

The ethical principles of bodhisattvas

THREE REFUGES

1. we take refuge in the nature of mind *the soil of awakening*
2. we take refuge in cause and effect (*the seeds of awakening*)
3. we take refuge in community *the gardeners of awakening*

THREE PURE PRECEPTS

1. we refrain from all unskillful action that increases ill being
2. we engage in all skillful action that increases well being
3. we act always with the benefit of all others in mind

TEN GRAVE PRECEPTS

1. we refrain from killing life *instead we affirm and encourage all life ;*
2. we refrain from stealing or taking what is not given *instead we honor, through giving and through receiving, the non-separation of giver, receiver, and gift ;*
3. we refrain from abusing sexuality *instead we honor all bodies and relationships ;*
4. we refrain from lying and illusory speech *instead we manifest truth and reality ;*
5. we refrain from intoxicating mind and body of self or others *instead we help self and others settle into clarity ;*
6. we refrain from all presumption to judge others through denouncing their supposed faults or praising their supposed merits *instead we reflect gratefully on our own positive experience of the activity of others and remorsefully on our own negative experience of the activity of self, and we communicate both experiences at the earliest appropriate opportunity ;*
7. we refrain from elevating self above others *instead we realize the non-separation of self and others ;*
8. we refrain from hoarding anything *instead we give generously and realize that we can possess nothing ;*
9. we refrain from being angry or harboring ill will *instead we let the flower of compassion blossom in the soil of love and tend it with the pure water of equanimity in the cool shade of joyfulness ;*
10. we refrain from disparaging the three treasures *instead we honor teachers, reality, and community*

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FOUR VOWS

1. beings are numberless; we vow to help them all
2. delusions are inexhaustible; we vow to end them all
3. teachings are boundless; we vow to learn them all
4. the way of awakening is unsurpassable; we vow to realize it

SOURCES

These ethical principles of bodhisattvas were rendered by Nathan Strait nathanstrait.com on the 31st of January of 2014. They are based on the sixteen bodhisattva precepts and the four bodhisattva vows in the tradition of the San Francisco Zen Center as found in Reb Anderson's book *Being Upright: Zen Meditation and the Bodhisattva Precepts*, Berkeley: Rodmell Press, 2001 and the Everyday Zen Foundation as found in Norman Fischer's book *Taking Our Places: The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up*, San Francisco: Harper, 2003 . The sixth grave precept as rendered here incorporates the insight of psychologists Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey that the most helpful communication is direct, specific, and nonattributive (as found in their book *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work: Seven Languages for Transformation*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2001 : "Powerful communications of appreciation and admiration do not characterize the other person's attributes but rather describe the speaker's experience." The ninth grave precept as rendered here includes Longchenpa's description of the "four immeasurables" as found in his book translated by Herbert Guenther as *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1976 . The tenth grave precept as rendered here is inspired by Gary Snyder's translation of the three treasures as "teachers, the wild, and friends" as found in his book *The Practice of the Wild*, San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990 .