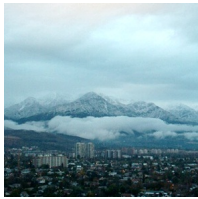


## Touching the Spirit of the Three Refuges

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Thursday, 18 August 2011 11:34

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### [ [Master's Teachings](#) ]

Oftentimes, when we read spiritual texts such as the sutras or listen to a talk on the teachings, we feel a profound sense of peace and understanding. It is as if we have been led to the mountaintop, and the view is breathtaking. Our transcendent state of mind vanishes very quickly, however, after we return to our mundane everyday life. All it takes is for someone to do something that displeases us and our temper rises up. Why is that inner state of transcendence and peace so fleeting?

When reading or hearing the teachings, we see the mountaintop so clearly, but when we bring our vision back to where we are, our two feet are still planted at the bottom of the mountain. We can see the peak, but we are not there yet. We still need to climb up the mountain by walking the path.

To do so, we need to nurture a heart of sincerity, purity, and great vows. As Buddhists, we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. The spirit that lies at the heart of the Three Refuges\* can only be touched if we develop sincerity of heart, purity of heart, and greatness of vows.

### **Sincerity of heart**

The Buddha is our teacher. We take him as our teacher because he is someone who awoke to the truths and universal laws that govern life. This being so, we need to develop a very genuine and sincere desire to understand the truths he shared with us. This comes from first believing the Buddha to be enlightened, and then believing in the truth of what he said.

Firstly, we need to truly believe what he said about all of us having, deep within us, an enlightened nature—and that this is our true nature. We too are capable of attaining the same great awakening that he did.

We also need to truly believe what he tells us about the law of karma that governs this world, and the reality of collective karma. We need to understand that in our ignorance and wrong notions, we have acted in greed, anger, delusion, arrogance, and doubt, creating negative karma which accumulates into collective karma.

Still, we always think that we are right, never aware of how our actions may be wrong. That is why we need to turn inward and reflect, and then cleanse our hearts. Then we can be open to learning the Buddha's teachings.

With that sincerity of heart and earnestness to learn, we will be able to come closer to understanding the truths that the Buddha shared with us. We can draw closer to that kind of enlightened understanding—touching it so that the Buddha's heart becomes our own heart; our

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heart, the heart of a Buddha.

This all begins with faith in the Buddha's awakening, from which a sincere desire to learn from him is born. Without such faith, how can we begin? Without such sincerity and earnestness to learn, how can we learn?

### **Purity of heart**

While the universal truths that the Buddha tried to share with us are in fact very simple, because our hearts are not pure, we cannot access them. We cannot take them to heart and we continue in our habit patterns, still blind to many of life's principles. That is why purifying our hearts is important.

How can we purify our hearts? By taming our afflictions and working on overcoming our unwholesome tendencies in daily living. Our personal habits and idiosyncrasies are based on these unwholesome tendencies, and when we exhibit them outwardly, they reflect the inner state of our mind. When our habits are very entrenched, it shows that our heart and mind are not very clean. The way to begin cleansing our hearts and minds is by repenting and undertaking the practice of the zhai jie.

We need a cleansed heart and mind in order to learn the Buddha's teachings. When we try to learn the teachings without this preparation, it is like pouring pure water into a dirty bucket: The water will get contaminated.

Learning the teachings with a clean heart and mind, we will be able to understand them correctly and touch the truth in them. This is what we should do when we study the sutras. Though many people recite sutras because they think it creates merit, focusing on the act of reciting, we should actually look to the sutras as sources of enlightened wisdom and strive to awaken to the principles they contain. The sutras aren't complicated; the teachings they contain are in fact very simple. When our heart and mind are clean, we can touch the essence of the teaching; our inner wisdom then can be brought forth and we can gain deep insight.

So, let us clean our heart and mind by eliminating our unwholesome habits, and with a pure heart strive to understand the essence of the teachings, enter deeply into the Dharma, and gain insight.

### **Greatness of vows**

On the spiritual path, we must also harbor a deep desire and great vow to guide more people to join us on this path to awakening. In the world today, many people have lost sight of what life is about. Without a true sense of purpose, they go about life caught up in superficials. If more people can come to understand the Buddha's authentic teaching, they will gain wisdom and comprehend life's true value. We need to give rise to a sincere desire to help people come to understand and live out life's true meaning. In our hearts, there needs to be such a great, selfless vow.

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Sincerity of heart, purity of heart, and greatness of vows are essential in our spiritual practice. Sincerity of heart means a sincere wish to understand the Buddha's heart and the truths he awakened to. Purity of heart means genuine effort to cleanse our hearts so that we can touch the simple truth of the Buddha's teachings. Greatness of vows means harboring a deep aspiration to inspire others to join us in walking the path. It is with such a heart that we should practice as Buddhists.

### ***\*The Three Refuges (verses adapted from Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings)***

*With a heart of genuine sincerity,  
I take refuge in the Buddha,  
the Awakened One who has attained  
perfect understanding of the workings of the universe  
with its deep, subtle, and profound laws;  
who with his example  
shows me the path to rediscovering  
my own true enlightened nature, Buddha nature.  
I vow to walk the path  
by bringing forth the same heart as the Buddha—  
a heart of true love for all living beings.*

*With a heart of purity,  
I take refuge in the Dharma,  
the teachings that guide me to  
penetrate the true principles of the universe.  
I vow to learn them mindfully  
and to see the living sutra in each person,  
awakening to the principles of the Dharma  
in every encounter with people and matters in everyday life.*

*With a heart of great vows,  
I take refuge in the Sangha,  
the monastics who continue the Buddha's legacy,  
deeply understanding the teachings,  
making them applicable to our world and our lives.  
I vow to learn from them respectfully  
and pass on the Buddha's teachings to others  
through my own living example  
so they may also benefit and attain awakening.*

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks  
Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

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Он мгновенно поднялся и с огромной "[бесплатные песни лезгинки скачать](#)" энергией ринулся на меня, уклонившись от выпада "[кино для мобильные скачать](#)" мечом.

И еще, добавила Алиса, почему призраки "[скачать игра фиксика на компьютер](#)" вдруг начали исчезать.

Перебрался с берега в океан волны щекотали мне брюхо, грудь нащупывая "[Adobe faim reader скачать бесплатно](#)" кончиками щупальцев камешки, ленты водорослей.

Ты сам вызвался идти со мной, "[скачать донлоад менеджер](#)" сам и выпутывайся.

Тогда мне "[тартак золотая книга](#)" лучше послушать ее за завтраком, сказала она.

И мы пошли "[скачать тренировка интеллекта](#)" к нему, похоже было, что та часть меня, которая "[Скачать бесплатно виндовс на русском языке](#)" обычно бодрствует, сейчас спит, а та часть, которая обычно "[скачать ирину круг букет из белых роз](#)" спит, бодрствует, и эта перемена позволяла легко принимать чудеса, легко забыть события этого "[ms office 2003 скачать бесплатно](#)" дня и заботы предыдущих недель.

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