

Contemplating the Refuge and Bodhisattva Vows

Saturday & Sunday, July 16 & 17 at Kunzang Palchen Ling & Livestreamed



Illustration from Wikipedia

Refuge Vow

- English translation by Lama Yeshe (Thank you!)

It is said, "Those who take refuge in the three jewels achieve fearlessness." Fearlessness means freedom from the fear of lower rebirth and endless samara. The three jewels are the buddha, dharma, and sangha. Taking refuge in them means taking the buddha as a teacher and example, taking the dharma as a path, and taking the sangha as companions and guides on the path.

We take refuge in the buddha because we seek freedom from samsara. Only someone who has achieved that freedom can give us the refuge that is the start of achieving such freedom. The buddha is a fit source of refuge because he is fearless in proclaiming that he has abandoned all that is to be abandoned and realized all that is to be realized, and fearless in proclaiming for others' benefit the path and the impediments overcome by the path.

We take refuge in the dharma as a path. This means that we take refuge in both of the two aspects of dharma: the dharma as a tradition, and the dharma as realization. The dharma as a tradition is the buddha's teachings, which exist in the form of written words in books. The dharma as realization includes all the freedom and realization that the practice of dharma brings about.

We take refuge in the sangha as companions on the path. This means that we take refuge in both of the two aspects of the sangha: the sangha of ordinary beings, which includes all male and female followers of the buddha; and the sangha of the mahayana, which includes all male and female bodhisattvas.

The ceremony will begin with your performance of three prostrations. You will then repeat the refuge vow after me three times. At the end of the third repetition, you will have received the vow. This is what you will be repeating, translated into English:

Preceptor, please attend me! I (state your name), from this time onward and for the duration of my life, take refuge in the buddha, supreme among all with two feet. I take refuge in the dharma, supreme among all that is free from attachment. I take refuge in the sangha, supreme among all assemblies. Preceptor, from this time onward and for the duration of my life, please accept me as an upasaka [a non-monastic Buddhist practitioner] who holds the three refuges.

You will first repeat that twice. I will then ask you individually, in Tibetan, “Are you happy to have your hair cut?” If you are, please say, “tro la” which means “I am indeed happy!” I will then cut a small amount of hair from the top of your head and hand you a booklet on the second-to-last page of which is your refuge name. Although you are here to receive the vow of refuge and I am here to give you it, it is required by Buddhist tradition that I receive your individual assurance that you wish to receive the vow. So the real meaning of the question is, “Are you sure you want to take refuge?” It is asked after the second repetition of the vow because you will receive the vow of refuge at the end of the third repetition. The cutting of hair represents your willingness to offer a token of the best of yourself to the three jewels. It has this meaning because the top of your head is the highest point on your body. Now, to begin the ceremony, please perform three prostrations.

Now please kneel on your right knee, join your palms in front of your heart, and repeat after me.

You have now received the vow of refuge. The commitments of the vow are the three things not to do, the three things to do, and the three special things. Of these, the three special things are the most important. They are: recollection of the three jewels, regular offerings to the three jewels, and the practice of dharma. For the first, in order to maintain the recollection of the three jewels, recite the vow of refuge daily as many times as possible, such as twenty-one, or seven, or three times. For the second, if you mentally offer to the three jewels anything new you acquire before using it yourself, such as food you are about to eat or new clothing, you will accumulate the same merit as if you had actually donated it to the three jewels. For the third, please study and practice dharma to the best of your ability, relying on qualified teachers.

Refuge vow in Tibetan

སྐྱབས་འགྲོའི་སྣོན་པ་དོན་དུ་གཉེན་བ་དག་འོངས་ན། དཀོན་མཆོག་གི་རྟེན་དང་མཚོན་པ་ཅི་འབྱོར་བ་བཤམས་པའི་མདུན་དུ། ལྷ་མ་ལྷན་མཐོ་བ་ལ་
འདུག་པའི་དུང་དུ་སློབ་མས་རྟེན་དང་ལྷ་མ་ལ་ཕྱག་གསུམ་བྱས་ནས་ལྷན་དམའ་བ་ལ་ཚོག་བཤམ། ལུས་མོ་བཅུགས། མལ་མོ་སྦྱར་ནས་འདུག་ཏུ་བཅུག
རྟེན་མ་འབྱོར་ན་ལྷ་མ་ལ་ཕྱག་གསུམ་བཅོལ་ནས་འདུག་པ་ལ། ལྷ་མས་ཁྱོད་སྐྱབས་འགྲོའི་སྣོན་པ་ལེན་པར་འདོད་པ་དེ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ལགས། དཀོན་མཆོག་
གསུམ་ལ་སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་བ། །འཇིགས་པ་མེད་པར་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར། ཞེས་གསུངས་པས། ཕན་ཡོན་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཆེ། དེ་ལ་ལྷ་མའི་རྗེས་སུ་བསྐྱུངས་ནས་སྐྱབས་ན་
ངོ་ཚ་ཁྲིལ་ཡོད་ཀྱི་རྟེན་སོགས་དགོས་པ་ཁྱུད་པར་ཅན་ཡོད་པས། རྗེས་བསྐྱུངས་མཛོད། བཅོལ་བར་སྦྱར། ཆོས་འབྲེལ་མེད་ན། བཅུན་པ་དགོངས་སུ་
གསོལ། ཡོད་ན། སློབ་དཔོན་དགོངས་སུ་གསོལ། བདག་མིང་(རང་རང་གི་མིང་གང་ཡིན་བཅོད)ཞེས་བཞུགས། དུས་འདི་ནས་གཟུང་སྟེ་ཇི་སྲིད་འཚོའི་
བར་དུ། ཀྱང་གཉེས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་ །སངས་རྒྱས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་འཚོའོ། །འདོད་ཆགས་དང་བྲལ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་ །ཆོས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་འཚོའོ། །ཆོགས་
རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་ །དགོ་འདུན་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་འཚོའོ། །བདག་དུས་འདི་ནས་གཟུང་སྟེ། ཇི་སྲིད་འཚོའི་བར་དུ་སྐྱབས་གསུམ་འཇོན་པའི་དགོ་བཅོལ་དུ་སློབ་

དཔོན་གྱིས་གཟུང་དུ་གསོལ། །ཞེས་ལན་གཉིས་ལན་གསུམ་དུ་བརྗོད་ནས། སློབ་དཔོན་གྱིས། ཐབས་ཡིན་ནོ། །སློབ་མས། ལེགས་སོ། །གཙུག་ལྷན་བཅད་
 པར་སློབ་མ། སློལ་གས། །ཞེས་བརྗོད་ནས་སྐྱབ་བཅད། མིང་བསྐྱར། དེ་ནས་བསྐབ་བྱ་བཤད་པར་བྱ་སྟེ། དེ་ལྟར་སྐབས་སུ་འགྲོ་བའི་སློམ་པ་ཐོབ་ནས།
 དེའི་བསྐབ་བྱ་ལ་དགག་པའི་བསྐབ་བྱ་གསུམ་དང་། སྐབ་པའི་བསྐབ་བྱ་གསུམ་དང་། ཆ་མཐུན་གྱི་བསྐབ་བྱ་གསུམ་མོ། །དང་པོ་ནི། སངས་རྒྱས་ལ་
 སྐབས་སུ་སོང་ནས། འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་ལྷ་ལ་སྐབས་འགྲོ་མི་བྱ། ཆོས་ལ་སྐབས་སུ་སོང་ནས། སེམས་ཅན་ལ་གནོད་འཚེ་མི་བྱ། དག་འདུན་འ་སྐབས་སུ་
 སོང་ནས། ལྷ་སྟེགས་ཅན་དང་འགྲོགས་པར་མི་བྱའོ། །མི་སྟེག་ལ་རྣམས་སུ་སྟེགས་དང་འདྲ་བས་དེ་དང་མི་འགྲོགས་པའོ། །གཉིས་པ་ནི། སངས་
 རྒྱས་ལ་སྐབས་སུ་སོང་ནས། སྐྱའི་རྟེན་ཐ་ན་སྤྲོད་ཆག་དུམ་ཅམ་ལའང་སངས་རྒྱས་དངོས་ཀྱི་འདུ་ཤེས་བཞག་ནས་བྱུག་མཚོད་བཀུར་བསྟེ་བྱེད། འོ་
 བརྒྱལ་བའི་གནས་རྣམས་སུ་བཞུགས་མི་འཇུག་པ་དང་། དག་འདུན་ལ་སྐབས་སུ་སོང་ནས། དག་འདུན་གྱི་གཟུགས་འཐང་ཤམ་དང་ལྡན་པ་ཡན་ལ།
 དག་འདུན་དཀོན་མཚོག་དངོས་ཀྱི་འདུ་ཤེས་བཞག་ནས་བཀུར་བསྟེ་བྱེད། འོ་བརྒྱལ་བའི་གནས་རྣམས་སུ་བཞུགས་མི་འཇུག་པ་དང་། གསུམ་པ་ནི།
 དུས་དུས་སུ་དཀོན་མཚོག་མཚོད་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་པ་དང་། རང་ལུབ་སོགས་སུ་སྐབས་སུ་འགྲོ་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་པ་དང་། སྐྱེས་བྱ་དམ་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་
 རྗེས་སུ་འཇུག་ཅིང་ཆོས་དང་མཐུན་པར་སྦྱོད་པའོ། དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་བསྐབ་བྱ་རྣམས་ཡིད་ལ་གཟུང་ལ་དུན་ཤིང་བཞེན་དང་ལྡན་པས་དུས་རྟག་ཏུ་སློབ་པར་
 གྱིས་ཤིག ཅེས་བརྗོད་ནས། དུག་གསུམ་འཚལ་དུ་བཅུག །ཁྱིམ་གྱི་ཚུལ་ཁྱིམ་སྟོན་མེད་ཅིང་། །ཚུལ་ཁྱིམ་སྟོན་པར་དག་དང་ལྡན། །ཁྱིམ་སེམས་
 མེད་པའི་ཚུལ་ཁྱིམ་གྱིས། །ཚུལ་ཁྱིམ་པ་རོལ་བྱེན་རྗོགས་ཤོག །རྒྱལ་བ་ཀུན་གྱི་རྗེས་སུ་སློབ་ཀྱང་། །བཟང་པོ་སྦྱོད་པ་ཡོངས་སུ་རྗོགས་བྱེད་
 ཅིང་། །ཚུལ་ཁྱིམ་སྦྱོད་པ་དེ་མེད་ཡང་དག་པ། །རྟག་ཏུ་མ་ཉམས་སྟོན་མེད་སྦྱོད་པར་ཤོག །བསོད་ནམས་རི་བོ་བཞེན་དུ་བརྟན་པ་དང་། །བརྒྱད་
 འཛིན་ཉི་ལྔ་བཞེན་དུ་གསལ་བ་དང་། །སྟན་གཤམ་ནམ་མཁའ་ལྷ་བྱུང་བྱུང་པའོ། །བཀྲ་ཤིས་དེས་ཀྱང་དེང་འདྲིར་བདེ་ལགས་ཤོག། ཅེས་བསྟོན་བ་
 སྟོན་ལམ་བུས་ནས་རང་གི་གནས་སུ་གཏང་ངོ་། །

Refuge Prayer

༄༅། །སངས་རྒྱས་ཆོས་དང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་རྣམས་ལ། །

In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Assembly Most Excellent,

བྱང་ཚུབ་བར་དུ་བདག་ནི་སྐབས་སུ་མཆི། །

I take refuge until I reach enlightenment.

བདག་གིས་སྦྱིན་སོགས་བགྲིས་པས་བསོད་རྣམས་གྱིས། །

By the merit of generosity and other good deeds,

འགྲོ་ལ་ཡན་ཕྱིར་སངས་རྒྱས་འགྲུབ་པར་ཤོག །

May I attain buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

Bodhisattva Vow



Buddha Śākyamuni

Courtesy of Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche

༄༅། །བྱང་ལྗོངས་སྐྱེས་ཆོག་དཔལ་སྤྱུལ་གསུང་རྒྱན་ལྟར་བཀོད་པ་བཞུགས་སོ། །

The Ritual for the Bodhisattva Vow, Arranged According to the Tradition of Patrul Rinpoche

by Chatral Rinpoche

The Preliminary Prayer for Requesting the Attention of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Teachers

ཕྱོགས་བརྩུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་། །

chok chu na zhukpé sangyé chomdendé tamché dang

All you buddhas who dwell in the ten directions

ས་བརྩུ་ལ་གནས་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་རྣམས་དང་། །

sa chu la népé changchub sempa sempa chenpo nam dang

All you great bodhisattvas on the ten levels,

སླ་མ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་རྣམས་བདག་ལ་དགོངས་སུ་གསོལ། །

lama dorjé dzinpa chenpo nam dak la gong su sol

All you great teachers, the vajra-holders, turn your mind towards me, I pray!

II. The Main Part

ཞེས་དང་། དེ་ནས་དངོས་གཞི་སློན་འཇུག་སྐབས་གཅིག་ཏུ་སྒྲུབ་བ་ནི།

Taking the Vows of Bodhicitta in Aspiration and Action Combined

བྱང་ཚུབ་སྟིང་པོར་མཆིས་གྱི་བར། །

changchub nyingpor chi kyi bar

Until I realize the essence of enlightenment,

སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི། །

sangyé nam la kyab su chi

I take refuge in the buddhas,

ཚོས་དང་བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཡི། །

chö dang changchub sempa yi

And likewise in the Dharma,

ཚོགས་ལའང་དེ་བཞིན་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི། །

tsok la ang dézhin kyab su chi

And the assembly of bodhisattvas.

Three times

ཇི་ལྟར་ཚོན་གྱི་བདེ་གཤེགས་གྱིས། །

jitar ngön gyi déshek kyi

Just as the sugatas of former times

བྱང་ཚུབ་ཐུགས་ནི་སྐྱེད་པ་དང་། །

changchub tuk ni kyépa dang

Aroused the bodhicitta

བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་བསྐྱབ་པ་ལ། །

changchub sempé labpa la

And established themselves by stages

དེ་དག་རིམ་བཞིན་གནས་པ་སྟར། །

dédak rimzhin népa tar

In the training of a bodhisattva,

དེ་བཞིན་འགོ་ལ་ཕན་དོན་དུ།
 dézhin dro la pen döndu
 Just so, for the benefit of beings

བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་ནི་བསྐྱེད་བགྱི་ཞིང་།
 changchub sem ni kyé gyi zhing
 I will arouse bodhicitta

དེ་བཞིན་དུ་ནི་བསྐྱབ་པ་ལའང་།
 dézhin du ni labpa la ang
 And likewise I will train

རིམ་པ་བཞིན་དུ་བསྐྱབ་པར་བགྱི།
 rimpa zhin du labpar gyi
 Progressively in those disciplines.

Three times

ཞེས་སྒྲེལ་བ་ལན་གསུམ་གྱིས་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་སྒྲངས་ལ། མཇུག་དུ་གཟེངས་བསྟོད་ཅིང་དགའ་བ་བསྐྱོམ་པ་ནི།
*On reciting this all the way through three times, we will have taken the vow of arousing
 the bodhicitta. At the end comes the meditation on encouragement and rejoicing:*

དང་དུས་བདག་ཚེ་འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད།
 dengdù dak tsé drébu yö
 Today, my birth has been fruitful

མི་ཡི་སྲིད་པ་ལེགས་པར་ཐོབ།
 mi yi sipa lekpar top
 I have well obtained a human existence.

དེ་རིང་སངས་རྒྱས་རིགས་སུ་སྐྱེས།
 déring sangyé rik su kyé
 Today I am born into the family of the buddhas:

སངས་རྒྱས་སྲས་སུ་ད་གུར་ཏོ།
 sangyé sé su da gyur to
 I have become a son or daughter of the buddhas.

ད་ནི་བདག་གིས་ཅི་ནས་ཀྱང་། །
 da ni dak gi chi né kyang
 From now on, at all costs, I will perform

རིགས་དང་མཐུན་པའི་ལས་བརྩམས་ཏེ། །
 rik dang tünpe lé tsam té
 The actions befitting to my family.

སྐྱོན་མེད་བསྟན་པའི་རིགས་འདི་ལ། །
 kyön mé tsünpe rik di la
 I will not be a stain

རྣོག་པར་མི་འགྱུར་དེ་ལྟར་བྱ། །
 nyokpar mingyur détar ja
 On this faultless noble family.

ལོང་བས་ཕྱག་དར་ཕུང་པོ་ལས། །
 longwé chak dar pungpo lé
 Just like a blind person

ཇི་ལྟར་རིན་ཆེན་རྗེད་པ་ལྟར། །
 ji tar rinchen nyépa tar
 Happening upon a priceless jewel in a heap of rubbish,

དེ་བཞིན་ཇི་ཞིག་ལྟར་སྟེས་ན། །
 dézhin jizhik tar té né
 So, through some fortunate coincidence,

བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་ནི་བདག་ལ་སྐྱེས། །
 changchub sem ni dak la kyé
 The bodhicitta has been born in me.

ཞེས་དང་།
And:

བདག་གི་དེ་རིང་སྐྱོབ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི། །
 dak gi déring kyobpa tamché kyi
 Today, in the presence of all the protectors,

ལྷན་སྐྱེས་འགྲོ་བ་བདེ་གཤེགས་ཉིད་དང་ནི། །
 chen ngar drowa déshek nyi dang ni
 I invite all beings to the state of sugata,

བར་དུ་བདེ་ལ་མགོན་དུ་བོས་ཟེན་གྱིས། །
 bardu dé la drön du bö zin gyi
 And, meanwhile, to happiness and bliss:

ལྷ་དང་ལྷ་མིན་ལ་སོགས་དགའ་བར་གྱིས། །
 lha dang lhamin lasok gawar gyi
 Gods, asuras and others—rejoice!

| Rigpa Translations 2008. (Some verses courtesy of Nalanda Translation Committee.)
 Website: <https://tinyurl.com/26bp5ux4>

Bodhicitta Prayer:

༄༅། །བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་ནི་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །
 As bodhichitta is so precious,

མ་སྐྱེ་བ་རྣམས་སྐྱེས་གྱུར་ཅིག། །
 May those without it now create it;

སྐྱེས་པ་ཉམས་པ་མེད་པ་དང་། །
 May those who have it not destroy it;

གོང་ནས་གོང་དུ་འཕེལ་བར་ཤོག། །
 And may it ever grow and flourish.

Within the Barway Dorje Ngondro/Preliminary Practices, “**The Great Gate to the Path of Liberation: A Liturgy for the Preliminaries to the Four Sadhanas of the Vidyadhara Guru’s Mind**,” we take the following vow.

Taking the refuge vow and prostrating:

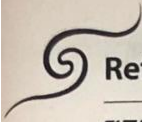
ན་མོ། མཁའ་མཉམ་རང་གཞན་འགྲོ་ཀུན་བྱང་ཆུབ་བར་། ཀུན་འབྱུང་ལས་ཀྱི་འབྱས་བུའི་འཁོར་བ་དང་།
 Namō. I and all beings throughout space go for refuge until awakening from the cause of
 suffering, the that results from actions,
 ངན་སོང་འཇིགས་ལས་མཚོག་གསུམ་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་། ཀྱིབས་རུས་རེ་ལྷོས་ཀུན་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི།
 and the fear of lower states, to the three jewels, the group, and all who can protect us and fulfill
 our hopes.

Generating supreme bodhicitta:

ཕ་མར་ཤེས་པའི་འགོ་འདི་འཁོར་བ་ལས། ལྷོལ་ཕྱིར་སངས་རྒྱས་སློམ་མའི་གོ་འཕང་མཚོགས།
In order to liberate beings, whom I know to have been my parents, from samsara

མངོན་ལྷ་བྱས་ནས་སེམས་ཅན་མ་ལྷས་པའི། དོན་བྱ་དེ་ཕྱིར་བྱང་ཆུབ་ངེས་པར་སྐྱབ།
I will achieve the supreme state of the buddha, the guru. I will then benefit all beings without exception. For that reason, I will definitely accomplish awakening.

The **Kagyu Monlam Book** contains the following refuge and bodhicitta prayers:

 **Refuge and Bodhicitta**

སྐབས་འགོ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད།

བདག་ལ་སྣང་བར་བྱེད་པའི་དགུ། གཞོད་པར་བྱེད་པའི་བགེགས། ཐར་པ་དང་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པའི་
dak la dang war che pay dra nō par che pay gek tar pa dang tam che khyen pay
All my mothers, all beings throughout space, especially the enemies who hate me, obstructors

བར་དུ་གཞོད་པར་བྱེད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་གཙོ་བྱས་པའི། མ་ནམ་མཁའ་དང་མཉམ་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་
bar du chō par che pa tam che kyi tso che pay ma nam kha dang nyam pay sem chen
who harm me, and all those who obstruct my liberation and omniscience, must have

ཐམས་ཅད་བདེ་བ་དང་ལྷན། ལྷུག་བསྐྱེད་དང་བྲལ། ལྷུར་དུ་སློབ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་
tam che de wa dang den duk ngel dang dral nyur du la na me pa yang dak par dzok pay
happiness, be free from suffering, and quickly attain precious, unsurpassable, complete and

བྱང་ཆུབ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱ། ཞེས་ལན་གསུམ་དང་།
jang chup rin po che top par ja (3x)
perfect awakening. *Three times.*

དེའི་ཆེད་དུ་སངས་མ་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བར་དུ་ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་གསུམ་དགོ་བ་ལ་བཀོལ། མ་ཤིའི་བར་དུ་ལུས་
deyi che du sang ma gye kyi bar du lü ngak yi sum ge wa la köl ma shiyi bar du lü
For that purpose, until buddhahood, I will employ my body, speech, and mind in virtue.

ངག་ཡིད་གསུམ་དགོ་བ་ལ་བཀོལ། དུས་དེ་རིང་ནས་བཟུང་སྟེ་ཉི་མ་སང་ད་ཅུས་ཀྱི་བར་དུ་ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་
ngak yi sum ge wa la köl dü de ring ne sung te nyi ma sang da tsam gyi bar du lü ngak yi
Until death, I will employ my body, speech, and mind in virtue. From today until this time

གསུམ་དགོ་བ་ལ་བཀོལ། ལན་གསུམ།
sum ge wa la köl (3x)
tomorrow, I will employ my body, speech, and mind in virtue. *Three times.*

ནམ་མཁའི་མཁའ་དང་མཉམ་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད། ཀྱང་གཉིས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚོགས་སངས་
nam khay ta dang nyam pay sem chen tam che kang nyi nam kyi chok sang
All beings throughout the reaches of space take refuge in the bhagavan buddhas,

ཀྱུས་བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆིའོ། །འདོད་ཆགས་དང་བྲལ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་གི།
 gye chom den de nam la kyab sum chi o dö chak dang dral wa nam kyi chok
 supreme among human beings. We take refuge in the genuine Dharmas,

དམ་པའི་ཚོས་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆིའོ། །ཚོགས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་འཕགས་པའི་དགོ་འདུན་རྣམས་ལ་
 dam pay chö nam la kyab sum chi o tsok nam kyi chok pak pay gen dün nam la
 supreme among all freedoms from attachment. We take refuge in the arya Sanghas,

སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆིའོ། །ཞེས་ཚང་ཅི་རིགས་དང་།
 kyab sum chi o
 supreme among assemblies. *As many times as appropriate.*

སློབ་འཇུག་ལས།
 From The Way of the Bodhisattva:

བྱང་ཚུབ་སློབ་པོར་མཆིས་ཀྱི་བར།
 jang chup nying por chi kyi bar
 Until I reach enlightenment's essence,

།སངས་རྒྱལ་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི། །
 sang gye nam la kyab su chi
 I go for refuge to the buddhas.

ཚོས་དང་བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཡི།
 chö dang jang chub sem pa yi
 I go for refuge to the Dharma

།ཚོགས་ལའང་དེ་བཞིན་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི། །
 tsok la'ang de shin kyab su chi
 And Sangha of bodhisattvas, too.

ཇི་ལྟར་སློབ་ཀྱི་བདེ་གཤེགས་ཀྱིས།
 ji tar ngön gyi de shek kyi
 Just as the sugatas of the past

།བྱང་ཚུབ་བྱུགས་ནི་བསྐྱེད་པ་དང་། །
 jang chup tuk ni kye pa dang
 Aroused the mind of bodhichitta;

བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་བསྐྱབ་པ་ལ།
 jang chup sem pay lap pa la
 Just as they followed step-by-step

།དེ་དག་རིམ་བཞིན་གནས་པ་ལྟར། །
 de dak rim shin ne pa tar
 The training of the bodhisattvas,

དེ་བཞིན་འགོ་ལ་ཕན་དོན་དུ།
 de shin dro la pen dön du
 So, too, shall I, to benefit wanderers,

།བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་ནི་བསྐྱེད་བཞི་ཞིང་། །
 jang chup sem ni kye gyi shing
 Arouse the mind of bodhichitta.

དེ་བཞིན་དུ་ནི་བསྐྱབ་པ་ལ།
 de shin du ni lap pa la
 So, too, shall I follow step-by-step

།རིམ་པ་བཞིན་དུ་བསྐྱབ་པར་བཞི། །ཞེས་ལན་གསུམ་བཅོད།
 rim pa shin du lap par gyi (3x)
 The bodhisattva's training. *Repeat three times.*

Essential Instruction on Refuge and Bodhicitta



An Essential Instruction on Refuge and Bodhicitta by **Patrul Rinpoche**

*In the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Assembly
I take refuge until I attain enlightenment.
Through the merit of practising generosity and so on,
May I attain buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.*

Here I shall explain taking refuge, which is the foundation of the path to liberation, the basis of all vows, the source of all enlightened qualities and the point of differentiation between buddhists and non-buddhists, together with generating the mind of bodhicitta, which is the foundation for accomplishing the level of complete enlightenment and the source of all that is positive in existence and peace.

1. Taking Refuge

This has three sections: (i) the objects in which we take refuge, (ii) the duration of refuge and (iii) the actual practice of taking refuge.

i. The Objects of Refuge

There are three objects: the perfect Buddha who is the unsurpassable teacher, the sacred Dharma which is the unsurpassable protection and the supreme assembly of the noble sangha, who are the unsurpassable guides.

Buddha

The Buddha is the one endowed with the four kāyas and five wisdoms.

The four kāyas are:

1. The svābhāvikakāya, which is the nature of phenomenal reality devoid of any obscurations.
2. The dharmakāya, which is the unceasing aspect of wisdom.
3. The sambhogakāya, which is the self-appearing rūpakāya adorned with major and minor marks.
4. The nirmāṇakāya, which appears in order to tame disciples who are to be tamed.

The five wisdoms are:

1. The wisdom of dharmadhātu, which is the inherent purity of absolute space.
2. The mirror-like wisdom, which is wisdom's unceasing clarity aspect.
3. The equalizing wisdom, which is the absence of attachment and aversion towards anyone or anything, near or far.
4. The wisdom of discernment, which knows objects without confusing or conflating them.
5. The all-accomplishing wisdom, which effortlessly brings about the welfare of others.

Dharma

The Dharma is identified as scripture and realization.

The Dharma of scripture consists of the three collections (piṭakas):

1. The Vinaya collection, which tames (*'dul ba*) the disturbing emotions in one's mindstream.
2. The Sūtra collection of summarizing (*mdo*) texts in which points are arranged in categories.
3. The Abhidharma collection for generating the wisdom that clearly (*mngon par*) realizes the way things are.

The Dharma of realization is the threefold higher training:

1. The training in higher discipline, which is the subject matter of the vinaya collection.
2. The training in higher meditation, which is the subject matter of the sūtra collection.
3. The training in higher wisdom, which is the subject matter of the abhidharma collection.

The two truths [of cessation and the path] come from taking these three trainings into one's experience, as abandonment and realization develop on the five paths and ten bhūmis. The truth of cessation is the perfect abandonment and the truth of the path is the perfect realization.

Sangha

The sangha is the irreversible sangha of bodhisattvas. These are the bodhisattvas on the ten bhūmis, who can not revert to saṃsāra, because they have realized emptiness directly through their wisdom, and who do not fall into the extreme of quiescence, because in their compassion they care for beings with the love of a mother for her only child.

ii. The Duration of Taking Refuge

The verse says “...until I attain enlightenment.” In this context, the mahāyāna level of taking refuge is distinguished by three features.

Difference in terms of Objects

The followers of the hīnayāna take as their refuge the supreme nirmāṇakāya Śākyamuni, who is “The Buddha, the supreme of all humans (literally ‘those on two legs’).” They do not accept the dharmakāya and sambhogakāya, and they believe that even the nirmāṇakāya stops benefitting beings once it has passed beyond this world. They believe that the Dharma jewel refers only to the state of nirvāṇa, which is the truth of cessation. They refer to this as “peace and supreme freedom from passions.” For them, the “sangha, which is the supreme of all assemblies” consists of the noble śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, the stream-enterers, once-returners, non-returners and arhats.

In the mahāyāna, on the other hand, it is as I have explained above.

Difference in terms of Duration

The followers of the hīnayāna take refuge temporarily for as long as they live, and ultimately until they attain their own particular fruition.

Difference in terms of Attitude

The followers of the hīnayāna take refuge with an attitude of renunciation, wishing to find freedom from all the sufferings of saṃsāra for themselves alone. The followers of the mahāyāna take refuge with bodhicitta, in the wish that all sentient beings might attain buddhahood.

iii. The Actual Practice of Taking Refuge

When taking refuge with the words “I take refuge...” and so on, consider that in every atom appear buddhas as numerous as all the atoms in existence, each surrounded by an assembly of their bodhisattva heirs, reaching to the very limits of phenomenal reality. Consider that the enlightened minds of all these victorious buddhas and their bodhisattva sons and daughters are filled with the sacred Dharma of scripture and realization, and they all remain before you as great leaders, ready to care for and guide you and all sentient beings with their vast qualities of wisdom, love and power. As you remain before them, together with all other sentient beings, all clapping your palms together, you think the following, “From this moment on, until the essence of enlightenment is reached, we rely on you, Three Jewels, as our objects of refuge. We make offerings to you. You are our only practice. We have no other refuge or hope but you.” Then with total trust and heartfelt conviction, take refuge.

The Precepts of Taking Refuge

In this, there are six specific precepts and five general ones.

Six Specific Precepts

In the specific precepts, there are three things to avoid and three things to do.

Three Things to Avoid

1. Having taken refuge in the Buddha, you should not worship any gods who are still bound within the cycle of saṃsāra.
2. Having taken refuge in the Dharma, you should not inflict harm upon any sentient being.
3. Having taken refuge in the Saṅgha, you should not associate with friends who hold extreme views.

Three Things to Do

1. Practise according to the words of the Buddha and then, without forgetting them, generate faith and devotion. Show respect even for broken fragments of statues and images of the Buddha.
2. Exert yourself in studying, reflecting and meditating on the sacred Dharma. Show respect even for torn scriptures that represent the Dharma.
3. Respect the saṅgha who are followers of the Buddha, associate with virtuous friends, and treat even tiny pieces of yellow cloth as objects worthy of reverence.

Five General Precepts

1. Do not forsake the Three Jewels, even at the cost of your life.
2. Even in important ventures, do not seek other methods.
3. Do not interrupt your regular practice.
4. Encourage yourself and others to take refuge.
5. Pay homage to the buddha of whichever direction you travel.

2. Generating Bodhicitta

Generally there are said to be two levels to bodhicitta, the relative and the ultimate. Relative bodhicitta is the mind that is intent upon attaining perfect enlightenment for the sake of others, and ultimate bodhicitta is the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness.

Relative bodhicitta itself can be further divided into aspirational bodhicitta, which is like the wish to go somewhere, and the bodhicitta of application, which is like actually making the journey. In both cases, bodhicitta is generated through formal practice, and so it is known as ‘coarse bodhicitta arising from signs’.

Ultimate bodhicitta only arises through the power of meditating on the path, and is therefore known as ‘subtle bodhicitta, which is gained through reality itself’.

Relative bodhicitta has two points or aspects: compassion, which is focused on sentient beings, and wisdom, which is directed towards perfect enlightenment. If either of these two aspects is lacking, then it will not be the bodhicitta of the Mahāyāna, so it is important that they are both complete.

Here in the present context, the generation of aspirational bodhicitta alone has two aspects: focusing on merit which is the cause and aspiring towards perfect enlightenment which is the result.

The first of these is covered in the phrase “practising generosity and so on.” When all sources of virtue are categorized, they may be included within what are called ‘the three bases for creating merit’. These are the creation of merit through generosity, the creation of merit through discipline and the creation of merit through meditation. When we relate these to the six pāramitās, the first two relate to the pāramitās of the same name, and the creation of merit through meditation relates to patience, concentration and wisdom. Diligence assists them all.

These six pāramitās are also based on specific states of mind:

1. Generosity is an attitude of giving.
2. Discipline is an attitude of renunciation.
3. Patience is an attitude of imperturbability.
4. Diligence is an attitude of enthusiasm.
5. Concentration is non-distraction.
6. Wisdom is the precise discernment of phenomena.

The second aspect of aspiring towards the result of perfect enlightenment is covered in the phrase, “May I attain buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.” This is the actual bodhicitta endowed with the two points or aspects. “For the benefit of all beings” is the thought of who we are practising for, and is focusing on sentient beings with compassion. “May I attain buddhahood” is longing for what we are practising towards, and is wisdom directed towards complete enlightenment. It is therefore the aspirational bodhicitta, which is to think, “Through all these sources of virtue of mine, may I attain buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings who are as infinite as space!”

The Precepts of Aspirational Bodhicitta

In addition, there are the five precepts of aspirational bodhicitta, which are as follows:

1. Never giving up on sentient beings.
2. Continually reflecting on the benefits of bodhicitta.
3. Exerting yourself in the methods for accumulating merit and wisdom.
4. Applying yourself to the training in bodhicitta.
5. Adopting and abandoning the eight wholesome and unwholesome dharmas.

Giving up on just a single sentient being causes you to lose your bodhicitta of aspiration completely, so develop a wish to benefit all beings.

Reflecting on its benefits causes you to develop enthusiasm and apply yourself to arousing bodhicitta, so reflect continually on the benefits to be gained from the generation of bodhicitta.

Gathering the accumulations increases the strength of your bodhicitta, so accumulate merit and wisdom in various ways, such as the seven branch practice.

The training in bodhicitta has three elements:

1. training in the cause by meditating on the four immeasurables,
2. the actual training, which is to practise taking the vow of bodhicitta three times during the day and three times at night,
3. and the training in the precepts, the meditations on equalizing and exchanging yourself and others, and consider others as more important than yourself.

The four immeasurables are as follows:

1. Love, which is the wish that all beings who are unhappy may find happiness.
2. Compassion, which is the wish that all who are suffering may be freed from suffering.
3. Sympathetic joy, which is the wish that those who are happy and free from suffering may never be separated from their happiness.
4. Equanimity, which is the wish that those who feel attachment and aversion towards anyone, close or distant, may pacify their attachment and aversion.

The actual training in bodhicitta is to take the vow of bodhicitta by means of any formal practice—whether elaborate, medium or short—at the six times of the day and night, i.e., at dawn, mid-morning, midday, afternoon, dusk and midnight.

- ‘Equalizing self and others’ means recognizing the equality of yourself and others in wishing to find happiness and wishing to avoid suffering.
- ‘Exchanging self and others’ means giving your own happiness to other sentient beings, and taking their suffering upon yourself.
- ‘Considering others as more important than yourself’ means setting aside your own benefit and accomplishing the benefit of others.

The eight wholesome and unwholesome dharmas consist of four wholesome dharmas to be adopted and four unwholesome dharmas to be abandoned.

The four unwholesome dharmas are as follows:

1. Deceiving anyone worthy of veneration.
2. Feeling misplaced regret.
3. Abusing a holy person.
4. Cheating others.

The four wholesome dharmas are as follows:

1. Being careful never to lie, even at the cost of your life.
2. Setting everyone on the path to enlightenment.
3. Showing similar respect to bodhisattvas as you would to the Buddha.
4. Being honest to all beings.

If you apply yourself to these practices, then you will never forget the mind of bodhicitta in all your future lives, and all the qualities of the bhūmis and paths will develop and increase like the waxing moon.