these two realms (one distance oneself from the karmic ties of the animal and ghost realms).

9. Not Afflicting the Almsgivers

If monks carry on alms round into the afternoon, the almsgiver will see monastics coming and going throughout the entire day, which will surely cause dissatisfaction and anger. Having observed this precept, one will focus on sitting meditation and cultivating the Way in the afternoon, which make both monastic and lay communities feel peaceful.

10. Not Disturbing Fellow Practitioners

In today's monasteries where evening meals are served, the kitchen staff are constantly busy cooking, their whole lives bustling just like laborers. As soon as the precept becomes established (accepted and practiced), there will be no such disturbances and all can focus on cultivating the Path together. Therefore, whenever a Buddha appears in the world, he will definitely establish this practice.

Even laypeople are encouraged to observe the meal precept in the Eight Precepts during the six fasting days each month so as to plant the seed of eternal transcendence, let alone monks and novice monks. Can they go without shame and eat at improper times!? If there are conditions of illness and suffering, the Buddha himself established situations of allowable exceptions to the precepts: taking liquid (juice or soup) outside the prescribed meal hours, or taking the allowable seven-day medicines (dietary treatments), which refutes the rationale for considering evening meals as medicinal. I hope that those high-minded and wise ones will bring forth deep faith in what I say (in this precept) and earnestly put it to practice (Ten Great Benefits of Not Eating at Inappropriate Times by Master Ouyi). ❀