

Refuge and Bodhicitta

I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Assembly of the Excellent Ones until enlightenment is gained. Through the virtue of practising generosity and the other perfections may I attain buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.

[Recite the above three times.]

ACCUMULATING MERIT

In order to grasp this precious mind, to the Tathagatas and to the sacred Dharma that stainless jewel, and to the offspring of the Buddha those oceans of good qualities, I sweetly offer:

As many flowers and fruits as there are, and all the kinds of medicines that there are, and whatever jewels there are in the world, and whatever pure and pleasing water there is; and

Jewelled mountains and similarly forest groves, quiet and joyous, and creepers bedecked with adorning flowers, and trees whose branches bow down with good fruit; and

Fragrances of the celestial and other realms, and incense, wish-fulfilling trees, and trees of jewels, harvests appearing without cultivation and everything else worthy of offering as ornaments; and

The wonderfully pleasing cry of wild geese, and all such gifts which belong to no one, reaching to the very limit of the infinitely vast realm of the sky:

REQUESTING ACCEPTANCE

Imagining all these, I offer them to the Buddhas, the most excellent of beings, together with their offspring, the Bodhisattvas. May these compassionate ones, the excellent sites of good qualities, think kindly of me and accept my offerings.

I am without merit and quite destitute and have no other wealth to offer. Therefore, benefactors, you who think of the welfare of others, please accept these offerings for my sake.

OFFERING ONESELF

To the Victors and their offspring, I offer all my bodies, completely and forever. Most excellent heroic beings, please accept me fully! I shall be your devoted servant.

BENEFITS OF THEIR CARE

Through being completely under your care, I become freed from fear of phenomenal existence and can act for the benefit of beings. I turn away completely from my former unwholesome behaviour. Moreover, in future I will not do anything unwholesome.

TAKING REFUGE

Indestructible Enlightenment. From this time on and in all our future lives until enlightenment is attained I and all beings, as many as would equal the extent of the sky, all of whom have been my own mother in my countless past lives, go for refuge to our reverend root guru and to the glorious holy gurus of the lineage. We go for refuge to the hosts of

path deities in the mandalas. We go for refuge to the most perfect Buddha. We go for refuge to the most excellent Dharma. We go for refuge to the pure Sangha.

[Recite this Taking Refuge three times.]

To the Buddha, Dharma and the best Assembly I go for refuge until enlightenment. By the merit arising from generosity and the other transcendent qualities I will gain Buddhahood in order to benefit all those wandering in samsara.

With the desire and intention to take all beings out of samsara, until full enlightenment is gained I ceaselessly go to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha for refuge.

Working for the sake of beings, with discerning wisdom and kindness imbuing my diligence, I will stay close to countless Buddhas and develop completely enlightened mind.

May all sentient beings have happiness and the cause of happiness. May all sentient beings be freed from suffering and the cause of suffering. May all sentient beings never be separated from the happiness that is free of suffering. May all sentient beings abide in equanimity free from cherishing friends and relatives and being dismissive of strangers and enemies.

The vast foundation is completely free from small stones and such irritants. Made from bedurya, it is smooth and flat like the palm of the hand, and is a truly pleasant environment.

Most perfect Buddha, you are the benefactor of all beings without exception, the god who defeats the very dangerous hosts of demons. You know all things without exception just as they are. Please come here with your entourage.

Most perfect Buddha, for innumerable aeons you purified your character in order to care for wandering beings and you completed the intention of your vast aspiration. Now, as you wish to benefit beings, please effortlessly arise from the palace of all-encompassing space and, displaying the blessing of diverse miracles, please come here with your entire retinue in order to take limitless sentient beings out of samsara.

REFUGE VOW

*All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas please listen to me! Teacher, please listen to me! From this time on in all my future lives, in as many as it takes to reach full enlightenment, I (... **say own name**...), go for refuge to the Buddha, supreme among humans; go for refuge to the Dharma free from desire, the best of all paths, go for refuge to the Sangha, the best of assemblies.*

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, Gurus, Path Deities and Dakinis, please hear me! From today, in all my lives for as long as enlightenment is not gained, to Bhagawan Buddha, the chief of all humans, to the holy Dharma of relative and absolute truth, peaceful and free of desire, to all the Sangha of great Bodhisattvas, the best assembly, I go for refuge with genuine devotion.

[Say this Refuge Vow three times]

[Holding to the firm intention to abandon the ten unvirtuous actions listed below, recite as follows:]

I pray that my unfailing refuge, the Three Jewels will be attentive to me here and now.

Before the noble Three Jewels with sincere faith and my body, speech and mind, I abandon harming others and will now practise only virtue.

Killing, taking what is not given and immoderate sexual activity – these three sins of the body I completely give up and firmly decide and promise to practise the three virtuous activities of the body.

Lying, calumny, rough speech and worthless idle talk – these four sins of speech I completely renounce and firmly decide and promise to practise the four virtuous activities of speech.

Covetousness, malice and wrong views – these three sins of the mind I completely renounce and firmly decide and promise to practise the three virtuous activities of mind.

Taking the Bodhisattva Vows

Teacher, please hear me! Just as in previous times the Tathagatas, Arhats, supreme and complete Bhagawan Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas firmly staying on the great Stages, when they first began their careers, gave rise to the altruistic intention to gain the unexcelled supreme and complete great enlightenment, now, in the same way, I [...say own name...] also request from the teacher the raising of the altruistic intention to gain the unsurpassed supreme and complete great enlightenment.

When merely the thought of helping others is more excellent than the worship of the Buddhas, it is unnecessary even to mention the greatness of striving for the happiness and welfare of all beings without exception.

Developing the Bodhicitta of Aspiration

Unfailing Three Jewels, please pay heed to me! From now on, in all my lives until enlightenment is gained, I (...say own name ...), will fully develop the attitude of a mother to her children towards the beings who move in samsara, all of whom have been my own mother in my countless past lives. Then I will bring out all those beings who have not yet come out of samsara, and I will liberate all those who are not free, and I will inspire and help all those who are without hope and confidence. In order to do this I give rise to the altruistic aspiration towards the most excellent Enlightenment.

All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas staying in the ten directions, please pay heed to me. Teacher, please pay heed to me. In all my previous lives, I (...say own name...), by generosity, by morality, and by meditation have generated merit, and also by encouraging others to practise virtue, and by rejoicing in the virtue done by others. I will now make use of all this merit. Just as the earlier Thus Gone, Victors, supreme complete and most perfect Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas firmly staying on the Great Stages, did, at the beginning of their spiritual careers, raise the altruistic intention to gain the unsurpassed, supreme and complete great enlightenment, so in the same way, from this time on in all my lives until enlightenment is gained by all beings, I (...say own name...) also, will bring out all those beings who have not yet come out of samsara, and I will free all those who are not yet freed, and I will give hope and confidence to those in whom inspiration is lacking, and I will cause to pass from suffering all those who have not completely gone from suffering. In order to do this I raise the altruistic intention to gain the supreme and complete great enlightenment.

The Actual Practice

[The disciple who wishes to take the vow committing them to the actual practice of manifesting bodhicitta should engage as follows:]

The teacher says, “Good person called [...say your name...] do you wish to receive from this Bodhisattva called [...teacher’s name...] the vows of the training of all the Bodhisattvas of the past and all their moral disciplines, and the vows of the training of all the Bodhisattvas of the future and all their moral disciplines, and the vows of the training of all the Bodhisattvas who currently reside in all the realms in the ten directions of the world and all their moral disciplines, all that was trained in by all the previous Bodhisattvas, and all that will be trained in by all the future Bodhisattvas, and all that are being trained in by all the Bodhisattvas currently residing in the realms in the ten directions of the world, all the moral practices of the Bodhisattvas, their moral practices of vows, their moral practices of accumulating virtuous Dharmas, and their moral practices of benefitting beings? Do you wish to receive this?”

[The disciple is asked this three times]

[The disciple who wishes to receive them **replies “Yes, I do” three times**]

Unfailing Three Jewels, please pay heed to me! Just as all the perfect Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and previously passed beyond Victors stay firmly in their vows, in the same way I, (...say own name...), from today on in all my lives for as long as samsara is not emptied, for the sake of benefitting all beings by liberating them, I will raise the unsurpassed bodhicitta of engagement and will train in the practice of the six transcendent qualities of generosity, ethical discipline, patience, diligence, concentration and wisdom.

Developing diligence in order to liberate all beings without exception, I will maintain the three kinds of morality: of vows, of virtue, of benefitting others. In myself I raise the altruistic intention to gain the most excellent enlightenment. Then all beings without exception who have not yet come out of the three worlds of samsara, I will take out and who have not been freed, I will free. Those who are without hope and confidence I will help and encourage, and I will establish all beings on the stage of unsurpassed nirvana.

Developing the Absolute Bodhicitta

Unfailing Three Jewels, please pay heed to me! I and all limitless sentient beings filling the sky, are, from the very beginning, essentially Buddha. The full presence of knowing that this is how we are, reveals the mind as limitless perfect awakening.

PURE INTENTION

Just as the earlier Buddhas developed in their hearts the intention to gain enlightenment for the sake of others and pursued the training of the bodhisattvas, progressing through the stages of the path, I also in order to bring benefit to beings, raise and develop the altruistic intention towards enlightenment and like the Buddhas will follow this training, practising each of its stages.

Now, at this time, my life is fruitful. I have truly attained human existence. Today I am born in the Buddha's family. I have become a bodhisattva, a child of the Buddhas.

From now on I must only practise activity which is in harmony with my new family so that this faultless, reverend family does not become spoiled by my actions.

Today, before all the Buddhas I invite all beings to be my guests until they reach Buddhahood. Therefore, may the gods, asuras and all beings be happy!

This precious, excellent altruistic intention towards enlightenment, may it arise in those in whom it has not yet arisen. May it not deteriorate in those in whom it has arisen. May it increase ever more.

Never being separated from the altruistic intention towards enlightenment, and staying true to the conduct of a bodhisattva, may I be completely held by all the Buddhas. May I abandon all karmic activities arising due to the obstructing demons.

Whenever I am glad I will dedicate that joy to the happiness of all beings – may their happiness fill the sky! Whenever I get trouble I will take the suffering of all beings as my own burden – may the oceans of suffering become dry!

May all my virtuous actions quickly bring all beings in the world to enlightenment. In order to benefit beings I will teach the Dharma and thus free all beings from the many sorrows that oppress them.