

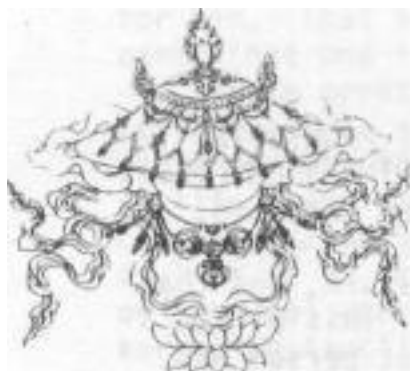
The Buddha Speaks The Brahma Net Sutra

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THE FORTIETH MINOR PRECEPT PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION WHEN CONFERRING THE PRECEPTS. A DISCIPLE OF THE BUDDHA MUST NOT DISCRIMINATE IN CONFERRING THE PRECEPTS. ANYONE MAY RECEIVE THEM WHETHER ONE IS A KING, PRINCE, HIGH MINISTER, OFFICIAL, A BHIKSHU OR BHIKSHUNI, A FAITHFUL LAYMAN OR LAYWOMAN, A LIBERTINE OR PROSTITUTE, A GOD OF THE EIGHTEEN BRAHMA HEAVENS, A GOD OF THE SIX DESIRE HEAVENS, AN ASEXUAL PERSON, OR A BISEXUAL PERSON, A EUNUCH, A SLAVE, A GHOST OR A SPIRIT.

CH, A SLAVE, A GHOST OR A SPIRIT.

A BODHISATTVA SHOULD INSTRUCT THOSE SANGHANS TO WEAR A SAMGHATI ROBE DYED WITH BLENDED COLORS IN ORDER TO ACCORD WITH THE REGULATIONS OF THE WAY. THE ACCEPTABLE HUE IS OBTAINED BY USING A DYE IN WHICH BLUE, YELLOW, RED, BLACK, AND PURPLE ARE ALL COMBINED. ALL CLOTHES, ROBES, AND SITTING CLOTHS SHOULD BE OF SUCH NEUTRAL TONES SO THAT ONE'S CUSTOMARY ATTIRE IS ALWAYS OF THIS SAME BLENDED SHADE. A BHIKSHU'S CLOTHES MUST BE OF A DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT CUT AND APPEARANCE THAN THE CLOTHES WORN BY THE CITIZENS AND LAYPEOPLE OF HIS COUNTRY.

WHENEVER A PERSON WISHES TO TAKE THE PRECEPTS, THE PRECEPT MASTER SHOULD FIRST ASK HIM, "HAVE YOU COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN REBELLIOUS ACTS IN THIS LIFE?" A BODHISATTVA DHARMA MASTER MUST NOT CONFER THE PRECEPTS ON ANYONE WHO HAS COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN REBELLIOUS ACTS IN THIS PRESENT LIFE. THEY ARE: SHEDDING THE BUDDHA'S BLOOD, PATRICIDE, MATRICIDE, MURDERING AN UPADYAYA, MURDERING AN ACHARYA, BREAKING UP A KARMAVACHA ASSEMBLY OF SANGHANS OR DHARMA-WHEEL-TURNING ASSEMBLY OF SANGHANS, AND MURDERING A SAGE. ONLY SOMEONE WHO HAS COMMITTED ANY OF THESE SEVEN REBELLIOUS OFFENSES IN THIS PRESENT LIFE IS NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE THE PRECEPTS IN THIS LIFE; ALL OTHER LIVING BEINGS ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THEM.

THE DHARMA WHICH GOVERNS THE BEHAVIOR OF SANGHANS PROHIBITS BOWING TO KINGS, PARENTS, THE SIX KINDS OF CLOSE RELATIVES, OR PAYING

RESPECTS TO GHOSTS OR SPIRITS. ANY BEING WHO COMES FROM ANY DISTANCE IN ORDER TO RECEIVE PRECEPTS AND TO SEEK DHARMA, BE IT THIRTY OR THREE HUNDRED MILES, AND WHO IS CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THE SPEECH OF THE DHARMA MASTER, CAN RECEIVE PRECEPTS. IF A BODHISATTVA DHARMA MASTER DIRECTS EVIL OR HATEFUL THOUGHTS AT SUCH A BEING AND REFUSES TO TRANSMIT TO HIM THESE PRECEPTS WHICH SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL BEINGS, HE OR SHE THEREBY VIOLATES THIS MINOR PRECEPT AND COMMITS A DEFILING OFFENSE.

COMMENTARY:

THE FORTIETH MINOR PRECEPT PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION WHEN CONFERRING THE PRECEPTS. When a Dharma Master confers the Precepts, he can't be selective. He must not say, "This person has got an evil nature, and that person's got good roots." Or, "This person's got an honorable status and that person has an inferior background." He can't discriminate when conferring the Bodhisattva Precepts. The Bodhisattva Precepts are different from the Bhikshu and Bhikshuni Precepts in this case. If someone wishes to receive the Bhikshu Precepts, he must meet certain qualifications. If a person is not replete with the six sense faculties, he's not allowed to take the Bhikshu Precepts. But the Bodhisattva Precepts do not have these limitations. If a person has a wholesome nature, if his mind-ground is good, then he's allowed to receive them. One cannot discriminate as to types of beings who ask to receive them.

A DISCIPLE OF THE BUDDHA MUST NOT DISCRIMINATE IN CONFERRING THE PRECEPTS. ANYONE MAY RECEIVE THEM WHETHER ONE IS A KING, PRINCE, HIGH MINISTER, OFFICIAL, BHIKSHU, OR BHIKSHUNI, A FAITHFUL LAYMAN OR LAYWOMAN, A LIBERTINE OR PROSTITUTE, A GOD OF THE EIGHTEEN BRAHMA HEAVENS, A GOD OF THE SIX DESIRE HEAVENS, AN ASEXUAL PERSON, OR A BISEXUAL PERSON, A EUNUCH, A SLAVE, A GHOST OR A SPIRIT. All these beings listed are eligible. Even ghosts and spirits may receive them. That is because all beings have the Buddha nature. Anybody who is endowed with the Buddha nature can become a Buddha, and is qualified to take the Bodhisattva Precepts. Once you have taken the Bodhisattva Precepts, it's for sure that you will become a Buddha.

However, there are two things that should be considered. The first is physical appearance and comportment; the second is karmic obstacles. As to the first, for members of the Sangha this means wearing a Precept sash; they should manifest an appearance that's different from other people.

A BODHISATTVA SHOULD INSTRUCT THOSE SANGHANS TO WEAR A SAMGHATI ROBE DYED WITH BLENDED COLORS IN ORDER TO ACCORD WITH THE REGULATIONS OF THE WAY. A kashaya, a Precept sash, is called "a dyed robe," because it's dyed a neutral color. It's also called "the garment" or "the robe of being apart from dust," "the patched robe," and a "lotus flower robe," because a lotus is also not defiled by the dust. The Kashaya refers specifically to robes that left-home people wear. In India and all the Theravadan countries, the kashaya is the only apparel of a monk. That is, they wear it right next to the body. When Buddhism came to China where the climate was colder, the sash evolved into a separate

piece worn over the inner robes. Unfortunately, since the sash was an extra garment, people got into the habit of not wearing their sashes all the time. But here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas all the left-home people wear the sash at all times.

THE ACCEPTABLE HUE IS OBTAINED BY USING A DYE IN WHICH BLUE, YELLOW, RED, BLACK, AND PURPLE ARE ALL COMBINED. This Precept stipulates that the color of the sash should be five colors blended together: blue, yellow, red, black, and purple. The Vinaya actually only mentions three colors: dark blue, black, and red. In China most of the left home people wear brown sashes and black inner robes. Dark blue and grey are also acceptable colors. In Tibet, they have a strict rule against wearing black. At any rate, Bhikshus should manifest an appearance that is distinctly different from the laity in his country. ALL CLOTHES, ROBES, AND SITTING CLOTHS SHOULD BE OF SUCH NEUTRAL TONES SO THAT ONE'S CUSTOMARY ATTIRE IS ALWAYS OF THIS SAME BLENDED SHADE. A BHIKSHU'S CLOTHES MUST BE OF A DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT CUT AND APPEARANCE THAN THE CLOTHES WORN BY THE CITIZENS AND LAYPEOPLE OF HIS COUNTRY. This is in order to show that Bhikshus and Bhikshunis are representatives of the Sangha. Bhikshus and Bhikshunis are part of the Sangha Jewel. Therefore, they absolutely should not wear clothes that are the same as the laity. For this reason, the Buddha stipulated three types of clothing called "fields of blessings" so that left-home people would always look different from ordinary worldly people. The five assemblies that come after the Bhikshunis have different rules. The five assemblies are Shramaneras, Shramanenkas (novices), Shikshamanas (training), Upasakas, and Upasikas (laymen and laywomen). They should wear blended colors as well, but their sashes do not have to be patched. There are certain rules that govern the design of the sashes for members of the Sangha. The pieces alternate between long and short and are assembled in a specific pattern, symbolic of the field of blessings. But the rest of the five assemblies do not wear sashes composed of long and short pieces.

WHENEVER A PERSON WISHES TO TAKE THE PRECEPTS, THE PRECEPT MASTER SHOULD FIRST ASK HIM, "HAVE YOU COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN REBELLIOUS ACTS IN THIS LIFE?" A BODHISATTVA DHARMA MASTER MUST NOT CONFER THE PRECEPTS ON ANYONE WHO HAS COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN REBELLIOUS ACTS IN THIS PRESENT LIFE. Before, it was mentioned that there are two factors to be considered when administering the Bodhisattva Precepts. The first, one's appearance, has been discussed. Now the text brings up the second: karmic obstacles. THEY ARE: SHEDDING THE BUDDHA'S BLOOD, PATRICIDE, MATRICIDE, MURDERING AN UPADYAYA, MURDERING AN ACHARYA, BREAKING UP A KARMAVACHA ASSEMBLY OF SANGHANS OR A DHARMA-WHEEL-TURNING ASSEMBLY OF SANGHANS, AND MURDERING A SAGE. The seven rebellious acts are:

1. patricide,
2. matricide,
3. murdering an upadyaya--one's teacher.
4. murdering an acharya--a teacher of regulations of comportment.
5. breaking up a karmavacha assembly of Sanghans, or a Dharma-Wheel turning assembly of Sanghans--this means disrupting the harmony of the Sangha.
6. murdering a Sage or an Arhat, and

7. shedding the Buddha's blood. So before one has taken the Bodhisattva Precepts, one will be asked whether one has done any of those seven things in this life.

ONLY SOMEONE WHO HAS COMMITTED ANY OF THESE SEVEN REBELLIOUS OFFENSES IN HIS PRESENT LIFE IS NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE THE PRECEPTS IN THIS LIFE; ALL OTHER LIVING BEINGS ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THEM.

THE DHARMA WHICH GOVERNS THE BEHAVIOR OF SANGHANS PROHIBITS BOWING TO KINGS, PARENTS, THE SIX KINDS OF CLOSE RELATIVES, OR PAYING RESPECTS TO GHOSTS OR SPIRITS. Why is it that someone must not bow to kings, parents, the six types of close relatives, or pay respects to ghosts or spirits? It is because when one has received the Bhikshu Precepts, and the Bodhisattva Precepts, that message is relayed to the spirits all the way up to the heavenly palaces. Even the gods, who have so many blessings, have to pay respects to Bodhisattvas and Bhikshus. Given this fact, how could one act in any other way? How could Sanghans bow to their parents or to kings? If they were to bow to their parents, they would cause their parents to lose their blessings. The same applies if they were to bow to kings. Therefore, in the Theravadan countries, the king will bow to Bhikshus, but Bhikshus must not bow to the King. Because of the question of blessings, this Precept states that one cannot bow to one's parents, relatives, or to ghosts or spirits.

ANY BEING WHO COMES FROM ANY DISTANCE IN ORDER TO RECEIVE PRECEPTS AND TO SEEK DHARMA, BE IT THIRTY OR THREE HUNDRED MILES, AND WHO IS CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THE SPEECH OF THE DHARMA MASTER, CAN RECEIVE PRECEPTS. IF A BODHISATTVA DHARMA MASTER DIRECTS EVIL OR HATRED THOUGHTS AT SUCH A BEING AND REFUSES TO TRANSMIT TO HIM THESE PRECEPTS WHICH SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL BEINGS, HE OR SHE THEREBY VIOLATES THIS MINOR PRECEPT AND COMMITS A DEFILING OFFENSE. Understanding the Dharma Master's speech is the criterion for being eligible to receive the Precepts.

The mention of distance shows that these beings have come from afar to seek the Precepts, and shows the extent of their sincerity. If a Dharma Master refuses to give them the Precepts, he's being very unfair to those beings. The Precept also says that the Dharma Master cannot direct evil or hateful thoughts toward anyone who receives the Precepts. Having hateful or evil thoughts means refusing to administer the Precepts to those for whom they are appropriate. One sees a person with the appropriate faculties, knows that he should be crossed over, and yet refuses to do that for him. That is not beneficence. It indicates that one is full of hatred.

These great Precepts are available to all living beings, so all living beings are eligible to take them regardless of their status in life. Any being with sentience who can communicate verbally can receive the Precepts as long as he or she meets the requirements of physical appearance and lack of severe karmic obstructions. The only people who are not allowed to take the Bodhisattva Precepts are those who have committed any of the seven rebellious acts in this lifetime; those offenses cannot be expiated even through repentance. There is absolutely no way to get around them.

These Precepts are different from the Bhikshu and Shramanera Precepts. The latter requires much stricter discrimination. When people want to take the Bhikshu or Shramanera Precepts they're not allowed to take them if their six sense organs are not replete, or if they have other difficulties. If they are afflicted by certain diseases in their body, they are not allowed to leave the home-life.

This is a Precept of restraint. That is, it applies only to people who have received the Precepts. And there are four conditions that make up the offense.

- 1) The being deserves to receive the Precepts.
- 2) One knows that the being is worthy of receiving the Precepts. The Dharma Master knows that the person before him is eligible.
- 3) One brings forth a mind of discrimination, for example, one scorns a person because he is poor or belongs to an inferior class.
- 4) One refuses to administer the Precepts. Each refusal constitutes an offense.

THE FORTY-FIRST MINOR PRECEPT PROHIBITS ACTING AS INSTRUCTOR OF THE SAKE OF PROFIT. DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, WHEN TEACHING AND TRANSFORMING PEOPLE TO PRODUCE FAITH, A BODHISATTVA SHOULD ALSO SERVE AS A PRECEPT-TEACHING DHARMA MASTER. HENCE, WHEN HE ENCOUNTERS A PERSON WHO WISHES TO RECEIVE THE PRECEPTS, HE SHOULD INSTRUCT THAT PERSON TO REQUEST TWO MASTERS TO TRANSMIT THEM TO HIM: AN UPADYAYA AND AN ARCHARYA. THOSE TWO MASTERS SHOULD ASK THE PRECEPT CANDIDATE, "HAVE YOU COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN OCCLUSIVE OFFENSES?" IF THE CANDIDATE HAS COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN REBELLIOUS ACTS IN THE PRESENT LIFE, THE MASTERS MUST NOT CONFER THE PRECEPTS UPON HIM; HOWEVER, IF HE HAS NOT, HE MAY RECEIVE THE PRECEPTS.

IF A PERSON VIOLATES ONE OF THE TEN MAJOR PRECEPTS, HE SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO REPENT AND REFORM BY RECITING THE BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS IN THE SIX PERIODS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT BEFORE THE IMAGES OF THE BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS. HE SHOULD EXHAUST ALL OF HIS EFFORTS IN WORSHIPPING THE THOUSAND BUDDHAS OF THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME UNTIL HE OBSERVES AUSPICIOUS SIGNS. IF IT TAKES ONE WEEK, TWO WEEKS, THREE WEEKS, OR EVEN A YEAR, IT IS STILL ESSENTIAL THAT HE OBSERVE AUSPICIOUS SIGNS SUCH AS THE BUDDHA RUBBING THE CROWN OF HIS HEAD, LIGHT, FLOWERS, OR OTHER SUCH RARE SIGNS. IF HE SEES SUCH AUSPICIOUS SIGNS, HIS OFFENSES HAVE BEEN ERADICATED. IF HE DOES NOT, THEN ALTHOUGH HE HAS REPENTED, HE IS PRESENTLY UNPRECEPTED, BUT THE BENEFIT ACCRUED INCREASES HIS LIKELIHOOD OF RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS IN THE FUTURE.

THE SITUATION FOR ONE WHO HAS VIOLATED ONE OF THE FORTY-EIGHT MINOR PRECEPTS IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF A PERSON WHO HAS COMMITTED

ONE OF THE TEN MAJOR PRECEPTS. HIS OFFENSES MAY BE EXPIATED THROUGH CONFESSION BEFORE A SUPERIOR SANGHAN.

THE DHARMA MASTER WHO PROVIDES INSTRUCTION IN THE MORAL CODE MUST UNDERSTAND EACH OF THE PRECEPTS WELL. SHOULD HE NOT UNDERSTAND THE MORAL REGULATIONS OF THE GREAT VEHICLE SUTRAS: WHAT CHARACTERIZES A MAJOR OR A MINOR OFFENSE, OR WHAT CONSTITUTES AN OFFENSE AND WHAT DOES NOT; SHOULD HE NOT UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLE OR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATURE, THE AUGMENTING OF THE NATURE, THE MATURATION OF THE NATURE, THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF THE NATURE, THE NATURE OF THE WAY, AND THE NATURE OF PROPER DHARMA; OR SHOULD HE BE UNAWARE OF THE TYPE AND AMOUNT OF CONTEMPLATION INVOLVED IN CULTIVATING ENTRY INTO AND DEPARTURE FROM THESE POSITIONS; OR UNABLE TO EXPLAIN ALL THE DHARMAS INVOLVED IN CULTIVATING THE TEN LIMBS OF DHYANA SAMADHI--SHOULD THIS BODHISATTVA BE UNABLE TO FATHOM THE MEANING OF ANY OF THESE DHARMAS--AND YET MAKES A PRETENSE OF EXPLAINING THE SUTRAS AND MORAL REGULATIONS IN ORDER TO GET PERSONAL BENEFIT OR FAME, OR TO ENTER INTO UNWHOLESOME SEEKING OR GREEDY SEEKING FOR DISCIPLES OR OFFERINGS, HE IS CHEATING HIMSELF AND CHEATING OTHERS. HENCE, IF A BODHISATTVA DELIBERATELY POSES AS A TEACHER OF PRECEPTS, HE THEREBY VIOLATES THIS MINOR PRECEPT AND COMMITS A DEFILING OFFENSE.

COMMENTARY:

THE FORTY-FIRST MINOR PRECEPT PROHIBITS ACTING AS INSTRUCTOR FOR THE SAKE OF PROFIT. DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, WHEN TEACHING AND TRANSFORMING PEOPLE TO PRODUCE FAITH, A BODHISATTVA SHOULD ALSO SERVE AS A PRECEPT- TEACHING DHARMA MASTER. To act as an instructor for the sake of profit means that one's intention is not really to teach people about the Buddhadharma, but to use an improper method to gain either money or fame. HENCE, WHEN HE ENCOUNTERS A PERSON WHO WISHES TO RECEIVE THE PRECEPTS, HE SHOULD INSTRUCT THAT PERSON TO REQUEST TWO MASTERS TO TRANSMIT THEM TO HIM: AN UPADYAYA AND AN ACHARYA. These two Masters are the Precept Transmitting Master and the Teaching ransmitter. When one receives the Bhikshu Precepts, the transmitting Dharma Masters are right there before one, but this is not the case with Bodhisattva Precepts. The PreceptTransmitting Master is Shakyamuni Buddha himself. The Teaching Transmitter is Maitreya Bodhisattva, the Buddha due to appear in the future. In seeking the Bhikshu Precepts, one comes before Three Masters and Seven Certifiers on the platform. But in receiving the Bodhisattva Precepts, one's certifiers are the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions. Although a Dharma Master administers the Precepts, the other positions are taken tip by the Buddha, Maitreya Bodhisattva, and so forth.

THOSE TWO MASTER SHOULD ASK THE PRECEPT CANDIDATE, "HAVE YOU COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN OCCLUSIVE OFFENSES?" IF THE CANDIDATE HAS COMMITTED ANY OF THE SEVEN REBELLIOUS ACTS IN THE PRESENT LIFE,

THE MASTERS MUST NOT CONFER THE PRECEPTS UPON HIM; HOWEVER, IF HE HAS NOT, HE MAY RECEIVE THE PRECEPTS. Any person who wants to receive the Bodhisattva Precepts must not have committed any of the Seven Rebellious Acts in this lifetime. But if one has committed any lesser offense, even if one has violated one of the Ten Major Bodhisattva Precepts, one can still repent and reform.

IF A PERSON VIOLATES ONE OF THE TEN MAJOR PRECEPTS, HE SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO REPENT AND REFORM BY RECITING THE BODHISATTVA PRECEPTS IN THE SIX PERIODS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT BEFORE THE IMAGES OF THE BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS. Repentance and reform is not to be taken lightly, however. One must do it very sincerely. The Precept instructs one to repent and reform in the six periods of the day and night by reciting the Bodhisattva Precepts. Basically that just means never stopping; it means not even taking time out to sleep. One has to go through that type of vigorous repentance and reform in order to expiate one's offense karma. This kind of intense repentance was established during the time of the Buddha. One time when the Buddha went to visit his father, the King, the regal lord took a look at his son and his son's disciples, who were mostly from the Brahman caste. All of them looked emaciated and haggard to the Buddha's father, who thought, "My son should have better looking disciples." So he commanded a thousand people from the Shakyan race to be the Buddha's disciples. The Shakya clan--Shakyamuni Buddha's clan--was a royal race, so of course the people were full-featured and majestic. This clan of a thousand left home under the Buddha, and from this thousand, the Buddha selected five hundred who were the cream of the crop. To these people he gave special instructions. He saw that they were true Dharma vessels. He taught them how to cultivate this practice of not sleeping day and night. They cultivated that kind of samadhi. Within six months all five hundred had certified to the fruit of Arhatship. But they had no sleep for half a year. They were pushed to the extreme. That's exactly what this part of the Precept is saying. If you want to repent and reform after having committed the Ten Major violations, you have to do it this way. Exhaust all of your efforts in worshipping the thousand Buddhas of the three periods of time. The three periods of time are the past, present, and future. An auspicious sign is seeing the Buddha coming to rub your crown, or seeing light or flowers, smelling rare scents, or feeling a very cool breeze come to refresh you. All such signs when experienced during repentance are indications that your heavy karma has been erased and you're again able to receive the Precepts. HE SHOULD EXHAUST ALL OF HIS EFFORTS IN WORSHIPPING THE THOUSAND BUDDHAS OF THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME UNTIL HE OBSERVES AUSPICIOUS SIGNS.

IF IT TAKES ONE WEEK, TWO WEEKS, THREE WEEKS, OR EVEN A YEAR, IT IS STILL ESSENTIAL THAT HE OBSERVE AUSPICIOUS SIGNS SUCH AS THE BUDDHA RUBBING THE CROWN OF HIS HEAD, LIGHT, FLOWERS, OR OTHER SUCH RARE SIGNS. IF HE SEES SUCH AUSPICIOUS SIGNS, HIS OFFENSES HAVE BEEN ERADICATED. IF HE DOES NOT, THEN ALTHOUGH HE HAS REPENTED, HE IS PRESENTLY UNPRECEPTED, BUT THE BENEFIT ACCRUED INCREASES HIS LIKELIHOOD OF RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS IN THE FUTURE. "Unprecepted" means a person still hasn't received them. Unless this person observes those auspicious signs described above, he hasn't received the Precepts. Even if one doesn't see special signs, he receives increasing benefits which may enable him to receive the Precepts in the future. Though in this life he may have a lot of difficulty, if he undergoes this practice of repentance and reform, in his

next life he won't have to go through so much difficulty, but will be able to receive the Precepts very quickly. So, as to planting future causes, this is called a supreme cause.

THE SITUATION FOR ONE WHO HAS VIOLATED ONE OF THE FORTY-EIGHT MINOR PRECEPTS IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF A PERSON WHO HAS COMMITTED ONE OF THE TEN MAJOR PRECEPTS. HIS OFFENSES MAY BE EXPIATED THROUGH CONFESSION BEFORE A SUPERIOR SANGHAN. A violation of one of the Forty-eight Minor Precepts is less severe. One need not perform repentance and reform day and night. One can confess before a superior Sanghan such as one's teacher or some other high monk and one's offenses will be expiated. Or one can confess before a pure assembly, that is, people who have received the Precepts and haven't violated them. To "repent" means to be sorry about your past offenses. To "reform" refers to the resolve that one will never commit those offenses again in the future.

THE DHARMA MASTER WHO PROVIDES INSTRUCTION IN THE MORAL CODES MUST UNDERSTAND EACH OF THE PRECEPTS WELL. SHOULD HE NOT UNDERSTAND THE MORAL REGULATIONS OF THE GREAT VEHICLE SUTRAS: WHAT CHARACTERIZES A MAJOR OR A MINOR OFFENSE AND WHAT DOES NOT; SHOULD HE NOT UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLE, OR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATURE, THE AUGMENTING OF THE NATURE, THE MATURATION OF THE NATURE, THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF THE NATURE, THE NATURE OF THE WAY, AND THE NATURE OF PROPER DHARMA; OR SHOULD HE BE UNAWARE OF THE TYPE AND AMOUNT OF CONTEMPLATION INVOLVED IN CULTIVATING ENTRY INTO OR DEPARTURE FROM THESE POSITIONS; OR UNABLE TO EXPLAIN ALL THE DHARMAS INVOLVED IN CULTIVATING THE TEN LIMBS OF DHYANA SAMADHI--SHOULD THIS BODHISATTVA BE UNABLE TO FATHOM THE MEANING OF ANY OF THESE DHARMAS--AND YET MAKES A PRETENSE OF EXPLAINING THE SUTRAS AND MORAL REGULATIONS IN ORDER TO GET PERSONAL BENEFIT OR FAME, OR TO ENTER INTO UNWHOLE--SOME SEEKING OR GREEDY SEEKING FOR DISCIPLES OR OFFERINGS, HE IS CHEATING HIMSELF AND CHEATING OTHERS. This part of the Precept refers to the Dharma Master who's actually conferring the Precepts. He must know what he's doing. He can't be a fake. That is, he must know all the characteristics of the finer and grosser aspects of each precept, so that when people come to him and say, "Well, I've done such and such a thing, is it an offense or not? Is it a light offense, or a heavy offense?" he must know exactly what to say. He also must know the truth of the primary principle, that is, the substance and nature of precepts. Precepts are the proper cause of the mind ground, and the ultimate fruit of the permanently dwelling. He must be well-grounded in this utmost, unsurpassed, most wonderful Dharma, in order to understand what the Precepts are all about. Further, he must be able to explain all the stages of fruition. "The development of the nature...nature of Proper Dharma" basically refer to the Forty Minds, but here they are divided into different parts. "The development of the nature" and "the augmenting of the nature" together make up the Ten Stages of Advancement which are also called the Ten Dwellings. At this stage one practices the contemplation of emptiness and gradually increases one's momentum in cultivating the Way. "The maturation of the nature" and "the indestructibility of the nature" refer to the Ten Developmental Stages, also called the Ten Conducts. On this level, one practices the contemplation of falseness. This refers to the ground of relative truth,

also called mundane truth. "The nature of the Way" refers to the Ten Vajra Positions, also called the Ten Transferences. At this point one contemplates the Middle Way. These stages, then cover the Contemplations of Emptiness, of Falseness, and of the Middle Way.

"The Nature of Proper Dharma" refers to the Ten Grounds, as well as Equal and Wonderful Enlightenment. Basically, what is discussed here are the Three Worthy Positions,

- a) Ten Dwellings
- b) Ten Conducts
- c) Ten Transferences

The Sagely Positions,

- a) The Ten Grounds

then there is Equal Enlightenment, and Wonderful Enlightenment. The Dharma Master should know all these extremely well. He must be able to recognize when someone has certified to a particular position and he must be able to answer inquiries correctly. Furthermore, he should also be well versed in the type and amount of contemplation involved in cultivating entry into and departure from these positions and the Ten Limbs of Dhyana Samadhi.

The Ten Limbs of Dhyana Samadhi: the first eight limbs are the eight liberations:

1. The liberation in which inwardly there is the mark of form and outwardly form is contemplated.
2. The liberation in which inwardly there is no mark of form and outwardly form is contemplated.
3. The liberation in which the pure body of wisdom certifies to the complete dwelling.

Add to these liberations of the four formless samadhis:

4. The liberation of the station of boundless emptiness.
5. The liberation of the station of boundless consciousness.
6. The liberation of the station of nothing whatsoever.
7. The liberation of the station of neither perception or non perception.

Then add:

8. The liberation of samadhi of the extinction of skandhas of feeling and thought (also called "eight castings off the back").

These are the first eight limbs; then there are:

9. The Eight Victorious Places, and
10. The Ten All-Pervasive Places.

HENCE, IF A BODHISATTVA DELIBERATELY POSES AS A TEACHER OF PRECEPTS, HE THEREBY VIOLATES THIS MINOR PRECEPT AND COMMITS A DEFILING OFFENSE. A Dharma Master should know all the those aspects well. If he does not understand and merely makes a pretense of explaining the Sutras and moral regulations because he is motivated by the desire for personal benefit or fame, some other unwholesome reason, or greedily seeking disciples and offerings, then he is cheating himself and cheating everybody else. If he is confused about the appearance of precepts, the nature of the Way, and the characteristics of samadhi, then he cannot tell for sure what offenses someone may have committed or what position they may have been certified to. If the Dharma Master doesn't completely understand cue principle of precepts, then he cannot really inspire people to bring forth faith and understanding. If he does not understand the Samadhi of the Way, and all the different stages therein, he cannot cause other people to cultivate and work towards the supreme fruition. This, then, is a case of the blind leading the blind--a blind teacher leading blind disciples. That's why it's most important for the Dharma Master to really understand and know what he's talking about. If he's conferring the Precepts out of wish for gain, fame, or disciples, but he really isn't qualified, then he has committed this offense.

This is a Precept of restraint, which means that it only applies to people who have received the Precepts. There are two conditions that set up the offense.

1. One does this for the sake of benefit.
2. One takes disciples without being qualified.

-continued next issue