

5) What does it mean to avoid close associations with non Buddhists? What is it that you really have to give up? (Tibetan track give the Tibetan for this commitment)

It does *not* mean to give up non Buddhist friends and co-workers. It does mean that once you have taken refuge, you must not adopt a wrong worldview as your own. So you cannot adopt a worldview that sees things as self existent, even if those who are dear to you hold such a view. You have taken refuge in those who have seen emptiness directly. Those who would never, could never, give up their correct view.

Once you have gone for refuge in the Community, then don't associate closely with non-Buddhists.

དགོ་འདུན་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་སོང་བས་གྲོགས་སུ་སྟེགས་ཅན་དང་མི་འགྲོགས་པ།

gendun la kyab su songwe drok mu tekchen dang mi drokpa

Meditation Assignment: 15 minutes a day: Think about your day. How many times did you take "exceptional refuge"?

7) Take refuge throughout the day, by bringing to mind the high spiritual qualities of the objects of refuge again and again.

ཡོན་ཏན་བླ་མ་པའི་སྣོན་སེམས་ཡང་དང་ཡང་དུ་སྐྱབས་སུ་འགྲོ་བ།

yunten drenpay kone yang dang yang du kyab su growa

8) Bringing to mind their kindness, offer the first part of anything you eat or drink to the Three Jewels.

བཀའ་རྒྱུ་བླ་མ་པའི་སྣོན་སེམས་ཅི་ཟེ་ཅི་འཕུང་གི་ཕྱད་གྱིས་མཚོན་པ།

kadren drenpay kone ci sa ci tung gi pu kyi chupa

9) Encourage others to go for refuge.

གཞན་སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་ལ་འགོད་པ།

shen kyamdro la gupa

10) Bringing to mind the benefits of doing so, go for refuge three times during the day, and three times at night.

ཕན་ཡོན་བླ་མ་པའི་སྣོན་སེམས་ཉིན་ལན་གསུམ་མཚན་ལན་གསུམ་དུ་སྐྱབས་སུ་
འགྲོ་བ།

penyun drenpay kone nyin len sum tsan len sum du kyab su growa

11) Place all your trust in the Three Jewels, during any activity you undertake at all.

བྱ་བ་གང་བྱེད་ཀྱང་དགོན་མཚོག་ལ་སྣོ་བཀའ་ནས་བྱེད་པ།

jawa gang je kyang konchog la lo kelne jepa

12) Never give up the Three Jewels, even at the cost of your life, or even in jest.

དགོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་སྣོ་བཀའ་། ཐ་ན་བཞད་གད་གྱི་ཕྱིར་ཡང་མི་སྣོང་བ།

konchok sum sok kam, tana she ge kyi chir yang mi pongwa,

pieces of an image laying in one of those special shrines for storing discarded images.

སངས་རྒྱལ་སྐབས་སུ་སོང་བས་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སྐབས་གཟུགས་རྒྱ་དང་བཟོ་
དབྱིབས་ངན་པ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་། ཅ་ཚ་ཁང་ནང་གི་ཚག་དུམ་ཡན་ཆད་ལ་
སངས་རྒྱལ་དངོས་ཀྱི་འདུ་ཤེས་འཛོག་དགོས།

*sanggye la kyab su songwe sanggye kyi ku suk gyu dang so yib ngen pa
tabu dang, tsa tsa gang nang gi chak dum yenche la sanggye ngo kyi
dushe jok ko,*

5) Once you have gone for refuge in the Dharma, you must honor any piece of writing—from a single letter on up—as if it were the actual Jewel of the Dharma itself.

ཚོས་ལ་སྐབས་སུ་སོང་བས་ནི། ཡི་གེ་ན་གཅིག་ཚུན་ཆད་ལ་ཚོས་དགོན་
མཚོག་དངོས་ལྟར་གྲུས་པ་བྱ་དགོས།

*chu la kyab su songwe ni, yi ge na chik tsunche la chu konchok ngo tar
gupa ja ko,*

6) Once you have gone for refuge in the Jewel of the Community, you must pay high respect to the saffron robe—whether it be a bolt of cloth which is meant to be made into robes; or just a single little scrap of a saffron robe which has fallen on the ground; or saffron robes that are actually being worn by someone at the time.

དག་འདུན་དགོན་མཚོག་ལ་སྐབས་སུ་སོང་བས་ནི་དག་འདུན་པའི་ན་བཟའི་
ཚལ་བུ་དང་ལྟན་པ་དམར་སེར་ཅམ་ས་ལ་ལྟུང་བ་དང་། རྒྱོན་པ་དག་
ལའང་ཤིན་ཏུ་གྲུས་པ་བྱ་དགོས།

*gendun konchok la kyab su songwe ni gendunpay se tsel bu dang hlen pa
mar ser tsam sa la hlung wa dang, kyonpa dak la-ang shintu kupa ja ko*

II. The refuge commitments which relate to all of the places of refuge together

3) Do you leave your refuge commitments behind when you become ordained? Why or Why not.

No, as a matter of fact, if a novice monk or nun breaks any one of their refuge commitments, it is a wrongdoing which must be confessed. Taking refuge is what makes you a Buddhist. It is the only way to reach the goals of leaving your own suffering behind and being of true assistance to others in their efforts to end their own suffering.

4) Name and describe the two categories of refuge commitments. List one example from each category. (Tibetan track: give the examples in Tibetan.)

I. The refuge commitments which relate to each individual place of refuge.

1) Once you have gone for refuge in the Buddha, then stop taking refuge in worldly things.

སངས་རྒྱལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་སོང་ནས་འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་ཡུལ་སྐྱབས་བཙོལ་བ་
སོགས་མི་བྱེད།

sanggye la kyab su song ne jiktenpay yul kyab cholwa sok mije

2) Once you have gone for refuge in the Dharma, then stop harming any living being at all.

ཆོས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་སོང་བས་ནི་སེམས་ཅན་ལ་གནོད་འཚེ་མི་བྱེད།

chu la kyab su songway ni semchen la nut se mije

3) Once you have gone for refuge in the Community, then don't associate closely with non-Buddhists.

དགོ་འདུན་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་སོང་བས་གྲོགས་སུ་སྟེགས་ཅན་དང་མི་འགྲོགས་པ།

gendun la kyab su songwe drok mu tekchen dang mi drokpa

4) Once you have gone for refuge in the Buddha, you must consider any image of an enlightened being to actually be an enlightened being—regardless of how poor the quality of the material used for the image might be; or how poorly it was fashioned; and with any such image at all, on down to the broken



Answer Key Eight: Seeking Shelter

1) What is the central idea that makes one a Buddhist? Define this idea. (Tibetan track: give the definition in Tibetan)

What makes you a Buddhist is the act of going for refuge. The formal definition of refuge is “that thought which of its own power puts all its hope in an external object. Buddhist refuge is “exceptional refuge”, as described below in question 2. In real terms, going for refuge means remembering that every suffering in your life has been created by you harming others, and to try in every moment to act to help others. So a true example of going for refuge would be not yelling back when someone else yells at you.

ཡུལ་གཞན་ལ་རང་སློབས་གྱིས་རིབ་འཆའ་བའི་སེམས་པ། སྐབས་འགྲོའི་

མཚན་ཉིད།

yulshen la rang top kyi rewa chaway sempa, kyamdro tsennyi

2) What two things are needed to take refuge? What is the difference between “exceptional refuge” and “ordinary refuge”?

You need to be afraid of something, and you need to believe that something else has the power to protect you. Ordinary refuge is, for example, buying insurance for your home, believing that it will protect you if your belongings are stolen or damaged. Exceptional refuge is taking refuge in the three jewels, knowing that they are the only things that can truly protect you. Basically that means emptiness, the direct realization of emptiness and those who have realized emptiness directly. This wisdom is the only thing that can possibly protect us from suffering.