

# *Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels*



*Including the Refuge Commitments*

Refuge Master \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_

Refuge name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_



# Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels

## *A Short Daily Practice of Taking Refuge*

*How to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in order to be completely liberated from suffering and its causes.*

### *Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta*

I go for refuge until I am enlightened  
To the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly  
By my practice of giving and other perfections,  
May I become a buddha to benefit all sentient beings.

### *Prayer of the Four Immeasurables*

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were to abide  
in equanimity, free from hatred and attachment, not holding  
some close and others distant.

May they abide in equanimity  
I myself will cause them to abide in equanimity.  
Please, Guru-Deity, bless me to be able to do this.

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings had happiness  
and the causes of happiness.

May they have happiness and its cause.  
I myself will cause them to have these.  
Please, Guru-Deity, bless me to be able to do this.

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were free from suffering and its cause.

May they be free of suffering and its cause.

I myself will cause them to be free from suffering and its cause.

Please, Guru-Deity, bless me to be able to do this.

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were never separated from the happiness of higher rebirth and liberation.

May they never be separated from these.

I myself will cause them never to be separated from these.

Please, Guru-Deity, bless me to be able to do this.

## *Motivation for Life*

The purpose of my life is to free all sentient beings from every suffering and to lead them to happiness, especially the sublime peerless happiness of full enlightenment.

Since the enjoyments in my everyday life – every past, present, and future happiness, including enlightenment – are dependent on other sentient beings, the happiness of these numberless sentient beings depends on me.

If I generate loving kindness toward sentient beings, then all sentient beings will receive no harm from me and instead will have peace and success. Therefore, I am responsible for all sentient beings' happiness and peace.

I am a servant here to serve every sentient being without discriminating between those who harm and those who help, whatever they do.

For the success of this, I must achieve full enlightenment. Therefore, I am going to put all the actions of my body, speech, and mind in virtue so that I can be of the greatest benefit to all sentient beings, which means to achieve enlightenment as

quickly as possible. May all these actions not cause the slightest harm but bring only benefit to all sentient beings in the best way so that they, too, may as quickly as possible achieve enlightenment.

## *Dedication*

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It is best, if possible, to always dedicate the merit of any virtuous action right after doing it. If not, at least dedicate the merit of each day before going to bed. Dedicate your own past, present, and future merit and also that of the buddhas and bodhisattvas:

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Due to this merit, may I soon  
Attain the enlightened state of a Guru-Buddha,  
That I may be able to liberate  
All sentient beings from their sufferings.

May the precious bodhi mind  
Not yet born arise and grow.  
May that born have no decline  
But increase forever more.

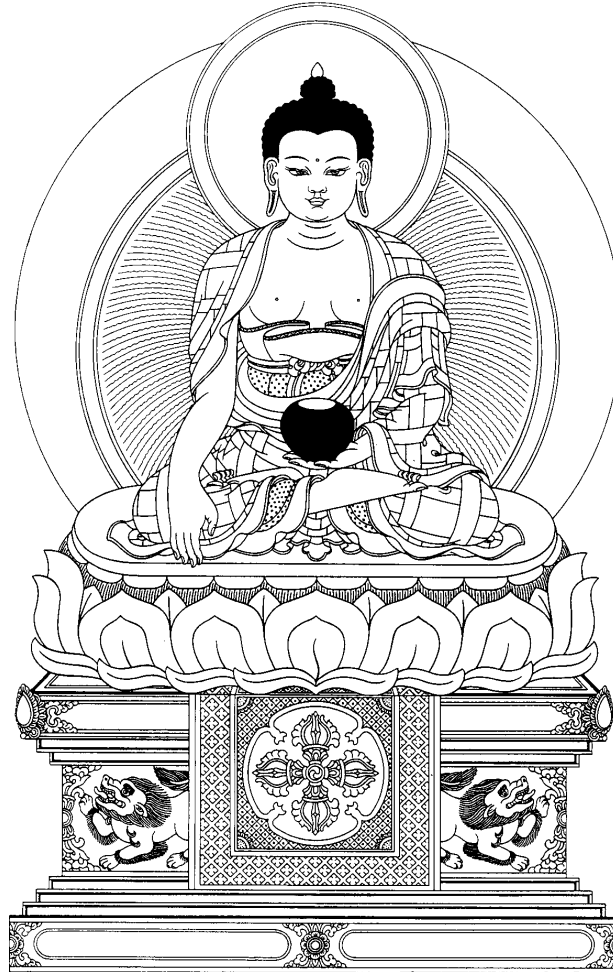
May sentient beings who have all been my mother and father  
be completely happy, and may the lower realms be forever  
empty.

May all the prayers of the bodhisattvas, in whatever places they  
live, be immediately fulfilled.

Whatever white virtues I have created, I dedicate as causes  
Enabling me to uphold the holy Dharma of scriptures and  
insights

And to fulfill without exception the prayers and deeds  
Of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times.

By the force of this merit may I never be parted  
In all my lives from the four wheels of the Mahayana vehicle,  
And may I reach the end of the journey along the paths  
Of renunciation, bodhichitta, the pure view, and the two stages  
of tantric practice.



*Shakyamuni Buddha*

# *The Commitments of Taking Refuge*

## *What Is To Be Avoided*

1. Having taken refuge in the Buddha, one should not take refuge from the depths of one's heart in worldly gods, such as Brahma and so on, and one should not prostrate to such objects. One should not entrust oneself from the depths of one's heart to non-virtuous friends or teachers of non-Buddhist teachings that have no supporting levels.
2. Having taken refuge in the Dharma, one should avoid harming any being, either directly by oneself, or indirectly by making others do it.
3. Having taken refuge in the Sangha, one should avoid entrusting oneself to and keeping company with negative friends and followers of hedonism.

## *What Is To Be Practiced*

1. Having taken refuge in the Buddha, with a mind of respect toward those gone to bliss (the buddhas), one should regard even statues as being actual buddhas and should prostrate and pay respect to them.

One should avoid showing disrespect to them by, for example, placing them on the bare ground, judging them according to their material value, or discriminating between them, saying that some are good and others bad.



2. Having taken refuge in the Dharma, one should pay homage and respect by generating the recognition of all scriptural texts, or even just one syllable of the teachings, as being the actual rare, sublime Dharma.

One should avoid placing texts on the bare ground, regarding them as material objects, using them as security for a loan, or carrying them together with one's shoes.

3. Having taken refuge in the Sangha, one should regard even one member of the Sangha as being the actual Sangha.

One should avoid discriminating within the Sangha community but should have equal respect for all.

One should train well in all the advice concerning what is to be practiced, such as not even stepping over pieces of monastic robe or throwing them in dirty places, but instead placing them in clean places.

## ***General Advice***

In general, there are four points to the practice of Dharma.

1. One should rely upon holy beings, listen to the holy Dharma, and after correctly comprehending, follow the Dharma and practice it.
2. One should not let one's senses become excited (that is, one should control the senses when in danger of creating negative karma), and take as many vows as one is capable of keeping.
3. One should have a compassionate attitude towards sentient beings.
4. When eating or drinking, one should make effort to offer to the rare sublime ones (the Triple Gem); one should train well in

the refuge precepts, including exerting oneself to make offerings to the Triple Gem.

Every morning and evening, one should make three prostrations to the Triple Gem.

## *The Lay Vows*

The five vows to be kept by a full upasika (Tib. *ge nyen*, “nearing virtue”) are to avoid:

1. killing
2. taking what has not been given
3. sexual misconduct
4. telling lies
5. drinking alcohol

The root vows are the first four: avoiding killing, taking what has not been given, sexual misconduct, and telling lies. The fifth vow of avoiding alcohol protects the other vows from being broken, since when one is intoxicated, it is more difficult to control one’s actions. This vow protects the others like a fence around a field of crops.

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These vows must be taken as the second part of the refuge ceremony. If the lama or teacher giving refuge includes this section, they will explain that you may take as many of the vows as one likes and is able to keep. With the lay refuge vows, you are not required to take all five, but should take as many as you are able to keep, due to the benefit of keeping vows.

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## *Losing the Vow from the Root*

The four root vows can be broken from the root in the following ways. The vow is lost from the root and so should be taken again if one transgresses any of the four root vows by:

1. killing a human being;
2. stealing an object that is valuable to another person;
3. engaging in sexual misconduct; that is, engaging in sexual activities with another's partner;
4. telling a supreme lie; that is, pretending one has attained realizations of the grounds and paths even though one has not.

## *Receiving a Downfall*

Otherwise, one does not lose the vow from the root but receives a downfall, which must be confessed, if one transgresses the vows by:

1. killing a non-human, such as an animal;
2. stealing an object of no value;
3. engaging in sexual conduct at a holy place; at a special time (for example, on full moon day, on the eighth day of the lunar calendar, on Buddha's special holy days, etc.); or engaging in sexual activity whilst living in the one-day eight precepts (nyen ne, "near abiding");
4. telling ordinary lies;
5. drinking alcohol.

Therefore, one should confess and abstain precisely, which is the method of purification.

One should protect well and tightly with the mind the six remaining non-virtuous actions, which are similar in part to the previous negative karmas (that is, close to those heavy nega-

tive karmas), by avoiding slander, harsh words, gossip, covetousness, harmful intention, and wrong views.

## ***Benefits of Protecting the Vows***

The benefits of protecting the vows in this way are:

- you will not fall to the suffering lower realms (hells, animals, or hungry ghosts);
- temporarily, you will continuously achieve the body of a deva or human;
- ultimately, you will achieve the state of liberation.

Furthermore, the virtue of protecting these five vows increases constantly, even while one is asleep or unconscious.

Also, in addition to these, the Founder (Guru Shakyamuni Buddha) will always think of you; the gods (protectors beyond sorrow, worldly protectors, devas) will praise and protect you; non-humans cannot harm you; your qualities will increase limitlessly; and at the time of death you will die without regret.

By avoiding killing, you will have a long life in all future lifetimes.

By avoiding taking what has not been given, in future lives you will have great wealth.

By avoiding telling ordinary lies, in the future others will not cheat and blame you.

By avoiding sexual misconduct, in future lives you will meet with good friends and a perfect partner who is harmonious exactly according to your wishes.

By avoiding alcohol, you will have a sharp and clear mind.

It is said in the sutra *The Lamp of the Moon*:

If, with a mind of devotion, one makes offerings of umbrellas, fan-flags, rows of lights, food, and drink to as many billions of buddhas as there are grains of sand in the River Ganges for tens of millions of eons, the merit of this can in no way compare with that of a person who keeps just one precept even for just one day at the time when the holy Dharma, the teaching of the One Gone to Bliss, is perishing.

# *The Prayer of St. Francis of Assísí*

*(with additions from Lama Zopa Rinpoche in brackets)*

Lord [Buddha], make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is discord, unity.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is error, truth.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is sadness, joy.

Where there is darkness, light.

O divine master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled [happiness  
for the ego] as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

It is in dying [having practiced] that we are born to eternal life  
[from happiness to happiness up to full enlightenment].

*May all beings effortlessly attain the transcendent bliss-  
ful state of omniscient buddhahood.*

**Colophon:**

Originally compiled and translated in Singapore by the students of Amitabha Buddhist Center on the advice of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, with some additional clarifications on the basis of the great enlightened Pabongkha's advice.

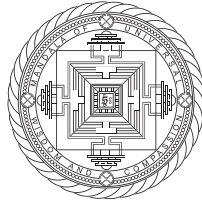
It was lightly edited for inclusion in the prototype FPMT Prayer Book in January 1999 and has been further revised for publication by Venerable Constance Miller, FPMT Education Department, July 2000, with some additions by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Further edited, clarified, and reformatted by Venerable Gyalten Mindrol, FPMT Education Department, December 2005, September 2008, August 2009.

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Thangka of Shakyamuni Buddha on p. 3 © Jane Seidlitz. Used with permission.

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Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition  
1632 SE 11th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97214 USA  
(503) 808-1588

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