

The Sixteen Precepts: Buddhist Ethics

Taking Refuge in the Triple Treasure

I take refuge in the **Buddha (Teacher)**

Vowing with all sentient beings

Acquiring the great way

Attaining the unsurpassable Mind

I take refuge in the **Dharma (Teaching)**

Vowing with all sentient beings

Deeply entering the teaching

Wisdom like the sea

I take refuge in the **Sangha (Dharma Community)**

Vowing with all sentient beings

Bringing harmony to all

Completely without hindrance

John Daido Looi: The first three precepts are vows to take refuge in the Three Treasures—the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. **Buddha** is the historical Buddha, but at the same time Buddha is each being, each creation. **Dharma** is the teaching of the Buddha, but at the same time Dharma is the whole phenomenal universe. And **Sangha is the community of practitioners of the Buddha's Dharma, but at the same time Sangha is all** sentient beings, animate and inanimate.

GCW: the three treasures each have a specific referent and a universal reference

Collective Pure Precepts

I strive to avoid the unwholesome

I strive to do the wholesome

I strive to benefit all living beings

John Daido Looi: The Three Pure Precepts define the harmony, the natural order of things. If we eschew evil, practice good, and actualize good for others we are in harmony with the natural order of all things.

The Ten Grave Precepts

1. Not taking life;
2. Not stealing
3. Not indulging in sexual greed
4. Not speaking falsehood
5. Not indulging in intoxicants
6. Not discussing the faults of others
7. Not praising self or slandering others
8. Not begrudging the bestowal of Dharma to anyone
9. Not indulging in anger
10. Not disparaging the Triple Treasure

John Daido Looi describes the ten grave precepts as:

1. Affirm life; do not kill
2. Be giving; do not steal
3. Honor the body; do not misuse sexuality
4. Manifest truth; do not lie
5. Proceed clearly; do not cloud the mind
6. See the perfection; do not speak of others' errors and faults
7. Realize the self and other as one; do not elevate the self and blame others.
8. Give generously; do not be withholding
9. Actualize harmony; do not be angry
10. Experience the intimacy of things; do not defile the Three Treasures

The Sixteen Precepts –taking refuge in the Three Treasures, the Three Pure Precepts and the Ten Grave Precepts—are **not fixed rules of action or a code for moral behavior**. They allow for **changes in circumstances**: for adjusting to the time the particular place, your position and the degree of action necessary in any give situation. When we don't hold on to an idea of ourselves and a particular way we have to react, then we are free to respond openly, with reverence for all the lie involved.

GCW: Skillful Means: compassion influenced by wisdom; wisdom influenced by compassion. The bodisattvas Avalokitesvara and Manjushri. Use of the middle way taught by the Buddha.