

# *INSTRUCTIONS TO THE FIRST BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS*

## *On The New Vajra Brilliant Jeweled Precept Platform*

Today is the first time that the Bodhisattva Precepts are being transmitted on this new Precept Platform, and it is my hope that all of you will be "Number One" in Buddhism, and not just settle for being number two. By being "Number One," I don't mean that you should strive, or use tricks, or some kind of strategy to become "Number One." Instead you should move others with your virtuous conduct so that they become convinced that you *are* "Number One," and then it will count. If you use strategies and tricks, then not only will you not become a number-one personality within Buddhism, but you will fall into the hells! If one is a worldly person and conducts oneself in a worldly way that is still pardonable, but once having received the Proper Dharma, if you fail to up-hold the Proper Dharma, then you cannot be forgiven.

People who hold precepts are most honorable among people, and those who practice the Bodhisattva Way are the most lofty human beings. After receiving these Precepts you should change all your bad habits and evil thoughts so that you become completely different from the way you were in the past. As it's said, "It's the same temple, but a different spirit inhabits it." Now you are a Bodhisattva, and so you cannot perform any more ghostly acts, you can not commit the deeds of hell beings, nor can you act like an animal. Your actions should tally with your words, and your words should identically match your actions. Your every single word and thought must be true to what you represent, so that you conduct yourselves as the people you claim to be. Having received the Precepts, you can't go on doing ghostly things.

I have outlined the Precept Mark for you and now it is up to you to go about constant and detailed investigation of the Bodhisattva Precepts as set forth in the *Brahma Net Sutra*. If you can investigate and recite the *Brahma Net Sutra* in that way, then you can be said to be one who has truly received the Bodhisattva Precepts.

What am I referring to when I tell you to have awesome comportment? For this occasion I will give you a list of six "don'ts," which, if you can follow, will help you to maintain awesome comportment with regard to the Precepts you are about to receive. In regard to your external comportment you must watch yourselves. If you can't help laughing, then

just don't laugh out loud so much. An occasional subtle smile is okay, but don't just burst out in hysterical laughter.

These are the six "do n'ts."

1. When sitting, don't wiggle your knees. If you do that, you are just acting like a jumping-jack and are totally lacking in awesome deportment.

2. When standing, don't twist your body around inside your clothes. Many of the laypeople who are here now often wear their long black robes and yi's, but it shouldn't be that when you take off your robe and yi you suddenly become like any ordinary lay person and move your body seductively. You should conduct yourself with restraint, with decorum and dignity at all times. You should always know to act in a proper manner.

3. When walking, don't look back over your shoulder. Don't let your eyes gaze east and west, darting back and forth, looking at this and that to see whether people are watching you so that you can steal things when they aren't looking.

4. Even when you are full of happiness, don't laugh out loud; don't quack--"ka! ka!ka!"--like a flock of ducks.

5. If you can't help getting angry, nevertheless, don't raise your tone of voice. Even if you get angry, don't scold others with a loud voice--you should always maintain control over yourself.

6. When talking, don't make an exhibition of your lips. Don't pucker up your mouth so it looks like a bellows vigorously blowing on a flame, trying to get your pot of water to boil a little faster. You shouldn't contort your mouth like that.

Those are the six mannerisms of deportment which anyone who receives the Bodhisattva Precepts should adhere to. If you can guard those rules of deportment you will physically manifest the appearance of one who has received the Bodhisattva Precepts. But if you don't guard the Precepts in this way, then although it can't be said that it was totally useless for you to receive them, still you will be wasting your time. I am being as frank and earnest with you as I can, and this is how we at this Way Place differ from those at other Way Places.

In a short while, when I transmit the Bodhisattva Precepts to you, you must in order to receive the Precept Substance bring forth 10,000 parts of sincerity and 10,000 parts of reverence. You must not be the slightest bit casual at heart, because if you are not 100% sincere, you will not be able to actually receive them. It is just because of these habits of ours--being sloppy and casual about things--that since beginningless time we have been turning on the Wheel of the Six Paths, dying and getting born, getting born and dying, and never getting out. Now that you have encountered the Proper Dharma, if you don't try your best to get out of the Wheel of the Six Paths, then if Shakyamuni Buddha himself were to appear right before you, even he would have no way of helping you to leave suffering and obtain bliss.

The Vajra Brilliant Jeweled Precept Platform of the Ten Thousand Buddhas has just been newly established. Last week was the first time that the complete Bhikshu and Bhikshuni Precepts were transmitted on the new Platform and today, the 15th day of the 9th lunar month, will be the first time that the Ten Major and Forty-eight Minor Bodhisattva Precepts will be transmitted on that Platform. Since this is such a special event you must

be sure to maintain the Precepts sternly and purely. You must not regard them casually. If you hold the Precepts only casually then not only will you not be able to face me, but you will not be able to do justice to the tremendous amount of sacrifice it took to establish this Precept Platform. You could say that I spewed out my very blood and guts in order to establish this Precept Platform--every bit of my life's energy went into making it, and so if you receive the Precepts here and fail to hold them purely, then how will you be able to face up to me? Therefore, if after hearing this, you feel that you aren't up to taking and upholding the Bodhisattva Precepts in the way I have described, then it is still not too late for you to decline and withdraw. You still have an opportunity to back out. I am being serious when I say this. If you really think that it will be too much for you to handle, if you feel you want to wait a while longer before taking these Precepts and you want to leave, it's still okay. Because in everything I do, I follow a natural course. I never coerce people into doing things that they don't themselves truly want to do. And so, if you are not afraid of the suffering, if you are not afraid of being cheated by me, then we can go ahead with the transmission. But if you are scared, there's still time for you to withdraw.