

The 16 Bodhisattva Precepts of the Village Zendo

*Incorporating the Three Refuges and the Three Pure Precepts of the Zen Peacemakers (ZP)
and commentary by Bodhidharma and Dogen Zenji on The Ten Grave Precepts*

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in the Buddha, the awakened nature of all beings. This is oneness.

I take refuge in the Dharma, the ocean of wisdom and compassion. This is diversity.

I take refuge in the Sangha, the interdependence of all creations. This is harmony.

The Three Pure Precepts

Not knowing, thereby giving up fixed ideas about myself and the universe. This is ceasing from evil.

Bearing witness to the joy and suffering of the world. This is doing good.

Loving myself and others. This is doing good for others.

The Ten Grave Precepts

First Grave Precept: Not Killing

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the everlasting Dharma, not giving rise to the idea of killing is called the Precept of Not Killing.

Dogen: The Buddha seed grows in accordance with not taking life. Transmit the life of Buddha's wisdom and do not kill.

ZP: Recognizing that I am not separate from all that is. This is the precept of Non-Killing.

Second Grave Precept: Not Stealing

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the unattainable Dharma, not having thoughts of gaining is called the Precept of Not Stealing.

Dogen: The self and things of the world are just as they are. The gate of emancipation is open.

ZP: Being satisfied with what I have. This is the precept of Non-Stealing.

Third Grave Precept: Not Misusing Sex

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the ungilded Dharma, not creating a veneer of attachment is called the Precept of Not Misusing Sex.

Dogen: The Three Wheels are pure and clear. When you have nothing to desire, you follow the way of all Buddhas.

ZP: Encountering all creations with respect and dignity. This is the precept of Chaste Conduct.

Fourth Grave Precept: Not Lying

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the inexplicable Dharma, not preaching a single word is called the Precept of Not Lying.

Dogen: The Dharma Wheel turns from the beginning. There is neither surplus nor lack. The whole universe is moistened with nectar, and the truth is ready to harvest.

ZP: Listening and speaking from the heart. This is the precept of Non-Lying.

Fifth Grave Precept: Not Giving or Taking Drugs

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the intrinsically pure Dharma, not giving rise to delusions is called the Precept of Not Giving or Taking Drugs.

Dogen: Drugs are not brought in yet. Don't let them invade. That is the great light.

ZP: Cultivating a mind that sees clearly. This is the precept of Not Being Ignorant.

Sixth Grave Precept: Not Discussing the Faults of Others

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the flawless Dharma, not expounding upon error is called the Precept of Not Speaking of the Faults of Others.

Dogen: In the Buddha Dharma, there is one path, one Dharma, one realization, one practice. Don't permit faultfinding. Don't permit haphazard talk.

ZP: Unconditionally accepting what each moment has to offer. This is the precept of Not Talking About Others' Errors And Faults.

Seventh Grave Precept: Not Praising Yourself While Abusing Others

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the equitable Dharma, not dwelling upon I against you is called the Precept of Not Praising Yourself While Abusing Others.

Dogen: Buddhas and Ancestral Teachers realize the empty sky and the great earth. When they manifest the noble body, there is neither inside nor outside in emptiness. When they manifest the Dharma body, there is not even a bit of earth on the ground.

ZP: Speaking what I perceive to be the truth without guilt or blame. This is the precept of Not Elevating Oneself And Blaming Others.

Eighth Grave Precept: Not Sparing the Dharma Assets

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the genuine, all-pervading Dharma, not being stingy about a single thing is called the Precept of Not Sparing the Dharma Assets.

Dogen: One phrase, one verse -- that is the ten thousand things and one hundred grasses; one dharma, one realization -- that is all Buddhas and Ancestral teachers. Therefore, from the beginning, there has been no stinginess at all.

ZP: Using all of the ingredients of my life. This is the precept of Not Being Stingy.

Ninth Grave Precept: Not Indulging in Anger

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the selfless Dharma, not contriving reality for the self is called the Precept of Not Indulging in Anger.

Dogen: Not advancing, not retreating, not real, not empty. There is an ocean of bright clouds. There is an ocean of solemn clouds.

ZP: Transforming suffering into wisdom. This is the precept of Not Being Angry.

Tenth Grave Precept: Not Defaming the Three Treasures

Bodhidharma: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the One, not holding nihilistic concepts of ordinary beings and sages is called the Precept of Not Defaming the Three Treasures.

Dogen: The teisho of the actual body is the harbor and the weir. This is the most important thing in the world. Its virtue finds its home in the ocean of essential nature. It is beyond explanation. We just accept it with respect and gratitude.

ZP: Honoring my life as an instrument of peacemaking. This is the precept of Not Thinking Ill of the Three Treasures.