



## **Illuminating the Excellent Path to Omniscience** *Notes on the Longchen Nyingtik Ngöndro*

*by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo*

Homage to the Guru!

This is a guide to the stages of the daily practice of the Dzogchen Longchen Nyingtik Ngöndro.

To begin with, at dawn when it is time to get up, your root master appears in the sky before you in the form of Orgyen Dorje Chang. He is surrounded by hosts of dakas and dakinis, all playing *damaru* hand-drums which resonate with the sound of mantra, awakening you from your sleep.

As you rise, visualize your body in the form of the deity and your environment as a pure realm. Consider that the lama in your heart ascends the central channel to the space above the crown of your head, and remains there, joyfully.

Then, with your body in the correct posture, exhale the foul air nine times, and then rest for a short while, allowing your mind to settle in its natural state. When you are ready for meditation, practise the blessing of the speech as follows:

OM AH HUM

From the syllable RAM [in my speech centre] arises fire, consuming my tongue,  
Which is transformed into a three-spoked vajra of red light.

In its centre are the vowel and consonant mantras and around them the Essence  
of Interdependent Origination:

Their syllables are like strings of pearls. From them,

Light streams out making offerings to the buddhas and bodhisattvas and  
pleasing them;

As it converges back, all the obscurations of my speech are purified and

I obtain all the blessings and siddhis of vajra speech.

A A, I I, UU, RI RI, LI LI, E AI, O AU , ANG AH

KA KHA GA GHA NGA, CHA CHHA JA JHA NYA,  
TA THA DA DHA NA, TA THA DA DHA NA,  
PA PHA BA BHA MA, YA RA LA WA SHA SHA SA  
HA KSHA

Recite this mantra seven times, and then recite the following mantra seven times:

YÉ DHARMA HETU PRABHAWA HETUN TESHAN  
TATHAGATO HYAVADAT TESHAN TSA YO NIRODHA  
EWAM VADÉ MAHASHRAMANAH SOHA

If you wish, you can recite the following before *Calling the Lama from Afar*:

You are the one whose kindness  
Can bring great joy in an instant,  
Our lama in your jewel-like form,  
A vajra holder, at your feet we bow!

The lama is the Buddha,  
The lama is the Dharma,  
And the lama is the Sangha,  
The lama is the one who accomplishes everything –  
To your body, speech and mind, we bow!

All other guides have deserted us,  
And left us to face the precipice of the lower realms,  
To you, the great leader who shows  
The path to liberation, we bow down.

Not knowing what is true and what is not,  
Not knowing the right path from the wrong,  
We have wandered in the bleakest darkness –  
To you, who are our beacon of light, we offer praise.

Seeing your **body** transforms our whole perception,  
And even its remains, when you have passed beyond,  
Will still purify boundless ills, as the sutra says –  
To you, who benefit all you encounter, we prostrate.

By hearing your **speech** we know what to adopt and what to abandon,  
And so we are saved from the terrible abyss of wrongdoing,

It is the very essence of the truths of cessation and the path,  
To your voice which liberates whoever hears it, we offer praise.

We strive with effort, but still we are not liberated,  
Yet simply by directing your **mind**, we are spritually matured,  
And when we have devotion, realization is ours –  
To your non-conceptual and inconceivable mind, we bow down.

With great hardships over three countless ages  
We might overcome our senses, but still  
Find the vajra mind difficult to obtain,  
To you, who reveals it unerringly and directly, we prostrate.

From the *Lama Yangtik*:

O lama, precious and enlightened one,  
We have no one else to rely on but you,  
Look upon us with eyes of compassion  
And free us from this ocean of samsara.

Help us to accomplish all that is good in life,  
And avoid all that would hinder and obstruct us,  
Point out profound luminosity at the moment of death,  
And liberate us from the perils of the bardo states.

Ensure all that we do with body, speech or mind  
Always brings about benefit for others,  
And from this day forward, transform all adversity  
Into the supreme path of enlightenment.

In spite of our exertions, liberation is hard to find,  
O protector, on the ship of your compassion  
Carry us along with all those who lack protection,  
And lead us all to the island of liberation.

May all who have faith in me  
And all who slander and abuse me  
Be freed from evil and without afflictions,  
And may they leave the rivers of existence.

In time, may my very name be enough  
To fulfil the wishes of the world,  
And bring down rains of offering clouds  
In all the buddha realms of each direction.

Through this virtue, may all beings  
Be liberated from samsaric existence  
And, gaining the two sacred wisdoms,  
Spontaneously benefit both self and all others.

## THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

In the actual practice of the preliminaries there are the ordinary (outer) preliminaries and the extraordinary (inner) preliminaries.

### The Ordinary Preliminaries

There are six stages of contemplation in the ordinary preliminaries, all of which can be practised together. Reciting, “From the blossoming lotus of devotion at the centre of my heart...” etc., reflect as follows.

Essentially, there are eight freedoms, which are the opposites of the eight states where there is no chance of engaging in Dharma practice. Then, more particularly, there are ten endowments. Together, these eighteen freedoms and endowments characterize a precious human existence, which is of inconceivable benefit but also extremely rare, as the reflections on cause, analogies and numerical statistics prove.

You are now in possession of such a precious human body, but even this outer world, which appears so solid and so stable, will ultimately be destroyed by seven great fires and one great flood, leaving nothing behind, not even ashes. And as for the beings who inhabit this world, there has never been a single one who was born that did not die. So death will certainly come to you too, and there is no guarantee that it will not come tonight.

At the time of your death, nothing but the completely pure Dharma will be of any benefit; and once you have died, your future will be determined solely by your past actions.

As a result of harmful actions, you will be reborn in the three lower realms, where you must face the unendurable suffering of suffering. Even if you have accumulated imperfect positive actions<sup>1</sup> and are reborn in the three higher realms, there will still be no going beyond the suffering of change or the all-pervasive suffering of conditioned existence. So, you must do whatever is necessary right now in order to gain liberation from the great ocean of suffering that is samsara.

For this, you should rely on a qualified spiritual friend of the Mahayana, whom you should please in the three ways.<sup>2</sup> You should adopt or avoid whatever he or she instructs you to, and be careful not to fall under the influence of childish or negative friends.

Recognizing that the Dharma alone will benefit you at the moment of death and in the future, practise it as much as possible in the course of every single day.

In order to practise like this, consider that the lama and the Three Jewels care for you, and, generating a strong sense of renunciation, recite the following:

O lama, care for me!

Call out in ardent longing three times, and then continue:

From the blossoming lotus of devotion at the centre of my heart  
Rise up, O compassionate lama, my only refuge!  
I am plagued by past actions and turbulent emotions.  
To protect me in my misfortune,  
Remain as the jewel ornament on the crown of my head, the chakra of great bliss,  
Arousing all my mindfulness and awareness, I pray!

Being born in hell, preta or animal realms,  
Amidst long-living gods, in uncivilized lands, or with wrong views,  
In a world where a buddha has not come, or incapable of understanding:  
Now I am free from these eight states where there's no chance for Dharma  
practice.

Born a human being, with all my faculties intact, and in a central land,  
My lifestyle not harmful and wrong, and with faith in Buddha's teaching—  
All five "personal advantages" are complete. A buddha has come,  
He taught the Dharma, it has survived, I have embraced it, and  
A true spiritual friend has accepted me—I have the five "advantages due to  
circumstances."

Although in a position where I have every one of them,  
Once this life, so fraught with uncertainty, is relinquished,  
I will go on to yet another realm of existence—  
O Guru Rinpoche, turn my mind towards the practice—care for me!  
Omniscient masters, Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa, keep me from straying onto  
the wrong paths!  
Compassionate lama, you who are one with them—care for me!

If I do not seize the opportunity this present freedom offers,  
I will not find such a basis for attaining liberation later on.  
Once the merit that provided this happy existence is spent,  
After death I will wander as a being in the lower realms.  
Not knowing good from bad, I will never hear the sound of Dharma,  
Nor meet a spiritual friend—a terrible disaster!  
Only to think of the numbers and kinds of sentient beings  
Is to realise just how slim is the chance of gaining a human body;  
And even among human beings—to see how their behaviour is so harmful and  
contrary to Dharma,  
Is to realize that those who really act according to Dharma are as rare as stars in  
broad daylight.

O Guru Rinpoche, turn my mind towards the practice – care for me!  
Omniscient masters, Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa, keep me from straying onto  
the wrong paths!  
Compassionate lama, you who are one with them – care for me!

Even though I have reached this jewel island, the human body,  
A fickle and impetuous mind in such a promising basis  
Makes it no good as a foundation for attaining liberation.  
Especially when misled by corrupting influences, or with the five poisons raging  
inside,  
When negative karma overtakes me, or I am distracted by laziness,  
Like a slave – under someone else’s control, turning to Dharma simply out of  
insecurity or fear, or merely pretending to practise,  
Or chronically senseless and stupid. These are “the eight incidental  
circumstances that make Dharma impossible”:  
When they come upon me, menacing my Dharma practice,  
O Guru Rinpoche, turn my mind towards the practice--care for me!  
Omniscient masters, Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa, keep me from straying onto  
the wrong paths!  
Compassionate lama, you who are one with them--care for me!

With little renunciation, and without the jewel of devotion,  
Caught in the bonds of worldly ties and cravings, or with crude, degenerate  
behaviour,  
Never holding back from negative, harmful actions, and without the slightest  
real interest,  
With vows all broken, and samaya torn to shreds:  
These are the eight “impossible states where mind cuts us off from the Dharma”:  
When they come upon me, menacing my Dharma practice,  
O Guru Rinpoche, turn my mind towards the practice – care for me!  
Omniscient masters, Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa, keep me from straying onto  
the wrong paths!  
Compassionate lama, you who are one with them – care for me!

At this moment, I am not ravaged by sickness and pain,  
Nor am I a slave or such, under another’s control.  
So now that I have this perfect, auspicious quality of total independence,  
If I waste the freedom of this human life through my own indolence,  
No need to worry about companions, possessions, relatives and loved ones,  
When this body I hold so dear  
Is carried out alone from its bed to some desolate spot  
To be torn to pieces by foxes, vultures and dogs.  
Then, in the bardo realm there will be nothing but terror in store.  
O Guru Rinpoche, turn my mind towards the practice – care for me!  
Omniscient masters, Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa, keep me from straying onto

the wrong paths!

Compassionate lama, you who are one with them – care for me!

The results of beneficial and harmful actions will follow me.

If I am born in the hell realms:

On a floor of burning iron, head and body are hacked with weapons,  
Ripped apart with saws, and crushed with red-hot hammers,  
Trapped in a doorless iron cell, screaming out loud,  
Impaled on red-hot spikes or boiled in molten bronze, and  
Burned in a fire of the intensest heat – in the eight Hot Hells.  
On the crests of snow mountains, on precipices of ice,  
Terrifying places engulfed by squalls and blizzards of snow,  
My tender body, lashed by freezing winds,  
Breaks out in blisters, which burst open into festering sores,  
In a ceaseless wail of agonized screams  
And suffering, hard to even think about,  
Like a dying person whose strength is all gone,  
I let out deep gasps and groans, my teeth clenched. My skin cracks open,  
And the raw flesh exposed splits deeper, and yet again – in the eight Cold Hells.  
My feet are cut to ribbons in the “Plain of Razor Blades”,  
In the “Forest of Sword Blades” my body is gashed and chopped,  
I sink into the “Swamp of Putrefying Corpses”, and the “Pit of Hot Embers”, all  
in  
The “Neighbouring Hells” that ring the Hell of Ultimate Torment. And then the  
changing, uncertain hells:  
Born in a door, a pillar, a fireplace, a rope and the like,  
Always made use of and exploited in these “Ephemeral Hells”.  
When the cause of being born in any of the eighteen hells –  
Intense hatred and aggression – arises,  
O Guru Rinpoche, turn my mind towards the practice – care for me!  
Omniscient masters, Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa, keep me  
from straying onto the wrong paths!  
Compassionate lama, you who are one with them – care for me!

Likewise, in a grim and destitute realm

Where the words, “food”, “drink” or “comfort” have never even been heard,  
The pretas find nothing to eat or drink for months and years on end. Their bodies  
Are emaciated and they lack even the strength to stand. They suffer from three  
different kinds of obscurations, and  
The reason for being born as one is greed.  
In constant dread of being killed and eaten by one another,  
Exploited and worked until exhaustion, bewildered as to what to do or not to do,  
Animals are oppressed by limitless suffering,  
The seed of which is stubborn stupidity – when I wander into its darkness,



O Guru Rinpoche, turn my mind towards the practice – care for me!  
Omniscient masters, Longchenpa and Jikmé Lingpa, keep me from straying onto  
the wrong paths!  
Compassionate lama, you who are one with them – care for me!

Though I have entered the path of the Dharma, I haven't put a stop to my erring  
ways.  
Though I have entered the door of the Mahayana, I am devoid of any beneficial  
thought for others.  
Though I have received the four empowerments, I do not practise the  
development and completion phases of meditation.  
O lama, free me from straying from the path!

Though I have not realized the View, I act as if "a master of crazy wisdom".  
Though I am distracted in my Meditation, I let myself get stuck in mental gossip  
and concepts.  
Though it's my own Actions that are at fault, it's someone else I blame.  
O lama, free me from becoming so arrogant and opinionated, so stubborn and  
insensitive!

Though I may die tomorrow, I am full of craving for home, clothes and  
possessions.  
Though I am quite old, I'm not mature enough to have the slightest renunciation  
for samsara.  
Though I have truly heard only a little Dharma teaching, I pride myself on all my  
knowledge.  
O lama, free me from such ignorance!

Though I may be rushing into danger, I go Dharma-socialising in crowds and  
public places, thinking I'm on a pilgrimage.  
Though going on solitary retreats, my basic character remains as tough as a block  
of wood.  
Though appearing calm and speaking softly, I haven't got rid of the attachment  
and aversion boiling inside.  
O lama, free me from these eight worldly concerns!

Quickly rouse me from this deep sleep of ignorance!  
Quickly set me free from this dismal self-imprisonment!

## The Extraordinary Preliminaries

Secondly, there are the six sections of the extraordinary preliminaries.

The first of these is taking refuge.

### Taking Refuge

For this you should adopt the attitude of a great being, and consider that you are taking refuge in the master and the Three Jewels in order to liberate yourself and all other sentient beings from the terrible sufferings of samsara.

The whole area where you are sitting is a beautiful paradise, pleasing to the mind. Upon the bejewelled ground stands a wish-fulfilling tree with five main branches, adorned with abundant leaves, flowers and fruit, garlands of jewels, and small bells. It pervades the whole of space. In its centre, upon a jewelled throne supported by lions and seats of multi-coloured lotus, sun and moon, is the embodiment of all the buddhas—your own root master—in the form of Orgyen Dorje Chang (the Vajradhara of Oddiyana), blue in colour,<sup>3</sup> and holding vajra and bell. He is in union with his consort Yeshe Tsogyal, who is white and holding a hooked knife and skull-cup. They are adorned with silk and bone ornaments.

The Guru is seated in the vajra posture. Above his head are the masters of the Dzogchen lineage, seated one above the other. They are surrounded by the root and lineage masters, the yidam deities of the various mandalas associated with the six great classes of tantra, and an inconceivable number of dakas and dakinis of the three spheres.<sup>4</sup>

On the branch in front are Shakyamuni Buddha and all the other buddhas of the three times, in nirmanakaya form. On the branch to the right is the Mahayana sangha, including the Eight Close Sons. On the branch to the left are Shariputra and Maudgalyayana, and the assembly of the noble sangha of shravakas. On the branch at the back is the Jewel of the Dharma in the form of stacks of books, red in colour, from which the vowels and consonants resound by themselves.

In the space in between, there is a great ocean-like gathering of samaya bound guardians of wisdom and action that fill the whole area, without leaving any gaps.

Consider how all these deities have immeasurable qualities of wisdom, love and power, and are actually present as great guides who care for you and lead you along the path to enlightenment.

You are seated before them with your father on your right and your mother on your left. In front of you are all the beings who have ever caused you harm; and in the whole surrounding area are all the sentient beings of the six realms. You all show respect with

your body by folding your hands together; with your speech, you all chant resoundingly the verse for taking refuge; and with your mind, you think the following:

From now until we realize the heart of enlightenment, we take the master as our guide, the yidams and buddhas as our teachers; the Dharma as our path; and the dakinis, Dharma protectors and members of the sangha as companions along the way. We rely on you. We offer everything to you. We have no other refuge or hope but you. Whatever we do, take care of us.

With this thought of intense yearning, practise taking refuge:

In the Three Jewels, and their essence, the sugatas,  
In the three roots: lama, yidam and khandro,  
In the channels, inner air and tiklés, and their nature, the bodhichitta,  
In the mandala of essence, nature and compassion,  
I take refuge, until enlightenment is fully realized.

Practise taking refuge as many times as possible.

At the end, rays of light stream out from the hearts of the refuge deities. They enter your body and mind, and those of all other beings, and purify your emotional and cognitive obscurations and habitual patterns. Consider that your life span is extended, your merit increases, and your qualities of learning and realization develop further and further. Rest in meditation for a while in a state that is free from any mental grasping.

### **The Generation of Bodhichitta**

First train your mind in the four boundless qualities. Begin by generating **equanimity**, in which there is no attachment to your family and close friends or aversion for your enemies. This comes from considering how, in the course of time without beginning, among all sentient beings who are as limitless as space, those who have been your enemies have also been your friends, and those who have been close to you have at other times opposed you. Just as it was in the past, so too in the present and in the future, you can not really say who is a friend and who is an enemy. Then generate **love**, by considering how they have all been your very own kind mother and father, and wishing that they may find happiness in return for all the kindness they have shown you, and **compassion**, by wishing that they never suffer. Finally cultivate **sympathetic joy**, which is the elation you feel at the prospect that all beings remain constantly in this state of complete happiness, free from all suffering.

Next, take the objects of refuge as your witness and generate the bodhichitta of aspiration, by thinking:

So that all beings may be established in the enduring happiness of complete liberation, I will do whatever is necessary to ensure that I attain the precious

state of complete enlightenment.

Then develop the bodhichitta of application, thinking:

To that end, having trained in vast waves of bodhisattva practices, represented by this profound path, I shall apply myself with diligence until not even a single sentient being remains in samsara.

Not allowing your mind to stray from these reflections, recite the verses of generating bodhichitta:

Ho!  
Mesmerised by the sheer variety of perceptions, 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.

Recite this three times, or as many times as you can.

If you are unable to do all this as a regular practice, it is sufficient simply to generate the bodhichitta of aspiration and application.

Should you wish to practise more elaborately, you could, at this point, train your mind in equalizing or exchanging self and others. In particular, you could do the practice of *tonglen*, by sending out happiness as you breathe out, and receiving suffering as you breathe in.

Meditate as much as you can on absolute bodhichitta—the union of tranquillity (*shamatha*) and insight (*vipashyana*)—inspired by a certainty regarding the selflessness of individuals and of phenomena.

Finally, you and all sentient beings dissolve into the objects of refuge, who then dissolve into the master in the centre. In turn, he dissolves into the primordial expanse of dharmakaya simplicity, and you rest in meditation.

### **Vajrasattva Purification**

Thirdly, there is the meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva.

Whilst reciting, “Ah! I am in my ordinary form: above my head...etc.” visualize the following.

You remain in your ordinary form. On the crown of your head is an eight-petalled lotus, with a stem of approximately four finger-widths inserted into your "aperture of Brahma". At its centre is a white full moon disc (as wide as the flower's orange anthers), upon which stands a white syllable HUNG.

In an instant, the HUNG transforms into the Lama Vajrasattva, his body brilliant white and emanating rays of light. He is smiling and complete with all the major and minor marks.

The five silken garments adorn his body: a white silk upper garment, a multi-coloured lower garment, crown pendants, a blue silk scarf which hangs down from the back of his crown, and "dancing sleeves" like those seen in some old paintings. He is also adorned with the eight jewel ornaments: the jewel crown, earrings, short necklace, bracelets, anklets, waistband, a long necklace which extends below the navel, and a shorter necklace which extends to his breast.

With his right hand he holds a vajra at his heart. His left hand holds a bell at his hip. He is in union with the consort Vajratopa, who is white and holds a knife and skull-cup. They are both seated, he with his feet in vajra posture and she with her feet in lotus posture.

Once you have visualized their forms in this way, with intense yearning and devotion, think, "Purify all the harmful actions and obscurations in my mindstream! Take care of me!" This forms the power of support. Feeling intense regret and remorse for the harmful deeds you have committed in the past is the power of regret. Pledging that from this moment on you will not repeat them, even at the cost of your life, is the power of resolution.

As a remedy for what you have done in the past, visualize a moon disc in Vajrasattva's heart, and in its centre a syllable HUNG, encircled by a string of white letters that form the hundred syllable mantra. The letters turn clockwise, and are as fine as if drawn with a single hair. Recite the mantra for a little while as if you were reading it.

The white nectar of great bliss begins to flow from the mantra garland, accompanied by rays of light. An immeasurable quantity of nectar flows through the bodies of the yab-yum deities, emerging from the point of their union, and then, winding around the stem of the lotus, it enters your body through the Brahma aperture.

Like the filth and dirt expelled by the powerful surge of a great flood, all your illnesses (as pus and blood), all harmful forces (as insects), and all your harmful deeds and obscurations (as sweat, soot and steam) gush out through the pores of your skin and your two lower orifices. It all flows into the wide open mouth of the Lord of Death, who resides nine levels below the earth's surface, appears in the form of a red bull. As it reaches his stomach, consider that untimely death has been averted.

Reciting the hundred syllable mantra – at best, as many times as you can; or, in an average case, a hundred times; or twenty-one times at the very least – is the power of action as an antidote. With all four powers complete, recite the following:

Ah!

I am in my ordinary form. Above my head  
On a white lotus, in the centre of a moon disc seat  
Is HUNG, which becomes the Lama Vajrasattva:  
Brilliant white, with complete sambhogakaya adornments,  
Holding vajra and bell, and embracing the consort Vajratopa.  
I take refuge in you and pray – purify all our negative actions!  
With the deepest regret I acknowledge them all and ask your forgiveness:  
From now on – even if my life is at stake – I shall refrain from indulging in them  
again.

In your heart, upon a full moon  
Is the letter HUNG, encircled by the mantra.  
Reciting the mantra invokes your wisdom mind, and  
From the point of union of the blissful play of yab-yum  
A cloud of bodhichitta nectar  
Flows down like a shining stream of milk. Through this,  
For me and all sentient beings of the three worlds  
May our negative karma and destructive emotions – the causes of suffering –  
Illnesses, harmful influences, negative actions and obscurations, along with  
wrong doing, downfalls, and blockages due to breakages of samaya,  
Be purified, till not a single one remains!

OM  
VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA  
MANUPALAYA VAJRASATTVA  
TENOPA TISHTHA DRIDHO ME BHAWA  
SUTOKHAYO ME BHAWA  
SUPOKHAYO ME BHAWA  
ANURAKTO ME BHAWA  
SARWA SIDDHI ME PRAYACCHA  
SARWA KARMA SU TSA ME  
TSITTAM SHREYANG KURU  
HUNG  
HA HA HA HA  
HO  
BHAGAWAN SARWA TATHAGATA  
VAJRA MA ME MUNCA  
VAJRI BHAWA  
MAHA SAMAYASATTVA  
AH

Once you have practised this, recite:

O protector! In my ignorance and delusion  
I have gone against and corrupted my samaya  
Lama protector, be my refuge!  
Chief of all the mandalas, vajra holder,  
Embodiment of great compassion:  
Chief of all living beings, in you I take refuge!

I confess all my impairments of the root and branch samayas of the body, speech and mind.

I implore you: let my negative actions, obscurations, wrongs and downfalls – all my flaws – be completely cleansed and purified!

Lama Vajrasattva is pleased by your request for protection and the purification of your harmful deeds and transgressions. He has a smiling and happy expression as he grants his approval, saying, “Son/daughter of an enlightened family, your negative actions, obscurations, wrongdoing and downfalls *are* all purified.” With this, he melts into light, which is, in essence, great bliss and emptiness.

Then, he dissolves into you, and you are instantly transformed into Vajrasattva in union with his consort, with the same form, colour, hand implements and clothing as before – completely perfect, appearing yet empty, like a reflection in a mirror. At his heart, in the centre of a moon disc, is the seed syllable HUNG, surrounded in the four directions by the syllables OM, VAJRA, SA and TVA, from which emanate countless rays of white light. They make offerings to all the noble ones, whose blessings and accomplishments dissolve back into you. And then, shining out once more, the rays of light purify the harmful actions and obscurations of all beings.

The environment is transformed into the realm of Akanishtha-Abhirati, and its inhabitants – all the beings of the three realms – become Vajrasattvas of the five families. Consider that they are all reciting the mantra together with you.

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

Granting his 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, around which the four brilliantly radiant syllables: OM VAJRA SA TVA 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.

Reciting the heart mantra OM VAJRA SATTVA HUNG as many times as possible purifies obscurations by means of the special development stage (*kyérim*).

Finally, when all thoughts of deity or mantra have dissolved into the state of natural luminosity, rest in the state of awareness and emptiness, in which all concepts of “something to be purified” or “something that purifies” are primordially lacking in true existence. This is known as looking into the face of the ultimate Vajrasattva, and it is the unsurpassed method for purifying obscurations based on the ultimate perfection stage (*dzogrim*).

### **The Mandala Offering**

Fourthly, there is the mandala offering. Visualize the field of merit in the sky before you, as in the refuge practice.

On a clean mandala plate made from precious metal or some other material, and anointed with scented water and *bajung*,<sup>5</sup> arrange thirty-seven or seven piles of flowers. Alternatively, if you are not doing this as a daily practice, it is sufficient simply to visualize.

Whichever way you do it, begin by offering the ordinary nirmanakaya mandala of a billion-fold universe made up of a thousand million worlds, each consisting of four continents, Mount Meru and the realms of the gods, and completely filled with abundant riches of the environment and of its inhabitants. Offer especially your body, possessions and the merit you have accumulated.

In the space above, infinite clouds of offering arise as the display of kayas and wisdoms in the realm of Akanishtha-Ghanavyuha. This is the extraordinary sambhogakaya mandala.

In the sphere above that, on the primordially unarisen ground of the special dharmakaya mandala, arrange piles representing “awareness reaching full maturity”<sup>6</sup>, the appearance aspect of unceasing luminosity.

Offer all this, considering that inside every atom there are many more pure realms, as numerous as all the atoms in the universe, and also with the knowledge that the inconceivable nature of reality permeates everything.

With yearning devotion, pray as follows:

Together with all sentient beings, may I complete the accumulations of merit and wisdom, purify my emotional and cognitive obscurations, develop the qualities



of experience and realization in my mindstream, and ultimately enjoy infinite realms of the three kayas.

With this thought of intense devotion, recite the following verses:

One billion universes--a hundred times ten million worlds,  
Filled with all the wealth of gods and human beings, like the “seven precious gems”,  
My bodies, my possessions, and my sources of merit, all together, I offer them in their entirety, so that  
I may be born as a nirmanakaya and turn the wheel of Dharma, liberating all beings!

The highest heaven of great bliss, the realm of “Tukpo Köpa”,  
Perfect with the five certainties and the mandala of the five buddha families, and  
Inconceivably vast clouds of offerings of every variety of sensual and emotional stimulants—  
With this offering, may we enjoy the perfection of the sambhogakaya fields!

Where all appearance and existence are completely pure from the very beginning— the youthful vase body,  
Ornamented by the play of dharmata, unceasing compassion,  
The realm where all clinging to the perception of kayas and tiklés is naturally liberated—  
With this wisdom offering, may we enjoy the freedom of the dharmakaya reality!

### **Accumulation of the Kusali: Chö**

Fifthly, there is Accumulation of the Kusali. In an instant, visualize the field of merit as before, and below it all the sentient beings of the six realms, led by those who have harmed you.

Whilst reciting “PHAT! By abandoning all attachment to this body held so dear, the demonic forces of seduction through desire are destroyed...etc.” visualize the following.

Abandoning the attachment that causes you to cherish your own body with an attitude of clinging, visualize the essence of your consciousness in the form of a white drop the size of a pea, which shoots out through the crown of your head, and is transformed into the wisdom dakini black Tröma (Krodhikali). She is adorned with silk and five bone ornaments. A sow’s head protrudes from her crown, and her right hand waves a hooked knife through the air, slicing the skull off your old, abandoned body at the level of the eyebrows. The skull grows as large as the billion-fold universe and is placed upon a hearth made from three skulls, each the size of Mount Meru. The remainder of your body is then cut into pieces and placed inside the skull-cup.

Below it is the vertical stroke of a letter A, from which the fire of wisdom now starts to blaze. Above it is a white syllable HAM, turned upside down, from which nectar begins to flow down into the skull-cup, melting and boiling its contents.

Reciting OM *purifies* the contents of the skull-cup, expelling any impurities in the form of purple steam. AH *multiplies* the pure contents, producing an unimaginable quantity of wisdom nectar. Through HUNG, the wisdom nectar maintains its essence, but is *transformed* into great clouds of sky-treasury wheels that arise as whatever is desirable or enjoyable. Repeat the three syllables OM AH HUNG many times.

Then, from your heart emanate innumerable offering goddesses who offer the first portion to the deities of the field of merit, bringing them immaculate bliss and satisfaction. Together with all sentient beings, you complete the two accumulations, purify the two obscurations and receive the two kinds of accomplishment (*siddhi*).

The leftovers are then given to the beings of the six realms. The assembled harm-doers, in particular, receive their share as heaps of flesh, blood and bones, and whatever they desire. Because they enjoy what you offer them, your karmic debts are eliminated, and their malevolent and vindictive natures are pacified. Your body becomes an immaculate rainbow body, and your mind finds rest, free of concept, in the dharmakaya.

At the end, all notions of subject and object represented by the offering, recipients of the offering and so on, are purified into the expanse of the luminous Great Perfection, the fundamental state of the mind that lacks any inherent existence. Rest in this natural and uncontrived state, free from the marks of the three conceptual spheres (of subject, object and action).

PHAT

By abandoning all attachment to this body held so dear, the demonic forces of seduction through desire are destroyed.

My consciousness shoots out through the aperture of Brahma into all-pervading space, uniting rigpa with space,

Destroys the demonic force of death and transforms into Tröma:

In her right hand, the hooked knife that symbolizes destruction of the demonic force of conflicting emotions.

Slicing the top off my corpse's skull, she destroys the demonic force of the aggregates of ego.

Her left hand holds the skull-cup to carry out her activity,

Places it on the fireplace of three human heads – representing the three kayas;

Inside it is the corpse, now an offering as vast as a billion worlds,

Melted into nectar by an "A stroke" and HAM,

Purified, multiplied and transformed through the power of OM AH HUNG

OM AH HUNG

Once this mantra has been recited countless times, continue with:

PHAT

The guests above – the root and lineage lamas and yidams – by my offering are pleased,

Whereby merit and wisdom are accumulated, and ordinary and supreme siddhis attained.

The guests below, belonging to samsara, are satisfied by my offering; karmic debts are repaid.

In particular, by satisfying malicious and negative forces,

All illnesses, destructive influences and obstacles are pacified, dissolving into all-pervading space;

Harmful circumstances and clinging to self are exploded.

Finally offering, offerer and guests – all

Dissolve into the nature of Dzogpachenpo, the great simplicity: AH

## **Guru Yoga**

### *Visualization*

Firstly, there is the visualization of the objects of refuge. As you recite the verses beginning, “Emaho! My entire perception, spontaneously perfect...etc.” visualize the following.

Wherever space pervades, perception pervades, and the entire extent of your perception is a pure realm. As the ordinary way you perceive dissolves into space, the paradise of infinite purity arises by itself, spontaneously perfect, as the great Akanishtha Palace of Lotus Light, manifestly sublime in its design, ornamentation and limitless structure.

You are at its centre. In essence, you are Yeshe Tsogyal, but you appear in the form of Vajrayogini, red in colour, with her right hand holding a hooked knife, and her left a skull-cup filled with blood. In the crook of her left arm she holds a khatvanga trident. She is standing upon a lotus, sun and corpse, with her right leg extended and the left slightly bent. She is adorned with silk and bone ornaments and gazes longingly, with her three eyes, at her master’s heart.

In the sky before you, level with the top of your head, is a multi-coloured lotus with a hundred thousand petals. Seated there, upon sun and moon discs as wide as the anthers of the lotus, is your own root master, the embodiment of all objects of refuge. He appears in the form of Orgyen Tsokyé Dorje (the Lake-born Vajra of Oddiyana), white with a tinge of red, and as youthful as an eight year old boy.

His two eyes are wide open in a piercing gaze. On his body he wears a white vajra undergarment and, on top of this, in layers, a red robe, a dark blue mantrayana tunic, a red monastic shawl decorated with a golden flower pattern, and a maroon cloak of silk brocade. He has one face and two hands. In his right hand, he holds a five-pronged

vajra at his heart; and in his left, which rests in the gesture of equanimity, he holds a skull-cup in the centre of which is a vase of longevity filled with the nectar of deathless wisdom. Cradled in his left arm is a three-pointed khatvanga representing the consort Mandarava. On his head, he wears a five-petalled lotus hat. Wrathful and smiling, he blazes magnificently with the splendour of the major and minor marks. He is seated with his two feet in the royal posture.

He is completely surrounded by a rainbow sphere and a lattice of five-coloured rays of light, in and out of which swirl orbs of rainbow light. Then, arising as the display of your root master's wisdom mind are the eight vidyadharas of India, the eighty-four lords of yogins, the mahasiddhas of Tibet such as the twenty-five disciples, and many more. There are those on the level of vidyadhara, siddha and pandita from India and Tibet. There are infinite peaceful and wrathful yidams associated with the six great classes of tantra, and an assembly of dakas and dakinis of the three abodes, Dharma protectors, guardians, wealth deities and treasure masters. Together they appear like billowing clouds; all of them uniting luminosity and emptiness like the moon's reflection in water, or a rainbow. Visualize them in such a way that your ordinary perception ceases automatically.

Emaho!

My entire perception, spontaneously perfect, is a realm of infinite purity,  
The Glorious Copper Coloured Mountain, arrayed in complete and perfect detail.  
Here, in its very centre,  
My own body is Vajrayogini,  
With one face and two hands, brilliant red and holding hooked knife and skull,  
My two feet gracefully poised, my three eyes gazing into the sky.  
Above my head, on a blossoming hundred thousand-petalled lotus, sun and  
moon disc seat,  
Inseparable from my own root master, embodiment of all sources of refuge,  
appears  
Guru Rinpoche, in the supreme nirmanakaya form of the "Lake-born Vajra".  
His body glows with youth, white with a tinge of red,  
He wears a gown, monastic shawl, cloak and robe,  
With one face, two hands and seated in royal poise.  
In his right hand he holds the vajra, in his left a skull-cup  
containing the vase of immortality,  
On his head he wears a five-petalled lotus hat,  
Cradled in his left arm he holds the "supreme consort" of  
bliss and emptiness,  
Concealed as the three-pointed khatvanga trident.  
He presides amidst a shimmering aura of rays and rings of rainbow light.  
All around him, enveloped in a beautiful lattice of white, blue, yellow, red and  
green light,  
Are King Trisong Detsen, the twenty-five disciples,  
The pandits, siddhas and vidyadharas of India and Tibet, yidam deities,

Dakinis, and dharmapalas and protectors who keep the samaya – all gather like billowing clouds,  
Visualised vivid and distinct, in the great equality of clarity and emptiness.

Having visualized this clearly, recite:

Hung!  
In the north-west of the land of Oddiyana,  
In the heart of a lotus flower,  
Endowed with the most marvellous attainments,  
You are renowned as the “Lotus Born”,  
Surrounded by hosts of dakinis.  
Following in your footsteps,  
I pray to you: Come, inspire me with your blessing!  
GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG

As you invoke the deities with the seven-line prayer, feeling an intense yearning and devotion, Orgyen Pema Thötreng and an ocean-like assembly of victorious deities of the three roots arrive from the nirmanakaya realm of the glorious mountain in Ngayab Ling to the south-west. They descend like a great mass of sesame seeds that have just burst from their pod, and merge inseparably with the samayasattvas.

### *The Seven Branch Practice*

Secondly, there is the seven branch practice.

Mentally create hundreds, thousands, and eventually countless, emanations of your own body, and then offer prostrations together with all the beings of the three worlds, expressing tremendous respect through your body, speech and mind.

Offer actual, prepared offerings, as well as those created in your own imagination, which you can imagine sending out, until they fill the whole of space, like the clouds of offering of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

Confess, with intense regret and remorse, all the harmful acts and transgressions that you have accumulated with body, speech or mind throughout your infinite lives in samsara. Consider that they gather together into a black heap on your tongue. Confess them, and vow not to commit them ever again. Then, as an antidote, rays of light shine out from the enlightened body, speech and mind of the deities in the field of merit, strike the pile, and purify it like a stain that is washed clean away.

Rejoice, without the slightest feeling of envy or jealousy, in all the absolute and relative sources of virtue of samsara, nirvana or the path. Implore the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions to turn the Dharma-wheel of the three yantras of the shravakas, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas. Pray and request that they do not pass into nirvana until samsara is empty. Dedicate all the causes of virtue accumulated throughout the

past, present and future, represented by the virtue gathered through this practice, as the cause of all beings attaining enlightenment.

Keeping the meditations for these seven branches in mind, perform prostrations and recite:

Hrih!  
As many times as there are atoms in the universe,  
I multiply my body and offer you prostrations.

With both real offerings and those created in the mind through the power of samadhi,  
I offer the entire universe in one vast "gesture of offering".

All the harmful actions of my body, speech and mind,  
I confess and purify in the luminosity of dharmakaya.

Whether they be relative or absolute,  
I rejoice in all positive, virtuous actions.

According to the receptivity and needs of different beings,  
I implore you to turn the wheel of Dharma of the three yantras.

Till samsara is completely empty, and all beings liberated,  
Do not pass into nirvana, but remain here among us, I pray.

All the merit and positive actions of past, present and future,  
I dedicate so that all beings may attain supreme enlightenment.

Thirdly, there is the section of prayer and receiving empowerment.

The attainment of liberation and omniscience depends upon the realization of co-emergent wisdom within your own mind; such a realization is dependent upon the blessing of the master; and whether or not you receive his blessings depends entirely upon creating the auspicious circumstances by the power of your devotion.

Come to the firm decision that your own root master has exactly the same enlightened qualities as the Buddha, and yet he is even greater than the Buddha in terms of the kindness he shows you. Generate this kind of conviction.

Then, focusing your entire mind, heart and soul upon the master, and placing all your trust in him or her, think:

From now until I attain enlightenment, in happiness or sorrow, in circumstances good or bad, in situations high or low, I rely on you completely! You know me!

Practise with an intense yearning and devotion that affects you physically and mentally: the hairs on your body stand on end, tears stream from your eyes, and your mind is so captivated by the master that you can think of nothing else.

O Guru Rinpoche, Precious One,  
You are the embodiment of  
The compassion and blessing of all the buddhas,  
The only protector of beings.  
My body, my possessions, my heart and soul  
Without hesitation, I surrender to you!  
From now until I attain enlightenment,  
In happiness or sorrow, in circumstances good or bad, in situations high or low:  
I rely on you completely, O Pemajungné, you know me!

OM AH HUNG VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG

Recite the mantra as many times as possible, and then recite:

I have no one else to turn to;  
In these evil times, the beings of the Kaliyuga  
Are sinking in a swamp of intense and unbearable suffering.  
Free us from all this, O great Guru !  
Grant us the four empowerments, O blessed one !  
Direct your realization into our minds, O compassionate one !  
Purify our emotional and cognitive obscurations, O powerful one!

When my life is at an end,  
With my entire perception the heaven of Ngayab Ling--the Glorious Copper  
Coloured Mountain,  
The nirmanakaya pure land of indivisible appearance and emptiness--  
My body, Vajrayogini,  
Is transformed into a radiant, shimmering sphere of light  
And merging, inseparable, with Padmasambhava,  
I shall attain buddhahood.  
Then, from the play of vast primordial wisdom,  
Which is the miraculous manifestation of bliss and emptiness,  
For every single being in the three realms,  
Let me appear as their true guide, to lead them to liberation—  
Jetsün Padma, grant this, I pray!

I pray to you from the bottom of my heart,  
It's not just words or empty mouthings:  
Grant your blessings from the depth of your wisdom mind,  
And cause all my good aspirations to be fulfilled, I pray !

Recite these verses several times and then practise the yoga of prayer and invocation, by saying the mantra OM AH HUNG VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG, as you bring to mind its meaning.

It begins with OM AH HUNG, which are the seed syllables of the three vajras (of body, speech and mind).

VAJRA signifies the dharmakaya since [like the adamant vajra] it cannot be “cut” or destroyed by the elaborations of conceptual thought.

GURU signifies the sambhogakaya, which is “heavily” laden with the qualities of the seven aspects of union.<sup>7</sup>

PADMA signifies the nirmanakaya, the radiant awareness of the wisdom of discernment arising as the lotus family of enlightened speech.

Remembering the qualities of the great Guru of Oddiyana, who is inseparable from these three kayas, pray with the continuous devotion that is the intrinsic display of the nature of mind, free from the elaboration of conceptual thought.

All the supreme and ordinary accomplishments – SIDDHI – are obtained through the power of this prayer, and by thinking, “HUNG! May they be bestowed upon my mindstream, this very instant!”

Apply yourself to the mantra recitation, while recognizing your environment as the Palace of the Glorious Copper Coloured Mountain, and all beings within it as the Oddiyana Guru and the assembly of dakas and dakinis. Remember that all sound is the spontaneous sound of the mantra, and that, secretly, the movements of mind liberate themselves, without leaving any trace behind, just like the path of a bird in flight. At the end, recite the lineage prayer, while bringing to mind the wonderful qualities of the root and lineage masters.

Emaho!

In the heavenly realm, free from all dimensions and extremes,  
Is the Primordial Buddha, the dharmakaya Samantabhadra;  
His wisdom-play, like the reflection of the moon in water, the  
sambhogakaya Vajrasattva;  
Perfect with all buddha-qualities, nirmanakaya Garab Dorje:  
To you I pray: Grant me your blessings and empowerment!

Shri Singha, treasure of the ultimate Dharma;  
Manjushrimitra, universal ruler of the Nine Yanas;  
Jnanasutra, great pandita Vimalamitra:  
To you I pray: Show me the way to make my mind free!



Padmasambhava, sole ornament of this world of ours,  
Your supreme heart-disciples, Trisong Detsen,  
Vairochana, and Yeshé Tsogyal;  
Longchenpa, who revealed the symbols of a vast ocean of wisdom mind  
treasures;  
Jikmé Lingpa, entrusted with the space treasury of the dakinis:  
To you I pray: Grant me liberation and fruition!

Through true renunciation and disgust for samsara,  
May I rely upon my vajra lama meaningfully, as though he were my very eyes,  
Following his instructions to the letter, and taking to heart the profound practices  
he gives,  
Not just now and then, but with diligent and constant application,  
May I become worthy of the transmission of his profound wisdom mind!

Since all that appears and exists, samsara and nirvana, from the very beginning is  
the Akanishtha pure realm of the buddhas,  
Where all appearance is liberated into perfect buddha forms;  
all sounds are purified into mantra; all thoughts are matured into dharmakaya;  
And since Dzogpachenpo is *free* of any effort of abandoning and adopting,  
And since rigpa's self-radiance is *beyond* thoughts and experience,  
May I see the naked reality of dharmata!

May all ordinary clinging to reality be totally liberated into rainbow light,  
And the experiences of kayas and tiklés increase!  
May rigpa's strength be enhanced, maturing into the fullness of sambhogakaya  
perfection!  
As all perception of phenomenal reality wears out, and the  
conceptual mind dies into the state of total enlightenment,  
May I gain the stronghold of the youthful vase body, free from birth and death!  
But if I am not able to master the practice of the great Atiyoga in this life,  
And this gross physical body is not liberated into the pure space of the rainbow  
body,  
Then when the constituents that form this life fall apart –  
At the moment of death may the ground luminosity arise as the dharmakaya,  
pure from the beginning;  
May appearances of the bardo experience be liberated into  
sambhogakaya forms;  
And, perfecting the path of trekchö and tögal,  
May I be liberated, as naturally as a child running into its mother's lap!

In this great secret mantrayana path of luminosity – Dzogpachenpo – the summit  
of all,  
Enlightenment is to be sought nowhere but in the face of the dharmakaya.

If I am not liberated into the primordial state by actualizing this,  
 Then, by taking the sublime path of the five practices of “enlightenment without meditation,”  
 May I be born in one of the naturally emanated realms of the five buddha families,  
 And especially in the “Palace of Lotus Light,” the Zangdopalri heaven of Guru Rinpoche,  
 In the presence of the Lord of Orgyen himself, chief of the ocean of vidyadhara masters,  
 While he is celebrating the feast of the great secret mantra Dharma,  
 Let me be born as his favourite son or daughter,  
 To take upon myself the task of helping limitless beings!

Through the inspiration and blessing of the ocean of victorious vidyadharas,  
 By the truth of the dharmadhatu, beyond conception,  
 And with this free and well-favoured human form, may I  
 Train in the three activities of perfecting, ripening and purifying,  
 And by actualizing this auspicious interconnection, attain the state of buddhahood!

By making this aspiration and feeling an intense yearning and devotion, consider that the retinue dissolves into the root master. Then, from your root master, who is the embodiment of all the objects of refuge, you receive the four empowerments, according to the description in the root text.

From the letter OM in the Guru’s forehead, radiant and shimmering like moonlight,  
 Rays of light stream out and enter my forehead.  
 Negative actions of the body and obscurations of the channels are purified.  
 The blessing of the vajra body of the buddhas infuses me,  
 The vase empowerment is obtained,  
 I become a receptive vessel for the generation phase of kyérim,  
 The seed of the “completely matured vidyadhara” is sown.  
 The potential for obtaining the level of nirmanakaya is implanted within me.

From the letter AH in his throat, blazing like a ruby,  
 Rays of light streak out and penetrate my throat.  
 Negative activity of the speech and obscurations of the inner air are purified,  
 The blessing of the vajra speech of the buddhas enters me,  
 The secret empowerment is obtained,  
 I become a receptive vessel for mantra recitation practice.  
 The seed of the “vidyadhara with power over life” is sown.  
 The potential for obtaining the level of sambhogakaya is implanted within me.

At his heart, from the letter HUNG, sky-coloured rays of light  
Pour out and plunge into my heart.  
Negative activity of the mind and obscurations of the tsklé  
are purified.  
The blessing of the vajra mind of all the buddhas is instilled in me,  
The wisdom empowerment is obtained,  
I become a receptive vessel for the “chandali” practice  
of bliss and emptiness,  
The seed of the “mahamudra vidyadhara” is sown.  
The potential for obtaining the level of dharmakaya is implanted  
within me.

Again, from HUNG in his heart, a second letter HUNG bursts out  
like a shooting star  
And merges indistinguishably one with my own mind.  
The karma of the “ground of all” and cognitive obscurations are purified,  
The blessing of the vajra wisdom pervades me,  
The absolute empowerment, symbolized by the  
Word, is obtained.  
I become a receptive vessel for the primordial purity of Dzogpachenpo,  
The seed of the “spontaneously accomplished vidyadhara” is sown.  
The potential for the svabhavikakaya – the final fruition –  
is implanted within me.

After receiving the empowerments through combining the recitation with visualization, the master’s body, speech and mind merge inseparably with your own body, speech and mind (the three doors), and you experience a state of naked awareness and emptiness. Recite the mantra while maintaining this state of “nowness”, and then, as you conclude the session, recite: “When my life is at an end...etc.” and visualize the following dissolution as the perfection stage practice.

As a result of your intense longing for the master, his compassion for you increases, and he smiles and looks at you lovingly. From his heart, a single ray of warm, red light streams out and touches you, Vajrayogini, at your heart, so that your body and mind are instantly overcome by a feeling of bliss.

At the end, you melt into red light, which is of the nature of great bliss, and shrink to a pea-sized sphere of light – inner air (*prana*) and mind indivisible. This sphere then flies up into Guru Rinpoche’s heart like a shooting spark, and there it merges with his wisdom mind. Rest in that state.

I visualize myself clearly as Vajrayogini. From the heart-centre of the lama a beam of light, red and warm, suddenly bursts out and touches my heart.  
Instantaneously I am transformed into a sphere of red light the size of a pea,

which shoots up towards Padmasambhava, like a spark that spits from the fire. It dissolves into Guru Rinpoche's heart, merges and becomes one with him: one taste.

Arise from the meditation, and, like a fish leaping out of water, visualize yourself in the basic form of the deity, and the environment as a pure realm, just as before.

Glorious tsawé lama, precious one,  
Dwell on the lotus-seat in the depth of my heart,  
Look upon me with the grace of your great compassion,  
Grant me the attainments of body, speech and mind!

Towards the lifestyle and activity of the lama,  
May wrong view not arise for even an instant, and  
May I see whatever he does as a teaching for me.  
Through such devotion, may his blessing inspire and fill my mind!

In all my lives, may I never be separated from the perfect lama;  
And having benefited fully from the splendour of the Dharma,  
May I perfect the qualities of the five paths and ten bhūmis,  
And swiftly attain the sublime level of Vajradhara!

Through this merit, may all beings  
Complete the accumulations of merit and wisdom,  
And so attain the dharmakaya and rupakaya  
That come from merit and wisdom.

Through all the merit that beings have –  
Whatever they have done, will do and are doing now,  
May they attain the very same stages of perfection  
As Samantabhadra did.

Just as the bodhisattva Manjushri knew to be the way,  
And Samantabhadra too,  
I shall follow in the footsteps of all the bodhisattvas,  
And make a perfect dedication of these merits.

As all buddhas, past, present and future,  
Praise the dedication of merit as supreme,  
All my sources of merit I dedicate completely  
So that all may perfect Samantabhadra's "Good Actions".

In all my lives, wherever I am born,  
May I obtain the seven qualities of birth in higher realms.  
As soon as I am born, may I meet the Dharma,

And have the freedom to practise it correctly.  
Then, may I please the noble lama,  
And put the Dharma into action day and night.  
May I realize the Dharma, actualize its innermost meaning,  
And so cross the ocean of existence in this very life.  
May I teach the sacred Dharma to beings wandering in samsara,  
And never tire or weary of working to help others.  
Through my vast and impartial service to others,  
May all beings attain buddhahood together, as one!

Recite additional general prayers of dedication and aspiration, but also the *Prayer of Aspiration for the Copper-Coloured Mountain of Glory* and the *Secret Path to the Mountain of Glory*.

In between sessions, the general practice is the yoga of recognizing sights, sounds and thoughts as deity, mantra and wisdom – the so-called “three transformations” – according to the explanation given above (in the section on the visualization for the mantra recitation). In particular, you should offer the first portion of your food and drink, considering that it has the nature of nectar, and any new clothes you may receive, considering them to be made from divine fabric, to the master at the crown of your head. Whatever you perceive through your six senses,<sup>8</sup> good or bad, positive or negative, do not chase after ordinary thoughts, but instead maintain the vivid awareness of deity, mantra and wisdom.

At night, when it is time to sleep, pray for welfare of both yourself and all others, with the *Sampa Lhundrupma* or the *Aspiration Prayer of Training in the Pure Realms of the Three Kayas*. At the conclusion, the master descends through your aperture of Brahma and arrives at your heart, which has the form of a four-petalled lotus. He emanates rays of light to fill your whole body, and as you drift into sleep, focusing your attention upon these clear rays, maintain the sense that your mind and the wisdom mind of the master are united inseparably.

Alternatively, the rays of light strike the outer world, visualized clearly as the palace of the deity, which then melts into light like salt dissolving in water. This light dissolves into the inhabitants – all sentient beings – who are visualized as deities. They dissolve into you; you dissolve into the master; and he is purified into non-conceptual clear light. Relax in inner clarity, the union of naked awareness and emptiness, uninterrupted by any other thought. It is a state of dissolution, but not one of dullness.

Should you wake up, cut the momentum of any wild, excited thoughts or dreams; and then by continually maintaining the vivid state of clear light, you will recognize the luminosity of sleep and dream.

Then, when you wake up the next morning, practise the yoga of rising at dawn, and all that has been explained here, in four or however many sessions you prefer.

Moreover, when the time for death approaches, to practise the dissolution visualization of the perfection stage and then rest with your awareness merged into space is considered the king of all *phowas*, or transference practices. Even if you do not actualize the transference, you may still be liberated in the bardos by remembering the yoga of recognizing form, sound and mental activity as deity, mantra and wisdom mind.

In short, if, with completely pure samaya and devotion, you reach the end of this path of the preliminaries, then without even looking at the main practice, upon your death, you will go directly to the glorious mountain of Ngayab Ling. There, in that pure realm you will surely reach the level of Samantabhadra by completing the path of the four levels of vidyadhara, even more swiftly than the course of the sun or the moon.

If you gain some experience in these methods of the ngöndro practice, then you will gradually be able to enter into the main practice. The path relating to the vase empowerment is the generation stage practice of the peaceful and wrathful vidyadharas. The path relating to the secret empowerment is the practice of controlling the inner air and generating inner heat. The path relating to the transcendent knowledge-wisdom empowerment is the practice of hidden meaning and skilful means. The path of the fourth empowerment is trekchö and tögal. By bringing them all together into an essential practice, and applying yourself to it with diligence, you should attain the level of Vajradhara, the state of primordial union, within this very lifetime!

### Colophon

This compilation, in a brief, clear and essential form, of the stages of visualization required for the regular practice of the Dzogpachenpo Longchen Nyingtik Ngöndro (The Excellent Path to Omniscience) was composed by Khyentse Wangpo, the favourite servant of the omniscient master, in accordance with the oral teachings and instructions of my masters, solely with the wish to benefit those fortunate ones first setting out on this path. May the merit of this be the cause for all beings swiftly attaining the level of the immortal Pema Thötreng!

*Translated by Adam. Edited by Janine Schulz. Longchen Nyingtik Ngöndro translation courtesy of Rigpa Translations.*

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<sup>1</sup> *zag bcas kyi dge ba*. This refers to positive actions undertaken without the three noble principles.

<sup>2</sup> The three ways of pleasing a master are mentioned in *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* in chapter 6, p.145 "How to Follow a Spiritual Friend": "The best way is known as the offering of practice, and consists of putting whatever he teaches into practice with determination, disregarding all hardship. The middling way is known as service with body and speech, and involves serving him and doing whatever he needs you to do whether physically, verbally or mentally. The lowest way is by material offerings, which means to please your teacher by giving him material goods, food, money and so forth."

<sup>3</sup> According to Patrul Rinpoche, Guru Orgyen Dorje Chang is white with a tinge of red.

<sup>4</sup> The three spheres or three abodes are (i) above the earth, (ii) upon the earth and (iii) below the earth.

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<sup>5</sup> *Bajung* is a ritual preparation made from five different substances collected from a cow. See *The Treasury of Precious Qualities*, Kangyur Rinpoche, Shambhala Publications, 2001, n.120 p.371.

<sup>6</sup> "Awareness reaching full maturity" is the third of the four visions of Tögal practice.

<sup>7</sup> *kha sbyor yan lag bdun* means "seven aspects of union". The seven qualities of a sambhogakaya buddha are: complete enjoyment, union, great bliss, absence of a self-nature, presence of compassion, being uninterrupted and being unceasing.

<sup>8</sup> i.e. The usual five senses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, plus the mind as the sixth sense.