

# **TAKING REFUGE IN THE TRIPLE JEWELS AND OBSERVING THE FIVE MORAL PRECEPTS**

## **OFFERING INCENSE TO THE BUDDHA**

- Chanting the Prajna Paramita Sutra

## **TAKING REFUGE IN THE TRIPLE JEWELS CEREMONY**

- *Opening speech*

Today, you pledge to Take Refuge in the Triple Jewels and to uphold the Five Precepts of the Buddhists. This is a resolution made with the aspiration to transform your life. It is therefore essential that you understand the essence of Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewels and Observing the Five Precepts.

What does “To take Refuge in The Triple Jewels” mean?

To “Take Refuge In” is to return and rely. Like a person, immersed in the darkness, returns and relies on the light; from a wandering life, he returns and relies on a peaceful dwelling; or like a person, drifting on the stormy sea, returns and relies on a safe shore.

Amidst this life, impermanent and volatile, full of ravaging changes, where may mankind find a peaceful place to return and rely on? To this question, a Buddhist answer is to return and rely on the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

To return and rely on the Buddha! The Buddha is the embodiment of immense compassion, with perfect wisdom; He is the foremost teacher who shows us the path of emancipation and enlightenment.

To return and rely on the Dharma (Buddha’s teachings)! The Dharma is the teaching of the Truth, a path for us to realize the right

understanding, so as to be liberated from suffering, to attain Nirvana and tranquility.

To return and rely on the Sangha! Sangha is the community that lives in harmony and awareness; together they cultivate to realize Emancipation and Enlightenment. They are the teachers who give truthful guidance, the noble friends who help us walk the path of emancipation and enlightenment.

As expounded previously, The Buddha, The Dharma, and The Sangha, are the Triple Jewels of the external essence. We rely on the external essence to return to our true inner nature. Our inner Buddha is enlightenment. Our inner Dharma is emancipation. Our inner Sangha is harmony. Hence, in a more reflective meaning, to Take Refuge in the Buddha is to relinquish a life of delusions, and to return to true awareness and understanding; to Take Refuge in the Dharma is to relinquish a life of suffering, full of fetters, to return to self-liberation and happiness; to Take Refuge in the Sangha is to relinquish a life filled with chaos and conflict, to return to inner harmony. We can truthfully say that to Take Refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha is to relinquish those matters that bring suffering, so as to return to our truthful and divine inner nature.

With such understanding, Taking Refuge in the Buddha is to never again accept refuge in deities, ghosts, devil, or animals; Taking Refuge in the Dharma is to never again accept refuge in harmful beliefs; Taking Refuge in the Sangha is to never again accept refuge in evil friends.

It should be understood, that once a person has Taken Refuge in The Triple Jewels, that person becomes an empowered Buddhist, a child of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

With complete clarification and readiness, you are now affirming your commitment by participating in the “Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewels” ceremony.

– *Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewels Ceremony*

First and foremost, please mindfully reflect on all the transgressions that you have committed so as to purify your heart and mind. Please repeat the following affirmations after me:

**I, ..... (state your full name) have committed immeasurable transgressions. Today, before the Triple Jewels, I solemnly vow to return to my true nature. (3 times)**

You have self-reflected, and with pure mind, you pledge to Take Refuge in the Triple Jewels. Please repeat the following affirmations after me:

- **I wish to take refuge in the Buddha, the one who shows me the way in this life. (3 times)**
- **I wish to take refuge in the Dharma, the way of understanding and of love. (3 times)**
- **I wish to take refuge in the Sangha, the community that lives in harmony and awareness. (3 times)**
- **I Take Refuge in the Buddha, vowing to never again accept refuge in deities, ghosts, devil, or animals.**
- **I Take Refuge in the Dharma, vowing to never again accept refuge in harmful beliefs.**
- **I Take Refuge in the Sangha, vowing to never again accept refuge in evil friends.**
- **I have Taken Refuge in the Buddha, I am now a Buddha's disciple.**
- **I have Taken Refuge in the Dharma, I am now a Dharma's disciple.**
- **I have Taken Refuge in the Sangha, I am now a Sangha's disciple.**

**OBSERVING THE FIVE MORAL PRECEPTS CEREMONY**

– *Opening Speech*

You have taken refuge in the Triple Jewels, and become a bona fide Buddhist. It is essential that you observe the five fundamental moral precepts of a Buddhist.

Those five fundamental moral precepts are:

1. The first precept, “**Not To Kill**”, means not to induce harm to the right to life of all living beings. We shall not kill or entice others to kill; we shall not glorify the killing of beings, wherever the occurrence may be. On the contrary, we should cultivate love and compassion to cherish and protect all lives.
2. The second precept, “**Not To Steal**”, means not to take what is not given, not to use wrongful means to benefit ourselves. We shall not steal, use wrongful means, or entice others to steal, to use wrongful means; we shall not glorify the act of stealing, wherever the occurrence may be. On the contrary, we should cultivate generosity, and contribute to the needy.
3. The third precept, “**Not To Engage In Sexual Misconduct**”, means not to engage in sinful relationship, to respect our own spouse as well as those of others. On the contrary, we should nurture a wholesome conjugal bond, so as to protect the happiness of our family and that of others’.
4. The fourth precept, “**Not To Lie**”, means not to resort to lies or falsehood, so as to injure others. On the contrary, we should convey the truth to bring about happiness and trust to others.
5. The fifth precept, “**Not To Use Alcohol or Other Intoxicants**”, means not to use harmful substances; not to emerge ourselves in a degenerate life style. On the contrary, we should adopt a wholesome life style, so as to attain equanimity for our whole being.

You should be aware that those five precepts are **not** commandments; they are values which guide mankind to a life of good moral conduct, to forsake evil and to embrace goodness, so as to bring happiness to ourselves, our family, and society.

Those five precepts are not fetters; they are but means of liberating ourselves from wrongful acts. Facing the moral and spiritual crises of the current materialistic societies, those five precepts are the Buddhist's answers to help mankind to save themselves, their families and their societies to transcend all tragedies and suffering. These are the first steps towards our spiritual life, to bring forth the serenity of the mind, and to develop true wisdom.

– *The Five Moral Precepts Ceremony*

With complete clarification and readiness, you are now affirming your commitment to observe “The Five Moral Precepts”. Please repeat after me the following vows:

- 1. From now until the end of my life, I vow to observe the precept of not killing.**
- 2. From now until the end of my live, I vow to observe the precept of not stealing.**
- 3. From now until the end of my life, I vow not to engage in sexual misconduct.**
- 4. From now until the end of my life, I vow not to lie.**
- 5. From now until the end of my live, I vow not to use harmful substances.**

You have pledged to undertake those five noble precepts; please mindfully observe them. Do not violate them! Do not violate them!

– **TRASFERRING MERITS**