

GREAT WAY-THIRD PERIOD-UNIVERSAL SALVATION

Tây Ninh Holy See



CAODAI ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK

CẨM NANG

HÀNH CHÁNH ĐẠO

Translator: Khai Tâm Quách Minh Chương



ĐỨC HỘ PHÁP (Ban phép lành)

CAODAI ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK

ADVICE FOR NEW STUDENT PRIEST OF CHIEF OF RELIGIOUS DISTRICT

Dear Student Priest,

You had ever served the Caodaism at Tây Ninh Holy See under the Divine position of Student Priest. Nowadays, you are assigned to serve at local regions with a new obligation of Chief of Religious District by the Religious Order of Sacerdotal Council of Nine Divine Planes Palace's decision. The Sacerdotal Council obeys the Supreme Being's holy order and the visible Pope to remind you, so that you can be steadfast on your path of beautifying the position. This means that you fulfill your promise done to the Sacerdotal Council in the first stage.

I would like to remind that when you were at position of the Sub-dignitary, you submitted the document for Student Priest investiture and you signed for the engagement of "*whole life sacrifice for religious service*". At that time, your mind always wanted complete merits, so that when leaving the physical body and the world, your soul would obtain a divine throne. All you perhaps wished that point. In spite of hardships, tiredness of mind, you still devote your obligation yourself. However, the Sacerdotal Council knows that you see the Religious path; therefore you need to make merits. Whenever your virtue is complete, you will obtain the divine throne.

Due to the Sacerdotal Council's love, the obligation is confided more obligation and the Sacerdotal Council entrusts me to advise you about the religious path. I find that your obligation to the local region requires the following actions:

- 1- Serve the human beings.
- 2- Make the sympathy.
- 3- Love and make peace.

The difficulty in the beginning time is that you go to a strange place with your two empty hands except of Order. However, you should not lose your heart because of that situation, but you should concentrate on your belief that besides the Sacerdotal Council's Order, the Supreme Being, Holy Mother and Divine Spirits also grant you a precious invisible treasure, so that you can use it when going to the local region for

your religious activity. That precious treasure is your ready virtue in your heart and when you go for religious service, the Divine Spirits will enlighten your wisdom realization to obtain the divine position.

I would like repeat the Holy Teaching of Eighth Immortal:

*"God supports behind the advice,
Create Divine throne, sprinkle drop of love"*

We recognize that the religious servant needs virtue, which is created by yourself. If you do, how will you have got it? How do you do to have virtue? You must obey the Sacerdotal Council to serve the religious activity in local region; must be close to the human beings in order harmonize and guide disciples, so that they know to lead a religious life to be correct to the Sacerdotal Council's disciplines stipulated; must keep the New Religious Code. If there is no dignitary Sacerdotal Council to remind, the human beings maybe loose way. Therefore, the Chief of religious District is appointed.

Today, you receiving the order are to suplemeente merit on the visible world. For virtue for divine throne, you were serving at the Holy See. Nowadays, you make merit and virtue in local region and when you get enough virtue and merit, you will not worry your divine throne without good result. In a recent day, you will start on journey and I have some advices that from the time of receiving the order to the time of seeing off, you remember to do the following points:

At Holy See: When receiving the Order, Laissez-Passer and luggage, the new Chief of religious District should remember to do things before leaving:

1. Wear the divine great Vestment and enter the Holy See to make service to the Supreme Being and Divine Spirits [The divine great Vestment is the color dress and head-dress of Student Priest].
2. Wear small Vestment and enter the Temple of Gratitude to make service to the Holy Mother and Nine Generations of Genealogical line and Seven Generations of Ancestor.
3. Wear the small Vestment to the Hộ Pháp's house to make service to Him [pray to be blessed for religious journey]
4. Wear the small Vestment to bow to the Cardinal to receive the teachings.

5. Wear small Vestment to the Principal Archbishops of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism to receive the instructions.
6. Wear small Vestment to bow to the Governor of Interior Affair Institute to hear more recommends and receive the official correspondence.
7. Wear small Vestment to bow the Governors and Dignitaries in your same Institute before the date of appointment in order to take leave of for religious journey [Small Vestment is white dress, black head-dress].

At Religious Province: When reaching the Religious Province, you wear the small Vestment to bow to the Chief of Religious Province and show the appointed Order and Religious Laissez-Passer to the Chief of Religious Province, then depends on him to recommend to the Religious District. Or the Chief of Religious Province may write the recommendation letter, so the former Chief of Religious District and all local followers for new receiving and entrustment obligation.

At the Religious District: The local religious Administration and all male and female followers hold the welcoming ceremony to welcome the new Chief of Religious District. If the ceremony sets up an incense table and solemn music, the Chief of Religious District has to do the following affairs:

You wear the Divine Great Vestment, white trousers, and white canvas shoes and always maintain the joyful face. The Order is folded and placed in an envelop put on a dish or pure paper box. The New Chief of Religious District carries it and put on the incense table, bows for three times, then stands at one side. An old Sub-Dignitary on behalf of all local followers kowtows at the incense table to express the attitude of welcoming the Order of Sacerdotal Council. After the Sub-Dignitary kowtows, the New Chief of Religious District formulates:

“Dear Dignitaries, Sub-Dignitaries, gentle brothers, sisters, friends and male female children of chorus of Religious Administration organ and Charity Body,... Today, as all followers of Religious District respects the Sacerdotal Council, you receive the Order and welcome me solemnly. I obey the Sacerdotal Council’s order to grant the favor to you, so that you reach the impregnated moral, excited spirit leading to many joyful results; you together enjoy the sprinkled blessing of Supreme Being, For me in the name of Chief of Religious District, I would like give a salute to all followers of Religious District and thank you bringing the joy and dear sentiment for me in the first meeting. Accordingly, please let us enter the sanctuary to kowtow the Supreme Being and listen to the Order”.

The New Chief of Religious District remembers to take shoes off and put outside doors, selects one old Sub-Dignitary in local region on behalf of all followers to take the Order box and follow the New Chief of Religious District. All disciples and male female children of chorus enter the sanctuary. The Order is placed on the table and all followers kowtow the Supreme Being.

After kowtowing, the Chief of Religious Province reads the Sacerdotal Council's Order for all followers and says the praise for solemn welcoming ceremony. He does not forget to advise the religious path for all followers, so that they will help the New Chief of Religious District. For next step, the New Chief of Religious District says:

“Dear brothers and sisters, the receiving Order ceremony with the New Chief of Religious District is held well. I feel so pleased for all local followers in the first meeting. Would you go back the building at back for mutual ethics discussion?”

When going the building at back, the New Chief of Religious District asks the local Sub-Dignitary if there is the Temple of Holy Mother. If it is built, the New Chief of Religious District has to say:

“Dear brothers and sisters, please wait me for some minutes because I have to kowtow the Holy Mother”

After that, you go back the office of Administration Section. When they deliver a welcoming lecture, the New Chief of Religious District has to listen by heart and pay attention to very speech of each person. Finally, the New Chief of Religious District has to make a response. It is good if the response was readily prepared. It is better if the response is done by improvising fluently:

“The brief is that I am appointed by the Sacerdotal Council to this Religious District to cooperate with your strength in harmony to adore the Supreme Being, to obey the True Doctrine and Law of Tây Ninh Holy See; then make affection in Religious gate and world aspect in mutual love in order to enjoy the joy together. My wish is that all local followers love me who have not enough virtue and talent, but it relies on many years of merits, the God grants me this Religious position. Today, I obey the order to go to the local region and rely on the Administration Section and ideas of brothers, sisters that you have ever done for the former Chief of Religious District, in order to cooperate to make a progress for this Religion of propagation”

It depends on specific situation to have different statement over the first welcoming ceremony. However, the New Chief of Religious District should not make a statement over 5 minutes in spite of delivering a speech or improvising in this first welcoming ceremony (long talk becomes bad). After that, he attends the tea party or informal

meal. The new Chief of Religious District should be careful about local followers feasting in the first ceremony and for next times.

As some people do not fast carefully because they still eat shrimp, crab, cuttlefish, and egg or drink alcohol..., the Chief of Religious District should eat all pure foods and avoid those mentioned above.

The necessary is to have to wear dress gracefully that he should remember the sentence: *“Not wish to be full for meals, not wish beautiful dress, not seek delicacy, and not seek good dress for wearing”*. He just has frugal meals, shows simple dress and moral attitude in order to show a sample to all local followers.

Obligation transferred and received:

After the welcoming ceremony, he needs to ask for idea of former Chief of Religious District to decide the date to make the minutes; then invites the Chief of Religious Province as the chairman and Administration Section and all local followers with the witness of Committee of Four Affairs transferring and receiving the obligation.

When transferring and receiving, he should pay attention to the financial records carefully, should ask for idea of Administration Section and Committee of Four Affairs about that finance if there is somebody having any query. If it happens, the former Chief of Religious District has to solve that matter, then transfer to the new Chief of Religious District. If there is no complaint or query, he will sign to receive it to be effective from the signing date. For the previous time from the signing date, the former Chief of Religious District blames for it. The statement is made into four same copies: one for new Chief of Religious District, one for former Chief of Religious District, one for Chief of Religious Province, one for Sacerdotal Council.

Visit the local government:

After transferring and receiving, he should count on the former Chief of Religious District to visit the District Chief, Police Chief, Chief of Health service, Security Chief, Canton Chief, and Commune Council,...In general, he should visit all local sections of government to express the close diplomacy of concord between the religious activity and secular one. When visiting the Chief of District and Police Chief, he should show the Religious issued , should show the Laissez-Passer of Sacerdotal Council to have the seal and signature of District Chief, Branch Chief and Chief of Commune Council, so that it will be confident when going to distant locations for religious obligation.

After visiting the government, visit religious disciple:

He should visit the honorary and retired Dignitaries of male and female, Dignitaries of Charity Body and Administration Section, elders. If it is possible, he should visit religious families. If he does not have enough time, he may cut down visit.

After visiting the religious villages, he continues to serve the religious works for one year, then sends the report to the Chief of Religious Province with the following contents (made into 03 copies: one for Chief of Religious Province, one sent to the Sacerdotal Council by the Chief of Religious Province, one kept at the Religious District):

1. How many religious villages are there in the Religious District?
2. Was the welcoming of Administration Section over the Chief of Religious District warm?
3. Did all local followers welcome him warmly?
4. How is the spirit of local followers? Are they loyal to the Tây Ninh Sacerdotal Council? Or do they trend to other one?
5. Are rites of wine about same to the New Religious Code?
6. About misfortune and sickness and aid over poor people, do the local followers unite to help them?
7. In the Religious District, how many Temples are there? List details of the Temples built by wood pillars, leaf wall, cement floor, tile ceiling,..... Whom were the Temples offered by? Or the followers bought themselves? List the area of Temples.
8. List total hierarchy of Sub-Dignitaries, Rites and Music section, Children of Chorus, elders, male and female.
9. Do the Rites and Music section, Acolytes, Institutes of Children of Chorus, and Children of Chorus offer the service solemnly in harmony as the Holy See?
10. How is the living standard of disciples? List careers.
11. What is the aspiration of all local disciples?
12. What is the aspiration of Chief of Religious District to help the religious district?

About monthly assembly:

1. Every month, the Administration section holds an assembly. The Chief of Religious District as the chairman plans the program to suggest the general interests for religious district by inviting the Administration section to unite to solve program. The Administration section has the authority to express their ideas within the moral circle. Whichever ideas, which are agreed by attendees, will be recorded in report to the Chief of Religious Province for approval. It is just issued and executed when it is approved officially.

2. Review the religious affairs in one month: Religious Order, Religious Law, Instruction, Circular, Correspondences sent by Sacerdotal Council and Chief of Religious Province. The Chief of Religious District reviews how the Administration section was executing.

3. Receive the Monthly report of Religious Villages: The Administration sections monthly send the monthly report to the Chief of Religious District to tell the detail religious activities of religious village. The important issue is reported separately. The normal issues are recorded in the monthly report.

After assemble of Administration section, the Chief of Religious District combines all monthly reports of religious villages to make the monthly report of Religious District., in order to send to the Chief of Religious Province. The important issue should be reported in clear detail (there is the form of monthly report for printing).

4. Method of making the report: should make one report for one issue. Should not make a report with many issues, so that the superior can be easy to consider and approve and keep documents. Should make the report in summary, should not make it lengthily. The summary requires the full content.

Method of making reports to the Sacerdotal Council:

When the Chief of Religious District makes detail report to the Sacerdotal Council, he has to count on the Chief of Religious Province to be approved and sent to the Sacerdotal Council. He must not send to the Sacerdotal Council by myself because that way shows cross the hierarchy with three errors:

- It is short of the Chief of Religious Province's witness that that report belongs to the Chief of Religious District.
- That affair is not passed from the Chief of Religious Province to report to the Sacerdotal Council.
- It is difficult to differentiate the unreal report with unreal seal and signature.

Pay attention: The report or document to the Sacerdotal Council must be approved by the Chief of Religious Province. If it misses that approval, the office of Interior Affairs Ministry will not accept it.

Witness method over document of Administration section:

If the Administration section submits whatever request of disciples, the Chief of Religious District should consider the request carefully, should consider if it support the persons in question, but it damages the religious fame. If it does not cause any damage, he approves it, then returns it to the person in question for execution. If it does not belong to his authority, let the Administration section solve the issue. That it about the local affairs. For essential affairs, he has to submit them to the Chief of Religious Province for consideration.

He should pay attention that the correspondence sent to the Chief of Religious Province must be considered carefully if it is worthy accepted for the person in question. It must be showed the date, seal and signature. He should not just sign without any comment because the Chief of Religious Province does not know the affair of person in question easily.

About witness, it contains three meanings:

1.) First case: The person in question is a disciple.

a). The Administration section gives a **witness** that they see and know the issue, which is same to the content in the correspondence of person in question. The Administration section gives a witness, a comment and submits to the Chief of Religious District.

b). The Chief of Religious District gives a **witness** that he sees that situation and gives a comment with seal and signature. The Chief of Religious District has to have a clear comment to submit to the Chief of Religious Province.

c). The Chief of Religious Province gives a witness that he confirms the signature and seal of Administration section and Chief of Religious District. He has to consider if the **witness** in reality is legal, then he submits to the Sacerdotal Council for approval. The word “reality” expresses that he knows the correspondence and request of Sub-Dignitary and Dignitary, but it does not belong to other outsiders.

2.) Second case: If the correspondence of person in question belongs to the Administration section sent to the Chief of Religious District, the Chief of Religious District must give a **witness** and send to the Chief of Religious Province. The Chief of

Religious Province has a **witness** and sends it to the Interior Affairs Ministry of Nine Divine Planes Palace.

3.) Third case: If the person in question is the Chief of Religious District sends the request to the Chief of Religious Province, the Chief of Religious Province gives a **witness** then sends it to the Interior Affairs Ministry of Nine Divine Planes Palace.

Should remember - First rank: CERTIFY.
that: - Second rank: WITNESS.
- Third rank: ATTEST.

Meaning: Comment and Approval:

- **Comment:** It means that the correspondence can be returned and issued, can be submitted to the highest superior for approval.
- **Approval:** The correspondence is submitted to highest superior, approved and returned to be issued.

CONCLUSION: For three certifying issues and two approval issues, the Chief of Religious District depends on specific situation for consideration.

For finance:

At the local Temples, the Administration section assigns the Committee of four affairs to help the religious activities of Temples. The Finance section keeps the local money such as the donation money for amending the Temple or supporting the departments...

The Chief of Religious District should not keep the local finance, but he only has the authority to observe and witness the receipts and expenses and to certify the donation money, so that the donation is delivered to the Finance section. Except for domination money offered to the Holy See, the Administration section makes a list clearly and submits to the Chief of Religious District; the Chief of Religious District must receive and keeps carefully to submit it to the Chief of Religious Province. If loss happens, the Chief of Religious District must be responsible for that loss.

Service:

Besides two ceremonies of the first day and fifteenth of lunar month and Feasts, the Chief of Religious District must attend the service at least of two services which are the service of 12am and another service that he can select by himself due to the specific situation. At night, he has much free time, therefore he should chant the

Maitreya Prayer to pray, so that the world reaches peace, humankind has the harmony and the Religious followers have full belief.

Absent from office:

When returning to the Holy See for service or submitting the religious administration correspondence, he has to get permission of Chief of Religious Province. After being permitted, he writes a commissioning letter for Sub-Dignitaries to solve daily issues of office for a determined period. When visiting the religious villages, he has to assign Sub-Dignitary to undertake the standing issues of office. He should not leave without Sub-Dignitary (his authority is responsible for solving common affairs. For the important affairs, he must wait the Chief of Religious District. If it is necessary, that affair must be submitted to the Chief of Religious Province)

The selection for a Secretary helping the document affair for the Chief of Religious District is done and elected by the Administration section. The Chief of Religious District with the role of chairman gives a witness in the election report and submits it to the Chief of Religious Province for approval.

In general, the Chief of Religious District must not be absent causelessly.

For sickness of disciples and non-believer:

With a physical body, nobody avoids four paths of misery (birth, oldness, sickness, death). The heavy obligation is for the Dignitaries of Great Way-Third Period-Universal Salvation, who have received the order of Supreme Being and Sacerdotal Council and they have to serve the Religion at local regions. Consequently, they have to be close to the humankind (general) to share misery and to be close to the Caodaists (particular). Thus, the obligation of Chief of Religious District has to go to patient's house to visit, solace, advise the patient and to seek physician for relative to look after patient when he knows the news. If the patient is alone and poor, he has to arrange the coreligionists to look after in shifts until the patient survives the illness. They should contribute service and fortune to help those people facing that hard situation (in spite of the religionist or non-religionist)

About funeral of religionist:

When getting the news of that a religionist dies in spite of a newborn baby, he also manages to let that soul receive the prayer of salvation fully and sees off that soul up to the grave due to the rites of Great Way-Third Period-Universal Salvation taught in the New Prayer.

If he knows the news, but he does not hold the salvation service for soul, the Chief of Religious District gets the defect about the aspect of salvation.

For funeral of non-religionist:

When knowing the news of died non-religionist such as officer, mandarin, public servant, elder, widow keeping virginity, poor and alone people,...the Chief of Religious District has to go attend the funeral with a visit payment of condolence and helps them due to the specific situation. If the bereaved obeys the Caodai law, adheres to the Caodaiism and sets up the Supreme Being altar, he has to organize the salvation funeral of Petition Ceremony to see off the corpse to the grave in order express the affection between the religionists and non-religionists because there is the harmony affection to make love and the love helps the mutual sympathy respect. By that way, we have chance to help the non-religionists guide them to adopt to the Caodai religion.

For misfortune of religionist and non-religionist:

When knowing that people face on a misfortune, he has to go to them to consider their situation, advise them and unite idea of Administration section to help them for their misfortune. Due to every situation, there is different help. In spite of religionist or non-religion such as widow, orphan who are miserable, poor, feeble, alone, sick...the Chief of Religious District has to makes effort with all local religionists to help them due to each situation.

For marriage of religionist:

The Chief of Religious District combines effort with the Administration section to share the joy of family of marriage. When making rites at the Temple or house, he should explain clearly the obligation of son, husband, wife to the bride and bridegroom that the man has to keep Three Moral Bonds and Five Constant Virtues and the womankind has to keep Three Womanly Objections and Four Womanly Virtures which are same to the ethics of Confucianism. He should also explain and give some historical examples to the bride and bridegroom, such as *“Origin gen under moon’s shadow, envelop hairs shadow by resignation to poor or rich conditiopho61iMarriage Prayer] and good sample of Tống Hoàng.*

Pay attention: The Chief of Religious District must not make the sacrament of marriage as Dignitaries do at the Holy See, but the prayer for two families of marriage is enough. For the Funeral and Marriage or offerings, he needs to advise them to select according to the New Religious Code in fast with no killing.

For ceremony vestment and religious vestment:

In the service to the Supreme Being, he wears the Heaven Vestment. In the service to the Holy Mother [Đức Phật Mẫu], he has to wear the white dress with black headdress. For ceremonies at the pagoda, temple, communal house in village, joss-house,... he wears the white dress with 9 buttons and a black headdress.

He has to wear the white dress with 9 buttons and a black headdress.

When attending the secular ceremony, he needs to wear dress tidily to keep the appearance of a local religious representative.

For kowtow to the died elder who is older:

Regardless of religious or secular position, he kowtows the elder in spite of male or female. He has to wear white dress with 9 buttons and a black headdress kowtow the coffin or tablet of death.

When going to the religionist's house, he has to wear white dress. In the office, he should not wear drawers, t-shirt.

Pay attention: He should not wear black dress in spite of going out for religious activity or staying at office. He should wear dress made by canvas to express the sparing character.

For attitude when receiving the Order and Religious Order

When receiving the Religious Order, Instruction, Teaching, Circular sent from the Sacerdotal Council or Chief of Religious Province, he must receive by two hands and put it on a dish or pure paper box put on altar in the house of Divinely Appointed Dignitaries, wears the white dress, back headdress with three times of bow to the Religious Order, Instruction, Teaching, Circular and opens to read it, in order to express the respect to the Sacerdotal Council and Chief or Religious Province. He should not wear short dress and open to read it immediately because he does not have the respect. In spite of staying along, he has to wear the white dress when reading the Holy Order, Religious Order,.....

For living standard demand of Chief of Religious District:

The Chief of Religious District should not request the local religionists to provide him more than daily expense, but he should maintain the living standard how to be equal to disciples or to be more economical. For spirit and morality, he has to maintain how

to be brighter and more steadfast than disciples. If the Chief of Religious District's living standard is luxurious, the disciples will compare and feel self-pity, Which status will make disciples gradually keep away from Chief of Religious District. By that way, it is very difficult to have close affection in guiding them on the religious path.

For reconciliation over human's heart:

When hearing that A censures B, the Chief of Religious District should not believe hurriedly, but he should consider carefully how the B's conduct is, to have an exact conclusion. He must remember that the right person gets hidden error and the wrong person also gets hidden right. The matter is juts different from many errors or less error. The revengeful distrust sometimes comes from a joke. It may come from the argument that both of them reckon he is right, therefore private envy happens.

If we want a heap of burning fire to be extinguished, we have to use the water. The Chief of Religious District is a drop of holy water to extinguish the burning fire of seven feelings of human beings. The Chief of Religious District seeks a condition to let them meet together and reconciles them by advising them that they should be resigned, should harmonize and forgive together to undertake the religious affairs. By that way, it helps to convert the human's heart from anger.

Pay attention: For two persons fighting together, if there is no third person as a moderator giving an advice, they cannot reach peace [although they do not feel angry, they still feel ashamed]. The third person is the elder or a person having a higher position because it is the psychology in spite of secular or religious aspect.

The Obligation of Chief of Religious District:

- Should avoid: Money, Glamour, Anger character.
- Should do the following issues:
 1. Help other people, sacrifice himself to bring interest to other people.
 2. Love people, wholeheartedly make people delivered from misery.
 3. Consider that all families of disciples are his family.
 4. The disciple's affair is his affair.
 5. The disciple's wife and children are his younger sister and grandchild.

It means that he has to unite with disciples to care the religious and secular affairs. Going to the local regions for religious service is your chance to make merit and virtue.

The Dignitary with a divine mission needs to cultivate character and practices the method of regenerating oneself to step on the third path of Great Way, in order to practice the moral spirit and execute the mission.

IN SUMMARY:

The Dignitary as the Chief of Religious District is the representative of Sacerdotal Council at the local region to receive the order to teach and guide the good for people. Therefore, for speech, conduct and behavior, the Chief of Religious District must be reserved in religious law to be worthy for the representative receiving the Sacerdotal Council's order.

Dear New Student Priest as the Chief of Religious District,

The divine throne is still waiting for your return. If you fulfill your mission according to the New Religious Law to be worthy under a religious instructor: the religious history raises your name and human beings glorify forever.

We pray that the Supreme Being [Đức Chí Tôn], Holy Mother [Đức Phật Mẫu] and divine Spirits will grant the blessing to you, will enlighten you wisdom with lucid spirit, will make your body have good health for your good journey to the local region as your wish.

World likes virtue, Religion love talent,
Virtue and talent united in many merit days

The Sacerdotal Council wishes that you will gain many good results in the religious journey.

Yours truly,

Written in the office of Interior Affair Ministry on 30th January Canh Tý year (26th February 1960)

Minister of Interior Affair Ministry
Bishop Ngọc Mỹ Thanh
(Sign and stamp)

Assistant of Interior Affair Ministry
Student Priest Ngọc Tịnh Thanh
(Sign and stamp)
