

# Self-Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels

Buddhist True Enlightenment Practitioners Association, October 2023

Procedure for Self-Taking the Three Refuges  
(Please make vows in front of a Buddha statue.)

## 1. Prostrate yourself before the Buddha and beseech the precept teacher— to preside over the ceremony by taking His position (offering incense).

Namo Fundamental Teacher, Buddha Śākyamuni [Repeat three times, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

## 2. Buddhist Incense Anthem (with palms joined):

**(Recite)** Awareness has a pristine nature, it is quiescent, illuminated, true, and permanent.

One has been deluded by ignorance but now gets enlightened to the distinctively manifesting one, thanks to the Three Jewels as our navigation.

The mind is fragrant, like this flower petal.

Let me worship and take refuge to the king of all dharmas.

Namo Yún lái jí<sup>1</sup> Bodhisattva Mahasattvas [Recite three times.]

## 3. Recite the Heart Sutra once, with palms joined.

Bodhisattva Guanzizai, in practicing the profound *prajñāpāramitā*, observes and perceives that the five aggregates are all empty, thus transcending all suffering and distress. Sariputra! Form is none other than emptiness, and emptiness is none other than form. Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form. The same is true of sensation, perception, formation, and consciousness. Sariputra! All phenomena are emptiness-appearances, neither arising nor ceasing, neither defiled nor immaculate, and neither increasing nor decreasing. Therefore, in emptiness, there is no form, sensation, perception, formation, or consciousness; no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mental faculty; no form, sound, odor, taste, touch, or mental object; no element of eye consciousness; all the way through to no element of mental consciousness. There is

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<sup>1</sup> The bodhisattva-mahasattvas joining the Great Gathering were like swarming clouds.

no ignorance or the ending of ignorance, all the way through to no old age and death or the ending of old age and death. There is no suffering, accumulation, cessation, or path. There is no wisdom or attainment. As there is no attainment, the bodhisattva's mind, relying on *prajñāpāramitā*, is free from worries and obstructions. Without worries and obstructions, it has no fear, leaves delusions far behind, and attains the ultimate nirvana. All Buddhas of the three times attain *anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi* through reliance on *prajñāpāramitā*. Hence, *prajñāpāramitā* is the incredible mantra, the illuminating mantra, the unsurpassed mantra, and the peerless mantra. It can remove all suffering; it is genuine and not illusory. For these reasons, the *prajñāpāramitā* mantra is delivered. Thus, recite it as follows: "*Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā!*"

**4. Prostrate yourself three times before the ultimate bodhisattva sangha who can verify your refuges, Bodhisattva Xiao Pingshi.**

[Recite the following with tall kneeling and palms joined:]

I, (state your name), pray for the venerable to have mercy on me and be my precept teacher for three refuges. Relying on the venerable one, I am able to take the triple refuges and become a disciple of the Three Jewels. Relying on the venerable one's mercy and compassion!

[Prostrate yourself before the Buddha.]

**5. Beseech the noble Saints to verify the three refuges for us.**

Greeting with incense and flowers, and inviting with incense and flowers, disciple (state your name) focuses single-mindedly and respectfully beseeches the Saints to be present at the site:

The Sahā founder—our Fundamental Teacher—Buddha Śākyamuni; Buddha Amitābha of the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss; Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru of the Eastern Pure Land of Lapis Lazuli; the next decent Buddha, Maitreya; and all Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions, I beseech your radiant compassion to embrace and illuminate me. Have mercy on me, and grant my request: Verify my three refuges!

[Repeat three times, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

Greeting with incense and flowers, and inviting with incense and flowers, disciple (state your name) focuses single-mindedly and respectfully beseeches the following to be present at the site:

Vinaya Piṭaka of the Great and Lesser Vehicles; five sections and three categories of

pure precepts; the *prātimokṣa* of the Great and Lesser Vehicles; the sutras of the Three Vehicles; the twelve divisions of teachings; the correct paths of sound-hearers, solitary realizers, and bodhisattvas; the definitive true Dharma of the Path to Buddhahood; and the extremely profound Dharma Treasures of the mundane and transmudane dharmas.

I beseech the light of the Noble Truths to thoroughly illuminate us, and I focus single-mindedly on taking refuge in and prostrating myself before the Dharma Treasures.

[Repeat three times, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

Greeting with incense and flowers, and inviting with incense and flowers, disciple (state your name) focuses single-mindedly and respectfully beseeches the following to be present at the site:

Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī; Bodhisattva Avalokitêśvara; Bodhisattva Samantabhadra; Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta; countless Great Bodhisattvas with pure practices; Venerable Upāli, who participated in the compilation of the Vinaya; and all Buddhist patriarchs of ancient India and China.

May I follow this vow, and may your radiant compassion embrace and illuminate us: Verify my three refuges!

[Repeat three times, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

Greeting with incense and flowers, and inviting with incense and flowers, disciple (state your name) focuses single-mindedly and respectfully beseeches the following to be present at the site:

The celestial beings who participated in the light ceremony, Bodhisattva Skanda Saṃghârāma, the four lords of Brahma and Indra, the eight classes of celestial beings, all Great Dharma-protectors, diamond guardian warriors, deity-kings who protect the precepts, and all spirits and ghosts who protect the Dharma.

May I follow this vow, and may you be present at the Bodhimanda to supervise and protect us!

[Repeat three times, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

## **6. Repentance and Purification.**

All unwholesome acts I have ever committed,

Arise from the beginningless craving, aversion, and delusion.

Those acts are generated by the karma pertaining to the body, speech, and mind, and now, I repent for all of them.

[Prostrate yourself once after every sentence.]

### **7. Taking the Three Refuges (Karma).**

Disciple (state your name) takes refuge in all Buddhas, who have attained the supreme and perfect enlightenment, and in the World-Honored Ones, who have attained perfect virtues and wisdom.

I take refuge in the Fundamental Teacher, Buddha Śākyamuni!

I take refuge in Buddha Vairocana, the pure Dharma-body of Buddha Śākyamuni!

I take refuge in Buddha Rocana, the perfect reward-body of Buddha Śākyamuni!

I take refuge in all Buddhas who abide permanently in the worlds of the ten directions!

After taking refuge in all Buddhas, I will never take refuge in any belief of non-Buddhists.

[Recite three times with palms joined, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

Disciple (state your name) takes refuge in the ultimate and correct dharma and in the World-Honored One's correct teachings.

I take refuge in the shared teachings of liberation in the Three Vehicles.

I take refuge in the perfect Path to Buddhahood of the Great Vehicle.

I take refuge in the correct meanings expounded in the sutras on the definitive teachings.

I take refuge in the Buddha Dharma abiding in the worlds of the ten directions.

After taking refuge in the Dharma, I will never take refuge in any belief of non-Buddhists.

[Recite three times with palms joined, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

Disciple (state your name) takes refuge in the saints and sages of *Mahāyāna* sangha in Buddhism and in *Mahāyāna* bodhisattva sangha with correct views.

I take refuge in the ultimate bodhisattva sangha who have realized the Ultimate Reality.

I take refuge in something-to-learn bodhisattva sangha with correct views.

I take refuge in all ultimate bodhisattva sangha in the worlds of the ten directions.

After taking refuge in the sangha, I will listen to them and accept their instructions, and I will never comply with any non-Buddhists teachings.

[Recite three times with palms joined, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

## **8. Make vows to faithfully accept the four indestructible faiths.**

Disciple (state your name) takes refuge in the Buddha from now to the infinite future lives and will never fall into the destination of hells.

Disciple (state your name) takes refuge in the Dharma from now to the infinite future lives and will never fall into the destination of hungry ghosts.

Disciple (state your name) takes refuge in the Sangha from now to the infinite future lives and will never fall into the destination of animals.

[Recite three times with palms joined, and prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha.]

However innumerable sentient beings may be, I vow to save them all.

However inexhaustible afflictions may be, I vow to eradicate them all.

However immeasurable the teachings may be, I vow to study them all.

However difficult the unsurpassed Path to Buddhahood may be, I vow to complete it.

[Prostrate yourself once after each sentence before the Buddha.]

## **9. Self-Taking the Three Refuges.**

I self-take refuge in the Buddha, and I hope that all sentient beings will understand and realize the Great Path and bring forth the bodhi mind.

I self-take refuge in the Dharma, and I hope that all sentient beings will delve deeper into the treasury of the scriptures so that their wisdom will be like the ocean.

I self-take refuge in the Sangha, and I hope that all sentient beings will rule the masses without any obstruction.

[Prostrate yourself once after each sentence before the Buddha.]

## **10. Statement of Dedication of Merits.**

Taking the three refuges is an excellent meritorious process!

I dedicate all these boundless and excellent merits and virtues, and I hope that all sentient beings who are drowning within the stream of transmigration can be quickly reborn in the fields of Infinite-Light Buddhas.

Take refuge in all Buddhas in the ten directions and three time periods, and in all Great Bodhisattvas!

Take refuge in the Great *prajñāpāramitā*!

[Prostrate yourself once before the Buddha.]

**11. The End.**

**[Prostrate yourself three times before the Buddha statue.]**

