

WORDS of VAJRADHARA
DHARMAKIRTI

INSTRUCTIONS ON THE FIVE-FOLD
PATH OF MAHAMUDRA



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Brief Life Story of Drigung Rigzin Chödrak (Dharmakirti)

The first Drigung Kyabgon Chungtsang Rinpoche, Je Rigzin Chödrak, was the 24th throneholder of the Drigung lineage. He was born in the wood-sheep year of the tenth rabjung (1595) to Chögyal Phuntsok and Yangkhukma, father and mother respectively, amid very auspicious signs such as rainbows and heavenly music. He offered his crown hair to his father, himself a distinguished lama, and received the refuge name Konchog Phuntsok. He was trained in Buddhist traditions under many spiritual masters who were both scholars and realized beings. By relying on many extraordinary masters of the Kagyu and Nyingma, he not only studied the sutras and tantras of his own tradition, but also excelled in the study of the literature common to all lineages. He worked diligently at his practice in retreat, and became renowned for his learning and realization.

For a certain period of time, he remained as a *ngak-chang* (tantric practitioner) and took Chamdrungma, the daughter of the Tsang regent, as his consort. He built *Jeri Taktse* palace in her home area, and commissioned many images at Drigung monasteries. In the wood-bird year (1645), he received full ordination from Lama Balokpa Jinpa Phuntsok, who served as the abbot.

He took Gunakara, the holder of medical knowledge, as his master of Tibetan healing science and studied the four medical tantras along with other treatises. So great was his learning of the important elements of the subject and the practical instructions, it was as if his own and the master's mind streams had become inseparable. From this knowledge of medicine, he eventually pioneered a new "Drigung tradition" within the Tibetan medical system.

Rigzin Chödrak was so well regarded as a scholar of Buddhist philosophy that he earned the appellation "Drigung Dharmakirti," showing that his benefit for beings was equal to the great Indian logistician Dharmakirti. Among the fifteen volumes of works attributed to him are the authoritative commentaries on the *Gong Chig* called *The Light of the Sun* and *The Lamp Clearing Away the Darkness of the Difficult Points*. Rigzin Chödrak is also credited with miraculous deeds, such as thwarting an attack by Mongol invaders by manifesting a huge figure that blazed with fire such that the invaders not only ceased their attack but became devotees of the Dharma. His Holiness the 5th Dalai Lama received Kagyu and Nyingma teachings, particularly concerning the yidam Yamantaka, from Drigung Chödrak, and offered him some wonderful medical equipment made of the five precious metals.



Drigung Chödrak had many outstanding disciples—experts in both medicine and astrology—who continued his lineage. Among them were Panchen Konchog Lundrup, Konchog Drophen Wangpo or Tsewang Tenpa, and Lho Trinley Namgyal. Some of his most popular and outstanding written works are *rgyud-bzhi'i-bka'-mchan* (*Great Exposition on Four Tantras*), and *rin-chen-phyag-len* (*Use of Precious Pills*). The latter work was a response to the questions of Desi Sangye Gyatso with regard to the *bam-bcos-tshe-'dzin-srong-skyob* (*Protecting Life by Healing Chronic Illness*) and *rims-nad-kun-gyi-gnyen-po-'bri'lugs-sma-nag-'phrul-khor-chen-mo'i-zhal-she-phyag-len* (*The Practice and Instructions of Drigung 'phrul-khor,' the Black Medicine that is the Antidote to all Plagues*), and so forth, which he left behind for the sick people of future generations.

He passed away in the earth-pig year (1659) at the age of 64, again amid many miraculous signs. It is said that a great light arose from his funeral pyre and drifted away wrapped in rainbows, accompanied by earthquakes and a rain of flowers. From Drigung Chödrak's time onwards, the tradition of enthroning reincarnations of the Drigung Kyabgon was followed at the Drigung monastery.

Most of this was taken from Dungar Lobsang Trinley's condensation of a very long biography of *Rigzen Chödrak*; a little material was added from other sources.

Introduction

Prostration to the Lama and the supreme deity.

You who are liberated from all the bonds of samsara and nirvana by perfecting
the two accumulations,
Knowledgeable through attainment of the vajra body,
Endowed with the seven aspects,
And arising as the white light-rays of love in the continent of those to be tamed,
To the Dakpo Kagyu lamas who dispel the darkness of ignorance, I prostrate.

You who give the teachings that completely liberate the fortunate ones of Jambudvipa,
All of the holy Dharma, the doctrine of the buddhas of the three times,
The profound paths condensed into five parts,
I bow my head in prostration to Lord Drigungpa.

Glorious Saraha, the true Vajradhara,
Known in this land as noble Dharmakirti,
You are the supreme master among masters of learning and accomplishment
in Jambudvipa.
To you who show one's primordial innate nature, I prostrate.

By the light of the sun, which is your excellent speech,
The lotus garden of definitive meaning blooms, causing nectar to flow.
By merely tasting its flowing honey and experiencing the meaning in my mind,
These words have been composed.

Regarding Vajradhara Dharmakirti, he is the embodiment of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times' knowledge, compassion, and primordial wisdom, his form that of the glorious lama, the holy, complete buddha known as Dharmakirti. His guidance, amidst the embodiment of the various great beings who are supreme emanations and also the one supreme path that traverses the path of all buddhas, is the essence of sutra, tantra, and shastra.

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The experience and realization of the lamas of the precious Kagyu lineage, from the Bhagavan Great Vajradhara up until the present, continue unbroken; especially, the essence of the minds of the lord of beings, the glorious Phagmo Drupa, as well as Lord Jigten Sumgön and his heart essence sons. This is the quick path that actualizes buddhahood in one lifetime for fortunate beings.

From the turning of the Dharma Wheel of the Five-fold Mahamudra, I have written here whatever parts that I was able to comprehend through my intellect. The arrangement of this treatise into the essential points of body and the essential points of mind is in accordance with the two purposes

Regarding the first:

On a comfortable seat in an isolated spot, place one's feet in vajra posture, straighten the spine, spread the shoulders, tuck the chin slightly, place the two hands in equipoise, place the tongue on the top palate, and let the gaze fall on the tip of the nose. One should practice these--the seven postures of Vairochana.

Regarding the second:

The three general instructions are the preliminaries, the main practice, and conclusion. The first of these general instructions has three parts: the common, uncommon, and special preliminaries.

Part I The Preliminaries

The First Section of the General Instruction

Chapter 1 The Common Preliminaries

THE COMMON PRELIMINARIES

- The remedy for attachment to this life is the contemplation of the difficulty attaining the leisure and endowments.
- The remedy for indolence and laziness is the contemplation of impermanence and death.
- To accomplish the purpose of this precious human body with its leisures and endowments, one contemplates karma—the causes and effects of action.
- The remedy for clinging to the happiness of samsara is the contemplation of the faults of samsara.

1. Precious Human Life

The hell realms, the hungry-ghost realm, the animal realm, bordering countries, long-life god realms, holding wrong views, living at a time of absence of the Buddha, being mute, abiding in states unfavorable for the practice of Dharma—not being born in any of these states constitutes the eight leisures to practice the holy Dharma.

If one has attained a human body, been born in a central country (FN-to which the Mahayana has spread), has all one's sense faculties, has not violated the limits of karma (FN-committed the five inexpressibles), and has devotion for the teachings in the right place (FN-in the right place is in the Three Jewels)—these are the five endowments related to oneself.

If the Buddha has appeared in this world, if his precious Dharma has been taught and the teachings remain, if there are followers of the Dharma who continue [to practice], if there is loving-kindness and support by others, and an example to emulate (FN-the Mahayana spiritual master, S., Kalyanamitra)--these are the five endowments based on other. Recognition of this is the method of contemplation on the difficulty of obtaining the freedoms and advantages.

Moreover, the methods that show the difficulty of obtaining these freedoms and advantages:

Example: If a turtle living in the depths of the ocean surfaces once every hundred years, the possibility he would put his neck through a one-holed, wooden yoke which never remains in one place and is being blown about by the wind, is not more difficult than it is attaining a precious human birth in samsara from the lower realms. This is how difficult it is, it is taught, to obtain the

precious human birth. There are many examples like this.

Cause: Since the cause for obtaining a precious human body is the accumulation of merit, such as keeping excellent moral ethics, it is difficult to obtain by the cause.

Enumeration: There are as many beings in the hell realms as there are atoms in the great earth. There are as many hungry-ghost beings as there are snowflakes in a blizzard. There are as many animals living in the depths of the ocean as there are grains of malt barley in a vat of chang—such it is taught. Scattered animals, such as insects and honeybees— consider how many of just these there are and how highly unlikely then is the possibility of obtaining a precious human birth.

From *Yum Bar Ma*:

 If it is difficult even to obtain a human body,
 what can be said then about the difficulty of obtaining the abundance of pleasures?
Thus, it is said.

From the *Bodhicaryavatara*:

 The pleasures and endowments, so extremely difficult to obtain,
 accomplish the purpose of human life.
 If one does not achieve benefit from them now,
 How could this opportunity come again?
Thus, it is said.

 The appearance of the Tathagata,
 obtaining devotion and a human body—
 being thus accustomed to the practice of virtue is rare.
 Will this be obtained again?

Because it is extremely difficult to obtain this body with its eighteen pleasures and endowments, as previously explained, these are the essential points regarding the attainment of a precious human body. Because this body with its pleasures and endowments has the power to attain the happiness of rebirth in the higher realms, and considering the ways that attaining such a body can accomplish the great purpose, meditate from the depths of the heart on the thought, “It is necessary to accomplish the holy Dharma.”

2. DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE

Thus, this precious human body, with pleasure and endowments, is extremely difficult to obtain, and possesses great meaning; however, it is unreliable because of its ephemeral nature.

The contemplation of death and impermanence has three parts:

- a. In the past, there is no one who remained and did not die;
- b. There is nothing that is not compounded in this body.
- c. There is no one who can sustain the life force and so forth, because there is no one who can extend life for an instant longer; therefore, death is certain. Moreover, there is no

certainty that the time of death will occur more frequently in the order of the old first and then the successively younger.

This body, other than being composed of the thirty-six impure substances,¹ has not the slightest essence of hardness, stability, or strength.

From *Lung*, the words of the Buddha:

Some people die by choking on a mouthful of food.

La la, some are even killed by medicine.

What can be said about unfavorable conditions?

As is said in this way, there are many causes of death. Because there are few conditions that sustain life, the time of death is uncertain, and none of the following can help in avoiding death. By reflecting on the impermanent nature of wealth and possessions that have been diligently acquired, of loving and sympathetic friends and relations, of one's own cherished and nurtured body, the Lord Drigunpa spoke thus:

Ka! No matter what has been done, nothing will help you avoid death.

At the time of death, worldly activities are also lies.

Ka! The eight worldly dharmas are like a painted rainbow.

Think, can you put your trust in them?

Thus, it is said.

When contemplating these reasons as previously explained--it is certain no one in the past has avoided death, that there is no certainty that we will not die at this moment--therefore, there is no time to engage in distracting activities. Accomplish benefit for the future. Even now, it is a little late. This is the time to generate great exertion.

From the incomparable Gampopa:

In the certainty of death and knowing that nothing remains long,
quickly accomplish liberation.

Impermanence makes departure certain, like the shadow of the setting sun.

Abandoning laziness and indifference, blaze like fire in fierce diligence.

Thus, it is said.

¹ The thirty-six impure components of the body are: feces, urine, blood, flesh, ear, nose, eye, tongue, anus, female organs, pus, sputum, lice, digestive bacteria, lice eggs, liquid fat, body hair follicles, hair, intestine, jaundice, bones, marrow, liver, lungs, nerves, skin, heart, fat, ear wax, nasal mucus, discharge from the eyes, tongue coating, female organ secretions, anal discharge, male organ discharge, and sweat. (From the *Kalachakratantra Vimalapracha* commentary by the Indian pandit Kalgina Shri Pundarika)

From the *Lalitavistara Sutra*:

This life is impermanent, like clouds in the autumn sky.

The birth and death of beings is like watching a drama.

The life of beings is like lightning in the sky.

Quicker than water falling from a steep mountain cliff, it departs.

Meditate on what has been taught.

3. KARMA

Since death is inevitable because of its impermanent nature, the result of present positive and negative actions will follow one's consciousness. One is certain to experience their fruition as happiness or suffering. Therefore, there are three points to contemplate karma: recognition of non-virtuous action; recognition of virtuous action along with the classification of both their fruits, and so forth; and contemplation on immoveable karma [FN- karma of the higher realm] and the ripening of their fruit.

First, the ten non-virtuous actions consist of the three actions of body: taking life, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct; the four actions of speech--lying, divisive speech, idle talk, and harsh words; and the three actions of mind--a covetous mind, harmful thoughts, and wrong view.

There are four results of these non-virtues:

- a. The fruition of separation, causing separation from happiness wherever one is born.
- b. The fruition of ripening, causing one to fall to the three lower realms.
- c. The fruition similar to the cause, in two sections:
 - c.1 Acting similarly to the action that was the cause; acting in accordance with tendencies from previous lives, such as taking joy in the practice of non-virtue
 - c.2 Where the results of experience similar to the cause is concerned, even if one is born in the higher realms, one has an order of experiences corresponding to the causes such as a short life, bereft of wealth, losing one's husband or wife to another, constant change, separation from kith and kin, untrustworthy speech, always hearing unpleasant words, great desire for things which do not come to hand, being harmed by all, having wrong views, and being separated from the Dharma.
- d. Under the power of this fruition, one will, in order: be born in an inauspicious country where there is little dignity; there will be much frost and hail; one will live in a place with more dust than normal; food will be unpalatable and inconstant; the ground will be uneven, the time of summer and winter will be reversed, a hot and savage country, and so forth; a country where grain is sparse and bad, food is coarse and bitter, and fruit does not grow when planted.

Second, on top of abandoning the ten non-virtues, the ten virtuous actions consist of saving life, giving generously, practicing pure morality, speaking the truth, reconciling the disharmony of others, speaking purposefully, speaking gentle and peaceful words, having less attachment and joyfully giving, meditating on love and so forth, trusting in the complete truth (FN- the law of causality and so forth), and establishing the correct view.

The fruition of separation from these is to be free of suffering. If one had little strength, the result is a human birth. If middling, one is born in the desire god realm; if great, one is born in the form god realm. If one has renunciation, one is born as a shravaka or pratyekabuddha. If one maintained bodhicitta, one obtains the state of buddhahood.

Concerning the fruition of a similar cause, the active corresponding cause will result in one being happy to avoid killing and diligent in the practice of virtue. Concerning the experience of a similar cause, one will have long life, become wealthy, and so forth, and will oppose non-virtuous similar causes.

Under the power of fruition, one will be born in an auspicious and harmonious place and so forth. (One should) reverse those actions previously described. Furthermore, differentiating between those that are weighty and those that are lighter, all that are done repeatedly and with powerful intention and behavior, without a remedy such as regret and so forth, whether virtuous or non-virtuous, the ripening of these actions become heavier according to the objects--those possessed of the qualities, the Three Jewels, and those possessed of love, one's mother and father.

The karma of non-transferability is the realization that all phenomena are merely one's own conceptions. Moreover, like space, they are nothing whatsoever, neither present nor absent. The fruition of this is to be reborn possessed of the formless absorptions, such as Limitless Conceptuality, and so forth.

Third is the mode of the ripening of the fruit. The karmic fruition will be experienced in this lifetime. This life will exhaust the past lives' actions and their effects; in the next life, one will experience the fruition of this life's actions. This is called experience after next birth. One may experience the ripening of actions in the next life, or in the second, or third rebirth after the present life, or in many lives thereafter -- this is called karma to be experienced in other lifetimes. Regarding other types of ripening, if virtuous actions are not dedicated they are exhausted [destroyed] by regret, anger, and so forth. However, if non-virtuous actions are exhausted [purified] by the remedy of confession joined with the four powers and so forth, it is not certain that one will experience their karmic fruition. In this way, because it is impossible for karma and fruition to be deceptive, one should think about this explanation with a subtle and detailed understanding. It is necessary to abandon all non-virtue and to practice whatever virtue one can.

From the *mdo dren nye* (*The Application of Mindfulness Sutra*)

For fire to be cold, yes, it's possible;
For wind to be caught by a noose, yes, it's possible;
For the sun and moon to fall to the ground, moreover, is possible.
For karmic fruition to be deceptive is impossible.

Further, from the *skye rab* (*Lives of the Buddha*)

The ripening of karma is inconceivable,
even one who has developed great compassion, a bodhisattva,
can take rebirth as an animal.

From the *Bodhicaryavatara* (*The Way of the Bodhisattva*)

Suffering and mental unhappiness, the varieties of tearfulness, and
separation from what one desires all arise from non-virtuous actions.
Whatever one does with virtuous thoughts in one's mind, wherever that
particular individual may go, the fruition's offering will be received.
Whatever one does to seek happiness through non-virtue, wherever
that particular individual may go,
that individual will be conquered by the weapons of suffering.

Therefore, one should have adoration for virtuous deeds and perform them with respect.

Further, from the *rgyal po la kdams pai mdo* (*Instructions to the King Sutra*)

Even if one were a king, at the time of death
one's wealth, spouse, family, and friends would not follow.
But wherever an individual may go,
his karma follows after him like a shadow.

Meditate in accordance with what has been taught.

Although there is certainty regarding karmic fruition in this way, if one thinks that because one had happiness in this life the future can take care of itself, then understand that no matter which birth one takes in the six realms of beings, there is nothing other than suffering and unhappiness.

4. THE MEDITATION ON THE FAULTS OF SAMSA RA

a. The Suffering of the Hell Realms

The hot hells:

Reviving Hell (S. Sanjivana), where one is burned in fire and cut with various weapons. One revives and again experiences this suffering.

Black Line Hell (S. Kalasutra), where one is marked with black lines then split as if with burning hatchets and axes (on those lines).

Crushing Hell (S. Samghata), where one is crushed to death, as by iron mountains coming together like rams.

Howling hell (S. Raurava), where one is in completely burning mountains and valleys full of molten, hot metal that is poured in one's mouth and burns the inside of the body, causing one to cry out in anguish and pain.

Great Howling Hell (S. Mahaurava) where one burns in a fire as previously described, twice as hot as the previous hell. In this unbearable, burning heat, one cries out in greater anguish and pain.

Heating Hell (S. Tapana), where one falls again and again onto a ground of burning metal, stabbed again and again with iron spears, then impaled clear through with an iron spear, and then burned.

Intense Heating Hell(S. Pratapana), where the body is chopped into pieces of meat, then impaled on a trident and boiled in an iron pot of molten metal.

Hell of Ultimate Torment (S. Avici), where one is in an iron house with a fire a thousand times hotter than ordinary fire burning one's body inside and outside, like a butter lamp.

These are the eight hot hells.

The neighboring hells:

The pit of hot embers (T. me ma mur, S. kukulam);

The swamp of putrescent corpses (T. ro rmyuks kyi edam, S. kunapam)

The path of the plain of razors (T. pu tri tang, S. ksuradhara)

The forest of trees which are swords (T. ral dri tsal, S. asidhara)

The shalmali tree, the tree whose leaves are like iron spikes.

An impassable river of hot ashes surrounds these, the neighboring hells.

The Length of Life in the Hot Hell Realms:

From the *mdo dren nye* (*Application of Mindfulness Sutra*)

In the Reviving Hell, one can live for the length of time of up to
1,620,000,000,000 human years.

Thus it is taught.

In the Black Line Hell, Crushing Hell, Howling Hell, Great Howling Hell, and the Heating Hell, each of their life-spans is twice as long as the previous one, in stages. In the Intense Heating Hell, the life-span is forty intermediate kalpas. In the Hell of Ultimate Torment, the life-span is said to be equal to that of a great kalpa.

The Cold Hells:

Blistering Hell (S. Arbudah), where one's body is covered with blisters.

Bursting Blister Hell (S. Nirarbudah), where these blisters burst, causing a rash-like Wound.

The Hell of A-chu (S. Hahavah) intolerable cold, makes “a-chu” sound [expressive of pain from cold].

The Hell of Lamentations (S. Huhuvah), in which one makes impatient struggling sounds expressing grief.

Chattering Teeth hell (S. Atatah), where one is unable to even make those sounds.

Hell of Cracking like a Lotus (S. Padmah), where one cracks open like a lotus.

Hell of Cracking like an Utpala (S. Utpalah), where one breaks open like an utpala Flower.

Hell that is like Ten-million Utpala flowers (S Mahautpalah), where one’s body breaks open like an utpala flower with ten million petals.

These are the eight cold hells.

The Length of Life in The Cold Hell Realms:

Regarding the life-span in these hells, if one were to remove one seed once every hundred years from eighty bushels of Magadha sesame seeds, this [the time it takes to empty all the bushels] would be the length of one’s life in the Blistering Hell. In the Bursting Blister Hell and the other cold hells, each is said to be twenty times longer than the previous one.

Otherwise, in those which are known as ephemeral hells, one lives in the human realms, but like an insect inside a stone. In that which is known as the neighboring hells, one is cooked by being boiled in molten metal in a very large copper pot. In this dangerous heat, one yearns to be cool [and tries to escape]. As one enters this place of molten metal [again], one has the suffering of having been cooled off [and re-entering]. One experiences the inexhaustible suffering of the alternation of these two [alternating hot and cold].

b. The Suffering of the Hungry Ghost Realm

Pretas suffering from outer obscurations: In the winter, they experience fire and the sun as cold; in the summer, they see even the moon as hot. Upon looking, rivers go dry, the fruit and leaves of trees disappear, and so forth.

Pretas suffering from inner obscurations: These pretas have enormous, sickly bodies, and mouths the size of the eye of a needle; their waists are as fine as a bowstring; their stomachs are the size of a country. Their arms and legs are the size of blades of grass and, if their stomachs are filled, the food and drink blaze with fire and go up in smoke.

Pretas suffering from obscurations of food and drink: If these pretas happen to acquire food and drink, they experience them as balls of iron, a burning pit of fire, or nose mucus, pus, blood, and other unclean substances.

Pretas suffering from common obscurations: These pretas suffer from hunger, thirst, fear, terror, and cold.

In brief, pretas can live in the depths of the ocean, or up to five-hundred paktsek below the earth. Scattered pretas have uncertain living places--not to mention, they won’t see food and drink for up to five thousand human years. It is even difficult to hear the words “food” and “drink,” therefore

there is limitless suffering of the blazing fire of hunger and thirst.

c. The Suffering of the Animal Realm

Animals living in the depths: These are animals living in the depths of the ocean. The larger animals eat the smaller animals, smaller animals bore into the larger ones, and so forth. In the naga realms, which are like deserts, sandstorms descend three times every day, burning the nagas' bodies. Garudas eat them, and so forth.

Animals scattered in the human realms and different places: These animals eat each other and are killed for meat, hides, and bones. They serve as domesticated animals, and they also experience the limitless suffering of being killed, being beaten, receiving bleeding wounds, and so forth. Their life-span is indeterminate, as long as a kalpa or as short as a day, and so forth.

d. The Suffering of the Human Realm

The sufferings of the human realm are the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, death, and so forth.

The first, the suffering of birth: In the mother's womb, it is like being boiled or roasted in a hot copper vessel. When the mother takes hot or cold food and drink, it is as if boiling water or ice had entered the womb. If the mother fills her stomach, it is like being crushed by boulders. If the stomach is empty, it is like being dangled in space. When the four limbs are being formed, it is like being impaled on a stick. When the nine passages are being opened, it is like being pierced by sharp weapons. In addition, at that time it is dark, nauseating, and foul-smelling. The thought, "I am in prison" arises. At the time of birth, it is like being drawn through an entanglement of burning iron in which one cannot remain. Falling to the ground is like being cast into a bed of thorns. Later, when one is being washed, it is like one's skin is being ripped off. These are said to be some of the sufferings of birth.

The second, the suffering of old age: As youth fades, the body loses its strength. One becomes hunched over, and one's body becomes stiff. It becomes difficult to walk, sit, or move around. One's hair becomes white and falls out. One's skin becomes wrinkled. One's eyes become unclear. One becomes hard of hearing. One's tongue makes unintelligible sounds. One's memory deteriorates. One's teeth fall out and one is unable to chew food. One's stomach is unable to digest food. One's sense of taste becomes flawed, and one is unable to enjoy the taste of food, as one could in the past. One begins to pant from shortness of breath. It is taught that old age attracts a plethora of other diseases.

The third, the suffering of sickness: One is struck by the pain of virulent illness and must undergo harsh medical treatment. One's enjoyment of food and drink ceases. One must please one's doctors. One exhausts one's belongings. One's mind becomes disturbed and irritated. One has the suffering of the fear of death.

The fourth, the suffering of death: At this time one is alone and must depart that way. All one's wealth and possessions and all one's relatives and loved ones are left behind. One sleeps in one's bed for the last time. One eats one's last food. One speaks one's last words. One experiences the intense suffering of the interruption of life, thrashing like a fish beached on hot sand, when one's

life is cut off. One's body becomes a corpse and one's mind wanders the bardo like a feather blown in the wind. The suffering is limitless as one is taken away by the Lord of Death, and so forth.

Furthermore, there is the fear of meeting with hostilities and the suffering of meeting with them. There is the fear of being separated from loving friends and the suffering of separation. There is the suffering of looking for what one does not have and not finding it, and the sufferings of the difficulty of keeping what one possesses.

e. The Suffering of the Demigod Realm

Having seen the joy, happiness, and possessions of the gods, they are agonized by the painful burning of jealousy. They fight and quarrel about possessions. The gods rain down various weapons, swords, hatchets, vajras, arrows, wheels, and so forth. The demigod's heads and limbs are cut off, and they die, or they panic at the approach of death and vomit blood. They fall face downwards, crying out in anguish, and so forth. They experience limitless suffering.

f. The Suffering of the God Realm

As death approaches the gods of the desire realm, they become unpleasant in color, smell, and they become unhappy about their own seat and desire to go elsewhere. Their ornamental flower garlands wilt and their clothes become filthy and have the foul smell of sweat unlike previously. This is the arising of the five signs that foreshadow their death.

They are abandoned by their sons, daughters, and friends, and they are left alone. Seeing the place of their subsequent rebirth with the eye of the gods, the lower realms and so forth, they are frightened and faint. From far away, that god's mother, father, friends, and relatives call out, saying his name, "Dear one, take rebirth in the human realm in Jambudvipa. There, by practicing the ten virtuous actions, you will again be able to take birth in this god realm." Making this prayer, they toss flowers and depart. In this way, the suffering of the gods arises for seven days.

Seven days in the realm of the Four Great Kings is equivalent to 350 human years. In the realm of the superiors, the Thirty-three and so forth, it is taught that the life-span of each is progressively twice as long in terms of human years. After the karma to be reborn in each of the form and formless god realms is exhausted, one falls into the existence below.

Regarding this, Milarepa said:

Consider the sufferings of beings in the six realms of samsara.

Doing so, great fear and dread arise in the heart.

This is as it is taught.

In samsara, there are three types of suffering—pervasive suffering, the suffering of change, and the suffering of suffering. One should meditate with fierce renunciation in the knowledge that the intrinsic nature of these three is like a building blazing with fire. Having established in this way the difficulty of obtaining the pleasures and endowments through the four common

preliminaries, one should meditate on them in order, or it is acceptable to practice them in no particular order.

The *Gong Chig* says:

What others [consider] not profound is [considered] profound here.

This is the root of Dharma, which is like the foundation of a house. It is important for certainty to arise in one's mindstream, which will not happen merely through listening to the Lama's teaching.



Chapter 2

The Uncommon Preliminaries

To reiterate, the uncommon preliminary practices are:

1. The instructions on going for refuge, the accomplishment of which makes one's mindstream a suitable container [for the teachings]
2. The meditation and mantra recitation of Vajrasattva, which purifies negative actions and obscurations
3. The instructions on the mandala offering, which perfects the two accumulations
4. The meditation on guru yoga, the entrance into the receipt of blessings

From among these four, the first is the instruction on going for refuge.

1. THE INSTRUCTIONS ON GOING FOR REFUGE

The instructions on going for refuge has five parts:

- a. The nature
- b. The definition
- c. The classifications
- d. The training
- e. The actual practice

a. The *nature* is the mind that holds refuge by abiding in the Three Jewels.

b. The *definition* is to be protected from all fears and harm.

c. The *classifications* are causal refuge and resultant refuge, or the refuges of lesser, medium, and superior beings, or the refuges of the Hinayana and Mahayana, which are common and Vajrayana. Regarding these, the objects of refuge are designated based on length of time one is going for refuge—long or short,² as well as the scope of one's intention regarding refuge—large or small.³ There are many distinctions like these regarding the classifications of refuge. One should study other explanations that are more extensive.

d. The *training* has three parts: common, special, and the training that is appropriate [to the needs of the disciple].

The common training has three parts:

- Having gone for refuge in the Buddha, one does not prostrate to worldly deities.
- Having gone for refuge in the Dharma, one abandons harm for sentient beings.
- Having gone for refuge in the Sangha, one does not associate with heretics.

² “Long or short” refers to whether one takes refuge only for this life or all future lives.

³ “Large or small” refers to whether one takes refuge for oneself alone or for all sentient beings.

The special training has three parts:

- One treats with respect any object that is a suitable representation of an enlightened being, down to a broken shard of a tsa-tsa.
- By not abandoning the Dharma, one respects even a single word of the teaching.
- What then can be said of a pure Sangha? One respects those who hold even [a piece of] the saffron robes.

The training that is appropriate is in five parts:

- One offers whatever one eats or drinks.
- One should make offerings regularly.
- Whatever arises under any circumstances as suffering and illness, one should not practice divinations and rituals, but rather place one's mind with faith in the Three Jewels.
- Even if one's life is in danger or for the sake of rewards, one does not abandon the Three Jewels.
- Wherever one goes, one should prostrate to the Buddha of that direction.

Recalling the benefits and qualities of going for refuge, one should diligently take refuge three times during the day and three times at night.

Regarding the benefits of refuge, the *Seventy Verses of Refuge* says:

If the benefits and qualities of going for refuge had form,
all space could not contain it.

As one cannot measure the treasury of the ocean by handfuls,
one cannot measure this either.

Limitless benefits are taught regarding refuge.

In brief, Atisha referred to the following eight benefits:

1. One becomes a Buddhist.
2. One becomes a vessel for all the vows.
3. One purifies all negativities.
4. One cannot be harmed by the malicious actions of humans or nonhumans.
5. One accumulates a huge amount of merit.
6. One fulfills all one's wishes.
7. One does not fall into the three lower realms after one's death.
8. One quickly attains buddhahood.

e. The Actual Practice

That which is to be clearly visualized:

The five groupings of the objects of refuge are visualized in the space in front. In an instant, visualize the wish-fulfilling tree with a great trunk, with a central branch and four branches in the four directions. Above all five branches are lion thrones with lotus, moon, and sun seats. The center branch is slightly higher than the branches in the four directions. The five objects of refuge sit on their seats. (FN-The Buddha may not have the sun component as part of his seat, but the two ways of visualizing are not contradictory. Other objects of refuge have the four-tiered seat with the sun component.)

Either with the meditation seat resting on the trunk of the wish-fulfilling tree or without, whichever one enjoys, on the center seat is the root lama Vajradhara surrounded by the lineage lamas. On the front seat is the glorious Chakrasamvara surrounded by the assemblies of yidam deities. To the right is the Lord Buddha, King of the Shakya Clan, surrounded by the 1,000 buddhas of this fortunate kalpa. On the branch behind is the holy Dharma in the form of scriptures, and also Prajnaparamita, golden or white in color, whichever is appropriate. To the left is the grouping of bodhisattvas: Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of skillful means; Manjushri, the bodhisattva of wisdom; Vajrapani, the lord of secret mantra; Bhūmigarbha and so forth, the eight close sons⁴, the assembly of the noble Sangha. Encircling this tree below is Mahakala and so forth, the assembly of Dharma Protectors, like a gathering of clouds. The colors, hand implements, and so forth of the objects of refuge are in accordance with the way they are generally taught.

The Chakrasamvara mother (Vajrayogini) is embracing the father with both legs. If one meditates on the golden Prajnaparamita, she has four arms--the first two in the mudra of meditative equipoise, the lower right arm holds a text, and the left holds a vase. Or, alternatively, the right is in the mudra that bestows refuge and the left bestows generosity and so forth, whatever is suitable. If one meditates on the white Prajnaparamita, she has two arms--the right holding a text and the left in the mudra of meditative equipoise. Vajrapani, in this case, is peaceful, holding a vajra aloft in his right hand. All of the objects of refuge are looking at the principal, Vajradhara. (FN-If one elaborates on this, one should invite and dissolve the jñānasattvas, and so forth.)

Offer the seven branches and so forth to the visualized objects of refuge.

Embodiment of the assemblage of all the lord buddhas,
the essence itself of the Vajraholder—
To the lamas, the root of the Three Jewels,
I offer prostrations and praises.

⁴ The eight close sons are Manjushri, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara, Kṣitigarbha, Sarvanīvaranaviśkambhin, Akāṣagarbha, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra.

The lama's body, the Vajra body,
a beauty one can never behold enough—
To the body of the lama endowed with inconceivable qualities,
I offer prostrations and praises.

The lama's speech, melodious song,
the unimpeded lion's roar—
To the speech of the lama that conquers the wrong views of heretics,
I offer prostrations and praises.

The lama's mind, like the sky,
non-conceptual bliss and clarity, the experience of emptiness—
To the mind of the lama that abides well in the three liberations,
I offer prostrations and praises.

The lama is the Buddha, the lama is the Dharma,
The lama is also the Sangha.
The lama is the one who accomplishes all.
To the lamas I offer prostrations and praises.

Through the great compassion that arises from the sphere of the unborn,
from the syllable *HUNG* that tames Mara, above a seat comprised of lotus,
sun, Bhairava and Kalaratri,
come great, wrathful emanation bodies.
To Bhagavan Chakrasamvara I offer prostrations and praises.

From the castle of the Dharmakaya of purity,
by the power of non-referential compassion,
she displays the illusory body of form—
To the mother Vajravarahi, I offer prostrations and praises.

The four completely pure elements,
the nature of the four wisdoms,
are the four dakinis: Dakini, Lama, Khandarohi, and Rupini.
To the four dakinis whose emanation bodies benefit beings,
I offer prostrations and praises.

One should praise each of the Three Jewels individually by offering this supplication, and so forth.

The actual practice of going for refuge:

One should think that oneself and others, all sentient beings, are practicing refuge together.

What one actually does is recite:

Myself and all sentient beings, who have been my mother, equal in extent
to space, until enlightenment is reached,
Go for refuge to the glorious, holy lama, together with the kind root and
lineage lamas;
Go for refuge to all the Buddhas;
Go for refuge to the holy Dharma;
Go for refuge to the assembly of the noble Sangha;
Go for refuge to the dakas, dakinis, and Dharma protectors,
all of whom possess the eye of wisdom.

Recite this 100 or a thousand times [each session], not merely with one's mouth. Rather, one should have certainty, mixing one's mind in this way: "Whatever happens, you understand." This is very important. If one does not have a mind that spontaneously relies on the meaning of what the wise call "going for refuge," one is not a suitable container for meditation on the path of sutra and tantra. Even if one entered the door of the anuttarayoga tantra, still it would be difficult to be included in the Buddhist community.

From the *Gong Chig*:

It is taught that going for refuge is what distinguishes a Buddhist from
a non-Buddhist.

Then at the end of the session, all the surrounding objects of refuge dissolve into the principal. Then the principal dissolves into light and into oneself. After the dissolution, rest the mind for a while directly in a nonconceptual, unfabricated state.



2. THE MEDITATION AND RECITATION OF VAJRASATTVA

Above the crown of one's head is a lotus and moon disc, above which is a white five-pointed vajra. In the center of the vajra is a HUNG syllable. Light radiates from it, making offerings to the Noble Beings and benefitting sentient beings. Then the light returns and the vajra transforms into Vajrasattva, whose body is white, like sunshine striking the peak of a snow mountain. He has one face and two arms; he is holding a five-pronged vajra to his heart with his right hand and holding a bell to his hip with his left hand. His feet are in the half-lotus posture. He is wearing silk and precious ornaments. Envision this clearly.

Light emanates from Vajrasattva's three places marked with the three syllables, *OM AH HUNG*, inviting the jnanasattvas and the empowerment deities of the five families.

DZA HUNG BAM HO

They become inseparable with the samayasattva. Having prayed to the empowerment deities by reciting OM SAR WA TA THA GATHA AH BHI KEN TSA TU MAM, water from the vase fills the body, bestowing empowerment. The overflow becomes the crown ornament of the five families. The empowerment deities dissolve into Vajrasattva.

One recites:

OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA AR-GHAM PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA PA-DYAM PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA PUSH-PAM PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA DHU-PAM PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA A-LO-KAM PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA GHAN-DE PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA NAI-WI-TE PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
OM BAZ-RA SAT-WA SA-PA-RI-WA-RA SHAP-TA PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA

Thus, one makes the outer, inner, secret, and suchness offerings.

Vajrasattva, Mahasattva,
Vajra, embodiment of all the Tathagatas,
Vajra, the primordial Samantabhadra,
I prostrate to Vajrapani.

Make these and other praises.

Envision in the heart, a moon mandala above which is the syllable *HUNG* surrounded by the hundred-syllable mantra circling clockwise.

OM BAZ-RA SA-TWA SA-MA-YA MA-NU PA-LA-YA
(*Vajrasattva, protect the samaya.*)
BAZ-RA SA-TWA TE-NO-PA TIS-TRA
(*By its power stay near me.*)
DRI-DO-ME BHA-WA
(*Be steadfast for me.*)
SU-TO KA-YO-ME BHA-WA
(*Be extremely happy with me.*)
SU-PO KA-YO-ME BHA-WA
(*Grow greatly within me.*)
A-NU RAK-TO-ME BHA-WA
(*Be loving toward me.*)
SAR-WA SI-DHI-ME PRA-YA-TSA
(*Grant me all the siddhis.*)
SAR-WA KAR-MA SU-TSA-ME
(*Perform all activity for me.*) TSI-TAM SHRI-YA KU-RU HUNG
(*Make me good and virtuous.*)
HA HA HA HA HO
(*Revel in the bliss of the four joys. These syllables are also the five wisdoms.*)
BHA-GA-WAN SAR-WA TA-TA GA-THA
(*Bhagavan, embodiment of all the Tathagatas,*)
BAZ-RA MA- ME MUN-TSA
(*Vajra, do not abandon me.*)
BAZ-RI BHA-WA
(*Be of the vajra nature.*)
MA-HA SA-MA-YA SA-TWA AH
(*Great samayasattva AH.*)

Recite this as much as you are able.

Light radiates from the seed syllable and the mantra garland, making offerings to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and purifying the negative actions and obscurations of sentient beings.

Nectar flows from the hearts of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, dissolving into the syllable HUNG and the mantra garland. Nectar flows down, filling his body. Flowing out through the big toe of his right foot, nectar enters one's body through the crown of the head. All of one's negative actions, obscurations, faults, and shortcomings from beginningless time in samsara are expelled in the form of black soot and dirty grease through the lower sense doors and the pores of the skin. It is like a container that has been emptied and milky nectar has flowed in. Meditate that it is filled.

After the meditation session, recite:

Protector,
I am deluded and ignorant,
I have broken my samaya.
Lama protector, grant me refuge.
Master, vajraholder,
personification of great compassion,
please grant me protection.

After praying in this way, Vajrasattva says:

Child of noble family, all of the violations and breakages of samaya
you have committed are purified.

Thus, it is said.

Having granted his assurance that one's sins are purified, he dissolves into oneself. In the conviction that one's body, speech, and mind—the three—have become inseparable from his, rest evenly in the meaning of the union of appearances and emptiness. (FN-Generally, it is taught that if [one] does not receive assurance that one's negative actions have been purified from the objects of confession, confession will not accomplish purification.) It is taught that from among all the limitless methods of purifying negative actions and obscurations, the meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva is supreme.

Especially from the *Nyingpo Gyen*:

If one recites the hundred syllables 100,000 times without distraction to anything other than the visualization of the body of Vajrasattva, it is taught that all the violations of the root vows of samaya, moreover, are completely purified.

One should apply oneself to this practice.



1. Place a few grains in your left hand then hold the base with the same hand and heap some grains in the centre with your right

2. Wipe the base clockwise with your right forearm (3x) (Purifies Obscurations)

Saying:

OM vajra ground AH HUM
(*OM vajra bhumi AH HUM*)

Tip the base away from you (casting away all negativities)

3. Place some more grain on the base

South

7. Inside 1st Ring
Place heaps 1 - 17 (starting with Mount Meru and ending with the crop). The East is closest to you

8. 2nd (middle) Ring
Place heaps 18 - 33 (starting with the Precious Wheel and ending with the Goddess of Perfume).

9. 3rd (top) Ring
Place heaps 34 - 38 (starting with the Sun and ending with the Palace).

West

4. Wipe the base counter-clockwise with your right forearm (3x) (Blessing Body, Speech and Mind)

Saying: *OM vajra fence AH HUM*
(*OM vajra rekhe AH HUM*)

Tip the base towards you (receiving blessings)

5. Put some grain in the centre of the base (vajra ground) & place the 1st ring.

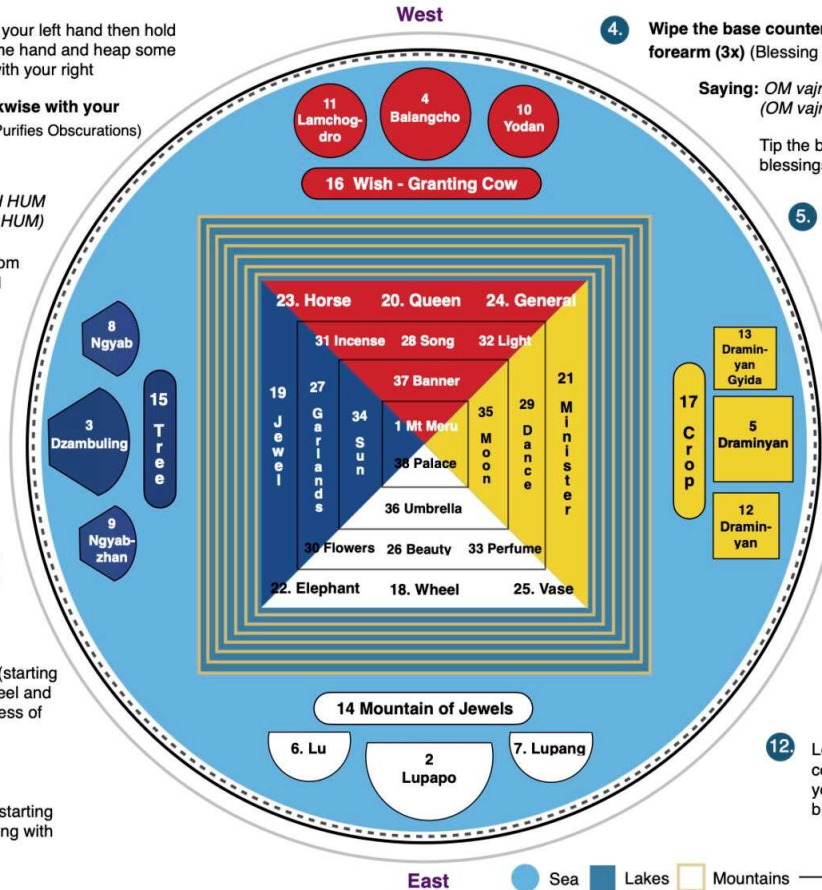
6. Continuously sprinkle some grain clockwise around the inner edge of the 1st ring to create the vajra fence.

North

10. Hold Mandala as high as possible in both hands

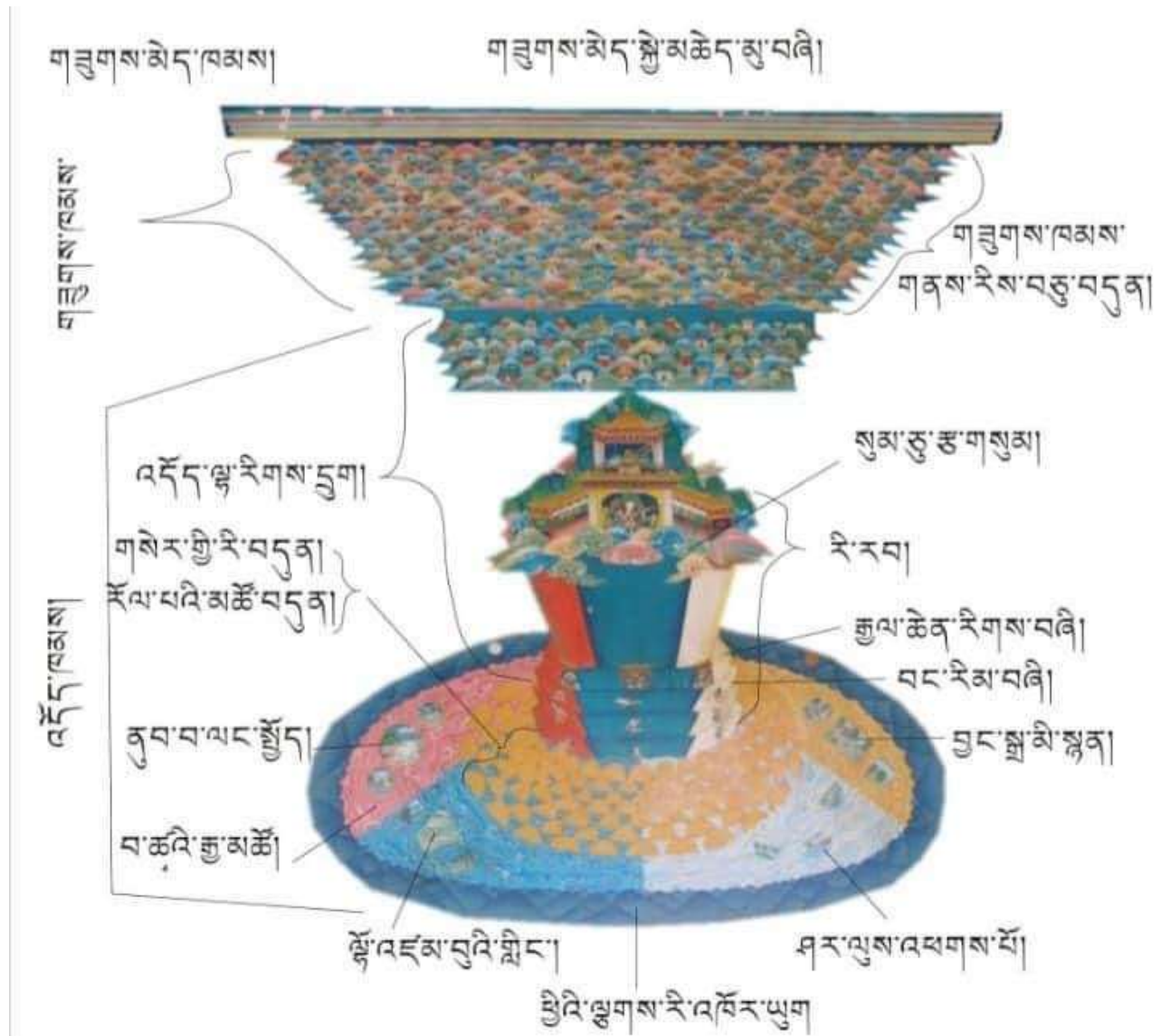
11. Whilst holding the mandala up, recite the appropriate offering prayers.

12. Lower the mandala and tip the contents towards you, imagining you are receiving all the blessings



East

Sea Lakes Mountains — 1st Ring - - - Vajra Fence



3. THE INSTRUCTIONS ON OFFERING THE MANDALA

This has two sections:

- The arrangement of the accomplishment mandala
- Performing the offering of the mandala

a. *The arrangement of the accomplishment mandala*

If a precious mandala is made of valuable substances such as gold and so forth, it should have a wide support. The center of the mandala plate should be higher than the outer perimeter. The mandala should be at least four finger breadths high. If it is made of clay or wood, the mandala should be of a good size; it is not suitable for it to be smaller than a cubit.

The surface of the center and so forth, as above, should be free of impurities, dust particles, and so forth. As one removes these, one thinks that the obscurations of karma, klesha, and knowledge of all sentient beings are being purified. One moistens with scented water. Then, one arranges heaps of jewels, medicine, grain, and so forth in the center and in each of the directions—east, south, west, and north. These are the pure bases of the five supreme seats, each consisting of lion throne, lotus, moon, and sun.

Above the five mounds, instantaneously envision five four-tiered seats of lion throne, lotus, sun, and moon. The central mound is a little higher than the others, above which is the root lama Vajradhara, surrounded by the lineage lamas, and so forth. The five heaps are the same as the refuge objects—the rare and supreme ones. Clearly visualize them as the objects of refuge described above. Light radiates from the deities clearly visualized in this way and marked by OM at the forehead, AH at the throat, and HUNG at the heart, inviting the jnanasattvas who are like the visualized deities.

DZA, HUNG, BAM, HO.

They become non-dual.

Offer argham, padyang, pushpam, dhupam, aloke, gandhe, newite and shabda.

Offer praises such as *Embodiment of the Assemblage* and so forth.

If one has a second mandala plate, put this [the accomplishment mandala] on the shrine as an object of offering. One arranges it as previously explained. If one does not have a second mandala plate, one recites, HUNG BA ZRA TISH TRA, generating belief that the objects of offering are present in the space in front.

b. *Arranging the offering mandala*

One arranges the mandala with the heaps of precious substances and so forth as before. Moreover, mental darkness will arise for the practitioner if the dust and so forth are not cleaned from the mandala. If one does not sprinkle the mandala with scented water, the practitioner will be born in a desert and therefore experience drought. Sprinkle the mandala with scented water.

Regarding the manner of the arrangement of the heaps, the central one should be higher. If the four surrounding heaps are too far from the center heap, then there will arise the fault of being reborn in a border country. If the mounds are too close [to the center and each other], this will give rise to the fault of sleepiness and obscuring mental darkness.

If one elaborates, this is the manner of offering the thirty-seven-point mandala:

Consider the surface of this mandala, which one has just cleaned, to be a great ocean that is blue, bright, and very pleasing. Then visualize that above this arises the great golden ground that is attractive, desirable, and is evenly surfaced like the palm of a hand.

One recites:

OM BA ZRA BHU ME AH HUNG (FN-the vajra ground)

The base is the great, completely pure, golden ground.

Outside this, visualize surroundings like a circle of mountains made of precious iron.

OM BA ZRA RE KE AH HUNG (FN-the vajra iron mountains)

Arranging each heap

In the center, which is completely encircled by the iron mountains, is:

HUNG

Mt. Meru, the king of mountains

In the east, silver; in the south, lapis-lazuli; in the west, lotus-ruby; and in the north, gold.

The four sides are made of these precious substances, with the four steps square in shape. Mt Meru is high and wide.

In the east, the first heap that is arranged is *Videha*, white, the color of crystal, and semi-circular in shape. Think that this continent is high and wide. In this way, the other heaps are arranged in succession. In the south is *Jambudvipa*, made of lapis-lazuli, and trapezoidal in shape. In the west is *Apara-Godaniya*, made of red fire-crystal, round in shape. In the north is *Uttara-kuru*, made of gold, and square in shape.

In the east to the right of *Videha* is *Deha*, and to the left is *Videha*. In the south, to the right of *Jambudvipa*, is *Camara*, and to the left is *Upacamara*. In the west, to the right of *Apara-Godaniya*, is *Shatha*, and to the left is *Uttara-mantrina*. In the north, to the right of *Uttara-kuru*, is *Kurava*, and to the left is *Kaurava*. The shapes and substances of the eight sub-continents correspond to the main continents.

Inside the eastern continent is the mountain of jewels. In the south is the wish-fulfilling tree, from which arises all that one needs and wants, just as one wishes. In the west is the wish-fulfilling cow, who is golden in color, through eating gold as food. In the north is the inexhaustible food.⁵

In the east, inside⁶ the mountain of jewels, is the precious wheel, which is made of gold and has 1,000 spokes. (FN-This is the wheel that is held by a Chakravartin and his entourage, which takes them to the sky, etc., wherever they want to go.) In the south is the nine-faceted, precious wish-fulfilling jewel, which fulfills all desires and wishes. (FN-This jewel has nine facets in the cardinal and ordinal directions and in the center.) In the west is the precious queen, who is golden in color. (FN-She does not have a kleshic mind.) In the north is the precious minister. (FN-He understands the king's wishes and fulfills them all without being told.)

In the southeast is the precious elephant, silver in color. In the southwest is the precious great horse, blue, with a golden mane, attractive like a peacock's neck. In the northwest is the precious general, who wears golden armor. (FN-He is free of the kleshas. Merely by brandishing his sword in his right hand, he defeats all external enemies.) In the northeast is the treasure vase. (FN-It has the qualities that fulfill all needs and desires; by simply calling inside, whatever one wishes is

granted.)

In the east, inside the precious wheel, is the goddess of beauty. (FN-She expresses the aspects of beauty and grace.) In the south is the goddess of garlands. (FN-She is holding precious garlands with her outstretched arms.) In the west is the goddess of song, holding tingsha or a flute. In the north is the goddess of dance. (FN-She is performing various types of dance.)

In the southeast is the goddess of flowers. In the southwest is the goddess of incense. In the northwest is the goddess of lamps. In the northeast is the goddess of perfumes.

To the right of Mt. Meru is the mandala of the sun, which is made of precious fire crystal. To the left is the mandala of the moon, which is made of precious water crystal. Behind is the precious umbrella. In front is the victory banner which is completely victorious in all directions. This is the thirty-seven-point mandala.

⁵ Inexhaustible food generally consists of crops that do not have to be cultivated.

⁶ Looking from above, “inside” means toward the center.

If one wishes to abbreviate, one offers Mt. Meru and the four continents as above, the moon to the northeast and the sun to the southwest. This is the seven-point mandala. Whether extensive or abbreviated, one can perform whichever of them is appropriate.

In the center of this is the abundance of the glorious wealth of gods and men from which nothing is missing. This completely pure field itself, I offer to the glorious holy lamas, together with the kind root and lineage lamas, the assemblies of the mandalas of deities, the three precious ones, the Three Jewels, together with the dakas, dakinis, and dharma protectors. I request that you accept this with your compassion for the benefit of beings, and kindly grant us your blessings.

And so forth.

To all the holy lamas, yidam deities,
The Precious Noble Three Jewels, dakas and dakinis, and Dharma protectors,
Please accept this with your compassion for the benefit of sentient beings.
Please bless me.
I offer my body, wealth, and roots of virtue.
Please accept this offering.

(FN-When one makes the outer offerings to the lama and the Three Jewels, if one cannot generate certainty in one's mind regarding the offering of one's body, flesh, bones, meat and so forth, it is taught that one is not really making an offering.)

Please grant the arising of supreme realization.

Repeat this supplication many times.

Further, one offers the recitations, "The ground is strewn with scented flowers" and so forth.

To the Lamas who have completely perfected the three kayas,
I offer the outer, inner and secret offerings and the suchness offering
with my body, wealth and all that is visible.
Grant me the unsurpassable, supreme achievement.

Thus, it is said.

Further:

Because it is pleasing, I offer this excellent mandala.
May obstacles on the path of Bodhicitta not arise.
May the intention of the victors of the three times be realized.
May there not be confusion in samsara or abiding in nirvana.
May beings equal in extent to space be liberated.

OM GU-RU DE-WA DA-KI-NI RAT-NA MAN-DA-LA PRA-TI-TSA SWA-HA
The completely perfected three bodies. . .

And so forth.

Offer prostrations and so forth, the seven-branch offering, such as:

Whatever merit I have gathered through prostrations, offerings,
confession, rejoicing, beseeching and praying —
for the sake of the enlightenment of all sentient beings,
all this I dedicate.

(FN-This mandala offering is a wonderful way of perfecting the accumulations. Furthermore, regarding this, it is taught that one will attain rebirth as a Chakravartin as many times as there are atoms in the golden ground that one has offered in one's mind.)

One should perform prostrations, circumambulations, and so forth, in actuality and mentally. Then, envisioning the field of accumulation as before, one thinks that it dissolves into oneself.



4. THE MEDITATION ON GURU YOGA

The field of accumulation is as described above. It is acceptable to visualize in an abbreviated or unabbreviated form because it is taught that this is the supreme form of the wheel of protection.

Although there is a tradition of visualizing the lama at one's crown as the lord of the family, at the time of receiving the four empowerments in one's ordinary form, however, one visualizes that the

wide and expansive throne supported by eight lions and composed of precious substances is in front of you. On top of this, a lotus arises from the syllable PAM. From the AH syllable, arises a moon. Above that is the syllable RAM that becomes the sun-seat, on which sits the guru in the nature of one's kind root lama. His aspect is that of Vajradhara: blue, with one face, two arms, a five-pointed vajra in the right hand, and holding a bell by the vajra handle to the heart with the left hand. His hair is gathered in a topknot. He is ornamented with bone and various jewels: a crown; earrings; short and long necklaces; garlands; belt; bracelets; anklets; and so forth. His upper and lower garments are made of various silks. He is adorned with the eighty minor marks, and the thirty-two major marks. His feet are in the vajra posture. (FN-He is joined in the embrace of the mother Datasvari (*Vajra Jing yuk ma*, Queen of Space) who is blue, holding *drigug*⁷ and *kapala*.⁸ Meditating without the mother is not mistaken.)

Above the crown of Vajradhara's head, in descending order downward from the lineage lama Vajradhara above, are the lineage lamas. (FN-One can meditate on the lineage lamas as gathered at a marketplace or bazaar, but it is said to be profound to meditate on them in a descending column.)

To the glorious lama, Lord of the four kayas, I present my body, speech, and mind, the outer, inner and secret offerings, and all existence as an offering. These offerings, the one who offers, and the act of offering are of one nature, free from all elaboration, with one taste. In this state, I make the offering. Please bestow the attainment of the nature of effortlessness.

Thus, it is said.

(FN-If one wishes to elaborate, one should recite Serkhangma, joined with understanding of the meaning of the words of recitation.)

Having continually made outer, inner, secret, and suchness offerings and offerings of one's body and enjoyments, together with the roots of virtue, at the time of making prayers such as *rigs kun ma* and so forth, the lamas, Vajradhara, Tilopa and so forth, dissolve downward into the lineage lamas in stages, down to the root lama. (FN- It is not mistaken to receive empowerment without dissolving the lineage lamas.)

Glorious Lama, the intrinsic nature of all sublime characteristics, please purify the habitual tendencies of the waking state with the joyful water of the vase empowerment, through the entrance of the bindu of body into the crown of my head.

Having prayed like this, white light emanates from the forehead of the holy lama, dissolving into one's own forehead and purifying the obscurations of the waking state. One has thus obtained the vase empowerment, actualizing vajra body, the Nirmanakaya.

⁷ A *drigug* is a hooked flaying knife.

⁸ A *kapala* is a skull cup.

Again:

You who fulfill all beings through the perfection of the enjoyment body, please burn the wood of the dream state with the fire of supreme joy, which is the secret empowerment, through the entrance of the bindu of speech into my throat.

Having prayed like this, red light emanates from the throat of the holy lama, dissolving into one's own throat and purifying the obscurations of the dream state. One has thus obtained the secret empowerment, actualizing vajra speech, the Sambhogakaya.

Again:

Jetsun Lama, the Dharmakaya of non-conceptuality, please purify the dark thickness of the sleep state with the knowledge wisdom empowerment through the entrance of the bindu of mind into my heart.

Having prayed like this, blue light emanates from the heart of the holy lama, dissolving into one's heart and purifying the obscurations of the heaviness of the sleep state. One has thus obtained the knowledge-wisdom empowerment, actualizing vajra mind, the Dharmakaya.

Again:

Protector of beings, the body of co-emergence, may I please obtain the joy of non-transference through bestowal of the great wisdom empowerment, by entrance of the bindu of wisdom into my navel.

Having prayed like this, yellow light emanates from the navel of the holy lama, dissolving into one's navel and purifying the obscurations of transference. One has thus obtained the fourth empowerment, actualizing vajra wisdom, the Svabhavikakaya.

Again:

May the supreme joy be actualized by myself and all sentient beings, equal in extent to space, by uniting in equality our primordial body, speech, mind and wisdom with your four vajra bodies.

Having prayed like this, the holy lama melts into a sphere of light and dissolves into oneself. Rest evenly in the thought of the indivisibility of one's own body, speech and mind, with the body, speech, and mind of the lama.

I pray to the glorious Lama,
Master of the four buddhas' bodies,
Crown-jewel of the entire Dagpo Kagyu,
Leader of sentient beings,
Teacher of the ultimate path,
Lord of Compassion,
Regent of the Buddha,
Of peerless kindness,
Incomparable teacher,
Vajradhara,
Heed my prayer, Great Drigungpa!
I pray to you.
Look upon me with compassion!
Empower me with the blessings!
The two attainments —
Bestow them now!
Spontaneously establish the two benefits!
Here bestow the fruit!

(FN-One should recite *Rigs kun ma*⁹ once for each hundred recitations of this prayer).

Je Dags po said:

In the lineage of blessings of the Dakpo Kagyu, if one does not abide in the blessings of the lama, there is no possibility of the meaning of Mahamudra to arise in one's mind stream. With the blessings of the lama, there is no difficulty.

Thus, it is said.

It is necessary to foster and sustain this meditation on Guru Yoga. At the time of accumulation of this practice, one prays from a bone in the depths of one's heart, with a devotion that is not sporadic, thinking of the body, speech, mind and qualities of the kind root and lineage lamas with fiercely intense longing and yearning. Until one's hair stands on end, one's eyes fill with tears, one's mind is joined with nothing but the lama, until one wishes to pray constantly, day and night, for closeness with the lama, until realization and experience arise and blaze in one's mind stream, and so forth, one should practice this diligently.

⁹ *Rigs kun ma* is also known as the Golden Lineage Prayer.



Chapter 3

Special Preliminaries

The special preliminaries are in three sections: the meditations on love, compassion, and bodhicitta.

Moreover, from Lord Drigunpa:

If the steed of love and compassion does not establish itself
in the intent to benefit others at the start of the race,
the acceptance and appreciation of gods and men will not arise.
Firmly establish the mind in this right from the beginning.

The horse is a metaphor for love and compassion. The meditation on the mind of enlightenment that benefits others is symbolized by the silk ribbon awarded to the winner of a horse race. Whoever is born with bodhicitta in their mind stream will benefit every sentient being, and homage is paid to them by ordinary and noble beings. This is a symbol of bestowing gratitude. All these poetic expressions are metaphorically symbolic.

The single cause by which Buddhahood is obtained is the mind of enlightenment, bodhicitta. For this purpose, one generates the measureless compassion and love from which it arises.

1. THE MEDITATION ON LOVE

This meditation is based on visualizing one's mother in front of one. Having visualized this, consider the four kindnesses she has shown as a basis for the meditation:

- a. She gave birth to one's body
- b. She sustained one's life
- c. She taught one what to take up and what to abandon
- d. She underwent hardship for one's benefit

a. The kindness of giving birth to one's body: When in the mother's womb, she created one's body with the essence of her flesh and blood, and with the nutrients of the food she consumed. She sustained oneself with her own body. From the time of conception onwards, she endured embarrassment about being pregnant, illness, and all the unbearable experiences of suffering, particularly death. Thinking that this child may die, that she would not know how to live without this cherished child, she accepted all the obstacles and difficulties that arose. She was very protective and nurturing. She avoided all activity that would be harmful to this being.

After the birth, even if the newborn looked scary like an insect, the mother did not look away. She lovingly took the child on her lap. She cleaned the mucous and saliva with her own mouth, and other filth by her hand. She warmed her child with her own body, and when the child was hungry,

she provided food. When thirsty, she fed the child with her breast milk. When the child was cold, the mother dressed the child in warm clothing. From the time the child was as small as a bundle until the child grew as big as a yak, for all this time, the mother cherished her child more than her own interior heart and the eyes on the forehead.

One should remember this.

b. The kindness of the mother in sustaining one's life: This means to be protected from all harms --from the fear of being burned in a fire, fear of being carried away by water, or fear of falling from a precipice. Because of her fear of the child's death and sickness, she saves the life of the child doing all immeasurable things, such as performing divinations, astrological calculations, the reading of texts, healing rituals, and so forth.

One should have recollection and mindfulness of these.

c. The kindness of teaching what is to be abandoned and what is to be taken up: When we are born, we only know how to cry and move our arms and legs. Then the mother teaches us the manners of how to eat food, how to wear clothes, and so forth. She teaches us how to speak and how to call the father's and mother's name and so forth. The child learns everything from the mother, from how to use the toilet on up. The mother teaches one to abandon all that leads to developing faults and to take up all that leads to positive qualities. The mother wishes her child to be better than other children, that her child grows bigger and thrives more than other children. It is acceptable for her to feel her child is superior to others. She hides her child's faults and, even if the child has no good qualities, she praises the child. If the infant smiles, even if it takes a few months, this makes the mother happy and overjoyed. One knows that by merely raising the foot for each step, however few words one might be able to say, she will be proclaiming the accomplishment to others; these alone are enough to evoke her praise. In all the former lives, having a body had no meaning. Now, through the body given by this mother, one has met the Dharma and has the opportunity to practice the Dharma.

One should remember her extremely great kindness.

d. The kindness of practicing austerities for one: One's mother undergoes the hardship of being without food to sustain her child. She keeps everything she gets, no matter how expensive, whether it is food, drink, or clothing, only for her child. If this child is healthy and happy, she is happy. She thinks that if she experiences hunger, thirst, or cold, or even if she dies, it is acceptable as long as her child is healthy and happy. She will kill to sustain her child. She will steal the wealth of others and commit many non-virtuous actions, which will certainly lead to rebirth in the lower realms. She will endure the suffering of exhaustion and so forth and will endure other's negative speech about her for the sake of her child. She will diligently engage in selling in the marketplace, business, and farming, and so forth. She will abandon concern for her father, mother, and relatives. She cherishes her child, still a stranger to her, always looking on her child with the eyes of love. Chewing the solid food herself first, she feeds the child with it, placing it in her child's mouth. She calls her child with a sweet tone, and so forth.

One should remember these kindnesses.

Furthermore, one should consider it is not just this life's mother. Even the Buddha could not count all the sentient beings who have been one's father and mother in previous lives. Remember the kindness and love you received from all of them, only wishing you happiness and joy. Remembering that kind of love, one should meditate on this until one's hair stands on end and *one sheds tears of unbearable love for all sentient beings.*

When one thinks it is only the mother of this lifetime who has loved one like this, it is not true. When one generates loving-kindness and compassion for all sentient beings like this mother has for her child, one understands that all sentient beings have equally been one's mother. *Remember the great kindnesses all sentient beings have shown oneself.*

Visualize all sentient beings in front of you equal to the expanse of space. When you place all sentient beings in the core of your heart, one feels delight and cherishes all of them. Then there is no distinction between those who are close and those who are distant.

The meditation is to expand one's mind into impartial love, wishing all of them happiness and joy.

If one does not enter into the partiality of others being friends, enemies, or neutral, this is complete practice. If there is partiality, consider that one's mother in this life was an enemy in other lives. Also consider that one's enemies were one's mother in various other lives and have been kind to one and benefitted one.

Diligently meditate until it becomes impartial, friends and enemies being indistinguishable.

(FN-If it is difficult to give rise to this, Jigten Gonpo says:

Due to lack of merit, sentient beings who have difficulty meditating on loving-kindness for their mothers and fathers, find it easier to generate loving-kindness to those who have given one even small benefit, such as friends, a cherished child, or dear ones. Anyone who has given loving-kindness to one—meditate on that until one experiences the taste of this meditation.

Then gradually one can extend loving-kindness to all sentient beings.

This is the essential point.)

e. Benefits: The happiness, joy, and so forth, that arises for oneself and others, is the limitless benefit. One should read about the details from other texts to understand this further.

2. THE MEDITATION ON COMPASSION

a. Compassion for beings in the hell realms

If one were to see one's own mother in this life helplessly being cut, being struck on the head or limbs, being cooked in boiled liquid, being burned in a mass of flames, and so forth— how could one not give rise to compassion? Is it one's duty to protect one's mother or not? Yes, one must protect her. If one does not, one's mother will suffer and be deeply saddened. She has no other way to protect herself. If one does not protect her, other beings will discredit one. One, oneself,

will be unhappy to see her suffering. For all these reasons, one cannot enjoy one's own happiness while others are unhappy. It would be shameful if one did not protect and give her refuge, leaving her there to suffer.

Those sentient beings who have taken rebirth in the hot hell realms were previously one's mother. She nurtured her child, blowing on the tea and food to cool it for oneself, and nurturing one and protecting one in countless greater ways. Now, every day, the hosts of the lord of death are killing sentient beings millions of times, then flaying the skin, throwing the flesh into molten copper, roasting it on the iron ground while inside a pit of fire, and so forth. How could one not give rise to compassion for those who are suffering to the point that they don't even have the power to cry out and moan in pain?

Meditate on the compassion which is the unbearable compassion, the wish for all those sentient beings to be free of suffering together with its causes.

Again, one's own mother is powerless and naked, being struck by icy winds and extreme cold, her body filled with blisters being broken open like a flower. She is being chopped into a thousand pieces, like a mushroom being sliced. This being the situation, one should be extremely compassionate.

In the same way, those sentient beings who have been reborn in the cold hell realms, were previously one's mother who was concerned for the smallest amount of cold one might experience and provided warmth. Now she has taken rebirth in the cold hell realms—how could one not have the nobility of heart, the compassion, for those whose experience the suffering of the cold hell realms?

Meditate on compassion, which is the wish for others to be free of those sufferings.

b. Compassion for those in the preta realms

In this way, those sentient beings born in the preta realms, all of whom who have been one's mother, experience the fear of hunger and thirst. Previously, one's mother, concerned about one's own hunger and thirst, nurtured one with her own breast milk, with many delicious types of food and drink, and many types of sweet and pleasant things. Right now, one's mother is experiencing the suffering of the preta realms in this way—how could one not have nobility of heart, compassion?

Meditate on compassion, which is the wish for beings to be separated from those sufferings.

c. Compassion for those in the animal realm

Moreover, one's own mother is being struck, roasted, and boiled, and is experiencing great fear and apprehension. When one sees this, one has extreme compassion. In this way, beings who are born as animals, unlike oneself, are stricken by certain suffering. Previously, these beings have taught one what to accept and what to abandon. Now they are in a state of confusion and great stupidity. How could one not have the nobility of heart and compassion towards them?

Meditate on compassion for them, as one did previously.

d. Compassion for those in the human realm

Again, one's own mother is old, with a hunched body, weak eyes, impoverished in food and drink, abandoned by relatives, friends, and servants, and suffering with sickness and violent illnesses together with intense, continuous suffering. Unbearable compassion arises as one meditates, forming a clear vision of those for whom death is near. Those of the higher realms of gods, men, and so forth, moreover, are one's mother.

Human beings continually experience the eight sufferings. Continually confused by the joy and happiness of this life, which is merely a dream, one doesn't know when it will be exhausted. One experiences old age and sickness; one is powerless to do anything as one is drawn along by the lord of death, together with the fear and apprehension of all these.

How could one not have love and compassion for those beings who do not have a protector and refuge who has gone beyond?

e. Compassion for those in the god realms

Like this, the suffering, quarreling, and fighting of those born in the asura realm are like the sufferings of the Reviving Hell. Those born in the god realm who are distracted by temporary pleasure do not know when that will be exhausted. In the end, the only thing they can experience is the suffering of the six classes of beings. Moreover, these beings will be stricken by the suffering of changing and falling at the time of death.

How could one not have a noble heart of compassion?

f. Benefits and qualities of the meditation on compassion

In brief, all sentient beings from time without beginning have been experiencing the suffering of samsara, unbroken for even an instant. Furthermore, now in dependence on clinging to the self, and through not knowing what to accept and what to reject or that the cause of happiness is the practice of virtue, one gives rise to the five poisons in one's mind. Through one's own practice of non-virtuous action, one wanders endlessly in samsara and the lower realms. In an insane fashion, one destroys one's own life. Sentient beings are like moths flying into a flame. Who could not ennoble their heart for them? Who could not generate compassion for them?

The meditation on compassion is the wish for all those to be free of suffering together with its causes.

(FN-This consideration of the actual suffering of sentient beings is the visualization of compassion based on ordinary beings. The meditation on compassion regarding phenomena is the consideration of the actions that cause suffering.)

In this way, if one has completely integrated this compassion, if one places the benefit of others uppermost in one's consideration, entering the fires of hell is like the joy of entering the *gyal bu sked* grove. To elaborate on this, give rise to certainty in not looking at things in terms of one's own happiness. This is the root of all the Mahayana Dharma. If one has not integrated this into

one's stream of being, bodhicitta is mere words. It is important to meditate on this diligently. The limitless qualities and benefits are spoken in the sutras.

3. THE MEDITATION ON BODHICITTA

From the *Vajra Verses of the Five-fold Mahamudra Upadesha*:

There are two types of bodhicitta, relative and absolute.

The first category is divided into two: aspirational and engaged.

Regarding this, the first is a wish, and later one engages in accomplishment of this wish. To accomplish both of these, there are vows.

It is necessary to perfect the trainings of:

- The divisions of the four causes of abiding
- The twenty-two examples
- The four grounds
- The two essences
- The method of taking up
- That which is abandoned and that which is accepted

These are the complete trainings which are needed. The expanded teaching of this is in the *Tuks bskyed chen mo*¹⁰. The abbreviated teaching is to practice whatever one is able to practice. One should definitely develop understanding of these trainings.

Thus, it is said.

From the two types of bodhicitta, relative and ultimate, the ultimate bodhicitta is as is taught in the main practice, Mahamudra. From the two types of relative bodhicitta, aspiration and application, first there is the wish to attain Buddhahood for the purpose of benefitting all sentient beings. This is aspiration, exemplified as a wish to go somewhere. Then, one takes up the bodhisattva training. One works to accomplish Buddhahood, or engages oneself in the practice of Buddhahood, which is like the action of actually going.

a. The training in aspiration

Causes: There are two causes for giving rise to bodhicitta. The abiding cause is membership in the Mahayana family. The causes of giving rise are:

1. Believing that one's lama is a buddha
2. Gathering the vast accumulations
3. Meditating on the Four Immeasurables
4. The extraordinary practice of going for refuge

¹⁰ By Jigten Sumgön

Examples: If one were to make divisions in terms of examples, the *Abhidharmakosa* (*Mngonrtogs gyen*) says:

Moreover, the earth, gold, moon, and fire . . .

Thus, and so forth, it is said—the twenty-two.¹¹

Grounds: If one were to make divisions in terms of the demarcations of the bhumis:

1. Giving rise to bodhicitta through interested activities on the paths of accumulation and application
2. Giving rise to bodhicitta through pure intention on the first through seventh bhumis
3. Giving rise to fully mature bodhicitta on the final pure three bhumis
4. Giving rise to bodhicitta by abandoning obscurations which is the state of Buddhahood

These are the four.

Essence: If one were to make divisions in terms of essence, there are two--aspiration and application. Considering the teachings given immediately above, particularly those regarding the path of application, aspiration is a commitment based on fruition, and application is a commitment based on cause.

Method of Taking up: To practice this extensively, it is necessary to take up the path as presented in the *Tuk skyed chen mo* of the Drigungpa, Jigten Sumgön. If abbreviated, one should do this practice as described below in this text:

1. Implementation
2. The main practice
3. The concluding practice

1. *Implementation*

First, it is necessary to implement the four causes of generating the mind of enlightenment, as previously taught.

1.1 The first cause is generating the thought that the lama is the Buddha. Clearly visualize that in the sky in front, above a four-tiered seat, is one's root lama, the Bhagavan Buddha Shakyamuni, golden in color, with the marks and characteristics of perfection. The right hand is in the earth-touching mudra; the left, in the mudra of meditative equipoise. His feet are placed in lotus posture. He is wearing the three Dharma robes. Light radiates to the retinue, the surrounding

¹¹ These are four of the 22 similes. The rest are: treasure, jewel mine, ocean, vajra, mountain, medicine, spiritual master, wish-fulfilling jewel, sun, melody, king, treasury, highway, conveyance, well, elegant sound, river, and cloud. These metaphors are explained clearly in *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, Chapter 9.

buddhas, the eight close children and so forth—the bodhisattvas, the assembly of yidam deities, the dakinis, and the Dharma protectors.

1.2 The second cause is gathering the two vast accumulations.

(i) First, gathering the accumulation of merit. As is taught in the *Aspiration for Excellent Conduct*, the *Bodhicaryavatara* and so forth, one should practice the expanded seven branches. (FN-These are: prostrations, offering, confession, rejoicing, prayers to turn the wheel of the Dharma, requesting the buddhas to remain, and dedication of merit.) If one wishes to abbreviate, one should recite:

Prostrations, offerings, and confession,
Rejoicing, praying, requesting,
However slight the merit I have accumulated,
I dedicate it all to attaining enlightenment.

And so forth.

(ii) Second, gathering the accumulation of wisdom. In an instant, rest with equanimity in a completely non-conceptual state.

1.3 The third cause is meditation on the Four Immeasurables.

May all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.

(FN-Love is the desire that all sentient beings have happiness.)

May all sentient beings be free of suffering and the causes of suffering.

(FN-Compassion is the desire for all sentient beings to be free of suffering.)

May all sentient beings have happiness and be free of suffering.

(FN-Joy is the wish for all sentient beings not to be separated from happiness.)

May all sentient beings abide in the equanimity free of the two, near and far, attachment and aversion.

(FN-Equanimity is the thought of the equality of all without bias or favoritism, or near and far.)

(FN-Meditate on these with certainty, mixing the meaning with one's stream of being.)

1.4 Fourth, the special practice of going for refuge.

(FN-It is said to be special because the meaning is different from the Hinayana practice of going for refuge. This practice is special regarding the time for which one goes for refuge because one is going for refuge until one achieves enlightenment. This practice is special regarding the motivation of going for refuge because it is to benefit others. This practice is special regarding the objects of refuge because they are the Three Jewels of the Mahayana.)

Until the heart of enlightenment is reached,
I go for refuge to the buddhas
and to the Dharma and the bodhisattvas.

In the manner of the assembly of enlightened beings, I go for refuge.
From the depths of the heart, recite this many times.

2. *The Main Practice*

Previously, the buddhas generated the mind of enlightenment. Clearly remember the example of all the buddhas abiding in the training of bodhicitta. One generates bodhicitta as they did. Reflecting on the training of bodhicitta, contemplate with certainty on mixing one's mind stream with the thoughts of this training. Regarding this, one should recite the following as many times as possible:

Just as the previous Tathagatas
Generated the mind of enlightenment,
Just as they trained in stages
In the mind of enlightenment,
I will train in stages
By generating the mind of enlightenment
For the purpose of benefitting beings in that way.

3. *The Concluding Practice*, in three parts:

- 3.1 Rejoicing for self
- 3.2 Not dishonoring the Mahayana family
- 3.3 Giving joy to others by taking care of them

3.1 First, recite:

With this precious human body I could achieve great result.
Today I am born in the Buddha's family and now I am a son
or daughter of the bodhisattvas.

3.2 Second, recite:

Now, no matter what happens, I will make effort according
to the Mahayana family.
I will never contaminate this stainless, saintly family.

3.3. Third, recite:

In front of all the protectors, I promise today to establish
all the migrators into the Sugata (well-gone) state.
Meanwhile, for their happiness, I invite all to be my guests.
I bring all sentient beings to joy, including gods and demigods.

Recite these with a clear understanding regarding the meaning of each and every word.

The training in aspiration bodhicitta:

One should not damage one's training in going for refuge.
One should remember the benefits and qualities of bodhicitta.
In one's mind, one should not abandon even one sentient being.
The four wholesome and unwholesome dharmas—
These are what should be rejected and accepted.

One abandons the four unwholesome dharmas:

1. Deceiving the lama (FN-from whom one has received great kindness) and those worthy of receiving offerings (FN-those who act in accordance with the holy Dharma);
2. Harboring a mind of hatred and expressing the faults of a bodhisattva who has generated the mind of enlightenment;
3. Causing regret in others for accomplishing the roots of virtue, such as giving rise to the mind of enlightenment; and
4. Deceiving sentient beings. (FN-This is the wish to cheat others, deceptive actions in business such as shortchanging someone or selling less than the agreed upon measure of goods, and other unethical business practices.)

These are the unwholesome dharmas.

One takes up the four wholesome dharmas as antidotes to the above:

1. One should have respect for the lama and those worthy of offerings, and not tell lies to them.
2. One should give rise to the thought that regards all the bodhisattvas as buddhas, and express their qualities.
3. One should encourage other beings in virtuous practices, such as generating the mind of enlightenment.
4. Having this faultless, all-trusted intention, one should rejoice in sentient beings.

These are the wholesome dharmas to be practiced.

The training in applied bodhicitta

There are three trainings:

1. Restraining from misbehavior
2. Accumulating the virtuous dharma
3. Morality for the welfare of other sentient beings

Regarding the first, *Restraining from Misbehavior*:

- a. Praising oneself and denigrating others based on attachment to gaining wealth, honor, and respect. (FN-praising oneself and blaming others; if you want to make divisions,

there are the eight worldly dharmas.)

- b. With stinginess, not being generous with the Dharma and wealth to those who are suffering and without protection.
- c. Angrily punishing others without accepting their apology.
- d. Abandoning the Mahayana vehicle, and then giving false teachings.

These four, and so forth, are the violations [of the root of the bodhisattva's vow] that are the same defeats as in the vinaya.

Regarding the second, *Gathering the Accumulations*:

- a. With a generous mind, giving to sentient beings without attachment to all your possessions and to the result for oneself.
- b. With a disciplined mind, abandoning the practice of non-virtue through the three doors.
- c. Being tolerant of being harmed by others, and of sadness and tiredness; patience which is not afraid of suchness.
- d. Perseverance is the perfect joy in virtue.
- e. The samadhi in which the mind is one-pointed on virtue.
- f. The wisdom which realizes the intrinsic nature of dharmas.

Practice all kinds of virtues, such as the six paramitas, and so forth.

Regarding the third, *Regarding the Morality for the Welfare of other Sentient Beings*:

- a. In actuality or in one's mind stream, one should continually work toward or accomplish the benefit and happiness of beings—common individuals, those who have entered the Dharma and are established in the doctrine, and beings who have aversion and so forth to the Dharma.
- b. In this way, one should examine all one's thoughts and actions, day and night, to see if there are contradictions with the training of the bodhicitta of application and intention. If there has been a contradiction, one should confess this within the session or without the passing of day and night. If there is no contradiction, one should meditate with rejoicing and recite dedication prayers.
- c. In brief, in all one's activities on the path [i.e., post-meditation], if there is diligence that is not separate from the thought that all mother sentient beings, equal in extent to space, should have happiness, be free from suffering, and quickly attain the unsurpassable, complete, perfect enlightenment, which is precious, all the bodhisattva vows are collected into this.

If one holds this generation of the mind of bodhicitta, even with a single root of virtue, this becomes the completion of the three disciplines or the six paramitas.

The benefits and qualities

Regarding the benefits and qualities of the meditation presented here, from the *Phal po che* (*Avatamsaka Sutra*):

This most holy bodhicitta is the treasury of merit.

From this, excellently arise the buddhas of the three times. From this, all the happiness of worldly beings in samsara arise. From this, arise all the goodness, which is praised by the Buddha. There is no doubt that this will make you Lord of the Buddhas. This exhausts all the obscurations of the world.

Thus, it is said.

Because generating bodhicitta is the source of all the happiness in samsara and all—as many as there are—of the qualities of the shravaka, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas, if one does not generate bodhicitta, it is impossible to achieve Buddhahood by practicing the instructions of the generation and completion stages of the unsurpassable tantra. If it is present, one cannot help but achieve enlightenment effortlessly. Even Mara, who deceitfully generated Bodhicitta, will achieve enlightenment, as prophesied by the Buddha. Moreover, because all phenomena are the embodiment of mind, the hell realms are the embodiment of the mind of aversion. In this way, the Buddha himself is the embodiment of bodhicitta itself.

Gong-chig says:

The Buddha is the embodiment of bodhicitta.

Thus, it is said.

These three special preliminaries, the expression of the three turnings, are the most important root of the path. One should meditate with diligence until certainty has arisen in one's mind-stream.