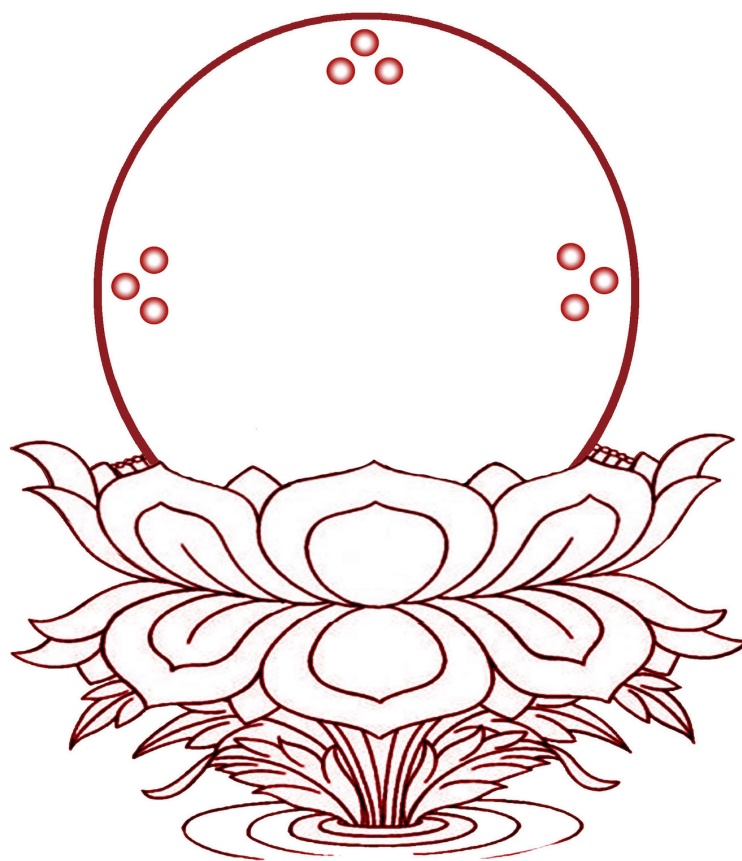


Presence as the Path

Part One: Foundational Practices



Foundational practices of the Buddhist Yogis Sangha
As taught by Pema Khandro
Prepared on the Dalai Lama's Birthday, July 6th 2015
Restricted Text - Ngakpa International

The view is Longchen Rabjam,
the infinite great vast expanse.

The meditation is Khyentse Ozer,
the light rays of wisdom and love.

The conduct is Gwalwe Nyugu,
the fresh sprouts of future Buddhas.

Anyone who practices whole-heartedly in this way will surely attain
Buddhahood in a single lifetime without striving after it.

And even if one does not, one's mind will surely enjoy happiness.

A-la-la!

- Patrul Rinpoche, from the Three Vital Points, the Special Teaching of the Wise
and Glorious King

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Buddhist Wisdom in Family, Work & Society

Ngakpa Intl is an international association of Buddhist Yogis founded by Pema Khandro.

Our vibrant community trains in the philosophy and practices of Tibetan Buddhist Yogis, the non-celibate, life-embracing path of Tibetan Buddhism.

The emphasis of our practices are simple, direct experience of wakefulness and ease. Our centers, clinics and schools focus on the teachings known as **the great perfection (Dzogchen)** – Buddhism's most treasured path to awakening intrinsic wisdom.

We celebrate the system of meditation and personal transformation found in the practices of Dzogchen, the Six Yogas, Chod and Tibetan Yoga as taught in the Nyingma lineage. Among the Nyingmas we specialize in the Nyingthig treasures, the Dakini's Heart teachings.

We explore the practical application of Buddhist wisdom in the modern context, **with a specialty in integrating Buddhism with a dynamic, complex life**. We also emphasize nourishing body-mind vitality through natural medicine – embracing Buddhist wisdom as **applied and embodied**. We are dedicated to providing **accessible, in-depth Buddhist education** for students, teachers and leaders. Due to our commitment to integrating **Buddhist Wisdom with technology** – our online courses allow an unprecedented access to ongoing and advanced study.

About Us

The tone of our community is serious study with a **non-sectarian spirit, in an atmosphere of joyous**, down-to-earth warmth and kindness. We favor a non-dogmatic approach to exploring Buddhist resources with an emphasis in the **value of questions, doubts, diversity and contradictions**.

Our Activities: include community-led meditation classes, group retreats, ongoing phone and online web-cast courses, and a seminary for advanced study.

Our Projects: include a clinic, three residential centers, research to preserve the history and culture of Buddhist Yogis, support of Ngakpa schools worldwide and sponsoring orphans in the Himalayan border regions.

Our Values: Above all, Buddhism's goal is to become a wakeful, ethical and compassionate human being. We believe spiritual awakening goes hand in hand with unraveling the roots of racism, sexism, homophobia and bigotry of all kinds. We are committed to ecological sustainability.

Our Methods: We offer a range of learning environments from study oriented, to practice-oriented, community oriented and discussion oriented, both in person and online – in order to foster diverse relationships with Buddhist wisdom and affordable access to in-depth training.

Schedule of Practice

Lunar Calendar Practice Days

- Day 8 Tara Day - White Tara Practice
- Day 10 Guru Rinpoche Day - Rain of Blessings Practice
- Day 15 Full Moon - Vajrasattva Meditation
- Day 25 Dakini Day - Chod Practice or Yeshe Tsogyal
- Day 29 Protector Day - Protector Practice
- Day 30 Dark Moon - Kunzang Monlam
- Solstices, Equinoxes, Eclipses, for dying – Kunzang Monlam
- Other Buddhist holidays or any lunar holiday– Vajra Guru Mantra

Daily Practice Outline The First One to Three Years of A Life Long Practice

First Phase at Least Six Months

- Daily Prayers + Calm Abiding + Dedication
- Read a Daily Contemplation from Excellent Path, Sutrayana Vol. 1

Second Phase Continue with These Practices

- Daily Prayers + Vajrasattva Meditation + Calm Abiding + Dedication
- Complete 100,000 Vajrasattva mantra recitations during this time
- Continue to read a daily contemplation for Excellent Path Sutrayana Vol. 1 and proceeding to subsequent volumes
- Once this phase complete, request from Pema Khandro to receive the lung, the oral transmission, to begin the Ngondro meditation.

If you are not doing daily practice

- Practice on Lunar Calendar Days of Guru Rinpoche Day and Dakini Day (twice a month).
- On those days do this practice:
Daily Prayers + White Ah + Calm Abiding + Dedication
Whenever mantra practice is needed - use Vajrasattva Mantra

Schedule of Training

Online Classes with Pema Khandro

1. Open Teaching – Study Excellent Path to Enlightenment
2. Dzogchen Day – Meditation + Q & A
3. Vajrayana Training
4. Ngakpa Seminary
5. Bodhisattva Training

Yearly Retreats

- Vajrayana Retreat - Spring
- Dzogchen Meditation Retreat – Summer
- Additional retreats are offered on a rotating basis.

One Day Retreats

One-day retreats or weekend courses are offered throughout the year to train in particular practices. Usually offered two to three times a year by Pema Khandro or authorized instructors.

Self Paced Online Courses with Pema Khandro

These are offered for in-depth study of texts and meaning behind the practices.

Vajra Sangha Retreats

Practice retreats with the Vajra Sangha students only. These are the personal students of Pema Khandro Rinpoche for whom Pema Khandro is their root teacher and who aspire to be her student for the long-term.

Levels of Training

There are three levels of students in the Buddhist Yogis Sangha. These levels are separate from membership levels.

- General Members
- Vajrayana Training
- Vajra Sangha

Daily Prayers Tibetan

Refuge (from the Longchen Nyingthig aka Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse)

དགོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་དངོས་བདེ་གཤེགས་ཙུ་བ་གསུམ་མཆོག་།

ཙུ་བ་ཐུང་ཐུང་ལེ་ལོ་རང་བཞིན་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་མཆོག་།

ངོ་བོ་རང་བཞིན་སྤྱུགས་རྫེའི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་ལ་མཆོག་།

བྱང་ཆུབ་སྤྱིང་བོའི་བར་དུ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆོག་།

könchok sum ngo deshek tsawa sum
tsa lung thigle rangshyin changchub sem
ngowo rangshyin tukje kyilkhör la
changchub nyingpo bardu kyab su chi

Bodhichitta (also from the Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse)

ཧྲོལ་མྱ་ཆོགས་སྤང་བ་ཙུ་ཟླའི་རྩུན་རིས་ཀྱིས་མཆོག་།

འཁོར་བ་ལུ་གུ་རྩུད་དུ་འབྱུངས་པའི་འགྲོལ་མཆོག་།

རང་རིག་འོད་གསལ་དབྱིངས་སུ་ངལ་བཞེད་ཕྱིར་མཆོག་།

ཆོད་མེད་བཞི་ཡི་ངང་ནས་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་དོལ་མཆོག་།

ho natsok nangwa chude dzun ri kyi
khorwa lugu gyü du khyampe dro
rangrig osal ying su ngalso chir
tseme shyi yi ngang ne semkye do

Daily Prayers English

Refuge (from the Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse)

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and Sangha
I take refuge in the Lama, Yidam and Khandro
I take refuge in the tsa, lung, thigle, and their nature, the bodhichitta,
I take refuge in complete openness, lucid presence and compassion

Bodhichitta (from the Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse)

Ho! Mesmerized by the sheer variety of appearances, which are like the illusory reflections of the moon in water, beings wander endlessly astray in samsara's vicious cycle.

In order that they may find comfort and ease in the luminosity and all-pervading space of the true nature of their minds,

I generate the immeasurable love, compassion, joy and equanimity of the awakened mind, the heart of bodhichitta.

4 Bodhi Vows

Sentient beings are numberless,
I train in order to free them

Delusions are inexhaustible
I train in order to transform them

Reality is boundless
I train in order to realize it

The awakened way is unsurpassable,
I train in order to embody it

Short Dedication from Longchenpa

May the teachings of the Buddha spread and flourish
May all sentient beings be happy and joyful
May we practice the dharma day and night
May the benefits for self and others be fully accomplished

VajraSattva རྩོམ་སེམས་སྒྲོམ་ Longchen Nyingthig

Begin by reciting the Daily Prayers.

ཨུཾ བདག་ཉིད་ཐ་མལ་སྒྱི་བོ་རུཾ བད་དཀར་ཟླ་བའི་གདན་གྱི་དབུས་ལྷོ་ལས་ཟླ་མ་དོ་ཇེ་སེམས་ལྷོཾ

ah daknyi tamal chiwo ru / pekar dawé den gyi u / Hung le lama dorje sem

Ah. In my ordinary form. Above my head, on a white lotus, in the center of a moon disc seat, is the Hung syllable which becomes Vajrasattva

དཀར་གསལ་ལོངས་སྒྱུད་རྫོགས་པའི་སྐྱུ་དོ་ཇེ་དྲིལ་འདྲིན་སྒྲིམས་མ་འཁྲིལ་ཁྱོད་ལ་སྒྱབས་གསལ་ཕྱིག་པ་སྦྱངས་ལྷོཾ

karsal longcho dzokpe ku / dorje dril dzin nyemma tril / khyo la kyab sol dikpa jong

Brilliant white, with complete Sambhogakaya ornaments, He is holding vajra and bell, and embracing the consort Vajratopa. I take refuge in you and pray—purify all our negative actions!

འགྲོད་སེམས་དྲག་པོས་མཐོལ་ལོ་བཤགས་ལྷོཾ ཕྱིན་ཆད་སློག་ལ་བབས་ཀྱང་སྤོམ་ཁྱོད་ཐུགས་ཟླ་བ་རྒྱས་པའི་སྤོང་ལྷོཾ

gyosem drakpo tol lo shak / chinche sok la bab kyang dom / khyo tuk dawa gyepe teng /

With the deepest regret, I confess them all. From now on—even as my life force depends on it- I shall refrain from indulging in negative action again.

རྩྱུ་ཡིག་མཐའ་མར་སྒྲགས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱོར་བཟུངས་པ་སྒྲགས་ཀྱིས་རྒྱུད་བསྐྱལ་བསུལ་བ་ཡུམ་བདེ་རོལ་སྦྱོར་མཚམས་ནས་ལྷོཾ

hung yik tamar ngak kyi kor / depa ngak kyi gyu kulwe / yabyum de rol jortsam ne

In my heart, upon a full moon, is the letter hung encircled by the mantra. Reciting the mantra invokes my wisdom mind, and from the point of union of the blissful play of Vajrasattva and consort,

བདུད་ཅི་བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིན་ལྷོཾ ག་བྱར་རྩལ་ལྷར་འཛག་པ་ཡིས་ལྷོཾ བདག་དང་ཁམས་གསུམ་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་ལྷོཾ

dutsi changchub sem kyi trin / gabur dul tar dzakpa yi / dak dang kham sum semchen gyi /

A cloud of bodhicitta nectar, flows down like a shining stream of ambrosia. Through this, for me and all sentient beings of the three worlds,

ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་སྤྱུག་བསྐྱལ་རྒྱུ་ནད་གདོན་སྤིག་སྒྲིབ་ཉེས་ལྷུང་གི་བཟུམ་ལུས་བྱང་བར་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ་ལྷོཾ

nedon dikdrib nyetung drib / malu jangwar dze du sol/ le dang nyomong dukngal gyu/

Our negative karma and destructive emotions—the causes of suffering, illnesses, harmful influences, negative actions and obscurations, along with wrong doing, downfall, and blockage due to breakages of samaya are all purified, until not a single trace of it remains.

The 100 Syllable Mantra

ཨོ་བཙྰ་སཏྱ་ས་མ་ཡུལ་མ་རུ་སྤྱ་ལ་ཡུལ་བཙྰ་སཏྱ་རྟེ་པ་ཏིཐྱ་བྱི་ཞོ་མེ་གླ་མུ་ཏྱ་ཕྱི་མེ་གླ་མུ་
 མུ་པོ་ཕྱི་མེ་གླ་མུ་ཨ་རུ་རྟོ་མེ་གླ་མུ་སཙ་སི་རྟི་མེ་པ་ཡལྱེལ་སཙ་ཀམ་སུ་ཙ་མེལ་ཙི་ཏྱི་ཤེ་ཡིལ་
 ཀུ་རུ་རྩྱེལ་ཏ་ཏ་ཏ་ཏ་ཏེལ་གླ་ག་ལྷ་ནེལ་སཙ་ཏ་ཤ་ག་ཏ་བཙྰ་ལྷ་མེ་ལྷ་ལྷ་བཙྰ་གླ་མ་མ་རུ་ས་མ་ཡུལ་
 སཏྱ་ཞུལ་

om benza sato samaya | manupalaya | benza sato tenopa tishta dridho mé
 bhava | sutokhayo mé bhava | supokhayo mé bhava | anurakto mé bhava |
 sarva siddhi mé prayaccha | sarva karma su tsa mé | tsittam shreyang | kuru
 hung | ha ha ha ha ho | bhagavan | sarva tatagata benza ma mé muntsa benzi
 bhava maha samaya sato ah

(Repeat three times while ringing bell)

The Contemplation and Visualization During the Six Syllable Mantra

ཤྱེ་ཤེལ་ས་དཔའ་དབྱེས་བཞིན་འཇུམ་པ་དང་བཅས་པས་རིགས་ཀྱི་བྱ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཐིག་སྒྲིབ་ཉེས་ལུང་ཐམས་
 ཅད་དག་པ་ཡིན་ལོ།

shye jope dorje sempa gye shyin dzumpa dang chepe rik kyi bu khyo kyi dik drib nyetung
 tamche dakpa yin no/

Vajrasattva is pleased and smiling, says, “Child of an enlightened family, your negative actions, obscurations, wrong doing and downfalls are all purified.”

ཞེས་གནང་བ་བྱིན་ཞིང་འོད་དུ་ཁྱེན་ས་རང་ལ་ཐིམ་པའི་རྒྱུན་ལས་རང་ཉིད་ཀྱང་རྫོ་རྫོ་ཞེས་ཞེས་དཔའ་སྣང་སྟོ
 ང་མེ་ལོང་ནང་གི་གཟུགས་བརྟན་ལྟ་བུར་གྱུར་པའི་ཐུགས་སྟོན་རྩྱུ་གི་མཐའ་མར་ཡི་གེ་འབྲུ་བཞི་པོ་གསལ་
 བ་ལས་འོད་ཟེར་འཕྲོག་ལམས་གསུམ་སྟོན་བཅུད་དང་བཅས་པ་རྫོ་རྫོ་ཞེས་ཞེས་ལཱའི་རྟེན་དང་བརྟེན་པ་
 འི་རང་བཞིན་དུ་སངས་རྒྱས་པར་གྱུར།

shye nangwa jin shyin o du shyu ne rang la timpe kyen le / rangnyi kyang dorje sempa
 nangtong melong nang gi zuknyen tabur gyurpe tuk sok hung gi tamar yige dru shyipo salwa je
 ozer tro / kham sum nochu dang chepa dorsem rik nge ten dang tenpe rangshyin du sangye par
 gyur

Granting forgiveness, he melts into light and dissolves into me. Through this, I too become Vajrasattva, appearing yet empty, like a reflection in a mirror. At my heart is hung syllable around which the four brilliantly radiant syllables “om vajra sattva hung” emanate rays of light. Whereby the three worlds—the whole universe of the environment and beings within it—attain enlightenment all together as the buddha fields and buddhas of the five families of Vajrasattva.

The Six Syllable Mantra

ཨོ་བཙ་སཏྭ་ཧྱུྃ

om benza sato hung (Repeat 1008 or at least 108 times)

Vajrasattva Completion Prayer

དག་དང་མཐའ་ཡས་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ཡི་ནས་སངས་རྒྱས་ཡིན་པ་ལུང་

ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་པའི་དག་ཉིད་དྲུག་ཅུ་མཆོག་ཏུ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་དོ།

Dag dang taye semchen nam / Yene sangye yin pa la/
yin par shepay dag nyi du/ chang chub chog tu sem kye do

I and all sentient beings are already enlightened from the beginning. Fully knowing this is really so, I vow to help myself and all beings to realize it.

Vajrasattva English

Contemplating the Meaning of Nectar

Vajrasattva Meditation & Visualization Instructions in English
A summary of all her Lama's oral instructions given by Pema Khandro

(Begin by reciting the daily prayers. Then repeat the 100 syllable mantra three times while ringing the bell with the left hand)

The 100 Syllable Mantra

om benza sato samaya | manupalaya | benza sato tenopa tishta dridho mé
bhava | sutokhayo mé bhava | supokhayo mé bhava | anurakto mé bhava |
sarva siddhi mé prayaccha | sarva karma su tsa mé | tsittam shreyang | kuru
hung | ha ha ha ha ho | bhagavan | sarva tatagata benza ma mé muntsa benzi
bhava maha samaya sato ah

Recite Hung

"Hung" From the dimension of primordial purity and vast open space, arises a white Hung, white, clear transparent, shining like the sun, standing on top of a moon disc.



Vajrasattva Generation

Vajrasattva is the dynamic energy of emptiness-compassion, white Buddha of exalted spaciousness, boundless goodness, shining like a great star in the heavens. Vajrasattva appears on top of my crown. He is white like a snow mountain illuminated by the sun. Vividly apparent, intangible like a rainbow, the union of appearance and emptiness.

Consort Generation

Vajrasattva is entwined in non-dual union with his consort who holds the dakini's hook knife and skull cup. His right hand holds a vajra over his heart. His

left hand holds a bell and twines around his consort's body. In his heart is Kuntuzangpo and Kuntuzangmo in yabyum. He is the completely perfect peaceful radiance, filling the expanse of space with bright luminosity as bright as the snow on sun-lit mountains.

Purification

With Om Ah and Hung he is radiating light rays that completely purify me and all existence into Vajrasattva's pure dimension. A downpour of nectar rains down on my body, speech and mind, clearing all errors, mistakes, harmful actions, misdeeds and flaws into the dimension that is beyond dichotomies of pure and impure, good and bad. These light rays pour over me again and again washing away all stains, all karmic debts, all doubts and all fears. All limitations dissolve. I experience complete forgiveness and extend that forgiveness to all beings. My mind becomes soft and open, exposing the beautiful, superb, marvelous space of clear light that is my true nature.

Becoming Inseparable from Vajrasattva

Like water pouring into water, Vajrasattva and his consort's body, energy and speech melt into great bliss. Great bliss melts into light. This light is poured into my own body, speech and mind until all that remains of me is Vajrasattva, with the mantra spontaneously arising and re-arising again and again from my heart, the heart-mind of complete peace, absolute purity and total openness.

The Six Syllable Mantra

Om Benza Satto Hung (Recite 1008 or 108 times)

Dissolution and Completion

The whole universe of the environment and beings within it—attain enlightenment all together as the buddhafiels and buddhas of the five families of Vajrasattva.

Vajrasattva and consort dissolve into great bliss, this dissolves into luminous white hung, the white hung expands into space filling the entire universe as the great expanse.

Sit In Silent Meditation

Vajrasattva Completion Prayer

I and all sentient beings are already enlightened from the beginning. Fully knowing this is really so, I vow to help myself and all beings to realize it.

The Seven Line Song

ཧྲིཿ ཨོ་རྒྱན་ཡུལ་གྱི་ནུབ་བྱང་མཆོམས་ཀྱི།

hung, orgyen yul gyi nubjang tsam

Hung! In the north-west of the land of Oḍḍiyana

པཌ་གེ་སར་སྒོང་པོ་ལཱ།

pema gesar dongpo la

In the heart of a lotus flower

ཡ་མཚན་མཆོག་གི་དངོས་གྲུབ་བརྟེན་ཀྱི།

yatsen chok gi ngodrup nye

Endowed with the most marvelous attainments

པཌ་འབྱུང་གནས་ཞེས་སུ་གྲགས་ཀྱི།

pema jungne she su drag

You are renowned as the 'Lotus-born'

འཁོར་དུ་མཁའ་འགོ་མང་པོས་བསྐོར་ཀྱི།

khor du khandro mangpo kor

Surrounded by many hosts of dakinis

ཁྱེད་གྱི་རྗེས་སུ་བདག་བསྐྱབ་གྱི།

kay kyi jesu dak drub kyi

Following in your footsteps

བྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱབ་ཕྱིར་གཤེགས་སུ་གསོལ་ཀྱི།

jingyi lab chir shek su sol

I pray to you: Come, inspire me with your blessing!

གུ་པ་པཌ་སིདྲི་ཧྲིཿ

guru pema siddhi hung

guru pema siddhi hung

Vajra Guru Mantra

ཨོ་ཨུཙུཎི་བཙུ་རུ་པཎ་སིཊྭ་ཧུཙུཎི་

om ah hung benza guru pema siddhi hung

Yeshe Tsogyal Mantra

ཧུཙྱུ་ཆེ་སེ་མ་པད་རུ་གུ་བཙུ་ཧུཙྱུ་ཨུཙུཎི་

hung dhi sid ma pa ru gu jra va hung ah om

Mani Mantra

ཨོ་མ་ཎི་པཎེ་ཧུཙུཎི་

Om Mani Peme Hung

Tsok - The Short Feast Offering

From the Northern Treasures

རི་ཡི་ཁྲིཿ རྩི་ཨུ་ཧྲུཿ

Ram Yam Kham Om Ah Hung

("Ram Yam Kham" the syllables of Fire, wind, water, purifies and "Om Ah Hung" gives blessings and multiplies the offerings)

ངོ་པོ་སྟོང་པའི་ཚོགས་གཞོང་དུཿ རང་བཞིན་གསལ་བའི་ཚོགས་རྩིས་བཤམསཿ ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཀུན་ཁྱབ་བྱིན་ཆེན་པོཿ

Ngowo Tongpay Tsok Shong du / Rang zhin sel way tsok zay sham / Thug je kun khyab jin chen phob

On the offering plate of empty essence.

The offering feast of luminous nature is arranged

Shower down great blessings of all pervading compassion

མཚོག་གསུམ་ཅ་གསུམ་སྟུ་གསུམ་ལུཿ ཀུན་འདུས་ལྷ་མ་འདིར་བྱོན་ལུཿ བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཚོགས་མཚོད་བཞེསཿ

chog sum tsa sum ku sum la / kun du la ma dir jon la / de wa chen po tsok cho shey

Three jewels, three roots, deities of the three buddha bodies,

And the teacher who encompasses them all,

Come accept this feast offering of great bliss

ཉམས་ཆགས་ཉེས་ཚོགས་ཐོལ་ཞིང་བཤགསཿ འཁྱལ་སྤང་རྟོགས་ཚོགས་དབྱིངས་སུ་བསྐྱལཿ

ཀ་དག་རིག་པའི་ཁྲོང་དུ་བསྟུངསཿ

Nyam chag nay thsog thol zhing shag / Trul nang tog tsok ying su dral / Ka dag rig pay long du tab

I instantaneously confess all defilements and accumulated faults.

Appearances are already liberated in the gathering of realized space.

This is the way of primordially pure awareness as the vast expanse.

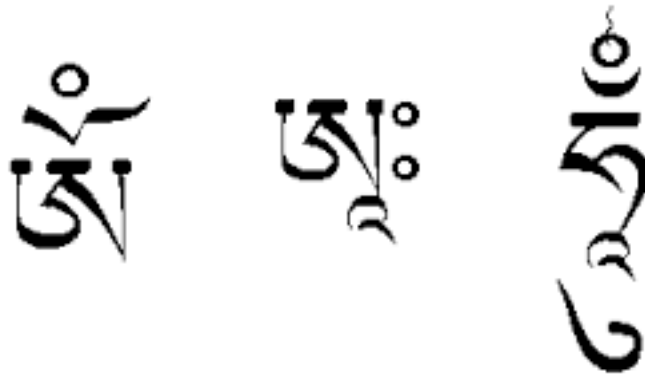
མགོན་བཞིའི་ཐུགས་དམ་བསྐྱང་གྱུར་ཅིགཿ ཚོགས་རྩིས་དོན་གཉིན་ལྷན་གྲུབ་ནསཿ སྟུ་བཞིའི་ཁྱལ་སྤང་གྱུར་ཐོབ་ཤིགཿ

don shi thug dam kang gyur chig / tsog dzog don nyin lun drup nay / ku zhi gyal si nyur tho thob shog

May the four guests' hearts delight be fulfilled! After having spontaneously accomplished the two accumulations and two purposes. May we quickly attain the kingdom of the four bodies!

The Very Short Feast Offering

Exhale and blow air onto your food. Visualize Om Ah and Hung syllables falling into your food. These transform the food into limitless nectar. This food multiplies and expands into a feast that satisfies every desire of all beings.



Refuge Prayer Without the Word Refuge

An explanation of the nine levels of refuge by Pema Khandro

(Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha)

I have found deliverance and hope due to the one who demonstrated the possibility of awakening – the Buddha;

I enjoy immeasurable wealth, basking in the sunlight that dispels all darkness – the teachings on the nature of reality;

I receive strength and shelter from the lineage of heroes and heroines, the Buddhists before me and around me, the ones who sustained the teachings, the ones who will never abandon sentient beings.

(Tantric Refuge – Refuge in the Lama Yidam and Khandro)

I rest into the support of all who have taught me, the masters of lineage and especially my kind root teacher who has guided me. I am empowered by the love, wisdom and hope my teachers ignited in me. I am rich due to the generosity of all teachers who gave me what is most precious to them, in order to help me meet the inner guide, pristine wakeful mind.

I am healed and uplifted by the wisdom beings who reveal the Buddha within me, exposing the constructed nature of my identity so that I can find my way home to indestructible authentic presence.

I lean into the unfailing help offered by the expressive dimension of phenomenon that communicates the radiance and vitality that is my own intrinsic nature.

(Inner Refuge – Refuge in the Tsa, Lung & Thigle)

I find comfort in the natural wisdom that courses through my body-mind, flowing through my channels.

I am refreshed and renewed by the pure wisdom energy that animates the currents of my heart-mind.

I am rescued by the ease and clarity found in the power centers which radiate an unrelenting impulse for awakening, the organizing principle of life.

(Secret Refuge)

I victoriously return to an unending source of intrinsic confidence found in the emptiness of complete openness, the luminosity of lucid presence and openhearted responsiveness of compassion.

The Five Precepts

Introduction by Pema Khandro

The five precepts are the foundational code of ethics that my students, the Buddhist Yogis Sangha members, train to live within. In Tibetan Buddhism, they are the code of ethics that Buddhist practitioners (Tib. dge bsnyen) follow after taking refuge. In Tibetan Buddhism, the five precepts are part of the first set of a series of vows known as the pratimoksa vows. These are later followed by bodhisattva vows and finally, the Vajrayana vows.

It is impossible to have a moral code that covers every possible situation. Ultimately the principles that we seek to live by are awareness, kindness, and reliance on innate intelligence. However, whenever awareness or intelligence is dim, rules and laws have to be relied upon more heavily. Ideally, by following rules, experience is channeled and developed in fruitful directions. From that perspective, by following the five precepts, Dzogchen's principle of intrinsic goodness can be more readily experienced.

Action, Karma and Creativity of the Ground

"In naturally occurring timeless awareness, the ultimate heart essence, there is no causality, so the abyss of samsara is crossed." - Longchenpa

The five vows suggest boundaries for right action. Generally, Buddhist theory of action is talked about in terms of karma. Karma is the idea that actions have results that ripen into future circumstances. It also includes the understanding that actions condition the mind in positive or negative ways. However in Dzogchen, another possible paradigm for action is posited. Karma is not the only active force in the universe, according to Dzogchen theory. The other source of action is said to be the ground of being. The ground of being is an expressive and responsive force that transcends karma. Since the ground of being is also an active, creative, volitional force, those actions which arise from buddha-nature are said to expose and express the nature of reality. This is what is known as "All-accomplishing wisdom," within the 'yeshe na,' (Tib. ye shes lnga), the five wisdoms.² Perhaps this is really referring to the action of highly-realized beings, buddhas and almost-buddhas. But, since every person has buddha-nature, it also refers to a possibility for spontaneous wisdom action. It is said to be spontaneous because it is not originating from karmic causes, but instead arises from the ground of being. Therefore it is naturally ethical.

¹ Rabjam, Abiding 5.

² These are the five wisdom energies of the ground of being. One of these is the activity of the ground of being, the notion that a spontaneous wisdom action is possible. These are the five wisdom energies of the ground of being. One of these is the activity of the ground of being, the notion that a spontaneous wisdom action is possible.

Are There Natural Ethics?

Dzogchen does not see reality as ethically neutral. It considers the ground of being to be ethical. From that point of view, vows are not imposed rules. They are descriptions of natural ethics. This is a concept that is difficult for me to fathom intellectually, but pragmatically it works out in a positive way. Whether the idea of natural ethics is ultimately true or not, simply assuming this perspective as a practice serves a particular function. It foregrounds ethics in terms of psychological identity. From this point of view, the five precepts as rules are not regarded as imposed rules. They are not regarded as being artificially-generated or contrived. Instead they may be seen as attempts to describe how the five pure wisdom energies of the ground of being could possibly appear in the social context. They describe the potential structure for action and interaction that is not clouded by the five poisons of the mind; not conditioned by karma and not originating from grasping at a fictive self.

Limitations & Contexts

Every description of the five precepts is a partial description. Our relationship to the five precepts evolves throughout our lives of practice. Their meaning is revealed as we put them into action. Every description of the five precepts is contextually-bound. In Vajrayana, the concept of the five certainties (Tib. nges pa lnga) explains this contextually bounded-ness of teachings. The five certainties framework appears at the beginning of Tantric literature to situate the teaching. At the beginning of these texts, the context of the teaching is described in five ways. This is because the five certainties are thought to be the elements that come together to make up the meaning behind a teaching. They are the time, teacher, audience, teaching, and place. In other words, every teaching is contextually-bound and contextually-specific. It is interdependent with the teacher, students, and situation. The implicit message behind the five certainties is that the teaching is not presented as a universal truth, independent from contexts. It is presented as a particular truth, a situated truth, a truth for a particular context. If we understand Vajrayana teachings this way, then it helps to make sense of the diversities of interpretation without having to resort to a dogmatic mindset.

Depending on different contexts, the five precepts are understood in different ways and in different times and places, even though they share the same five primary themes. For example, the vantage point of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen may influence how the precepts are presented. Furthermore, every Lama teaches them in a particular way. For example, even though the first precept is generally taught to be avoiding killing, most Tibetan Buddhists were not vegetarian. Yet, for some Lamas such as Chatral Rinpoche, vegetarian diet is the obvious implication of following the first precept. This diversity of interpretation explains why some particular themes appear in the precepts below yet are not stated explicitly in Tibetan literature.

Questions of Interpretation

Why were important themes left out of previous literature? The five precepts are somewhat vague in their delivery. The teaching on the 'avoiding sexual impurity,' could be interpreted in many ways. However great teachers in the past have done the work of offering their interpretations. When they did, they may have omitted themes that are

included in this presentation. Perhaps those themes were omitted due to cultural blind spots. Perhaps they were omitted because cultural forces were in place that made such statements unnecessary. Perhaps they were omitted because they were beyond the scope of Buddhist thought as it was previously formulated. The exposition of the precepts written below reflects the current circumstances for my teachings today.

For example, issues of gender and misogyny are made more explicit in this text than in mainstream Tibetan literature of the past. Explicitly including these issues could be considered somewhat innovative. Yet, at the same time, I would argue that it is not innovative in terms of the meaning of Buddhist teachings on emptiness, the ground of being and the five wisdoms. It is not innovative in relationship to literature such as the Vimalakirti Sutra, which argued against gender essentialism. Neither is it innovative for a Lama to respond to the needs of their students by giving teachings with particular details that are specific to their own shared context. Such a class of teachings even has a name – men ngak de, (Tib. man ngag sde). The men ngak instructions are a class of Dzogchen teachings. They refer to the pith instructions, similar to the heart advice of a Lama. Such advice aims to convey the lived meaning of Buddhist philosophy. Men ngak covers every Buddhist theme from the special point of view of the Lama's experience and teachings. Therefore, the innovations here are my own men ngak, my pith heart advice on the Five Precepts.

Matters Traditionally Mentioned in a Colophon

With these issues at heart, the following text was composed by me, Pema Khandro. It is based on the Five Precepts in my own experience, in teachings given to my own personal students within the unique world we find ourselves in. It is also based on the teaching of the ten actions to avoid. It is drawn from the Five Precepts texts that impacted me the most, which were from Longchenpa, the San Francisco Zen Center, Ngak'chang Rinpoche and Thich Nhat Hanh. If there is anything omitted or in error, I take full responsibility. I pray that the blessings of the lineage arise to fill in any gaps or correct any errors by working through the intelligence of my students and by working through their diligent study of other Buddhist sources.

The Five Precepts

“Understand that ethical discipline lies at the very root of the teachings. Harmful actions lead to the experience of lower realms. Without the observance of your vows, the foundation of your life will rot. Ethical discipline supports all of your positive qualities...It is the vehicle that will convey you to liberation. ”

- Longchenpa, from the Pith Instructions

1. Avoiding harming other beings
2. Avoiding taking what has not been given
3. Avoiding sexual misconduct
4. Avoiding false speech
5. Avoiding loss of awareness

1. Avoiding harming other beings

The Tibetan phrase is: སྤྱུག་གཅོད་པ་སྒོང་བ་ srog gcod pa song ba

“Do not cut the life force.”

Committed to non-aggression, I resolve to avoid harming others, to avoid injuring the body or mind of myself and others. I resolve conflicts and tensions with an attitude of openness and loving-kindness, acknowledging transgressions and seeking reconciliations. I base my dietary choices on compassionate intention. I resolve to relieve the suffering of beings wherever I see it and to make compassionate connections with everything everywhere.

2. Avoiding taking what has not been given

The Tibetan phrase is: མ་བྱིན་པར་ལེན་སྤོང་བ་ – ma byin par len spong ba

“Do not take what has not been given.”

I do not take what is not freely given. I exert to avoid depriving others through my presence in this world, to avoid exploitation of others and to avoid squandering resources. I avoid misusing my authority or status, and I respect the autonomy, needs and rights of others. I take responsibility to help when help is needed, whenever I have the capacity to assuage that need. I resolve to be a giver more than a taker. I commit myself to generosity.

3. Avoiding sexual misconduct

The Tibetan phrase is: འདྲོད་པས་ལྷོག་པར་གཡེམ་པ་སྤོང་བ་ 'dod pas log par g.yem pa spong ba

“Do not be sexually impure.”

I remain always in ecstatic embrace within the dakini or hero (Khandro and Pawo) by respecting the intrinsic equality of myself and others. I respect my intimate partner at all levels. I recognize that celibacy and non-celibacy have the same principle: to devote the body to liberation. Therefore, I commit to wielding my sexuality for the realized union of body, mind and emotions, and for the integrity of self, other, sangha and society. I

avoid sexual exploitation, manipulation, deception, discrimination, harassment, and objectification. I undermine misogyny by respecting marriage, relationships and sexuality. I respect the expression of the spectrum of genders within myself and others as it manifests according to each person's art of being. I disentangle sexual relationships from asymmetrical power relationships in order to undermine the patriarchal systems that have exploited women, girls, and other vulnerable and marginalized people for centuries.

4. Avoiding false speech

The Tibetan phrase is: བརྟན་དུ་སྟོང་བ་- brdzun du smra spong ba-

“Abandon false speech.”

I avoid taking refuge in the lie of dualism. Ever advancing toward less manipulative, self-protective, deceptive speech, I refrain from using my speech for rationalizing neurotic views and behavior. I refrain from all bigoted, sectarian, racist, sexist, judgmental, and arrogant speech that condemns others. I avoid harsh speech, gossip and useless chatter. I develop increasing capacity for deep listening and authentic communication. I respect confidentiality and respect the disclosures of others. I refrain from offering unsolicited advice. I recognize that withholding can be a misuse of speech. I speak up to prevent others from being harmed by racism, sexism and other forms of domination.

5. Avoiding loss of awareness

The Tibetan phrase is: མྱོས་པར་འགྱུར་བའི་བདུང་བ་སྟོང་བ་ - myos par 'gyur ba'i bdung ba spong ba –

“Abandon the demented state.”

I embrace the radical sobriety of the unaltered state and I give myself over to intoxicated appreciation of the phenomenal world. I avoid deliberate loss of awareness through substance use. I avoid mindless consumption of anything. I avoid spiritual delusions that put me out of touch with common sense, morality and shared experiences of conventional reality. I apply renunciation where necessary. I avoid what clouds my mind and adhere to diet, drinks and medicines which bring forth pristine presence, sanity, compassionate awareness for my body, mind, my family, my sangha, and my society.

Short Summary of the Five Precepts

སྤྲོག་གཙོད་པ་སྤང་བ – Do not cut the life force

Respecting Life:

- Precept: To avoid harming other beings whenever possible
- Meaning: To establish compassionate connections with everyone and everything everywhere

མ་བྱིན་པར་ལེན་སྤང་བ - Do not steal

Respecting Resources:

- Precept: To avoid stealing; to cultivate great acts of generosity.
- Meaning: To deprive others as little as possible through your presence in the world; do not take what is not given and avoid squandering your resources.

འདྲོད་པས་ལོག་པར་གཡེམ་པ་སྤང་བ- Do not be sexually impure

Respecting Relationships:

- Precept: To avoid sexual misconduct. To devote the body to liberation.
- Meaning: To devote the body to liberation of ourselves and others.

བརྗམས་དྲུ་སྤང་བ- Abandon false speech

Respecting Speech:

- Precept: To avoid lying and cultivate vigorous honesty.
- Meaning: To use speech in a way that relieves and prevents suffering.

ཚྭ་པར་འགྱུར་བའི་བདེང་བ་སྤང་བ - Abandon the demented state

Cultivating the Unaltered State:

- Precept: To refrain from deliberate loss of awareness and cultivate presence of awareness.
- Meaning: To cultivate the unaltered state.

How to Set up A Shrine Room



Simple Shrine Room

On the Shrine in Tiers starting from top to bottom

First Level: Image of Samantabhadra - on the shrine in the north or where you sit to meditate.

Second Level: The Seven Offering Bowls - on the shrine below the Samantabhadra

- filled with fresh water every day
- or filled according to the seven offering bowls (see below)

༡༣། ཁའ་དོན་མཐོང་མཐོང་བཞི་པེ་རྒྱུ་། དཀྱིལ་འཛེར་གྲུབ་སྤྱི་འབྲུང་ཕུན་སེམས་ཅོ།
མ་ཆེན་རབ་ལྗོངས་ཆུ་མཚོ་བརྟེན། །ཁྲུག་བཟང་ལལ་ལུ་མ་ལ་ལུ་ག་འཛེལ། །

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The homage for Samantabhadra for recitation when setting up the shrine is:

གདོད་མའི་མགོན་པོ་འོད་མི་འགྱུར།
དགྱིལ་འཁོར་ཀུན་གྱི་འབྱུང་གནས་གཙོ།
མཁྱེན་རབ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་མཆོ་བརྟེན།
ཀུན་ཟང་ཡལ་ཡུམ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།

gdod ma'i mgon po 'od mi 'gyur/
dkyil 'khor kun gyi 'byung gnas gtso/
mkhyen rab ye shes rgya mtsho brnyes/
kun zang yab yum la phyag 'tshal lo/

Do ma gon po o mingyur
Kyil kor kun gi jung nay so
Khen rab ye shay gya tso nay
Kun zang yab yum la chag tsal lo

Immutable protector, enduring light,
Principle source of the mandala of the phenomenal world,
Attainment of the ocean of the supreme wisdom presence,
I pay homage to the buddhas of total goodness

Set up for a more elaborate shrine:

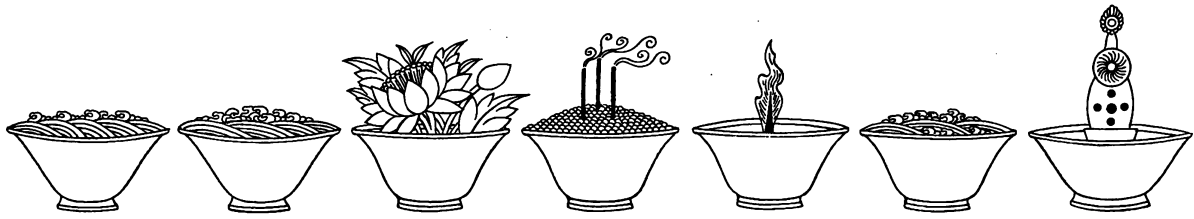
On the Shrine in tiers starting from top to bottom - on the shrine in the north or where you sit and face to meditate

- Level One: Image of Samantabhadra
- Level Two: other buddhas as per your own selection such as: Shakyamuni, Guru Rinpoche, Yeshe Tsogyal, White Tara, Prajnaparamita, Vajrasattva, VajraYogini
- Level Three: The Protectors are always below the buddhas: Ekajati, Dorje Legpa, Rahula, Vajrakilaya
- Level Four: The Seven Offering Bowls - on the shrine below the Samantabhadra
 - a. filled with fresh water every day or
 - b. filled according to the seven offering bowls below.

Also: Place a White Ah in a Thigle - in the East or the main wall you are facing during practice.

Place other thangkas and images - on the wall in the South or West, to the side of you when you are practicing.

Seven Offering Bowls



The Dzogchen style of the seven bowls:

Fill them all with water, replace with fresh water every day and fill them as full as possible.

The Tantric style of the Seven Bowls:

Seven bowls set out in a straight line, without touching, filled from one's left to one's right, pouring the water in a steady flow. If you know the White Tara Sadhana, recite this after setting them up. From left to right the bowls represent the following offerings:

1. Drinking Water (cool, sweet, light, soft... soothing)
2. Washing Water (for purification)
3. Flowers (including medicinal plants, fruits and grains)
4. Incense (including all natural fragrances)
5. Scented Water (includes perfume or a few drops of essential oil representing all perfumes)
6. Food (representing all that is delicious to taste)
7. Music (something that produces sound like conch shell or tiny bell)

(Optional - Butter lamp or candle here between 4 and 5)

Disposing of Offerings

When emptying out the water each day, throw it up in the air, not down, or place it high in a tree or tall bird feeder. Offerings are always disposed of upward.

When disposing of food offerings, you may eat them or place them high on a tree for hungry ghosts and animals to eat. Never throw them down since they are consecrated substances.

Long Life Prayer for Pema Khandro

འཆི་མེད་ཆེ་ཡི་ཨར་ཡ་ཏ་རེ་མ།
རིག་འཛིན་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་པད་མ་མཁའ་འགོ་ཡི།
སྟོན་བསགས་ལས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་སྟོན་པ་ཡི།
པད་མ་མཁའ་འགོ་ཞབས་པད་བརྟན་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Chime tse yi arya Tare ma
Rigdzin Namgyal Pema Khandro yi
Ngon sag leh kyi drehbu min pa yi
Pema Khandro shab pe ten gyur chig

To deathless, precious Tara
Victorious Awareness Holder's Pema Khandro

After having accomplished benefit to many beings in her previous life,
Pema Khandro has returned,

Pema Khandro, may your lotus feet ever remain, may there be long life for you
and may all your teachings flourish.

*This long-life prayer was written by Gyaldak Rinpoche and translated by his assistant,
Dhondup in 2013.*

Pema Khandro is a name of Vajrayogini in Tibetan Buddhism. Pema Khandro was a Dzogchen teacher in the early twentieth century in Eastern Tibet who was known both as an emanation of Vajrayogini and White Tara. Local villagers report having seen her manifest herself in the form of a Dakini with three eyes. She taught and practiced in the Nyingma and Kagyu lineages in Eastern Tibet. The current Pema Khandro Rinpoche was recognized and enthroned as the tulku (reincarnation) of the previous Pema Khandro. Rinpoche continues the legacy of Pema Khandro's teachings focusing on Dzogchen, Chod and the Six Yogas.

VajraSattva Image

