

The 8 Mahayana precepts ceremony by **Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron**

Introduction

The eight Mahayana precepts are taken for 24 hours. It is especially good to take them on full and new moon days and on other Buddhist festival days. Observing precepts for even such a short time has tremendous benefits: one accumulates a great amount of merit in a short time. One will receive upper rebirths and eventually will attain awakening. 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 are 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:

Avoid killing, directly or indirectly.

Avoid stealing and taking things without the permission of their owner.

Avoid sexual contact.

Avoid lying and deceiving others.

Avoid intoxicants: alcohol, tobacco and recreational drugs. (You may take prescription drugs.)

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 meat, chicken, fish, eggs, onions, garlic and radishes.

Avoid sitting on a high, expensive bed or seat with pride. Also avoid sitting on animal skins.

Avoid wearing jewelry, perfume, and make-up. Avoid singing, dancing or playing music with attachment.

Taking the precepts

All Buddhas and bodhisattvas residing in the ten directions, please pay attention to me!

Preceptor, please pay attention to me! (omit if taking before a Buddha image.)

Just as the past tathagatas, the foe destroyers and the completely perfect Buddhas, like the heavenly steed and the great elephant, accomplished their objective and did their task, laid down their load (of the contaminated aggregates), achieved their own purpose, consumed their ties to samsara; as they possessed perfect speech, a mind properly liberated, a wisdom properly liberated; just as they perfectly took the Mahayana precepts for the sake of all sentient beings, in order to benefit them, to liberate them, to eliminate famine, to eliminate sickness, to perfect the thirty-seven aids to awakening, and to realize the highest perfect awakening; in the same way, for the sake of all sentient beings, to benefit them, to liberate them, to eliminate famine, to eliminate sickness, to perfect the thirty-seven aids to awakening, and to realize the highest perfect awakening, I, (say your name), will also perfectly accept the Mahayana precepts from this moment until sunrise tomorrow. 3x

Prayer of commitment to keep the precepts

From now on I will not kill, or take another's property. I will not engage in sexual activity and will not speak false words. I will totally avoid intoxicants, which are the cause of many faults. I will not use high or expensive beds or seats. I will avoid eating food at improper times. I will not wear perfumes, garlands and ornaments, or sing, dance and so forth. Just as the foe destroyers abandoned killing and so forth, may I, by avoiding killing and so forth, quickly attain the highest awakening. May I and all beings be freed from the ocean of cyclic existence, this world disturbed by many sorrows.

Dharani of pure ethical conduct

om ahmoga shila sambara bara bara maha shuda sato payma bibu kitay budza dara dara samanta ahwalokite hum pey soha. (21x)

Dedication prayers

By having the flawless ethical conduct of the Dharma, pure ethical conduct, and ethical conduct without conceit, may I complete far-reaching ethical conduct.

Follow this by reciting other **dedication prayers**.