।। बोधिसत्त्वनयेन शरणगमनम् ।।
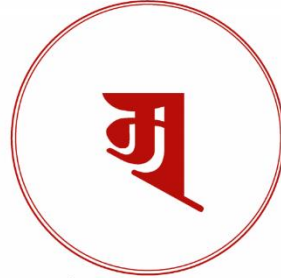
|| bodhisattvanayena śaraṇagamanam ||

Going for refuge,

according to the method of Bodhisattvas

Saugatam
Sanskrit Buddhism

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Introduction

|| namo ratnatrayāya ||

The difference between a Buddhist and a non-Buddhist is refuge: this is a traditional way to define someone as being Buddhist by vows, rather than by view. "Going for refuge" means to recognize the Three Jewels (the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha) as the sole source of ultimate freedom from the suffering of saṁsāra. Some masters emphasize that taking refuge implies a commitment to practice the Buddhist path. Such commitment stems from the realization that the entirety of saṁsāra is suffering, and that the Buddhist teachings are the genuine antidote to that suffering: this is the connection between view and refuge.

Thus, refuge is a common feature of all types of Buddhist practice; it does nonetheless differ in some aspects according to the specific mode of practice that one is taking up.

The present wording represents refuge as taken by Mahāyāna practitioners, whose goal is not only to become free from suffering, but also to become an omniscient Buddha, so as to benefit all sentient beings.

The length of time that one is taking refuge for is until Buddhahood. The Buddha Jewel is seen as including the three kāyas (Dharmakāya, Saṁbhogakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya). The Dharma Jewel includes not only the Śrāvaka Tripiṭaka but also the Mahāyāna texts. The Saṅgha includes the assembly of eight types of Nobles Persons (ārya) and the Noble Bodhisattvas that have reached irreversibility from the eventual achievement of Buddhahood.

The refuge chant also reminds us why the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha are called "jewels." These three are the best among things of their own type.

एषो ऽहमाबोधेर्बुद्धं भगवन्तं शरणं गच्छामि द्विपदानामग्र्यम् |
धर्मं शरणं गच्छामि समग्रं महायानम् |
सङ्घं शरणं गच्छाम्यवैवर्तिकबोधिसत्त्वगणम्

eṣo 'ham ā bodher
buddhaṁ bhagavantaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmi dvipadānām agryam |
dharmaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmi samagraṁ mahāyānam |
saṅghaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmy avaivartikabodhisattvagaṇam ||

[For a female, change eṣo 'ham to eṣāham; for other genders, change eṣo 'ham to etad aham]

I, this person, until Bodhi,
go for refuge in the Buddha, the Bhagavat, the foremost among the two-footed;
I go for refuge in the Dharma, the entirety of the Mahāyāna;
I go for refuge in the Saṅgha, the assembly of irreversible Bodhisattvas.

Grammatical notes and glossary

Nouns have three grammatical genders (feminine, masculine, neuter), three numbers (singular, dual, plural), and seven vibhaktis (the vocative is regarded as a subtype of the 1st vibhakti).

Example of abbreviations for nouns:

f1s

gender (liṅga), f, m, n ◄ **f 1 s** ► number (vacana), s, d, p

vibhakti
(1 to 7, 1v = 1st vocative)
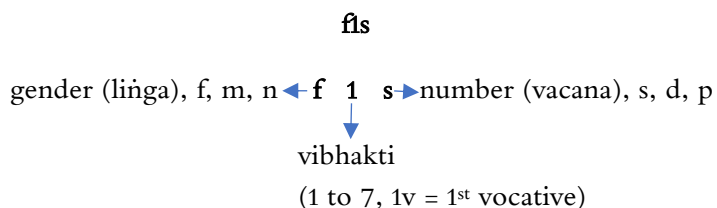
Thus, f1s means:
feminine gender, 1st vibhakti, singular number.

Other examples:
m3p = masculine, 3rd vibhakti, plural
n5d = neuter, 5th vibhakti, dual

eṣo 'ham ā bodher
buddhaṁ bhagavantaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmi dvipadānām agryam |
dharmaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmi samagraṁ mahāyānam |
saṅghaṁ śaraṇaṁ gacchāmy avaivartikabodhisattvagaṇam ||

eṣaḥ, aham, ā, bodheḥ, buddham, bhagavantam, śaraṇam, gacchāmi, dvi-padānām, agryam, dharmam, śaraṇam, gacchāmi, samagram, mahā-yānam, saṅgham, śaraṇam, gacchāmi, avaivartika-bodhisattva-gaṇam ||

eṣaḥ | *etad* m1s, this, this person || *aham* | *asmad* m1s, I || *ā* | nipāta, governs the 5th vibhakti || *bodheḥ* | *bodhi* f5s, Bodhi, Awakening, Buddhahood || *buddham* | *buddha* m2s, the Buddha, the Awakened One || *bhagavantam* | *bhagavat* m2s, the Bhagavat, the Fortunate One || *śaraṇam* | *śaraṇa* n2s, refuge || *gacchāmi* | uttamapuruṣa, ekavacana, laṭ, of *gam*, to go || *dvipadānām* | *dvipada* m6p, two-

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footed, having two (dvi) feet (pada) || *agryam* | *agrya* m2s, supreme, foremost || *dharmam* | *dharma* m2s, Dharma (here referring to the teachings of the Buddha) || *śaraṇam* | *śaraṇa* n2s, refuge || *gacchāmi* | uttamapuruṣa, ekavacana, laṭ, of *gam*, to go || *samagram* | samagra n2s, entire, it its entirety || *mahāyānam* | *mahāyāna* n2s, Mahāyāna, the Great Vehicle, the Great Place of Going, etc. (the term yāna can mean not just the instrument of going, but also the place where one goes, etc.) || *saṅgham* | *saṅgha*, m2s, Saṅgha, assembly, cohesive assembly || *śaraṇam* | *śaraṇa* n2s, refuge || *gacchāmi* | uttamapuruṣa, ekavacana, laṭ, of *gam*, to go || *avaivartika-bodhisattva-gaṇam* | *avaivartikabodhisattvagaṇa* m2s, the assembly (gaṇa) of irreversible (a-vaivartika) Bodhisattvas ||

References

The wording is taken from the Bhramaharasādhana of the Mahāpaṇḍita Ratnākaraśānti; by comparing this text with the wording of the Śrāvaka-style refuge, the unique features of Mahāyāna refuge become clearly visible.

Isaacson, Harunaga. "Ratnākaraśānti's Bhramaharanāma Hevajrasādhana: Critical Edition (Studies in Ratnākaraśānti's tantric works III)", *Journal of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies* 5 (March 2002), Akira Hirakawa Memorial Volume, pp. 151-176.

The whole text can be accessed here:

http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/corpustei/transformations/html/sa_ratnAkarazAnti-bhramaharanAma-hevajrasAdhana.htm