

## V. BHIKSHU AND BHIKSHUNI FULLY ORDAINED SHEMDAP

[NOTE: THE WAY THAT THE SEWING OF SANGHA ROBES IS DONE IS NOT NECESSARILY THE SAME AS THE WAY SEWING IS DONE IN THE WEST. THEREFORE, PLEASE READ ALL THE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE BEGINNING TO SEW YOUR FABRIC]

The Buddha did not speak about any difference in the lower robe, or shemdap among the different levels of ordained Sangha. However, according to the culture of the Tibetan Mahayana Tradition, 3 different shemdaps have come into being. These 3 different shemdaps are designed to show the 3 different levels of ordination. Those people, who have left the householder's life and have taken the vows of Rabjung, wear a plain shemdap. Those individuals, who have taken Novice vows, Getsul & Getsulma, can wear a shemdap which has 2 additional side panels. However, many Novice Sangha continue to wear the plain shemdap. The Fully Ordained Sangha, Bhikshu & Bhikshuni, members wear a shemdap that is designed with the addition of several panels which are arranged at right angles to one another.

The Fully Ordained shemdap is a bit more complex than the Rabjung and Getsul shemdaps. Also, this shemdap has slightly larger dimensions than the other two. Due to the fact that so many additional panels are added, the total finished width of this shemdap is 128 and 1/2". Since the shemdap is made from 3 pieces, the material of 60" in width is best for this. This shemdap has, in addition to the 2 Side Panels of the Getsul/Getsulma shemdap, 4 Vertical and 5 Horizontal Panels sewn onto the Main Panel.

### A. Measurements

Due to the fact that most guide systems for sewing machines are in the inch system, sewing measurements are given in this system. However, for greater accuracy in some measurements, the metric system is used, with the English system conversion as follows:

- **1 Meter = 100 cm = 1000 mm = 39 3/8 inches =**
  - **OR 1 yard = 36 inches = 36" = 91.5 cm = 915 mm**
- **2.54 cm = 25.4 mm = 1 inch = 1"**
- **1.27 cm = 12.7 mm = 1/2 inch = 1/2"**
- **0.635 cm = 6.35 mm = 1/4 inch = 1/4"**
- **0.3175 cm = 3.175 mm = 1/8 inch = 1/8"**

## **B. Size of Patterns**

### **BHIKSHU/BHIKSHUNI OR FULLY ORDAINED SHEMDAP**

- 1) Like the zen, the Main Panel of the shemdap is made in 3 pieces. The total length of the shemdap is calculated by measuring the HEIGHT of the shemdap needed by a person. [The pattern provided is for a person that has a height of 42.0 inches from their waist to their ankle. This is a medium height for a person about 5 feet and 7 – 10 inches tall.] Then the length of the material to be cut would be the height + ½” inch for seam allowance times 3. (For layout of cutting & dimensions, see Diagram III.a.)

Example calculation: Height of shemdap = 42.0” [Waist to Ankle]

+ 0.5” for seam allowance

= 42.5” for each piece

X 3 [number of pieces]

= 127.5” [3.54 yards or 3.25 meters] for

total length of fabric for the Main Panel. Additional fabric is required for Top and Bottom Panels, Side Panels, and Vertical & Horizontal Panels (see below).

- 2) Adjust the size of the patterns by adding or subtracting the differences between your size and the pattern sizes.

## **C. Number of Pieces & Measurements (includes seam allowances)**

**See Diagram V.a**

The Bhikshu/Bhikshuni or Fully Ordained Shemdap is made up of 22 total pieces.

For this Shemdap, we have calculated the measurements as noted above for a medium height individual which translates into the following measures:

- 1) 3 pieces [Two pieces of 51 ¾” wide x 42 ½” long [A & B], and one piece of 27 ¼” wide x 42 1/2.” long [C]] comprise the Main Panel.
- 2) 6 pieces for the Top and Bottom Panels; 3 pieces form the Top Panel and 3 pieces form the Bottom (overlaid) Panel. Thus, each piece is 9 and ½” inches long x width [51 ¾”, 51 ¾”, and 27 ¼”]. And each Panel is 9 ½” long x [A + B +C] =130.75” wide *minus* seam allowances.
- 3) 4 pieces, 2 pieces for each Side Panel; each piece = 25” long x 4” wide.
- 4) The 9 Extra Panels [4 Vertical and 5 Horizontal] are 4” wide with variable lengths:
  - a) The length of each Vertical Panel is the finished height of the Main Panel minus the two 9” Top and Bottom Panel borders plus two ½”seam allowances
  - b) The Horizontal Panels vary in their lengths of 17”, 19”, 21”, 16.5”, and 17.5”.

## **D. Layout & Cutting Instructions for Patterns**

**See Diagram V.a**

- 1) **Main Panel**

- a) Cut the above length of 127.5" into 3 equal lengths of exactly 42.5" each. Label each piece of the Main Panel as A, B, and C.
- b) For the A and B pieces, cut the width to exactly  $51 \frac{3}{4}$ ". Thus this piece of material is 42.5" long by 51.75" wide. A  $\frac{3}{4}$ " seam allowance is included.
- c) For the C piece, cut the width to exactly  $27 \frac{1}{4}$ ". Thus, this piece of material is 42.5" long by 27.25" wide. A  $\frac{3}{4}$ " seam allowance is included.

## 2) Top and Bottom Panels

- a) To form the Top and Bottom Panels for the shemdap, you will need to cut 6 widths of material. **See Diagram V.a.**
- b) The Top and Bottom Panels are identical in dimensions. But for ease of reference, after cutting, label the Top Panel pieces as A1, B1, and C1 and the Bottom Panel pieces as A2, B2, and C2.
- c) Each piece is 9 and  $\frac{1}{2}$ " inches long. The widths of the pieces correspond to the width of the A, B, and C pieces of the Main Panel [above]. For the Bhikshu or Bhikshuni shemdap, this length is  $51 \frac{3}{4}$ " for two pieces, and  $27 \frac{1}{4}$ " for the third piece. If you have uneven A, B, and C pieces for the Main panel of the shemdap, you must match the pieces of the Top and Bottom Panels to these widths.

## 3) The Side Panels See Diagram V.a.

- a) Two strips make up one side panel, so you need to cut 4 strips. The strips are 4" wide. To make these strips more secure, add  $\frac{1}{2}$ " more to the total length, and thus cut 4 strips 4" wide by 25" in length.

## 4) Vertical and Horizontal Panels See Diagram V.a.

- a) The 4 Vertical and 5 Horizontal Panels are all 3.5" plus  $\frac{1}{2}$ " in their widths. Thus the cutting widths are 4" for all.
- b) The length of each Vertical Panel is the finished height of the Main Panel minus the two 9" Top and Bottom Panel borders plus two  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowances. Thus 42" minus 18" plus 1", making the ends extend  $\frac{1}{2}$ " underneath the Top and Bottom Panels. This adds security against fraying for these panels.
- c) The Horizontal Panels vary in their lengths. Cut these to allow for a seam allowance at either end of  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", producing a final length of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " more than the final lengths, or 17", 19", 21", 16.5", and 17.5". Write the final dimensions of each [16.5", 18.5", 20.5", 16", and 17"] on the back of each piece with tailor's chalk.

## E. Sewing Instructions

To begin sewing this Fully Ordained Shemdap, study **Diagram V.b**, below so you can see how the finished shemdap will appear. Note: The shemdap is shown laid out, without being sewn into a circle, to more easily see all aspects of the finished shemdap.

**Note: Some of the sewing instructions of the Bhikshu, Getsul and Rabjung Shemdaps are the same, therefore, on occasion, reference is made to the Diagrams for Rabjung or Getsul Shemdaps. Diagrams for Rabjung Shemdap are prefaced with a III. Diagrams for the Getsul Shemdap are prefaced with a IV. Diagrams specific to the Bhikshu Shemdap are prefaced with a V.**

## 1) Main Panel

**You will stitch with an *Overlap Seam***

***Overlap Seam*** is made in the following way: [Same as for Rabjung Shemdap, refer to Diagram III.c]

- With RIGHT SIDES together, lay piece A on top of piece B, having the A piece short of meeting the B piece by  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", that is, the B piece extends  $\frac{1}{4}$ " past the edge of the A piece.
  - Stitch a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam [from the edge of the A piece and which is  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the edge of the B piece].
  - Fold over the extra  $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the B piece to cover the raw edge of the top A piece. Pin and press. Then top stitch close to the left edge of the folded edge of the B piece to produce a finished seam on the inside of the garment. Press finished seam
- a) Using the Overlap Seam technique, stitch the B piece to the C piece. To keep the finished pieces all the same width, this time the B piece should be short of the C piece by  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and the extra  $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the C piece if folded over the raw edge of the seam and stitched.
- b) DO NOT yet stitch the C piece to the A piece.

## 2) Constructing Side Panels Same as for Getsul Shemdap, see Diagram IV.b

- a) **Examine Diagram IV.b.** Note that there are 3 openings labeled U, W, and Y, interspaced between 4 solid sections, labeled T, V, X, and Z, in the middle of each finished Side Panel. These lengths of the gaps and solid sections are dependent upon the length of your finished panel.
- b) To find the lengths of these gaps and solid sections, divide the total length of your side panel [minus  $\frac{1}{2}$ " for seam allowances] by 7. This will give you the length of the sections T through Z shown in **Diagram IV.b.**
- c) For this pattern, the total length is  $24 \frac{1}{2}$ " minus  $\frac{1}{2}$ " [for seam allowances of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " at top and bottom], or 24". But for ease of measure, to get equal divisions of sections, we can include the seam allowances of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " so we divide  $24.5/7 =$  to get an equal 3.5" for each section. When we sew the Top and Bottom Panels in place over the top and bottom raw edges of these panels, the top, T, and bottom, Z, pieces will each be  $\frac{1}{4}$ " shorter, but not noticeable, and the other sections will all be 3.5" exactly.
- d) To construct each Side Panel, first pin and press, then sew two 4" wide strips together with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, leaving gaps at sections U, W, and Y. Both the gaps and the solid sections will be 3.5" long. Remember to leave an additional  $\frac{1}{4}$ " at

- the top and bottom of the pieces, so the top and bottom gaps measure 3.75” to allow ¼” to be sewn under the Top and Bottom Panels.
- e) Open the panels so the two strips are side by side. Top stitch down the middle of each strip to reinforce the gaps and solid sections. See **Diagram IV.b**.
  - f) Fold the other raw edge of each of side of the Side Panels down ¼” and press.
- 3) Side, Horizontal and Vertical Panels onto Main Panel**
- a) Fold the raw edges of each panel over by ¼” and press.
  - b) Scrutinize **Diagram V.b** to locate where these panels will be placed.
  - c) Measure carefully, and with tailor’s chalk, map out the locations of all the panels that will be placed on top of the Main Panel.
  - d) Pin the panels in place.
  - e) Carefully stitch the panels in place, noting which panels overlap and which panels underlap the adjacent panels. Stitch close to the edge of each piece.
- 4) Overlaying the Top and Bottom Panels onto the Main Panel [Same as for the other shemdaps, See Diagram III.d.]**
- a) Matching the seams of the Top Panel to the seams of the Main panel, and with the WRONG SIDE of the Main Panel facing the RIGHT SIDE of the Top Panel, pin these two Panels together.
  - b) Stitch the Top Panel to the Main Panel at the TOP EDGE, using a ¼” seam. To avoid stretching of fabric causing a mismatch of seams, first stitch the middle B piece, and then the 2 outer A and C pieces, sewing from the B piece seam out to the edges of the other 2 pieces. Leave the last ½” unsewn to accommodate the seam allowances.
  - c) Pin and stitch the Bottom Panel to the Main Panel in the same manner as described above for the Top Panel.
- 5) Joining the Shemdap into a Circle [Same as for other shemdaps, see Diagram III.e]**
- a) Turn your garment WRONG SIDE OUT. With RIGHT SIDES together, turn the garment so you can join the A piece and the C piece of the Main Panel together.
  - b) Using the **Overlap Seam Technique**, first pin, then sew the above Pieces. To avoid stretching problems, sew from the middle B piece of the Main Panel outwardly, as described above.
  - c) Then, turn your Garment RIGHT SIDE OUT.
- 6) Sewing Top and Bottom Panels to the Main Panel [Same as for Getsul, see Diagram IV.d]**
- a) Check to see that your seams on the panels will match those of the Main Panel. Then pin and stitch with simple, ¼” seams, WITHOUT joining the final seam of the last piece with the first piece.
  - b) Press ¼” of the other raw edge of the Top Panel to the inside or wrong side of the Top Panel.
  - c) Fold the Top Panel over the Main Panel [so that the RIGHT SIDE of the Top Panel comes down and over the RIGHT SIDE of the Main Panel].

- d) Pin and then stitch the bottom of the Top Panel to the Main Panel at the bottom edge of the Top Panel in the same manner described above to avoid stretching of fabric and uneven matching of seams, leaving the last 10” at either end free.
- e) Top stitch the upper and lower edges of the Top Panel to within the 10” of the end, to keep the garment pieces squarely in place.
- f) With **RIGHT SIDES** of the Top Panel together, pin and sew the first and last pieces together, matching this seam with the seam of the Main Panel.
- g) Lay the Top Panel on top of the Main Panel, pin, press, and finish stitching the last 10” of the bottom edge of the first and last pieces of the Top Panel to the Main Panel.
- h) Repeat the procedure for the Bottom Panel. Press.

**Diagrams can be found under V. Bhikshu Shemdap under the title: Compressed Bhikshu Shemdap Files.**