

**The Three Refuges**  

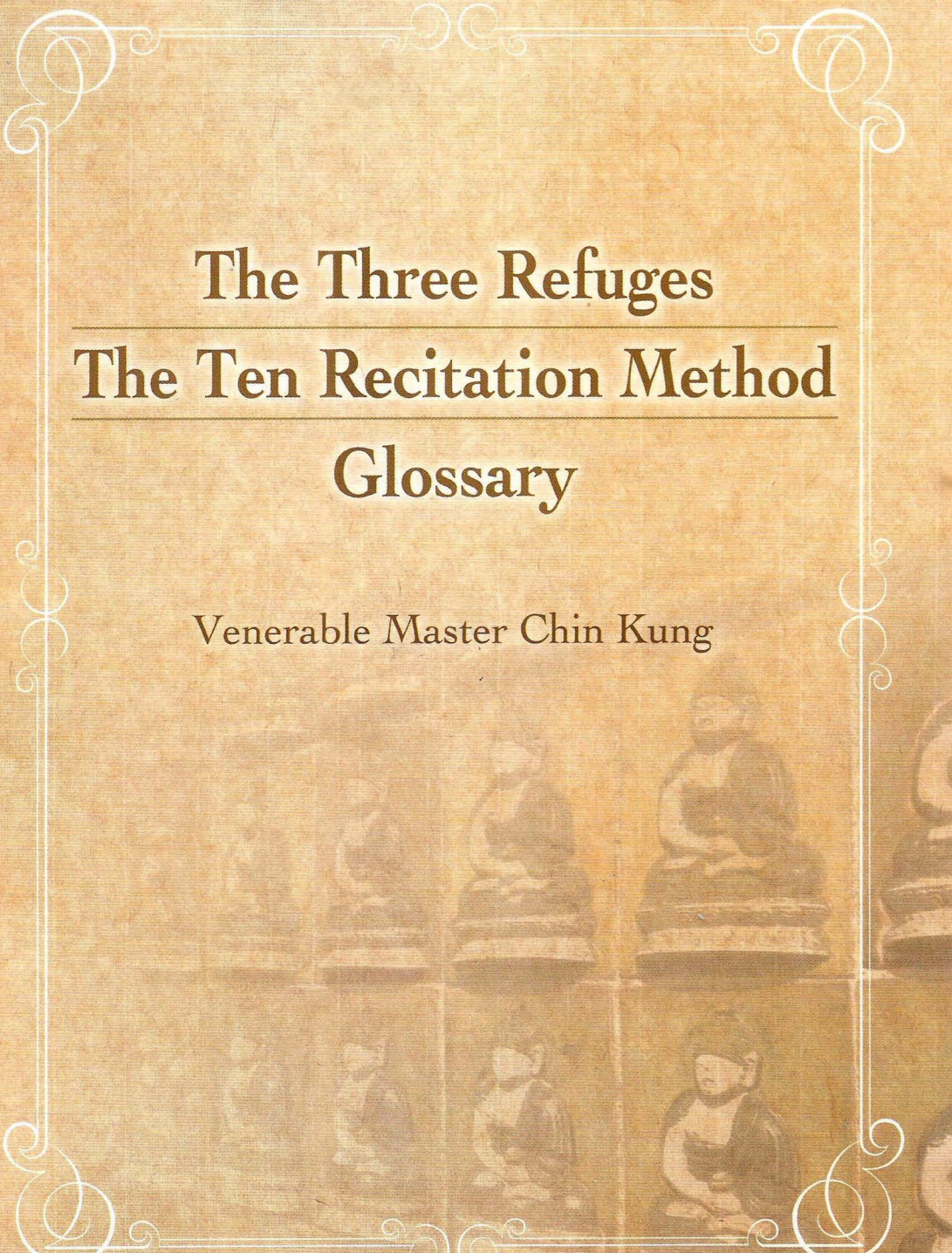
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**The Ten Recitation Method**  

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**Glossary**

Venerable Master Chin Kung



# The Three Refuges

Venerable Master Chin Kung



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2F, No.333-1, Sec 4, Hsin Yi Road, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.  
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Printed in Taiwan  
1000 Copies; 2010 November  
HZ50-12-01

## "TAKING REFUGE IN THE TRIPLE JEWELS"

SINGAPORE 1992

Dear fellow practitioners, today we are going to conduct the Initiation Ceremony of the Triple Jewels, which are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. I would like to clarify what taking refuge in the Triple Jewels means since there have been growing misunderstandings in modern times. In order to reap the true benefits, we must first settle these misunderstandings.

What is Buddhism? Is it a religion? Buddhism is not a religion but rather the most profound and wholesome education based on forty-nine years of Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings for all sentient beings. As I recall, in 1923, Mr. Jing-Wu Ou-Yang spoke at the University of Zhong-Shan. The title of his lecture was "Buddhism is Neither a Religion, nor a Philosophy, but the Essential of the Modern World." This lecture was an insightful breakthrough that shook the contemporary Chinese Buddhist world.

Since Buddhism is an education, what exactly are its objectives, methods and principles? Its educational objective is to help sentient beings understand the truth of the Dharma which is defined as (1) the teachings of the Buddhas (2) duties, laws and

doctrines or (3) things, events, phenomena, everything. Simply put, the truth of the Dharma addresses the causes that initiate all the phenomena of life and the universe. Life refers to ourselves while the universe refers to our living environment. Therefore, the educational content of Buddhism directs us to gain clear understanding of our living environment and ourselves.

Nowadays, the formal educational system only subscribes to a partial understanding of the universe, which has yet to be proven. Moreover, we are still discussing and investigating this limited part, not yet knowing enough to draw the correct conclusions. Unfortunately, even religions cannot provide comprehensive and satisfactory explanations of life as a whole, and are only confined to a limited area of the truth. Therefore, the profound and extensive educational content of Buddhism is essential for every sentient being.

The boundary of our living space is not restricted to a city, a region or even just the planet earth. There are galaxies in outer space, comprised of innumerable planets, on which exist advanced life forms that are much more intelligent than human beings. All these galaxies are also our living environment. Furthermore, apart from the space dimension,

there is also a time dimension, which extends from the past through the present and into the future. Thus, the environment in which we live consists of an infinite magnitude of space and time.

Our current formal education does not cover such an extensive discussion of this infinite living space and time. Even the well-respected Confucianism only involves a single lifetime, ranging from birth to death and ultimately to a strong relationship that links us to our ancestors. The teachings of Confucius barely touch on the heavenly beings or ghosts but instead focus on how to behave as an honorable person. In contrast, Buddha Shakyamuni clearly and precisely described the Four Sage Realms, which are Buddha, Bodhisattva, Pratyekabuddha and Sound-hearer. Apart from the Four Sage Realms are the Six Realms of Reincarnation of heavenly beings, Asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hells. Levels of awakening rank these Four Sage Realms and the Six Realms. For example, Buddhas have the most awakened minds while beings in the hells have the most deluded minds. By combining the Six Realms and the Four Sage Realms, we have the Ten Realms. These comprise our existing living space and it is essential for us to clearly understand them.

After we understand the truth of life and the universe, our thoughts, viewpoints, speech and behavior would naturally differ from before. In the past, our deluded mind and erroneous viewpoints led to incorrect actions, thereby creating bad karma, which is the future retribution resulting from one's thoughts, speech and action. According to the fundamental Law of Cause and Effect, unavoidable consequences will result from creating karma, as good results come from good karma and bad results come from bad karma. One creates one's own destiny; no one can step in to bear the consequences of our actions.

As we can see, thoroughly understanding the truth of life and the universe will bring us infinite benefits. Once we understand and deeply believe in the Law of Cause and Effect, we will not create any more bad karma. If we do not create any more karma, then we will not have to bear the consequences or fruits, thus achieving what the Buddha frequently referred to in the sutras as surpassing the Ten Realms. From the Cause and Effect point of view, the Four Sage Realms are the results of diligent cultivation and attainment, while the Six Realms are the consequences of good or bad deeds. The Six Realms can be further categorized into the Three

Good Realms of humans, Asuras and heavenly beings and the Three Bad Realms of hells, hungry ghosts and animals.

After understanding karma and its consequences, we will refrain from creating any more karma or at least not any bad ones. By applying the above concepts to our daily lives, we will obtain what everyone wishes for: a happy life, pleasant family, successful career, harmonious society, prosperous nation and peaceful world. Only the Buddha's education completely provides the solution to humanity's search for true happiness. Clearly understanding this, we realize that this education is essential for everyone. Since this education encompasses infinite space and time, it surpasses differences in nationality, race, political affiliation and religion. In other words, it is for all sentient beings in the Nine Realms below that of Buddhas.

There are several examples in the sutras about different religious followers who learned the Buddha's teachings during Buddha Shakyamuni's time. The Flower Adornment Sutra and the Earth Store Sutra, tell respectively of a Hindu priest and a daughter of a Hindu priest who, by adhering to the Buddha's teaching have attained the level of Bodhisattva. From these examples, we understand that the Bud-



dha's education indeed transcends religious beliefs and that any religious followers can benefit from it.

The educational system founded by the Buddha is similar to our contemporary educational system. For example, becoming an Arhat is equivalent to earning a University Bachelor's degree and becoming a Bodhisattva is equivalent to earning a Master's degree. Buddhahood, the highest degree, is equivalent to a Ph.D. Followers of any religion can attain these stages of enlightenment. Is it necessary to abandon one's religion and learn the Buddha's education to obtain enlightenment? Definitely not. If one were to go to school or study abroad to pursue knowledge and advancement, one need not change nationality or religion. In other words, the purpose of studying does not conflict with nationality, religion, etc.

Therefore, Buddhism is an education. Titles such as Arhat, Bodhisattva and Buddha are nothing but "degree" names. Regardless of our differences, we shall achieve these degrees equally as long as we diligently follow the teachings. Thus, the Initiation Ceremony of the Triple Jewels is to formally enroll one into a school where Buddha Shakyamuni teaches the objective, methods and principles of attaining enlightenment.

Since Buddha Shakyamuni established Buddhism, we acknowledge him as our original teacher. Actually, there is only one teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni, for all Buddhists. Bodhisattvas such as Manjusri (symbolizing wisdom), Samantabhadra (symbolizing great vows) and Avalokiteshvara (symbolizing compassion) were all the Buddha's earlier students. Today, we too are the Buddha's students. These Bodhisattvas are our schoolmates, seniors who studied before us while we are freshmen. As they are seniors and have the ability to teach us, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Arhats are not objects for worship but rather someone we can respect and learn from.

What is the ultimate goal of the Buddha's education? The sutras teach us that it is Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. This very important and well-respected phrase is transliterated from Sanskrit in order to keep its original pronunciation. It means the highest, proper and complete enlightenment. Simply said, it can be interpreted as the ultimate, perfect wisdom. Whoever obtains it will be able to intuitively know and sense every aspect of the true reality of life and the universe. Obtaining this wisdom and ability is the ultimate goal of all the Buddha's students.

The Buddha teaches us that the ultimate perfect

wisdom is innate. The Avatamsaka (Flower Adornment) Sutra states, "Every being possesses the same wisdom and virtuous capabilities as Buddhas." Why do we not have this wisdom now? It is because of "wandering thoughts and attachments." This statement clearly reveals the two causes of how we temporarily have lost our original capabilities. Wandering thoughts and attachments are not within our basic nature; therefore, they can be discarded. Like dispersing the clouds to let the sun shine through, we remove wandering thoughts and attachments from our mind and cultivate virtue to restore our Buddha Nature, thus completely recovering our innate abilities.

In practice, how do we cultivate? Formally taking refuge in the Triple Jewels is the initial step as it symbolizes asking Venerables, monks or nuns, to pass on ways of Buddhist cultivation. Taking Refuge means to find a shelter that we can return to and rely on or what Buddhists call "Return to the other shore." In practice, from where do we return and upon what do we rely? We return to and rely upon the Triple Jewels of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

In the first step, we return to and rely on the Buddha. "Buddha" is a Sanskrit word meaning awareness and understanding. When we take refuge in

the Buddha, we are returning from our deluded state of mind and relying upon an awakened, understanding mind. Participating in the Initiation Ceremony and accepting the Buddha's teachings are the first steps of the awakening in becoming aware of the importance of learning his education.

The Sixth Patriarch of Zen, Master Hui-Neng, used a different approach in explaining the Triple Jewels. He did not use the words "Buddha, Dharma and Sangha" for fear of promoting misconceptions in the Triple Jewels for future generations. He was afraid that as Buddhism was passed from generation to generation, if he used these words, people would form erroneous views, automatically thinking of a statue for the Buddha Jewel, a sutra for the Dharma Jewel and a Buddhist monk or nun for the Sangha Jewel. These are not what we should return to. Actually, we should take refuge in our Self-Nature Buddha. A Bodhisattva stated, "The Self-Nature Awareness is innate." Therefore, what Buddha Shakyamuni meant in taking refuge in the Buddha is not to seek protection under his wing, but to return from our delusive mind and rely upon the innate Self-Nature Buddha. It is essential for one to understand the importance of returning to one's Self-Nature.

In the second step, we take refuge in the

Dharma, returning from deviant views by relying upon proper views and understanding. Dharma is the proper comprehension and viewpoint of life and the universe. The Dharma Jewel is the infinite, innate wisdom of Self-Nature also referred to as the Prajna Wisdom. Relying upon our Prajna Wisdom to correct our erroneous thoughts, speech and behavior is the meaning of taking refuge in the Dharma Jewel. Among the Three Jewels, the Dharma is the primary one we should rely on. In this day and age, Prajna Wisdom will be our primary concern.

However, our innate wisdom cannot be restored in a short time. Then what should we follow? Sutras are records of the Buddha's teachings that describe the truth of the universe. Before our Prajna Wisdom has been fully recovered, we follow the teachings in the sutras and use them as a guideline. If our thinking coincides with the sutras, then our comprehension is correct. For example, the Buddha teaches us to respect and take care of our parents and teachers, to be compassionate by not killing and to practice the Ten Good Conducts. People may wonder in this modern age why we should be following what the Buddha taught three thousand years ago. We do so because the Self-Nature Prajna Wisdom is everlasting and unchanged; those who obtain it have

the capability to know everything in the past, present and future within the infinite universe.

However, we must beware of fraudulent sutras. It is easy for us to encounter fake sutras, especially in a modern world that promotes freedom of publication. Essentially anyone can publish books. In ancient times when sutras first came to China, each sutra had to undergo a strict examination by experts, followed by the emperor's official seal to prove its authenticity. Even the sutra commentaries of ancient patriarchs underwent scrutiny from highly accomplished monks and scholars of that time before receiving the Emperor's approval for distribution. Nowadays, no one regulates or enforces this process. Therefore, we need to be careful in verifying the authenticity of a sutra by checking for its listing in the Dragon (Chien-Long) Canon of the Sutras. This Canon of thirty-eight volumes was compiled under the decree of Emperor Chien-Long in 1738. Previous canons were meticulously certified by the most accomplished monks and scholars of their time and thus also serve as reliable references.

In the third step, we take refuge in the Sangha Jewel. Used here, Sangha does not mean a group of monks or nuns. There are two representations, purity of mind and harmony in life. First, Sangha refers

to living in a way that keeps our minds far away from temptations while maintaining the purity of our six senses of sight, sound, taste, smell, touch and mind object. In the modern world, people suffer from pollution of mind, spirit and body. Even the earth's ecological system is off-balance. There are holes in the ozone layers that are "pollution" of the skies. Almost everything from the skies and the earth to their inhabitants are contaminated in one way or another. Today, everyone is aware of environmental pollution. Governments are also promoting environmental protection to ensure better living conditions. However, how effective are these protection programs? It is questionable. The problem comes back to what the Buddha revealed, that the environment, the dependent variable, changes with our minds, the independent variable. If the impurities in our mind cannot be eradicated, our environment will never reach a state of purity. Therefore, if we want to improve the external environment, we first start internally by purifying our mind. Taking refuge in the third Jewel, the Sangha, thus means returning from pollution and relying upon purity of mind.

Second, the Sangha represents harmony in living. Having observed the sufferings resulting from the disharmony between peoples, countries and even

religions, the Buddha taught us the Six Principles of Harmony. The Six Principles are the essential guidelines that all Buddhists need to observe. When we take refuge in the Sangha, we are returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon Purity of Mind and the Six Principles of Harmony. Thus, the guidelines for cultivation are:

**Taking refuge in the Buddha,**

*awareness without delusion,*

**Taking refuge in the Dharma,**

*proper viewpoints without deviation,*

**Taking refuge in the Sangha,**

*purity without pollution.*

These are the primary disciplines in practicing Buddhism from the beginning of cultivation to the attainment of Buddhahood.

The main purpose behind taking the Three Refuges is to cultivate practicing awakening, proper thoughts and viewpoints, and purity. From now on, if people ask us what we are cultivating, we can answer that we are cultivating the Three Refuges. What are we learning? We are learning to achieve the ultimate, perfect wisdom that comes from perfecting these Three Refuges. What are the methods we use



for cultivation? There are innumerable methods available depending on the ability and condition of each individual practitioner. Methods are not fixed, but flexible. However, we must remember that our learning objective always remains the same; awakening, proper thoughts and viewpoints, and purity.

For Pure Land practitioners, the main cultivation method we use is chanting Buddha Amitabha's name. This method is advocated by Mahasthamaprabhata (Great Strength) Bodhisattva in the Surangama Sutra and by Samantabhadra (Universal Worthy) Bodhisattva in the Avatamsaka (Flower Adornment) Sutra.

In addition to chanting Buddha Amitabha's name, we follow the Five Guidelines to help us in our daily cultivation. First, we advocate Confucius' Five Virtues of Gentility, Kindness, Respectfulness, Thriftiness and Humility. We use these Five Virtues to cultivate our body and mind. Practicing them provides the foundation for our cultivation. The first level is comprised of the Three Conditions that are described in the Visualization Sutra. The First Condition includes (a) being filial and respectful to one's parents and teachers, (b) being compassionate and not killing any living beings and (c) practicing the Ten Good Conducts. The second Condition includes (a)

following the Three Refuges, (b) observing precepts, laws and customs and (c) behaving in a proper and dignified manner. The Third Condition includes (a) generating our Bodhi-Mind, (b) deeply believing in the Law of Cause and Effect, (c) reciting and upholding Mahayana Sutras and (d) encouraging others to advance on the path to Enlightenment. The Buddha told us that the Three Conditions are the causes that brought all the Buddhas of the three times and the ten directions to Enlightenment. Therefore, we cannot do without this important step in our practice.

Proceeding upward from the Three Conditions, we advance to the second level which is the Six Principles of Harmony. The First Principle of Harmony is to share the same viewpoints or goals. There will be no conflict in the world if we all share the same thoughts and viewpoints. This principle tries to create a common understanding for all sentient beings. This common understanding is based on our Self-Nature and not on Buddha Shakyamuni's opinion. He taught us how to cultivate and explore our own innate wisdom, virtues and capabilities. We are not imitating him; rather we are rediscovering our inborn potential. His education is truly extraordinary.

The second principle is to observe the same pre-

cepts. Practicing the precepts includes cultivating an attitude of following society's laws and customs. Once everyone shares the common viewpoints and is able to follow the law, society will be peaceful and prosperous and world peace will naturally ensue.

Another important principle is to share benefits equally. In modern society, it is beneficial not to have a big difference in wealth between people but to try to close the gap between the "have's" and the "have-nots." Equal sharing of wealth consequently settles the conflicts over wealth. Sharing benefits harmoniously with others is a deed of wisdom and a real cultivation of good fortune. The reason people do not have equal wealth comes from the different seeds that they have previously planted. If people did not plant the same seeds, how can they expect to harvest the same fruits? The Buddha taught that those who harvest more should share with those who harvest less. Then, the sharing behavior becomes the seeds that will benefit one more later. According to the Law of Cause and Effect, poor people need to cultivate more good fortune to receive better harvests in the future. In addition, the wealthy need to share their possessions in order to remain wealthy in the future. Only by doing so will the world become peaceful. This true merit

cómes from learning the Buddha's teachings.

Pure Land practitioners, as a foundation, cultivate the Confucian Five Virtues that are basic for all humanity. From here, we advance to the Three Conditions and the Six Principles of Harmony that are the important basis before practicing Buddhism. Then the Three Learnings are the foundation before practicing Mahayana Buddhism that includes the Six Paramitas. Finally, we practice the Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra (Universal Worthy) Bodhisattva to attain Buddhahood. It is not difficult to remember these five guidelines. Combining this solid foundation with chanting Buddha Amitabha's name will assure us of obtaining what people have always pursued, a harmonious family life, a successful career and a peaceful society. Now that we have a clear understanding of what we are learning and sincerely want to follow the teachings, we need to practice diligently toward accomplishing our ideal goal. Consequently, one returns and relies on one's Triple Jewels of Self-Nature.

In addition to the abstract form of the Triple Jewels of Self-Nature, there are the physical forms seen as Buddha's images, sutras, monks and nuns. Making offerings to the Buddha's image serves two purposes. First, it honors our original teacher, Buddha

Shakyamuni. Every time we look at the image, we remember the great teachings he passed on to us. Second, it is to remind us to emulate the Buddha. When we see the Buddha's image, we remind ourselves to strive for awakening and not to be deluded. Sutras serve the same purpose by reminding us that we have taken refuge in the Dharma and need to reflect upon our viewpoints and comprehension. Similarly, seeing a monk or nun, representing the Sangha, can remind us of the importance of maintaining purity of the six senses and harmony with others. Therefore, attending the physical form of the Triple Jewels greatly benefits us because they constantly remind us of the path to awakening.

Some practitioners attend the physical forms of the Triple Jewels at home. The Buddha's image symbolizes the Buddha Jewel while the Bodhisattva's image represents the Sangha Jewel. When we honor the Three Sages of the Western Pure Land, Buddha Amitabha symbolizes the Buddha Jewel, and Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattvas symbolize the Sangha Jewel. Furthermore, Buddhist sutras symbolize the Dharma Jewel. These three remind us of the treasures of Self-Nature within us.

Of all the Buddhist sutras, the Infinite Life Sutra is

what I recommend the most. Although not too lengthy, the text completely encompasses the Buddha's teachings. Thus, it is well suited to modern practitioners. The full title of this sutra is The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahayana School. This title fully reveals the objectives, principles and methods of cultivation in the Buddha's teachings. "Infinite Life" in this sutra's title embodies the most important of all the other infinities, including infinite wisdom, abilities, virtues, wealth, etc. Without infinite life, one could not enjoy all these other infinities. The infinity of our natural potential is what Pure Land practitioners seek and the virtues and capabilities of our innate Self-Nature are infinite. Furthermore, infinite Dharma originates from Self-Nature. Thus, the immeasurable unbounded existences of the Ten Realms are created by the Self-Nature.

The word "Adornment" in the sutra's title represents truth, goodness, beauty and wisdom, qualities that are not a true reality in this world. They exist within the Self-Nature and will be found when one seeks within.

The principles of cultivation are also expressed by "Purity, Equality and Enlightenment." Purity represents the Sangha Jewel; Equality represents the

Dharma Jewel; and Enlightenment represents the Buddha Jewel. These three concepts are also equivalent to the Three Learnings, and cover the Buddha's forty-nine years of teachings. Purity stands for self-discipline and the Vinayas (Precepts); Equality stands for the Concentration and the Sutras; Enlightenment stands for the Wisdom and the Sastras (Commentaries).

If we have a busy lifestyle and do not have time to study numerous Buddhist sutras, we can start from this Infinite Life Sutra. Once thoroughly understanding it, not only will one understand Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings but also the teachings of all the Buddhas, because all these teachings come from the Self-Nature.

The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality, and Enlightenment of the Mahayana School expresses the essence of all sutras. Practicing according to the teachings in this sutra fulfills the requirements of taking refuge in the Triple Jewels!

Today, I have explained to everyone the meaning of taking the Three Refuges. We will begin the Three Refuges Ceremony by sincerely and respectfully repeating the oath three times in front of the Buddha, vowing to be willing to become Buddha's

student and to learn from him. I, Venerable Chin-Kung, will be the witness and initiation teacher. Please remember that one does not take refuge in the monk conducting the ceremony, but rather in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, thus becoming students of the Triple Jewels.

The following is a simple yet solemn initiation ceremony. Everyone will receive a certificate of the initiation with an oath extracted from the Book of the Precepts by Dharma Master Hong-I. We use it for commemoration and simplicity. Let us stand in front of the Buddha's and Bodhisattva's images with our most sincere, pure, compassionate and respectful heart. Repeat after me, "I solemnly pledge to be a student of the Triple Jewels. From now on, I will cultivate according to the Buddha's teachings, will seek birth into the Pure Land and will help all other sentient beings to understand the truth of the Dharma."



## WHAT IS TAKING REFUGE?

Taking Refuge means to return and rely. From where do we return from and upon what do we rely? When we take refuge in the Buddha, we are returning from our deluded state of mind and relying upon an Awakened, Understanding mind. When we take refuge in the Dharma, we are returning from deviant views and relying upon proper views and understanding. When we take refuge in the Sangha, we are returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon Purity of Mind and the Six Principles of Harmony. Taking refuge in the Triple Jewels restores the complete wisdom and abilities of our Self-Nature. We will attain purity, equality, honesty, contentment, compassion and overall, true happiness.

### The Buddha Jewel

Buddha is a Sanskrit word meaning Awareness and Understanding. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we vow to return from blind faith and delusion and rely upon Understanding and Awareness as a way of life. We are not relying upon the statues or Buddha-images, but rather the spirit of understand-

ing and awareness they represent.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we learn to rely upon Buddha Amitabha's lessons on wisdom and compassion. The name "Amitabha" stands for Infinite Light and Infinite Life. When we follow his teachings, we will attain wisdom, happiness and longevity.

This is taking refuge in the Buddha.

### The Dharma Jewel

Dharma means Right Understanding and Views. Delusion has obstructed us from seeing the true face of people and the reality behind matters and objects. This has caused us to look at life and the universe in a distorted and deviant way. When delusion is cleared and our minds are pure to an extent, we give rise to wisdom. With wisdom, we are able to see all people and matters completely and clearly. When our hearts are pure, we can see the past, present and future. Only when we have clearly seen the whole can our viewpoint and understanding be considered right.

The Buddha's mind is pure without the slightest

pollution and therefore sees everything clearly and entirely. We can rely upon the sutras, which are the recorded teachings of the Buddha, because they speak entirely of the truths the Buddha has seen. They teach and show us the way to attain Purity of Mind, to see life and the universe most clearly and become just like the Buddhas.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we should rely upon the five Sutras and one commentary of the Pure Land as guidelines of practice:

1. The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahayana School
2. The Amitabha Sutra
3. The Visualization Sutra
4. "The Chapter of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Conduct and Vows" from the Flower Adornment Sutra
5. "The Chapter on the Foremost Attainment of Great Strength Bodhisattva through Buddha Recitation" from the Surangama Sutra

6. Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's Report on the Way to Reaching the Pure Land.

This is taking refuge in the Dharma.

The Sangha Jewel

Sangha means purity and harmony. Today's world is full of pollution; pollution of mind, spirit, views and body. Even the earth and atmosphere are hazardly polluted. The Buddha taught, "The environment changes according to our state of mind." We would do well to return from all these pollutants and rely upon Purity of Mind, for it is the key to saving our Earth.

There is also great disharmony in our world today, among spouses, families, friends, societies and countries which has brought us much suffering and many disasters. The Buddha taught us to rely upon the Six Principles of Living in Harmony to establish harmonious relationships between others and ourselves.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we rely upon wisdom and compassion as our way of treating others and dealing with affairs. Great Strength Bodhisattva represents wisdom. His choice of the Bud-

dha Recitation method of practice is wisdom in its highest form. Guan Yin Bodhisattva represents compassion; when we help introduce the Pure Land Teachings to others, we are practicing the compassion of Guan Yin Bodhisattva.

This is taking refuge in the Sangha.

## THE THREE REFUGES

To the Buddha I return and rely,  
returning from delusions and  
relying upon Awareness and Understanding.

To the Dharma I return and rely,  
returning from erroneous views and  
relying upon Proper Views and  
Understanding.

To the Sangha I return and rely,  
returning from pollution and disharmony and re-  
lying upon Purity of Mind and the  
Six Principles of Harmony.

The  
Ten  
Recitation  
Method

Venerable Master Chin Kung



## THE TEN RECITATION METHOD

The Ten-Recitation method is a simple, convenient, effective way to practice Buddha Name Recitation. It is especially suitable for those who find little time in the day for cultivation. Practicing this method helps us to regain mindfulness of Buddha Amitabha and brings us peace and clarity in the present moment.

The practice begins first thing in the morning when we wake up. We sit up straight and clearly recite "Namo Amitabha" ten times with an undisturbed mind, aloud or silently to ourselves. We repeat this process eight more times for the rest of the day. Altogether, we do one round of ten recitations, nine times a day, every day as follows:

1. Upon waking up
2. Before starting breakfast
3. After finishing breakfast
4. Before work
5. Before starting lunch
6. After finishing lunch
7. Before starting dinner
8. After finishing dinner



## 9. At bedtime

Altogether, this method is practiced nine times daily. The key is regularity; disruption of this practice will reduce its effectiveness. Without interruption, the cultivator will soon feel an increase in his/her purity of mind and wisdom.

Diligent practice of the Ten-Recitation Method, together with unwavering belief and vows, can ensure fulfillment of our wish to reach the Western Pure Land of Infinite Life and Infinite Light. We hope everyone will practice accordingly.

Namo Amitufo

# Glossary

Venerable Master Chin Kung



## GLOSSARY

**Aeon.** 1,334,000,000 years. Often expressed as the time it would take for a mountain of solid rock of ten cubic leagues to wear down if the tip of a heavenly maiden's delicate tunic brushed against it every hundred years. A fantastically long period of time.

**Affliction.** Condition or cause of pain, distress and suffering which disturbs the body and mind.

**Alaya Consciousness.** (Sanskrit or Skrt). Our store consciousness, the thought database from all our past and present lives, good or bad.

**Amitabha.** The name of the Buddha of the Western Pure Land, primarily meaning Infinite Life and Light. Called Amitufo in Chinese.

**Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi** (Skrt). Highest, proper and complete enlightenment.

**Arhat** (Skrt). One who has reached self-realization, a state in which one possesses no erroneous perceptions, views, speech or behavior.

**Asuras.** Quarrelsome, half-gods.

**Attachments.** Fixed to certain ideas or objects.

**Bodhi mind** (Skrt). The great compassionate and sincere mind, with every thought to attain complete self-realization for self and other.

**Bodhisattva** (Skrt). One who helps others to reach

realization after achieving their own.

**Buddha** (Skt). One who has reached perfection in both self-realization and helping others to reach realization.

**Delusion**. False beliefs, wrong views.

**Deva**. Heavenly Beings or gods

**Dharma** (Skt). 1) The teachings of the Buddha (generally capitalized in English); 2) Things, events, phenomena, everything in the universe; 3) Duty, law, doctrine.

**Dharma Ending Age**. The Dharma Perfect Age began with Buddha Shakyamuni's demise and lasted five hundred years, during which Enlightenment was often attained. The Dharma Semblance Age began after that and lasted one thousand years, during which Enlightenment was seldom attained. The Dharma Ending Age that we are now in began after that and will last for ten thousand years during which Enlightenment will rarely be attained.

**Dusts**. Metaphor for all the mundane things that can cloud our self-nature.

**Eight Afflictions**. Absence of embarrassment and shamefulness, and the presence of jealousy, stinginess, misdeeds, drowsiness, sleep and agitation.

**Eight Sufferings**. As human beings, we undergo the sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death. We

do not attain what we seek, suffer hardships, are parted from our loved ones and find ourselves in the presence of those whom we resent or even hate.

**Eighth Ground Bodhisattva.** There are ten levels or grounds of a Bodhisattva's enlightenment, which summarize the most important steps in a Bodhisattva's path right before attaining Buddhahood. Some say it is at this level that Bodhisattvas reach the stage of Non-regression, the level at which they will never retreat from the Bodhisattva-path.

**Five Deadly Offenses.** Murdering one's own father, murdering one's own mother, causing a Buddha to bleed, killing a Bodhisattva or an Arhat and disrupting the unity of the Sangha.

**Five Desires.** Wealth, lust, fame, food-drink, and sleep.

**Five Guidelines.** Following: 1) The Three Conditions; 2) The Principles of Harmony; 3) The Three Learnings; 4) The Six Paramitas or Principles and 5) Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's Ten Great Vows.

**Five Pure Land Sutras and One Sastra.** (1) The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahayana School, (2) The Amitabha Sutra, (3) The Visualization Sutra, (4) "The Chapter of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Conduct and Vows", from the Flower Adorn-

ment Sutra (5) "The Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Great Strength Bodhisattva through Buddha Name Recitation" from the Surangama Sutra and (6) Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's Report on the Way to Reaching the Pure Land.

**Four Universal Vows of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.**

(1) Sentient beings are innumerable, I vow to help them all; (2) Afflictions are inexhaustible, I vow to end them all; (3) Ways to practice are boundless, I vow to master them all; (4) Enlightenment is unsurpassable, I vow to attain it.

**Good Fortune.** Happiness, intelligence, wellbeing, prosperity, etc. The great benefits of the human and celestial realms; therefore, they are temporary and subject to birth and death.

**Good roots.** Good qualities or seeds sowed by a good life to be reaped later.

**Hungry Ghost.** One of the three lower realms. Hungry ghosts wander in a limbo-like state in which they can find no satisfaction for their desires, especially but not exclusively, for their hunger or thirst. One is reborn here if he or she has extreme greed.

**Karma** (Skt). Law of Cause and Effect, results from thought, speech and behavior.

**Karmic Result.** The natural reward or retribution brought about by the Law of Cause and Effect

(Karma).

**Mahayana** (Skt). One of the two major branches of Buddhism. Bodhisattva path of helping all sentient beings to attain universal liberation.

**Merits and Virtues**. To do good things without expectation of reward, without discrimination, attachment or wandering thoughts.

**Mindfulness of Buddha**. Initially the mind remembers the Buddha and does not forget. After further cultivation, one constantly contemplates the Buddha.

**Nine Realms**. All ten realms minus the Buddha realm.

**Non-regression**. One who will never retreat from the Bodhisattva-path, some say it is not reached until the eighth of the ten grounds of a Bodhisattva.

**Phenomena**. Things, events, happenings, everything in the entire universe.

**Prajna-Wisdom** (Skt). Intuitive wisdom.

**Pratyekabuddha** (Skt). One who attains his enlightenment alone, independent of a teacher, with the objective of attaining Nirvana for him/herself.

**Precepts**. Rules set up by Buddha Shakyamuni to guide his students from erroneous thoughts, speech and behavior.

**Pure Land**. See Western Pure Land.

**Pure Mind or Purity of Mind**. The mind without discrimination or attachments.

**Retribution**. Karmic punishment from erroneous thought, speech or action.

**Saha world** (Skr̥t). Refers to our solar system, filled with suffering and afflictions. yet gladly endured by its inhabitants.

**Samadhi** (Skr̥t). Proper enjoyment. Usually denotes the particular final stage of pure concentration and contemplation. There are many degrees and types of Samadhi.

**Sangha** (Skr̥t). Group of four or more peoples who properly practice the Buddha's teaching together, especially The Six Principles of Harmony.

**Sanskrit** (Skr̥t). Language of ancient India.

**Sastra** (Skr̥t). Commentary on sutras primarily by Bodhisattvas.

**Self-Nature**. Our original, true self that we still have, but is currently covered by deluded thoughts.

**Sentient being**. A living being that is self-aware and that can experience feeling or sensation.

**Sharira** (Skr̥t). Relics that remain after cremation indicating the person had attained some degree of purity of body and mind.

**Six Paramitas or Principles**. Giving, self-discipline, patience, diligence, deep concentration and wisdom.

**Six Principles of Harmony**. 1) Share the same viewpoints or goals. 2) Abide by the same precepts. 3)



Live and practice together harmoniously. 4) Not quarrel. 5) Experience the inner peace and happiness from practicing together harmoniously. 6) Share benefits harmoniously.

**Six Realms.** Three upper realms are heavens, asuras and humans. Three lower realms are animals, hungry ghosts and hells.

**Six Senses.** Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought.

**Six Sense Objects.** Form, sound, scent, taste, texture and thought.

**Six Sense Organs.** Eyes, ears, nose, mouth, body and mind.

**Sutra** (Skt). Teaching by the Buddha, initially given verbally, later compiled and written down by the Buddha's students.

**Ten Directions.** North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, Northwest, above and below.

**Ten Good Conducts.** No killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, abusive language, bearing tales, seductive words, greed, anger or ignorance.

**Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.** 1) Pay respect to all Buddhas. 2) Praise "Thus Come One." 3) Make offerings extensively. 4) Repent of Karmic obstacles. 5) Be joyful over others meritorious

deeds. 6) Appeal to the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. 7) Request the Buddha to reside in this world. 8) Constantly be a diligent follower of the Buddha's teaching. 9) Accord with all sentient beings. 10) Dedicate all merits.

**Ten Realms.** Six realms plus those of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas and Sound-hearers.

**Three Conditions.** The First Condition includes: Being filial to one's parents, Being respectful to one's teachers and elders, Being compassionate and not killing any living beings and Following the Ten Good Conducts. The Second Condition includes: Taking the Three Refuges, Abiding by the precepts, laws and customs, and Conducting oneself in a proper and dignified manner. The Third Condition includes: Generating the Bodhi mind, Deeply believing in the Law of Cause and Effect, Reciting and upholding Mahayana sutras and Encouraging others to advance on the path to Enlightenment.

**Three Learnings.** Self-discipline, deep concentration and wisdom.

**Three Poisons.** Greed, anger and ignorance.

**Three Refuges.** We take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we are returning from our deluded state of mind and relying upon an awakened, understanding

mind. When we take refuge in the Dharma, we are returning from deviant views and relying upon proper views and understanding. When we take refuge in the Sangha, we are returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon purity of mind and the Six Principles of Harmony.

**Transliteration.** To represent (letters or words) in the corresponding characters of another alphabet, so the original sound is retained.

**Virtues.** See **Merits.**

**Way Place.** Usually called a temple, a place where Buddhist practitioners come to practice.

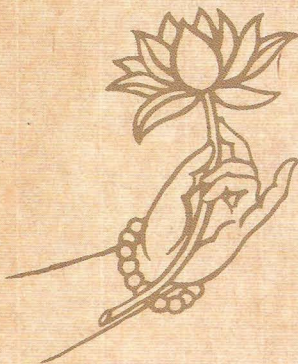
**Western Pure Land.** World created by Buddha Amitabha. An ideal place of cultivation, those who are born there are no longer subject to reincarnation.

## The Teachings Of Great Master Yin Guang



Whether one is a layperson or has left the home-life, one should respect elders and be harmonious to those surrounding him. One should endure what others cannot, and practice what others cannot achieve. One should take others' difficulties unto oneself and help them succeed in their undertakings. While sitting quietly, one should often reflect upon one's own faults, and when chatting with friends, one should not discuss the rights and wrongs of others. In every action one makes, whether dressing or eating, from dawn to dusk and dusk till dawn, one should not cease to recite the AMITABHA Buddha's name. Aside from Buddha recitation, whether reciting quietly or silently, one should not give rise to other improper thoughts. If wandering thoughts appear, one should immediately dismiss them. Constantly maintain a humble and repentful heart; even if one has upheld true cultivation, one should still feel one's practice is shallow and never boast. One should mind one's own business and not the business of others. Only look after the good examples of others instead of bad ones. One should see oneself as mundane and everyone else as Bodhisattvas. If one can cultivate according to these teachings, one is sure to reach the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

**Homage to Amitabha! Amitabha!**



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Printed in Taiwan

HZ50-12-01