

Ngöndro Instructions – the Practice of Refuge and Bodhicitta

		<i>The preliminary instructions</i>
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.
		<i>The refuge practice</i>
Pg 7	DUN DU TSO U...	<p>Generate the Refuge practice visualization, in the space in front of you.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 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.</p> <p>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.</p>


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.


		<p>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 the various lineages of the Dharma.</p> <p>On the front branch are yidams. The central figure is Korlo Demchog (Chakrasamvara) There are peaceful, semi-wrathful and wrathful yidams, in various postures.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Pg 9	DAK DANG NAM KAI...	<i>Stand.</i> 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.
		<i>The Bodhisattva Vow – Recite three times</i>
Pg 11	CHANG CHUB NYING PO	<i>Kneel</i> 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...	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>There are other alternatives. See the text.</p>
		<i>Dedication</i>
Pg 63	GEN DI DRO WA...	Finish this session by dedicating the merit to the awakening of all beings. ²

² This handout created for the ‘Ngondro – Refuge and Bodhicitta’ class and supplemented for the Vajrasattva practice class in spring of 2024, by Lama Lekshe for students at Dekeling.

Ngöndro Instructions – the Practice of Vajrasattva (Dorje Sempa)

		<i>The Preliminary recitations</i>
Pg 1	PAL DEN TSA WAI...	<p>(If only doing Vajrasattva) Begin the session 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.</p> <p>Recite refuge and bodhicitta prayers from the Refuge section of Ngondro (pages 8 - 10).</p>
		<i>Vajrasattva main visualization</i>
Pg 19	RANG GI CHI WOR... 	<p>Creating the visualization and addressing Vajrasattva</p> <p>A white Tibetan syllable PAM sits just above the crown of your head and changes into a white louts.</p> <p>A white Tibetan syllable AH sits atop the lotus and changes into a flat moon disk.</p> <p>A white Tibetan syllable HUNG sits atop the lotus and moon and changes into a white, 5 pronged vajra marked with a white syllable HUNG. (see images for these visualizations in the handouts)</p> <p>From the HUNG on the dorje light radiates in all directions benefitting all sentient beings and making offerings to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Light returns from the Noble Ones and enters the Hung. The entire dorje is transformed into Vajrasattva (Dorje Sempa), inseparable from our root lama.</p> <p>Vajrasattva is white, with one face and two arms. His right hand holds a five pronged golden vajra at his heart, his left, a silver bell upturned at his hip. He wears silk garments, a jeweled crown and other ornaments. On the crown of his head is Buddha Akshobya.</p> <p>In thangkas and statues he is in the vajra posture (full lotus), but for this practice, he is in the Bodhisattva pose, right leg slightly extended and his left folded inward. Vajrasattva is clear and emits measureless light. His form lacks substantiality, like a reflection of the moon in water.</p>

		<p>Three syllables mark his three places. A white Tibetan syllable OM at the forehead is the mark of enlightened body or form. A red Tibetan syllable AH at the throat is the mark of enlightened speech. A blue Tibetan syllable HUNG at the heart is a mark of enlightened mind.</p> <p>A white <i>Hung</i> stands on a lotus and moon seat in his heart. The white letters of the hundred-syllable mantra stand in a circle around the <i>Hung</i>.</p> <p>They are arranged counter-clockwise, beginning in front and facing outward (towards you). Light radiates from the mantra inviting the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times who all dissolve into Vajrasattva. He becomes the essence or unity of all the Precious Ones.</p>
Pg 20	LAMA DORJE SEMPA...	Pray to Vajrasattva (Dorje Sempa) on behalf of all beings for the removal of harmful acts and obscurations.
		<i>Recitation of the mantra</i>
Pg 20	SOL WA TAB PE...	Visual the process of purification.
Pg 22	OM BENZRA SATO...	<p>Recite the mantra as many times as you wish for the session. After completing the recitation of the hundred syllable mantra, recite an equal number of Vajrasattva's short mantra, OM BENZRA SATO HUNG.</p> <p>As the mantra is recited, white elixir pours down from the HUNG and circle of mantra letters in his heart, entirely filling Vajrasattva's form. It streams out the big toe of his right foot and enters your body through the crown of your head.</p> <p>As the elixir fills your form, meditate that it expels all mental confusion, the obscuring karma of past harmful deeds, diseases, and other physical obstacles. These are expelled through all the orifices and pores of the body in the form of dark substances like ink and soot, bodily substances like blood and pus, and various forms of insects. All of these are absorbed into the ground which is visualized as vast and golden. Your own flesh and blood is washed away-- you have the insubstantial clear body of an enlightened being, like a transparent container filled with elixir.</p> <p>Throughout the meditation the sole occupation of the mind should be the form of the divinity, the sound of the mantra, and the purifying visualization.</p>

		<p><i>The Four Powers</i></p> <p>To purify ourselves there are forces or powers that must be in effect. Traditionally, these are four:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The power of remorse. Appreciation of the negative effects of any given action, tendency, or level of confusion in ourselves and our sincere desire to remove this. The power to renounce and regret as vigorously as if you had swallowed poison. 2. The power of resolve, determination not to repeat a harmful deed. The promise or commitment to ourselves that having divorced ourselves from the above negativities, we will not reinforce them in the future. We commit to a positive direction. 3. The power of support, reliance. The support of different vows we have taken. The power to rely on Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude. Receiving Vajrayana empowerment, especially Vajrasattva, increases the efficacy of the practice because it greatly increases the power of reliance. 4. The power of techniques used as a remedy—in this case Vajrasattva meditation. The power to carry out all types of remedial wholesome acts to purify harmful ones.
		<i>Closing prayers and formless meditation</i>
Pg 23	GON PO DAK NI...	Joining your palms in a gesture of devotion, recite the prayer of confession.
Pg 23	DORJE SEM PE...	<p>Vajrasattva is pleased and smiling and assures you that your harmful deeds, obscurations, and transgressions are purified. He dissolves into light which is absorbed into your form. Your own form, speech and mind and those of Vajrasattva's are inseparable.</p> <p>Let your mind rest without conceptualizing.</p>
		<i>Dedication</i>
Pg 63	GEN DI DRO WA	Recite the dedication prayers.