

## Bell and Wooden Fish Practice

I. Preparation: Borrow a small wooden fish bell set from the temple.

II. Lesson Time:

1. Listen: The wooden fish bell set enhances the solemnity and regularity of Buddhist ceremonies and chanting, fostering reverence and purity. To achieve the desired significance, it is crucial to strike the wooden fish bell correctly.

a. Before the Ceremony:

- ) Two appointed youth members prepare the wooden fish bell set in the main hall, ensuring cleanliness and tidiness of the altar for the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and ancestors. Light incense for each incense burner and offer three separate sticks of incense for the presiding officiant.
- ) The two youth members responsible for the wooden fish bell set stand facing each other, not looking at the Buddha's altar. They keep an eye on the presiding officiant for cues to strike the bell.
- ) Strike the bell gently once to signal all attendees and leaders to gather.

b. During the Ceremony:

- ) During the offering of incense:
  - ) Strike the bell once after each incense offering and chanting.
  - ) After each verse, strike the bell once, and all participants bow in reverence.
- ) At the beginning of the chanting session:
  - ) The wooden fish bell is struck three times, departing: o o o.
  - ) The wooden fish is struck seven times (4 individual strikes, 2 continuous strikes, 1 individual strike): x x x x x x x.
  - ) Bell and wooden fish: 1 bell, 1 wooden fish (repeated 3 times): o x o x o x.
  - ) The wooden fish: 1 individual strike, 2 continuous strikes, 1 individual strike: x x x x.
  - ) The bell rings simultaneously with the final wooden fish strike: o o o, x x x x x x x, o, x, o, x, o, x, x x x x x o.
- ) During the recitation of the Repentance Prayer:
  - ) Strike the wooden fish for the second sound (Disciples) and wait for the presiding officiant's intonation. Strike the fourth sound (Reverence) and then strike continuously from the fifth sound onward.
  - ) The bell rings once after the phrase "...with a repentant heart."
  - ) Strike the wooden fish twice at the last syllable of the final verse (Buddha) and follow the bell in the last strike.
- ) During the chanting of Buddhist titles, Bodhisattvas, etc.:
  - ) The wooden fish is struck in accordance with the presiding officiant, starting on the second and the syllables that correspond to the pauses in recitation. Conclude each verse by striking twice at the last syllable.
  - ) The bell rings once before concluding each chanting or each verse of the Self-Pledging.
- ) At the end of the ceremony:

- ) The bell is struck three times to signal the conclusion.
- ) The presiding officiant invites two youth members to escort the wooden fish bell set out while everyone bows three times.

c. After the Ceremony: Youth members exit the main hall in silence and order. The two youth members handling the wooden fish bell set turn off the fans, tidy up, and exit last.

2. Practice: Adult leaders divide the youth members into two rows facing each other—one row for striking the bell and one for the wooden fish. Leaders demonstrate using their mouths and gestures to focus. Correct any mistakes and then have each pair practice with the actual wooden fish bell set. Select two proficient youth members for practice observation, and then regroup for review. Note: Lift the striker and strike gently. Tilt the striker toward the bell's rim, and strike the wooden fish straight.