

Chapter 11
Going to the Three Jewels for Refuge

ii. Relying on the means to achieve happiness in future lives
Matches ⅱ in Ch 9

Taking refuge takes you deeper into the teachings
Next is to develop unshakable faith in karmic causality

b' is in Chapter 13
4' of this a' is in Chapter 12.

1" The causes of going for refuge

Accumulation of **negative karma** through ignorance and not caring

You will have to experience the results of all that negative karma

You should be seeking some form of protection - a secure place of refuge

There are two main causes for a **strong and sincere** desire to go for refuge

fear of the suffering of lower rebirths

Understand the causes of bad migrations

If you have created such karma

Fear will naturally arise

understand that you have no means to block the results

All that can save you

the confidence that the Three Jewels have the ability to protect you from that misery

The Buddha can show you how. He gave the teachings.

Practice the Dharma; the Buddha's teaching

The Sangha can help you understand the Buddha's teachings

Comprise the Three Jewels

Must be sincere else worthless words

Needs great effort

You need to know the differences between them; you must be able to distinguish their different abilities so that you can rely on each of them properly.

a' Taking refuge: the sacred door for entering the teaching

Strongly applies to people of Small Scope

This refuge is **the** major action for people of Small Scope

Taking this refuge means you are on the path and you are a Buddhist

2' Based on that, the objects to which you go for refuge

a" Identifying the objects of refuge

The Buddha attained highest level of knowledge, compassion, power and freedom from all forms of misery and it causes

The Dharma is his reliable, complete teaching

Sangha properly practice the Dharma and can be your guide

b" The reasons why they are worthy to be a refuge

i. The Buddha has attained the fearless state of complete self-control

The Buddha eliminated all of the mental afflictions of hatred, attachment, pride, etc.

he is no longer under the power of uncontrolled causes and conditions

A person who is worried about his own preservation cannot be your saviour

A person who is afraid cannot save others from all fear

ii. The Buddha is an expert in training disciples

The person in whom you take refuge must have mastered the ways to help other sentient beings.

He must be skill at taming disciples

iii. The Buddha has great compassion

Even with the first two - free of fear and skilled to help, if he does not have great compassion, he will not protect you

iv. The Buddha is pleased by the offering of spiritual practice

What pleases the Buddha is our practice—actually doing what he has advised us to do

The Buddha is the perfect doctor. The Dharma is his prescribed medicine/antidote. The Sangha are the nurses who practice the Dharma.

Take refuge in all Three Jewels with confidence.

Trust that this is the only way

Look towards the Buddha and think, "I have a refuge. I have a saviour. Now I only need to take his advice seriously and practice what he taught."

We are lazy and do only those things that are fun, bring us enjoyment and are within our comfort zone, so we don't commit to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

The Buddha's teachings are not difficult or complicated. They have many steps to follow in specific order.

We behave like children— fun and enjoyment oblivious to consequences.

4' is all of Chapter 12
The Precepts of Refuge.

3' The way you go for refuge

Without knowing the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, you cannot take refuge in them properly.

You should take refuge fully, from the heart, knowing that these Three Jewels have the complete power and ability to help you.
You should not have a divided mind thinking someone else might help.

reprise

1" The good qualities of the Buddha

(a) The good qualities of the Buddha's body

Three bodies. The first two (wisdom and enjoyment) we cannot see. Only bodhisattvas can see.

The emanation body we can see. Takes various forms

(b) The good qualities of the Buddha's speech/teachings

When contemplate what he said, all of our mental afflictions—including desire, anger and ignorance—can be eliminated

teachings on how to bring to an end the suffering

Teachings clear away the dust of desire, attachment and the other mental afflictions (eg anger and hatred)

Teachings extremely clear and consistent. Each for a specific person or audience

Beneficial to all beings: Small, Intermediate and Great Scope

(c) The good qualities of the Buddha's mind

Qualities of mind that make him worthy of refuge
Knowledge, compassion and power

(i) The good qualities of knowledge

Two Truths or Natures

Conventional Truth or Nature: the way things appear to our ordinary senses and knowledge

Also called relative of phenomenal because these do not actually exit the way that they ordinarily appear to us

Buddha's have both Conventional & Ultimate Nature

Ultimate Truth or Nature: refers to phenomena's true modes of existence

is an object's final nature because once it is recognised it requires no further interpretation

ultimate nature of things is seen when you obtain a direct realisation of emptiness (śūnyatā)

Until they obtain buddhahood, everybody including arhats and bodhisattvas have some level of ignorance that impedes knowledge of all phenomena

Knowledge narrower than the Buddha's

The Buddha is a perfectly reliable refuge in whom you can place your trust

The Buddha comprehends all phenomena. This includes knowing every sentients being's faults and problems. He understands the causal sequence that brings about negative experiences and he knows the most skilful way to solve those problems

(ii) The good qualities of compassion

In samsara, sentient beings are bound by various mental afflictions—desire, hatred, ignorance, pride, etc that take control and govern lives

Buddhas have completely eliminated these passions. They are under the power of love and compassion

Before enlightenment, the Buddha lived for many eons liked other beings—remained in samsara to help others

The Buddha feels great compassion when he sees poor beings who are overwhelmed by desire, ie all the forms of craving and attachment found in samsara

Self-centred egotism is the root of other faults, buddhas do not have any of those faults at all

(d)The good qualities of enlightened activities

Because he has perfect compassion, he acts without any selfish regard for his own interest.

The Buddha acts to benefit other beings all the time and will continue to do so until the end of Samsara.

The Buddha knows what should be done, said or taught and does exactly that

You need to have the potential to benefit from the Buddha's physical, verbal and mental actions

You must be willing and able to receive Dharma teaching—good human life, not too much bad karma, not already a devout in another religion

The only way that the buddhas can bestow total cessation of suffering is to teach each individual the method to accomplish it themselves.

The Buddha will then give you every help you need.

He cannot remove your bad karma nor can he transfer his own realisations into someone else's mind. Only you can do that with work.

methods leading away from lower rebirth and every misfortune

show the Dharma leading towards every wonderful, blissful attainment, including higher birth and total liberation from samsara

teaches the truth: what is correct, what is incorrect, what is the cause of suffering and what is the cause of happiness

He explains who should take which path and the steps to follow.

We each have to extricate our mental afflictions by using wisdom to pull out the root of suffering – ignorance

The Buddha has shown us the four noble truths; he has demonstrated both the nature of samsara—suffering and the causes of suffering—and also the fearless side of freedom and the path leading to emancipation.

Compassionate buddhas have done everything that could possibly be done to benefit sentient beings. They have revealed a method to transcend every form of misery, suffering and unfortunate circumstance.

The necessary element from our side is taking refuge. Taking refuge means: "I trust you. Please give me the medicine and I will take it." Then you and the Buddha are working harmoniously together.

We need to do our share.

You are searching for protection and each of the Buddha's teachings has a purpose for you; you have to learn how each part works and how they all fit together.

Once you recognise that the teachings are trustworthy and profound, deep faith in both the Buddha and your teacher will naturally develop - together the confidence to rely on them.

This is a pivotal essential point. There is no other path to emancipation. Without understanding this is the only path, strong refuge will not arise.

You should contemplate the great virtues of the Buddha until you definitely understanding them — that is the path to the Dharma Jewel — the Sangha is the assembly who follow the Buddha's teachings and help others practice. Faith in Buddha -> faith in Dharma -> faith in Sangha.

2" The good qualities of the Dharma

The **Dharma of scripture** refers to all instructions given by the buddhas and other proper teachers. All advice which leads toward the attainment of emancipation is included in the Dharma of scripture.

The **Dharma of realisation, Dharma of understanding or the Dharma of knowledge** is an individual's accomplishment of these instructions

Dharma of understanding includes practicing enough to stop, cease mental afflictions—ceasing is also called Dharma

the Dharmas of scripture and understanding are the real protection

The phrase, "I take refuge in the Dharma," refers to both the meditations that lead step by step to the various levels of realisation and the resulting cessations.

In the context of the **four noble truths**, the Dharma is the truth of the path and the truth of cessation.

The truth of the path is the practices and realisations through which the afflictions are eliminated.

The cessations that occur when the afflictions are removed are the truth of cessation.

These two are the principal elements of the Dharma Jewel.

As you practice the levels of the truth of the path, you eliminate progressive levels of afflictions until you totally eliminate all faults, afflictions, obscurations and ignorance. When you achieve this state you are omniscient; this is buddhahood.

highest enlightenment is attained only by means of the Dharma: the truth of the path and the truth of cessation.

The good quality of the Dharma Jewel is that it is the only cause that brings complete, perfect buddhahood.

You start practicing on a lower level and gradually rise higher and higher until you completely and fully develop. The teachings are the nourishment that makes you grow. You have to make them fit your particular mind, body, lifestyle and daily routine. You must find a way to practice so that you always incline further toward the Dharma. Finally these teachings will become actualised in you.

3" The good qualities of the Sangha

The Sangha are those trying to accomplish the Dharma by practicing seriously—practitioners; they rely upon the Dharma.

The Sangha also help others by teaching them to practice; ie, the Dharma arises in the field of the Sangha

The Sangha find their enjoyment in the Dharma. (In contrast, we ordinary people find pleasure in objects like food and worldly goods.)

If you desire emancipation, these are the people you should look upon as friends. They are the ones who can help; they will lead you to the higher goal.

We rely on them because they can help us reach that state of emancipation.

The Sangha fully commit their lives to attaining emancipation or enlightenment.

a" Going for refuge from knowing the good qualities of the Three Jewels

Not blind faith.
Question everything, analyse everything.
Make certain teacher is reliable before trusting

Keep thinking about the completeness, truth and strength of Buddha's teachings

Ditto for Dharma. What do they bring to the table. Are they trustworthy and able to provide adequate refuge.

Every teaching reveals the qualities of the Three Jewels — every scripture and commentary is a special instruction to protect you from your tendency for error.

All teachings are important and valuable

think deeply about what you are studying - especially during meditation

You should always be checking and analysing yourself. Your mind is trainable. With daily practice your mind will get to the point where it naturally acts in the new manner

practice constantly in all kinds of ordinary circumstances—when you are walking, talking, watching, or meeting others—your mind will develop in the direction that you wish

Bodhichitta — When you see that a buddha has the capacity to benefit other beings you begin to think, "How wonderful it would be if I had such qualities."

Constantly focus your mind on the excellent qualities of the Buddha and the superior qualities of the Buddha. You eventually wish to obtain the perfect wisdom of a Buddha all the time in every situation.

The Buddha made these rules because he wanted to help us and spelled out the specifics of ethical conduct

When you seriously examine your mind, you will understand that your refuge is not pure, because you do not sincerely put your trust in the Buddha or his teachings. Properly taking refuge based on correct understanding is very rare — but is what you should strive for so your practice will become powerful and on track.

b" Going for refuge from knowing the benefits between the Three Jewels

1" The distinction based on their defining characteristics

The distinguishing characteristic of the Buddha Jewel is highest perfect enlightenment. The Buddha is completely pure and fully realised.

Defining characteristic of the Dharma Jewel is it being the result of the Buddha's enlightenment. His teachings. His perfect knowledge and his faultless method gives each different individual just what he or she needs.

Each type of disciple is guided along a path that suits his or her particular propensities and aptitude.

The nature of the Sangha Jewel is that they seriously try to accomplish the instructions they received and teach these instructions.

2" The distinction based on their enlightened activities

Buddha like a highly skilled doctor who prescribes specific medicine for a specific persons problems. The Buddha correctly gives complete instructions in accordance with the need and ability (aptitude) of each disciple.

The function of the Dharma is to eradicate mental afflictions and thereby get rid of all suffering. The Dharma Jewel eliminates misery just as medicine does with sickness. By intently following the various levels of practice taught by the Buddha you eliminate faults until you are free of all suffering.

The Sangha's distinctive activity is to take joy in practicing and sharing these teachings - guide and accompany others on their journey along the path.

3" The distinction based on devotion

The correct manner of taking refuge in the Buddha is to honour him and trust what he says. When you respect others and their words you will be inclined to follow them.

The correct attitude for taking refuge in the Dharma is not merely to revere it as an external object of worship, but to actualise it within yourself and change your behaviour.

The proper attitude for taking refuge in the Sangha is similar. These are learned practitioners of the Dharma. Respect them as your friends, traveling partners and helpers.

4" The distinction based on practice

Express your respect through your practice

The way to honour the Buddha is to perform offering ceremonies and services that assist him in accomplishing his goals.

You show your respect for the Dharma by actualising the teachings in your mind. Meditation transforms your wild mind into the path of the Buddha. The teachings become one with your mind.

To show respect for the Sangha share your knowledge, experience, advice about the Dharma. Help each other.

5" The distinction based on recollection

In order to take refuge in the Three Jewels, you must contemplate their perfect qualities as they are taught in the sutras.

6" The distinction based on how they increase merit

c" Going for refuge with commitment

take refuge through belief in the Three Jewels.

Taking refuge in the Buddha means acknowledging the Buddha as your teacher—your guide and leader; you look to him to show you the way along the proper path. Since he is the perfect teacher of the method to attain liberation, you rely on him seriously and deeply from your heart.

The Dharma is the actual protection and refuge

The Sangha share the same goal as you. They help you to accomplish that real refuge. The way to profess your faith in the members of the Sangha is to believe in them as your spiritual friends.

d" Going for refuge by disavowing any other refuges

You should not take refuge in anyone or anything other than the Three Jewels. This means that any teacher or teaching that wholly contradicts the Three Jewels is something you should not regard as a source of protection.

In Buddhism the emphasis is on your training your mind. The Buddhist path entails recognising your negative mindset and combating it with wisdom and positive attitudes.

The Buddhist path shows you the way to eliminate the mental afflictions motivating negative actions. It thereby breaks the continuous cycle of birth and death in samsara.