BRIEF RECITATIONS for the
FOUR PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

GYALWANG KARMAPA
OGYEN TRINLEY DORJE
Brief Recitations
For the
Four Preliminary Practices

by

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Ogyen Trinley Dorje

Dharma Ebooks
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dor je chang chen te lo na ro dang
Great Vajradhara, Telo, Naropa,

མར་པ་མི་ལ་ཆོས་ེ་མ་པོ་པ། །

mar pa mi la chö je gam po pa
Marpa, Mila, Dharma Lord Gampopa,

དུ་སུམ་ཤེས་་ན་མེན་ཀ་པ། །

dū sum she ja kün khyen kar ma pa
The knower of three times, omniscient Karmapa,

ཆེ་བཞི་ང་བད་བད་པར་འཛན་མས་དང༌། །

che shi chung gye gyü par dzin nam dang
Those who hold the four elder and eight younger lineages,

འི་ག་ཚལ་གམ་དཔལ་ན་འག་པ་སོགས། །

dri tak tsal sum pal den druk pa sok
The Drikung and Taklung and Tsalpa, great Drukpa,

ཟབ་ལམ་ག་་ཆེ་ལ་མངའ་བེས་པའི། །

sap lam chak gya che la nga nye pay
And others who’ve mastered mahamudra’s profound path,
Unequaled protectors of beings, Dakpo Kagyu,

We supplicate you. Kagyu gurus, we uphold

Your lineage: Please bless us to follow your example.

Detachment’s the foot of meditation, as it’s taught.

As ones with no craving for food or for wealth,

Who cut all the ties to this life: Please bless us

To have no attachment to honor or to gain.
Devotion’s the head of meditation, as it’s taught.

As ones who pray always to the lama who opens

The gate to the treasury of oral instructions:

Please bless us to develop genuine devotion.

The main practice is being undistracted, as it’s taught.

As ones who whatever arises, rest simply,

Not altering, in just that fresh essence of thought:
gom ja lo dang dral war jin gyi lop
Please bless us with practice that’s free of conception.

nam tok ngo wo chö kur sung pa shin
The essence of thought’s the dharmakaya, as it’s taught.

chi yang ma yin chir yang char wa la
Not anything at all, yet arising as anything,

ma gak röl par char way gom chen la
In unceasing play we arise: Please bless us

khor de yer me tok par jin gyi lop
To realize samsara and nirvana inseparable.

kye wa kün tu yang dak la ma dang
In all of our births may we never be separate

dral me chö kyi pal la long chö ching
From the perfect guru, enjoying dharma’s splendor.
完美善行路径与层次，
迅速达到金刚亥母境。

Composed by Pengar Jampel Sangpo.
1. The Precious Human Body

dang po gom ja dal jor rin chen di
First meditate on this precious human body, so hard to get and easy to lose.

I shall make this life meaningful!

2. Death and Impermanence

nyi pa nö chü tam che mi tak ching
Second, the world and living beings are impermanent.

Our lives in particular are like water bubbles—

Who knows when we will die and become corpses?
Since Dharma will help then, I’ll practice diligently.

Third, there is no freedom at the time of death.

In order to take control over karma,

I give up misdeeds and always do virtuous acts.

Thinking thus, I examine myself every day.

4. The Defects of Samsara
Fourth, the places, friends, pleasures, and riches of samsara,
Are always stricken with the three sufferings;
They’re like a feast before being led to execution.
Cutting the ties of attachment, I’ll strive and reach enlightenment.
Glorious, powerful, omnipresent Lord Vajradhara, principal of all Buddha families—Guru Karmapa,

Origin of all maṇḍalas, glory of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—Yidam Vajrayoginī,

Those who have power over enlightened activity—dharma protectors Bernakchen and consort,

This yogi bows to you with one-pointed respect—please protect me forever with your noble compassion.

Once individuals have purified their mindstreams with the common preliminary practices, they should excellently request empowerment and instruction from a qualified guru and then train in the recitation meditation of Mahāmudrā’s extraordinary preliminary practices as follows:
First, so that everything you do will accord with the dharma, go for refuge and give rise to bodhichitta in two ways: during meditation sessions and in between meditation sessions. During meditation sessions, leave worldly concerns and other activities aside, sit in a proper meditation posture on a comfortable seat, and recite:

Before me in the sky is the Guru Vajradhara,

Surrounded by the gurus of the lineage of meaning and blessings

And gurus with whom I have dharmic connections of faith.

In front are the yidams, to the right are the buddhas.
བ་་དམ་ཆོས་གཡོན་་དགེ་འན་བཅས། །

gyap tu dam chö yön du gen dün che
Behind is the sacred dharma; to the left, the sangha.

rang rang rik tun khor tsok gya tsoy kor
All are surrounded by ocean-like retinues of their own kind.

kyap yul kün gyi chen lam ok chok su
My mothers, sentient beings, and I stand together

ma gyur sem chen kün kyang khö gyur pay
As the sources of refuge gaze down upon us.

tse chik yi kyi kyap dro sem kye gyur
One-pointedly, we go for refuge and arouse bodhichitta.

dak dang sem chen tam che la ma la kyap su chi o
All sentient beings and I go for refuge to the gurus.

yi dam lha la kyap su chi o
We go for refuge to the yidams.
Go to these five jewels for refuge as many times as possible. Maintaining the same visualization, arouse bodhichitta:

I go for refuge to the buddhas.

To the dharma and the assembly
Of bodhisattvas, too, I go for refuge.

Just as the sugatas of the past
Aroused the mind of bodhichitta;
Just as they followed step-by-step
The training of the bodhisattvas,
So, too, shall I, to benefit wanderers
Arouse the mind of bodhichitta.
de shin du ni lap pa la
So, too, shall I follow step-by-step,

rim pa shin du lap par gyi
The bodhisattva’s training. *(Recite three times.)*

*Then recite the following:*

jang chup sem chok rin po che
May precious and supreme bodhichitta

ma kye pa nam kye gyur chik
Arise where it has not arisen,

kye pa nyam pa me pa dang
Not diminish where it has arisen,

gong ne gong du pel war shok
And continually increase and increase.

*Finally, the sources of refuge melt into light and then become one with me.*
Second, between sessions, do not be indifferent. Take up the antidotes: Strive to increase devotion to the guru, to develop as much faith in the rare and supreme jewels as possible, and to have greater and greater compassion for sentient beings.
Guru Vajrasattva
The Vajrasattva meditation and recitation practice, which purifies negativity and obscurations, has two parts. First, during meditation sessions, recite:

*rang gi cha rpo pa day den gyi teng*

Above the crown of my head, on a lotus-moon seat,

*la ma dor je sem pa gyen den kar*

Is Guru Vajrasattva, white in color, adorned with ornaments,

*shal chik chak nyi ye pay dor je dang*

With one face and two arms,

*yön pay dril bu dzin ching kyil trung shuk*

Holding a vajra with his right hand and a bell with his left, and seated in vajra posture.
Clearly visualize at Vajrasattva’s heart center a moon disc, upon which sits a ིུམ (HŪṂ), encircled by the mantra garland. Due to your supplicating him, a stream of amṛita fills his body and descends from his right big toe, entering the Brahma aperture at the top of your head. All your obscurations and past negative actions, embodied in a substance that looks like ink or dark smoke, leave your body as all of your body’s parts are filled with amṛita. While doing this visualization, recite Vajrasattva’s mantra as many times as you can:

OṂ VAJRASATTVA SAMAYAM ANUPĀLAYA VAJRASATTVA
tvenopatiṣṭṭha dṛḍho me bhava sutoṣhya me bhava
suṇoṣhya me bhava anurakto me bhava sarva-siddhi me
prayaccha sarva-karmasu cha me chittaṃ shreyah
kuru hūṃ ha ha ha hoḥ bhagavan sarva-tathāgata
vajrā mā me muñcha vajrī bhava mahāsamayasattva āḥ

OṂ VAJRASATTVA HŪṂ

Then, confess your past negative actions and vow not to perform them again by reciting the following:

ཐམས་ཅད་མེན་གཟིགས་་མས་དགོངས་་གསོལ། །
tam che khyen sik lha nam gong su söl
Noble ones who know and see everything, think of us.
Since beginningless time, under the power of the three poisons,

We have transgressed the three vows and the victors’ commands

In body, speech, and mind.

We admit and confess these downfalls and misdeeds

And promise not to do them again—may we not experience their results.

Saying this, confess and resolve not to repeat your misdeeds. Vajrasattva says, “Your misdeeds are purified,” and is pleased. He melts into light and dissolves into you. Rest in equipoise.
Second, between sessions: whatever afflictions or thoughts arise, be mindful of them as soon as they arise. Completely cut through them and rest in freedom from fixation. Whatever sentient beings you see, hear, or think of—especially those who have done terrible misdeeds—visualize Vajrasattva above their heads and recite the hundred-syllable mantra.
The maṇḍala ritual, which completes the two accumulations, has two parts. First, during meditation sessions, there are two types of maṇḍalas: the maṇḍala of accomplishment, the field of focus for one’s gathering of the two accumulations, and the offering maṇḍala, which contains the substances offered. For the first of these, the maṇḍala’s physical base may be made of any suitable material. Visualize that in its center and each of its four directions there are lotus flowers, upon each of which stand eight lions supporting a throne made of precious jewels, upon which is a lotus, sun, and moon seat. On these central thrones sit the gurus, in front sit the yidams, to the right the buddhas, behind the dharma, and to the left the sangha—so are the rare and supreme jewels arrayed. The dharma protectors guard the maṇḍala’s perimeter. While remembering its meaning, offer the seven branches:

ok min chö kyi ying kyi po drang du
In the dharma expanse palace of Akaniṣṭha
Is the essence of all buddhas of the three times,

Who directly shows my mind as dharmakāya:

I prostrate to the genuine, glorious guru.

My body, possessions, and all the pleasing things I can imagine,

I offer you; I praise you.

I confess all the misdeeds I have performed

And will never do such things again.
I rejoice in all sentient beings’ virtuous actions.

I dedicate all this as a cause of supreme enlightenment.

I supplicate you to remain and not pass into nirvāṇa.

Please turn the dharma wheel of the unsurpassably supreme vehicle.

Just as the victors and their heirs mastered

Universal love and compassion, and realized

The ultimate co-emergent wisdom,
བདག་གིས་མངོན་མ་ོགས་པར་ིན་ིས་ོབས།

Bless me that I may directly realize that.

Next, pick up the offering maṇḍala and recite:

ས་གཞི་ོས་ས་གས་ཤིང་མེ་ཏོག་བམ།

The earth is perfumed with scented water and strewn with flowers,

རི་རབ་ིང་བཞི་ཉི་ས་བན་པ་འདི།

Adorned with Mount Meru, the four continents, sun, and moon.

སངས་ས་ཞིང་་དམིགས་ཏེ་ལ་བ་ཡིས།

Visualizing this as the buddha realm, I offer it

འོ་ན་མ་དག་ཞིང་ལ་ོད་པར་ཤོག །

So that all beings may enjoy this perfectly pure realm.

IDAM GURU RATNA MAṆḌALA KHAṂ NĪRYATAYA MI
Combine the maṇḍala recitation and meditation and offer the maṇḍala until your visualization of it is vivid. Finally, rest in equipoise, free of thoughts of the offering’s three spheres.

Second, in between meditation sessions, abandon self-centered attachment and offer your three gates to the guru and the rare and supreme jewels. Especially, offer respect, service, and veneration to these sources of refuge and their symbolic representations.
Guru yoga, which quickly brings blessings, has two parts. First, during meditation sessions, there are the common and the extraordinary ways to do this practice. Here, do the former by visualizing yourself as your yidam and then reciting:

chi wor pe ma nyi day den teng du
Above the crown of my head, on a lotus, sun, and moon seat,

tsa way la ma dor je chang wang po
Is my root guru, the mighty Vajradhara,

ngo sang dor dril dzin pay chak gya nöl
Sky-blue, holding vajra and bell in his crossed arms,

rin chen gyen dze tsen pe rap tu bar
Beautified by precious ornaments, blazing with major and minor marks,
chok dü gyal kün dü pay ngo wor sal
The vivid embodiment of all ten directions and three times’ victorious ones.

Recite the seven-branch prayer as above and then the supplication of the four kāyas:

I and all my mother sentient beings, as great in number as space is vast,
suppliant the guru, the precious buddha.

I and all my mother sentient beings, as great in number as space is vast,
suppliant the guru, all-pervading dharmakāya.

I and all my mother sentient beings, as great in number as space is vast,
suppliant the guru, great bliss sambhogakāya.
I and all my mother sentient beings, as great in number as space is vast, supplicate the guru, great compassionate nirmāṇakāya.

Then, recite:

Precious guru

Who holds the lineage of meaning,

Who gives us blessings,

Who has the confidence of realization,
ngon she chen dang den pa
Who has the clairvoyances and eyes,

dzu trul kö pa ten te
Who shows arrays of miracles,

sö me ka drin tsol wa
Who gives unbearable kindness,

sang gye lak chang su tö pa
Who places buddhahood in our palms,

ta mal nang wa gyur te
Who transforms ordinary appearances

dak pa rap jam tön pa
And shows infinite purity,

pak pa jik ten wang chuk
You are the noble Lokeshvara.
From the depths of my heart,
I supplicate you, the all-capable.
Please hold me with your compassion.
The undisputed Kagyü lineage
Holds the power of the siddhis,
And can tame wild sentient beings—
Your enlightened activity is peerless.
dzog pay sang gye dam pa
You are the genuine and perfect Buddha.

go sum ge tsa dang che pa
For the benefit of all the limitless sentient beings,

ta me sem chen dön du
This very moment, I offer you

da ta nyi du bül lo
My body, speech, and mind, and all my roots of virtue.

tse wa chen poy she shik
Please accept them with your great love.

she ne dro wa kün gyi
Having accepted them,

ten kyap tuk pay la ma
O lord and guru, ultimate protector
Of all wandering beings,
Please bless me that I might become like you.

Recite “Karmapa, think of me” (Karmapa Khyenno) and other supplications at length. Visualize that the Guru Vajradhara is utterly pleased, and that from the three places on his enlightened form emanate white, red, and blue light respectively. These purify the stains of your own three gates, you receive the four empowerments, and you manifest the four kāyas. Finally, the guru melts into light and dissolves into you. Rest in the equipoise of the guru’s enlightened body, speech, and mind and your own body, speech, and mind being undifferentiable.

Second, in between meditation sessions, in all paths of conduct, never be apart from the appearance of the guru. View all happiness and suffering as the guru’s kindness. Do not let your lord’s intentions and your own desires contradict each other, but rather, pray again and again that his enlightened mind and your own mind will mix and become one. In short, whatever of the activities of pacifying and so forth you seek to accomplish, you need only to adjust your conduct’s focus and the way you think of it and to supplicate the guru—that will suffice.
As it was needed quickly, the one called Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley, composed this according to the Fifth Shamar’s pith instructions on the preliminaries on the ninth day of the waxing phase of the sixth Tibetan month at the temple of Gyutö, August 3, 2006.

English translation compiled and revised by Tyler Dewar based upon previous translations by Ari Goldfield and Karma Choephel, April, 2008.
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