



# 正法西興 戒幢初樹

## THE PROPER DHARMA FLOURISHES IN THE WEST AS A NEW PRECEPTS BANNER IS RAISED

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在經上說：

衆生受佛戒，  
即入諸佛位；  
位同大覺矣，  
是名真佛子。

由這幾句偈頌看來，佛教徒必須要  
先受戒，然後才能成佛。所以釋迦牟尼佛  
將要入涅槃的時候，阿難以四事問佛。其  
其中之一就是：佛住世的時候，以佛爲師；  
佛滅度之後，又以誰爲師呢？佛就告訴阿  
難和一切弟子，說是「以波羅提木叉爲  
師」。波羅提木叉就是戒。人若能受五  
戒、行十善，就會生到天上去；若受十  
戒、行百善，就可以證果阿羅漢。

十戒是甚麼戒呢？就是沙彌戒。若  
能受二百五十條比丘戒，這一定成佛果。  
所以才說「衆生受佛戒」，衆生，無論哪  
一類的衆生都包括在內了；所謂飛、潛、  
動、植——飛的，天上飛的；潛，在水裏  
頭的魚類；動，就是有氣血的；植，就是  
植物，就是花草樹木——這都是衆生，衆  
生都可以受戒。所以在南華寺，虛老在那  
兒傳戒的時候，就有樟樹去求戒，又有

A Sutra says:

**Sentient beings, on receiving the Buddha's precepts,  
Join the ranks of the Buddhas.  
Their position is equal to the Greatly Awakened Ones;  
They are the true disciples of the Buddhas.**

This verse indicates that receiving the precepts is a prerequisite for  
Buddhists before they can become Buddhas.

When Shakyamuni Buddha was about to enter nirvana, Ananda  
asked the Buddha about four matters. The first of these four was,  
after the Buddha enters stillness, whom should we rely upon as our  
master? For when the Buddha dwelt in the world, we took the Buddha  
as Master.

The Buddha told Ananda and all the disciples, "Take the Pratimok-  
sha as your master." The Pratimoksha refers to the Precepts. If people  
can receive the Five Precepts and practice the Ten Good Deeds, they  
can be reborn in the heavens. If they receive the Ten Precepts and  
practice a hundred good deeds they can become Arhats.

What are the Ten Precepts? They are the Sramanera (novice)  
precepts. If they can receive the 250 Bhiksu precepts, they certainly  
can become Buddhas. Therefore, the verse says, "Sentient beings, on  
receiving the Buddha's precepts,..." All living beings, no matter what  
species they are, are included here: that is to say, flying creatures, aquatic  
creatures, land animals, and plants. Flying creatures refers to those who  
fly in the sky; aquatic creatures refers to creatures that swim, such as  
fish. Animals have energy and blood; plants include flowers, grasses,  
and trees. All living beings can receive the precepts. So when the  
Venerable Elder Xu was transmitting the precepts at Nanhua Monastery,





老虎去皈依；不過那是在山上，這樹也要受戒，老虎也要皈依。若在城市裏頭呢？這個樹就不會來受戒，老虎也不會來皈依。因為牠雖然有個善心，但是怕這個惡人；人多的地方就有惡人，這些個惡人就不允許牠們想受戒。

「既入諸佛位」，那麼能受戒，就是有佛的位子了。「位同大覺矣」，你那個地位，和成大覺佛是一樣的。「是名真佛子」，這才是真真實實的佛的弟子。由這幾句偈頌看來，受戒是最重要的。

你若不受戒，就不能成比丘、不能成沙彌、不能成菩薩。所以必須要受沙彌戒、比丘戒、菩薩戒，這叫「三壇大戒」。傳戒這個方法，在東方是很盛行的，可是在西方的國家，打開歷史來看一看，還沒有過；不單在美國沒有，就是其他的西方國家，也都沒有過。那麼這是正法傳到西方的第一次，這第一次是早了一點，早了一年；若等到明年，就會好一點。因為宣傳的力量不夠，甚至是需要三年的宣傳；在三年以前，就應該做這種的工作，才能發生效果。可是在去年，他們五位到紐約「大乘寺」去參加開幕典禮，看見大乘寺開幕，他們就著急了，就等不了了；所以就發表說，金山寺今年就傳戒。

這最低限度，早了三年；方才我說是一年，這要是正式說起來，就是早了三年。那麼早了三年，人就會少一點；可是人會少一點，佛就會多一點了。受戒在西方，好像沙裏澄金一樣；在沙子裏邊找金子，這是很不容易的，要費很多人工，才能把金子淘出來。

今年提前傳戒，所以人就很少的，只有三個沙彌、沙彌尼來求比丘戒、菩薩戒；其餘的，有想求菩薩戒的、有想求五戒的，那還慢慢會有人。那麼現在

a camphor tree spirit came to seek the precepts, and a tiger came to take refuge. Because this happened on a mountain, the tree spirit wanted to receive precepts, and the tiger wanted to take refuge. What if this were in a city? In a city, the tree spirit would not have come to receive precepts, and the tiger would not have come to take refuge because although they may have had a wholesome intent, they feared bad people. In a heavily populated area, there would have been bad people who just wouldn't have allowed them to come and receive the precepts.

“Join the ranks of the Buddhas.” To receive the precepts is just to join the ranks of Buddhas.

“Their position is equal to the Greatly Awakened Ones.” Your position and the Buddha's position are just the same.

“They are the true disciples of the Buddhas.” They are genuine disciples of the Buddha. From these few lines of verse, we know that receiving the precepts is extremely important.

If you do not receive the precepts you cannot be called a Bhikshu, a Shramanera, nor a Bodhisattva. So it is essential to receive the Shramanera Precepts, the Bhikshu Precepts, and the Bodhisattva Precepts. Together this is called the Great Threefold Ordination.

Ordination is very popular and well-established in the East. If one were to open the books and look into the history of the West, they would see that it has never existed before in the West. It did not exist in America nor in any other Western country.

Hence, this is the first time that the Proper Dharma has come to the West although the timing is a little bit early—too early by one year. If we had waited till next year it would have been a little bit better because the publicity for it was insufficient. Actually, such an event may require three years' publicizing—it should have been publicized three years prior to its taking place.

But last year, these five people who went to Mahayana Monastery in New York to observe the Opening Ceremony got anxious and couldn't wait any longer. They made an announcement that Gold Mountain Monastery would transmit the Precepts this year.

Actually, this ordination is held least three years early. Before I said one year, but actually, it was early by three years. Thus, there are fewer people. But with fewer people, there will be more Buddhas.

Receiving the Precepts in the West is like panning for gold. Looking for gold in the sand is very difficult and requires a lot of labor.

Because this year's ordination was done ahead of the planned schedule, very few people have come to receive the Precepts—only three novice monks and novice nuns came to seek the transmission of the Precepts. As for the others, some seek to receive the Bodhisattva Precepts while others seek the Five Precepts. Gradually, there will be more people in the future. But as for now, only three? Is three too few? No. Not only is three not too few, even if there were only one person, that would not be too few.





就這三個，可是三個是不是少呢？不是！不單三個不少，一個也不少；不過這三個是在前邊，是第一次。第一次這三個，正是表示的「三如來」——東方阿彌陀佛、西方無量壽佛、中央釋迦牟尼佛；那麼將來這三而九，九九就無盡，無盡無盡的那麼多了！凡事一開始是難，因為一開始，人人都不敢；怎麼叫「受戒」？他們也不明白。以前有這麼些個佛教徒，也不懂得怎麼叫「受戒」，甚至於這國家的人都不懂得甚麼叫「受戒」；所以我們這兒一提倡這個「傳戒」，這人就認為是一個很奇怪的事情了！甚麼叫「傳戒」呢？他們就很驚奇了；很驚奇，有的想要來受吧？又不敢來，不知道是怎麼回事？你說這可憐不可憐？你們大家想一想，是不是這個樣子？

我們今年有三位求受出家人的具足戒，這也表示過去一個、現在一個、未來一個；也是過去、現在、未來這三際，也是三如來。所以你們三位拜願的時候，也誠心來拜；讀誦毘尼經典，也都誠心讀誦，絲毫不可以馬虎的。人多了，就有的馬馬虎虎的；人少的時候，就不能馬虎了，一定要認真。越少，我們要做得越好；人多了，就照顧不過來了！那麼天天拜願，要拜拜祖師；天天早晨要拜西天東土的歷代祖師三拜，晚間也要拜西天東土歷代祖師三拜。

本來在諸方拜祖，要到祖堂裏去。從大殿走到那個祖堂，大約有——我在普陀山時，那是要上山的；從這邊山上去，從那邊又下來，每天都是這樣子。到那兒幹甚麼呢？就叩三個頭；這上山大約有五分鐘的時間，下山也要五分鐘的時間，因為那兒有很多台階，就那麼樣去禮祖。為甚麼要禮祖呢？這就是孝順哪！我們孝順西天東土歷代的祖師。我們現在想出家了，要恭敬過去的祖師；所以受戒的

Nevertheless, these three are the forerunners—the first three for the first time; that is exactly what the “Three Tathagatas” stands for—with Aksobhya Buddha in the east, Limitless Lifespan [Amitabha] Buddha in the west, and Shakyamuni Buddha in the center.

In the future, the three will become nine; and nine times nine will turn into an infinite number. There will be an endless number of people! Everything is difficult in the beginning because no one dares to try in the beginning. What is meant by “receiving the precepts”? They do not understand. Not only they, but also some Buddhist disciples in the past did not understand it, nor do people in this country understand.

So when we advocated the Precepts Transmission, people thought it was a very strange thing: “What is meant by ‘transmitting precepts?’” They were really alarmed and surprised. Alarmed and surprised, some wanted to come, yet dared not to, for they did not know what it was all about. Wouldn’t you say this is pitiful? All of you think about it; isn’t this the way it is?

This year, these three people have come to seek the complete Precepts for entering the monastic order; this represents one in the past, one in the present, and one in the future—hence the three periods of time of the past, the present, and the future—and also the three Tathagatas of the three periods of time.

When you three are bowing to the Buddha, you should do it with sincerity; also, when reading or reciting the Vinaya Code or Buddhist Sutras, do it sincerely. You should not be lax or sloppy in the slightest. When there are many people, some will be sloppy. When there are few people, you cannot be sloppy. You certainly must be sincere. The fewer we are, the better we should do things. When there are a lot of people, we won’t be able to take good care of everyone. You should bow to the Buddha every day, and also to the Patriarchs every day. Every morning, make three bows to all the Patriarchs of the East and the West, and every evening make another three bows.

Traditionally, when one bows and pays respect to the Patriarchs in monasteries, one needs to go to the Patriarch Hall. It is about a five-minute walk to the Patriarch Hall from the Main Buddha Hall and five more minutes back.

When I was on Putuo (Potola) Mountain we needed to climb up the mountain to the Patriarch Hall to bow. When we finished, we came down the mountain—it was like this every day. What was the purpose of the climbing? Just to make the three bows. Five minutes up and five minutes down through many steps; that’s what we did to pay respect to the Patriarchs. Why was it this way? For the sake of practicing filial piety—we need to be filial to the Patriarchs of the East and the West. Now we are about to venture forth into the monastic order, so even more should we be filial to the Patriarchs.





時候，必須要天天禮祖。在諸方禮祖，引禮師叫：「排班——！」你們在台灣，是不是有這個「排班」？引禮師說：「對面立——！向上排班——！頂禮三拜！」這麼樣子。我們這兒人少，就不必那麼唱了！我們尤其在這個西方的佛教，不必對面立。我們可以說是：「排班——！向上——！面上——！恭立！」這麼樣子，然後頂禮祖師。

因為我們這兒的規矩，是面都對著佛的；不像中國的佛教，是面對面，你看我也不順眼、我看你也要發脾氣。我們現在在這個西方，誰也不看誰；我們看佛，佛沒有發脾氣的。但是我們若到旁的地方，還要隨其他人的規矩；因為他們都是那個老規矩，我們這個新規矩他們不懂。所以我們這兒做早晚課，人人都面對著佛，不是對面立；到中國，他們是對面立。所以我說：我們這兒的佛教，不是中國的佛教；我們這兒，是一個新興的佛教。

以後你們受戒的沙彌、沙彌尼，要聽我們以前在台灣受戒回來這些個老戒的招呼；在受戒的期間，一定要循規蹈矩的，要認真去學習。在今天，一開始的時候，我和你們隨便談幾句話，就是中國有這麼一句話說：「心誠，雖不中，亦不遠矣！」你無論做甚麼事情，你必須要有一種誠心；你若有一種誠心求戒，也一定會得戒的。

☞待續

During the Ordination period, we need to bow to the Patriarchs every day. When it is time to bow, according to the tradition in Buddhist monasteries, the ritual master (Yin Li Shi) will call out: "Line up—."

Didn't you have this procedure of formal lining up in Taiwan? The master says, "Face the center —. Line up and face up the Buddha—. Three bows." That was how it was done. Since we are so few here, we do not need to chant in this manner. Especially we Buddhists of the West do not need to stand facing each other towards the center. Instead, we can say, "Line up —, face forward—, look up — and stand in respect!" After that we can bow in respect to the Patriarchs.

Our rule here is to face the Buddha, unlike in Chinese Buddhism where people face one another towards the center. You look at me and get upset with me. I look at you and am just about to blow up.

Now in the West nobody looks at anybody, but looks at the Buddha because the Buddhas never lose their temper. However, if we go to other places, we still need to respect and follow the rules of those places. They follow the old rules and are unfamiliar with our new rules. When we do the Morning Ceremony and the Evening Ceremony, we face the Buddha, whereas people in Chinese Buddhism face the center and each other. That is why I said, "The Buddhism we practice here is not the Buddhism practiced in China. We are establishing a new Buddhism here."

From now on the Shramaneras and Shramanerikas should listen to the instructions of their seniors who were ordained in Taiwan. During the ordination period, everyone must absolutely follow the rules and study seriously. Today at this opening I have a few informal words for you: there is a saying in China, "As long as one is sincere, even if one may not be doing things right and well, it is not too far yet!" No matter what you do, do it with a sincere heart. If you seek to receive the Precepts with a sincere heart, you will surely obtain the Precepts.

☞To be continued

