

# THE REFUGE CEREMONY - WHITE HERON SANGHA

(12/2018)

## **Leader: Dedication of Merit**

In gratitude, we assemble here, followers of the dharma,  
and offer this ceremony for the benefit of all beings everywhere.  
May it reflect our careful efforts, our wholehearted awareness,  
and the fruit of understanding, slowly ripening.  
May we and all beings be companions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.  
May we awaken from forgetfulness and realize our true home.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

## **Leader: The Three Refuges**

**All:** *(Monotone, except \_ indicates lower pitch, ^ higher. Translations not spoken)*

Namo tassa, bhagavato, arahhato sāmmma sāmbbuddhasa

Namo tassa, bhagavato, arahhato sāmmma sāmbbuddhasa

Namo tassa, bhagavato, arahhato sāmmma sāmbbuddhasa

*[Homage the blessed one, the worthy one, the supremely enlightened one]*

Buddham saranam gacchāmi

*[I go to the Buddha as my refuge]*

Dhammam saranam gacchāmi

*[I go to the Dhamma as my refuge]*

Sāṅgham saranam gacchāmi

*[I go to the Sangha as my refuge]*

Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchāmi,

Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchāmi,

Dutiyampi Sāṅgham saranam gacchāmi.

*[For the second time: “ ” ]*

Tatīyampi Buddham saranam gacchāmi,

Tatīyampi Dhammam saranam gacchāmi,

Tatīyampi Sāṅgham saranam gacchāmi.

*[For the third time: “ ” ]*

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader: Reflections That Turn The Mind Toward Dharma**

**1. Leader: Precious Human Existence**

**All:** This precious human existence, this lifetime, well-endowed with leisure, qualities and opportunities, is difficult to attain, tenuous and easily lost, so this is the time to practice awakening with diligence.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**2. Leader: Impermanence**

**All:** All things are impermanent. Our life breath especially is like a bubble on a swift-moving stream. The time of our death is uncertain, and we depart alone from this world.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**3. Leader: The Unavoidable Law of Karma**

**All:** The law of karma follows us as a shadow follows the body. Skillful and unskillful thoughts, words and deeds ripen in kind.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**4. Leader: The Defects and Shortcomings of Samsara**

**All:** Samsara and all its contents, pleasure as well as pain, are like a public feast we are passing through on our way to the grave.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader: The Prajña-Paramita Heart Sutra**

The Bodhisattva of Compassion, from the depths of prajña wisdom,  
saw the emptiness of all five skandhas, and sundered the bonds that caused him  
suffering. Know then:

**All:** *[Syllabic chant to the steady rhythm of the fish drum (mokugyo). Ignore punctuation.]*

Form here is only emptiness, emptiness only form.

Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form.

Feeling, thought and choice, consciousness itself, are the same as this.

Dharmas here are empty, all are the primal void.

None are born or die. Nor are they stained or pure, nor do they wax or wane.  
So in emptiness no form,  
no feeling, thought or choice, nor is there consciousness.  
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;  
no color, sound, smell, taste, touch, or what the mind takes hold of,  
nor even act of sensing.  
No ignorance, or end of it, nor all that comes of ignorance:  
no withering, no death, no end of them.  
Nor is there pain or cause of pain or cease in pain,  
or noble path to lead from pain,  
not even wisdom to attain, attainment too is emptiness.  
So know that the Bodhisattva holding to nothing whatever  
but dwelling in prajña wisdom  
is freed of delusive hindrance, rid of the fear bred by it,  
and reaches clearest nirvana.  
All buddhas of past and present, buddhas of future time  
through faith in prajña wisdom come to full enlightenment.  
Know then, the great dharani, the radiant, peerless mantra,  
the supreme, unfailing mantra,  
the Prajña Paramita, whose words allay all pain. *(beat slows)*  
This is the highest wisdom, true beyond all doubt, know and proclaim its truth:

***(beat stops)***

*Gate, gate  
para gate  
para sam gate  
bodhi, svaha!*

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader:**

Our words ring out through space beyond the stars;  
their virtue and compassion echo back from all the many beings;  
we recite the Prajña Paramita Heart Sutra for renewal of the Buddha-mind  
In fields and forests, homes and streets, throughout the world,  
in grateful thanks to all our many guides along the ancient way;  
All Buddhas throughout space and time; all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;  
the great Prajña Paramita.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader:        The Positive Precepts**

**All:** With deeds of loving-kindness, I purify my body.  
With open-handed generosity, I purify my body.  
With stillness, simplicity and contentment I purify my body.

With truthful communication, I purify my speech.  
With words kindly and gracious, I purify my speech.  
With utterance helpful and harmonious, I purify my speech.

Abandoning covetousness for generosity, I purify my mind.  
Changing hatred into non-hatred, I purify my mind.  
Transforming ignorance into wisdom I purify my mind.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader:        Recitation of The Five Precepts**

The Five Precepts are ancient Buddhist guidelines to help us lead a happier life.  
They are not commandments or rules, but sign posts to help us find the way.  
Listen mindfully as we recite them. What do they mean to you in your life?  
Please reflect on how you live them and the joy they bring.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader:        Training in the Reverence for Life**

**All:** Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating the insight of connectedness and compassion, as well as learning to protect our world.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader:        Training in Skillful Happiness**

**All:** Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, theft, and oppression, I am committed to practicing generosity in my thoughts, speech, and actions.

**BELL** *(Allow sound to fade completely)*

**Leader: Training in the Skillful Use of Love**

**All:** Aware of the suffering caused by sensual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families and community.

**BELL** (*Allow sound to fade completely*)

**Leader: Training in Skillful Speech and Deep Listening**

**All:** Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and a failure to listen, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and compassionate listening.

**BELL** (*Allow sound to fade completely*)

**Leader: Training in Nourishment and Healing**

**All:** Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family and my community.

**BELL** (*Allow sound to fade completely*)

**Leader: Subjects for Frequent Recollection**

**All:** I am of the nature to age, I have not gone beyond aging  
I am of the nature to have ill health, I have not gone beyond illness  
I am of the nature to die, I have not gone beyond dying  
All that is dear to me and everyone I hold dear, are of the nature to change  
Separating from them is inevitable  
My thoughts and words and deeds are my only true belongings  
The results of my thoughts and words and deeds are inescapable  
Thus we should frequently recollect

**BELL** (*Allow sound to fade completely*)

**Leader:        The Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Teaching on Loving-Kindness**

Even the most exalted states and the most exceptional spiritual accomplishments are unimportant if we cannot be happy in the most basic and ordinary ways, if, with our hearts, we cannot touch one another and the life we have been given. The quality of loving-kindness is the fertile soil out of which an integrated spiritual life can grow. Cultivating metta helps us recover the incandescent power of love that is present in all of us.

**All:** *(chant in monotone, except \_ indicates lower pitch, ¯ higher)*

This is what should be done  
By one who is skilled in goodness,  
And who knows the path of peace:  
Let them be able and up<sup>¯</sup>right,  
Straightforward and gentle in speech.  
Humble and not conceited,  
Contented and easily satisfied.  
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.  
Peaceful and calm, and wise and skilful,  
Not proud and dema<sup>¯</sup>nding in nature.  
Let them not do the slighte<sup>¯</sup>st thing  
That the wise would la<sup>¯</sup>t<sup>¯</sup>er reprove.  
Wishing: In gladness and in s<sup>¯</sup>a<sup>¯</sup>fety,  
May all beings b<sup>¯</sup>e at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be;  
Whether they are w<sup>¯</sup>eak or strong, o<sup>¯</sup>mitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, sh<sup>¯</sup>ort or small,  
The seen and the unseen,  
Those living near and f<sup>¯</sup>a<sup>¯</sup>r away,  
Those born and to-b<sup>¯</sup>e-born,  
May all beings b<sup>¯</sup>e at ease!  
Let none de<sup>¯</sup>ceive an<sup>¯</sup>other,  
Or des<sup>¯</sup>pise any being in an<sup>¯</sup>y state.  
Let none through anger or ill-will  
Wish h<sup>¯</sup>a<sup>¯</sup>rm upon an<sup>¯</sup>other.  
Even as a mother protects with her life  
Her child, her on<sup>¯</sup>ly child,

So with a bōundless heart  
Should one cherish all līving beings:  
Radiating kīndness over the entīre world  
Spreading upwards to the skīes,  
And downwards to the depths;  
Outwards and unbounded,  
Freed from hātrēd and ill-will.  
Whether standing or walking, seated or līying down  
Free from drowsiness,  
One should sustain this recollection.  
This is said to be the sublīme abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views,  
The pure-hēarted one, having clarity of vision,  
Being freed from from all sēnse desires,  
Is not bōrn āgain into this world.

**BELL** (*Allow sound to fade completely*)

**Leader:        Reverence to the Three Jewels**

**All:** **We reverence the Buddha**, and aspire to follow him.  
The Buddha was born, as we are born.  
What the Buddha overcame, we too can overcome.  
What the Buddha attained, we too can attain.

**BELL** (*Bow, pause for long reflection, approx. 20 sec.*)

**We reverence the Dharma**, and aspire to follow it  
with body, speech and mind, until the end.  
The Truth in all its aspects, the path in all its stages,  
we aspire to study, practice, realize.

**BELL** (*Bow, pause for long reflection, approx. 20 sec.*)

**We reverence the Sangha**, and aspire to follow it:  
the fellowship of those who tread the way.  
As, one by one, we make our own commitment,  
an ever-widening circle, the Sangha grows.

**BELL** (*Bow, pause for long reflection*) **FINAL BELL** (*full fade*)

**Leader:      Final Dedication**

**All:** Goodness comes from this practice now done  
Let me not hold it just in me  
Let it spread to all that is known  
And awaken good throughout the world  
Awakening mind is precious  
May it arise where it has not arisen  
May it not fade where it has arisen  
May it ever grow and flourish  
Everything known—nothing to understand  
Everything clear—nothing to explain  
Everything in its place—nothing to do  
May the joy of this way touch beings everywhere

**BELL**

**BELL**

**BELL (full fade)**