

*TAKING REFUGE
IN THE
TRIPLE JEWELS*

WHAT IS TAKING REFUGE?

Taking Refuge means to *return* and *rely*. From where do we return from and to what do we rely upon? 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 Living in 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 which means ‘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 Understanding and Awareness they represent.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we learn to rely upon Amitabha Buddha’s lessons on wisdom and compassion. ‘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 (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 Six Sutras of Pure Land as guidelines of practice:

1. The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding.
2. The Amitabha Sutra
3. The Sutra on Observing Amitabha Buddha and His Pure Land
4. The Chapter of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Conduct and Vows
5. The Chapter on the Foremost Attainment of Great Strength Bodhisattva Through Buddha Recitation
6. Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's Report on the Way to Reaching 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 should return from all these pollutions and rely upon *purity of mind*. Purity of Mind 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 disasters. The Buddha taught us to rely upon the Six Principles of Living in Harmony to establish harmonious relationships between ourselves and others.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we should rely upon the choice of wisdom and compassion as our way of

treating others and dealing with affairs. Great Strength Bodhisattva represents wisdom. His choice of the Buddha Recitation method of practice is wisdom in its highest form. Kuan Yin Bodhisattva represents compassion; when we help introduce the Pure Land Teachings to others, we are practicing the complete compassion of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva.

This is taking refuge in the Sangha.

*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 pollutions and disharmony
and relying upon Purity of Mind and the
Six Principles of Living in Harmony.*

