

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Eight Mahayana Precepts are taken for twenty-four hours. It is especially good to take them on full and new moon days and on special Buddhist days (see the Tibetan Calendar). The essence of this practice is to be mindful of the Mahayana motivation; to take these precepts in order to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment.

Observing precepts for even such a short time has tremendous benefits: one accumulates a great amount of positive potential (merit) in a short time. One will receive pleasant rebirths and eventually will attain enlightenment. One is protected from harm and the place where one lives becomes peaceful and prosperous. One's mind is peaceful and calm; one gains control over one's bad habits; there will be fewer distractions when meditating. One gets along better with others. One will meet the Buddha's teachings in the future and can be born as a disciple of Maitreya Buddha.

The eight precepts are:

1. Avoid killing, directly or indirectly.
2. Avoid stealing and taking things without the permission of their owner.
3. Avoid sexual contact.
4. Avoid lying and deceiving others.
5. Avoid toxicants: alcohol, tobacco and drugs (except for medicinal purposes).
6. Avoid eating more than one meal that day. The meal is taken before noon, and once one has stopped eating for thirty minutes, the meal is considered finished. At other times of the day one can take light drinks, but not undiluted whole milk or fruit juice with pulp. Avoid eating black foods: meat, eggs, onions, garlic and radishes.
7. Avoid sitting on a high, expensive bed or seat with pride. Also avoid sitting on animal skins.
8. Avoid wearing jewellery, perfume, and make-up. Avoid singing, dancing or playing music with attachment.

For a precept to be broken completely, four conditions must be present:

1. The motivation is a negative attitude such as attachment, anger, etc.
2. There is an object of the action, e.g. a being that is killed or an object that is stolen.
3. One does the action. If one tells someone else to kill, steal or lie, it is also a transgression.
4. The action is completed, e.g. the being dies before oneself or one thinks, "This is mine."

The first time one takes the precepts, it is done from a master. Thereafter, one can do the ceremony before a Buddha image by regarding it as the actual Buddha.

## **THE ACTUAL PRACTICE**

*Recitation of Prayers:*

*Refuge and Bodhichitta*

*Seven Limb prayers*

*Mandala Offering etc.*

## TAKING THE ORDINATION

*Kneel down on your right knee and put your right handpalm on top of your left while reciting the following two prayers: [\*Note: to be said only when taken with teacher.] All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas dwelling in the ten directions, please pay attention to me. \*[Master, please pay attention to me.]*

Just as the Tathagatas of the past, the Arhants, the complete and perfect Buddhas who, like the wise horse and the great elephant, have done what was to be done, have performed their tasks, have laid down the burden, have accomplished their own purpose, have cut their ties with existence and who possess perfect speech, well-liberated minds and well-liberated wisdom, have taken fast-day vows for the sake of all sentient beings, in order to benefit them, in order to liberate them, in order to eliminate famine, in order to eliminate sickness, in order that the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment be perfected, and in order that the highest, complete and perfect enlightenment be truly realized, so do I, called [*..SAY YOUR NAME..*], from now until tomorrow sunrise, for the sake of all sentient beings, in order to benefit them, in order to liberate them, in order to eliminate famine, in order to eliminate sickness, in order that the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment be perfected and in order that the highest, complete and perfect enlightenment be truly realized, take the [Mahayana] fast-day vows." (3X)

(These verses in Tibetan:

Chog chu na shug pay sang gya dang jang chub sem pa tam cha dag la gong su sol / (lob pon gong su sol) ji tar ngon gyi de shin sheg pa dra chom yang dag par dzog pa sang gye ta chang she ta wu / lang po chen po / ja wa ja shing je pa cha si par kun tu jor wa yong su za pa / yang dag pa ka / leg par nam par drol wa tug / leg par nam par drol wa she rab chan de dag gi / sem chan tam cha kyi don gyi chir dang / pan par ja wa chir dang / drol war ja wa chir dang / mu ge me par ja wa chir dang / na me par ja wa chir dang / jang chub kyi chog kyi cho nam yong su dzog par ja wa chir dang / la na me pa yang dag par dzog pa jang chub nge par tog par ja wa chir so jong yang dag par dze pa de zhin u dag [*...SAY YOUR NAME...*] zhe gyi wa kyang / du di na zung te ji si sang nyi ma ma shar gyi bar du / sem chan tam cha kyi don gyi chir dang / pan par ja wa chir dang / drol war ja wa chir dang / mu ge me par ja wa chir dang / na me par ja wa chir dang / jang chub kyi chog kyi cho nam yong su dzog par ja wa chir dang / la na me pa yang dag par dzog pa jang chub nge par tog par ja wa chir [tek pa chen po] so jong yang dag par lang war gyio.)

Lama: THAB YIN NO [*this is the method*]

Student: LEG SO [*good*]

*After the third repetition, think you have received the ordination in the form of light and that your whole body is radiant with that light. You should feel very pleased. Remember the Bodhicitta motivation.*

## **PRAYER OF THE PRECEPTS**

Henceforth I shall not take life,

I shall not take other's goods,

I shall not do sexual acts, I shall not lie.

I shall avoid all alcohol, the cause of many faults.

I shall not use great or high seats and beds.

Likewise, food at the wrong time, perfumes, garlands, ornaments, dance, song and so forth I shall avoid.

Just as Arhants never do actions such as taking life, I too shall abandon these.

May I quickly gain supreme Bodhi.

May this world, disturbed by many sorrows, be freed from the ocean of samsara.

(These verses in Tibetan:

Deng na sog cho mi ja zhing / zhan gyi nor yang lang mi ja / trig pai cho kyang mi cho ching / dzun gyi tsig kyang mi ma wo / kyon ni mang po nyer ten pai / chang ni yong su pang bar ja / tri tan che to mi ja zhing / de zhin du ma yin pai za / dri dang treng wa gyan dang ni / gar dang lu sog pang war ja / ji tar dra chom tag tu ni / sog cho la sog mi je tar / de zhin sog cho la sog pang / la med jang chub nyur tob shog / dug ngal mang trug jig ten di sid pai tse la drol war shog.)

*Sit down again.*

## **DHARANI OF IMMACULATE MORALITY**

OM AMOGHA-SHILA-SAMBHARA, BHARA BHARA, . MAHA-SHUDDHA-SATTVA-PADMA-VIBHUSHITE-BHUJA, DHARA DHARA, SAMANTA, AVALOKITE, HUM PHAT SVAHA (21X)

By keeping moral law

Purely and without pride,

May we attain the ethics-gone-beyond.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dedication prayers

Make three prostrations