

## ◎ Taking The Five Precepts At Mu Sang Sa ◎

Taking the five precepts means recognizing the importance of practicing, and making it part of your everyday life. It means joining a family of other people who have made the same decision, practicing with them when you can. If you live near a Zen center, you can frequently join others in formal meditation and will find great support practicing within a community of other Zen students. If you live at a distance from a Zen center, you will find it helpful to come to intensive retreats periodically.

◆ **Prerequisites** : In order to take the five precepts, you should

- Normally be at least eighteen years of age and,
- Have sat at least a short retreat or a week of Kyol Che in the Kwan Um School of Zen, or
- Have attended Sunday Class on a regular basis at Mu Sang Sa.

Precepts are taken in a formal ceremony. When you take five precepts, you will receive a Buddhist name. Youths, at least 12 years of age, can take the five precepts after talking with the Guiding Teacher.

◆ **Teacher's Gift** : It is a traditional custom to express gratitude to the teacher leading the precepts ceremony with a small gift of money. At the time of the ceremony, you may leave an envelope containing a donation on the altar, with your name on it if you like.

◆ **Precepts Burn** : During the precepts ceremony, you will receive a small burn on the inside of your forearm. This is a Buddhist tradition from China, modified in Korea. The burn itself is very small and relatively painless; the significance of this custom is expressed in the repentance ritual: "May all my offenses, accumulated during hundreds of kalpas, now be totally consumed in an instant, as fire burns dry grass, extinguishing all things until nothing remains." The 'instant' when fire touches skin is an all-consuming moment in which all opinions and ideas disappear, and only the direct experience of burning sensation remains. Our practice is to return again and again to each moment of direct experience; in experiencing totally what is in each moment, all our transgressions and defilements are extinguished; the chain of karmic residue is broken.

◆ **Robe and Kasa** : If you don't already have your own short gray (bowing) robe, you must obtain one when you take five precepts. You can borrow one set from our zen center before the ceremony. During the precepts ceremony, those who take the five precepts will receive a small kasa symbolizing the precepts which can be used in all Kwan Um School of Zen Centers only.



## ◎ The Five Precepts ◎

1<sup>st</sup> precept : I vow to abstain from taking life.

2<sup>nd</sup> precept : I vow to abstain from taking things not given.

3<sup>rd</sup> precept : I vow to abstain from misconduct done in lust.

4<sup>th</sup> precept : I vow to abstain from lying.

5<sup>th</sup> precept : I vow to abstain from intoxicants, taken to induce heedlessness.

The Buddha taught us that we already have a balanced nature. We are, each one of us, already perfect and complete. As we endeavor to wake up to the compassionate and wise state, we must see what hinders us.

The instructions are so simple: Avoid evil and do good. Why can't we just write that in large letters over our beds and make sure we read it before we put our feet on the floor each morning? Then, as Zen Master Seung Sahn says, "just do it"? Avoid evil and do good, moment to moment to moment.

The precepts spell out the major hindrances. It's so obvious what these hindrances are and so helpful to be reminded of them. Read them and be honest with yourself; ask yourself to deepen your understanding of what it means to not take what is not given.

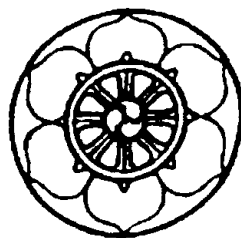
What does it mean when it says to always tell the truth? Did we 'kill' anything today? Were we destructive? How intimately familiar can we become with the precepts so that we can put our feet on the floor in the morning and not have to think of dichotomies such as good and evil? The precepts become, "How may I help you?"

As our practice matures, as we shed our accumulated fears and mistrust, we do realize that being compassionately awake is our natural state. We can take the sign off our bedroom wall and give it to a brother or sister who might still need the reminder.

As members of our Zen Center and of our larger sangha, we recognize and support each others' efforts. When we make our direction and vow clear together, we not only help each other, we also inspire our extended community around the world.

*Zen Master Soeng Hyang*





- Date : \* Please arrive at Mu Sang Sa by 12 pm
- Location : Mu Sang Sa, Seung Sahn International Zen Center
- Cost for ceremony : 5 Precepts - 50,000 Won (which includes price of the small kasa.)
- Only people who have sat 4 days or more of retreat at Mu Sang Sa can apply to take precepts at this ceremony.
- We will let you know if you may take precepts, after we have received your application

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Submitted completed form to:  
Mu Sang Sa office ;  
Seung Sahn International Zen Center  
Chung-nam, Gyeryong-shi  
Eomsa-myon, Hyangjeoksan-gil 129  
South Korea 321-935

**Ph: (042) 841- 6084 Fax: (042) 841-1202**

[www.musangsa.org](http://www.musangsa.org) e-mail. [office@musangsa.org](mailto:office@musangsa.org)

Fee Payment Details:

Kookmin Bank (국민은행)

Eomsa Branch, Eomsa-Ri,

Eomsa-myon, Chung-Cheong Nam Do,

South Korea

A/C Name: Jae Dan Bup In Seung Sahn Guk Jae Seon Won

(재단법인 승산국제선원)

A/C No: 733101-01-259386

