

# 8. Ceremonies

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# **8. Ceremonies**

## **Refuge Vow Ceremony**

### **Who May Take Refuge**

The following criteria for people who wish to take refuge are guidelines, not strict rules:

1. One should have been sitting regularly for at least six months.
2. One should have an ongoing relationship with a meditation instructor.
3. One should have taken some classes on the buddhist path and should understand the meaning of taking refuge.

### **Planning**

1. Arrange with the sound people to record the ceremony.
2. Publicize the vow ceremony.
  - Contact nearby centers and announce the date and time of the vow ceremony and the preliminary meeting.
  - Announce that participants must submit a written recommendation from their meditation instructors at least four days before the preliminary meeting. Also be sure that meditation instructors understand the guidelines for such approval.
  - Announce that the public are welcome to attend the refuge vow ceremony.
3. Prepare a form for listing participants:
  - At the top, indicate the name of the preceptor and the place and date of the ceremony. From the meditation instructors' recommendation letters, type an alphabetical listing of participants. Leave spaces for refuge names: (1) Tibetan script (if preferred by preceptor), (2) Tibetan phonetic transcription, and (3) English translation
  - When completed, make four copies of these records: one for your local center, two for the preceptor's secretary, and one to send to Vajradhatu.

4. At least one day before the preliminary meeting, the practice coordinator reminds staff to be present at the preliminary meeting and/or at the vow ceremony.
  - *Umdze*: present at ceremony both the preliminary meeting and the vow
  - *Meditation instructors*: present during the preliminary meeting and immediately before the vow in order to screen anyone who has not yet seen an instructor.
  - *Escort*: ushers people into and out of the preceptor's office in the appropriate order. This may be the practice coordinator or a senior administrator.
  - *Practice assistant* (if practice coordinator not available): present at both preliminary meeting and vow ceremony, to arrange people in shrine hall in order of their names on the form.
  - *Calligrapher*: present at both preliminary meeting and calligraphy session.
  - *Sealer*: present at time of vow ceremony. Sealing is hard work; a person with stamina, approved by the preceptor, is required.
5. Call a meeting of the staff to discuss their functions at the preliminary meeting and at the actual ceremony.

## **The Preliminary Meeting**

### **Preparations**

1. Fifteen minutes after the scheduled time of the preliminary meeting, the practice coordinator reads off the names of the participants and seats people in the order of their name on the list.
2. All present whose names are not on the list meet outside the shrine hall while the others are sitting. These people fall into one of two categories:
  - those who have not seen a meditation instructor
  - those who have seen an instructor who did not properly communicate their approval to the practice coordinator
3. The meditation instructors on hand screen these people, or try to contact by phone the instructor who already has seen them. After a short interview with each student, the instructors permit them to go ahead and join the group in the shrine hall, or to defer taking the vow. If asked to defer, they should be invited to attend the refuge ceremony.
4. After the interviews, if any students are permitted to take the vow, the practice coordinator adds their names to the list and communicates this information to the preceptor's secretary. The secretary should also be informed if anyone who was expected did not arrive.

## Explanation

A senior instructor should give a short explanation of the vow. After the talk, participants should be asked to sit in the shrine hall while waiting for their name interviews.

## Name Interviews

1. When the preceptor is ready to begin interviews, the practice coordinator brings the first row of people from the shrine hall (about 10 persons) to the preceptor's office and seats them in the hallway. The preceptor will see each one briefly-just time enough to see them and write down a name. This is not a personal interview.
2. The escort posted outside the office door asks people to introduce themselves by name to the preceptor. This is very important for keeping records straight.
3. After a student comes out of the office, the escort outside waits for a signal from the kusung or secretary inside before sending in the next person.
4. When the group of 10 people is almost finished, the practice coordinator brings the next row of people and seats them in order in the hallway. And so on.
5. The calligrapher prepares the individual sheets of the Tibetan phonetic transcription and English translation of names. It is critical that every sheet be numbered lightly in pencil according to the number each person is assigned on the list. Standard practice is to capitalize each word in the Tibetan transcription, and the first letter of the first word only of the English translation. Characters should be placed in the lower portion of the page.

## Vow Ceremony

### Preparations

1. The shrine master sets up the shrine hall with the help of the sound crew. The following items are needed:
  - microphone for the preceptor
  - bowl of rice and gong on the side table by the preceptor's chair

2. Be sure that the preceptor's seal and red ink are on hand, and that the sealer is present two hours before the vow. The seal should be stamped in the lower right corner of the preceptor's calligraphy, just slightly touching the calligraphy.
3. The calligrapher should be present at least two hours before the vow in order to do any additional calligraphy. The calligrapher checks his or her work for errors before the preceptor signs the documents.
4. Frequently there are people who were not able to meet with the preceptor at the time of the preliminary meeting. They also should arrive two hours before the vow and sit in the meditation hall.
5. Anybody who has not yet talked to a meditation instructor must do so. The preceptor's secretary must be informed of additions or of people who have not showed up.
6. After the preceptor has seen everyone, the practice coordinator makes sure that the participants are seated in the proper order in the shrine hall.
7. The master of ceremonies gives a short talk on ceremony protocol.

## Ceremony

The master of ceremonies gives a talk on the sequence of the ceremony before the preceptor enters. Use the following outline. Announce to the audience that all are welcome to witness the ceremony. However, only those taking the vow do prostrations and repeat the refuge formula. Participants should sit on zabutons, without gomdens or zafus.

1. The preceptor enters and all stand.
2. The preceptor opens shrine, sits down, and all sit.
3. The preceptor gives a talk about the nature of taking refuge.
4. The preceptor asks refugees to do three half-prostrations.
  - These are offered to the shrine which represents the lineage, as well as to the preceptor, who is a living representative of the lineage. Prostrations are a gesture of surrendering ego; an offering of body, speech, and mind.
  - Someone should demonstrate a half-prostration. Hands touch floor first, then knees, then forehead. Forehead represents body; throat, speech; heart, mind.

- Prostrations should be done in unison; do not rush.
  - When all have finished prostrations, kneel on both knees.
5. After repeating the refuge formula three times, the preceptor snaps his or her fingers. At that point, the actual transmission of the energy of the lineage from the teacher to the students takes place; the refugees officially become buddhists.
  6. The preceptor explains the change of mark, attitude, and name.
  7. The preceptor asks people to come up and receive their names. This is a critical point in the ceremony. If someone is out of order, the whole group will get the wrong names. Someone should check to see that the students are receiving the correct names, checking the order of the students with the list of names given.
  8. Someone should demonstrate the walk-through as it is described:
    - When the preceptor asks the participants to come forward, the entire first row stands up together; other rows remain seated.
    - All line up on the preceptor's right-hand side.
    - When the preceptor reads the participant's name, he or she approaches, bows in anjali, receives the name with both hands, and moves along, bowing to the shrine.
    - To get back to their seats, participants simply file down between the rows, go to their seats and sit down; they do not wait for the whole row to sit down.
    - When the last person in the first row reaches a certain point
    - (indicate), the whole second row stands up behind their zabutons (so
    - that they do not interfere with the first row returning) and joins the queue.
    - Ask everyone to do a walk-through.
  9. After the last name, the preceptor does the auspicious verses and tosses rice as a blessing, ringing the gong at the end. This is the conclusion of the ceremony.
  10. When the preceptor stands up, all stand.
  11. After the preceptor leaves the shrine hall, all do the closing chants. A reception follows.

# **Bodhisattva Vow Ceremony**

## **Who May Take the Bodhisattva Vow**

The following criteria for people who wish to take bodhisattva vow are guidelines, not strict rules:

1. One should wait six months after taking refuge before taking the bodhisattva vow. The Vidyadhara established this guideline to emphasize a practitioner's sense of path.
2. One should have taken at least one class on the bodhisattva path and should understand the meaning of the vow.
3. One should have a genuine desire to work for the benefit of others. This desire might manifest, for example, as greater participation in the activities of the local center.

## **Planning**

1. Arrange with the sound people to record the ceremony.
2. Photocopy the "Bodhisattva Vow Ceremony," "The Root Text of the Seven Points of Training the Mind," and "The Forty-Six Unskillful Actions of a Bodhisattva" for participants (see Appendix). Participants should also receive the Morning Liturgy for Mahayana Students, which can be ordered from Ziji, Samadhi, or Soho Design, or in quantity from the Nalanda Translation Committee (see Appendix for addresses); it should not be photocopied.
3. Publicize the vow ceremony.
  - Contact nearby centers and announce the time and date of the vow and the preliminary meeting.
  - Announce that participants must submit a written recommendation from their meditation instructor at least four days before the preliminary meeting. Also be sure that meditation instructors are clear on the guidelines for such approval.
4. Prepare the list of participants:
  - At the top, indicate the name of the preceptor, and the place and date of the ceremony.



- From the meditation instructors' recommendation letters, type an alphabetical listing of participants.
  - Leave spaces for:
    - refuge name: (1) Tibetan phonetic transcription and (2) English translation
    - bodhisattva name: (1) Tibetan script (if preferred by preceptor), (2) Tibetan phonetic transcription, and (3) English translation
  - When completed, make four copies of these records: one for your local center, two for the preceptor's secretary, and one to send to Vajradhatu.
5. At least one day before the preliminary meeting, the practice coordinator reminds staff to be present at the preliminary meeting and/or at the vow ceremony.
- *Umdze*: present at both the preliminary meeting and the vow ceremony.
  - *Meditation instructors*: present during the preliminary meeting and immediately before the vow in order to screen anyone who has not yet seen an instructor.
  - *Escort*: ushers people into and out of the preceptor's office in the appropriate order. This may be the practice coordinator or a senior administrator.
  - *Practice assistant* (if practice coordinator not available): present at both preliminary meeting and vow ceremony, to arrange people in shrine hall in order of their names on the form.
  - *Calligrapher*: present at both preliminary meeting and calligraphy session.
  - *Sealer*: present at time of vow ceremony. Sealing is hard work; a person with stamina, approved by the preceptor, is required.
6. Call a meeting of the staff to discuss their functions at the preliminary meeting and at the actual ceremony.

# The Preliminary Meeting

## Preparations

1. Fifteen minutes after the scheduled time of the preliminary meeting, the practice coordinator reads off the names of the participants and seats people in the order of their name on the list. At the preliminary meeting for the bodhisattva vow, obtain the refuge names of those not already written on the list.
2. All present whose names are not on the list meet outside the shrine hall while the others are sitting. These people fall into one of two categories:
  - those who have not seen a meditation instructor
  - those who have seen an instructor who did not properly communicate their approval to the practice coordinator.
3. The meditation instructors on hand screen these people, or try to contact by phone the instructor who already has seen them. After a short interview with each student, the instructors permit them to go ahead and join the group in the shrine hall, or to defer taking the vow.
4. After the interviews, if any students are permitted to take the vow, the practice coordinator adds their names to the list, and communicates this information to the preceptor's secretary. The secretary should also be informed of anyone who was expected but did not arrive.

## Explanation

A senior instructor gives a short explanation of the vow.

1. Hand out copies of "Bodhisattva Vow Ceremony," Morning Liturgy for Mahayana Students, "The Root Text of the Seven Points of Training the Mind," and "The Forty-Six Unskillful Actions of a Bodhisattva" (see Appendix).
2. Explain the significance of the bodhisattva gift, which is symbolic of offering one's attachment: symbolic of offering one's wealth to all beings or valuable in itself. Cash gifts are quite acceptable; checks should be made out to "Cash."
3. Inform students that, after taking the vow, they should include tonglen as a part of their practice. Give an explanation of how to do tonglen.

4. Instruct students to begin studying lojong (see Section 5).
5. Schedule a follow-up Lojong Day or Lojong Weekend at your center. Announce the dates of this program at the preliminary meeting.

## **Name Interviews**

1. When the preceptor is ready to begin interviews, the practice coordinator brings the first row of people from the shrine hall (about 10 persons) to the office where the interviews will take place and seats them in the hallway. The preceptor will see each one briefly-just time enough to see them and write down a name. This is not a personal interview.
2. The escort posted outside the office door asks people to introduce themselves by name to the preceptor, including their refuge names in Tibetan and English. This is very important for keeping records straight.
3. After a student has come out of the office, the escort outside waits for a signal from the kusung or secretary inside before sending in the next person.
4. When the group of 10 people is almost finished, the practice coordinator brings the next row of people and seats them in order in the hallway. And so on.
5. The calligrapher prepares the individual sheets of the Tibetan phonetic transcription and English translation of the names. It is critical that every sheet be numbered lightly in pencil according to the number each person is assigned on the list. Standard practice is to capitalize each letter in the Tibetan transcription, and the first letter of the first word only of the translation. Characters should be placed in the lower portion of the page.

## **Vow Ceremony**

### **Preparations**

1. The shrine attendant sets up the shrine hall with the help of the sound crew. The following are needed:
  - microphone for the preceptor
  - bowl of rice and gong by his chair
  - a puja table in front of the shrine for gifts. The puja table should be

- covered with yellow or blue satin, and be in proportion to the shrine.
2. Be certain that the preceptor's seal and red ink are on hand, and that the person sealing is present at least two hours before the vow. The seal should be stamped in the lower right corner of the preceptor's calligraphy, just slightly touching the calligraphy.
  3. The calligrapher should be present at least two hours before the vow in order to do any additional calligraphy. The calligrapher or, preferably, someone else, checks for errors before the preceptor signs the documents.
  4. Exceptional cases, who were not able to meet with the preceptor at the time of the preliminary meeting, should arrive two hours before the vow, and sit in the meditation hall.
  5. Anybody who has not yet talked to a meditation instructor must do so. The preceptor's secretary must be informed of additions or of people who have not showed up.
  6. After the preceptor has seen everyone, the practice coordinator makes sure that the participants are seated in the proper order in the shrine hall.
  7. The master of ceremonies gives a short talk on ceremony protocol.

## Ceremony

The master of ceremonies gives a talk on the sequence of the ceremony before the preceptor enters. Use the following outline. You may also ask the participants to try the half-prostration (hands touch floor first, then knees, then forehead—forehead represents body; throat, speech; heart, mind) and do a walk-through of the procedures for receiving their names. The ceremony may be witnessed only by those who have already taken the bodhisattva vow. If people are present who wish to reaffirm the vow, they may participate in the ceremony; they would offer a bodhisattva gift but not receive another name. Participants should sit on zabutons, without gomdens or zafus.

1. The preceptor enters and all stand.
2. The preceptor opens shrine, sits down, and all sit.
3. The preceptor gives a talk about the nature of the bodhisattva vow.
4. The preceptor asks participants to do three half-prostrations.

- These are offered to the shrine, which represents the lineage, and to the preceptor, who is a living representative. They are a gesture of surrendering ego; an offering of body, speech, and mind.
  - Prostrations should be done in unison; do not rush.
  - After finishing prostrations, all kneel on both knees.
5. The preceptor asks the participants to repeat after her or him, with hands in anjali, the first reading from The Jewel Ornament of Liberation: "May the teacher. . ."
  6. At "I (name)" students insert their refuge name in Tibetan.  
Repeat this passage three times.
  7. The preceptor asks students to repeat after her or him, with hands in anjali, the second reading from The Jewel Ornament: "May the buddhas . . . ."
  8. At "I (name)" students insert their refuge name in Tibetan.  
Repeat this passage only once.
  9. Note: Steps 5 and 6 are the actual vow.
  10. The preceptor asks the students to read together, with hands in anjali, the passage from Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*: "As earth and the other elements . . . ." They stop reading after the next-to-the-last verse: "For travelers wandering the paths . . . ."
  11. The preceptor asks students to offer their gifts. This is for everyone taking the vow, not just first-time participants.
    - Entire first row stands.
    - Row by row, students file in front of the offering table and set down
    - offering with both hands.
    - Each bows to the preceptor and the shrine.
    - Each student should sit down when finished; do not wait for entire row.
    - The umdze should lead the chanting of the "Four Dharmas of Gampopa" as the vow-takers are offering their gifts.
  12. The preceptor asks students to read, with hands in anjali, the last verse from the Bodhisattvacharyavatara: "Today, witnessed by all the protectors..."
  13. Students should take home the rest of the texts and study them.
  14. The preceptor makes further remarks, then asks students to come up and receive their names.  
Only people who are taking vows for the first time receive names. This is a critical point in the

ceremony. If someone is out of order, the whole group will get wrong names. Someone should check to see that the students are receiving the correct names, checking the order of the students with the list of names given.

15. When the preceptor asks the students to come forward, the entire first row stands up together; other rows remain seated.
  - All line up on the preceptor's right-hand side.
  - When the preceptor reads a name, that student approaches, bows in anjali, receives his or her name with both hands, and moves along, also bowing to the shrine.
  - To get back to your seat, simply file down between the rows, go to your seat and sit down; do not wait for the whole row to sit down.
  - When the last person in the first row reaches a certain point (indicate), the whole second row stands up behind their zabutons (so that they do not interfere with the first row returning) and joins the queue.
16. After the last name, the preceptor does the auspicious verses and tosses rice as a gesture of blessing, ringing the gong at the end. This is the conclusion of the ceremony.
17. When the preceptor stands up, all stand.
18. After the preceptor leaves the shrine hall, all do the closing chants. A reception follows.

# **Lhasang**

A lhasang is a traditional ceremony performed to dispel neurosis, to purify the environment, and to bring down the blessings of the divine upon the participants and place. In doing so, one's neurosis may be dispelled, one's lungta raised, and an appreciation of sacred world can occur. A lhasang should be included as a part of Shambhala Day and nyida day celebrations, including Midsummer Day and Children's Day. A lhasang is customarily performed at the beginning of Vajradhatu Seminary, Kalapa Assembly, and Magyal Pomra Encampment.

*Lha* in this context means "divine"; *sang* means "to purify." Therefore, a lhasang is an invocation of the principle of heaven. The lhasang smoke purifies the environment and empowers the space, the objects, and the beings within it by inviting the awakened energy of drala and the principal of lha to descend. A simple lhasang may be used to purify a new home, apartment, or office.

The ceremony begins with the burning of juniper, creating smoke as a pathway for drala to descend. Juniper is regarded as the lha tree, whose smoke invites the principle of heaven, or drala. Chanting and carrying flags also invite drala and the energy of windhorse. Various offerings, such as tea and saké, may be made to the drala principle.

The instructions in this section are intended to reflect the way that the Vidyadhara performed the lhasang ceremony. Other Tibetan teachers have introduced their own style of conducting lhasangs. At Gampo Abbey, for example, Thrangu Rinpoche introduced the Tibetan custom of everyone tossing barley flour into the air at the end of the ceremony.

## **Personal Articles**

When a lhasang is performed at the Vajradhatu Seminary, Kalapa Assembly, or Magyal Pomra Encampment, participants should be informed to bring any of the following personal items to be consecrated by the lhasang smoke:

- important articles of clothing (excluding underwear and footwear). Pockets should be left open.
- oryoki sets (wrapped)
- dharma pins, Shambhala pins, and jewelry
- implements used in the Shambhala disciplines, such as a calligraphy brush, yumi (bow), or ya (arrow).

Such objects should be tied in a bundle, with the largest at the bottom. For example, clothes could be folded and an oryoki set be placed, inverted, on the top. Tie the bundle, which may be wrapped in other material, with a belt or sash.

Individual articles, such as a brush or pen, may be passed through the lhasang unwrapped. After passing an article through the lhasang, it is considered empowered and should be treated with respect. Vajra and ghanta and other such buddhist practice materials are not to be passed through a lhasang, as they are blessed already by practice itself. Lhasangs performed on nyida days, Shambhala Day, and other occasions should not include passing personal articles through the smoke.

## Simple Lhasang

### Preparations

Place the following articles on a table in front of the Shambhala shrine (if your center has one) or in front of the buddhist shrine. The table can be placed near the center of the room, if you wish to walk around it. For some occasions, such as Shambhala Day, a lhasang burner is placed at the entrance of the shrine hall, so that everyone who enters is blessed by the smoke.

1. *Lhasang burner*: a nice metal urn or china container, fined with sand. If needed, place a heat-resistant pad underneath.
2. *Self-lighting charcoal*: several pieces could be used, depending on the size of the burner.
3. *Powdered juniper*: may be purchased (see Appendix for sources) or prepared locally.

*Preparing powder*: Pick juniper branches preferably from a tree or tall bush, rather than a low-lying shrub. White cedar is also quite acceptable. Hang branches to dry in a warm place for at least one week. They can also be dried in an oven at low heat. Crumble the needles off the branches, discard twigs, and grind them in a blender.

4. *Purification vase*: a lebum with a peacock-feather sprinkler, fined with pure water, as used in sadhana practice. The lebum is optional for a simple lhasang.
5. *Offerings*: a small quantity of saké and of tea in two nice bowls, a chemar (see recipe below), and a nice silver spoon. These are optional for a simple lhasang.



## Procedure

1. For a simple lhasang, it is not necessary to walk around or through the smoke, although you may wish to do so.
2. Light the charcoal about 10 minutes before the ceremony.
3. It may be appropriate for the leader to explain the purpose of the ceremony, if there are people present who are unfamiliar with a lhasang.
4. If you have a lebum, the leader begins the ceremony by blessing the juniper by sprinkling water from the lebum on it while reciting the Vajrasattva mantra quietly. A drop or two can also be sprinkled on the burning charcoal. Only the leader (and chöpon if present) chant the Vajrasattva mantra.
5. Sprinkle some powdered juniper on the charcoal. Begin chanting The Invocation for Raising Windhorse just as smoke begins to rise. When using this text for a lhasang, replace the words "I supplicate you" (8th line down) with "I offer you this cleansing offering." Chant the following mantra as if it were two words: OM + HAKSHAMALAVARAYAM. Continue to add juniper so that smoke continues throughout the chanting.
6. If offerings are used, offer only a very small quantity of tea and saké. The remainder can later be offered outside, as usual.
7. After the last line of the liturgy, chant the warrior's cry KI KI SO SOI ASHE LHA GYEL LO/ TAK SENG EHYUNG DRUK/ DI YAR KYE over and over again for a few minutes.
8. The lhasang burner can be left in place to smoke and burn out after the chanting has ended. If necessary, move it if it is in the way of the events that follow. Never put out the fire or move the burner to the floor.

## Elaborate Lhasang

When the lhasang is done outdoors, it is preferable to build a hearth for burning firewood. However, a burner with charcoal can be used as for the indoor lhasang, in which case the offerings are kept simple.

### Preparations

Collect fresh juniper (or white cedar) branches and break them into lengths that will fit inside the hearth. Three large garbage bags full of branches should be sufficient.

The hearth can be either in the ground or above the ground. If it will be in the ground, dig a shallow hole and arrange a ring of stones around it. Place a metal grill on top. Alternatively, you can build a hearth out of bricks or rocks above the ground. In either case, place firewood and kindling in the base of the hearth. Be careful not to build too big a fire; only a small bed of coals is needed. Pile the juniper next to the hearth.

Place a large container of water and a shovel nearby for controlling the fire if it burns too hot or high.

### Personnel

1. *Leader*: explains the meaning of the lhasang and the procedures to the participants (if appropriate); lights the fire; blesses the juniper and offerings; lays the first juniper on the hearth; begins making offerings to the fire.
2. *Umdze*: leads the chanting.
3. *Chöpön*: lights and/or tends the fire; adds juniper to the hearth after the leader adds the first branches; finishes making offerings to the fire after the leader makes the first offerings. It may be helpful to have two chöpöns: one to work with the fire and to dampen the juniper when needed, one to add juniper and make offerings.
4. *Flag bearers*: usually the sangyum, acharyas, dapöns, directors, ambassador, coordinators, rusung, and other local administrators or honoured guests carry the flags, if they are used.

### Preparations

1. Set a table for offerings near the hearth. Place it far enough away so that the leader is not too hot. Arrange the following on a tray:
  - lebum filled with pure water, for blessing the offerings. The offerings are a small bowl of saké, a small bowl of black tea, and chemar (see recipe below).
  - nice spoon for making the offerings
2. Place a bucket of water next to the hearth for dipping the juniper if it burns too quickly. It is good to have a few other buckets of water readily available (especially if the wind picks up).
3. Consult with Dorje Kasung and decide how to direct traffic during the circumambulation.
4. Pass out chants to all participants: the long Werma Lhasang, called The Warrior Song of Drala, or The Invocation for Raising Windhorse. (The former is generally used at the opening of Vajradhatu Seminary, Kalapa Assembly, and Magyal Pomra Encampment, and on Shambhala Day and Midsummer Day.) Pass out copies for the leader, umdze, and chöpon.

## Procedures

1. The leader and/or the chöpon light the fire.
2. The leader blesses the juniper, the offerings, and the hearth by sprinkling water from the lebum while chanting the Vajrasattva mantra. The chöpon(s) also chants the mantra; no one else chants this.
3. The leader (or chöpon) places the first juniper branches on the fire. After this, the chöpon takes over the responsibility of offering juniper. The objective is to produce a dense, white smoke.

*Note:* The chöpon should make sure there is enough juniper, so that there is plenty left when the circumambulation begins. If the branches burn too quickly, sprinkle the burning branches with a juniper branch drenched in water.

4. The umdze begins to chant when smoke first starts to rise.
5. The offerings are made at the beginning of the chant. The leader (or chöpon) offers some of each of the offerings in this order: saké, tea, chemar. The leader can offer all the substances or only some of each, in which case the chöpon finishes offering the substances into the hearth until they have been used up. The chöpon may use the spoon for several offerings and then pour the remainder into the hearth.

## Circumabulation

1. After the end of the lhasang liturgy, all chant the warrior's cry over and over. If people are passing articles through the smoke, continue chanting until the last person has passed through the lhasang smoke.
2. Flag bearers lead the procession around the hearth. After they circumambulate the hearth clockwise a few times by themselves, one of the chöpons may collect their flags and others join the queue.
3. The rest of the participants pass by the fire in a clockwise direction, while passing their belongings through the lhasang smoke. Then they resume their position in a circle around the fire.
4. If people are not passing any personal articles through the smoke, the assembly may just remain standing around the hearth, with only the flag bearers circumambulating.

## Conclusion

1. The umdze ends the warrior's cry when all have passed through the lhasang smoke or whenever the leader signals to end.
2. At least one person should stay behind to tend the fire until it is completely safe. It is best to let the fire burn out by itself. If it is necessary to extinguish the fire, use dirt, or add milk to the water you use for putting it out.

## Recipe for Chemar

A chemar ("flour and butter") is a special offering used at a lhasang. It is not a tormo. The primary ingredient (about ninety percent) is barley flour. The mixture should be dry and crumbly-- not sticky enough to be shaped into a ball. Not more than two cups is needed.

Mix together:

- roasted barley flour
- whole barley grains (about one handful) roasted and popped on an oiled frying pan at high heat to three degrees of darkness: light brown, dark brown, and burnt black
- very small quantities of milk, yogurt, and butter--the "three whites"

- very small quantities of honey, white sugar, and raw (or brown) sugar the "three sweets"
- small snippets of colourful. brocade (of the five colours, if available)

Mound this mixture into a conical shape on top of a nice plate. The cone is four to ten inches in diameter at the base, and three to six inches high. It can be decorated with thin squiggly ropes of moulded butter, which are placed from the tip of the cone down the sides in three or four directions. For added ornamentation, a crescent moon, sun, and bindu of moulded butter can be fixed to a tongue depressor and placed into the top of the cone.

# **Shrine Protocol for Talks and Ceremonies**

## **Protocol for the Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche**

The shrine master should consult with the kusung on duty to make sure that the shrine hall is properly arranged. Plan to offer stick incense and Japanese teaching incense. The shrine master is responsible for the arrangement of the entire shrine hall, not just the shrine itself. She or he may need to enlist volunteers to rearrange the room. The kusung will arrange what is needed on the Sakyong's side table.

Consult Section Three of this manual for direction on decorum during talks and ceremonies with the Sakyong.

### **Shrine Keeper's Responsibilities**

1. Add to the main shrine beforehand:

- a good-quality container of loose, granular, Japanese teaching incense
- an incense burner, filled with sand, with a piece of charcoal in it
- a second, smaller incense burner behind the main one, so that stick incense may also be offered.

Light the charcoal at least 10 minutes before the Sakyong enters.

2. As the Sakyong enters the shrine hall, be in a position near the shrine. The umdze strikes gong, all stand. Walk up to the shrine as he approaches the front, taking a position on his right. Bow to the shrine in unison with the Sakyong. Umdze strikes gong gently.
3. *Teaching incense:* Japanese teaching incense is offered before lighting the candles. Offer the bowl of incense to the Sakyong with a slight bow. The Sakyong sprinkles incense on the charcoal. Bow slightly to the shrine in unison with the Sakyong.
4. *Lighting candles:* Hold the rock steady while the Sakyong strikes the match. After the Sakyong lights the candle on the left side of the shrine, take the match from him and light the right candle.

5. *Stick incense*: Stick incense is offered after lighting the candles. Offer the Sakyong a stick of incense with both hands, bowing slightly. Bow slightly to the shrine in unison with the Sakyong.
6. Remain standing by the shrine until the Sakyong is seated.
7. As everyone is seated, the umdze leads appropriate chants

## **Formal Processions with the Sakyong**

Formal procession are done at Kalapa Assembly, vajradhatu Seminary, Vajra Assembly, and certain other formal teaching situations. For all other teaching situations, please refer to the following section.

## **Preparations**

### **Selecting Personnel**

There are two components of the procession: those who play instruments inside the shrine hall, and those who walk in the procession.

1. *Inside shrine hall*: drummer, gandi player, inkan player. The practice coordinator chooses these musicians.
2. *Procession*: personal kasung, kusung, the Sakyong, holder of the nyoi (if the Sakyong requests it), holder of the fan, holder of the dharma, inkan player. The Sakyong and his assistant determine who will be in the procession.

### **Organizing the Procession**

1. The practice coordinator meets with the musicians inside the shrine hall to review procedures and timing.
2. The Sakyong's assistant meets with people in the procession to go over procedures. This could take the form of a walk-through.

## **The Procession**

1. The Sakyong's assistant hands out processional implements with a bow, and later retrieves them in this fashion.
2. The procession lines up in the following order:
  - personal kasung holding incense
  - kusung holding the kaishaku
  - holder of the nyoi (if the Sakyong requests it)
  - a space for the Sakyong
  - holder of the fan
  - holder of the dharma
  - inkan player
3. The Sakyong's assistant signals the musicians inside the shrine hall when to begin.
4. The inner gandi and inkan players stand up, holding their instruments. The drummer strikes the first beat.
5. Each instrument is struck every 5 seconds. Musicians should count slowly. The timing is:  
DRUM - 2 - 3 - 4 - GANDI, and so on. Inner musicians should allow time for outer musicians to play, even if the latter are too far away to be heard.
6. The sequence of instruments:
  - drum -inside
  - gandi -inside
  - kaishaku. -outside
  - inkan -inside
  - inkan -outside
7. Soon after this, the Sakyong joins the processional and they move forward, slowly.
8. The Sakyong's assistant signals for the umdze to ring the gong for people to stand. The umdze needs to be positioned where he or she can see the Sakyong. Otherwise, the shrine master can signal the umdze when to ring.



9. The umdze rings the gong twice:

- when people stand just before the Sakyong's entrance
- when the Sakyong bows to the shrine after lighting it

*Note:* There is no gong when the Sakyong bows slightly to offer incense.

10. The personal kasung, holding a lit stick of incense, leads the procession up to the shrine and takes a position at the Sakyong's right.
11. The shrine master walks up to the shrine as the Sakyong approaches and also takes a position at his right side.
12. Other members of the procession take their positions assigned by the Sakyong's assistant. Positions may vary, but usually they stand in a line stage right of the Sakyong's chair.
13. Lighting the shrine: see "Shrine Protocol" later in this section.
14. After the Sakyong lights the shrine and takes his seat, the last round of music is completed. The kusung adjusts his microphone. Members of the procession place the Sakyong's notes (the dharma) and fan on his side table. The personal kasung and the kusung take their seats near the Sakyong. Other members of the procession take reserved seats. The holder of the nyoi presents it to the Sakyong following the "Lineage Supplication".

## **Recessional**

1. The only instruments used during the exit are the drum and the gong. At the deepest part of the Sakyong's bow to the sangha after the concluding chants, the drum and gong are struck simultaneously.
2. Accompanied by the procession, the Sakyong gets up and walks towards the door. This is accompanied by a drum rolldown that begins with the initial drum beat and ends exiting.

*Note:* If it is difficult for the drummer to see, the shrine master signals the drummer when the rolldown should end.

3. The drum is struck every five seconds as the sangha leaves the shrine hall. As the last group of people are leaving, there is a rolldown ending with a full stop (medium-soft-loud).



## **Protocol for Visiting Tibetan Teachers**

If you have questions regarding protocol for Tibetan teachers who visit your center, consult the Vajradhatu International Affairs Committee and the Visit Manual. Some Tibetan teachers are familiar with the Vajradhatu style and use it when visiting one of our centers. Some observe no formality at all.

## **Protocol for Vajradhatu Teachers**

The following guidelines apply to teachers who are students of the Vidyadhara, including Acharyas.

1. The gong is rung once as the teacher enters the shrine hall. It is appropriate to stand for the entrance of an Acharya in non-public teaching situations.
2. Only the Sakyong may sit in the guru chair. For other teachers, set up a chair and side table, perhaps on top of a small carpet, in front of the shrine and slightly to one side. This could be slightly elevated.
3. Powdered incense is not generally used by teachers other than the Sakyong.
4. Use the basic procedure, outlined above, for lighting the shrine and offering incense.
5. Use the same basic procedure when the teacher leaves the shrine room.

## **Shambhala Shrineroom Blessing**

This is the procedure for consecrating a new shrine hall at the Shambhala Center. It is ordinarily conducted by the Sakyong, Mipham Rinpoche, an Acharya, or a member of the Shambhala Board of Directors or Executive Council during a visit.

### **Shrine Set-Up**

1. Inform the recordings people in advance to set-up microphones (one for the preceptor and one standing mike) and recording equipment.
2. Place a bowl of rice and gong on the table beside the preceptor.
3. Prepare candles for all participants, Wrap 4” to 6” taper candles with foil, like the bottom of a sword, to prevent dripping.
4. Prepare for a lhasang. The description of how to perform the lhasang ceremony is found in the Practice Manual, chapter 8, Ceremonies. Either the long or short lhasang ceremony would be appropriate.
5. Set out copies of the *Lhasang Chant* (long or short), *The Seven-line Supplication to Padmakara*, *The Supplication to the Takpo Kagyu*, *The Shambhala Homage*, and the *Sutra of the Heart of Transcendent Knowledge*.

### **The Ceremony**

1. Pass out candles to all participants as they arrive.
2. Go over instructions for the ceremony.
3. The preceptor enters
4. Both the buddhist and Shambhala shrines are opened by the preceptor and the shrinekeeper.
5. The preceptor is seated.

6. All chant the *Seven-line Supplication*, *The Supplication to the Takpo Kagyü*, and the *Shambhala Homage*.
7. The preceptor may make opening remarks.
8. The lhasang ceremony is performed.
9. All recite *The Sutra of the Heart of Transcendent Knowledge*.
10. At the end of the *Heart Sutra* repeat the mantra—*om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha*— over and over again.
11. The preceptor meets the shrinekeeper with one of the small tapers and lights it from one of the shrine candles, then gives it to the shrinekeeper.
12. The shrine keeper walks over to the first row and lights the first person's candle. Each person lights the candle of their neighbour.
13. Continue to chant the mantra until all the candles are lit. This ends the actual ceremony.
14. The preceptor does the traditional chants and blessing.
15. Chant the *Dedication of Merit* (both buddhist and Shambhala)
16. The director or coordinator thanks the preceptor, requests his return, and presents a gift, wrapped in a khata and placed on a tray.
17. If the Sakyong has performed the ceremony, he may conclude with a blessing line, outlined below.

## Talk on the Meaning of the Shrine

A talk to the participants could include:

1. A discussion of the buddhist shrine, including:
  - appreciation of Shakyamuni Buddha as a human being who attained enlightenment
  - simple explanation of the trikaya. Refer to the talk from the 1974 Hinayana-Mahayana Seminary Transcripts, “The Attainment of Enlightenment.”
  - remarks on the significance of the shrine. Refer to the dialogue on pages 159-60 of the 1974 Hinayana-Mahayana Seminary Transcripts. In general, the shrine is
  - a reminder of the three jewels
  - a sense of reality bouncing back
  - explanation of shrine symbolism. Refer to Section 2 of this manual.
2. A discussion of the Shambhala shrine, including:
  - appreciation of the lineage of people who have manifested basic human goodness
  - a discussion of invoking drala through creating sacred space. Refer to chapters twelve and thirteen of *Shambhala: Sacred Path of the Warrior*: “Discovering Magic” and “How to Invoke Magic.”
  - a sense of spontaneously invoking awakened mind.
  - an explanation of shrine symbolism: see Section 2 of this manual.

## Blessing Lines

The Sakyong, Mipham Rinpoche has a number of styles of giving blessings in various situations. Sometimes he will use his hand, a text, sometimes a phurba, and sometimes he will do a Vajrasattva blessing—outlined below. All of these are quite simple and straightforward. If there is to be a blessing, it is nice to have protection cords available to give people after they have received the blessing from the Sakyong. If there is no one in your center or with the Sakyong who knows how to tie the vajra knot for the protection cords, we can attempt the telephone oral transmission! After being tied, they should be presented to the Sakyong so that he may bless them prior to the event.

If the audience is a mixture of new as well as more long-time practitioners it is helpful to say a few words about what receiving blessing is all about. It should also be made clear that it is optional.

## Vajrasattva Blessing

### Preparations

1. Bhumpa (ritual vase) filled with saffron water, tied with a white scarf. The Sakyong travels with his own bhumpa which he generally will use for this blessing.
2. Extra pitchers of saffron water.
3. Towels

### Procedure

1. People file by the Sakyong one by one and he pours water into people's hands for them to drink as purification. The towels are to keep the floor as dry as possible.
2. During the blessing there is chanting of either the *Four Dharmas of Gampopa* or the *Shambhala Dedication of Merit* (By the confidence of the golden sun . . .). These chants are repeated over and over in unison, led by a chant leader, until every person has received

blessing. After filing by the Sakyong, people could receive a protection cord. They can be passed out by any member of the sangha.



## **Children's Blessing Ceremony**

This ceremony can be performed by the Sakyong, Mipham Rinpoche, the Sangyum of the Vidyadhara, the Acharyas, and various others specially authorized.

### **Preparations**

1. A medium sized-mirror. Large enough for a child to see it's face.
2. A bowl of water with a branch of juniper. A side table should also be provided, on which to set the mirror and bowl of water.
3. A bowl of treats--small pieces of candy wrapped in paper are best.
4. Protection cords if the Sakyong is presiding.

This blessing can take a number of different forms. Usually the event begins with a short talk with some questions or discussion. Following that, sometimes the children come up to the preceptor who shows them their face in the mirror, and then shakes water on the mirror as the child watches. Then the child receives a little treat (usually candy), and goes back to their seat. Sometimes, if the Sakyong is presiding, the blessing consists simply of a short blessing with the bhumpa which the Sakyong travels with. If he is offering protection cords these should be prepared in advance with the help of the Sakyong's staff. These will need to be blessed by him before the event.

# **Weddings**

The Vidyadhara instituted and often preferred a buddhist wedding ceremony for his students in the early 1970s. By 1977, he passed on the responsibility as main preceptor for wedding vows to the Vajra Regent. Soon after this, the Vidyadhara also developed a Shambhala wedding ceremony, which he preferred occasionally for members of the Shambhala Lodge, notably at several of the Kalapa Assemblies. During this time, he also created a military version of this ceremony for members of the Dorje Kasung.

Included in this manual are guidelines and instructions for preparations, procedures, and rituals in performing both a buddhist and a Shambhala wedding ceremony. The Shambhala wedding ceremony presented here is not the elaborate Shambhala version, which only Shambhala Lodge members can attend. It is appropriate for sangha members as well as Shambhala Training students who desire to use it. The preceptor marrying Shambhala Training students should be a senior Shambhala Training director.

## **Buddhist Wedding Ceremony.**

### **Authorization to perform weddings**

Beginning in the late 1970s, senior Vajradhatu students began to be authorized to perform wedding ceremonies for fellow sangha members. Usually this was restricted to members of the Vajradhatu/Nalanda Board of Directors, directors of contemplative centers, and Dharmadhatu Ambassadors. Later, more senior teachers and leaders in the sangha were occasionally requested to perform wedding ceremonies. The Vidyadhara suggested that preceptors should be (or have been) married themselves. Questions about authorization may be directed to the Practice and Study Administrator.

Legally speaking, the Vajradhatu preceptor authorized to perform a wedding ceremony, or to solemnize a marriage, does so as a member of the buddhist clergy. Legal requirements vary by state in the United States, by province in Canada, and by country in Europe. For instance, in Colorado there is no registration requirement whatsoever and the requirements for being authorized are extremely loose. In Nova Scotia, however, the church must register any members of its clergy so authorized.

## Instructions for the bride and groom

1. Notify the coordinator or the shrine master how many guests and relatives are expected for the ceremony.
2. Bring a present for the preceptor, the established fee for the center, and the marriage license. The license should be prepared before the day of the ceremony and be ready for signatures.
3. Bring the following at least one hour before the ceremony:
  - an attractive selection of fruit for the offering bowl
  - three baby roses for the offering tray
  - rings
1. Select two readings for the ceremony. The following readings, included at the end of this section, are often used:
  - “Unlimited Friendliness,” the chant used for Maitri Bhavana
  - “The Perfect Love Poem” from *Mudra* (Shambhala Publications, 1972, pp. 49-51)
  - “Song of a Yogi’s Joy,” from *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa, Volume I* (Shambhala Publications, 1962, pp. 74-75). The line after “The most extreme happiness” is changed to “Is the conviction in the truth.”
  - “1111 Pearl Street Off Beat” from *First Thought, Best Thought* (Shambhala Publications, 1983, p. 108)
1. Choose two close friends to do the readings.

## Advance planning by coordinator or shrine master

1. Find out from the couple how many guests to expect for the ceremony, including how many relatives and friends will sit in the reserved sections, and how many chairs will be required.
2. Inform the couple that they need to bring shrine flowers, fruit, baby roses, and rings.
3. Ask someone to prepare arrangements from flowers which the couple brings. (This could be done the day before the ceremony.)
4. Inform the sound people in advance to set up for recording the wedding. Three microphones are needed:
  - a standing mike for the couple, directly in front of the shrine
  - a standing mike for the reader, off to the right side of the shrine

- a mike for the preceptor, who is seated to the left side of the shrine.
1. If there is much work to rearrange the shrine hall, request volunteers in advance to help the shrine master.
  2. Arrange for service during the premeeting between the preceptor and the bride and groom.
  3. If needed, organize hospitality for the relatives and friends of the couple before the ceremony. Refreshments may be served.
  4. Arrange for ushers to seat guests in the shrine hall as they arrive.

### Set up by the shrine master before the ceremony

1. Begin preparations one or two hours before the ceremony.
  2. Set up reserved seating for relatives and friends, on the right hand side of the shrine near the front of the room. These seats face toward the couple and the preceptor, rather than toward the shrine.
  3. Supervise the rearranging of the shrine hall and the placing of the microphones. Refer to the illustration included in this section.
- *Main shrine.* Add to the usual arrangement of the shrine:
    - One pair of two-inch by nine-inch candles
    - a bowl of assorted fruit arranged in the center
    - two small bouquets of flowers.
    - powdered incense and charcoal (optional)
4. *Offering table.* Set up a table or box in front of shrine for six offering bowls. The box should be small, but in proportion to the shrine, preferably covered in blue or yellow. If available, extend a runner of brocade or other nice cloth from the top of the box across the floor to the front edge of the couple's zabutons.
  5. *Cushions.* It is traditional to cover the couple's zabutons and gomdens with yellow satin. The cushions are placed directly in front of the shrine.
  6. *Side table.* Place the following items on the preceptor's side table:
    - bowl of rice

- tray of offerings (described below)
  - gong
7. *Offering tray.* The offering tray should be covered with brocade or other nice cloth, and hold the following items:
- a. Small saucer for rings set in the middle of tray
  - b. Matches and small rock in middle of tray.
  - c. Three baby roses in bowl of water
  - d. One stick of incense in bowl of rice
  - e. One-half of a taper candle in bowl of rice
  - f. Bowl of saffron water
  - g. Small pieces of fruit in a bowl
  - h. Bell or cymbals on top of rice in bowl
- Items (c) through (h) are arranged in a clockwise direction around the outer edge of the offering tray, starting with item (c) at six o'clock.

## Premeeting

The couple meets with the preceptor before the ceremony. The preceptor discusses the nature of the vows and explains the progression of the ceremony itself. Saké or other refreshments are usually served. The preceptor should meet with the parents before the ceremony also, if only briefly. The signing of the marriage certificate can happen at this time, or if preferred, immediately after the ceremony. During this time, relatives and friends are hosted separately, or are asked to take their seats in the shrine hall.

## THE CEREMONY

1. The shrine master lights charcoal after receiving signal that ceremony is about to begin.
2. The couple, followed by the preceptor, enter in procession. The couple take their places, standing on their zabutons, the groom to the right of the bride.
3. The preceptor lights the shrine with the assistance of the shrine master. The preceptor lights the candle on the left, then hands the match to the shrine master, who lights the candle on the right. Then the preceptor sprinkles incense on the charcoal (optional) or lights a stick of incense and offers it.
4. The couple sits down when the preceptor sits down.
5. The preceptor gives a talk on the significance of the ceremony, including an explanation of the six paramitas, being especially attentive to the nonsangha relatives and friends present. This should be a bright, sparkling glimpse of our world.
6. The preceptor rings the gong, with a rolldown and full stop (medium-soft-loud).

7. The preceptor asks the couple to stand up in order to begin the ceremony.
8. Offering of the six paramitas.
9. Groom takes wedding-vow texts ("Offering of the Six Paramitas," see below) out of coat pocket and hands one copy to the bride.
  - Preceptor's assistant hands preceptor bowl of flowers, which preceptor holds with both hands in front. (If there is no assistant, the preceptor simply picks up the offerings him/herself.)
  - Preceptor cues couple to begin chanting the first verse of wedding vows.
  - Bride hands her text to groom and goes up to receive flower offering from preceptor.
  - bride bows in anjali to preceptor; preceptor returns bow, holding bowl
  - bride receives flower offering with both hands, steps back, and bows again; preceptor returns bow in anjali
  - bride takes offering to offering table, bows to shrine, places bowl on table at far left, steps back, and bows again in anjali to shrine
  - While bride returns to her place, assistant hands preceptor match and holds rock with other hand.
  - preceptor strikes match, lights candle, extinguishes match, and hands back to assistant
  - preceptor takes stick of incense, lights it from candle, and extinguishes flame using hand
  - assistant holds up howl of rice for preceptor to place the incense
  - preceptor takes incense bowl and holds with both hands in front
10. Preceptor cues couple to chant second verse.
  - Groom comes forward to receive and make the offering of incense.
  - All offerings proceed as above.
  - After last offering, preceptor waits until the couple are ready, then signals them to chant the last verse.
  - Groom puts texts of wedding vows back in his pocket.
11. The couple exchange rings.
  - Preceptor first hands the groom's ring to the bride; then gives bride's ring to the groom.
  - Groom first puts ring on bride's finger; then bride puts ring on groom.
12. Couple kiss, return to their places, and sit down.
13. Two readings by relatives or close friends of the couple. The preceptor announces each reading.
14. The preceptor chants auspicious verses (see below) while throwing rice toward the couple and the assembly.
  - Preceptor begins to ring the gong during the last stanza or two.

- Preceptor plays a double rolldown and a full stop (medium-soft-loud) to end, letting gong fade naturally.

After the ceremony, guests may form a reception line to congratulate the couple. Soon after the wedding, the preceptor signs the marriage license for the couple. A reception with food and drink may immediately follow the ceremony; sometimes the reception takes place elsewhere.

*Offering of the Six Paramitas*

I offer this flower so that we may develop transcendent exertion.  
I offer this incense so that we may develop transcendent patience.  
I offer this light so that we may develop transcendent meditation.  
I offer this perfume water so that we may develop transcendent discipline.  
I offer this food so that we may develop transcendent generosity.  
I offer this musical instrument so that we may develop transcendent knowledge.  
Having offered these, may we attain wisdom and compassion so that we may help all sentient beings on the path of dharma.

*Auspicious Verses*

Enjoyment of the glory of long life, Insightful mind, discriminating prajña, and so on,  
Whatever richness there is in samsara and nirvana,  
May the goodness of all these spontaneously be present.  
May the teachings, the only source of benefit and happiness,  
Remain for a long time,  
And may the victory banner of the life of great beings who hold the teachings  
Be firmly established.  
May any sentient being suffering from disease  
Be quickly liberated from disease.  
May all the diseases of beings,  
Without exception, never arise.  
May the eighty thousand kinds of obstructing spirits be pacified,  
May there be freedom from harmful defects and discord,  
And with harmonious and abundant goodness  
May excellent well-being be present here and now.  
Brilliant on the neck of Upper White Snow Mountain,  
The sun rays of Longchen Rabjam Sangpo  
Cause the lotus mind of fortunate ones to blossom.  
May his liberating environment always shine.  
May the dharma teachings of the Practice Lineage,  
The blazing glory of auspiciousness, the ornament of the world,  
Flourish west of the kingdom of Tibet, the Land of Snow.  
May there be auspicious peace throughout the world.  
I supplicate you to bring peace to the world.

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## Shambhala Wedding Ceremony

The preparations for a Shambhala wedding are similar to those for a buddhist wedding. The wedding takes place in front of a Shambhala shrine. Set-up for the six paramita offerings, if used, is identical. Gomden and zabuton covers for the bride and groom are white satin, rather than yellow. During the premeeting, the couple perform stroke of ashe together. The coordinator should set up brushes, paper and ink (black ink for the groom and red ink for the bride) in the sitting room.

### Sequence of Events

1. The preceptor enters, opens the Shambhala shrine with the shrine master, and sits down.
2. The bride and groom enter together in procession.
3. The preceptor rings the gong once, deadens it, and gives a talk on the meaning of the ceremony.
4. The couple make the six paramita offerings, just as for the buddhist ceremony (see above).
5. [Optional] The preceptor asks first the bride, then the groom, to take this marriage vow:

Do you, (*Western name, Shambhala name, possibly refuge name*), receive this (*man/woman*) to be your (*husband/wife*) and heart companion on the path of true dharma? And commit yourself to hold together with (*him/her*) as a warrior to propagate the Great Eastern Sun and to join together in the Tiger Lion Garuda Dragon dignities of Meek Perky Outrageous and Inscrutable?

6. [Optional] Each bows and responds, in turn: “I do” or “Hai!”
7. The couple repeat together the marriage oath:

Rejoicing in joining the vision of the Great Eastern Sun, we drink this water so that we may promote the way of true household. We vow to perform our duty to each other, to the citizens of Shambhala, the community, and all sentient beings. By drinking this may we be genuine, loyal, gentle, and fearless.

8. The couple seal the oath by drinking a cup of saké (there are 2 cups, traditionally square).
9. The couple exchange rings and kiss
10. There are two readings, by relatives or close friends.
11. All chant the *Supplication to the Rigden Father*

*Supplication to the Rigden Father*

O Rigden Father

Your grace and gentleness have saved us from the depressions of the barbarians

And your sweet smile has produced chrysanthemums

As we watch each petal grow we rejoice and cry,

And the tears of our crying produce future warriors.

When we finger the sword blade we become heartbroken:

Why, with such sharpness, Rigden Father, are you not presently with us?

From the pain of our heartbreak we cry, KI KI SO SO!

Remembering your brush stroke, we swoon

And collapse into your overwhelming genuineness.

Watching occasional raindrops spotting your robe as it ripples in the wind makes us

thirsty

But you turn our thirst into elegance.

Watching your windhorse galloping in the fields about your palace, we feel so jealous—

Why could not we be one of your horses?—

But that jealousy turns into confidence.

Watching you do archery, we feel intimidated—

The whistling arrow hitting the target, you have such accuracy—

But intimidation becomes fearlessness:

We are your arrows adorned with garuda's feathers.

O we long for you, Rigden Father,

Please bless us on this auspicious occasion.

Let our wedding be as yours.

We vow to perpetuate your world.

## Readings

### *The Song of a Yogi's Joy*

Obeisance to you, my Guru!  
I met you through having accumulated great merits,  
And now stay at the place you prophesied.

This is a delightful place, a place of hills and forests.  
In the mountain-meadows, flowers bloom;  
In the woods dance the swaying trees!  
For monkeys it is a playground.  
Birds sing tunefully,  
Bees fly and buzz,  
And from day until night the rainbows come and go.  
In summer and winter falls the sweet rain,  
And mist and fog roll up in fall and spring.  
At such a pleasant place, in solitude,  
I, Milarepa, happily abide,  
Meditating upon the void-illuminating Mind.

Oh, happy are the myriad manifestations!  
The more ups-and-downs, the more joy I feel.  
Happy is the body with no sinful Karma,  
Happy indeed are the countless confusions!  
The greater the fear, the greater the happiness I feel.  
Oh, happy is the death of sensations and passions!

The greater the distress and passions,  
The more can one be blithe and gay!  
What happiness to feel no ailment or illness;  
What happiness to feel that joy and suffering are one;  
What happiness to play in bodily movement  
With the power aroused by Yoga.  
To jump and run, to dance and leap, is more joyful still.  
What happiness to sing the victorious song,  
What happiness to chant and hum,  
More joyful still to talk loudly and sing!  
Happy is the mind, powerful and confident,  
Steeped in the realm of Totality.

The most extreme happiness  
Is the conviction in the truth.

Happy are the myriad forms, the myriad revelations.  
As a welcoming gift to my faithful pupils,  
I sing of yogic happiness.

from *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*

### ***Friendliness***

This is what should be done by those who are skilled in seeking good, having attained the way of peace:

They should be able, straightforward, and upright, easy to speak to, gentle, and not proud,  
Content and easily supported, with few obligations and wants,  
With senses calmed, prudent, modest, and without greed for other people's possessions.  
They should not do anything base that the wise would reprove.  
May they be at their ease and secure— may all beings be happy.

Whatever living beings there are, whether they be weak or strong— omitting none—  
Whether long, large, average, big or small,  
Seen or unseen, dwelling near or far,

Born or to be born— may all beings be happy.  
Let no one deceive another or despise anyone anywhere.  
Let none out of anger or hostility wish suffering upon another.

Just as a mother would protect with her life her own child, her only child,  
So one should cultivate a boundless mind toward all beings and friendliness toward the entire world.

One should cultivate a boundless mind— above, below, and across,  
Without obstruction, hatred, or enmity.

Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, throughout all one's waking hours,  
One should practice this mindfulness; this, they say, is the supreme state.

Not falling into wrong views, virtuous, endowed with insight,  
Having overcome desire for sense pleasures, one will never again know rebirth.

*Note:* Buddha Shakyamuni taught this *Metta Sutta*, which is found in the *Sutta-Nipata* section of the *Khuddaka-Nikaya* collection of shorter-length discourses. It was translated

from the Pali by the Nalanda Translation Committee with reference to a number of previous translations.

*The Perfect Love Poem*

There is a beautiful snow peaked mountain  
With peaceful clouds wrapped round her shoulders.  
The surrounding air is filled with love and peace.  
What is going to be is what is,  
That is love.  
There is no fear of leaping into the immeasurable space of love.  
Fall in love?  
Or, are you in love?  
Such questions cannot be answered,  
Because in this peace of all-pervading presence,  
I see a beautiful playground  
Which some may call heaven,  
Others may regard it as a trap of hell.  
But, I, Chögyam, don't care.  
In the playground beautiful Dakinis are holding hand drums, flutes and bells.  
Some of them, who are dancing, hold naked flames, water, a nightingale,  
Or the whole globe of earth with the galaxies around it.  
These Dakinis may perform their dance of death or birth or sickness,  
I am still completely intoxicated, in love.  
And with this love, I watch them circle.  
This performance is all-pervading and universal,  
So the sonorous sound of mantra is heard  
As a beautiful song from the Dakinis.  
Among them, there is one dakini with a single eye,  
And turquoise hair blown gently by the wind.  
She sends a song of love and the song goes like this:  
HUM HUM HUM  
If there is no joy of Mahamudra in the form,  
If there is no joy of Mahamudra in the speech,  
If there is no joy of Mahamudra in the mind,  
How would you understand  
That we Dakinis are the mother, sister, maid and wife.  
And she shouts with such penetrating voice, saying  
Come, come, come  
HUM HUM HUM  
Join the EH and VAM circle.  
Then I knew I must surrender to the dance

And join the circle of Dakinis.  
Like the confluence of two rivers,  
EH the feminine and VAM the male,  
Meeting in the circle of the Dance.  
Unexpectedly, as I opened myself to love, I was accepted.  
So there is no questioning, no hesitation,  
I am completely immersed in the all-powerful, the joyous Dakini mandala.  
And here I found unwavering conviction that love is universal.  
Five chakras of one's body filled with love,  
Love without question, love without possessions.  
This loving is the pattern of Mahamudra, universal love.  
So I dance with the eighty Siddhas and two thousand aspects of Dakinis,  
And I will dance bearing the burden of the cross.  
No one has forsaken me.  
It is such a joyous love dance, my partner and I united.  
Gently blows the clouds,  
A beautiful silk scarf wrapped round.  
The Himalayas with their high snow peaks are dancing,  
Joining my rhythm in the dance,  
Joining with the stillness, the most dignified movement of them all.  
August 6, 1969  
—Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche  
from *Mudra* (Shambhala Publications, 1972, pp. 49-51)  
*1111 Pearl Street*

*OFF BEAT*

In the clear atmosphere,  
A dot occurred.  
Passion tinged that dot vermilion red,  
Shaded with depression pink.  
How beautiful to be in the realm of nonexistence:  
When you dissolve, the dot dissolves;  
When you open up, clear space opens.  
Let us dissolve in the realm of passion,  
Which is feared by the theologians and lawmakers.  
Pluck, pluck, pluck, pluck the wild flower.  
It is not so much of orgasm,  
But it is a simple gesture,  
To realize fresh mountain air that includes the innocence of a wild  
flower.  
Come, come, D.I.R., you could join us.  
The freshness is not a threat, not a burden;  
It is a most affectionate gesture—  
That a city could dissolve in love of the wildness of country flowers.  
No duty, no sacrifice, no trap;  
The world is full of trustworthy openness.  
Let us celebrate in the cool joy  
The turquoise blue  
Morning dew  
Sunny laughter  
Humid home:  
Images of love are so good and brilliant.  
June 1976  
—Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche  
from *First Thought, Best Thought* (Shambhala Publications, 1983, p. 108)