**Ngöndro Instructions – the Practice of Refuge and Bodhicitta**

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|  |  | *The preliminary instructions* |
| Pg 1 | PAL DEN TSA WAI… | Begin with the prayer to the Root Lama. Visualize the lama as Dorje Chang (Vajradhara) directly above your head, seated on a lotus and moon seat, facing forward. |
| Pg 3 | DANG PO GOM JA… | Recite the 4 thoughts that turn the mind to dharma. Contemplate all or one of the thoughts each session. |
|  |  | *The refuge practice* |
| Pg 7 | DUN DU TSO U… | Generate the Refuge practice visualization, in the space in front of you.  You and all beings are in vast meadow, covered with lush green grass and many kinds of wildflowers. In the center of the meadow is a lake whose water is pure and tranquil. Birds sing and the whole environment is wholesome in every way.  Standing in the meadow, you are surrounded by all sentient beings. On your left is your mother, and on the right, your father. Your siblings are likewise there. Behind you are those with whom you have positive relationships and in front of you are those with whom you have challenging relationships. Consider yourself the invitee of this gathering as they join you in doing prostrations and recitations.  In the center of the lake is a majestic tree. In the tree are all the sources of refuge: the Three Jewels and the Three Roots.[[1]](#footnote-1) The roots of the tree are firmly embedded in the earth. The trunk of the tree has 5 branches. There are branches growing in each of the four directions, and one that grows straight up.  On the central branch, where all the branches come together is a jeweled throne, held aloft by 8 snow lions, white with blue manes. Atop the throne is a lotus, sun and moon seat. On this seat is one’s root lama in the form of Dorje Chang (Vajradhara). Dorje Chang is deep blue in color, appearing as male. He has a vajra in his right hand and a bell in the left. His arms are crossed, right over left. He is seated in vajra position (legs in full lotus position). He has the usual jewels and ornaments.  In a column above his head are the masters of the lineage. At the top of this column, Dorje Chang again appears. The lineage masters are surrounded by all the lamas and masters of of the various lineages of the Dharma.  On the front branch are yidams. The central figure is Korlo Demchog (Chakrasamvara) There are peaceful, semi-wrathful and wrathful yidams, in various postures.  On the branch to Dorje Chang’s right are the Buddhas. In the center of this assembly is Shakyamuni Buddha, who is surrounded by buddhas of the past and future. Each buddha is clothed in monastic robes, seated on a lotus and moon seat.  On the back branch are a mountain of dharma texts, wrapped in brocade. The texts are written in syllables of light and they murmur their meaning, for the benefit of beings.    On the left branch is the Noble Sangha, vast in number. In the center of the assembly is Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara). Among them are included the Bodhisattvas of the ten stages, such as Avalokitesvara, the many Taras, Manjushri, Vajrapani and so forth. The Pratyekabuddhas and Shravakas who have attained the stages of Arhatship; and the complete assembly of Arhats.  Below the branches are the assembly of Dharmapalas (Protectors), arranged around the trunk of the tree. The central figures are Bernachen, the two-armed protector of the Karma Kagyu, and the six-armed protector particular to the Shangpa Kagyu—Chakdrupa.  The assembly of each of the sources of refuge appears as a vast, unlimited cloud. They all radiate light. This light touches you and all sentient beings equally, without exception. Each one receives the full measure of light. The rays of light create a palpable effect, like the warmth of the sun on a cool day. |
| Pg 9 | DAK DANG NAM KAI… | Stand. Recite the prayer one time, addressing the sources of refuge. |
| Pg 10 | PAL DEN LA MA… | Recite the refuge prayer while doing prostrations (full-length bows). Do one recitation for each prostration. To do the prostrations, stand with the palms of your hands joined together at the heart. Leave a little space between the palms, as if holding a large jewel. Raise the joined hands to the forehead. Then lower the hands to the throat center. Next, to the heart center, mid-chest. Now, prostrate yourself to the floor, stretching the body to the full length, palms down, sliding along the floor. End with arms fully extended, palms down. Rise to standing immediately. Do not stop mid-prostration. After completing the last prostration, end by rising to stand, raising your joined hands (as before) to the three places as before, this time ending at the heart center. If you are not able to do prostrations, recite twice the number of refuge prayers. |
|  |  | *The Bodhisattva Vow – Recite three times.* |
| Pg 11 | CHANG CHUB NYING PO | Kneel with the right knee on the ground, and the left knee up. Join the hands together in the mudra as before, at the heart level. |
| Pg 12 | DENG DU DAK TSE… | Recite the prayers of aspiration and rejoicing. |
| Pg 14 | CHANG CHUB SEM NI… | Recite these prayers and cultivate the mind of bodhicitta. |
| Pg 16 | SEM CHEN TAM CHE… | Recite the Four Immeasurables prayer three times. |
| Pg 17 | TA MAR KYAB YUL… | Now visualize the environment swirling into a mass of light that dissolves into the objects of refuge. Next, the objects of refuge dissolve into you.  Alternatively, you can visualize that the objects of refuge dissolve into Dorje Chang. Then Dorje Chang dissolves into light, which dissolves into you, through the crown of your head.  There are other alternatives. See the text. |
|  |  | *Dedication* |
| Pg 63 | GEN DI DRO WA… | Finish this session by dedicating the merit to the awakening of all beings. [[2]](#footnote-2) |

1. The Three Jewels are the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The Three Roots include the Guru, who is the root of all blessings; the Yidam, who is the root of accomplishment; and the Dakini (Tib. Khandro), who is the root of enlightened activity. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This handout created for the ‘Ngondro – Refuge and Bodhicitta’ class in spring of 2024, by Lama Lekshe for students at Dekeling. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)