

# A Guide to the Longchen Nyingtik Ngöndro Practices - Instructed Preliminaries \*

## 1 Raise Bodhicitta

At the beginning of any practice session ( even though it is included below in the key points relating to mind).

The refuge practice should be carried out in meditation.

Each session of the meditation practice includes three stages, the preliminaries, the main practice and the conclusion.

## 2 The Preliminaries

The preliminaries for each session are further divided into two parts, namely, the preparation for the preliminaries and the actual practice of the preliminaries.

### 2.1 Preparation for the preliminaries

Before each session, get yourself prepared and then sit down. Put aside all external affairs, and make aspirations that even if your parents of this present life request to see you, you wouldn't allow for this session to be interrupted; even your flesh is gouged out piece by piece , and you are tormented to death, you would not forsake this. In meditation, determination like this can dispel obstructions caused by human and non-human factors.

### 2.2 The actual practice of the preliminaries

This includes the three sections of key points relating to body, speech and mind as well as the four thoughts that turn the mind from samsara. (Pray to your root teacher that you may attain the four empowerments - see italics below)

Begin with the key points relating to body, speech and mind:

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\*A large extent of the description of the practises has been obtained directly from the excellent writings in "The words of my perfect teacher" by Patrul Rinpoche.

### 2.2.1 The key point relating to body - The Seven-Point Posture of Vairochana

1. Sit with your legs crossed in the vajra posture (lotus position) (If you are unable to sit in the full lotus position, it is also acceptable to sit in the half lotus position, or simply cross legged, see Figure 1);
2. Form the Dhyani mudra with both hands (Place your right hand over your left hand with thumbs touching each other. Rest your hands about 4 fingers' below your navel. Leave a space of approximately a fist's width between your arms and ribs, and make sure your arms and ribs do not press against each other.);
3. Sit up straight like an arrow (Keep your spine as straight as a pile of coins);
4. Gently pull your shoulders back and relax;
5. Bend your neck forward slightly (your chin should be tucked in slightly toward the chest);
6. Mouth slightly opened (the tip of your tongue touching your palate);
7. Eyes should be focused on the tip of your nose (or stare naturally downward at the space in front of you).



Figure 1: The seven-point posture of Vairochana

### 2.2.2 The key point relating to speech - expelling the impure air

This should be exercised nine times, i.e. three times from your left nostril, then three times from the right one, and lastly three times from both nostrils simultaneously, hence the name "the Nine Purification Breath of Pranayama "; It also can be done in three cycles:

Expel once from your left nostril, once from the right one, and once from both nostrils simultaneously. Repeat this cycle three times. The purpose of this practice is to expel impure air accumulated through the karma of body, speech and mind. This skillful practice is beneficial for cleansing your coarse afflictions before you embark on your practice (just as we cleanse a container before we fill it up with something clean).

The steps of this Nine Purification Breath are as follows (according to The Dzogchen Preliminary Practice of Longchen Nyintik in Yachen Monastery): Begin by forming the Vajra Fist (Figure 3) with your left hand and press it into the joint of your groin area of your left thigh; then form the three-pronged Vajra Mudra (Figure 2) with your right hand, press your right index finger against your right nostril, then inhale, hold your breath, and exhale with your left nostril. Repeat this three times. Each time you exhale, do it in a gradual manner: first slow, then fast, and slow it down again when you are about to finish it. Your exhalation should take the shape of a barley grain, which is thin at both ends while thick in the middle. Visualise that all negative karma of you and the infinity of beings, generated through anger since time without beginning, are expelled with your breath in the form of grey (dirty white) wind. For the next step, this time form the Vajra Fist with your right hand and press it into the joint of your groin area of your right thigh; then do a three-pronged Vajra Mudra with your left hand, press your left index finger against your left nostril, then inhale, hold your breath, and exhale with your right nostril. Repeat this three times (as instructed above). While doing this, visualise that you are expelling out all negative karma of you and all sentient beings in the form of dark red wind through your breath, which is caused by attachment ever since beginningless time. Lastly, form the Vajra Fist with both of your hands and press it into the joints of the groin area of both your thighs respectively, then inhale, hold your breath, and exhale three time with both nostrils, meanwhile visualise that all the negative karma of you and the infinity of beings, accumulated since beginningless time because of ignorance, is exhaled through your breath in the form of dark brown wind.



Figure 2: Vajra Mudra



Figure 3: Vajra Fist

### 2.2.3 The key point of mind - generating Bodhicitta

Before you start this session, check your motivation: "Am I practising with the hope of seeking shelter and relief from suffering of illness in this present life, or am I motivated by worldly concerns like fame, benefits and compliment?" If any of these applies to you, you should discard this thought as you do to poisons. Correct your attitude also if you are not driven by any specific motivation. Practitioners bearing this attitude, which is the attitude of a lesser motivation, have not attuned to the right path yet. Those who practice with the aim of attainment for themselves, have the middling motivation, which should not be followed either. While the greater motivation is to make aspirations like this before they practice: "I am doing this practice for the sake of all sentient beings. May they be relieved from sufferings and the cause of sufferings, so that they can attain Buddhahood."

Then the four thoughts that turn the mind from samsara: Visualise and contemplate the "Precious human birth with its freedoms and endowments", "Impermanence of life", "The sufferings and defects of samsara" and "The infallibility of the law of cause-and-effect" to give rise to true renunciation and the wish to seek liberation.

*(Please note that this is not the complete teaching - the attaining of the four empowerments still needs to be introduced below in italics.)*

*Next, pray to your root teacher. Visualise a white, full-blown, thousand-petal lotus in the space one elbow above your head. On the blossoming white stamen of this lotus, is a lion-throne covered by thick silken cushion, where your glorious root teacher, Padmasambhava, solemnly sits. Pray to him with fervent gratitude and devotion, and visualize that you attain the four empowerments: Firstly, start by visualising that the syllable "Ohm(ॐ)" between the Guru's eyebrows, transparent and shining like crystal, emanates rays of light which penetrate the crown of your head (or alternatively visualise the light enter between your eyebrows as according to Rinpoche's oral teaching) and purify you of the effects of the three harmful physical actions- taking life, taking what is not given and sexual misconduct, and purify of all obscurations your channels, from which the body develops. The blessings of Vajra body enters into you, and you now attain the vase empowerment. Then the syllable "Ah(ॐ)", blazing like a red lotus in the Guru's throat, emanates rays of light which enter your throat, purifying you of the effects of the four harmful verbal actions- lying, sowing discord, harsh words and worthless chatter, and purifying of all obscurations your energies, from which speech develops. The blessings of Vajra speech enters into you, and you now attain the secret empowerment. Then the deep blue syllable "hum(ॐ)" in the Guru's heart emanates rays of light which penetrate your heart, purifying you of the effects of the three harmful mental acts- covetousness, wishing harm on others and wrong views, and purifying of all obscurations your essence, from which mental processes develop. The blessings of Vajra mind enters into you, and you now attain the wisdom empowerment. Then from the white "Ohm(ॐ)" between the teacher's eyebrows, the red "Ah(ॐ)" in the teacher's throat and the blue "hum(ॐ)" in the Guru's heart, rays of light are emanated and they then penetrate respectively the*

*crown of your head, your throat, and your heart, purifying of all the karmic and conceptual obscurations the ground of all, which is what underlies body, speech and mind. The blessings of Vajra primordial wisdom enter into you, and you now attain the word empowerment. Finally, all the Buddhas and lineage teachers, together with Guru Padmasambhava and the assembly of deities around him, dissolve into light and merge into your root Guru, who emanates innumerable rays of light and then becomes a brilliant blue light energy drop. From the crown of your head this blue light energy drop slowly goes down, until it reaches your heart and merges completely with your mind. Free your mind from grasping to anything and rest in this state.*

### **3 The Main Practice**

Then meditate on the main part accordingly / Start the Refuge Practice (please find the refuge field in Figure 4 in the following page)





Figure 4: Refuge Field

Dedicate the merits of this session, and make aspirations with pure intentions for the infinity of beings.

## 4 The Conclusion

At the close of the session, examine your mind and see if you have fulfilled our previous aspirations. If you have, and positive discursive thoughts arise in you, which makes you overwhelmingly happy, at this moment you should overcome this thinking by reminding yourself: Is it really good to cheer over such a small merit? I'll see what's going to happen to me in my next session. Try to eliminate your pride in this way; but if you fail to live up to your aspirations made before this session of practice, you become distracted and feeling disappointed and frustrated, believing that you won't achieve anything, when this happens you should instead cheer yourself up and encourage yourself: What is there to be so disappointed about? If I'm not confused in the very beginning, then would I not be a Buddha by now? I've already become distracted in this session, I swear over my death that I won't be lost under the influence.

In all situations during sessions, when you eat, sleep, walk or sit, remember the deities of the refuge constantly. When you walk, visualise the deities in space above your right shoulder and imagine that you are circumambulating them; when you sit, visualise the them above your head and pray to them; when you eat, visualise the deities in your throat and offer them the first mouthful or sip of what you eat or drink; when you sleep, visualise the deities in your heart. This practice is essential to dissolve delusions (dreams) into clear light. Whatever you are doing, do not part from a clear mental image of the refuge deities. Entrust yourself with total confidence to the Three Jewels and devote yourself entirely to taking refuge. A proper session of the Refuge Practice should be conducted as above in this lineage. It is very important that for every session, except for the unfinished ones, be sure to apply the three supreme methods- the preliminaries, the main practice and the conclusion to it.