



EIGHT GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTING ON MY GOING FOR REFUGE

These guidelines offer a framework to reflect on your going for refuge in relation to joining the Triratna Buddhist Order. They are designed to be explored in dialogue with your preceptor, kula and/or kalyana mitras. Through reviewing your practice periodically you will be able to identify what has deepened and where you may need to put more effort. It is important to note that this framework is not the only means by which you can review your practice. There is no 'check-list'. While your process will share many features with all who join the Order it is also individual to you and, ultimately, something quite mysterious.

1. Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels

1.1 Am I going for refuge sincerely?

How has my understanding of going for refuge to the Three Jewels deepened?

What false refuges still hinder my going for refuge? How?

Are other motives confused with my request for ordination, such as looking for approval, joining a group or status? How do these impact on my practice?

1.2 Am I going for refuge effectively?

What steps have I taken to create conditions to better support my going for refuge?

In which circumstances or situations do I lose sight of the Refuges? Why?

In what ways am I going forth?

What still holds me back? For instance: psychological factors, objective circumstances, limited refuges, wrong views, ethics?

2. Ethical Practice

What aspects of the ethical precepts are currently alive in my daily life?

What is my understanding of the basis of Buddhist ethics + the principle of karma?

To what extent do I recognise my unskillful behaviour/mental states? What changes have I made?

How am I cultivating the positive speech precepts in my daily life (including in electronic communication)?

Are there significant ethical breaches that I have not confessed or resolved?

What is my understanding and experience of confession practice? Do I apologise and make amends where necessary? Have I shown the capacity for forgiveness?

3. Meditation + Mind Training

What is my understanding of an effective meditation practice? Do I have one?

Have I attended a meditation retreat recently? Have I done a solitary retreat?

How do I work with my mind inside and outside meditation, including the cultivation of mindfulness and metta?

What is my understanding of *shamatha* and *vipashyana*? How do I practise them?

How do I work on cultivating and maintaining skilful mental states? How do I work on preventing and transforming unskillful mental states?

4. Grasp of the Dharma as Taught by Urgyen Sangharakshita

Am I participating in (or completed) the Dharma Training Course for Mitras?

Which of Bhante's main teachings/writings have I studied recently? Are there important texts/teachings that I still need to study?

What is my understanding of 'Basic Buddhism' (as described by Sangharakshita in Chapter 1 of *A Survey of Buddhism*)?

What is my understanding of conditionality (*pratitya samutpada*) and how it shapes my life (for instance, through karma and the Four Noble Truths)?

What appreciation do I have of the unity and diversity of Buddhism?

How do I identify and transform wrong views? How am I cultivating right view?

How am I cultivating Samyak Drishti (Perfect Vision)?

5. The Mythic Context

How do I express reverence for and receptivity towards the Three Jewels in my life?

How has my response to myth, images and symbols deepened?

What is my sense of and connection with the transcendental? How does this manifest? For instance, do I connect with a Buddha or bodhisattva? Do I have a sense of my innate potential for enlightenment?

In what ways do I engage with the practice of devotion and ritual (for instance, through pujas and the Going for Refuge and Prostration Practice)?

6. Kalyana Mitrata and Sangha

How am I developing meaningful friendships with Order Members, connections with Order Members outside my local Centre, Kalyana Mitras or Order Members I look up to? How am I deepening my peer friendships?

How do I engage with kalyana mitrata as a path of transformation?

What are my patterns around conflict? How do I resolve conflicts when they arise?

Am I fully transparent with my KMs and potential Preceptor? Do I have 'no-go' areas (things like sex, addictive tendencies, money, family...)?

What is my understanding of the significance of Urgyen Sangharakshita and the Triratna lineage?

Do I have any unresolved issues with Bhante as a teacher and as a person? If so, am I in dialogue with kalyana mitras or other Order Members about these?

In which sangha activities do I participate regularly (e.g. festivals and mitra activities)?

7. Understanding the Principles of the Triratna Order and Community

What is my understanding of the distinctive vision of the Triratna Buddhist Order and of its place in the Buddhist tradition?

How am I applying the Triratna System of Practice in my Dharma life?

What is my understanding of the significance of Urgyen Sangharakshita within the Order?

What awareness do I have of Triratna as a whole, beyond my local context? What other Triratna contexts have I visited?

What experience do I have of Triratna as an international community, including Triratna in India and the importance of Dr Ambedkar?

8. The Altruistic Dimension of Going for Refuge

What is my understanding of the Bodhisattva Ideal and of its importance within the Triratna vision?

Do I aspire towards awakening for the benefit of all beings?

How is the altruistic dimension of going for refuge expressed in my daily life?

In what ways do I practise Dharma service? (for instance, helping Order members, my local centre, or through other projects)