

# 3. Decorum

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# 3. Decorum

## Guidelines

Decorum refers to the rules of proper and dignified behavior. Such rules were originally included in the vinaya, or monastic code of discipline. They traditionally included the precepts, as well as prescriptions for handling the details of one's body, speech, and environment on a literal physical level. For example, shrine hall etiquette and how to eat properly were included. The purpose of such rules and procedures is to train the mind, so that one creates a clear environment which encourages ongoing mindfulness and gives immediate feedback of one's neurosis.

1. Bow when entering the shrine hall, when passing in front of the shrine, and when passing in front of the teacher's chair. (Refer to instructions on bowing, below.)
2. In general, maintain a silent practice environment in the shrine hall. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule, such as community announcements and discussion groups.
3. When entering to practice, stand at your seats until the umdze sits down.
4. Do not lie down in the shrine hall (unless it is being temporarily used as a dormitory). Always maintain good sitting posture.
5. Do not stretch out your legs in the direction of the shrine, except momentarily to rest.
6. Do not put dharma texts, such as chants, directly on the floor. Placing them on a zabuton is fine, however.
7. Smoking is never permitted in the shrine hall.
8. Shoes are not permitted in the shrine hall, except in the case of an empowered lineage holder.
9. It is disrespectful to step over practice tables.

## Bowing as Practice

Bowing is a practice that expresses the sense of connection and respect we feel for the lineage holders, for the practice, and for each other. In the moment of bowing, we surrender any preoccupation with ourselves and acknowledge our connection with the great awakened world of the dharma. In *Zen Mind Beginner's Mind*, Suzuki Roshi says of bowing:

By bowing, we are giving up ourselves. To give up ourselves means to give up our dualistic ideas, so there is no difference between zazen (sitting meditation) and bowing. Usually to bow means to pay our respects to something which is more worthy of respect than ourselves. But when you bow to Buddha, you should have no idea of Buddha, you just become one with Buddha, you are already Buddha himself. When you become one with Buddha, one with everything that exists, you find the true meaning of being. When you forget all your dualistic ideas, everything becomes your teacher, and everything can be the object of worship.

## Types of Bow

### Buddhist Bow

There are different degrees of bows, depending on the situation:

1. *Formal standing bow.* Lean over about 45 degrees for this bow. Use this bow:
  - when you pass in front of the shrine, except in the case of walking meditation
  - when the Sakyong or other lineage holder is in the shrine hall. One would bow when he enters the room, passes in front of you, bows to the shrine, and leaves the room.
2. *Semi-formal standing bow.* Bend over about 30 degrees. Use this bow:
  - at the shrine hall door, just after you have entered or as you are leaving
  - when passing in front of the guru's chair
3. *Informal standing bow.* Bend over about 15 degrees. Use this bow to acknowledge the Sakyong or other Tibetan teachers in informal situations, such as meeting them in the hallway. Note: It is also common to offer a slight Shambhala-style bow in these situations, with the hands placed on the thighs. When bowing Tibetan-style, the shoulders are hunched slightly and the eyes are cast downward.
4. *Seated bows.* Bend over about 30 degrees. A seated bow is sometimes used while sitting in chairs to begin and end classes and Western style meals. When seated on your gomden, use this bow to return the Sakyong's bow when he is seated at the beginning and end of a talk.

5. *Posture.* In order to bow correctly, one must first be standing or sitting properly. The back should be straight, the head upright, and the shoulders relaxed. Then assume the anjali mudra.
6. *Anjali mudra.* The fingers and thumbs of each hand are closed, forming an open palm. Place the palms together and hold your hands up in front of your chest, at heart level.

We place our hands in what is called a namaste, or anjali mudra, which is like a greeting. In this case, the hands come together and form a representation of a bodhi seed. Bodhi means mind of enlightenment and it is also the name of the tree that the Buddha sat underneath. So, it is the seed of enlightenment.... The hands are not flat, not pressed, but it is like holding a little egg in there, cupped.

(Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, 1996 HINAYANA TRANSCRIPTS: 80-81)

*Note:* This mudra, commonly called anjali, is nearly the same as gassho in the Zen tradition. It is used in every situation, except oryoki. When practicing oryoki, hold your hands in front of your face, with the tops of your fingers just in front of the tip of your nose and a little ways forward -- at about the distance of the width of one's hand. Elbows are slightly raised..

## **Shambhala bow**

Three stages of the bow:

1. Hold, feel your head and shoulders and your existence; palms on upper thighs. Arms in the shape of bows (as in yumi). Feel the string as if it were going through the center of your body.
2. Then begin to give, bending the head and shoulders, leading with the head. Some sense of broadness and vastness is acknowledged as existing in your shoulders.
3. Finally opening to the situation completely with humbleness. Bow to about a 45 degree angle, then raise fully again.

## **Entering the Shrine Hall**

1. Before a scheduled practice session, the umdze stands in front of the shrine hall door, holding hands in the walking meditation mudra. Sometimes the gekö also stands in front of the door, facing the umdze.
2. Practitioners gather and wait outside with the umdze, holding the same mudra.
3. When the calling gong ends, the umdze opens the door and leads the practitioners into the shrine hall.
4. All bow as they enter the shrine hall, pass in front of the shrines, and pass in front of the teacher's chair. A buddhist bow is offered in front of the buddhist shrine, a Shambhala bow in

front of the Shambhala shrine. The style of bow when entering the hall or passing in front of the teachers chair could be either buddhist or Shambhala.

5. All walk to their seats and stand on their zabutons.
6. All sit down when the umdze sits down.

## **Walking Meditation**

1. The umdze signals the beginning of walking meditation by ringing the gong 1x and standing up. Depending upon the situation, she or he may say: "Walking meditation." In the case of all-day practice, it is not necessary to announce this every time. If kinhin style of walking is used, the umdze signals by also ringing the rin and announcing "kinhin walking meditation."
2. All stand and proceed to do walking meditation in a clockwise direction around the shrine hall.
3. When the umdze strikes the gandi, all pick up their pace and walk briskly, still clockwise, to their seat.
4. All remain standing on their zabuton, with hands still in the walking meditation mudra, until the umdze sits down; then all sit down. The gong will be struck to indicate the beginning of shamatha practice.

## **Dismissal from Shrine Hall**

1. The umdze ends a practice session with two or three gongs.
2. When the umdze rings the small gong 1x, all stand up and neatly arrange their cushions.
3. When the umdze rings the small gong 2x, all leave.

Sometimes, due to the number of practitioners in the shrine hall, sections of the room are dismissed separately. In this case, the umdze rings the small gong once and indicates for one section to leave with a gesture of extending her or his hand towards them, palm facing up. This is repeated for each section.

## **Shrine Room Protocol when a Lineage Holder is Present**

The following instruction for shrine room decorum when a lineage holder is present was given by Trungpa Rinpoche during the Vajradhatu Seminars of the early 1980s. It differs from the more traditional Tibetan custom of remaining in a crouched anjali.

1. The umdze rings the gong when the principal is about to enter the shrine room
2. Everyone stands, with hands in walking meditation mudra, and faces the door.
3. When the Principal enters, everyone bows to him or her. The depth of the bow will depend on the seniority and respect due the lineage holder, and all bows are done in buddhist style, with hands in anjali.
4. All return to good, upright, posture with hands in walking mudra and turn to follow the principal's progress into the shrine room.
5. When the principal approaches closest to one or crosses in front of one, even if one is standing in the back of the shrine room, bow with hands in anjali.
6. When he or she has passed, return to walking meditation mudra with good head and shoulders.
7. If the teacher bows to the shrine, bow with them.
8. When the teacher takes her or his seat, either be seated (in general teaching situations) or do three half-prostrations and then be seated (in Vajrayana teaching situations).

The same principles apply when the teacher is leaving. When the teacher rises, everyone stands with hands in walking meditation mudra. As the teacher approaches, bow in buddhist fashion. As the teacher passes, return to walking meditation mudra. If the teacher turns and bows, bow to them.

# Umdze Instructions

The umdze is a model for other practitioners in the shrine hall, providing an example of good posture and alert shamatha practice.

Becoming a good umdze involves a journey. To help overcome self-consciousness, learn procedures well so that you are not at a loss about what to do when you are in the umdze seat. This requires hands-on training: using the gong, the gandi, the microphone, etc. A general slogan for umdzes: "Be mindful of all details."

As you enter the shrine hall, it is helpful to check your state of mind and to connect with your appreciation of the lineage and the teachings. Bow to the shrine with a sense of devotion and elegance.

## Opening the Shrine Hall

1. *Arrival.* Arrive about 15 minutes before the sitting and check to see that the gomdens and zabutons are in place. If not, straighten them. Zabutons should be at least 6 inches apart on all sides, and should be staggered; exact spacing, of course, depends on the size of the room.
2. *Check room.* Be aware of ventilation and heating, and make sure that the shrine hall is well lit.
3. *Check shrines.* Make sure that the offering bowls have been filled and that there are sufficient candles, incense, and matches on the shrines and the tea offering on the mahakala shrine.
4. *Check seat.* You may wish to set up your seat (including practice table, chants, and microphone) in advance.
5. *Liturgies.* Set out any liturgies that will be used during the practice session.

## **Lighting the Shrines**

Bow to the shrine before lighting the candles. First light the candle on your left, then on your right, then the guru candle. Light a stick of incense from the candle on your left. You may support the forearm with which you light the candle and incense with your other hand. This contributes a sense of elegance; also, it is more respectful to make an offering with both hands. Holding the incense with both hands, bring it to your forehead and offer a slight bow. If the incense has a flame, wave it out with a gentle flick of your hand. Step back and bow to the shrine after offering the incense. Note: In general, you should not blow out a match, a candle, or incense; wave it out with your hand or use a snuffer.

The umdze is responsible for lighting incense again, if the practice session is lengthy. This should occur during walking meditation. The umdze should also replace candles when needed.

Be mindful of, and sensitive to, environmentally sensitive practitioners. If there is a practitioner in the meditation hall who is allergic to incense, make a token incense offering by lighting incense and immediately extinguishing it.

## **Arranging Your Seat**

If you are going to lead the chants as soon as you sit down:

1. Place the practice table in front of you, with the chant book on it.
2. Adjust the microphone so that it points directly towards your mouth, approximately 6-12 inches away, and turn it on.
3. Find your place in the chant book.
4. Pick up the striker and ring the gong.
5. Deadened gong somewhat sharply with an audible sound.
6. Begin chanting.

## Ring the Gong

The gong is a sacred musical instrument, which should be rung with an attitude of appreciation. Striking the gong properly is an art that requires practice. Practice striking the gong prior to leading sessions in order to reduce any hesitation. When the gong is struck two or more times in succession (except in the case of performing a rolldown), allow the sound to begin to fade before striking again.

*Note:* The striker should always remain inside the gong when you are not using it. It does not belong on your lap, zabuton, or anywhere else. When you do need to hold the striker, rest it on your knee, pointing up.

1. Ring the gong by striking it on the side of the rim, not on the top. Keep your wrist and elbow relaxed. Following through with your whole arm, make an upward sweeping motion, describing a circle.
2. Listen to the sound of the gong rise and swell, then strike again, and so on. Take your time.
3. *If chants follow:* Deaden the gong.
4. *If no chants follow:* Hold the striker while the sound of the gong fades out by itself.

## Musical Vocabulary

*Key to diagrams:*

- [0] The bold cipher represents a loud drumbeat.
- [o] The small letter represents a soft drumbeat.
- [/] The slash mark represent a slight pause.
- [0] The cipher represents a medium-loud drumbeat.

1. *Deaden* (refers to gong only): End the ringing of the gong with a firm but gentle touch of the striker on top of the rim; this produces a soft but definite "clunk."

2. *Rolldown* (with gong or drum): A rolldown begins with three strikes of the gong which are slowly and almost evenly paced; then the rhythm accelerates rapidly. As the length of interval between each strike of the gong decreases, so does the force with which it is struck. The analogies for the rolldown are a bouncing ball or a train pulling out of the station. In the annotated chants, the rolldown is represented as:

$0 > o$
---------

3. *Double rolldown* (with gong or drum): Two rolldowns in succession.

0 > o / 0 > o

4. *Sumdum* (with drum only): The Tibetan word means "three beats." It is a rhythmic pattern that follows a rolldown and precedes a section of monosyllabic chanting. It can be represented as

0 o / 0 0 0 o / 0 0 0 o / 0 o 0

5. Full stop (with gong or drum): This triplet always follows a rolldown. During the protector chants, it precedes a section of chanting which is not monosyllabic. It could be represented as (medium-soft-loud) or

0 o 0

## **Practice Signals**

### **General**

1. Three gongs begin and end the practice day.
2. One gong begins each practice session, unless it is the first session of the day; one gong also begins walking meditation.
3. Two gongs end a practice session if there will be another session later in the day.
4. Two strikes of the gong in quick succession signal the beginning of Tonglen.
5. A double rolldown on the gong, ending with a full stop (medium-soft-loud), signals the end of Tonglen.
6. One ring of the small gong (called a rin) signals all to stand up after the closing gong. A second ring dismisses everyone in the shrine hall. Alternatively, each side of the shrine hall can be dismissed separately with one ring.

### **Walking Meditation**

1. To begin walking meditation, strike the gong once.
2. When it is time to resume sitting meditation, return to your seat and stand on your zabuton. Strike the gandi once briskly, holding it at the level of your left ear. Then hold the gandi and striker at your waist level.
3. When all have returned to their seats, sit down. All sit down in unison. Wait until people have resumed their posture and settled.
4. When people have settled, strike the gong once for people to resume shamatha practice.

## **Bodhichitta**

1. Reserve a 15-minute period for Bodhichitta practice during at least one nyinthun session in an all-day practice. The practice is usually scheduled after about 30 minutes of sitting.
2. To begin, read the introduction to Bodhichitta practice, *Bodhichitta Practice on Love and Compassion*, from the umdze manual. Choose either the short or long explanation of the practice.

## **Tonglen**

1. Reserve a 15-minute period during each nyinthün block for Tonglen practice. One good time to schedule this is after the first walk.
2. Five minutes or so after the sitting has begun, ring the gong once and deaden it.
3. Say: "Those who have received Tonglen instruction now begin Tonglen; others continue shamatha."
4. Ring gong 2x briskly to signal the beginning of Tonglen.
5. Signal the end of Tonglen with a double rolldown on the gong, ending with a full stop (medium-soft-loud).
6. Say: "Return to shamatha practice."

## **Tea Offering**

Before an evening practice session which includes protector chants, pick someone to offer the tea during the Concluding Request to the Protectors. This is the responsibility of the gekö or gatekeeper, if one is scheduled. Refer to Gekö Procedures in this section.

## **Closing the Shrine**

Closing the shrine at the end of the day is the responsibility of the shrinekeeper (if present) or the umdze.

### **Buddhist**

1. Empty water from the offering bowls into a pitcher.
2. Pour the water outside in a clean place or on plants inside.
3. Wipe the glasses with a towel and set them upside down on match sticks, chopsticks, or a dowel to air-dry.
4. Replace candles as needed.

### **Shambhala**

1. It is not necessary to change offerings daily. When they lose their “freshness” it is time to change them.
2. Replace candles as needed.

## Leading Chants

Chanting is a proclamation of the dharma. When leading the chants, enunciate clearly. Learn how to pronounce any foreign words correctly. The pace should be uplifted and perky, but not as if you are racing to finish.

The Vidyadhara described how chanting was practiced in Tibet: people would chant next to a waterfall where the sound of one's voice was not audible to the chanter. In this way, they learned to extend themselves without self-consciousness.

1. *Pitch.* Choose a pitch that is comfortable for both high and low voices. Chanting is most effective with a medium-range pitch. Try to maintain that pitch constantly, not allowing it to drop during the chant. If the pitch does drop, bring it back up by clearly beginning with a higher pitch.
2. *Pace.* The umdze sets the pace for chants. Following the umdze, the drummer maintains that pace. There should be a close listening relationship between umdze and drummer. In general, morning chants and protector chants are fairly brisk. The concluding supplications are somewhat slower and heart-felt. *Fulfilling the Aspirations of Gyalwang Karmapa* is again brisk.
3. *Pauses.* There should be no pauses between stanzas or at the end of a line. To accomplish this, breathe in the middle of a sentence or line, saying the words to the chant on your inbreath. This permits you to keep time and not to lose your place.
4. *Microphone.* If you use a microphone, make sure that it is close enough and is pointed directly towards your mouth. If you use the microphone properly, you will not have to shout and you can chant with greater ease.

## Umdze Folder

A permanent umdze folder should be kept next to the umdze's seat or on a practice table next to the umdze platform. Its contents will vary; the following list may be helpful in considering what to include:

- umdze instructions
- annotated copies of all the chants
- daily nyinthün schedules
- list of nyinthün readings
- instructions for leading the Sadhana of Mahamudra
- instructions for leading the Maitri Bhavana
- instructions for leading Bodhichitta Practice

- instructions for leading Tonglen practice
- umdze instructions for oryoki practice
- instructions for Sukhavati ceremony

## Instructions for Morning Chants

### THE FOUR DHARMAS OF GAMPOPA

Begin with three gongs. Deaden after the third gong. Do not chant the title. The umdze alone chants the four dharmas somewhat slowly, pausing briefly after each line. Do not gong at the end.

### SEVEN-LINE SUPPLICATION TO PADMAKARA

Do not gong to begin. All chant together. Chant in a free-form style at a dignified, somewhat slow pace. Ring gong at the end. Do not use anjali.

### SUPPLICATION TO THE TAKPO KAGYÜ

Deaden gong when ready to begin. Do not chant the title. All chant together. Rapid, monosyllabic style, without drum. Generally, this chant is done without anjali, though this is optional. When visiting teachers are present, it is often appropriate to include anjali, to express one's reverence and to request teachings. Gongs may be omitted when this is chanted before a talk, especially with visiting teachers.

1. Gong at "I supplicate . . ." Deaden audibly on "example."
2. For the next three verses, gong at "Grant" and deaden on the last syllable of the verse.
3. For the next to last verse, gong on "Grant" but do not deaden at "nirvana."
4. Perform two rolldowns with the gong during the last verse: one during the first two lines and one during the last two lines.
5. Gong one more time at the end.

### HEART SUTRA

Deaden gong when ready to begin. Chant the title solo. Start somewhat slowly and pick up speed during the first line. Rapid, monosyllabic style, with drum accompaniment. Do not do anjali.

1. Gong at "profound"; do not deaden.
2. Gong at "OM" and directly after "SVAHA"; do not deaden.
3. Slow down during the last line, beginning around "rejoiced."
4. Gong at the end. Let the sound of the gong fade naturally if you are going to begin sitting.

#### RITUAL FOR TAKING THE FIVE PRECEPTS (OPTIONAL)

1. Deadened the gong if you are going to take the precepts.
2. All stand and perform three half-prostrations.
3. All kneel on their zabutons, with hands in anjali, facing the shrine.
4. All chant the homage to the Buddha (NAMASTAI . . . SAMYAK-SAMBUDDHAYA) and the triple refuge in Sanskrit, using the proper melody.
5. All chant the five precepts without melody, hands in anjali.
6. All sit back on their cushions.
7. Ring the gong once to begin sitting practice.

#### MORNING LITURGY FOR MAHAYANA STUDENTS (OPTIONAL)

If this directly follows the *Ritual for Taking the Five Precepts*, continue to chant in kneeling posture, hands in anjali, without ringing the gong. Do not include Tonglen practice if a period of sitting does not precede it.

The liturgy is sometimes done in the middle of a practice period, after sitting for an hour or so. In that case:

1. Ring the rin 1x and announce: "Renewal of bodhisattva vow."
2. People who have taken the bodhisattva vow stand and do three half-prostrations; others remain sitting.

3. Kneel, hands in anjali, facing the shrine.
4. Chant the bodhisattva vow from the Bodhicharyavatara.  
Note: The translation of the "four limitless ones" at the end of the liturgy has been changed (see Daily Chant Book, 1989 printing).
5. Return to your gomden and announce: "Those who have received Tonglen instruction now begin Tonglen; others continue shamatha."
6. Ring the gong 2x in quick succession to begin Tonglen. Note: The Tonglen session should be 15 minutes, although the printed text once indicated 30 minutes.
7. End Tonglen with two rolldowns on the gong, ending with a full stop (medium-soft-loud).
8. Announce: "Return to shamatha practice."

#### SHAMBHALA HOMAGE

1. Deaden gong

Do not chant the title. Chant in a free form style at a medium pace. Warrior posture is optional.

## Instructions for Evening Chants

The protector chants should be accompanied by drum and gong whenever possible. If you do not have a drum or there is no drummer, simply ring the gong and deaden at the beginning of each chant. In this case, chant in free-form style throughout rather than in monosyllabic style.

The following section includes instructions for all the Vajradhatu protector chants; use only the ones that are appropriate for your center. Anjali is not used in the protector chants.

*Mnemonic device:* A sumdum always precedes a section of monosyllabic chanting. A full stop always precedes a section chanted in free-form style, i.e., without drum accompaniment.

### FOUR-ARMED MAHAKALA

*(Shambhala Centers & RMSC for the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya)*

At the cue of the umdze, the drummer begins the protector chants by performing a rolldown and sumdum. (The rolldowns at the very beginning and end of protector chants is more leisurely than those between chants.)

The umdze begins chanting immediately after the last drum beat. Chant the first syllable, **HUM**, loud and clear in order to establish the pitch. The entire chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown during the mantra, which is chanted fairly briskly, not monosyllabically.

### VETALI

*(all Centers)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a full stop. The umdze gongs and deadens, then begins to chant the first stanza, "Vetali . . . offering," in free-form style without drum accompaniment. After first stanza, the drummer plays a rolldown and sumdum.

The umdze begins chanting again at the end of the sumdum. Chant the first syllable, **BHYO**, loud and clear in order to establish the pitch. The remainder of the chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown.

### EKAJATI

*(Karmé Chöling & Dechen Choling)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a sumdum. The umdze begins chanting at the end of the sumdum. Chant the first syllable, **BHYO**, loud and clear in order to establish the pitch. The entire chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown during the mantra, which is chanted briskly, not monosyllabically.

## VAJRASADHU

*(Karma Dzong)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a sumdum. The umdze begins chanting at the end of the sumdum. Chant the first syllable, **HUM**, loud and clear in order to establish the pitch. The entire chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown during the mantra, which is chanted briskly, not monosyllabically.

## THE SILVER BANNER OF THE GOLDEN DRINK OF POMRA

*(RMSC and Nova Scotia)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a full stop. The umdze gongs and deadens, then begins to chant the first line, "This undefiled . . . amrita," in free-form style without drum accompaniment. After **OM AH HUM**, which is repeated 3x, the drummer begins to play a rolldown and sumdum.

The umdze begins chanting again at the end of the sumdum. Chant the first syllable, Kye, loud and clear in order to establish the pitch. The remainder of the chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown during the mantra, which is chanted briskly, not monosyllabically.

## GAMPO LHATSE

*(Gampo Abbey)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a full stop. The umdze gongs and deadens, then begins to chant the first stanza, "From within emptiness . . . bliss," in free-form style without drum accompaniment.

Beginning with the mantra, **OM AH HUM**, the drummer plays a rolldown and sumdum. Chant this mantra 3x. Also repeat the A-KARO mantra 3x.

The umdze begins chanting again at the end of the sumdum. Chant the first syllable, **Pro-**, loud and clear in order to establish the pitch. The remainder of the chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown during the mantra.

## GESAR

*(Dechen Choling)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a full stop. The umdze gongs and deadens, then begins to chant in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown.

## CONCLUDING REQUEST TO THE PROTECTORS

*(all Centers)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a sumdum. The umdze begins chanting at the end of the sumdum. Chant the first syllable, **A-**, loud and clear to establish the pitch. The entire chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown and full stop.

## EXORCISM CHANT

*(all Centers)*

*Note:* refer to Section 4 of this manual.

## **Longevity and Rebirth Supplications**

To begin each supplication, ring gong and deaden. Hold hands in anjali throughout. Chant in free-form style at a pace somewhat slower and than for the protector chants.

In order to keep a well-paced flow between chants (particularly the longevity and rebirth supplications), ring the gong at the end of one chant, turn the page of the chant book, and deaden the gong to begin the following chant.

## **Aspirations and Dedications**

FULFILLING THE ASPIRATIONS OF GYALWA KARMAPA (Optional)

To begin, ring gong and deaden. No anjali. Chant in free-form style, somewhat faster than the supplications.

FULFILLING THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE VIDYADHARA, THE VENERABLE  
CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE

To begin, ring gong and deaden. No anjali. Chant in free-form style, somewhat faster than the supplications.

DEDICATIONS OF MERIT

To begin, ring gong and deaden. Chant in free-form style, somewhat faster than the supplications. Chant the buddhist dedication of merit (By this merit may all attain enlightenment...) without anjali and enter directly into the Shambhala dedication of merit (By the confidence of the Golden Sun...). End the session by ringing the gong three times, allowing the last strike to fade naturally. To dismiss the sangha, ring the rin once for all to stand, and again for all to leave.

## **Auspicious Verses**

SHAMBHALA INVOCATION

To begin, ring gong and deaden. No anjali. Chant in free-form style, somewhat faster than the supplications.

# Gekö Instructions

The gekö is the keeper of discipline in the shrine hall. The Tibetan term means "one in charge of virtue." Note that the word is not pronounced gek-oh; the ö is pronounced as the German ö (mögen) or as the French oe (oeuf). Before entering, the gekö may be the one to light the mahakala shrine and the guru candle.

*Entering.* The gekö stands opposite the umdze when lining up to enter the shrine hall.

*Seat.* Position the gekö seat where you can see all of the participants, in order to check posture and survey the environment.

*Maintaining environment.* If undue noise is coming from outside the shrine hall or even the building, get up and check out the situation or ask the gatekeeper to do so.

*Checking posture.* At least once during a practice period, walk around the shrine hall, using the walking meditation mudra. Your movement serves as a reminder to students to check their own posture. Notice who needs help with posture. Do not become too involved in studying each individual's posture.

*Posture reminder.* Simply touch people on the shoulder to remind them to correct their own posture. Students are encouraged to mentally run through the six points of good posture on their own from time to time.

*Physically correcting posture.* Physically correct posture only if you are trained. Refer to "Meditation Posture Guidelines" in the Appendix.

Approach from the side and slightly back, with respect for the person's space. After touching the person on the shoulder, proceed to adjust his or her posture.

*Verbal correction.* Sometimes offering verbal feedback is more appropriate than physical correction:

Approach the student from the side and slightly back, being careful not to startle the student.

Whisper verbal feedback; for example, "Are you aware that you are leaning forward?"

Observe how the person corrects his or her own posture.

If the self-correction is sufficient, say so. Say, for example: "Good."

If needed, offer a further suggestion or make a physical correction.

*Postponing correction.* Sometime it is preferable to talk to a person about his or her posture after the practice period. You might also mention any particular problem to the student's meditation instructor.

*Some key points regarding posture:*

The Vidyadhara designed and instituted gomdens to replace zafus; the use of zafus should be discouraged. One may use support cushions or risers to raise the height of the gomden.

One may sit flat on a zabuton, with or without a support cushion.

One may use a Japanese bench (seiza) if necessary. The Japanese kneeling posture, however, is not appropriate on a gomden.

The hands should be either resting on the thighs near the knees or held in the meditation mudra.

The mouth may be closed.

*Walking meditation.* Stand in a strategic place to observe people during walking meditation. See that they are using the correct mudra and that the lines are moving at a good pace. Make minimal correction by drawing people aside.

Walking meditation is good a time to adjust the temperature of the room, open windows, etc.

*Tea offering.* It is the responsibility of the gekö to make the tea offering during the *Concluding Request to the Protectors*. Rise during the chant which immediately precedes the Concluding Request (for Shambhala Centers, this is the Vetali chant). Proceed at walking meditation speed to the protector's shrine. Pick up and hold the cup in both hands. Turn to face the main shrine. *Note:* If a teacher is present, he or she may signal the protectors to accept the offering. However, this is an offering to the protectors rather than to the teacher.

At the line "Accept this offering gift of tormas," raise the cup, with arms extended and with a slight bow of the head. Leave the shrine hall and offer the tea outside, in a clean place. Do not wash the cup. Place it back on the mahakala shrine, upside down on a saucer, with a match stick underneath, so that it can dry properly. If the tea offering was made in a phukong, lay the phukong on its side, on top of its support stand. In general, offering vessels should be turned upside down when offerings are not being made.

# Gatekeeper Instructions

The gatekeeper calls the sangha to practice and protects the practice environment from distractions. She or he sits on a gomden outside the shrine hall in the postmeditation hall or inside the shrine hall, close to the door.

Gatekeeping is awareness practice in action. Be mindful of the environment as a whole, inside and outside the shrine hall. Observe a sense of decorum and posture while performing your duties. For example, do not carry on a conversation while ringing the gong. Use the gong and conch with an awareness of the instrument and of how it effects the environment.

## Responsibilities

1. *Noise.* Keep the noise level down outside of the shrine hall. Ask people to be quiet, if necessary.
2. *Late arrivals.* Ask late arrivals to sit in the postmeditation hall. Allow people to enter the shrine hall
  - during the next walking meditation
  - when a group of late comers has gathered, and there is no room to sit
  - following the morning chants. If the precepts are being taken, let them in before the three half-prostrations.
  - during the Morning Liturgy for Mahayana Students, just before and after the renewal of vows. It is fine for people to enter during Tonglen practice.
  - just before evening chants
3. *Inquiry.* Ask people who are leaving the shrine hall at an unscheduled time where they are going. Encourage them to stay and finish the session.

The gatekeeper should be a gentle but unequivocal boundary that people must pass through in entering and leaving the shrine hall at unscheduled times. Keep it simple; do not argue with anyone.

4. *During walking meditation.* Open the shrine hall door and stand just outside, with your hands in the walking meditation mudra. Make sure that walking meditation is not used for cigarette breaks or conversation.
5. *Before oryoki meals:*

- Remind the servers to be as quiet as possible while they are preparing oryoki service.
  - Permit late arrivals to enter the shrine hall in groups while the servers are preparing, up until 5 minutes before the meal is ready.
  - Make sure that the door is closed when the head server rings the gong in the postmeditation hall.
  - Open the door completely after the small bell rings, then join others in the shrine hall.
6. *Communicating problems.* If you notice someone having problems during the session, stay behind to talk it over with them. If possible, refer them to a meditation instructor.

## Calling Gong

*Note:* The following instructions can be simplified or omitted where necessary.

There are three series of calling gongs: two while people are lining up for practice, one while people are entering the shrine hall. Time the first two by silently chanting the Four Dharmas of Gampopa, 28x, using a mala. Strike the gong at the end of each recitation.

1. *First series.* Begin sounding the gong 15 minutes before sitting is scheduled – right after the first conch, if there is one. This lasts about 5 minutes. After 28 recitations of the Four Dharmas, play a rapidly descending rolldown and end with 1 loud gong. Allow a short pause, then play the conch again, if there is one.
2. *Second series.* Begin ringing the second series of gongs at 7 or 8 minutes before sitting is scheduled. This is identical to the first series: 28 recitations of the Four Dharmas, ending with a rolldown and one long gong. At the end of the second series, the umdze opens the door and leads the sangha into the shrine hall. Note: If the umdze is late, continue past the count of 28 until she or he arrives.
3. *Third series.* After the umdze opens the door, begin the final series of gongs, without repeating the Four Dharmas. Play the gong about four times as rapidly as during the previous two series. Just before the umdze sits down, he or she nods to end the rolldown with a full stop (medium-soft-loud). Then all sit down.
4. Close the shrine hall door and take your seat.

## Calling Conch

At Karmê-Chöling and RMSC, the gatekeeper uses a calling conch in conjunction with the calling gong.

1. *Karmê-Chöling*. The first sounding of the conch, 15 minutes before sitting begins, consists of two long blasts from each side of the building. The second sounding of the conch, approximately 7 1/2 minutes before sitting, consists of one long blast at each post.
2. *RMSC*. The first signal is three long blasts, followed by another three long blasts: X -- X -- X// X -- X -- X. The second signal is three short couplets, followed by another three short couplets: XX-XX-XX// XX-XX-XX.

## Tea Offering

If no gekö is scheduled, the gatekeeper should offer the tea during the Concluding Request to the Protectors. For making the offering, refer to Gekö Instructions in this section.

# Drummer Instructions

The drum is used to accompany the Heart Sutra and the protector chants. It maintains the pace established by the umdze and energizes the chanting. Drumming needs to be learned from an experienced drummer. Training classes are usually offered at Seminary and should also be scheduled periodically at local centers. Get feedback from other umdzes and drummers; listen to tapes of your own drumming. Constant practice is the key to good performance.

## Guidelines for Drumming

1. *Seat.* Take your seat next to the drum at the very beginning of the morning and evening chants. For stability, it is preferable to kneel on a zabuton while drumming. Position yourself so that you have direct eye contact with the umdze; never face the drum directly.
2. *Grip.* Grasp the striker somewhat loosely. When the wrist is kept flexible, the striker nearly bounces back by itself.
3. *Where to strike.* Out of respect, do not strike the drum in the center where the coil-of-joy is painted. Strike between the center and periphery of the drum, in the neighbourhood of two o'clock. Drums vary widely; some produce a good tone only when struck on a particular spot.
4. *Eye contact.* Never fixate your attention on the drum or on the printed chants. Watch and listen to the umdze and the environment. If it is difficult to hear the umdze, it is helpful to watch his or her mouth. If agreed upon in advance, the umdze could use hand signals for speeding up or slowing down.
5. *Pace.* There needs to be a close listening relationship between the umdze and drummer. The umdze chants the first syllable or beat of the chant without the drum; this helps everyone to find the pitch and come in together properly. The drummer enters on the second syllable or beat.

The umdze sets the pace of the chant; the drummer maintains that pace. In general, the pace should be crisp and perky. New drummers may find it helpful to refrain from chanting while drumming until they gain some confidence.

6. *Loudness.* Some drummers hesitate to strike the drum loudly enough. The sound of the drum should reach the far end of the room, but not so loud as to drown out the umdze.

## Performing a Rolldown

### *Key to diagrams:*

- [0] The bold cipher represents a loud drumbeat.
- [0] The cipher represents a medium-loud drumbeat.
- [o] The small letter represents a relatively soft drumbeat.
- [/] The slash mark represent a slight pause.

A rolldown begins with three loud beats, slowly and almost evenly paced. Then the pace accelerates rapidly but smoothly. As the frequency of the beats increases, their loudness decreases.

For the first few beats, move your whole arm; as beats become quicker, use only your wrist. At the beginning, strike the drum off-center. As the rolldown progresses, move the striker downwards across the drum head, ending near the bottom edge.

The analogies for the rolldown are a bouncing ball or a train pulling out of the station. In the annotated chants, the rolldown is represented as

0 > o
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A double rolldown consists of two rolldowns in succession, represented as

0 > o / 0 > o
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## Performing a Sumdum

The Tibetan word sumdum means "three beats." It is a rhythmic pattern that follows a rolldown and precedes a section of monosyllabic chanting. It could be represented as

0 o / 0 0 0 o / 0 0 0 o / 0 o 0
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## Performing a Full Stop

This concluding triplet follows a rolldown. During the protector chants, it precedes a section of chanting which is done without drum accompaniment; it also ends the chants. It could be represented as (medium-soft-loud) or

0 o 0
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## Drummer Folder

A drummer folder should be kept at the drummer's seat. Place a copy of the daily chants used at your center, fully annotated for the use of the drummer. Also place a copy of these instructions in the folder.

## Heart Sutra

The *Heart Sutra* is chanted in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment. The umdze begins by chanting the title solo. Never drum on the first syllable of the chant, "Thus." Always come in on the second syllable, "have." The umdze begins chanting somewhat slowly and picks up speed. By the end of the first line, the pace for the rest of the chant should be established. Be especially attentive at the beginning, in order to keep pace with the umdze. The drum should be perky. The umdze will begin to slow down during the last line, beginning around the word "rejoiced." Again, be attentive in order to keep pace with the umdze. The last drum beat falls on the last word, "One."

## Oryoki

1. Take your position next to the drum, holding two strikers, before the line of the liturgy: "May the health of my body flourish."
2. Before beginning, make eye contact with the cook at the entrance of the shrine hall.
3. Using both sticks, play two rolldowns during the time it takes for the cook to walk to the front of the shrine. Note: The cook should not bow while standing at the center of the shrine; he or she bows after taking two sideways steps to the right.
4. As the cook takes two steps to the right, rotate the wooden ends of the strikers twice clockwise around the edges of the drum's slightly vibrating surface (this is called a *pekor*).
5. Using both strikers, play a couplet on the drum three times as the cook makes the offering to the shrine. The two beats of the couplet should be executed quickly; the second beat should be somewhat louder than the first. Each couplet is played with a different degree of loudness:

[0-0]	medium loud, when the cook first bows to the shrine
[o-o]	softly, when the cook places the offering on the shrine
[0-0]	loudly, when the cook bows again to the shrine.

6. Return to your seat.

## Protector Chants

The protector chants are done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment. There is no marked acceleration or deceleration of pace like the beginning and end of the Heart Sutra. There is a slight acceleration at the beginning of protector chants, but no deceleration at the end.

This section includes instructions for all the Vajradhatu protector chants that use drum; use only the ones that are appropriate for your center. Once you have understood these verbal instructions, the icons used in the annotated chants will be easier to read.

*Mnemonic device:* Play a rolldown and a sumdum before a section written in verse. Play a rolldown and full stop before a section written in prose, such as at the beginning of Vetali, Magyal Pomra, and Gampo Lhatse.

### FOUR-ARMED MAHAKALA

Watch for the cue of the umdze. After the umdze's nod, perform a rolldown and sumdum. After the last beat of the sumdum, the umdze begins to chant. Do not drum on the first syllable, "HUM." Come in on the second syllable, "From."

*Note:* The rolldowns at the very beginning and end of the protector chants, sometimes called "dramatic rolldowns," are slower and weightier than those that come between chants. One could consider that one is actually invoking the energy of the protectors.

### VETALI

Immediately after the rolldown, play a full stop. The umdze gongs and chants the first stanza without drum accompaniment. After the first stanza, play a rolldown and sumdum. The umdze begins chanting again after the last beat of the sumdum. Do not drum on the first syllable, "BHYO"; enter on the second syllable, "Pro." The remainder of the chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment. End with a rolldown.

### EKAJATI

Immediately after the rolldown, play a sumdum. The umdze begins chanting after the last beat of the sumdum. Do not drum on the first syllable, "BHYO"; enter on the second syllable, "The." The entire chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment. End with a rolldown during the mantra.

### VAJRASADHU

Immediately after the rolldown, play a sumdum. The umdze begins chanting after the last beat of the sumdum. Do not drum on the first syllable, "HUM"; enter on the second syllable, "The." The entire chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment. End with a rolldown during the mantra.

### THE SILVER BANNER OF THE GOLDEN DRINK OF POMRA

Immediately after the rolldown, play a full stop. The umdze gongs and chants the first line without drum accompaniment. After OM AH HUM (repeated 3x), begin to play a rolldown and sumdum.

The umdze begins chanting again after the last beat of the sumdum. Do not drum on the first syllable, "Kye"; enter on the second syllable, "From." The remainder of the chant is done in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment. End with a rolldown during the mantra.

### GAMPO LHATSE

Immediately after the rolldown, play a full stop. The umdze gongs and chants the first stanza without drum accompaniment. Play a rolldown and sumdum, beginning with the mantra OM AH HUM. The umdze begins chanting again after the last beat of the sumdum. Do not drum on the first syllable, "Pro"; enter on the second syllable, "tec." The remainder of the chant is done in monosyllabic style. End with a rolldown during the mantra.

### GESAR

*(Dechen Choling)*

Immediately after the rolldown, the drummer plays a full stop. Do not drum on the first syllable; enter on the second syllable. The umdze gongs and deadens, then begins to chant in monosyllabic style with drum accompaniment, ending with a rolldown.

### CONCLUDING REQUEST TO THE PROTECTORS

Immediately after the rolldown, play a sumdum. The umdze begins chanting after the last beat of the sumdum. Do not drum on the first syllable, "As"; enter on the second syllable, "sem." The entire chant is done in monosyllabic style. End with a rolldown and full stop (medium-soft-loud).

### EXORCISM CHANT

If it is a protector day, the Exorcism Chant directly follows the Concluding Request. This begins with the Heart Sutra. Play the drum in exactly the same style as the morning chants.