

# Buddhist Fasting Practice

*The Nyungne Method of Thousand-Armed Chenrezig*



Wangchen Rinpoche

SNOW LION PUBLICATIONS  
ITHACA, NEW YORK

Snow Lion Publications  
P. O. Box 6483  
Ithaca, NY 14851 USA  
(607) 273-8519  
www.snowlionpub.com

Copyright © 2009 Wangchen Rinpoche

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced  
without prior written permission from the publisher.

Printed in USA on acid-free recycled paper.  
Designed and typeset by Gopa & Ted2, Inc.

ISBN-10: 1-55939-317-3  
ISBN-13: 978-1-55939-317-1

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*  
Wangchen, 1963-

Buddhist fasting practice : the Nyungne method of thousand-  
armed Chenrezig / Wangchen Rinpoche.  
p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-1-55939-317-1 (alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 1-55939-317-3 (alk. paper)

1. Fasting—Religious aspects—Buddhism. I. Title.

BQ7805.W37 2009

294.3'4447—dc22

2008055819

# Contents

Foreword by H.H. the Dalai Lama	xv
Introduction	1
Definition of Nyungne Practice	1
Source of the Practice	1
Level of Practice (Where Nyungne Belongs)	2
General Benefits of the Practice	3
SECTION ONE	
1. Eleven-Faced, Thousand-Armed Chenrezig	7
The History of Thousand-Armed Chenrezig	8
2. Benefits of the Practice	11
Obscurations of Body, Speech, and Mind	11
How Purification Works	12
Purification of Body, Speech, and Mind	13
Story of the Woman Who Killed Many People	14
3. Importance of Lineage and Guru	17
Gelongma Palmo's Biography	18
Gelongma Palmo's Disciples	21

Khenchen Tashi Ozer	38
An Inspirational Story	39

## SECTION TWO

4. Praises to the Buddha, The Twelve Deeds	43
5. Thirty-five Buddhas Confession Prayer	51
The Three Heaps:	51
First Heap: Homage by Prostration	51
Second Heap: Confession	52
Third Heap: Dedication	53
The Four Powers:	54
Power of Reliance	54
Power of Remorse	54
Power of Remedy	54
Power of Commitment	55
6. The Vows Of Nyungne	57
The Eight-Precepts Vow	57
The Sojong Vow	58
The Eight Vows of the Restoring and Purifying Ordination	67
The Powerful Benefits of the Sojong Vow	72
7. Seven-Branch Offering Prayer	75
The First Branch Prayer: Prostration	76
The Benefits of Prostration	77
The Second Branch Prayer: Offering	78
The Third Branch Prayer: Confession	80
The Fourth Branch Prayer: Rejoicing	82
The Fifth Branch Prayer: Request to Turn the Dharma Wheel	83
The Sixth Branch Prayer: Beseaching Buddhas and Bodhisattvas Not to Pass into Nirvana	84
The Seventh Branch Prayer: Dedication of Merit	86
Accumulation of Merit and Wisdom	87

8. Visualization	89
Field of Accumulation of Merit Phase	90
The Three Aspects of Deity Yoga: Clarity, Purity, and Stability	90
The Three Sattvas	91
Complete Steps of the Creation Phase (Self-Generation)	91
Deity Meditation with Five Purifications and Perfections, Blessing Being the Sixth	93
Essential Elements of Thousand-Armed Chenrezig	94
Additional Aspects of the Visualization and Their Meanings	97
Self-Generation Continued	98
The Frontal Visualization for the Purpose of Worship	100
SECTION THREE	
9. Mantras of Nyungne	105
Benefits of the Recitation of the Dharani	105
Benefits of the Six-Syllable Mantra	107
How the Six-Syllable Mantra Relates to the External, Internal, and Secret Aspects	114
Recitation of the Mantra Is of Six Different Kinds	116
The Power of Mantra	119
Benefits of Practice	120
Songtsen Gompo's Verses on the Mantra OM MANI PEME HUNG	121
Additional Dharanis and Mantras	126
10. Explanation of the Po Homage Prayer	133
Praise to Chenrezig's Body	136
Praise to the Qualities of Chenrezig's Mind	141
Praise to the Quality of Chenrezig's Supreme Knowledge	141
Praise to the Quality of Chenrezig's Compassion	142
Praise to Chenrezig's Speech	144
Benefits of the Praise	145
Benefits of the Prostrations	146

11. Ending Prayers and Offerings	149
The Special Wish Prayer and Torma Offerings	149
Receiving Blessing Water at the End of the Ceremony: Final Purifying Symbol	150
Ending the Fast	151
Concluding the Practice	152
Final Confession	152
Completion Phase	152
The Actual Self-Dissolution	152

## SECTION FOUR

12. Preparation for the Actual Ceremony	157
Preparing Oneself	157
Empowerment and Instruction	159
Preparing the Shrine	159
Location of the Practice	161
Auspicious Days to Do the Practice	162
13. Actual Practice	165
Three Components of Perfection	165
Nyungne Practice	166
Cleanliness	167
Power of Breaking the Vows	168
Pure Physical Action	170
Additional Rules	172
Food and Drink	172
Bending the Rules	174
Samaya Commitments of Nyungne	175

## SECTION FIVE

14. Benefits of Vegetarian Diet and Fasting	181
Vegetarian Diet	182
Spiritual Benefits	185

15. The Suffering of Sentient Beings	189
Animals Are Sentient Beings	189
Karmic Habits	192
Animal Cruelty	194
Lunar Feast	198
Conclusion	198
16. Questions and Answers	201

## SECTION SIX

### Nyungne Practice Text

Praises to the Buddha, The Twelve Deeds	206
Heartfelt Praise to Lord Chenrezig	214
Thirty-five Buddhas Confession Prayer	218
The Fasting Ritual of the Noble Eleven-Faced Chenrezig, Called the Omnipresent Happy Omen	226

### Additional Prayers

Dedication of Merit	268
Offering Prayer (before a meal)	270

# Prayers

	Practice Text Page No.	Commentary Page No.
<b>SECTION TWO</b>		
1. Praises to the Buddha, The Twelve Deeds	206	43
2. Heartfelt Praise to Lord Chenrezig	214	
3. Thirty-five Buddhas Confession Prayer, Sutra of Three Heaps	218	51
4. The Sojong Vow	226	58
5. Eight Vows of The Restoring and Purifying Ordination	228	67
6. Seven-Branch Prayer	244	75, 87, 102
<b>SECTION THREE</b>		
7. Po Homage Prayer	254	133
8. The Special Wish Prayer	258	149
<b>SECTION SIX</b>		
9. Dedication of Merit	268	53, 86, 166
10. Offering Prayer (before a meal)	270	173

## Foreword

### H.H. the Dalai Lama

THE FASTING PRACTICE known as nyungne, which involves eating only one meal on the first day and fasting completely on the second, is often done in conjunction with taking the eight Mahayana precepts. Following the tradition established by the fully ordained nun Bhikshuni Lakshmi, who we Tibetans remember as Gelongma Palmo, people pay special attention to the practice of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and recite the six-syllable mantra, Om mani padme hung. This is an excellent practice that, because it is simple to do, anyone can perform, yet at the same time can be a source of great merit and spiritual benefit.

It gives me great pleasure, therefore, to know that in this book Wangchen Rinpoche has given clear and comprehensive instruction on how to undertake the nyungne practice. Not only that, but by including stories of the great past masters who have undertaken the practice, accounts of the benefits it has brought, as well as auxiliary practices and recitations, he offers a wealth of background information that will serve as a rich source of knowledge and inspiration. Nyungne is an authentic and effective Buddhist practice employing the actions of our body, speech, and mind that has been enthusiastically followed in India, Tibet, and the surrounding regions for many centuries past, and which those who are interested can easily undertake wherever they are today.

With prayers that all who try to put what they read here into practice shall be blessed with success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lama', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

December 19, 2007

# Questions and Answers 16

1. **Question:** How does shamatha practice fit in with Nyungne?

**Rinpoche:** The idea of shamatha meditation is concentration. Whether you are doing Nyungne or any other practice doesn't matter, as long as you can focus one-pointedly on the practice or on the visualization or on the recitation, whatever; if you can focus your mind without distraction, there you have shamatha meditation.

2. **Question:** Are you saying that tranquility would arise automatically once we have established concentration?

**Rinpoche:** Yes, because one-pointed mind is free from neurotic distractions and it is tranquil.

3. **Question:** How does one then cultivate insight or awareness to learn about the nature of one's mind during this practice?

**Rinpoche:** During deity visualization, in addition to being able to visualize the deity clearly, knowing that the form is appearing yet empty in its nature is insight meditation. The completion aspect of meditation, which is dissolving everything into emptiness at the end of the practice, is insight meditation as well.

4. **Question:** How does one deal with the realm of extreme experiences (feelings, impulses, ideas) that arise during the Nyungne retreat?

**Rinpoche:** One must try to practice according to this tradition, and that is to transform all emotions into Chenrezig's body, speech, and mind. In general, one's state of mind can only function one moment at a time, meaning at the very moment you are experiencing an emotion, at that moment you are unable to experience anything else. The key is

༄༅། །ཕུབ་པའི་དབང་པོ་ལ་མཛད་པ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་སྒོ་ནས་བསྟོན་པ་བཞུགས་སོ།།

*Praises to the Buddha, The Twelve Deeds*

༄༅། །ཐབས་མཁས་ལུགས་རྗེ་ཤུག་འཛིན་ལྷན་ལྟུངས། །གཞན་གྱིས་མི་ཐུབ་བདུད་ཀྱི་དཔུང་འཛོམས་པ།  
T'AB K'E T'UK JE SHA KYEI RIK SU TR'UNG SH'EN GYI MI T'UB DUE KYI PUNG JOM PA

།གསེར་གྱི་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷ་ལུར་བརྗེད་པའི་སྐྱ། །ཤུག་འཛིན་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷ་ལྷན་ལྟུང་ལོ། །གང་གིས་དང་པོ་བྱང་ལུབ་  
SER GYI LHUN PO TA BUR JIE PEI KU SHA KYEI GYAL POI SH'AB LA CH'AG TS'AL LO GANG GI DANG PO JANG  
CH'UB

།ལུགས་བསྟེན་ནས། །བསོད་ནམས་ལེ་ཤེས་ཚོགས་གཉིས་རྗེ་གསེར་མཛད་ཅིང། །དུས་འདིར་མཛད་པ་རྒྱ་ཚེན་འགྲོ་བ་ཡི།  
T'UK KYE NE SOE NAM YE SHE TS'OK NYI DZOK DZE CHING DU DIR DZE PA GYA CH'EN DRO WA YI

།མགོན་གྱུར་ཁྱོད་ལ་བདག་གིས་བསྟོན་པར་བཀྱ། །ལྷ་རྣམས་དོན་མཛད་འདུལ་བའི་དུས་མཁུན་ནས། །ལྷ་ལས་བབས་  
GON GYUR K'OE LA DAG GI TOE PAR GYI LHA NAM DON DZE DUL WEI DU K'YEN NE LHA LE BAB

།ནས་གྲང་ཚེན་ལྷར་གཤེགས་ཤིང། །རིགས་ལ་གཟིགས་ནས་ལྷ་མོ་སྐྱེ་འཕྲུལ་གྱི། །ལྷུམས་སུ་ཞུགས་པར་མཛད་ལ་  
NE LANG CH'EN TAR SHEK SHING RIK LA ZIK NE LHA MO GYU TR'UL GYI LHUM SU SH'UK PAR DZE LA

།ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །ལྷ་བ་བཅུ་རྗེས་ཤུག་འཛིན་ལྷན་པོ་ནི། །བཀྱ་གིས་ལྷ་ལྷན་ཚལ་དུ་བལྟམས་པའི་ཚོ། །ཚངས་དང་  
CH'AG TS'AL LO DA WA CHU DZOK SHA KYEI SE PO NI TRA SHI LUM BI NI TS'AL DU TAM TS'ANG DANG  
PEI TS'E

།སྐྱེན་གྱིས་བསྟོན་མཚན་མཚོག་ནི། །བྱང་ལུབ་རིགས་སུ་དེས་མཛད་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །གཞོན་ལྷ་སྐྱོབས་ལྷན་མི་ཡི་  
GYA JIN GYI TOE TS'EN CH'OG NI JANG CH'UB RIK SU NGE DZE CH'AG TS'AL LO SH'ON NU TOB DEN MI YI

།སེད་དེས། །ལྷ་རྣམས་གཏུར་ནི་སྐྱེ་ཅུ་བསྟན། །སྐྱེ་བོ་དྲེགས་པ་ཅན་རྣམས་ཚར་བཅད་ནས། །འགྲན་ལྷ་མེད་  
SENG GE DE ANG GA MA GA DHAR NI GYU TSAL TEN KYE WO DREK PA CHEN NAM CH'AR CHEN NE DREN DA ME

།པར་མཛད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །འཛིག་རྟེན་ཚས་དང་མཐུན་པར་བྱ་བ་དང། །ཁ་ན་མ་ཐོ་སྐང་ཕྱིར་བཅུན་མོ་ཡི།  
PAR DZE LA CH'AG TS'AL LO JIG TEN CH'O DANG T'UN PAR JA WA DANG K'A NA MA T'O PANG CH'IR TSUN MO YI

།འཕོར་དང་ལྷན་མཛད་ཐབས་ལ་མཁས་པ་ཡིས། །རྒྱལ་སྤིད་སྦྱོང་བར་མཛད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །འཕོར་བའི་བྱ་བ་  
K'OR DANG DEN DZE T'AB LA K'E PA YI GYAL SIE KYONG WAR DZE LA CH'AG TS'AL LO K'OR WEI JA WA

།སྤྱིང་པོ་མེད་གཟིགས་ནས། །ཁྱིམ་ནས་བྱུང་སྟེ་མཁའ་ལ་གཤེགས་ནས་ཀྱང། །མཚོན་རྟེན་རྣམས་དག་དུང་དུ་ཉིད་  
NYING PO ME JIK NE K'YIM NE JUNG TE K'A LA SHEK NE KYANG CH'OE TEN NAM DAG DRUNG DU NYIE

།ལ་ཉིད། །རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་བར་མཛད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།  
LA NYIE RAB TU JUNG WAR DZE LA CH'AG TS'AL LO

***Praises to the Buddha, The Twelve Deeds***

*He who is skillful, compassionate, born in the lineage of the Shakyas,  
 Undefeatable by others, destroyer of maras,  
 And whose body is majestic like golden Mt. Sumeru:  
 King of the Shakyas, at his feet I prostrate.  
 He who first developed the mind of enlightenment,  
 Then perfected the dual accumulations of merit and wisdom,  
 And in this age performed vast enlightened deeds  
 And became the protector of beings: to him I offer praise.  
 Having fulfilled the needs of gods and having known the time  
 To tame (the human realm), he descended from the god realm,  
 Came in the form of an elephant, and seeing the lineage of Shakyas,  
 Entered the womb of Mayadevi: to him I prostrate.  
 At the completion of ten months, the son of the Shakyas  
 Was born in the auspicious garden of Lumbini.  
 At that time, Brahma and Indra praised him and his excellent signs,  
 Ascertained him to be in the lineage of enlightenment: to him I prostrate.  
 The powerful youth, the lion of men,  
 Exhibiting athletic skills at Anga and Magadhar,  
 Defeated the arrogant competitors  
 And became unchallengeable: to him I prostrate.  
 In accordance with the worldly customs and to avoid calumny,  
 He was accompanied by the retinue of queens.  
 With skillful means he served the kingdom:  
 To him I prostrate.  
 By seeing that mundane activities have no essence,  
 He left home and, traveling through the sky near Namdag Stupa,  
 He took the ordination of renunciation from himself:  
 To him I prostrate.*