

MANGALA SHRI BHUTI NGÖNDRO MANUAL

Preliminaries to Ngöndro

In order to enter the ngöndro phase of practice, one will need to:

- Receive the Sessions teachings
- Complete a Post-Sessions solitary retreat
- Receive both the ngöndro practice transmission and the complete transmission for the *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* text in person (not through an audio stream or recording) from Rinpoche during one of MSB's annual *Words of My Perfect Teacher* public programs.

Four Immeasurables & Aspiration Bodhicitta

The four immeasurables and aspiration bodhicitta practices are integrated into the bodhicitta section of the liturgy. Do the four immeasurables meditation and arousing bodhicitta before reciting the main four-line verse. After reciting the verses do the contemplations of equalizing self and other, tonglen, and considering others more dear than oneself. Rinpoche emphasized that this meditation on bodhicitta is the heart of the ngöndro. The English section of the Bodhicitta section is optional, but encouraged if one has time.

Sessions Practice

The instructions given during sessions should be practiced at the end of the refuge, bodhicitta, Vajrasattva, mandala/chöd, and Guru Yoga practices. However, the most appropriate time to focus just on the nature of mind practice is after receiving the fourth empowerment within the Guru Yoga section (twenty minutes is the suggested minimum). It is also encouraged to combine resting in the nature of mind with reciting the vajra guru mantra.

Short Ngöndro and Essential Guru Yoga

The purpose of these liturgies is to maintain continuity and consistency in the ngöndro practice even when one's time is limited. However, recitations within the context of these short ngöndro practices are not counted towards the total accumulations. On the other hand, vajra guru recitations accumulated in these practices may be counted towards the 100 million mantra total.

Recitation Language

The following are direct comments made by Rinpoche regarding the question of whether to recite the ngöndro in Tibetan or English:

Our ngöndro practice is composed by Jigme Lingpa, so it's not a terma. In MSB, some people do it in Tibetan, others in English. I encourage people to do it in whichever way they feel more connected. If you do it in Tibetan, you have to *like* doing it in Tibetan. The sadhanas [Rigdzin Düpa and Dechen Gyalmo], on the other hand, are terma, so I think it's good to do them in

Tibetan. One reason is, they're not altered by the translator, so there's going to be more direct experience, more direct blessing. Also, in Tibetan, you can chant, you can sing, you can do all kinds of things. But doing it in English, unless we hire some really professional person to come in and make some songs out of it, I don't know how the tunes and singing are going to be done.

Visualizations

The descriptions of the visualizations given by Patrul Rinpoche in *Words of My Perfect Teacher* and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo in *Illuminating the Excellent Path to Omniscience* (the italicized text that is integrated into the ngöndro liturgy itself) differ slightly. One may use either visualization description when doing the practice. Please note that the practice and visualization instructions given in the book by H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche entitled *The Excellent Path to Enlightenment* are for the short ngöndro, and therefore should only be followed when using that specific liturgy.

The visualization for the nine-fold clearing of the breath is as follows:

Left nostril: passion/murky pink

Right nostril: aggression/gray

Both nostrils: ignorance/black

Guru Yoga Prayers and Mantra Recitation Format

The instructions on how to do the vajra guru mantra recitation given by Patrul Rinpoche and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo differ slightly. One may use either instruction when doing the practice. The following are the recitation instructions according to Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo:

Recite the complete invocation prayer

Recite the first third of the mantra total for that individual session

Recite the complete invocation prayer a second time

Recite the second third of the mantra total for that individual session

Recite the complete invocation prayer a final time

Recite the last third of the mantra total for that individual session

Mala and Recitation

Malas should generally be kept private (it's okay for other sangha members to see one's mala). During recitations, the mala is held in one's left hand at the heart. Mantra recitation is not done silently or loudly, but should be done in a whisper, as if "speaking to your shirt collar." The mala is also held in the left hand while doing prostrations. It is permissible to use a hand mala while doing prostrations.

Dedication of Merit

When reciting the final dedication prayer composed by Longchenpa, recite the last four lines three times, and the final line three times at the end. It is also encouraged to recite the Guru Rinpoche Supplication written by Rinpoche as a final prayer of dedication.

Retreat

When doing a retreat that focuses on the ngöndro practice, one should go through the entire ngöndro liturgy during each distinct practice session. Spend the first session of the day focusing on the details of each section, and then spend the remaining three practice sessions focusing more on the section that you are accumulating.

One-Third Option

All students are encouraged to start their ngondro with the vision of accumulating the full numbers for each of the practices. However, if one gets into the practice and finds that for some reason the ngondro is taking longer than expected, there is the option of doing one-third of each set of accumulations. For example, one would only do one-third of the 110,000 prostrations and then move on to the next section. Before deciding to take the one-third option please speak with your SPR and write a letter directly to Rinpoche requesting his permission to do one-third of the accumulations with an explanation of your circumstances. Once the ngondro is started it is important that one always keeps a strong vision and aspiration to complete the ngondro in this life or in the next life despite difficult circumstances. In essence, never adopt the attitude of “giving up” on the ngondro practice.

PRACTICE MATERIALS

Mala: Bodhi seed or lotus seed, with three semiprecious stones, two counters, and a guru or 'main' bead. The mala should have three semiprecious marker stones, with one dividing the mala in half and the other two dividing it into quarters. The mala should have 108 beads total (not including the guru bead) and should have two counters.

The following may help with putting the mala together:

Beads #1 -26: 26 Regular beads (bodhi, lotus seed, etc.)

Insert a counter after bead #10

Bead #27: 1 Semiprecious stone to mark the $\frac{1}{4}$ point

Beads #28 - 54: 27 Regular beads

Bead #55: 1 Semiprecious stone to mark the halfway point

Beads #56 - 81: 26 Regular beads

Bead #82: 1 Semiprecious stone to mark the $\frac{3}{4}$ point

Beads #83 - 108: 26 Regular beads

Insert a counter after bead #98

Use a guru bead to separate bead #1 and bead #108

Mala bag

Prostration board: These should not be brought to the retreat, but can be purchased and kept at home prior to the retreat.

Offering mandala: Including a mandala base, three rings, and crowning ornament. It is encouraged to buy the best quality mandala set possible.

Accomplishment mandala: A single mandala base (separate from the offering mandala and without the three rings and crowning ornament).

Two Plates: Both the accomplishment mandala base and the offering mandala base should rest on plates rather than directly on the shrine top.

3'x3' piece of fabric: This fabric will be used during the mandala offering section of the practice to carry the rice and offering mandala set.

Small bowl: To be used for the scented water in the mandala offering section.

Saffron: To prepare the scented water used during the mandala offering.

Saffron rice: Enough to abundantly fill the offering mandala. If possible, mix semiprecious stones with the rice. If one can afford it, semi-precious stones could completely replace the rice.

Materials:

1 3-pound box Uncle Ben's Converted Rice
1 or 2 packages saffron (approx. 3 grams minimum; more for richer color)
Large screen for drying rice (a 2' x 3' or larger window screen works well; clean well if it is dusty)
Large pot (2-3 quarts)
Strainer for skimming saffron

Preparation:

Boil 7 cups water. Turn off heat, add saffron. Allow the saffron to steep in the hot water until water has cooled to the temperature of a hot bath. Skim off the saffron stamens. Then immediately pour in the rice and stir. Let the rice sit in the warm water, soaking up most of it, for about 7-8 minutes (any longer and the rice will crack when dry). Pour off the excess water and immediately spread the rice out on the drying screen. Spread it into a thin, even layer, approximately only one rice grain thick. In other words, don't pile the rice on top of itself. Let dry overnight. You should have a rich, deeply golden, and very durable rice, with the color soaked through. This amount makes a large batch, just enough for the mandala practice.

Pecha cover: Large enough to fit a 4 1/4" x 11" liturgy.

Ngöndro liturgy and visualization photos: Contact a khenchung to learn how to order a liturgy and visualization photos.

NGÖNDRO ACCUMULATIONS

There are five sets of accumulations contained within the ngöndro practice:

1. Refuge
2. Bodhicitta
3. Vajrasattva
4. Mandala
5. Guru Yoga

One focuses on each set of accumulations in the above sequence. It's not appropriate to change the order or to switch to another accumulation set before completing all of the accumulations connected to a previous set.

Focus on only one set of accumulations at a time. For instance, when focusing on refuge accumulations, do not count recitations of bodhicitta, Vajrasattva, mandala, or guru yoga towards one's totals. This is an important difference between the Dzogchen Longchen Nyingthik Ngöndro and some other ngöndro practices. Although one does a small amount of recitations for each of the five sets during each practice session, one only counts the numbers related to the set one is focusing on. The visual aid on page 7 shows an example of a three-hour practice session with a focus on refuge accumulations. Once one completes 110,000 prostrations and refuge prayers, one then does a minimum of three refuge prayers each session and spends the majority of the practice time focusing on accumulating bodhicitta prayers. This pattern continues for each accumulation set.

The following is a summary of the total accumulations and daily minimum for each accumulation set.

Refuge

Total accumulation: 110,000 prostrations and refuge prayers

Daily practice: minimum of three recitations

Bodhicitta

Total accumulation: 110,000 recitations of the four-line verse (HO Deceived by myriad appearances...)

Daily practice: minimum of three recitations

Vajrasattva

110,000 one-hundred-syllable mantras

Daily practice: minimum of 21 recitations

(Six-syllable Vajrasattva mantra recited daily; not accumulated)

Mandala

11,000 three-kaya mandala offerings

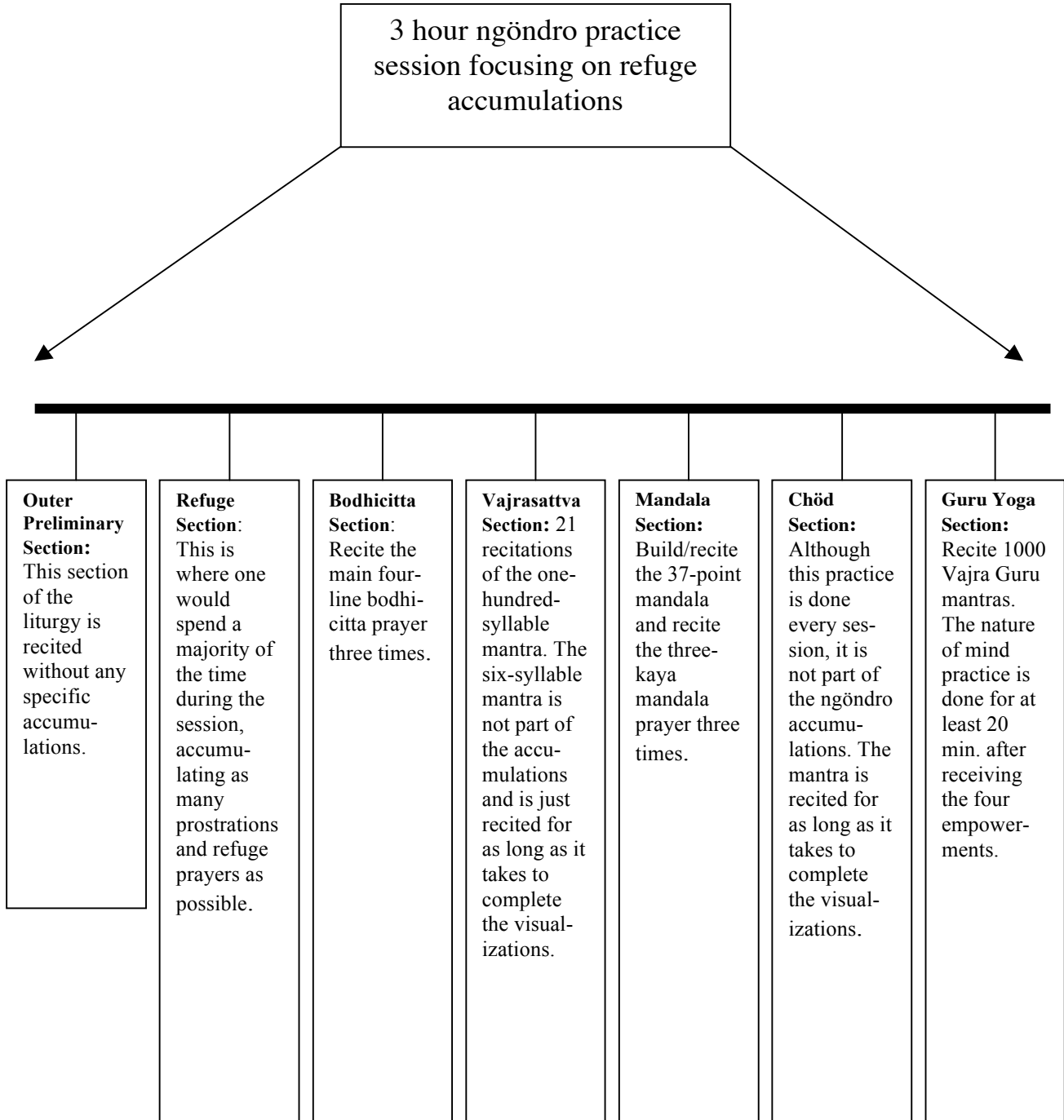
Daily practice: minimum of three recitations

110,000 short four-line mandala offering

Daily practice: minimum of one recitation
(37-point mandala offering recited once daily; not accumulated)

Chöd
OM AH HUNG recited daily, not accumulated

Guru Yoga
1,300,000 vajra guru mantras
Daily practice: minimum of 1000 vajra guru recitations



MANDALA PRACTICE

Daily Practice

The offering mandala is used for the duration of one's ngöndro practice. Therefore, the accomplishment mandala can also be placed on the shrine for this entire period. The 37-point mandala is built while reciting the corresponding verses, and can be held up while reciting the short mandala offering and three-kaya mandala offering three times.

Thirty-Seven Point Mandala Offering

Recite “OM BENZAR BHUMI AH HUNG.” At the same time hold the mandala in your left hand and with your right ring finger sprinkle the base with perfumed water (saffron water—you can also add a little milk to this). Then, with your thumb and right finger, take a small pinch of rice.

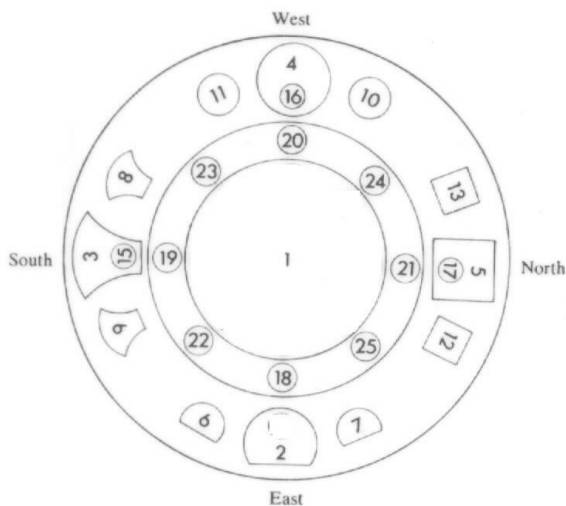
Recite, “The foundation is the utterly pure golden ground of vast strength.”

Reciting “OM BENZAR REKHE AH HUNG,” circle your hand clockwise on the mandala base and then place the pinch of grains in the middle.

Place the ready-made “fence of iron mountains” on the mandala base (the first of the three rings). Arrange piles of rice within each ring of the mandala as you recite the corresponding verses. While building the offering mandala have the inside of your wrist facing upwards as you pile the rice and, as much as possible, hold the mandala at the same height as your heart.

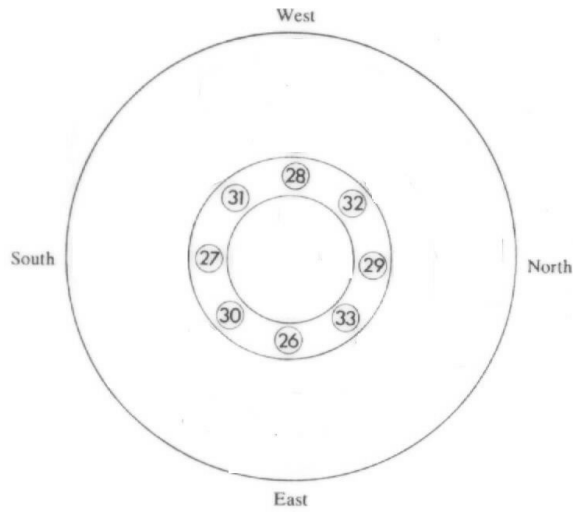
Ring 1:

Recite Mount Meru – The Vase of Great Treasure (1-25)



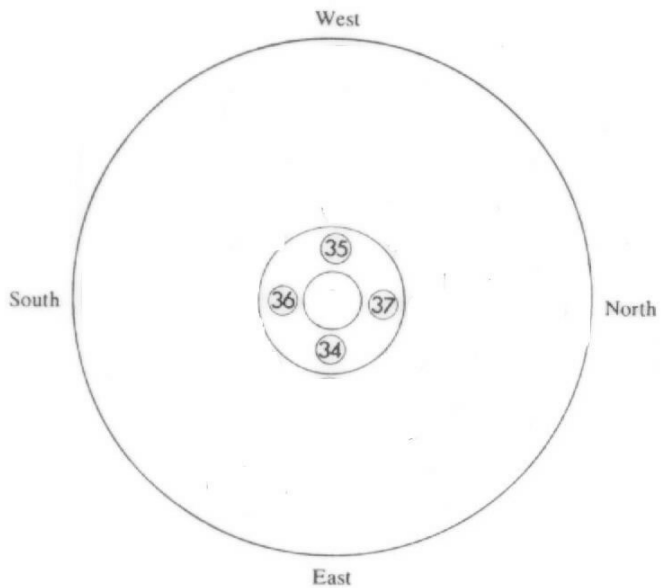
Composition of the “Thirty-Seven Point Mandala”

Ring 2:
Recite Lady of Charm – Lady of Perfume (26-33)



Composition of the "Thirty-Seven Point Mandala"

Ring 3:
Recite The Sun – The Banner of Universal Victory (34 – 37)

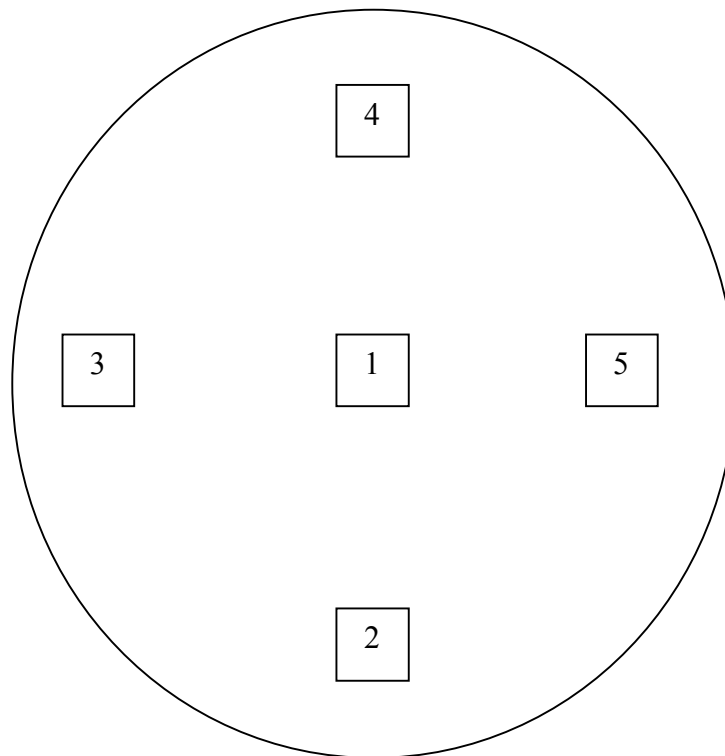


Composition of the "Thirty-Seven Point Mandala"

As you recite, “The glory, wealth, and enjoyments of gods and men ...” pile more grains on top of the rest so that no space is left unfilled. If you have an ornament for the summit, place it on top now. Finally, while reciting the concluding verses, turn the completed mandala 180 degrees in a clockwise direction. Continue holding the mandala as you recite the rest of the verses for this section. Once finished, place this offering mandala on a plate and put the built mandala on the shrine.

Accomplishment Mandala

Below is the configuration for the accomplishment mandala, which stays on the shrine. This consists of a mandala base arranged with five piles of rice. The mandala is place on a plate. Replace the piles of rice every so often.



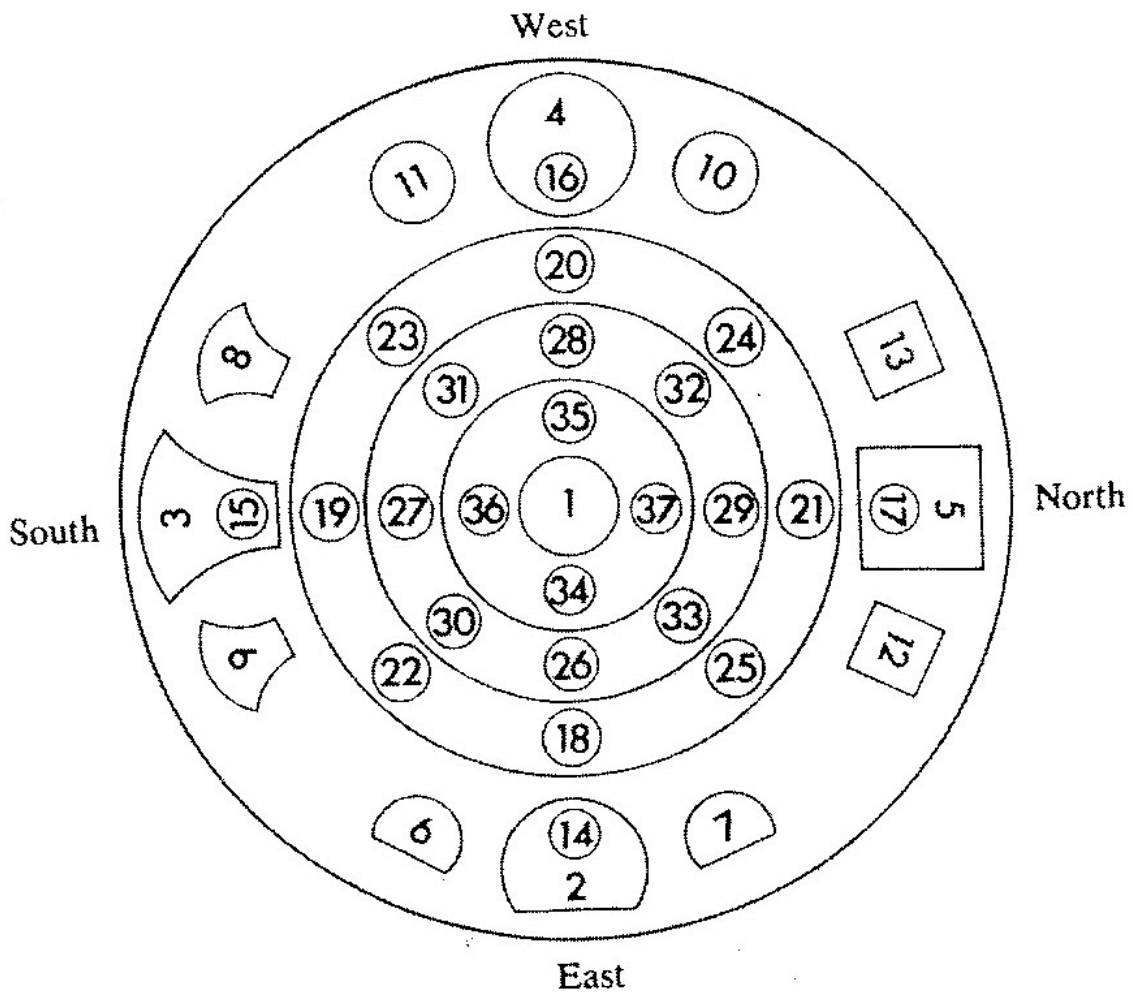
Mandala Accumulations

The mandala accumulations are twofold. First, one focuses on accumulating 11,000 recitations of the three-kaya mandala offering prayer, and then one accumulates 110,000 recitations of the short mandala offering (“The earth is perfumed with scented water...”),

but without the short mantra at end (“IDAM RATNA...”). The following is a detailed explanation of how to do these accumulations.

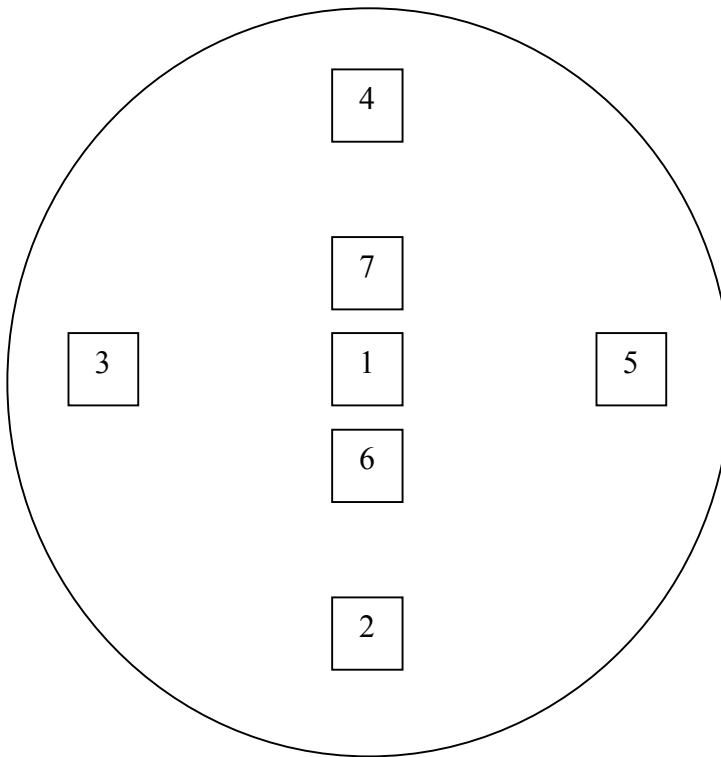
Three-Kaya Mandala Offering

Build the 37-point mandala offering as usual, and then take it apart before reciting the three-kaya mandala prayer. While accumulating the three-kaya mandala prayer, hold the mandala base in the left hand (along with your mala), sprinkle perfumed water on the mandala with the right ring finger, circle your hand clockwise on the mandala base, and then place 37 small piles of rice on the base plate in sequence (see below). This is done for each recitation of the three-kaya mandala prayer. Wipe the base clean by circling your hand clockwise on the mandala base between the recitation of each prayer. If you want to place the three-tiered mandala on your shrine at the end of the mandala section, build it up again during the last few recitations of the three-kaya mandala prayer. One completes 11,000 recitations of the three-kaya mandala prayer in this fashion.



Short Mandala Offering Accumulations

Build the 37-point mandala offering as usual while reciting the corresponding verses, then recite the short mandala once, followed by the three-kaya mandala prayer three times. Then disassemble the three-tiered mandala. While accumulating the short mandala prayer (“The earth is perfumed with scented water...” but without “IDAM RATNA...”), hold the mandala base in the left hand (along with your mala), sprinkle perfumed water on the mandala with the right ring finger, circle your hand clockwise on the mandala base, and then place seven small piles of rice on the base plate in sequence (see below). This is done for each recitation of the short mandala offering. Wipe the base clean by circling your hand clockwise on the mandala base between the recitation of each prayer. If you want to place the three-tiered mandala on your shrine at the end of the mandala section, build it up while reciting the final ten or so short mandala offerings. One completes 110,000 recitations of the short mandala offering in this fashion.

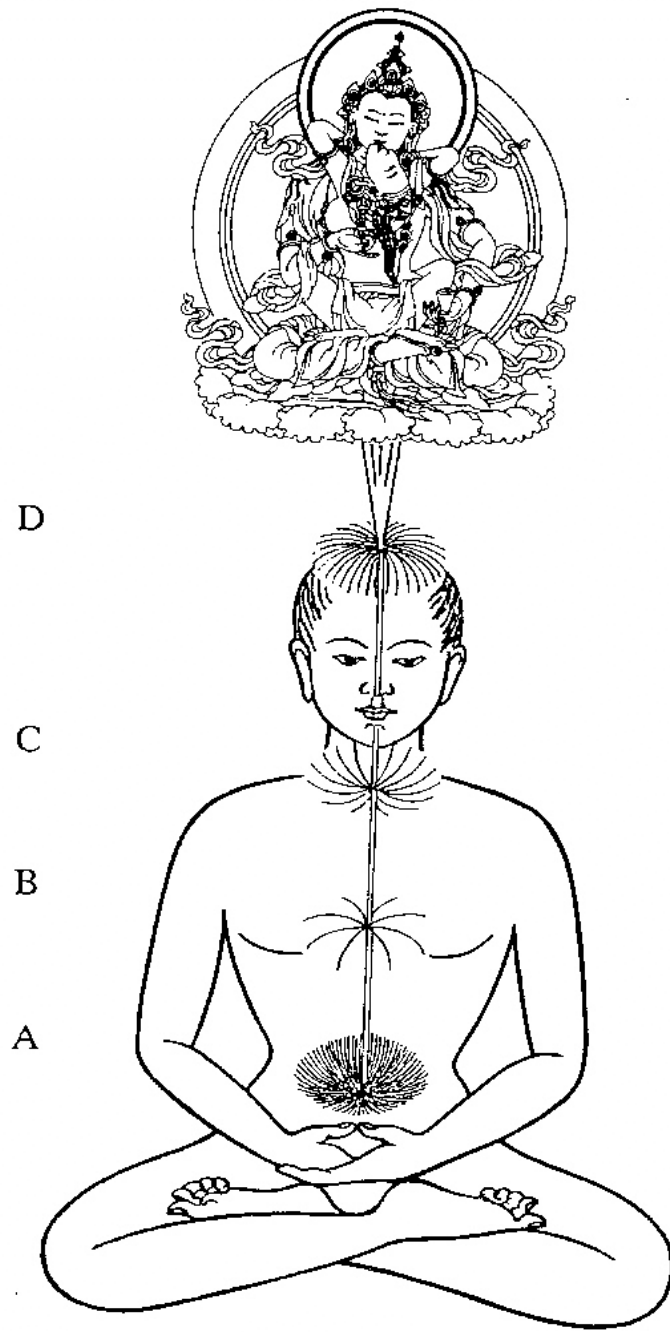


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OM AH HUNG HO RAM YAM KHAM DZA HUNG BAM HO

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BHRUM HRI PAM LAM TRAM MAM BAM SUM MUM TAM HAM NRI

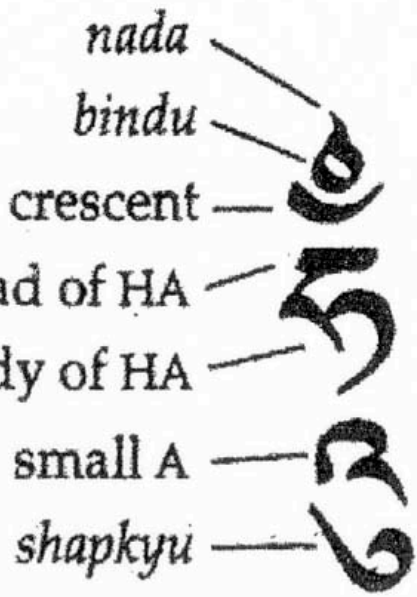


100 SYLLABLE MANTRA

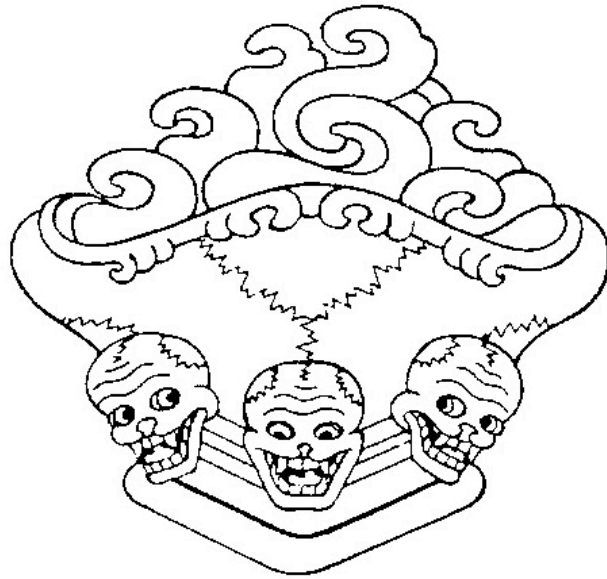
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CHOD VISUALIZATION