

## Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels

Relying on the means for achieving happiness in the next life

Training in going for refuge, the excellent door for entering the teaching

1. The causes of going for refuge
2. Based on that, the objects to which you go for refuge
  - a) Identifying the objects to which you go for refuge
  - b) The reasons why they are worthy to be a refuge
3. The way you go for refuge
  - a) Going for refuge by knowing the good qualities
    - i. The good qualities of the Buddha
      1. The good qualities of the Buddha's body
      2. The good qualities of the Buddha's speech
      3. The good qualities of the Buddha's mind
        - a. The good qualities of knowledge
        - b. The good qualities of caring
      4. The good qualities of enlightened activities
    - ii. The good qualities of the teaching
    - iii. The good qualities of the community
  - b) Going for refuge by knowing the distinctions
    - i. The distinction based on their defining characteristics
    - ii. The distinction based on their enlightened activities
    - iii. The distinction based on devotion
    - iv. The distinction based on practice
    - v. The distinction based on recollection
    - vi. The distinction based on how they increase merit
  - c) Going for refuge through commitment
  - d) Going for refuge by refusing to acknowledge other refuges
4. Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts

## CHAPTER FOUR

Buddhist Answers to Big Questions p44 – 47

A Buddhist is one who goes to the three jewels for refuge. When the objects of refuge are described in the texts the Buddha is described as 'the supreme among bipeds' (e.g., humans). The Dharma is described as the supreme teaching or the supreme truth. It is a truth that is free from attachment; it is tranquil. It is peace. The Sangha is described as the supreme assembly. However, if we understand the nature and characteristics of the three jewels only at that level, it is not necessarily unique to Buddhism. Other spiritual traditions take refuge and such qualities of the object of refuge may be present in those other traditions. Most-maybe all-spiritual traditions see their own original teacher as supreme among human beings. They will probably say that their spiritual teacher represents a truth that is peaceful and being attachment. Likewise, they also have some notion of a spiritual community.

Thus, if you understand the three jewels only on that level, your understanding is not so deep. How can you even say that going for refuge in the three jewels is what defines someone as a practicing Buddhist? People do say this, but how can they explain it? We have to cultivate a deeper understanding of the nature of the Buddha and the nature of Dharma. What is the nature of the Buddha to whom we go for refuge? And what is the particular nature of the Sangha that we as Buddhists perceive to be the supreme community?

With respect to the Buddha, there is a divergence of opinion within the Buddhist tradition. As I mentioned, some maintain that when the Buddha attained final nirvana, the entire continuum of the Buddha's existence came to an end. The other view, which Tsong-kha-pa shares, involves understanding buddhahood in terms of four embodiments. Here, the idea of an absolute end the continuity of the Buddha's existence is rejected.

Nagarjuna, particularly in his *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning*, makes a very explicit argument against the idea that the Buddha's final nirvana constituted the absolute end of the Buddha's existence. Nagarjuna says that if that was the case, then the whole concept of someone attaining nirvana without residue would be incoherent. When the person is alive, nirvana without residue is not yet present; yet when the nirvana without residue is reached, the person is no longer there. Thus, the idea of someone's attaining nirvana without residue is incoherent if it involves an absolute end to the continuity of the individual.

The tremendous differences between arhats and buddhas make it untenable that the entirety of the path to buddhahood could be included within the thirty-seven aspects of the path to enlightenment. Buddhas cannot simply be those who have done these same practices for a longer period. The outcomes attained by arhats and by buddhas are so vastly different that, in addition to the thirty-seven aspects, the path to buddhahood must also include other practices such as the six perfections.

We have many mental states that are distorted due to being grounded in a false way of understanding and perceiving the world. These mental states can be stopped, brought to and

end, by powerful antidotes to this false way of understanding. However, the essential quality of mind itself is *clear and knowing*. Unlike the case of ignorance or delusion-which can be eliminated-there are no forces or reasons that would block this continuum from going forward. There isn't anything that undermines the continuing existence of the essential quality of the mind itself.

Furthermore from the highest yoga tantra point of view, when we understand how consciousness operates at a very subtle level, we find two characteristics. One is the *knowing* aspect. And right with it there is a moving, dynamic aspect; we could call it energy. These two aspects are inseparable in that neither can exist without the other. So consciousness continues to exist at this very subtle level right together with this energy.

What happens when a person gains full enlightenment? Then consciousness itself, being dependently arisen, is fundamentally empty; emptiness is the ultimate nature of the mind. When one attains buddhahood, this emptiness is the natural body of a Buddha, a buddha's body as the very nature of reality. While the ordinary person's mind is pure and unpolluted in its essential nature, it is still tainted by adventitious pollutants and stains. When one attains buddhahood, these adventitious pollutants are removed, so the natural purity of the mind is accompanied by a purity attained through the cultivation of the path. Therefore, the emptiness of the mind, the very nature of the person's mind - becomes the natural embodiment of a buddha.

At that point, the person's consciousness becomes a Buddha's embodiment of truth and wisdom (*ye she chogu*) and the energy accompanying that wisdom-mind becomes a buddha's embodiment as form (*zug-gu*). Within the buddha's embodiment as form, there are the speech and physical qualities of a Buddha. Buddhahood is thus a state in which body, speech, and mind have become totally inseparable, a single nature, because they are all immediate expressions of the unity of the very subtlest mind and subtlest energy.

The effort to attain buddhahood is fundamentally motivated by an altruistic intention to for the welfare of an infinite number of living beings for as long as space remains, to the furthest reaches of space. Once buddhahood is attained, that Buddha does not cease to exist. The motivation for practice on the bodhisattva path comes to final fruition in an enlightened being who goes on acting for the benefit of all living beings for as long as space remains.

Understanding buddhahood in this manner changes your understanding of the Buddha as an object of refuge. Maitreya's *Sublime Continuum* tells us that a key quality of the Dharma is that it is not just freedom from attachment – it is beyond any concept, beyond anything we can imagine, beyond any verbal expression. The Sangha is a community of practitioners who embody a Dharma that has these inconceivable characteristics. When you have that kind of understanding of the three jewels, it transfigures your understanding of that to which you go for refuge. Implicitly, then, going for refuge to the three jewels becomes an affirmation of the four seals of the Buddha's teaching. *Becoming a Buddhist in philosophical terms converges with the act of going for refuge.*

# REFUGE IN THE 3 JEWELS CLASS NOTES 1

## A PREAMBLE TO THE CAUSES OF GOING FOR REFUGE

1. What are the two means for achieving happiness in the next life? *The two means for achieving happiness in the next life are*
  - 1) *Training in going for refuge, the excellent door for entering the teachings.*
  - 2) *Developing the faith of conviction that is the root of all temporary happiness and certain goodness.* **LRCM1p178**
  
2. Why does Refuge precede the teachings on karma in the LamRim? *Because refuge is the entry to the teachings it precedes that of karma in the LamRim. It helps practice become pure. With faith in the Buddha we gain faith that his teachings are unmistakable and with a stable conviction in karma, the actual way to abandon suffering and attain certain goodness can be attained.* **M1d25p2** *When you examine the Buddha's teachings on the complex issue of negative emotions and how to counter them, you can see that these matters are evident to all. We are all familiar with the emotions, so as we relate the Buddha's teachings on them to our own personal experience, we can gradually recognize the truth of the Buddha's words. Similarly, all his teachings dealing with the ultimate goal of liberation – impermanence, the Four Noble Truths, emptiness and so on – can also be understood through critical analysis. That analysis can then be extended to the scriptures dealing with the subtle workings of karma. We can thus conclude that if Buddha has not failed us in the most important area, the attainment of liberation, why should he fail us on his teachings on cause and effect? We can also consider that the Buddha had no reason to make false claims about karma and how there are no contradictions in the scriptures discussing it.*
  - *To summarize, once we develop a deep conviction in the validity of the Buddha's teaching, we gain an admiration for and faith in the Buddha himself.* **HHDL 'Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment' p70**
  
3. Refuge may be understood to mean different things because it has many layers of meaning. Describe some of the different levels of the meaning of refuge. *There are a number of different levels involved in taking Refuge. These primarily depend on the students own capacity and inclination of mind.*
  - (1) *In accordance with the way common to Buddhism in general, we can take refuge by respecting the Buddha as the guide along the path, the Dharma as the spiritual path, and the Sangha as the support in practicing the path. The most common metaphor used to describe this relationship is that of doctor, medicine and nurse.*
  - (2) *According to the Vajrayana or Tantric tradition of Buddhism, which is not found in all traditions, there are subtler levels in which we can take refuge. In the developing stage, we take refuge by offering our "three doors" - our body, speech and mind to the lama as refuge in the Buddha; we devote ourselves to the yidam as the path and we view the Daka or Dakini as the Sangha, the spiritual support on the path.*

- During the completion stage of Highest Yoga Tantra we take refuge in the true nature, the awakening mind conjoined with unchanging Great Bliss. The Buddha refuge is realizing the purification of our seminal essence (bindu) to be the Dharmakaya. The Dharma refuge is the understanding of the purification of the physical wind or energy, as the Sambhogakaya. The Sangha refuge means recognition of the practices dependence upon the physical channel system (nadi) which is understood as the Nirmanakaya.

(3) The highest and most subtle form of Refuge is that which is known as Refuge in the Vajra nature. This is the determination to realize the three inseparable aspects of Primordial wisdom present in the mind of the refuge objects. The Buddha Refuge is the Empty Essence as the Dharmakaya. The Dharma Refuge its Lucid Nature as the Sambhogakaya and its Universal Compassion as the Nirmanakaya, the Sangha Refuge **‘Innermost Essence Preliminary Practice’ by Jigme Lingpa, p46-47**

4. What is meant by “causal refuge”? Causal refuge means taking refuge in an object other than us - in a being that has generated the realization of true cessation, such as the founder Shakyamuni Buddha. It is necessary to first establish causal refuge firmly in the mind as a foundation for resultant refuge. To develop causal refuge, we need to understand why the objects of refuge are worthy of our faith. To accomplish this, we begin by establishing Buddha as an infallible object of refuge. On this basis, we can thus infer that his teachings and the beings who have realized those teachings are likewise infallible objects of refuge **Yangsi1p128**
5. What is meant by “resultant refuge”? Resultant Refuge arises from the understanding of the innate knowledge of our own mind, which is clear, luminous, and knowing, and from the understanding that our delusions are only temporary **Yangsi1p128**
6. What are some of the reasons for calling the refuge objects the three jewels? They are called jewels or ratna, meaning very precious, of great value ≠ rinpoche; instead it is kern cho meaning rare + supreme meaning most excellent and unsurpassable.
  - 1) rare, hard to encounter
  - 2) stainless, free from all emotional stains
  - 3) powerful, extinguish all suffering
  - 4) ornament, much goodness
  - 5) excellence, eternal peace
  - 6) changeless, never fall back **p46-47, ‘The Uttara Tantra: A treatise on Buddha Nature’ by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche**

## THE CAUSES OF GOING FOR REFUGE

1. What are the four parts of the section; ‘Training in going for refuge, the excellent door for entering the teaching’? *The four parts of the section ‘Training in going for refuge, the excellent door for entering the teaching’ are*
  - 1) *The causes of going for refuge*
  - 2) *Based on that, the objects to which you go for refuge*
  - 3) *The way you go for refuge*
  - 4) *Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts* **LRCM1p178**
2. What are the two common causes of going for refuge to the three jewels? *The two common causes of going for refuge for ordinary beings are fear and faith. If you are afraid of something you will seek protection. If you have confidence that someone has the power to protect you from what you fear, you will place your trust in them taking refuge in him or her from deep in your heart.* **Sopa1p401**
3. What is meant by the term “fear”? *Fear in this context is not the feeling that is similar to watching a horror movie. It is not an unreasonable feeling of dread. The meaning is more along the lines of an intolerable urgency, a reasonable anxiety, a concerned apprehensiveness about the future.* **‘LamRim Retreat’ oral commentary by Geshe Tashi Tsering, 2004**
4. How do the causes of an ordinary person seeking refuge differ from the two causes of the capable person of small capacity? *In general the two common causes of going for refuge for ordinary beings is existential angst with this life and confidence (faith) in the 3 Jewels to protect them from that so they attain a temporary release of suffering and greater happiness in this life. The practices of such a person would include the abandonment of the eight worldly dharmas and the ten unskillful activities and the adoption of the ten skilful actions along with the practices of mindfulness.*
  - *For a capable person who is interested in spiritual matters the two main causes of going for Refuge to the three jewels are fear of the lower realms and the like, and their conviction that the three jewels can protect them by delivering them into a higher realm rebirth* **LRCM1p179**
5. How do the causes of a capable person of small capacity seeking refuge differ from those two causes of the person of medium capacity? *The two common causes of going for refuge for the capable being of small capacity is fear of the sufferings of the miserable realms and confidence (faith) in the 3 Jewels to protect them from that misery with the attainment of a higher status rebirth as a human or a god in the form or formless realm. The practices of such a person would include the abandonment of the ten unskillful activities along with the eight worldly dharmas, the adoption of the vows of Refuge and the vows of approaching virtue along with the practice of mindfulness.* **M1d20p12** *The capable being of small capacity is mainly concerned about their next rebirth. Therefore every day they focus on the impermanence of life. That mindfulness leads to the recognition that after death they will have no freedom or power to choose where they will be reborn; they will be completely under the*

power of karma. So focusing on the impermanence of this life produces the determination to prepare for the next life. Being mindful of what they need to do to prepare for death is their cause of going for refuge. **Sopa1p399**

- The two common causes of going for refuge for a capable being of medium capacity is fear of all the sufferings in the realm of cyclic existence and confidence (faith) in the 3 Jewels to protect them from that with a personal liberation from the disturbing emotions and their causes. Liberation means the complete abandonment of the conception of self together with its potentials resulting in the personal peace called nirvana. The achievement of personal liberation depends upon the practices of Refuge, renunciation and the wisdom of selflessness.
  - In summary those capable beings of small capacity fear the three lower realms and have faith that the three jewels can give them refuge from that and help them attain higher status rebirth, whereas those of the medium capacity fear the whole of cyclic existence and have faith that the three jewels can give them refuge from that helping them attain liberation. **M1d20p52-53**
6. What fears do those of great capacity hope to overcome? *Those beings of great capacity hope to overcome all fears including those related to the emotional and cognitive obscurations.* **M1d20p52-53** For the being of great capacity the two common causes of going for refuge are fear of the extremes of samsaric existence on the one hand and individual liberation on the other and confidence (faith) in the 3 Jewels to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. **HHDL ‘Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment’ p72**
7. For those of great capacity, what other quality compliments their fear and faith? *The two common causes of going for refuge for a capable being of great capacity are complimented with the additional cause of great compassion that is apprehensive (fearful) about the suffering of others.* **p62 ‘LamRim Retreat’ commentary by Geshe Tashi Tsering, 2004** The sight of all beings plunged in the great ocean of samsara's infinite sufferings and undergoing an unimaginable variety of torments motivates those of great capacity to take refuge with the idea of establishing them all in the unsurpassable and omniscient state of perfect and complete Buddhahood. **p176 ‘The Words of my Perfect Teacher’ by Patrul Rinpoche** The addition of this type of compassion is the uncommon cause of Refuge for the person of great capacity, the person whose path is that of the great vehicle **p62 ‘LamRim Retreat’ commentary by Geshe Tashi Tsering, 2004**
8. What is the definition of faith? *The definition of faith is a mental factor that functions principally to eliminate non-faith. Faith overcomes disinterest and lack of conviction. Faith is a trust or confidence that has been developed over time through reasoning and experience.* **p142 ‘Understanding the Mind’ by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso** Faith is a distinct mental factor that, when referring to such things as the law of internal cause and effect, the Triple Gem and so forth, produces a joyous state of mind free from the turmoil of the root and proximate afflictions. **p125 ‘The Mind and its Functions’ by Geshe Rabten**



9. What is the function of faith? *Faith has the function of (a) acting as the basis for generating an aspiration for wholesome qualities that have not yet been generated and (b) increasing any such aspiration already generated. In brief it acts as the doorway through which all positive qualities manifest.* **Rabten p125**
10. What are the three types of faith? *There are three types of faith:*
  - 1) *Believing faith (confident)*
  - 2) *Admiring faith (aspiring) (longing)*
  - 3) *Wishing faith (vivid) (admiring)* **Gyatso p142**
11. What is the faith of belief? Describe this confident faith. *Confident faith believes in any object that is conducive to our spiritual development, such as the two truths, the two paths of method and wisdom and the three resultant bodies of a Buddha. This faith is based on vivid faith but is much stronger and more definite. Even animals occasionally develop a vivid faith (faith of admiration), but confident faith involves holding a special view* **Gyatso p142** *Confident (Believing) faith is a state of complete conviction and certainty in such things as the Triple Gem, the infallibility of the law of cause and effect and so on. It is unshakeable and cannot be enticed away by other propositions* **Rabten p125**
12. What is Aspirational faith, the longing faith? *Longing or aspiring faith is a state in which one has considered the object of faith to be attainable. It is thus characterized by a strongly interested longing to attain it* **Rabten p126** *Wishing or aspiring faith is a wish to follow any dharma path, based on recognition of its good qualities. All virtuous aspirations are wishing faith* **Gyatso p142** *Aspiring faith is our eagerness to be free of the sufferings of the lower realms when we hear them described; our eagerness to enjoy the happiness of the higher realms and of liberation when we hear what they are; our eagerness to engage in positive actions when we hear what benefits they bring; and our eagerness to avoid negative actions when we understand what harm they cause* **Patrul p172**
13. What is wishing faith? *The faith called wishing and known also as admiring or vivid faith is a tranquil, lucid state of mind, free from negative conceptions, that arises when we contemplate the good qualities of virtuous objects or holy beings such as the spiritual guide* **Gyatso p142** *Vivid faith (admiring faith) is a state in which the object of faith is held to be particularly excellent and dear* **Rabten p125** *Vivid faith is the faith that is inspired in us by thinking of the immense compassion of the Buddhas and great teachers. We might experience this kind of faith on visiting a temple containing many representations of the Buddhas' body, speech and mind, or after an encounter with a great teacher or spiritual friend we have just met personally or whose qualities or life-story we have heard described. This means that our faith in the refuge will enable us to deal with the experiences of the intermediate state after death* **Patrul p171-172**
14. In relation to the advice he gave to the Kalama's, how did the Buddha explain faith to be a working hypotheses when going for Refuge? *The Buddha said to not go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by*



analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, “this contemplative is our teacher”. When you know for yourselves that “these mental qualities are skillful; these mental qualities are blameless; these mental qualities are praised by the wise; these mental qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness” - then you should enter and remain in them. **Anguttara Nikaya 3.65** Although the Buddha recommends tolerance and a healthy skepticism towards matters of faith; he also notes a conditional imperative: if you sincerely want to put an end to suffering (that's the condition) you should take certain things on faith, as working hypotheses, and then test them by following his path of practice. The advice to the Kalama's, in fact, contains the crucial caveat that you must take into account what wise people value. **Majjhima Nikaya 70**

15. What does it mean to have faith in the Buddha? *The above caveat gives balance to the Buddha's advice: just as you shouldn't give unreserved trust to outside authority, you cannot give unreserved trust to your own logic and feelings if they go against experience and the genuine wisdom of others. As other early discourses make clear, wise people can be recognized by their words and behavior as measured against standards set by the Buddha and his awakened disciples. The proper attitude toward those who meet these standards is faith: “For a disciple who has conviction in the Teachers message and lives to penetrate it, what accords with the Dharma is this: “The Blessed one is the Teacher, I am a disciple. He is the one who knows, not I”* **Majjhima Nikaya 70** Repeatedly the Buddha stated that faith in a teacher is what leads you to learn from that teacher. Faith in the Buddha's own awakening is a requisite strength for anyone else who wants to attain awakening. **p71 ‘Faith in Awakening’ Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Tricycle, Summer 2006**
16. What important lesson can faith in the awakening of the Buddha connote for us? *The most important lesson, and the most important item of faith, is simply the fact of the awakening itself. The Buddha achieved it through his own efforts, and he did so, not because he was more than human, but because he developed mental qualities we all have the potential to develop. To have faith in his awakening thus means having faith in our own potential for awakening.* **Thanissaro p74**
17. Why is it important that the two causes of going for refuge be very strong within us? *It is important that the two causes for refuge be strong so that refuge itself is strong and pure.* **M1d21p1**

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## REFUGE IN THE 3 JEWELS CLASS NOTES 2

### THE OBJECTS TO WHICH YOU GO FOR REFUGE

1. Some assert a 'divine creator' that is permanent; a creator of the world without cause and who never suffered. Why is a 'divine creator' not a Buddha? *A Buddha comes into existence dependent on specific causes while his skill in freeing others from suffering arose from his personal experiences of suffering and the methods he discovered that brought about their cessation.* **BSPm1-5q9**
2. Why is a 'divine creator' not a sentient being? *A 'divine creator of the world' is not a sentient being because it is not an object of knowledge. The world is created by the karma of sentient beings that experience it.* **BSPm1-5q10**
3. What are the three criteria which we use to determine whether something exists conventionally? *We hold that something exists conventionally (1) it must be known to a conventional consciousness; (2) if no other conventional valid cognition contradicts or invalidates its being as it is thus known; and (3) if reason that accurately analyzes its final reality—that is, analyzes whether something inherently exists—does not invalidate it. We hold that what fails to meet those criteria does not exist.* **M4d10p17**
4. What are some of the reasons for calling the refuge objects the three jewels? *They are called jewels or ratna, meaning very precious, of great value ≠ rinpoche; instead it is kern cho meaning rare + supreme meaning most excellent and unsurpassable.*
  - 1) rare, hard to encounter
  - 2) stainless, free from all emotional stains
  - 3) powerful, extinguish all suffering
  - 4) ornament, much goodness
  - 5) excellence, eternal peace
  - 6) changeless, never fall back **p46-47, 'The Uttara Tantra: A treatise on Buddha Nature' by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche**
5. How do we go about developing a strong and stable conviction in the Three Jewels so that our refuge will transform the mind? *So that the mind may be transformed by the process of taking refuge we can develop a strong and stable conviction in the Three Jewels by*
  - 1) Understanding the circumstances and causes of the bad migrations
  - 2) Considering whether we have created those causes
  - 3) Developing strong and constant fear when we find we have created those causes
  - 4) Searching in earnest for protection from the consequences of our actions
  - 5) And to have confidence that taking refuge in the qualities of the three Jewels does protect us. **Sopa1p402**

## THE REASONS WHY THEY ARE WORTHY TO BE A REFUGE

1. We can't see the Buddha or his qualities so how are we to gain conviction that he is a good and reliable object of refuge? *We can infer that the Buddha is a good and reliable source of refuge by his teachings on the causes for suffering and liberation which are supported by valid reasons* **BSPm1-5q6**
2. Give four reasons why the Buddha is a worthy refuge and describe why these qualities are necessary?
  - 1) *The Buddha is free of all fears, without which he would not protect others from all fears.*
  - 2) *He is skilled in all the means of freeing others, without which he would not be able to fulfill your needs*
  - 3) *He has great compassion without which he would not protect you even if you went to him for refuge*
  - 4) *He is only pleased by offerings of practice; if not he would only work for those who have helped him.* **LRCM1p179-180**
3. Why is each of the four reasons explaining why Buddha is a worthy non-deceptive refuge important? *Each of the four reasons is important because*
  - 1) *Having attained a fearless state of complete self-control is important because only a person who is no longer under the control of contaminated causes and conditions has the power and ability to fearlessly help others free themselves from their contaminated causes and conditions. Because a Buddha is without fear they are a worthy non-deceptive refuge.*
  - 2) *Being an expert in training others is important because only a person who has superlative proficiency in thousands of methods to help everyone can help you attain emancipation. Because Buddha is skilful he is a worthy non-deceptive refuge.*
  - 3) *Only a person who has compassion so great that it encompasses all sentient beings would help you attain your own emancipation. Because a Buddha has great compassion he is a worthy non-deceptive refuge.*
  - 4) *Only a person who works for the benefit of others regardless of whether they have benefited them in the past or not are a worthy non-deceptive refuge and can help you attain your own emancipation.* **Sopa1p403-404**
4. What does it mean to say that the Buddha is a worthy object of refuge because he is free of all fears? *The Buddha has attained the fearless state of self-control. The Buddha achieved complete peace. In other words he completely eliminated all of the mental afflictions of hatred, attachment, pride and so forth. The result of eradicating all these rough samsaric faults is a state of fearlessness, because one is no longer under the power of uncontrolled causes and conditions. If someone is worried about his own preservation he cannot be your savior; a person who is afraid cannot save others from fear* **Sopa1p403** *As a result of purifying and overcoming all his faults, abandoning everything that is to be abandoned, and developing every positive quality in his mind, Buddha has attained the nature (essence) body or svabhavikakaya, and*

attained the state of fearlessness **Yangsi1p128** That the Buddha is without fear means the Buddha never has the feeling that he cannot understand something or becomes discouraged **The Uttara Tantra: Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche p160**

5. The Buddha is said to possess four types of fearlessness, what are they? *The four kinds of fearlessness are*
  - 1) Fearlessness in expressing ones own intuitive understanding before all sentient beings, including enlightened beings
  - 2) Fearlessness in guaranteeing that one has abandoned all the obstacles to be abandoned.
  - 3) Fearlessness in stating what sentient beings must abandon in order to progress spiritually.
  - 4) Fearlessness in explaining which opponent powers are to be used against the disturbing emotions **p228 'Tibetan Tradition of Mental Development' by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey**
6. It is also said that the Buddha is without fear because he has conquered the maras. What are these maras? *The Buddha is fearless having conquered the four Maras, the four obstacles to spiritual attainment. In general, the label 'mara' is given to what blocks a practitioner from attaining awakening or perfect liberation. The four maras are the mara of death, the mara of the aggregates, the mara of the disturbing emotions and the mara of the Devas son. The fourth mara is what obstructs the practice of Dharma and prevents us from becoming free of the first three maras. It is called deva-putra-mara, or the mara of the child of the gods. A child of the gods sounds delightful, and this mara is depicted as a very attractive person wearing beautiful clothes and jewelry. It is actually all desirable things - what is pleasing to the eye, ear, nose, tongue and touch. But their attractiveness is not the problem; it is our craving for and fixation on these pleasures and desirable states that prevents us conquering the other three maras **p19 'A Song for the King' by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche***
7. What does it mean to say that the Buddha is skilled in all the means to free others? *The person in whom you go for refuge must have mastered the ways to help other sentient beings. He or she must be skillful in taming disciples. A proper refuge must be like a skilled doctor - an expert in the techniques of protecting and saving others. If that skill is lacking, the refuge will not be able to help you even if he has saved himself. Buddhas have superlative proficiency in thousands of methods that can help you reach emancipation; **Sopa1p404** the Buddha is skilled in liberating other sentient beings from their states of fear. This is because Buddha has completed the extensive accumulation of the merit of virtue, and as a result has attained the form body for the benefit of others; **Yangsi1p128-129** All of the skillful activities performed by enlightened beings to help others and eliminate unfavorable circumstances may be summarized into four types of behavior; pacifying, increasing, controlling and fierce subduing **Patrul p413***

8. What sort of compassion does the Buddha possess that makes the Buddha a worthy object of Refuge? *The Buddha has a compassion that does not discriminate between beings. As a result of having nurtured the mind of loving concern to its furthest extent, Buddha has attained the fearlessness of committing himself to revealing the path of the antidotes to all other beings.* **Yangsi1p129**
9. What sort of equanimity does the Buddha possess that makes the Buddha a worthy object of Refuge? *Buddha is completely free of bias toward sentient beings because of his faultless compassion and bodhicitta, and thus is able to perfectly benefit sentient beings regardless of whether they have helped or harmed him in the past. This is the fearlessness of fully committing himself to revealing the objects of abandonment to others* **Yangsi1p129**
10. According to Pabongkha Rinpoche, approximately how long would a person be expected to meditate on the four reasons explaining why the Buddha is a worthy object of Refuge? *According to Pabongkha Rinpoche you will elicit a mental transformation by reflecting for about seven days on the four reasons that explain why they are a worthy object of refuge.* **Liberation in our Hands, Pabongka Rinpoche p34**
11. What are the external and internal causes of our being protected? *The external cause that protects us is the Teacher (Buddha) and the internal cause of protection is faith in him and his teachings. Lama Tsong-Kha-pa says there are two causes of your being protected: an external and an internal. The Teacher has already fully realized the external factor or cause, but you suffer because you have not yet developed the internal factor, entrusting yourself to the refuge.* **LRCM1p180**
12. How does Buddha afford us refuge? *The Buddha affords us refuge through what he taught. He liberates by teaching the truth of reality.* **M1d20p51**
13. What is the essence or heart of going for refuge to the Buddha Jewel? *The essence of going for refuge to the Buddha Jewel is to practice the advice given by the Teacher Shakyamuni Buddha.* **M1d20p51**
14. Why are the teachings and the community worthy objects of refuge? *Only a Buddha has no faults and all good qualities and is not misleading therefore his teachings and his community of disciples is also a worthy object of refuge.* **LRCM1p180**
15. What is the dharma jewel? *The dharma jewel is the teaching jewel; it has two aspects, scriptural and realization wherein it mainly refers to the true paths and the true cessations* **M1d21p12**
16. Of the Three jewels, which is the actual refuge? Why is this? *Of the three jewels the actual refuge is what the Buddha taught, the Dharma Jewel. This is because it is the means (True Paths) to deliver us from suffering and the result that is freedom from suffering (True Cessations)* **M1d20p53**



17. How do we use the dharma jewel to attain Buddhahood? *The dharma jewel is the means by which you attain the Buddha jewel. By adopting some things and discarding other things we can attain Buddhahood.* **M1d21p12**
18. How can we say that the Buddha jewel is the result of the dharma jewel? *We can say that the Buddha jewel is the result of the dharma jewel because the Buddha possesses limitless good qualities, all of which arose from meditating on and realizing both the verbal teachings (scripture) and the teachings as they are put into practice (realization)* **M1d21p12**
19. In what texts are the reasons found which provide the logical basis for going for refuge to the triple gem? *The texts which provide the logical reasons for going for Refuge to the triple gem are “The Compendium of Right Perception” by Dignaga and the commentaries of Dharmakirti called “The Precise Commentary on the Compendium of Right Perception” especially chapter two, “Proof of Right Perception”. It is mainly within these two texts that the points establishing the authenticity of the Triple Gem as suitable objects of refuge are explained. These points essentially retrace Buddha's path to enlightenment and allow us to see how it is possible for our own minds to realize emptiness and achieve enlightenment ourselves* **Yangsi1p294**
20. Geshe-la warned us against going for refuge with the wrong attitude – what is the attitude we need to avoid? *When going for refuge Geshe-la said that it is important to avoid the wrong attitude of thinking that we do not have to do anything more now that we have taken refuge.* **M1d20p51**

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## REFUGE IN THE 3 JEWELS CLASS NOTES 3

### THE WAY YOU GO FOR REFUGE

#### THE FIRST PART: (A) THE GOOD QUALITIES OF THE BUDDHA

1. What are the four aspects of going for Refuge? *The four aspects of going for refuge are (1) By knowing the good qualities, (2) By knowing the distinctions (3) Through commitment, and (4) By refusing to acknowledge other refuges.* **LRCM1p181**
2. What are the three subdivisions of going for refuge by knowing the good qualities? *The three subdivisions of going for refuge by knowing the good qualities are*
  - a. *The good qualities of the Buddha*
  - b. *The good qualities of the teaching*
  - c. *The good qualities of the community* **LRCM1p181**
3. What does the word Buddha mean to Tibetans? *The Tibetan word for the Buddha is sang gye. The first syllable sang, means to 'cleanse or remove', and refers to the removal of ignorance. The second syllable 'gye', means 'expanded or blossomed'. When ignorance is removed, appearances caused by it cease, and, consequently there is no fear. 'A Song for the King' by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, p25-26*
4. How are the good qualities of the Buddha explained? *The good qualities of the Buddha are explained in four parts. These four parts are*
  - 1) *The good qualities of the Buddha's body*
  - 2) *The good qualities of the Buddha's speech*
  - 3) *The good qualities of the Buddha's mind*
  - 4) *The good qualities of enlightened activities* **LRCM1p181**
5. How we should go for refuge according to the Lamrim Chenmo? *According to the Lamrim Chenmo, the way we should go for refuge is by recognizing the qualities of the objects of refuge, understanding the differences between the three objects of refuge, accepting the objects of refuge as the ultimate objects of refuge, and going for refuge to the three jewels without seeking any other refuge.* **Yangs1p129**
6. What are the benefits of reflecting on the qualities of the refuge objects according to the Lamrim Chenmo? *The more often we reflect on the qualities of the Triple Gem the stronger and more enduring our faith in them will become.* **M1d21p8**
7. Why is it important to use analytical meditation to contemplate these topics? *It is important to use analytical meditation to contemplate these topics because it brings about a stable awareness that is very forceful and capable of changing the mind.* **Sopa 1p239** *Another benefit that flows from analytical meditation is that when we read the scriptures and their commentaries those texts will appear to us to be personal instructions.* **M1d21p8**

8. What is the definition of Buddha potential? *The definition of Buddha potential is; phenomena suitable to be transformed into a Buddha's body. 'The Fundamental Potential for Enlightenment' by Geshe Acharya Thubten Loden, p186*
9. What is the definition of the Buddha jewel? *The definition of the Buddha jewel is "the consummate source of refuge which possesses eight qualities such as being uncompounded and so forth". 'Sublime Continuum' by Geshe Tashi Tsering, 2p1*
10. What function do the qualities of a Buddha Jewel fulfill? *The short answer to the qualities of the Buddha is perfect fulfillment for oneself and for others. The most complete answer is to say the Buddha has eight qualities which are the six qualities plus the value for self and the value for others. 'The Uttara Tantra: A treatise on Buddha Nature' by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, p25*
11. What is the first quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must experience death and rebirth that are free from the two obscurations. Yangsi1p129 The first quality of the Buddha is to be UNCREATED. Buddha is eternal, centerless, and endless. Eternal means there is no starting point of the Buddha. Centerless means there is no place where the Buddha abides. Endless means there is no death, no interruption of the Buddha. A birth, a place of abiding, and an ending, implies a condition of change. If there were change, even with happiness in the beginning, this happiness could change to suffering. Change automatically means impermanence and impermanence implies suffering. Being uncreated, the Buddha doesn't belong to conditioned phenomena which changes. Buddhahood is not created because it is inherent in the mind of all beings from the beginning. Because it was not created the nature of Buddhahood is changeless. 'Uttara Tantra', p21-25*
12. What is the second quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must possess spontaneous activity. Yangsi1p129 The second quality of the Buddha is peace or equanimity which implies the spontaneous presence of everything beneficial. This SPONTANEITY means the absence of effort. Peace means that all of the conceptual agitation has ended. All the qualities of the Buddha, the qualities of the dharmakaya and form kayas are inherently present and do not have to be modified or developed in any way. They have always been there without any effort 'Uttara Tantra', p24*
13. What is the third quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must be endowed with OMNISCIENT mind that knows phenomena beyond words and conception. Yangsi1p129 The third quality is realization without depending on something external. The Buddha has no need to rely on an external object or condition. 'Uttara Tantra', p24*
14. What is the fourth quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must also know both conventional and ultimate phenomena. Yangsi1p129 The fourth quality is PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. If one shows the path to others, one needs to*

*know it oneself; otherwise there is nothing to show. This means the understanding of the Buddha cannot be partial and the Buddha must continuously perceive the true nature of phenomena, not just glimpse it. The perfect knowledge of the Buddha has two aspects: the knowledge of seeing phenomena as they are and the knowledge of seeing the multitude and variety of phenomena. ‘Uttara Tantra’, p25*

15. What is the fifth quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must possess limitless loving compassion; Yangsi1p129 the fifth quality is COMPASSIONATE LOVE. If the Buddha perceived the nature of phenomena without compassion, he would keep this knowledge to himself. The Buddha is endowed with perfect compassion quite similar but stronger than, the love a mother has for her only child. That love implies one wants to free the other person from suffering and have him or her be happy. The Buddha has the most perfect form of compassion and this makes him able to help beings ‘Uttara Tantra’, p25*
16. What is the sixth quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must possess ability or POWER; Yangsi1p129 the Buddha has perfect knowledge and compassion, but these two qualities can't help all beings if a sixth quality is lacking. To remove suffering and the cause of suffering, one must have the power to do it. The Buddha has this ability to help others free themselves from suffering and the causes of their suffering with compassion and knowledge. ‘Uttara Tantra’, p25*
17. What is the seventh quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must also fulfill the ultimate benefit for oneself Yangsi1p129*
18. What is the eighth quality of the Buddha jewel? *The Buddha object of refuge must also fulfill the ultimate benefit for others Yangsi1p129*
19. We often think and say that the Buddha is a person but, are the Buddha's necessarily persons? *Although we often think of the Buddha as a person and speak of him as such the Buddha is not necessarily a person. All of the following are Buddhas, the Buddha Jewel and they are not persons*
  - 1) *A Buddhas body, speech or mind*
  - 2) *The crown ornament, the arms, legs and*
  - 3) *Consummate abandonment and realization*
  - 4) *Essence Dharmakaya & the sublime wisdom Dharmakaya*
  - 5) *The true cessations in the continuum of an Arya buddha M1d2p12*
20. What are the bodies of the Buddha and how are they described in terms of full awakening? *In the Mahayana, full awakening is often described in terms of the kayas, meaning “bodies” or “dimensions of reality”, which number two, three, four or five.*
  - 1) *When they are **TWO** they are the Dharmakaya (dimension [or body] of truth) and the Rupakaya (body of form).*

- *The Dharmakaya is the perfect realization of mind's nature and replete with enlightened qualities; it is non-conceptual and synonymous with emptiness or omniscience.*
- 2) *When the kayas are **THREE** the Rupakaya is divided into the sambhogakaya (body of bliss or enjoyment) and the nirmanakaya (body of manifestation or emanation).*
    - *Expressing the nature of radiant clarity, the Sambhogakaya is visible only to bodhisattvas on the ten levels. It is adorned with the 32 major and 80 minor marks and further defined through the five certainties of residence, entourage, teaching, time-span, and body.*
    - *The Nirmanakaya is the fully awakened mind that manifests without impediment in a variety of forms and remains visible to ordinary beings.*
  - 3) *When the kayas are **FOUR** the Svabhavikakaya (body of the essential nature) refers to the inseparability of the other three.*
  - 4) *When the kayas are **FIVE** the Mahasukhakaya (body of great bliss) refers to the blissful nature of the Dharmakaya. **'A Song for the King', p172***
21. In what way is this classification consistent with one another? *These classifications are all viewed as consistent with one another in that the enjoyment and emanation bodies represent the two types of form body, and the wisdom and essence bodies can each be subsumed within the other depending on how they are explained. **'Liberation in our Hands' by Pabongka Rinpoche, p319***
22. What is the SVABHAVIKAKAYA? *This Sanskrit term is another name for the Essence or Nature body of the Buddha. It is the abandonment of the appearances created by innate self grasping together with their imprints. This is also what the non-abiding nirvana is. This exists within the continuum of a Buddha. **Insight2m3p8***
23. What is the definition of a NATURE body? *The definition of a nature body is: an ultimate sphere possessing two purities **Loden, p155***
24. How is the nature body described in terms of its properties, characteristics and attributes? *The Essence/nature body is described in the Ornament of Realizations in terms of these three properties; (1) Immaculateness, (2) Complete purity and (3) Un-originated natural condition. The Essence body is also described in the Treatise on the Higher Science of the Mahayana as having five essential characteristics and five attributes. **Pabongka p290***
25. What are the five essential characteristics of the essence/nature body? The five essential characteristics of the essence body are to be
- 1) *Non-produced, because the nature body is not subject to production, duration or disintegration and*



- 2) *Indivisible in nature from its qualities of power and so forth.*
- 3) *Complete abandonment of the two extremes of exaggeration and denial.*
  - *Exaggeration is exaggerating the mode of existence of phenomena to the extreme of inherent existence. Exaggeration is taking something that actually does not exist and asserting its existence.*
  - *Denial is denying the actual mode of existence of phenomena as mere dependent arisings and thus falling to the extreme of non-existence. Denial is taking something that actually does exist and asserting its non-existence.*
- 4) *Free of the three obscurations: afflictions, objects of knowledge and meditative absorptions, because the nature body is beyond obscuration. The three obscurations are:*
  - *The obscurations of the afflictions which are the obscurations to liberation;*
  - *The obscurations to the objects of knowledge which are the obscurations to omniscience; and*
  - *The obscurations of meditative absorptions which are the seeking of the bliss of peace for oneself alone and is an obscuration to Mahayana realizations.*
- 5) *The nature of clear light because it is pure by nature and cannot be perceived as it is by any conceptual mind. It is the yogi's object of perception when in meditative equipoise on emptiness. It is the final or ultimate sphere of purity because by nature it is purified of the defilements. **Loden p156***

26. What are the five qualities of the essence/nature body? The five qualities of the essence body are to be

- 1) *Immeasurable because the nature body's qualities are so vast that they cannot even be estimated.*
- 2) *Innumerable because the qualities surpass the number of grains of sand in the Ganges river;*
- 3) *Inconceivable because the nature body cannot be conceived of as any of the four alternatives by the logicians.*
- 4) *Incomparable because the nature body is only possessed by Buddha's, and no other being possess anything comparable;*
- 5) *Ultimately pure quality because the nature body has completely abandoned all afflictions and their predispositions. **Loden p157***

27. Is the nature body an ultimate or relative truth? *The nature body of a Buddha is considered an ultimate truth, because the nature body of a Buddha is itself the emptiness of true existence of that enlightened mind. The nature body has two aspects.*

- 1) *The first is the naturally pure aspect, which is the enlightened minds emptiness of true existence.*
- 2) *The second aspect is the temporarily pure aspect, which refers to the cessation of all the defilements and obscurations, the enlightened mind*



*that has attained the cessation of all the temporary adventitious defilements.* **Yangsi1p432**

28. How may the two purities be categorized into the two types? *The two purities are purity from the object of negation, inherent existence and purity from the adventitious defilements. According to these two purities the nature body can be categorized into two types. The first is the naturally pure nature body and the second is the “pure of adventitious” nature body, (the temporarily pure).* **Loden p155**
29. Are the three bodies in essence an indivisible dimension? *Yes, the indivisibility of the three other bodies is the essential dimension.* **‘Systems of Buddhist Tantra’ by Jamgon Kongtrul p383/n40**
30. What does it mean to say the Buddha’s body is uncontaminated? *The Buddha’s body and mind are a single entity and both are free of contaminated karma and disturbing emotions.* **M1d21p4; Sopa1p409**
31. What does it mean to say that the Buddha’s mind ‘pervades all objects of knowledge’ and that a Buddha’s body pervades all? *When it is said that the Buddha’s mind ‘pervades all objects of knowledge’ it means the Buddha’s mind knows or realizes every existent, every object of knowledge. Because a Buddha’s body and mind are a single entity the Buddha’s body also ‘pervades all objects of knowledge’. The Buddha’s body therefore also realizes every existent, every object of knowledge.* **M1d21p6**
32. What is the definition of the JNANA-DHARMAKAYA, the WISDOM TRUTH body? *The definition of a wisdom truth body is: ‘a final exalted wisdom consciousness perceiving all modes and varieties of objects of knowledge’.* **Loden p190**
33. What is a wisdom truth body? *The wisdom truth body is the ground-of-all purified of adventitious stains and is called the reality dimension.* **Kongtrul p383/n40**  
*Kedrup Tenba Dargye defines the wisdom truth body as ‘ultimate and immaculate wisdom that has been transformed beyond all states of impurity’.* **Pabongka p291**  
*This is the conscious state of the Buddha’s mind, which understands all there is to know. This is attained solely by Buddha’s;* **Dhargyey p223** *the Dharma body is comprised of four principal forms of wisdom according to one commentary on the Ornament of Mahayana Sutras while according to the Ornament of Realizations the Dharma body is comprised of twenty-one types of immaculate wisdom.* **Pabongka p291-307**
34. What is the definition of a SAMBHOGA KAYA, the Buddha’s ENJOYMENT body? *A Buddha’s enjoyment body is defined as ‘the ultimate physical body possessing five certainties’. It is ‘a final form body possessing five definite characteristics’.* **Loden, p158**

35. What are the five definite characteristics that this final form body possesses? *The five definite characteristics of a Buddha's enjoyment body are to have a*
- 1) *Definite abode (Residence).*
    - *The enjoyment body abides only in a "Heavily Adorned Highest Pure Land". Though never abiding in other places, the enjoyment body's emanations go everywhere.*
  - 2) *Definite retinue (entourage)*
    - *An enjoyment body is always surrounded only by Superior Bodhisattvas. Ordinary beings, Hearers and Solitary Realizers are unable to perceive a Buddha's complete enjoyment body.*
  - 3) *Definite doctrine (teaching)*
    - *An enjoyment body teaches only the Mahayana Dharma and never sets forth teachings of the lower vehicle.*
  - 4) *Definite time (time-span)*
    - *An enjoyment body abides without showing the aspects of birth and death until cyclic existence has been emptied of beings.*
  - 5) *Definite body*
    - *An enjoyment body is always adorned with the thirty-two major signs and eighty minor marks of a perfect being **Loden, p158***
36. What are some of the causes and effects which result in any two of the thirty-two major signs? *The complete enjoyment body has the definite characteristic of always possessing 32 major signs. There were causes practiced in previous lives which brought results so that*
- 1) *His skin is golden colored; the result of giving furniture and so forth (14)*
  - 2) *His head has a crown protrusion; a result of previously offering temples, monks' quarters and so forth, and providing homes for the homeless. (23)*  
**Loden, p173**
37. Is the Buddha's skin actually yellow? *When we speak of the golden complexion of the Buddha it doesn't mean that his skin is a yellowish color. It indicates that his skin has an extraordinary radiant and rich luster. **Sopa1p411***
38. What is the definition of a major sign? *The definition of a major sign is: a pure quality depending on the dominant condition of a mind of actual concentration and which symbolizes that Buddha's are noble beings. **Loden, p160***
39. What are some of the causes and effects which result in two of the minor marks? *The complete enjoyment body has the definite characteristic of always possessing 80 minor marks. There were causes practiced in previous lives which brought results;*
- 1) *He is well built and attractive: from expressing the good qualities of others(18)*
  - 2) *His complexion is glowing as if having been polished: from his actions of body, speech and mind not having been tainted by negativities. (19)*  
**Loden, p173**

40. What is the definition of a minor mark? *The definition of a minor mark is: a pure quality depending on the dominant condition of actual concentration enabling other trainees to understand the pure qualities within the continuum of a Buddha.* **Loden, p186**
41. What are the five qualities of a Buddha's enjoyment body? *A Buddha's enjoyment body is described as having these five qualities.*
- 1) *It reveals physical manifestations uninterruptedly*
  - 2) *It speaks the dharma uninterruptedly*
  - 3) *It performs a Buddha's mental activities uninterruptedly*
  - 4) *It acts effortlessly*
  - 5) *It appears in different forms according to the propensities of beings, though its actual nature is to be free of diversity.* **Pabongka p307**
42. Do the statues and images of Buddha's belong to this kaya? *All statues and images of Buddha's belong to this kaya, but their real nature is not visible due to the impurities of our minds. The sambhogakaya is the physical form of the Buddha's wisdom and, in tantric teachings, is known as the Vajra of speech or as the voice of the Buddha.* **Dhargyey p223-224**
43. What is the definition of a Buddha's EMANATION body? *A Buddha's emanation body is the Nirmanakaya and is defined as 'the second type of physical body, which acts extensively on behalf of others through appearing directly to ordinary beings – both those with and without karmic obstructions'. Pabongka p314 Another definition given is that an emanation body is: 'an ultimate form body not possessing the five definite characteristics of the complete enjoyment body' Loden p179*
44. What is another name for the emanation body? *The emanation body of a Buddha is also called the NIRMANAKAYA. This is the form of a Buddha that can be seen and experienced by ordinary beings. It is the manifest dimension of awakening. The consciousness that perceives objects, when purified through the phase of generation, is the manifest dimension, which accomplishes the welfare of others through various means.* **Kongtrul p383/n40**
45. What are the different types of emanation body and how do they appear to others? *The nirmanakaya is the transformation of the Enjoyment body (sambhogakaya) into ordinary form. It is a true manifestation of the Buddha and its purpose is to enable a Buddha to communicate with those sentient beings having lesser attainment than that of the Arya Bodhisattvas. Those with pure karma are able to see the nirmanakaya form, whereas others see only an ordinary sentient being. There are three or four kinds of nirmanakaya.*
- 1) *Supreme nirmanakaya's always appear as monks, complete with the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks. They always enact the twelve deeds for the sake of helping sentient beings. Whether or not his form appears on earth, the Enlightened Teachers abode is the Akanishta heaven*

- 2) *The nirmanakaya may also appear as artisan master craftsmen such as musicians or sculptors.*
  - 3) *The nirmanakaya also appears as the host in the deva realms. Any Universal teacher must first be the host in Tushita heaven, acting as a religious guide for the Devas. **Dhargyey p224-225***
  - 4) *A birth emanation body is where the Buddha takes rebirth in various forms, such as a bird or animal, in order to benefit those beings **Loden p179***
46. *Is there any way at all to accurately describe the Buddha's perfect body? Actually there is no way to accurately praise the Buddha's perfect body. Its qualities are supra-mundane. Since they are beyond the ordinary world we don't have accurate analogies for them; however we can use whatever we can find in the world that suggests the Buddha's extraordinary qualities. **Sopa1p411***
47. *While the above is the case, what four thoughts might we skillfully employ to help us develop faith and a recollection of the Buddha's qualities when gazing upon the Buddha's body? When gazing upon the Buddha's body we can think that*
- 1) *This holy body is the result of having become completely free of fear.*
  - 2) *This holy body is perfectly skillful and can guide us into a state of fearlessness.*
  - 3) *This holy body represents compassion without discrimination.*
  - 4) *This holy body benefits all sentient beings regardless of past experiences of help or harm. **Yangsi1p131***
48. *Why do we need to know and repeatedly recollect the good qualities of the objects of refuge? Knowledge of the 3 Jewels is not enough to develop faith in them and that's why we must repeatedly recollect their good qualities. **M1d21p2** We need to know and recollect repeatedly the good qualities of the objects of refuge to clearly develop a firm conviction that they are the roots of dharma practice. **M1d21p5** If we gain certainty about them we will go for refuge to them from the depths of our heart and train oneself in the precepts of refuge. **M1d21p11***
49. *How are the good qualities of the Buddha explained? The good qualities of the Buddha are explained in four parts. These four parts are*
- 1) *The good qualities of the Buddha's body*
  - 2) *The good qualities of the Buddha's speech*
  - 3) *The good qualities of the Buddha's mind*
  - 4) *The good qualities of enlightened activities **LRCM1p181***
50. *Describe the wonderful qualities of the Buddha's speech. There are two traditions that record the qualities of a Buddha's speech. The Ornament of Mahayana Sutras refers to sixty qualities, while the Sutra which reveals the Inscrutable Mystery of the Tathagata enumerates sixty-four. **Liberation in our Hands, Pabongka Rinpoche 2p315** For instance*
- 1) *A Buddha's speech is not preceded by any conceptual activity*

- 2) *The Buddha's speech is never deceptive. His advice is totally genuine*
  - 3) *He perfectly comprehends every subject he speaks about*
  - 4) *There is no contradiction between what he says and who he is*
  - 5) *His words are eloquent and this makes them easy to understand*
  - 6) *His wisdom is very deep, but what he teaches makes it simple*
  - 7) *His speech is perfectly suited for each person. **Sopa1p414***
  - 8) *It gladdens the heart in that it removes all doubt (19)*
  - 9) *It is free of attachment in that it is never based upon a desire for gain or honor. (47)*
  - 10) *It is eloquent in that it expresses the dharma in many different ways (53)*
  - 11) *It speaks in all languages, in that one voice can speak many languages. A Buddha's single utterance can be understood by gods, demigods, humans and so on, each in their own language. (54) **Lib2p31***
51. What in general is the major characteristic of the Buddha's mind? *The general characteristic of the Buddha's mind is omniscience. **Yangsi1p132***
52. What in general are the specific qualities of the Buddha's mind? *The specific qualities are the ability to perceive existence exactly as it is, the ability to perceive the two truths simultaneously and directly with one consciousness, and the ability to effortlessly understand the subtle workings of karmic causes and their effects. Also, just as we are bound by karma and delusions, Buddha's holy mind is bound by the thought of loving concern and compassion for all sentient beings. **Yangsi1p132***
53. Is the presence of the refuge dependent on our faith in them? *Wherever the holy mind is, the holy body is there as well. Wherever the holy body is, the holy speech is there too. Therefore, whether the holy objects of refuge are present or not is not dependent on our faith in them. However to relate to the auspiciousness of our practice and to strengthen our faith, we recite the prayers of invocation and so forth **Yangsi1p132***
54. What does it mean to say that the Buddha's mind 'pervades all objects of knowledge' and that a Buddha's body pervades all? *When it is said that the Buddha's mind 'pervades all objects of knowledge' it means the Buddha's mind knows or realizes every existent, every object of knowledge. Because a Buddha's body and mind are a single entity the Buddha's body also 'pervades all objects of knowledge'. The Buddha's body therefore also knows or realizes every existent, every object of knowledge. **M1d21p6***
55. If the Buddha's mind 'pervades all objects of knowledge' and the Buddha's body pervades all, then what is the purpose for doing practices like the visualization of the merit field when we invite the holy beings to enter? *Inviting the holy beings to enter the visualization of the merit field is a skilful method to help us overcome our preconceptions of where the Buddha's abide. **M1d21p6***



56. How are the qualities of the Buddha's mind divided? Say a little about each of the two divisions. *The qualities of the Buddha's mind are explained in terms of*
- 1) *The good qualities of knowledge &*
  - 2) *The good qualities of caring* **M1d21p5**
    - *Within the good qualities of knowledge the Buddha's mind (an exalted knower) is able to spontaneously and effortlessly contact the real nature (emptiness) and diversity (conventional) of all phenomena without obstruction. His mind is unimpeded with respect to the single and the manifold, animate and inanimate phenomena.* **M1d21p7**
    - *Within the good qualities of caring the Buddha's mind is bound to sentient beings with a great compassion that spontaneously and constantly seeks to dispel the multitude of illnesses, miseries and afflictions that afflict those sentient beings.* **M1d21p8**
57. Explain how it is that the Buddha's enlightened activities are able to help living beings. *A Buddha's enlightened activities*
- 1) *Reveal the deceitfulness of the disturbing emotions*
  - 2) *Explain the destruction of those afflictions*
  - 3) *Proclaim the terrifying nature of cyclic existence*
  - 4) *Show the way to fearlessness* **M1d21p8** and
- These activities are able to help living beings if those beings are open to his guidance*
58. How do the activities of the Buddha's manifest in the world? *The activities of the Buddha's, manifest in the world through the dharmakaya. This acts as the condition, activating the virtuous imprints in the minds of sentient beings. Sentient beings, from their side, are able to experience the positive results of this activity because they are endowed with Buddha-nature.* **Yangsi1p132** *The divine activity of the Buddha's is completely spontaneous. Although this is the case, whether sentient beings actually receive the blessings of the Buddha or not is dependent on them.* **Yangsi1p134**
59. What is a blessing? *A blessing is a positive transformation within your mind. Viewing it as an external event that happens to you with no effort on your part is a misunderstanding. The primary cause of receiving a blessing comes from you, and the main cause that is needed from your own side is faith.* **Yangsi1p135**
60. Why is it important to use analytical meditation to contemplate these topics? *It is important to use analytical meditation to contemplate these topics because it brings about a stable awareness that is very forceful and capable of changing the mind* **Sopa1p239**
- *In other words the more often we reflect on the qualities of the Triple Gem the stronger and more enduring our faith in them will become.* **M1d21p9**
  - *Another benefit that flows from analytical meditation is that when we read the scriptures and their commentaries those texts will appear to us to be personal instructions* **M1d21p9**



61. Whose assertion was it that analytical meditation is mere conceptuality? *It was the incorrect view of the Chinese Abbot Hashang Mahayana that analytical meditation is mere conceptuality and an obstacle to enlightenment.* [LRCM1p109](#)
62. How did Lama Tsong Khapa debate that wrong assertion? *Lama Tsong Khapa debated that wrong assertion using quotes from Maitreya's Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras, which states "Proper attention is based upon prior study. Sublime wisdom, which takes reality as its object, arises from your cultivation of proper attention."* [LRCM1p109](#)
63. What are the benefits of reflecting on the Buddha's good qualities again and again? *The benefits of reflecting on the Buddha's good qualities again and again are to clearly develop a firm conviction in them so that*
- 1) *We develop faith in the Buddha and*
  - 2) *Develop the mind of enlightenment and*
  - 3) *Receive a blessing commensurate with the strength and purity of our mind. We will also*
  - 4) *Have visions of the Buddha night and day and*
  - 5) *No matter how much we suffer at the time of death we will not lose our recollection of the Buddha* [M1d21p10](#)
64. According to Pabongkha Rinpoche, how should we proceed after eliciting the mental transformation from meditating on the four reasons that explain why the Triple Gem is a worthy object of refuge? *He says that after that elicitation, "meditate on a Buddha's physical, verbal and mental qualities, and on the qualities of his activities.*
- *Do this in accord with your intellectual powers, either in brief by following the explanations that appear in the Lamrim writings or in detail by following those presented in major philosophical treatises, such as the two Ornaments, the Higher Science, and the like.*
  - *The measure for having generated the proper experiential realization is to develop an intense faith that cannot be reversed. Meditate similarly on the qualities of the dharma and the Sangha – Either in brief as taught in the Lamrim or in detail as taught in the major treatises. The measure for having generated this realization is again to develop a strong faith which cannot be overcome, through having recognized the qualities of this system's Triple Gem – That is, our teacher, his teaching, and those who practice the teaching".* [Lib2p340-342](#)

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## REFUGE IN THE 3 JEWELS CLASS NOTES 4

### THE WAY YOU GO FOR REFUGE

#### THE FIRST PART: (B) THE GOOD QUALITIES OF THE TEACHING

1. How should we go for refuge according to the Lamrim Chenmo? *According to the Lamrim Chenmo, the way we should go for refuge is*
  - 1) *by recognizing the qualities of the objects of refuge,*
  - 2) *understanding the differences between the three objects of refuge,*
  - 3) *accepting the objects of refuge as the ultimate objects of refuge, and*
  - 4) *Going for refuge to the three jewels without seeking any other refuge.*

**Yangsi1p129**
2. What are the three subdivisions of going for refuge by knowing the good qualities? *The three subdivisions of going for refuge by knowing the good qualities are*
  - a. *The good qualities of the Buddha*
  - b. *The good qualities of the teaching*
  - c. *The good qualities of the community* **LRCM1p181**
3. What are the good qualities of the teaching? *The good qualities of the teaching of the Buddha are those teachings that reveal the true paths and true cessations. There are also the vows that we possess in our continuum and the abandonment of non virtue. These function in a similar way to true paths. All virtues within our continuum can be considered the refuge of dharma. ‘Sublime Continuum’ by Geshe Tashi Tsering*
4. What is the Dharma Jewel? *The Dharma Jewel is a path or cessation that includes one or another of the eight qualities such as being ‘inconceivable’. ‘Sublime Continuum’ GTT*
5. What is a path? *Path means the development of a state of consciousness which has been grasped by the force of renunciation. Path, ground and wisdom all have the same meaning, ‘Tibetan Tradition of Mental Development’ by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, p202 the main true path is the awareness that perceptually realizes emptiness. A ‘path in the continuum of an Arya’ is inclusive with ‘true path’* **M1d22p16**
6. When does a True path begin? *The attainment of a True Path begins the 1<sup>st</sup> moment the person perceptually realizes emptiness. That 1<sup>st</sup> moment is called the uninterrupted path of the Path of Seeing.* **M1d20p12**
7. What is the process of the path in general? *The path in general is a process that gradually transcends the confused appearances of samsara and culminates in their elimination. This is referred to as the fruition of the path. The path is usually presented as successive stages, like traveling from one place to another. However the path does not truly consist of going from one state to another; it is more like*

*returning to the original nature that we have failed to recognize. By relinquishing bewilderment and confusion, we discover that nature. Since they are not intrinsic to the true nature of the mind, the nature itself does not change: there is no real moving from one place to another. We merely return to what was always there and see it without confusion or veils of ignorance. ‘A Song for the King’ by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, p31*

8. What is a true cessation? *The later moments after the first moment of the direct perception of emptiness are called the True Cessations of that True Path. The continuum of those moments is also called the liberated path because the seeing abandonment’s have been liberated (abandoned).* **M1d20p12**
  
9. What is the actual, ultimate dharma refuge? *The actual, ultimate dharma refuge is the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness in the mind of an Arya being. Ultimate bodhicitta, the extraordinary pure bodhicitta generated on the path of seeing and the state of the total abandonment of all the delusions are also part of the ultimate Dharma refuge. When an Arya being trains in higher ethics, higher concentration, and higher wisdom with the unification of pure bodhicitta and wisdom that directly realizes emptiness; this too is considered to be the ultimate Dharma refuge* **Yangsi1p127**
  
10. What are the qualities of the ultimate dharma jewel? *The ultimate dharma jewel has two aspects, the true paths and their fruitions, the true cessations. Within the context of TRUE CESSATION, the ultimate dharma jewel has these three aspects*
  - 1) *Inconceivable; means that an ordinary mind cannot conceive of what appears to an Arya being directly perceiving emptiness.*
  - 2) *Non-duality; means freedom from the impurities of karma and defilements and*
  - 3) *Non-conceptual; meaning totally free from concepts and thoughts*

*Within the context of TRUE PATH, the ultimate dharma jewel has these three aspects*

  - 1) *Stainlessness means free from the stains of defilements and dualistic knowledge.*
  - 2) *Brilliance means that one sees phenomena in their relative and ultimate aspect very clearly.*
  - 3) *Remedial power means that the defilements of the three poisons, attachment, aggression and ignorance have been eliminated. ‘Uttara Tantra’, p34*
  
11. What similarities do the three terms nirvana, final true cessation and true cessation have between them? *There are three terms that have similarities between them. These terms are nirvana, final true cessation and true cessation.*
  - 1) *Nirvana is an analytical cessation in which all disturbing emotions without exception have been abandoned.*
  - 2) *A final true cessation is the abandonment of both cognitive and emotional obscuration* **M1d22p24**

- 3) *Through the power of the wisdom realizing the absence of inherent existence, the defilements are extinguished in the sphere of the final nature of phenomena; such a pure sphere of reality is called a true cessation*  
**‘The Dalai Lama at Harvard’, HHDL, p106**

12. What are the possibilities between a true cessation and nirvana? *There are three possibilities between being a true cessation and nirvana.*

- 1) *Something that is not a true cessation and not nirvana is the continuum of an ordinary being who has not perceptually realized emptiness.*
  - 2) *Something that is a true cessation and not nirvana is ‘true cessation in the continuum of a person on the path of seeing’ which is called a true cessation of the acquired ignorance.*
  - 3) *Something that is both a true cessation and nirvana could be either the true cessation in the continuum of a Buddha called non-abiding nirvana or the true cessation in the continuum of a Hearer or Solitary Realizer called nirvana.*
- *Something that is nirvana and not a true cessation does not exist.* **M1d22p25**

13. What are the possibilities between a true cessation and a final true cessation? *There are three possibilities between a true cessation and a final true cessation.*

- 1) *Something that is not a true cessation and not final true cessation is the continuum of an ordinary being who has not perceptually realized emptiness.*
  - 2) *Something that is a true cessation and not a final true cessation is the true cessation in the continuum of a Hearer or Solitary Realizers.*
  - 3) *Something that is both a true cessation and a final true cessation would be the true cessation in the continuum of a Buddha called non-abiding nirvana.*
- *Something that is a final true cessation and not a true cessation does not exist.*

14. What are the possibilities between nirvana and a final true cessation? *There are three possibilities between a nirvana and a final true cessation.*

- 1) *Something that is not a final true cessation and not nirvana is the continuum of an ordinary being who has not perceptually realized emptiness.*
  - 2) *Something that is not a final true cessation and is nirvana is true cessation in the continuum of a Hearer or Solitary Realizers.*
  - 3) *Something that is both a final true cessation and nirvana would be the true cessation in the continuum of a Buddha called non-abiding nirvana.*
- *Something that is a final true cessation and is not a nirvana does not exist.*  
**M1d22p25**

15. How does the ultimate dharma jewel offer us protection? *The ultimate dharma jewel protects us from suffering because it overcomes the causes of suffering* **‘Sublime Continuum’ GTT**

16. What is the relative dharma jewel? *The relative dharma jewel is the teachings imparted through scripture, the teachings of statement and so forth. It includes the wisdoms of hearing, reflection and meditation. As an ordinary being one takes refuge in the dharma that is not one's personal realization; one takes refuge in things realized by other beings and one studies the Tripitaka; 'The Uttara Tantra'*<sup>p35</sup> *The conventional dharma jewel is the twelve sets of scripture contained within the three baskets of the vinaya, sutra and abhidharma. The conventional dharma may also be the virtue we presently have. These secondary mental factors are often enumerated to be the following eleven; faith, self-respect, consideration for others, detachment, non-hatred, non-bewilderment, enthusiasm, suppleness, conscientiousness, equanimity, and non-violence 'The Mind & its Functions' by Geshe Rabten, p124*
17. How does the relative dharma jewel offer us protection? *The relative dharma jewel protects us from suffering because it temporarily removes the conditions'* **Sublime Continuum' GTT**
18. Why do we need to know and repeatedly recollect the good qualities of the objects of refuge? *Knowledge of the Three Jewels is not enough to develop faith in them and that's why we must repeatedly recollect their good qualities. M1d21p2 We need to know and recollect repeatedly the good qualities of the objects of refuge to clearly develop a firm conviction that they are the roots of dharma practice. M1d21p5 If we gain certainty about them we will go for refuge to them from the depths of our heart and train oneself in the precepts of refuge. M1d21p11*

## THE WAY YOU GO FOR REFUGE

### THE FIRST PART: (C) THE GOOD QUALITIES OF THE COMMUNITY

- What are the relative and ultimate aspects of the Sangha? *The Sangha Jewel, like the other jewels, also has ultimate and relative aspects.*
  - The ultimate Sangha refuge is any Mahayana practitioner who has realized emptiness directly.*
  - The conventional Sangha Jewel is four ordained persons and according to the oral commentaries of some teachers anyone else who dedicates their life to the liberation of all sentient beings. M1d22p19-20*
- Who are the relative Sangha? *The relative Sangha are ordinary beings who are ordained. 'Sublime Continuum' GTT*
- Who is the Sangha Jewel? *The Sangha Jewel is an Arya person who possesses one or another of the eight qualities such as awareness (awareness of all sentient beings possessing buddha nature) and freedom (freedom from obscurations: (1) the attachment/emotional obscurations, (2) the obstructions/cognitive obscurations and*



(3) the inferior obscurations/obscurations of equilibrium) **'Sublime Continuum'**  
**GTT**

4. What are the good qualities of knowledge held by the realized community? *The good qualities of the realized community are those of knowledge and purity. The qualities of knowledge are three-fold*
  - 1) Knowledge of how it is, correct knowledge means that the Sangha objects of Refuge must possess the wisdom knowing existence as it is; they have perceptually realized emptiness
  - 2) The wisdom knowing all existent things means perceiving all sentient beings as existing in that state of emptiness
  - 3) And inner wisdom **Yangsi1p136**
5. What are the good qualities of purity held by the realized community? *The good qualities of purity held by the realized community are three-fold. They are the qualities of having freed oneself from any of the three obscurations*
  - 1) The affliction obscurations
  - 2) The obscurations to knowing
  - 3) The obscuration of lower aspiration, meaning the wish for ones own liberation according to the individual vehicle. **Yangsi1p136**
6. How many possibilities exist between a Buddha jewel and the Sangha jewel? *There are four possibilities between a Buddha jewel and a Sangha jewel. These possibilities are*
  - 1) Something that is both the Buddha jewel and the Sangha jewel is Shakyamuni Buddha who is a Buddha because he has collected the two collections to their utmost extent and he is also an Arya Buddha because he has a direct perception of emptiness.
  - 2) Something that is neither the Buddha jewel nor the Sangha jewel is a table or else a lay-person who has not attained the path of seeing
  - 3) Something that is a Buddha jewel and not a Sangha jewel is the nature body (essence dharmakaya) because it is Buddha and it is not a Sangha Jewel because it is not an Arya person.
  - 4) Something that is a Sangha Jewel and not a Buddha Jewel is an Arya Bodhisattva because it is a Bodhisattva and their ability exists up to and includes the 10th ground whereas the abilities of the Buddha Jewel exceed that. **M1d22p19-20**

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## REFUGE IN THE 3 JEWELS CLASS NOTES 5

### THE WAY YOU GO FOR REFUGE

#### THE SECOND PART: BY KNOWING THE DISTINCTIONS

1. What is the second of the four approaches to taking refuge, as laid out by Asanga in his 'Compendium of Determinations'? *The second of the four approaches to taking refuge as laid out by Asanga in his 'Compendium of Determinations' is to take refuge by understanding the distinctions between the Three Jewels.* **Sopa1p431**
2. What are the six subdivisions used to explain how to differentiate the Three Jewels and the distinct way to take refuge in each of them? *The six subdivisions are*
  - 1) *The distinction based on their defining characteristics*
  - 2) *The distinction based on their enlightened activities*
  - 3) *The distinction based on devotion*
  - 4) *The distinction based on practice*
  - 5) *The distinction based on recollection*
  - 6) *The distinction based on how they increase merit* **Sopa1p430**

#### THE DISTINCTIONS BASED ON THEIR DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

3. What are the three distinctive characteristics attributed to Buddha? *The Buddha jewel has the defining characteristic of full, perfect enlightenment.* **M1d22p21** *The holy mind of Buddha sees existence clearly and directly, is purified of the two obscurations, and is adorned with all qualities.* **Yangsi1p137**
4. What are the distinctive characteristics attributed to the Dharma Jewel? *The dharma jewel has the defining characteristic of arising from the Buddha jewel.* **M1d22p21** *The dharma jewel embodies the truth of cessation and the path that leads to cessation.* **Yangsi1p137**
5. What are the distinctive characteristics attributed to the Sangha jewel? *The community jewel has the defining characteristic of correct practice by means of personal instruction - the community jewel is in the process of correctly practicing.* **M1d22p21** *A community member should be one who realizes ultimate reality, entered the path of seeing, or one who possesses cessation.* **Yangsi1p137** *The nature of the Sangha jewel is that they seriously try to accomplish the instructions they receive from others* **Sopa1p431**

#### THE DISTINCTIONS BASED ON THEIR ENLIGHTENED ACTIVITIES

6. What is the Buddha's distinctive activity? *The Buddha is the founder of the refuge of true cessation;* **Yangsi1p137** *Buddha has the enlightened activity of giving sermons,* **M1d22p22** *the Buddha's distinctive activity is to teach disciples according to their*

*aptitude. The Buddha correctly gives complete instructions in accordance with the need and ability of each disciple. **Sopa1p431***

7. What is the function of the Dharma, what is its distinctive activity? *The teaching has the enlightened activity of focusing on the eradication of afflictions and suffering; **M1d22p22** the teaching is the actual path of true cessation, **Yangsilp137** the function of the teaching is to eradicate the mental afflictions and thereby get rid of all suffering. By intently following the various levels of practice taught by the Buddha you eliminate faults until you are free of all suffering **Sopa1p431***
8. What is the distinctive activity of the Sangha? *The Sangha's distinctive activity is to take joy in practicing these teachings, **Sopa1p431** the community is the support that encourages the practitioner to actualize the refuge of true cessation **Yangsilp137** the community has the enlightened activity of fostering enthusiasm **M1d22p22***

#### THE DISTINCTIONS BASED ON DEVOTION

9. What is the correct manner of taking refuge in the Buddha? *The correct manner of taking refuge in the Buddha is to honor him and trust what he says. When you respect him and his words, you will be inclined to follow him **Sopa1p432** the Buddha becomes an object of offering, an object of faith, and an object of respect for us, and subsequently becomes the representation of our faith in what we hope to attain **Yangsilp137** We should appreciate the Buddha as the one to venerate and serve. In other words, try to act in accord with his instructions **M1d22p22***
10. What is the correct manner of taking refuge in the Dharma? *The correct manner of taking refuge in the Dharma is not merely to revere it as an external object of worship, but to actualize it within you **Sopa1p432** we should appreciate the teaching as that which is to be realized. The dharma is that which we are trying to realize, we are trying to actualize it, to make it manifest. **M1d22p22** The dharma is what we aspire to generate within our own continuum. **Yangsilp137***
11. What is the correct manner of taking refuge in the community? *We should respect those who are in harmony with the dharma. We should respect them as our friends, travelling partners and helpers; **Sopa1p432** we should appreciate the community as those with whom we should associate because they have attributes that are similar to our own. The community has attributes that are in harmony with the teachings and that's why we should associate with them **M1d22p22** the community is what we rely on as our support in actualizing the spiritual path. **Yangsilp137***

## THE DISTINCTIONS BASED ON PRACTICE

12. What should we do after knowing the distinct manner of respect we should have towards each of the three jewels? *After knowing the distinct manner of respect we should have towards each of the three jewels, we need to actually express it in practice* **Sopa1p432**
13. What should we do to honor the Buddha? *The way to honor the Buddha is to perform offering ceremonies and services that assist him in accomplishing his goals* **Sopa1p432**
14. What should we do to respect the teaching? *You accustom your mind to the teachings with meditation. You show your respect for the teaching by actualizing the teachings in your mind* **Sopa1p432**
15. What should we do to respect the community? *We show our respect for the Sangha by sharing our knowledge, experience, advice, and worldly necessities that are compatible with the dharma.* **Sopa1p432**

## THE DISTINCTIONS BASED ON RECOLLECTION

16. What does it mean to go for refuge based on recollecting the distinctions? *Here, 'distinction based on recollection' is recollecting the good qualities of each of the three jewels as taught in the sutra called 'Recollecting The Buddha' M1d22p22 We can remember their qualities as they were explained in accordance with the 'Sublime Continuum' by Maitreya, Yangsi1p138 in effect we must contemplate their perfect qualities as they are taught in the sutras.* **Sopa1p433**

## THE DISTINCTIONS BASED ON HOW THEY INCREASE MERIT

17. How is it possible that the increase of merit differs in regard to each of the three jewels? *In general you gain more merit from a direct action than from an indirect one. In a direct action you create two kinds of merit; first from the action of controlling or motivating the act, and then you gain more merit when the recipient benefits from your activity. Worshiping the Buddha or the Sangha creates more merit than worshipping the Dharma because people can appreciate and receive assistance. It is an indirect action to make offerings to a statue, picture or visualization of a Buddha. Such offerings create the merit of making an offering but lack the fulfillment of the offering being accepted and used by a real person. If you offer food to a statue you will receive the merit that comes from your virtuous mind of reverence, but since the statue does not benefit from your gift, you do not create the second kind of merit.* **Sopa1p433** *The benefits that you gain from venerating and serving four members of the ordinary being Sangha are equal to the benefits you would gain by venerating and serving a single member of the Arya Sangha.* **M1d22p23**

## THE WAY YOU GO FOR REFUGE

### THE THIRD PART: GOING FOR REFUGE WITH COMMITMENT

18. What does going for refuge with commitment mean according to Dharmamitra's Commentary? *According to Dharmamitra's Commentary on the "Sutra on the Discipline", going for refuge through commitment means*
- 1) *upholding the Buddha as the teacher of refuge,*
  - 2) *the teaching-nirvana as the actual refuge and*
  - 3) *The community, as those who assist us to attain refuge. [M1d22p25](#)*
19. What is the 'teaching-nirvana referred to here as the actual refuge? *Here, when it talks about nirvana, it is referring to that true cessation in which all disturbing emotions have been abandoned without exception. This teaching-nirvana is referred to as the actual refuge because all true cessations are not necessarily true cessations in which all of the disturbing emotions have been abandoned without exception. Something that is a true cessation and not nirvana is 'true cessation in the continuum of a person on the path of seeing' which is called a true cessation of the acquired ignorance. On the path of meditation there are many levels of things that have to be abandoned in succession starting with the more coarse and going to more and more subtle levels, and as you abandon each of these levels you attain a true cessation but those true cessations are not necessarily true cessations in which all disturbing emotions without exception have been abandoned. [M1d22p25](#)*
20. What is an actual true cessation and nirvana? *Something that is both a true cessation and nirvana could be either the true cessation in the continuum of a Buddha called non-abiding nirvana or the true cessation in the continuum of a Hearer or Solitary Realizer called nirvana. [M1d22p23-25](#)*

## THE WAY YOU GO FOR REFUGE

### THE FOURTH PART: GOING FOR REFUGE BY REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE OTHER REFUGES

21. What does it mean to go for refuge by refusing to acknowledge other refuges? *Going for refuge by refusing to acknowledge other refuges means first of all understanding the differences in worth between Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers, teachings, and disciples, for then you will uphold only the three jewels as your refuge, and refuse teachers, teachings, and disciples that do not accord with them. Understanding these differences and taking refuge in accordance with this understanding is the main emphasis of this part of the teaching [M1d22p26](#)*
22. What is the essence of Lama Tsong Khapa's instruction? *Lama Tsong Khapa is not teaching us to criticize other religions but to not regard as a source of protection any teacher or teaching that wholly contradicts the Three Jewels. [Sopa1p434](#)*



23. In what two ways is it possible for you to lose your refuge? *Lama Tsong Khapa explains that to actually forsake one's refuge a person's trust in the objects of refuge must degenerate until they finally lose all faith and think, "This is damaging my life, and so I will give it up, I am not going for refuge to the three jewels"* The second way to forsake your refuge is to follow a teacher, a teaching or a community whose behaviors are incompatible with the three jewels. If you became a close friend with someone who behaves in ways that are incompatible with the Dharma you would also lose your refuge. [Sopa1p497](#)

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## REFUGE IN THE 3 JEWELS CLASS NOTES 6

### THE STAGES OF THE PRECEPTS

#### THE FIRST PART: THE SUBDIVISIONS FROM THE COMPENDIUM OF DETERMINATIONS

1. What are the two sources of advice for those who have taken refuge? *Lama Tsong Khapa cites two sources of advice for those who have taken refuge. The first is Asanga's 'Compendium of Determinations' and the second is personal advice from the lineage gurus.* **Yangsi1p143**
2. How are the precepts divided within the Compendium of Determinations? *The precepts are divided into two subdivisions within the Compendium of Determinations. These are called the 'first set of subdivisions' and the 'second set of divisions' and each of these divisions has four parts totaling eight pieces of advice.* **LRCM1p191**
3. What are the first four pieces of advice within the 'first set of subdivisions' within the Compendium of Determinations? *The first four pieces of advice within the 'first set of subdivisions' within the Compendium of Determinations are to*
  - 1) *Rely on excellent persons,*
  - 2) *Listen to the sublime teachings,*
  - 3) *Fix your attention properly on them, and to*
  - 4) *Cultivate a practice that conforms with the teachings* **LRCM1p191**
4. What does the first piece of advice mean when it says to 'rely upon excellent persons?' *Relying on an excellent person means to model your behavior on the practice of the Buddha by acting in accordance with his example. This is going for refuge to Buddha.* **M1d23p36** *It is important for both student and teacher to understand the ten qualities of a teacher because a student who seeks liberation needs a teacher with these qualities and teachers who wish to have students need to have these qualities.* **M1d06p19** *To take someone 'as your teacher' means that you think "This is my lama whom I am going to rely upon" and the Lama thinks "I am going to look after this student". If you have taken vows or an initiation from a Lama you must rely on that person as your teacher* **M1d06p28**
5. What does the second piece of advice mean when it says to 'listen to the sublime teachings?' *The six ideas we should rely on when listening to the teacher are*
  - 1) *To think of yourself as a sick person,*
  - 2) *And to think of the instructor as a doctor*
  - 3) *Think of the instructors teaching as medicine and*
  - 4) *Think of the practice as the way to cure the disease.*
  - 5) *Think of the Tathagata as an excellent being and*
  - 6) *Wish that the teaching endure for a long time. And of these six, the first four are the most important.* **M1d04p45**

6. What value does the analogy of the three cups hold in terms of ‘listening to the sublime teachings?’ *The analogy of the three cups demonstrates three faults of listening. They are*
  - 1) *When the cup is upside down – it means we are distracted, so that nothing enters because we are not paying attention*
  - 2) *The cup is cracked – the teaching is heard but quickly forgotten or misunderstood*
  - 3) *The cup is dirty – the meaning of what we’ve heard is changed with our own ideas; we are listening with the intention to find fault.* **M1d04p43**
7. What else do we need to remember when we ‘listen to the sublime teachings?’ *While listening to the sublime teachings we should maintain a pure motivation, free of the eight worldly concerns. We should also be free of the motivation of wishing to engage in the spiritual path or of the study of dharma in order to acquire intellectual knowledge or merely to gather extra information. We should have the wish to benefit ourselves as well as others* **Yangsi1p143**
8. What does the third piece of advice mean when it says to ‘fix your attention properly on them?’ *To listen to the sublime teachings with the attention fixed properly on them, means to actualize the teachings of scripture and realization. This is what it means to go for refuge to the Dharma.* **M1d23p36** *We should cultivate faith, wishing to attain what is taught in the scriptural and experiential teachings.* **Yangsi1p143** *Faith – does not only mean to have a reverent attitude before certain holy beings. It should be understood as a factor of mind capable of “broadening and expanding understanding”.* **M1d04p43** *To contemplate the Dharma correctly means to take it seriously with the intention to practice it.* **Sopa1p442**
9. What does the fourth piece of advice mean when it says to ‘cultivate a practice that conforms to the teachings?’ *To cultivate a practice that conforms to the teaching is possible if we take as our companions those persons who are on the path to liberation. We should associate with them and practice in ways that are compatible with their training. This is what it means to go for refuge to the Sangha Jewel.* **M1d23p36** *We should train in ethics, concentration, and wisdom, and seek the support of the friendship of people who live in these practices.* **Yangsi1p144** *The knowledge, sympathy, and influence of like-minded people can inspire you and make your practice stronger.* **Sopa1p443**
10. What are the first four pieces of advice within the ‘second set of subdivisions’ within the Compendium of Determinations? *The first four pieces of advice within the ‘second set of subdivisions’ within the Compendium of Determinations say*
  - 1) *Do not excite your sensory faculties,*
  - 2) *Take up the precepts correctly,*
  - 3) *Be compassionate towards living beings, and to*
  - 4) *Strive to make periodic offerings to the three jewels* **LRCM1p191**

11. What does the first piece of advice within the second subdivision mean when it says ‘do not excite your sensory faculties?’ *We should stop our sensory faculties from becoming excited because these doors allow the mind to become distracted and to produce disturbing emotions. Disturbing emotions are one of the major faults, one of the major producers of suffering. M1d23p37* We are advised not to let our sense faculties become distracted by objects that generate the disturbing emotions. While your mind easily strays and falls under the power of those objects, it is best to stay away from them **Sopa1p443**
- 1) *We have to avoid objects that excite the senses so that we do not encourage the disturbing emotions. Objects that are neutral like the breath or virtuous like patience, when engaged with mindfulness are able to keep the disturbing emotions at bay.*
  - 2) *To fix our attention on whatever serves to dispel the afflictions means to use mindfulness to avoid becoming distracted.*
  - 3) *To be conscientious, to be vigilant and to apply mindfulness prevents the mind being distracted to objects that excite the senses M1d23p37*
12. What does the second piece of advice within the second subdivision mean when it says ‘take up the precepts correctly?’ *To take up the precepts correctly means we should not engage in actions that are considered to be ‘negative by nature’, and we should learn and follow the advice set forth for actions that are considered ‘negative because of being prohibited’. Yangsi1p144* We should take up the precepts correctly and in that way train in the trainings set forth by the Buddha. They are the basis of training. **M1d23p37**
13. What does the third piece of advice within the second subdivision mean when it says ‘be compassionate towards living beings?’ *To be compassionate to living beings means that we should no longer harm them and do our best to protect them from harm. M1d23p37* Awareness of this precept is fundamental to making any kind of positive change. **Sopa1p446** *If we cannot genuinely feel for the pain and suffering of others, at the very least you must ensure that you yourself do not become a cause of their suffering. Yangsi1p145*
14. What does the fourth piece of advice within the second subdivision mean when it says ‘strive to make periodic offerings to the three jewels?’ *We need to accumulate great merit to counteract our powerful negative predispositions. The reason we honor the three jewels with these actions is to purify our body, speech and mind. The three jewels do not need our worship but we do, Sopa1p446* so strive to make periodic offerings to the three Jewels both during the day and night. **M1d23p37**

## THE STAGES OF THE PRECEPTS

### THE SECOND PART: THE ORAL TRADITION; SPECIAL PRECEPTS

1. How are the precepts divided within the Oral Tradition? *The precepts are divided into two subdivisions within the Oral Tradition. These are called the ‘special precepts’ and the ‘general precepts’. LRCM1p191*

2. How are the Special precepts divided? *The Special precepts are divided into two subdivisions. There are the proscriptive precepts, which are advice describing behaviors to abandon and the prescriptive precepts, advice to adopt and practice. Within each group there are three specific forms of personal advice. Yangsi1p146*
3. In the section on 'special precepts' as they appear in the oral tradition: what are the 3 proscriptive precepts? *The 'special precepts' has two divisions. The first division is called Proscriptive Precepts which means there are three activities to avoid. The three Proscriptive Precepts are*
  - 1) *Do not go to other deities for refuge*
  - 2) *Abandon harm & malice towards others*
  - 3) *To not associate too much with those holding wrong views Sopa1p447*
4. What does the first piece of advice mean when it says 'do not go to other deities for refuge?' *It is inappropriate to entrust yourself fully to wrathful local deities and local spirits. If you do not entrust yourself fully to the three jewels but rather entrust yourself to these local divinities and worldly gods taking them as your refuge, that would be inappropriate. You can, however, request assistance from them for instance saying, "Please help me to remove obstacles to my practice of the teachings" and so forth. You can turn to them for some assistance in avoiding obstacles. M1d23p39 Abandon taking Refuge in anything less than an enlightened being. Yangsi1p145 It is alright to rely on certain worldly gods and spirits to assist you with temporary objectives. But these forms of short-term refuge are different from taking refuge in the Three Jewels. You do not take refuge in them with the hope that they will lead you to enlightenment; for that ultimate purpose they are not a proper object of refuge. Sopa1p448*
5. What does the second piece of advice mean when it says to 'abandon harm and malice towards others?' *This second proscriptive precept related to giving up acts that cause harm and injury are the proscriptive precepts related to going for refuge to the dharma jewel. M1d23p40 Because the Dharma is rooted in compassion, when we take refuge in the Dharma, we must abandon harming others directly or indirectly. As the essence of the Dharma is non-harmfulness, abusing other sentient beings and abusing the environment are transgressions of your refuge in the Dharma. Yangsi1p146 Generally, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, speaking harshly, speaking falsely, speaking divisively, all of these things are acts that bring harm and injury to others. There are however other actions which perhaps we are more likely to perform that would also involve harm and injury towards others. M1d23p40*
6. What does the third piece of advice mean when it says 'to not associate too much with those holding wrong views?' *In the mind training texts there is a lot of advice on not associating with bad companions or negative friends. The meaning of this advice is that you should not act as they do and entrust yourself to them. It does not mean that you shouldn't try and help them if you can. It does not mean that you shouldn't have compassion for them. By all means have compassion for them. By all means help them if you are able, simply don't act as they do or entrust yourself to them; M1d23p40 do your best to no longer interact with people who inspire you to do*



negative things or give you ideas that could lead to non-virtue. The point is to protect the mind. **Yangsilp147** Do not associate with those who hold extreme wrong views. Have compassion and concern for them. You should not closely follow them; you should not listen to them in a way that can destroy your view, practice, and everything you are trying to build. **Sopa1p448**

7. In the section on ‘special precepts’ as they appear in the oral tradition: what are the 3 prescriptive precepts? The ‘special precepts’ has two divisions. The second division is called the Prescriptive Precepts; there are three activities to adopt and practice.

The three Prescriptive Precepts are

- 1) Treat images of the Buddha with respect
- 2) Honor the writing of the teachers
- 3) Revere members of the community **Sopa1p450**

8. What does the first piece of advice mean when it says ‘Treat images of the Buddha with respect?’ Show physical and mental respect for every single symbolic representation of enlightenment that you see - such as statues, drawings, paintings and so forth. You should give the objects that represent enlightened beings the same recognition that you would give an actual Buddha. **Yangsilp147** The practice of faith and taking refuge are made deeper in this way **Sopa1p448** As we go for refuge to the Buddha we should recall their qualities and increase our faith in them. When we encounter their images, whether they are pictures or statues, we must respect them and develop faith. We don’t come into direct contact with Buddha’s do we? We come into contact with them through images, statues and pictures. Therefore, we can’t increase our faith through actual contact, but must do so in dependence upon these representations. There are artists who are learning to draw images of Buddha’s and deities. When you are learning to draw and so forth, obviously not everything you do will turn out really well. If you were to just put them on display that could lead others to develop all sorts of different ideas and could actually increase their accumulation of faults. Such an image might actually be an obstacle for them. Better, then, to find time to burn those images that didn’t turn out so well. This is Geshe-la’s own idea. You can consider this and see if you think it is mistaken. It is aimed mainly at artists, those who make these drawings. The attitude that we adopt from our own side, however, must be different. From our side, any representation that we come into contact with we must respect and use as a way to increase our faith by recalling the qualities of Buddha. **M1d23p40-41**

9. What does the second piece of advice mean when it says ‘honor the writing of the teachers?’ The second prescriptive precept is to always show respect for writings on the teachings, even those composed of as little as four words. You should not pawn volumes of scriptures, treat them as merchandise, place them on the bare ground or in dishonorable places, carry them together with shoes, walk over them, etc. Treat them with respect, as though they were the teaching jewel itself. **M1d23p41** The texts are the material representation of the Dharma refuge. We should treat every sentence, every page, every text that contains the teachings with the highest respect and devotion. **Yangsilp148** The teachings are invaluable; you cannot put a price on the explanations you find there. **Sopa1p453**



10. What does the third piece of advice mean when it says ‘revere members of the community?’ *Never revile or despise members of the community, renunciates, or those who merely possess the symbols of a practitioner of virtue [someone who is dressed as a monk or nun but has no vow]. Nor should you do this to the mere symbols [part of the robes] of these practitioners. Never in any way divide yourself and others into opposing factions and view the others as enemies. Always treat members of the community with respect, as though they were the community jewel itself. M1d23p42 We should cultivate respect for anyone who has the signs of being in the Sangha. Yangsi1p148 Others will develop respect for you to the extent that you honor and feel a connection to the Three Jewels. Whatever you do out of sympathy and esteem for the Three Jewels, others will do for you in the future. Sopa1p457*

## THE STAGES OF THE PRECEPTS

### THE THIRD PART: THE ORAL TRADITION; GENERAL PRECEPTS

1. What precepts are common to all Three Jewels? The following six precepts are common to all Three Jewels. *The six general precepts of going for Refuge are*
  - 1) *By recalling the distinctions and good qualities of the three jewels, go for refuge again and again*
  - 2) *By recalling the great kindness of the three jewels, strive to worship them constantly and offer the first portion of your food and drink*
  - 3) *Establish other living beings in this practice by considering them with compassion*
  - 4) *Whatever activity you engage in, and whatever your purpose, make offerings and supplications to the three jewels, forsaking other worldly methods*
  - 5) *After you have understood the benefits, go for refuge three times in the day and three times at night*
  - 6) *Maintain your refuge and do not forsake the three jewels, even in jest or if it cost your life LRCM1p191*
2. What is the meaning of the first general precept within the Oral Tradition? *The Conqueror's teaching allows you to attain its goal of bliss through a joyful path. It stops the stream of cyclic existence, clears away the afflictions, does not mislead those who desire liberation, is completely virtuous, and clears away faults. Non-Buddhist teachings are the opposite. M1d21p28 The Buddha is without fault and has perfected good qualities, but the teachers of other religions are the opposite of this. M1d21p27 By recalling the distinctions and good qualities of the Three Jewels, go for refuge again and again. Relying on a source of protection with conviction is what taking refuge really means. Sopa1p459*
3. What is the meaning of the second general precept within the Oral Tradition? *Offerings are gestures of our respect and trust in the three jewels; it is a way to demonstrate that we are following them wholeheartedly. Sopa1p459 By recalling the great kindness of the three jewels, strive to worship them constantly and offer the first*

*portion of your food and drink. In the six general precepts of going for refuge the second precept deals with offerings.*

- 1) *We make offerings to accumulate merit*
  - 2) *The result of making offerings is to be protected which means that we are able to avert obstacles.*
  - 3) *The supreme offering is the offering of practice.*
  - 4) *We make supreme offerings to the supreme field of the triple gem.*
4. The second precept refers to making offerings. Of the two aspects the first outlines 10 different aspects of the offerings we make. Enumerate these ten. *The second general precept has two parts; the actions of offering and the attitudes of offering. The actions of offering have ten aspects. These are*
- 1) *Offerings to the Buddhas body*
  - 2) *Offerings to stupas*
  - 3) *Offerings to a perceived object*
  - 4) *Offerings to a non-perceived object*
  - 5) *Offerings made by yourself*
  - 6) *Offerings that you help others make*
  - 7) *Offerings of wealth and service*
  - 8) *Vast offerings*
  - 9) *Offerings not contaminated with afflictions*
  - 10) *Offerings of practice* **LRCM1p197-199**
5. If we have little wealth, does this stop us from making extensive offerings? *Having little wealth does not stop one from making extensive offerings because offerings made with faith, especially on the full moon, new moon and the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the month increase merit exponentially.* **M1d24p49-52**
6. What are ‘offerings not contaminated with the afflictions?’ *Offerings not contaminated with the afflictions are those that are not mixed with attachment, hatred, pride or laziness and when given are offered with joy.*
- 1) *Offer them manually by yourself*
  - 2) *Offer them respectfully*
  - 3) *Offer them without distraction*
  - 4) *Make sure they are free of the afflictions in that they are not mixed with attachment and the like*
  - 5) *Offer them without an expectation of receiving wealth or service*
  - 6) *Offer them with the proper material accompaniments* **M1d23p45**
7. What is the result of making offerings in our lives? *The result of making offerings is to be protected which means that you are able to avert obstacles.* **M1d24p47**
8. What is the supreme offering? *The supreme offering is the offering of practice.* **M1d24p48**

9. Who do we make this supreme offering to? *We make supreme offerings to the supreme field of the triple gem. M1d24p48 Offerings are gestures of our respect and trust in the three jewels; it is a way to demonstrate that we are following them wholeheartedly. Sopa1p459*
10. What six attitudes should one have which will make any offering immeasurable? *The six attitudes that make any offering immeasurable are to think that*
- 1) *There is no higher field of good qualities*
  - 2) *There is no higher benefactor*
  - 3) *He is the best of all living beings*
  - 4) *He is extremely rare like an udumvara flower &*
  - 5) *Since only one Buddha appears in a universe of three billion world systems; he is the only one and*
  - 6) *He is the foundation of all mundane and supramundane good M1d24p49*
11. What is the meaning of the third general precept within the Oral Tradition? *To establish other living beings in this practice by considering them with compassion; introduce others to the Dharma taking into consideration the factors of the appropriateness of the time, the occasion and the mental predisposition of that person. This instruction means that you must first see the correct accumulation of all the factors, and then act if it is appropriate. Yangsi1p149 This means that you should use all available means to caringly establish other living beings in the practice of going for refuge. M1d24p52*
12. What is the meaning of the fourth general precept within the Oral Tradition? *Whatever activity you engage in, and whatever your purpose, make offerings and supplications to the three jewels forsaking other worldly methods. Begin all activities, whether a Dharma activity or a secular activity with the practice of going for refuge. Yangsi1p149*
13. What is the meaning of the fifth general precept within the Oral Tradition? *After you have understood the benefits, go for refuge three times in the day and three times at night. M1d24p52*
14. What is the meaning of the sixth general precept within the Oral Tradition? *When you seek protection from the Three Jewels, you are going for refuge to a spiritual rule – the law of cause and effect. The Three Jewels do not make this rule; the Buddha just showed how this natural law actually works. Sopa1p503 No matter how high, powerful, kind, or compassionate the Three Jewels are, your emancipation depends on practicing what should be done and avoiding what should be abandoned. There is no other means of protection. Sopa1p504 Maintain your refuge and do not forsake the three jewels, even in jest or if it cost your life. M1d24p52*

15. List the benefits of going for refuge as they appear in the two sets of four in the ‘Compendium of the Determinations’. *The benefits of going for refuge may be found in Compendium of the Determinations and in advice given as Personal Instructions:*
- a) *The first of two sets of four in the Compendium of the Determinations are*
    - 1) *You obtain vast merit*
    - 2) *You obtain both joy and supreme joy*
    - 3) *You obtain concentration*
    - 4) *You attain purity*
  - b) *The second of the two sets of 4 in the Compendium of the Determinations are*
    - 1) *You will have great protection*
    - 2) *You will reduce, extinguish and totally annihilate all obscurations derived from incorrect belief*
    - 3) *You are included amongst excellent persons*
    - 4) *You delight and receive the approval of your teachers and religious companions and of the deities who take joy in the teaching **M1d24p54***
16. List the benefits of going for refuge as they appear in the personal instructions. *The benefits of going for Refuge as they appear in the “Personal Instructions” are*
- 1) *You are included among Buddhists*
  - 2) *You become worthy to uphold all vows*
  - 3) *You reduce and eliminate previously accumulated karmic obstructions*
  - 4) *You will accumulate vast merit*
  - 5) *You will not fall into the miserable realms*
  - 6) *You will not be thwarted by humans or nonhuman hindrances*
  - 7) *You will accomplish everything you wish*
  - 8) *You will quickly achieve Buddhahood. **M1d24p54-57***
17. How does the taking of refuge reduce and eliminate past karma and save us from the lower realms? *Taking refuge helps us to reduce and eliminate past karma and saves us from the experiences of the lower realms because it creates powerful virtuous karma that pushes aside and takes the place of prior non-virtuous karma so that at the time of death, the positive karma from taking refuge becomes predominant and so it protects you from birth in lower states. **Sopa1p489***
18. How is taking refuge the root of all vows? *Taking refuge is the root of all vows because it is the precedent of all vows **M1d24p55***
19. How does Lama Tsong Khapa explain what it means to actually forsake one’s refuge? *Lama Tsong Khapa explains that to actually forsake one’s refuge a person’s trust in the objects of refuge must degenerate until they finally lose all faith and think, “This is damaging my life, and so I will give it up, I am not going for refuge to the three jewels” **Sopa1p497** The second way to forsake your refuge is to follow a teacher, a teaching or a community whose behaviors are incompatible with the three jewels. If you became a close friend with someone who behaves in ways that are incompatible with the Dharma you would also lose your refuge. **M1d24p59***

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# **TAKING REFUGE IN THE THREE JEWELS**

## **Teachings from the Refuge and Lay Vows Ceremony**

Teacher: Ven. Geshe Tashi Tsering

Translator: Ven. Lozang Zopa

Transcribed: Mandy McNulty

Edited: Miffi Maxmillion

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You do not have to be a Buddhist if you want to study the training's for the mind that we find in the Buddhist texts. For instance, if you want to study Shantideva's *Way of the Bodhisattva* you do not have to become a Buddhist to do so. It is excellent for non-Buddhists to study this text as well – there is no problem in this. But if you take the vows, you have to become a Buddhist.

Tonight, we will first take Refuge and then we will take the vows of Approaching Virtue – less literally known as the lay person's vows. The vows of Approaching Virtue involve giving up certain activities. You can give up one, two, three, four or five different types of activity. I assume that all of you are taking the vows? You are all here to take Refuge – there is no choice about that – but you have a choice as to how many of the five behaviours you want to abandon.

### **The Three Jewels of Refuge**

There are Three Jewels of Buddhism that we take refuge in. They are the three objects, or sources of refuge. The Three Jewels of Refuge are the Buddha Jewel, who is the teacher of the refuge (the Dharma); the Dharma Jewel, which is the actual refuge itself; and the Sangha Jewel, those people who assist us in practicing refuge. The Three Jewels have different functions. The teacher of the refuge – the Buddha Jewel – is the one who teaches the refuge in an unmistakable way, but the *actual* refuge itself is the Dharma Jewel.

### **The Dharma Jewel – The Actual Refuge**

What does it mean to say that the Dharma Jewel is the actual refuge? We can speak about both an ultimate and a relative Dharma Jewel. The ultimate Dharma Jewel is True Paths and True Cessations (the latter two of the Four Noble Truths). A True Path is a state of mind that perceptually realises emptiness. When we develop a perceptual realisation of emptiness, this destroys the disturbing emotions, as represented by the misapprehension of self. It destroys them, together with their seeds. This destruction of the disturbing emotions such as the misapprehension of self is a True Cessation.

Then there are texts and other types of material that teach us the way to develop the True Paths – these realisations – and develop the True Cessations – these



abandonments. The materials and books that teach us how to develop and abandon such things are the relative Dharma Jewel. We need to respect these things. Likewise, we must respect the virtuous states of mind that we have within us, because these virtuous states of mind are what protect us from resultant suffering.

You came here today with the intention to give up taking life, give up taking that which is not given, give up sexual misconduct and so forth. These intentions are virtuous states of mind. They are our refuge. They protect us from suffering. The thought “I am going to take the vows of Approaching Virtue and I am going to give up killing and stealing and sexual misconduct ...” is our refuge. We need to respect these virtuous states of mind and develop them further. Negative states of mind are the causes of suffering. Positive states of mind overcome and eliminate the negative states of mind. Therefore, positive states of mind are our refuge, in the sense that they help us to overcome the causes of suffering.

This is the Dharma Jewel. Do you understand the Dharma Jewel well? You should think about these things on a regular basis. Reflect on their meaning and recognise that the Dharma Jewel is of utmost importance. It is the primary refuge.

### **The Buddha Jewel – The Teacher of the Refuge**

In order to develop these positive states of mind more and more, to whom do we turn? Who teaches us the way to do this? Those who have developed compassion and wisdom to their utmost extent. A person who has developed compassion and wisdom to their utmost extent draws upon their own experience to teach us the way to do so as well. They are the teachers of the refuge.

Within the context of Buddhism, a person who has developed wisdom, compassion and ability to their utmost extent is known as a Buddha. If you find such a person outside of Buddhism, that person is also a Buddha. A person who has developed wisdom, compassion and ability to their utmost extent, be they within the context of Buddhism or outside of it, they are a Buddha. If we ourselves developed these qualities in such a way, then we would also be a Buddha.

### **The Sangha Jewel**

What is the Sangha Jewel? The Sangha Jewel refers to those who have already developed True Paths and True Cessations in their continuum. If they have not developed True Paths and True Cessations, they are striving mainly to attain Liberation, and are not at all attached to the pleasures of cyclic existence. Such a person is an instance of the Sangha Jewel. They are an object or source of refuge.

### **The Refuge Commitments**

In taking the vow of Refuge, what are you committing yourself to? In taking this vow you are promising that from this day until you die, you will go for refuge to these Three Jewels. This is the commitment you make. What are you obligated to do? You do not have to give the Three Jewels any money or shower them in material gifts. This is neither expected nor needed. In going for refuge to the Three Jewels you are

committing yourself to respecting the Dharma Jewel that you actually have within yourself – your positive, virtuous states of mind. You are also committing yourself to respecting the books and materials that show the way to develop these things. And you are committing yourself to respect those who teach the way, and those who are actively engaged in trying to develop these qualities within themselves. This is the vow of Refuge.

## **The Correct Motivation**

Why would a person take the vow of Refuge? There are many different sorts of people so there are probably a variety of reasons that can lead you to take this step. But the one thing that it must come down to, for everyone regardless of who you are, is that taking refuge be based on a wish to attain the pleasure of Liberation. You need to be in a position where you are striving mainly to attain the pleasure of Liberation, and you stop taking the pleasures of cyclic existence as your main focus.

This is the motivation you must bring to the refuge ceremony. It is what we call the ‘intention to definitely emerge’, sometimes translated not so effectively as ‘renunciation’. If, in addition, you are taking these vows so that you may attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings, this is excellent – but it is not strictly necessary. The first motivation is the motivation to definitely emerge. The second is known as the motivation of the mind of enlightenment.

## **Taking the Five Vows**

First we have the request to the Master to please give us these vows. There are five different activities that you can promise to give up: you can promise to give up taking life; you can promise to give up stealing; you can promise to give up sexual misconduct; you can promise to give up lying; and, you can promise to give up taking intoxicants.

If you choose to give up all five types of behaviour, then as you recite the verse in Tibetan, think that you are requesting the Master to give you the vows of Approaching Virtue in which you promise to abandon all five. If you are only going to give up one of these types of behaviour, or two or three of them, then imagine you are asking the Master to bestow upon you those particular vows of Approaching Virtue.

Is everyone clear about the different motivations you should bring to this ceremony? The best type of motivation is to think that you are taking these vows to attain Buddhahood so that you can benefit all sentient beings.

The final recitation is split into three sections. At one point I will snap my fingers, and at that moment the vows are born within you – they are born within your mind. At the same time I also become your Refuge Master, the one who has given you the vows of Approaching Virtue. The first part of the final recitation is known as an *expression of homage*. In the second part you express your own wish that the Master give you these vows. You explicitly mention (in Tibetan of course) that you are going to guard these vows from now until you die. The section that leads up to the statement that, “I am

going to guard these vows from now until I die” is an *expression of self*. Then the request to “please give me these vows” concludes the final recitation, and is known as the *expression of other*. This is when I will snap my fingers. This threefold recitation is the method by which you receive the vows. It is also the method by which you attain the ultimate goal, be it Buddhahood or Liberation.

## **What You Are Giving Up**

Now I will introduce you to the things that you are giving up, the things that you are abandoning. We have touched on these in brief – you gave up killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxicants. Look at these activities – think about what you are able to give up. There is really no need to kill is there? Nor is there any need to steal. We can give these up. I also don’t think there is a need to commit sexual misconduct, or to lie. So, for the most part, we can give up all four of these types of activities, can’t we? It is important, of course, that you actually *want* to give these up, as well.

Now let us talk about the last behaviour, giving up intoxicants. There are some people who can drink a little alcohol from time to time in a responsible way that does not hurt them. Of course, it is best to give up taking intoxicants altogether, because there is a potential that they will cause you harm. But, if from time to time you feel you need to drink a little alcohol, you can set a limit for yourself and abide by that. If you engage in this behaviour responsibly – without harming yourself – then this is, in a sense, OK.

As for drugs, it would be very good to give these up entirely. You do not need to smoke; you do not need to shoot up heroin. You do not need to do any type of drug – it is just not necessary. So it is good, even if you are not going to give up intoxicants altogether, to make a promise to yourself to give up drugs, and if you do take alcohol, to do so responsibly.

If you make a promise, for instance you say, “Although I am not giving up intoxicants altogether, I am going to promise to give up drugs, and drink responsibly when I do drink.” This has certain beneficial effects. If you find yourself in a situation where someone is smoking dope, or maybe you want to smoke dope with your friend, the promise you made earlier is like a gate. It stops you from doing this. If you do not have a promise, then there is very little incentive to refrain. But if you have made a promise then you will remember your commitment not to do this. This helps you to refrain from that act. It acts as an internal teacher, giving you advice from inside yourself.

## **Taking the Vows**

It is your choice how many of the vows you want to commit yourself to. It is not up to me to say that unless you give up all five behaviours you cannot participate in this ceremony. I don’t have that authority, and you are not children! (If you were children however, I could probably make you do so!)

The meaning of what we are about to repeat in Tibetan is this: “Holy beings in the past – buddhas and arhats – made a mental commitment to refrain from these acts. Having committed themselves on a mental level, they then stopped such behaviours from finding expression through their physical actions and through their speech. Following this path, they went on to attain the state of an arhat, the state of buddhahood. Like them, I am going to commit myself to behaving in such a way, so that I may attain these states myself.”

The first recitation relates to taking life, and I assume that everyone here is taking this vow – to not kill. What you are saying is: “From this day, until I die, I am giving up the act of killing. Just as holy beings of the past have given up killing, then I too am going to give up killing and follow in their footsteps.”

The commitment to the remaining vows is given together. This recitation is a promise to give up stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxicants. If you are only promising to give up one or two of these – not all four – then simply think, “I am committing myself to this particular number,” and you still make the same repetition.

## **Refuge Commitments**

What do you have to do now that you have taken the vows? It is good if you recite the refuge verse from time to time. Geshe Chekawa advises us in the *Seven Point Mind Training* to “train in words in all of your activities.” Although the Dharma is the actual refuge, the Buddha is the one who teaches us the refuge and the Sangha assist us in accomplishing that refuge. So from time to time it is good to recollect this by saying, “I go for refuge to the Buddha. I go for refuge to the Dharma. I go for refuge to the Sangha.” We are also encouraged to adopt certain things and to avoid certain things.

## **Advice in Going for Refuge to the Buddha Jewel**

In going for refuge to the Buddha Jewel we are encouraged to reflect upon and remember the qualities of the Buddha. The Buddha has many qualities – particularly the quality of wisdom and the quality of compassion – but there are many other qualities as well, and it is good to recollect them. We should also adopt the attitude that any representation of a Buddha, whether a statue or painting and regardless of the material it is made of, is the Buddha himself. If it is made out of clay, wood or a more precious substance, you should still adopt the attitude that this is the Buddha himself and go for refuge, being mindful of the qualities of the Buddha all the while.

We are supposed to avoid going for refuge to worldly gods. What does it mean to go for refuge to a worldly god? What is a worldly god, after all? How can we distinguish between a worldly god and a supramundane or transcendental god? It’s difficult to say, isn’t it? If there is a being that you can say with certainty is a transcendental god, then it is OK to go for refuge to it. If, however, you decide that it must be a worldly god, you should not seek refuge in it. This advice encourages us to distinguish between worldly and transcendental gods. It directs us to the transcendental ones and away from the worldly ones. We are discouraged from placing 100% trust or

conviction in worldly gods, relying upon them totally. This does not mean, however, that you cannot turn to them for assistance with certain things of this life.

Perhaps I will explain a little about the context in which this advice was given. Indians and Tibetans identify many different gods or deities, and there is a whole culture of propitiating these gods. People propitiate so many different gods and deities that they are unable to recognise what the actual refuge is – they lose what the real refuge is. As soon as something is called a god or a deity they think it is the actual refuge, and they take refuge in it. This advice is mainly to help these people distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of refuge.

If a being is something you can completely rely on, something you can trust 100%, then you should adopt the attitude that this being possesses ultimate wisdom, ultimate compassion and ultimate ability. If you can adopt this attitude from your own side, then you will derive certain benefits from this. If, however, you have the attitude that this being is ordinary, then these benefits will not follow. You lose these benefits. So you can see that it relies mainly upon us and our own attitude.

### **Advice in Going for Refuge to the Dharma Jewel**

The Dharma Jewel has two aspects: the ultimate Dharma Jewel and the relative Dharma Jewel. When we go for refuge to the Dharma Jewel we are encouraged to show respect for the texts and materials that teach us the Dharma and to have respect for the virtuous states of mind in our own continuum.

We are also advised to avoid causing harm to sentient beings. This can be understood in the light of what we were just speaking about – that the real refuge is the positive states of mind. What we need to do is make effort so that we do not fall under the control of negative states of mind.

### **Advice in Going for Refuge to the Sangha Jewel**

The Sangha Jewel also has different aspects. There is the Arya Sangha, those people who are superior beings themselves by virtue of their attainment, and then there are ordinary beings who are Sangha. Whatever the case, we should look to them all as role models and go for refuge. We should maintain respect for such people.

In going for refuge to the Sangha Jewel we should avoid falling prey to bad influences; people who denigrate or try and turn us away from the Three Jewels. Avoiding their influence means that you should not place 100% trust in such people. In fact, this is addressed in *The Way of the Bodhisattva*. In commenting on this text I explained that we shouldn't place our complete trust in these people or act like them and emulate their activities. But this is not to say that we shouldn't care for them or have loving kindness for them, or that we should get rid of our compassion for them. We need these things. And if you are in a position to help that person, by all means help them.

### **The First Vow – To Abandon Killing**

If you kill a human being you lose your vow, in which case you would have to take the vows again. However, if you kill an animal you do not lose your vow, but you should confess and purify.

### **The Second Vow – To Abandon Stealing**

The second vow is against taking what is not given – stealing, as we commonly know it. If you steal something you lose the vow. That's it – you can't steal. If you do, you lose the vow, which means you have to take it again. You might unknowingly take something which is not given, for example, you might use someone else's belongings. If this occurs you do not lose your vow, but you should confess and purify. There is no fault in making use of something that is owned by someone within the same household.

### **The Third Vow – To Abandon Sexual Misconduct**

The next vow relates to sexual misconduct. In some ways this might be an unsatisfactory translation. Basically, what this refers to is engaging in sexual intercourse with someone who has a recognised partner. We might call this infidelity, or adultery. If you engage in sexual intercourse with someone who has a recognised partner then you lose your vow. If you practice other activities that are labelled sexual misconduct, you would not lose your vow, but you should confess and purify.

### **The Forth Vow – To Abandon Lying**

Likewise, lying or speaking falsely has different aspects to it as well. If you make a pretence that you possess higher qualities than you actually do, it is known as speaking a *great* falsehood. Speaking a great falsehood results in the loss of the vow. Other lies should be confessed and purified.

### **The Fifth Vow – To Abandon Alcohol**

The last vow corresponds to intoxicants like alcohol. The Buddha said many times in his scriptures that intoxicants are detrimental to us. Why? Because Buddhism has to be rooted within compassion and wisdom, and intoxicants like alcohol obscure and obstruct our compassion and our wisdom. They cloud the mind. They make the mind very dark. They prevent us from making progress along the path to freedom. It is because they do this that they are detrimental. Drinking alcohol or taking intoxicants is not something that is *by nature* a non-virtue or a bad thing; it is just that the adverse effect it has on our mind is counter-productive to what we are trying to do. Thus the Buddha spoke at length about how we should avoid alcohol.

You might ask, “Wait a minute, sometimes when I'm feeling tired, taking just a little alcohol refreshes me. What's wrong with that?” The prohibition against intoxicants has nothing to do with this. It is more about the fact that it is difficult to set a limit and say, “that's enough. I should stop here.” I myself have never drunk alcohol before, but I am aware that it is difficult for people to set a limit and stick to it. The tendency is to go over one's limit. A single sip does not mean you have gone over the limit – of



course not – but there is definitely a limit, wherever you set it. The main prohibition is against drinking without limit. In other words, we have to be responsible.

In Perth I was invited to lunch with some Catholic monks. In their tradition they have a small glass of wine after lunch. Of course I didn't join them in this – they gave me juice instead. But this is what they do and they stick to it; they have their one glass of wine after lunch and that's it. The prohibition is not against this type of thing, but this is not how people typically drink, is it? Usually you go out and buy yourself a bottle, pour yourself a glass, and set it down. You finish that glass and pour yourself another glass. You finish that one and pour yourself another glass....

## **Conclusion**

Virtuous, positive states of mind are what really afford us refuge. They protect our mind, and in the end it is our mind that we need to protect. So, thank you. As a way of showing your intention to live ethically and to guard the vows that you have just committed yourself to – so that you are able to stick to them and so it becomes good in the future – we will close the ceremony by making an aspirational prayer. We make a prayer that we develop perfect ethics. When we develop perfect ethics, or when we take ethics far beyond, then we become Buddhas.