

Refuge Vows and Ceremony: The Liturgy for Giving Refuge Vows

Praise to the Master, the Lion of the Sakyas!

Those, who seek to become lay followers,ⁱ who have faith in the Triple Refuge,ⁱⁱ and who wish to receive refuge vows (that are the basis of all good qualities), should place the three representations (of the Buddha),ⁱⁱⁱ for example: a statue of the Buddha, on the altar. In front of that, they should place whatever offerings they have, such as the five offerings,^{iv} a mandala,^v or something similar and then they should sit down in front of the altar and their teacher.

A detailed description of the refuge objects, the way in which one takes refuge, the time frame for taking refuge, the motivation for taking refuge, and the qualities that taking refuge engenders, can be found in the “Oral Instructions of my Samantrabhadra-like Teacher”.^{vi}

The teacher now summarizes these topics by saying:

Excellent! Due to the power of your previous positive actions and aspirations, you have found what is very difficult to find, namely you possess a human body with the eight freedoms^{vii} and the ten advantages.^{viii} You have met with what is very difficult to meet, namely the teaching of the Buddha. Now it is your responsibility to walk through the gateway of the teachings of the Buddha and realize the level of liberation. The final refuge of all who wish for liberation is the Three Jewels. Therefore one must take refuge in the Three Jewels.

Taking refuge is the foundation of all paths and the factor that determines whether one is a Buddhist or not. Taking refuge is also the basis for all other vows:

“One may have taken all vows, but if one has not taken refuge, one does not possess any vows.”

It is therefore very important that one understands the reasons why one should take refuge in the Three Jewels. The objects in which one takes refuge are the Three Jewels. The way in which one takes refuge is that one takes the Buddha as teacher, the Dharma as path, and the Sangha as support. The time frame for taking refuge, that is true for all vehicles, is the moment from taking refuge until the end of one’s life. The motivation for taking refuge is the thought: “In order to bring all sentient beings to happiness and to free them from suffering, I will accomplish the final stage by becoming an omniscient Buddha.”

That you now have the wish to enter the door of the sublime teaching is most excellent. Orgyen Rinpoche (Guru Rinpoche) stated:

“As the freedoms and advantages are very difficult to find, how pitiable are the beings without Dharma, who go empty-handed, when they pass away from a deadly illness.”

It is not the case that you will always have a human existence. The body, that you now have, is impermanent; and when you die, it is fully unknown in which of the six realms you will be reborn. Each of these six realms has the nature of suffering. Therefore Orgyen Rinpoche (Guru Rinpoche) said:

“In these six karmic cities, out of which there is no release, one circles as on a water wheel (without beginning and end) from one realm to another. How pitiable are the beings in the cycle of rebirths, from which there is no release.”

Now I will grant you the vows of a lay follower, who has faith in the Triple Refuge.

Therefore imagine in the space before you, the Lord of the Teaching, the sublime Lion of the Sakyas, sits on a lion-supported throne on top of a lotus and moon disc. His body is the color of shining gold and possesses the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks (of buddhahood). His body is clothed with the three monastic robes^{ix} and he sits in the vajra posture.^x His right hand touches the earth,^{xi} and his left hand, in meditation mudra,^{xii} holds his alms bowl.^{xiii} Light and light rays shine out from him. Meditate, such that you imagine that the Buddha, surrounded by infinite numbers of sravakas, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas,^{xiv} is actually present.

While you meditate on this, the teacher says three-times:

To the Buddha, Dharma and Supreme Assembly,
I go for refuge until I am enlightened.
By the merit that I create from giving and other perfections,
May I attain the state of buddahood
In order to benefit all sentient beings.

Then the teacher says:

Praise!
As all beings have buddha-nature,
I powerfully direct my mind towards the goal of supreme enlightenment.
As all beings have the potential for buddhahood,
There are no beings who are not suitable vessels.

Arise! Arise! Supreme Buddha possessing the ten powers.^{xv}
You, Three Jewels, who only think about the needs of all beings
And who through the power of your compassion
Never miss the opportune moment,
All you Buddhas with your retinues, come here,
To this place, where we have mentally and physically made our offerings.
Bendza Samaya Dzah!^{xvi}

The teacher says:

In the country of the King of Sahor
You accomplished the siddhis (powers) with which you defeated the armies of Mara.
You are known as the “Lion of the Sakyas”.
Following you, I will practice.
Please come and bestow your blessings.
Om Guru Shakya Senge Bendza Samaya Dzah!
Dzah Hung Bam Hoh!
Titra Lhen!

The teacher and the students recite three-times the Hundred-Syllable-Mantra.^{xvii}

Thereafter the students request the teacher to grant them the refuge vows, saying three-times:

Kye!

Precious treasury of oceanic qualities,
Incomparably kind teacher,
You teach sentient beings the methods to obtain happiness,
Show us the excellent path.

The teacher says:

Hoh!

Listen! You have obtained the human body with the eight freedoms and the ten advantages,
And you have faith in the Three Jewels.
I will plant (in your minds) the seeds of liberation,
So that you may walk step-by-step the path to awakening.

With these words the teacher gives his or her assent and approval.

Bow three-times before the symbols (of the Three Jewels) and in front of the teacher and concentrate on the following words: “In order to protect myself and all beings from the suffering of samsara, I have in the presence of the supreme Lion of the Sakyas and his entire retinue, and in front of you, my teacher, requested the vows of a lay follower. I intend from now until my death to uphold my refuge in the Three Jewels.” Now sit down on the floor with joined palms in a cross-legged position or kneel down on your right knee^{xviii} and repeat after me the following words:

You, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, and you, my teacher, think about me!^{xix}

tschok-tschu na shuk-pe sang-gye dang djang-tschub-sem-pa tam-tsche dang lo-pön gong su söl

I, named (the name of the person taking refuge),
dak “your name” she gyi ba

Take from this time
dü di ne sung te

Until death
ji-si tso-i bar-du

The most supreme of all human beings,
kang-nyi nam-kyi tschok

The Buddha, as my refuge.
sang-gye la kyab-su tschi-o

The most supreme of all that is free from desire,
dö-tschak dang-dral-wa nam-gyi-tschok

In the Dharma, I take refuge.
tschö-la kyab-su-tschi-o

The most supreme of all assemblies,
Tsok-nam gyi-tschok

In the sangha, I take refuge.
gen-dün la kyab-su tschi-o

From this point
dak dü-ne sung-te

Until death
ji-si tso-i bar-du

I ask the teacher to accept me as a lay follower, who has faith in the Triple Refuge.
kyab-sum dzin-pe ge-nyen-du lo-pön kyi sung-du söl

This is the first repetition.

Now repeat after me a second time:

You, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, and you, my teacher, think about me!
tschok-tschu na shuk-pe sang-gye dang djang-tschub-sem-pa tam-tsche dang lo-pön gong su söl

I, named (the name of the person taking refuge),
dak "your name" she gyi ba

Take from this time
dü di ne sung te

Until death
ji-si tso-i bar-du

The most supreme of all human beings,
kang-nyi nam-kyi tschok

The Buddha, as my refuge.
sang-gye la kyab-su tschi-o

The most supreme of all that is free from desire,
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In the Dharma, I take refuge.
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The most supreme of all assemblies,
Tsok-nam gyi-tschok

In the sangha, I take refuge.
gen-dün la kyab-su tschi-o

From this point
dak dü-ne sung-te

Until death
ji-si tso-i bar-du

I ask the teacher to accept me as a lay follower, who has faith in the Triple Refuge.
kyab-sum dzin-pe ge-nyen-du lo-pön kyi sung-du söl

The second repetition is done.

Now, with the third and last repetition of the vows, it is very important to understand exactly in which moment one receives the vows. When you repeat the refuge portion^{xx} and when you are making the request^{xxi} exactly at the time when you say the words “lay follower,” I will snap the fingers of my right hand once. In this moment, is born in your mind-stream the vows of a lay follower, who has faith in the Triple Refuge, and with that, I become your teacher.^{xxii}

Therefore thinking that you are receiving the vows in the correct way, speak after me the following words for the third time:

You, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, and you, my teacher, think about me!
tschok-tschu na shuk-pe sang-gye dang djang-tschub-sem-pa tam-tsche dang lo-pön gong su söl

I, named (the name of the person taking refuge),
dak “your name” she gyi ba

Take from this time
dü di ne sung te

Until death
ji-si tso-i bar-du

The most supreme of all human beings,
kang-nyi nam-kyi tschok

The Buddha, as my refuge.
sang-gye la kyab-su tschi-o

The most supreme of all that is free from desire,
dö-tschak dang-dral-wa nam-gyi-tschok

In the Dharma, I take refuge.
tschö-la kyab-su-tschi-o

The most supreme of all assemblies,
Tsok-nam gyi-tschok

In the sangha, I take refuge.
gen-dün la kyab-su tschi-o

From this point
dak dü-ne sung-te

Until death
ji-si tso-i bar-du

I ask the teacher to accept me as a lay follower, who has faith in the Triple Refuge.
kyab-sum dzin-pe ge-nyen-du lo-pön kyi sung-du söl

The teacher says after the third repetition:

It is accomplished!
tab yin no

Trusting that they have received the vows, the students say:

Excellent!
lek so

If one would like, one may now trim a small strand of hair from the top of the head of the students^{xxiii} and confer on them a Dharma name. In the texts relating to ordination rules, neither the cutting of a strand of hair nor the changing of names is considered absolutely necessary for a lay follower, who has faith in the Three Jewels. But as it is well known that it is the practice of teachers and masters to cut the hair and grant a new name to those disciples who will practice a pure (celibate) life,^{xxiv} one may perform these rituals in this context as well.

Therefore the teacher asks:

Would you like me to cut a strand of hair from your head?
Tra trek-pa tro-am

And the students reply:

Yes, we do.
tro-la

The teacher cuts the hair from the top of the head and puts these in front of the representations of the Three Jewels. There was a tradition in India to make a connection between the new (Dharma) name and the names of the Sravaka schools.^{xxv} In Tibet, there is the tradition to connect the new (Dharma) name with the names of the lineage masters.^{xxvi} The secret prophecies of Orgyen Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) state that an especially good karmic connection is made when one receives the Dharma name “Pema” (Padma).

It is said that cutting the hair and receiving a new (Dharma) name should remind you of your vows. Therefore let all your thoughts be in harmony with the Dharma.^{xxvii}

You have correctly received the vows of a lay follower, who has faith in the Triple Refuge. Therefore from now on, you must uphold the refuge precepts. There are three types of refuge precepts to maintain: 1. Precepts related to what is to be abandoned, 2. Precepts related to what is to be adopted, and 3. The three supplementary precepts.

The three precepts related to what is to be abandoned are: 1. Those who take refuge in the Buddha should no longer seek refuge in other worldly gods. 2. Those who take refuge in the Dharma should not harm others. 3. Those who take refuge in the Sangha

should no longer associate with tirthikas (those who do not share a similar ethical view).

The three precepts related to what is to be adopted are: 1. Those who take refuge in the Buddha should show respect towards representations of the Buddha, even if it is only a small piece of a terracotta statue. 2. Those who take refuge in the Dharma should show respect towards representations of the Dharma, even if it is only one letter of a text. 3. Those who take refuge in the Sangha should show respect toward representatives of the Sangha, such as monks and nuns wearing their robes.

The three supplementary precepts are: 1. One should imagine ones teacher as the Buddha. 2. When he or she teaches, one should imagine all that is taught is the Dharma. 3. One should imagine that the teacher's entourage and all of one's fellow students are the Sangha.

Furthermore one should practice the Dharma by following accomplished masters and daily one should conduct oneself in accord and in harmony with the Dharma. In short, one should never give up the Three Jewels, even at the cost of one's life. Orgyen Rinpoche said: "It (taking refuge) removes all temporary obstacles; protects one from the suffering of samsara; makes sure that one does not find the wrong path; it is the foundation for all three levels of vows^{xxviii} and ensures that what one accomplishes is based on Dharma. Therefore one should treasure it (one's refuge vows)".

With the thought: "I will from the depths of my heart endeavor to maintain the precepts", repeat after me the following words:

Teacher, think of me!
lo-pön gong-su-söl

The supreme Arhats have maintained the precepts,
ji-tar phak-pa dra-tschom-pa de-dak-gi kyab-dro-i lab-pa la tsön pa de schin du

So will I in their footsteps,
Dsche-su lob-bo

Follow them,
dsche-su drup-po

And do as they do.
dsche-su gyi-o

Repeat this three-times.

If you carefully practice these precepts with constant conscientiousness, it will be of great benefit to you!

Now that you have correctly received the vows of a lay follower, who has faith in the Three Jewels, bow three times in front of the Buddha and the teacher, as an acknowledgment of the merit that has been generated, and bring the mandala here.

The teacher scatters auspicious flowers^{xxix} and recites the following prayers:

May the victory banner of liberation be stable!
May the accumulations of merit be fully accomplished!
May you lead a pure life until you reach the goal (of liberation)!^{xxx}
May you in all your reincarnations live the life of a wandering practitioner!

May my morality be free from mistakes,
May my morality be completely pure,
May I, with a morality free from feelings of superiority,
Complete the transcendent perfection of morality.

Following in the footsteps of the Buddhas,
May I accomplish their excellent activities,
May my activities be without defect and be completely pure,
And may I carry them out always without impairment and mistakes.

May the precious precepts of morality
Take birth, where they have not yet taken birth.
Where they have taken birth, may they not wane,
But continue to grow forevermore.

And now the dedication:

May I through my merit attain omniscience,
And conquer my enemies, my mistakes,
And free all beings in the ocean of existence,
Who are churning through waves of birth, old age, sickness and death.

The conclusion is adorned with dedications and wishes for auspiciousness. One receives the refuge vows from a spiritual friend^{xxxii} who reminds us to conduct ourselves with modestly with morality.^{xxxiii}

This ceremony for granting refuge vows was written by the wanderer Sherab Sangpo based on the writings of the sublime masters. If this text should contain mistakes or inconsistencies, I own and regret them from my heart. May through these aspirations, the followers of our teacher, the Lion of the Sakyas, spread across the world.

Auspicious! Auspicious! Auspicious!

ⁱ A male lay follower [tib. dge bsnyen; skr. upasaka] or a female lay follower [tib. dge bsnyen ma; skr. upasika].

ⁱⁱ The phrase, “a lay follower, who has faith the Triple Refuge” [tib. skyabs gsum’dzin pa’i dge bsnyen], means, “a lay follower, who remembers and upholds the vows of the Triple Refuge” [tib. skyabs gsum’dzin pa’i dge bsnyen [tib. skyabs gsum gyi sdom pa rgyud la’dzin pa’i dge bsnyen].

ⁱⁱⁱ The phrase, “the three representations” or “the three supports” [tib. rten gsum] is to be understood as follows: 1) all physical representations of the Buddha are “representations of the body (of the Buddha)” [tib. sku rten]; 2) all Buddhist scriptures are “representations of the speech (of the Buddha)” [tib. gsung rten]; 3) all stupas are “representations of the mind (of the Buddha)” [tib. thugs rten].

^{iv} In front of the representation of the Buddha, one can place “the five offerings” [tib. mchod pa rnam lnga; nyer spyod lnga]: 1. flowers [tib. me tog; skr. puspa], 2. offering lamps (butter lamps) [tib. mchod me, mar me], 3. perfume [tib. dri chab; skr. gandha] 4. ??? and 5. food [zhal zas; skr. naivedya]. Or one can arrange an “offering lamp” (butter

lamp) [tib. mchod me, mar me] and the “seven offering bowls” [ting bdun, nyer spyod bdun, ting bdun tshar] filled with water. The water (or saffron water) then represents the following offerings: 1) drinking water [mchod yon; skr. argham], 2) wash water [zhabs bsil; skr. padyam], 3) flowers [me tog; puspa], 4) incense [gdug spos; dhupa], 5) lamps [mar me; skr. aloka], 6) perfume [dri chab; skr. gandha] und 7) food [zhal zas; skr. naivedya]. Of the seven offering bowls, three are filled with water [chu gsum] and four with grain [’bru bzhi]. For a complete description of the seven water bowl offering, see Beer 2004, 205-206; Beyer 2001, 147-148.

^v One places the “offering mandala” [tib. mchod pa’i mandal] that symbolizes the entire universe that is offered to the objects of refuge. This offering mandala consists of a mandala plate and three embossed or engraved metal rings that are each filled with rice that stand on top of each other. The completed mandala offering forms a “wheel of teachings”.

^{vi} The English translation completed by the Padmakara Translation Group is called “Words of My Perfect Teacher”.

^{vii} The eight freedoms [tib. dal ba brgyad] are defined by the absence of the appearance of the eight disadvantaged life forms. According to Nagarjuna, they are: “(1) to be born in the hell realms, (2) to be born in the realm of the hungry ghosts, (3) as an animal, (4) as a long-lived god or (5) as a barbarian, (6) to be born with a wrong view, (7) in an age, where no Buddha has appeared, (8) or without sight or speech – these are the eight life forms without freedom” [tib. klu sgrub kyis / dmyal ba yi dvags dud ’gro dang // tshe ring lha dang kla klo dang / log lta sangs rgyas kyis stong dang // lkugs pa’di dag mi khom brgyad].

^{viii} The ten advantages [tib. ’byor ba bcu] are divided into five individual advantages [tib. rang ’byor lnga] and the five circumstantial advantages [tib. gzhan ’byor lnga]. The five individual advantages are according to Nagarjuna: “(1) to be born as a human, (2) in a central place, (3) with all one’s faculties, (4) without a conflicting lifestyle and (5) with faith in the Dharma” [tib. mi nyid dbus skyes dbang po tshang / las mtha’ ma log gnas la dad / ces rang ’byor lnga]. The five circumstantial advantages are according to Nagarjuna: “(6) a Buddha has appeared and (7) has preached the Dharma, (8) his teachings still exist and (9) can be followed, and (10) there are those who are kind-hearted towards others” [tib. sangs rgyas byon dang des chos gsungs // bstan pa gnas dang de’i rjes ’jug / gzhan phyir snying ni brtse ba’o].

^{ix} The Buddha wears the three robes of a fully ordained monk; also called the triple Dharma-robes [tib. chos gos rnam gsum; skr. tri-cavara]. These consist of a lower robe (monk’s skirt) [tib. mthang gos; skr. antaravasaka], a yellow upper garment [tib. chos gos, bla gos; skr. uttarasanga] and a red or yellow ceremonial upper robe made from [tib. snam sbyar; skr. sanghati], 125 sewn patches.

^x In the vajra posture [tib. rdo rje’i skyil krung; skr. vajrasana, vajraparyankasana] the legs are crossed, so that the right thigh lies on top. Thereby the left sole of the foot sits facing upward on the right thigh and the right sole of the foot sits facing upward on the left thigh. Dagyab 1983, 192f.

^{xi} The Buddha’s right hand is majestically extended in the earth-touching mudra [tib. sa gnon gyi phyag rgya; skr. bhumisparśa-mudra].

^{xii} The gesture (mudra) of equanimity meditation [tib. mnyam bzhag gi phyag rgya; skr. avakāśa-mudra] means that the back of the left hand rests on the Buddha’s lap. This mudra is also called the gesture of concentration [tib. ting nge ’dzin gyi phyag rgya; skr. samādhi-mudra] or gesture of meditation [tib. bsam gtan gyi phyag rgya; skr. dhyāna-mudra].

^{xiii} On his left palm sits the nectar-filled alms bowl [tib. lhung bzed; skr. patra].

^{xiv} The Hinayana-Sangha is present through Sravaka-Arhats [tib. nyan thos dgra bcom pa] and the Pratyekabuddha-Arhats [tib. rang rgyal gyi byang chub], the Mahayana-Sangha is present through the great Bodhisattvas. In the commentary of the Bodhisattva-

caryavatara it says that the Buddha has three children: Rahula is the child of his body, the Sravakas and the Pratyekabuddhas are the children of his speech, and the Bodhisattvas are the children of his heart-mind [tib. sku'i sras sgra gcan 'dzin / gsung gi sras nyan thos dang rang rgyal / thugs kyi sras byang chub sems dpa'].

^{xv} The ten powers [tib. stobs bcu] belong to the “twenty-one groups of good qualities, that are free from the influences of the afflictions” [tib. zag med pa'i chos sde tshan nyer gcig], that define the dharmakaya, the “body of truth” [skr. chos sku] of a Buddha. See Mipham 2002, 229-239.

^{xvi} Bendza Samaya Dzah means: “Draw near due to the power of your vajra-samaya” [tib. rdo rje'i dam tshig gi dbang gis byon cig].

^{xvii} If the students know the Hundred-Syllable-Mantra, then they can recite it with the teacher. If not, it does not pose a problem. General pronunciation of the Hundred-Syllable-Mantra: *Om bendzar sato samaya, manu palaya, bendzar sato tenopa, titra dridho mebhawa, suto kayo mebhawa, supo kayo mebhawa, anu rakto mebhawa, sarwa siddhi ma me par ya tsa, sarwa karma sutsame, tsittam shire yang kuru hung, ha ha ha ha hoh, bhagawen sarwa tathagata bendzar mame müntsa bendzir bhawa maha samaya sato ah.*

Pronunciation of the Hundred-Syllable-Mantra according to Adzom Drugpa: *Om bendzar sato samaya, manu palaya, bendzar sato tenopa, titra dridho mebhawa, sutöyo mebhawa, supöyo mebhawa, anu rakto mebhawa, sarwa siddhi ma me par ya tsa, sarwa karma sutsame, tsittang shireya kuru hung, ha ha ha ha hoh, bhagawen sarwa tathagata bendzar mame müntsa bendzir bhawa maha samaya sato ah.*

^{xviii} The right knee touches the floor, while the sitting bones (posterior) rest on the right heel; the left sole of the foot is planted on the ground and the right knee touches the chest.

^{xix} If there is no prior Dharma relationship between the student and teacher, then the student addresses the teacher as “Venerable” [tib. btsun pa]. If there is a prior Dharma relationship, then one addresses the teacher as “teacher” (or “guru” or “lama”) [tib. slob dpon; skr. acarya].

^{xx} The “repetition of the refuge portion” [tib. skyabs brjod] refers to the following part of the text: “You, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, and you, my teacher, think about me ... I, named, so-and-so, take from this time until death, the Buddha as my refuge. The most supreme of all that is free from desire, in the Dharma, I take refuge. The most supreme of all assembles, in the Sangha, I take refuge.”

^{xxi} The “repetition of the request” [tib. bdag brjod] refers to the following part of the text: “From this point until death, I ask the teacher to accept me as a lay follower, who has faith in the Triple Refuge”.

^{xxii} Khenpo Jigme Püntsock defines six types of teachers:

(1) The general teacher [tib. spyi'i slob dpon] is a well-respected teacher who possesses good qualities and with whom one has a modest Dharma connection. (2) The refuge teacher, is the guru, who leads one to the gateway of the Dharma [tib. chos sgor 'dren pa'i slob dpon] and who confers on the student the refuge vows. (3) The samaya and empowerment teacher [tib. dam tshig dbang gi slob dpon] is the guru who bestows on the student the tantric samayas and empowerments. (4) Is the teacher through whom one is able to repair any broken vows and samayas [tib. nyams chags skong ba'i slob dpon]. The root teacher in the Vajrasattva practice performs this role. (5) The teacher, who liberates the mind (of the student) [tib. shes rgyud grol ba'i slob dpon]. This is the teacher who clarifies the tantras and from whom one receives the oral pointing-out instructions [tib. man ngag gi lung gi slob dpon]. (6) The teacher, from whom one receives the profound oral instructions of the Great Perfection (Mahasandhi) or the Great Seal (Mahamudra). In the teachings of the Great Perfection and the Great Seal, the teacher who introduces the student to the “Threefold Kindnesses” [tib. bka' drin gsum ldan] is called the “Root Teacher” [tib. rtsa ba'i bla ma; skr. mula-guru]. The “Threefold

Kindnesses” are the: 1. Giving of tantric empowerments [tib. sngags kyi dbang bskur], 2. Explaining the tantras [tib. rgyud bshad] and 3. Bestowing the oral instructions, the pointing-out instructions [tib. man ngag gngang]. See zur rgyan ye shes lam 'jug, 117.

^{xxiii} The top of the head is the highest place on the human body. As a sign of honor and respect, one offers to the Buddha and the teacher a strand of hair from this part of the body.

^{xxiv} tib. tshangs spyod dge bsnyen

^{xxv} tib. nyan thos sde pa bco brgyad

^{xxvi} For example, Khenpo Pema Tsewang gave his students Dharma names such as, “Pema Tsültrim” or “Tsewang Norbu”. Such a master as Khenpo Pema Tsewang had many names, so he could have chosen any of his many names to give his students as Dharma names.

^{xxvii} The changing of names and the cutting of a strand of hair are primarily a support to help the student constantly remember the aim of Buddhist teachings. Therefore one should always remember the Dharma name that is given during the refuge ceremony.

^{xxviii} Taking refuge is the basis for the Pratimoksa vows, for the Bodhicitta vows, and for the Samayas of the Secret Mantrayana.

^{xxix} Before beginning the ceremony, a plate of grains of rice or small flowers should be placed within reach of the teacher. When the teacher speaks the following verses, he throws some of the rice and flowers into the air.

^{xxx} A life of purity is a life that is directed towards the goal of liberation. One prays for a long life, so that one has enough time to accomplish this goal.

^{xxxi} tib. dge ba'i bshes gnyen; skr. Kalyanamitra

^{xxxii} A Buddhist lay follower should possess “a sense of shame in relationship to himself” [tib. rang ngo la ngo tsha], that means he (or she) should feel a sense of shame if he conducts himself unethically. One should also possess “a sense of moral inhibition (modesty) in the presence of others” [tib. gzhan ngo la khrel yod pa]; meaning that a student should, especially in the presence of his teacher, refrain from conducting himself immorally. By visualizing the constant presence of one’s teacher, a student is able to maintain proper moral conduct. (Translated from Tibetan into German by Andreas Kretschmar, 12.01.2012. Translated from German into English by Kate Thomas, 24.01.2012.)