A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE NUN GELONGMA PALMO
BY THE VERY VENERABLE KALU RINPOCHE
Translated by Chochi Ivyima

In the past, there was an extremely evil individual who nevertheless encountered the teachings of Dharma and forged a positive connection with the form and mantra of Avalokiteshvara. This individual was therefore reborn in the land of Uddiyana to the west [of India], as the daughter of a king. As she grew up to be an extremely lovely maiden, there were many princes from neighboring kingdoms who sought her hand in marriage. Not wishing to risk offending the other suitors by selecting any one of them, she instead became ordained as a Buddhist nun, or gelongma. At that point, karmic tendencies (which would ordinally have resulted in rebirth in a lower state of existence due to the violent force of her karma) came to maturity during the nun’s lifetime and she was afflicted with a virulent and infectious form of leprosy, a disease caused by naga-spirits. Her body became covered in swellings from which issued profuse pus and blood, so that she could not be allowed in the company of others. Building a wooden hut in a forest, she stayed alone in misery. A holy yogi encountered this nun, and out of great affection bestowed upon her the empowerment and blessing of Avalokiteshvara. After his departure, she practiced with intense exertion, supplicating the deity with concentrated mind even as her sickness and pain increased. Eventually, her body became one open sore and she was on the point of death. Then, one night in the early dawn before awakening, she dreamt of a person in white clothing carrying a vase of water with which she was bathed — she had the impression that all her sickness and suffering were cleansed without trace. Upon awakening, she found that in fact all her disease and suffering had been completely discarded like skin shed from a snake. Gladdened and overjoyed, she offered a prayer of fervent faith and devotion, whereupon the Exalted One [Avalokiteshvara] actually appeared and blessed her. Her mind merged with the divinity, and she experienced directly the eighth level of bodhisattva realization. The nun became widely known by the name of Gelongma Palmo. The cycle of empowerments and teachings which she received directly from Avalokiteshvara comprise both the sadhana for the one-thousand-armed, one-thousand-eyed form of the Supremely Compassionate One, and the empowerment and practical instructions for the fasting ritual (nyungne). These are classified in the Lotus (Pema)-family section of the Kriyatantra. This cycle was bestowed on the [Indian] Mahasiddha Candraprabhakumara, and from him to the succession of gurus in the lineage, whose names are mentioned in the supplications of the liturgies.
TEACHING ON THE NYUNG-NE PRACTICE
Ven. Lama Ganga Rinpoche at Karma Triyana Dharamachakra
Spring, 1988

First, engender the proper attitude: learn this practice with the wish to liberate all sentient beings from suffering.

This teaching is divided into the basis, the classification, the essence, the benefits, and the faults of not doing the nyung-ne practice.

This is the eight branch nyung-ne practice, as there are eight precepts taken. Our motivation is crucial. If the practice is done to benefit one’s self, then it’s not mahayana practice. The practice should be done one-pointedly, and to benefit others. If for the enjoyment of the place, the group, the teacher, or to test oneself, the result is limited, although better than nothing.

The nyung-ne practice includes the ngyi-ne practice, or taking the eight precepts from dawn to dawn. These include the four root vows of not killing, not stealing, not lying, of abandoning and avoiding sexual misconduct, and the four branch vows of no intoxicants, not taking an elevated seat, not taking food at the wrong time, and not using perfume or adornment, and not singing or dancing. The nyung-ne also includes putting body, speech, and mind into the accumulation of virtue, through prostrations, prayers, mantras, fasting, and no gossip.

The four root vows are similar to nun’s and monk’s vows, but since the time is shorter, the discipline is more strict for the nyung-ne.

The purpose of the nyung-ne practice is to remind us of the suffering in the lower realms. It arouses a desire to liberate them, and not to fall there.

The practice integrates the three yanas: Hinayana by being outwardly disciplined, with gentleness of physical movements; Mahayana by mentally maintaining the bodhisattva mind: and secretly because it is a tantric practice.

The outward discipline includes cleanliness of body, house, room, altar, offerings. Clothes should be casual, clean, and not flashy. Manners elegant and polite. Mindfulness of all actions should be maintained, including yawning, sneezing, farting, bathing, etc. When returning to the room, purify mouth with purification water (except on the second day, then rub into hair, clothes).

Solid food at mid-day, liquid all day, first day. Timely food, on one mat—once up, finished. The amount of food is not important. Servers will come around with second helpings.
Food should be divided into three portions: one to offer to the guru and the three jewels, one to one’s self, and one to the birds, dogs, insects, etc. Diet is white food: no meat, onion, garlic, or turnips. Garlic harms the enriching quality of the mantra.

After lunch, until around 10:00 or ‘when your head touches your pillow’, liquids only. Once in bed, observe fasting, no drinking, and silence all the next day.

The inner discipline includes maintaining the mind of bodhicitta, the wish to benefit others, and the practice of the six perfections (generosity, morality, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom). We take the vow of no jewelry, make up, perfume, dance, but is music a contradiction? Dharmic music is to keep us in a non-judgmental state.

There are two aspects to Dharma practice. The positive aspect is that through proper practice we will reach enlightenment. The negative side is that because of fasting and silence, we may develop a dislike toward the practice. We must maintain a proper attitude. To prevent negative thoughts we should not just tolerate the hunger and thirst, but take joy in it, appreciate our human life, develop compassion for the beings of the lower realms and an urge to liberate them. We should be joyous and untiring.

Traditionally in Tibet, the nyung-ne practice started when it was light enough to see the palm of your hand, and lasted until about 10:00pm with no break. You would cleanse if coming back from wherever. However, in the west, this is not followed because the Dharma is new, and not yet strongly cultivated. We can get more like the Tibetan tradition, practice, and should have our total effort.

This is a two day practice, and should have our total effort. As nyung-ne leader I am very lazy, I have jet lag, I don’t feel very well, and will fall asleep during the practice. Don’t take me as an example, but exert yourselves fully. I’ll do the best I can. What inspires us most is the four ordinary thoughts that turn our minds to the Dharma; precious human birth, impermanence, the infallability of karma and its results, and the shortcomings and meaninglessness of samsara.

Be logical, rational, practical about the four thoughts. It is very difficult to obtain a precious human birth, this is a rare opportunity.

And this precious human life is impermanent. Impermanence cannot be reversed. There is no time to waste.

Karma, or cause and effect, is infallable.

We should delight in virtue.
And samsara. We are attached to it, and hope it will produce joy and happiness, But its nature is suffering. Does money make us happy? If we don’t have it, we’re miserable. If we have it we worry about keeping it. Do our homes make us happy? Mortgages, insurance, bills, rent, arguments with landlords, it’s meaningless. We can attune to mahamudra practice, with no attachment. Our interest in worldly activities should be like a criminal going to his execution. We’re no different.

We are close to a dark kalpa, it is sometimes difficult to understand karma. Those who engage in destructive action seem to be happy. Those who engage in virtuous action may constantly suffer. Wrong views arise. But the happiness and suffering we experience are the result of previous actions. We must not waste detach ourselves from samsara. By practicing we gain self confidence in not having wasted our opportunity, and learn the proper means of applying the Dharma to ourselves.

The manner of practice is more important than the actual practice. Therefore we must grasp the three sacrednesses:
1- Knowing the root of virtue is bodhicitta, all activity is to liberate our mothers as vast as the sky.
2- To be sure nothing interferes with virtue, maintain attention and concentration in practice. Continuously feel the sacredness or oneness with the deity—don’t let one thought interfere.
3- To increase and prevent the destruction of the accumulation of merit, dedicate merit to the liberation of all sentient beings. The three sacrednesses are important in all practices.

The nyung-ne practice can thus be a very beneficial two day practice. To make the eight precepts lead to enlightenment, we have an infinite potential goal—for all sentient beings. This is essential to mahayana practice, to learn not to be selfish. It is not proper for us to practice to get a name as a devoted practitioner. It must be to liberate all sentient beings from samsara.

There are three categories of students: high, average, and lesser.

The highest totally abandon selfish attitudes, see all beings as their parents, and work for their liberation, The average student, having learned the meaninglessness of samsara, work for higher birth and self liberation.

The lesser student, fearing the pain and suffering of the three lower realms, with no knowledge of enlightenment, work to prevent birth in the lower realms, Learn to be the highest

AFTERNOON SESSION: Again we are reminded to engender bodhicitta, the wish to establish all beings as vast as the sky in the state of enlightenment, and to receive this teaching with that motivation. The meaning of the SO JONG vows we take for on the two days of the practice is twofold. SO means to renew, so we are renewing previous vows. And JONG means to purify, so we are purifying whatever vows have been transgressed or broken, we should hold the eight nyung-ne precepts with an altruistic mind, a stable mind throughout the practice.
We should hold It is also necessary to develop a detachment from samsara, a fire of pain, burning, and misery. With this thought of suffering, remember that our many parents, not recognizing the truth, are unable to separate themselves from samsara. We can thus develop compassion toward these beings who are gripped by their conflicting emotions.

Since our mother and father sentient beings are suffering in this cycle of samsara, how wonderful it would be to liberate them all! We should urge our guru and yidam to help in this.

Devotion, determination, and great yearning are necessary when practicing. May power, strength, and courage grow in me to this end!

Memorize all the words in the prayer by heart. Repeat it over and over in order to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment. This is how to receive the vows.

It is important to slowly rid ourselves of selfish feelings, and to engender bodhicitta.

Benefits of such practice:
The essence of the practice is Chenrezig.
The dharmakaya aspect is Amitabha. There are countless Chenrezig emanations in the sambhogakaya.

This symbolizes 22,000 enlightened beings, from the right eye of Amitabha emanate the eleven-headed Chenrezigs. From the left eye emanate Vajrapanis.

From the right hand, Padmasambhava. Particularly to devoted students in Tibet, Chenrezig is the most effective deity for awakening the enlightened mind.

There are different eleven-headed practices of Chenrezig, different transmissions, different yogas. This one is from chaya yoga, itself divided into six: three worldly, and three transcendental. This is Lotus Chaya Yoga. Its outcome is Pure Land. The origin of the practice is from the primordial Chenrezig. The princess of a powerful worldly king, emanated from Dorje Palmo and Tara, Gelongma Palmo had accumulated negative karma, she developed leprosy, and was banished to the forest, raised in a palace, and sent alone to the forest. There was no one to help her but Chenrezig. She came across a statue of Chenrezig, and felt great warmth from it. She prayed to the statue, and water sprang from it, curing her leprosy. The lineage of this practice has continued unbroken until now. This entire lineage is included in the text of the prayer: it was passed down to Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, a long version of the practice was written by him, but was so long the Tashi Wesar condensed it into this shorter form that we do.

Combining the day-long nyi-ne practice of the eight Hinayana precepts with the positive attitude of the Mahayana motivation of bodhicitta of the nyung-ne is aimed toward benefitting householders and laypeople.
With the willingness to endure the hardships of the practice, with the Mahayana motivation, and the Hinayana discipline, we must practice as done by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past, never giving up working for all sentient beings, no matter how difficult. This is the proper attitude for receiving the vows. The conduct of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is vast. put to use the teachings of Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche on Bodhisattva action. Take the vows with the intent of practicing like these great beings.

Put to use During the practice, the vows are repeated three times, each time with a different motivation. The first time take the vows with the motivation of taking refuge, so that all sentient beings receive the protection the three jewels, and the teacher.

The second repetition is a self-repetition, so that I will practice as the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times practice. The third repetition is the external or other repetition. Having taken the vows, the teacher then says we have gotten the precepts at the time of the finger snap.

Within the eight branch precepts, discipline is needed for cutting through the harmful actions of the root vows of killing, stealing, lying, and sexual misconduct. The necessity of mindfulness through the practice is the reason for not using intoxicants. Maintaining gentle, peaceful conduct is the reason for the three remaining branch vows. We give up the life of excitement... ornaments, music, dancing, sitting on a high and expensive seat, untimely food, no solid food after the noon meal.

Having received the eight precepts, we recite the long mantra to purify and develop merit. It is the mantra of Amoghasiddhi.

Next is the prayer and mantra of Manjushri to stabilize bodhicitta in one’s self.

The benefit of one nyung-ne is that for four kalpas one can practice Chenrezig, taking birth in the lower realms is totally blocked.

The benefit of eight nyung-nes is that the moment one dies one is reborn in Dewachen. Immediately, in one of the sutras it is said that if this is not true, given that the practice is done diligently, then he is a liar. But this result is based upon trust. Doubt could jeopardize one’s rebirth in Dewachen.

The nyung-ne practice is the quickest way to purify negative karma. For example, pain endured during the practice purifies karma that could lead to birth in the hell realms, hunger and thirst endured purifies karma that could lead to birth in the hungry ghost realms. Exertion to overcome dullness and sleepiness purifies karma that could lead to rebirth in the animal realm. This is how, with trust, birth in the lower realms is blocked.

It is beneficial to practice, and also to serve the practitioners. When some servers died, their bodies produced relics.
The following story shows the benefits of the nyung-ne practice, how very negative karma can be purified. A husband and wife lived in Tibet. The husband was a merchant, and had to travel to India. He would be gone for three years. While he was gone, the wife married someone else. His wealth ran out. They had a seven year old son. Her first husband was returning soon. She killed the son, but this was noticed by a monk. She invited several people to lunch and poisoned the food, killing fifteen people, including the monk. Someone told her husband anyway. He planned to torture her by removing both her eyes. She heard about this, and ran away. She met Dewa Zhonnu, second in the lineage to Gelongma Palmo, and confessed. She did eight pairs of nyung-nes, with poor discipline. She did not do them properly. She drank water during the first nyung-ne. She ate offerings from the shrine during the second. She died of old age. Later, Dawa Zhonnu was giving a teaching, and a student asked him about the lady. His answer showed the benefit of the nyung-ne practice. She had taken birth in a brahman family, but because of drinking the water, she was mentally unstable and spacey. Because of eating the offering, her body was deformed. But because of her devotion, she will be born in Dewachen her next birth. She was born as a human with defects only because of breaking the vows.

The length of time to keep the discipline is short. Keep the vows as pure as possible. It is a great purification, and not a great hardship. With awareness that it is a vajrayana practice, have respect for the practice, Maintain the mahayana motivation. Lama Ganga hopes you will take it seriously.
THE PRACTICE OF NYUNGNEY

A talk Given by Ven. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche  
Translated by Ngodrup T. Burkhar, rough edit Cathy Jackson

Rinpoche is going to give a brief explanation on the Nyungney practice, the fasting practice with the precepts. This talk is mainly for people who have not done the Nyungney practice before.

Two Practices – Nyiney and Nyungney

There are two practices: One is called Nyiney, and the other, which we will be doing, is called the Nyungney practice. They are quite different. Sometimes people make the mistake of thinking that they are the same, but that is not so.

The practice of nyiney is strictly for lay persons who do not have understanding of the Dharma, for those who simply regard the Dharma as something very special and wish to commit themselves to it as they are able. The practice involves keeping the eight precepts. There is no fasting, there is breakfast and lunch, and no dinner. There is not the commitment of fasting or silence, so one may talk and eat.

Probably some people know how to meditate and do, and some even don’t know how to meditate. Mostly, the nyiney practice is following the eight precepts. It is strictly a Hinayana practice, and very much a beginner’s Hinayana practice, making things simpler, quieter.

The Nyungney practice, on the other hand, is rather profound. It maintains practices of the Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana vehicles. The foundation of one’s practice is maintaining the eight precepts of the Hinayana vehicle. On top of that, one then generates the enlightened attitude, [Bodhichitta], that of wanting to benefit and liberate all sentient beings through the practice. So there is Bodhchitta, and the practice is according to the Mahayana. Also in the Nyungney, the practice of visualization, recitation, supplication, and doing the liturgy – the sadhana. One is involved with the profound Vajrayana teachings, too. Thus, it is a very profound and beneficial practice.

In the Nyiney practice one does not take the Bodhisattva Vow or, for that matter, one does not take the ordination or the precept of, for instance, the monk, because it is only a one day’s precept. The commitment is personally for one’s own benefit, taking these precepts for a day, just for overnight.

 Whereas, in the Nyungney practice, there is the taking of the Bodhisattva Vow, and the renewal, confirmation, further reaffirming of the precepts and the vows that one had already taken.
There is great benefit in this Nyungney practice in that one is doing the practice of all the three yanas, Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana. If one can commit oneself to such a practice, this practice alone could be one’s only tool or method necessary towards the attainment of enlightenment. So it is a very profound and beneficial practice.

This Nyungney practice, taking the precepts and the commitments from an unbroken lineage, is important for one. The transmission from this unbroken lineage of practitioners is given to the participants of the retreat. That is very important. From the time of the great nun Gelongma Palmo in India, up until this day, there is an unbroken lineage of this practice.

Receiving transmission and precepts from this unbroken lineage is very, very beneficial. It makes one’s practice very proper and effective. Now once one has formally taken the precepts and received the transmission, there may come a time when one wants to do this practice by oneself. At that time, it is wonderful if one [again] has the opportunity to formally receive such transmission and precepts from a teacher. But this is not necessary, since one had once formally taken and received such a transmission. If no teacher is available, one can renew the vows in the presence of the shrine and the enlightened objects of refuge. In this way one repeats the vows and begins the practice.

The Nyungney is a very special and a very skillful practice as mentioned earlier, because one takes the precepts only for an overnight. For instance, you would take it tomorrow morning until the next morning, and then take it again, [the second morning] renewing the vows and precepts. Yet, the benefit is immeasurable because in the light of the bodhichitta one would do such a practice, for the benefit, and for the liberation and the enlightenment of all beings, one makes the proper aspiration and the proper action of doing the practice. From that point of view this practice is a great friend and a great support in one’s regular practice as well as in commitment to the teachings in general.

When you take the precepts in the morning, you will take it with the clear attitude, with the aspiration that for the benefit and liberation of all sentient beings one is committing oneself to this practice. Having this attitude clearly is very important.

The Precepts and Nyungney Practice

As far as the precepts themselves are concerned, one is keeping these for a very short time. You take them on the first morning until the next morning, and then again on the second morning you take them again. In this way, you keep the precepts for only two days. Therefore, the precepts are quite strict.

The Four Root Vows – These are the four main precepts.

I. Not To Kill: One of the regular precepts is nor to kill. This usually
means not to take the life of a human being or a to-be-human being. This is because a human being has the best opportunity to experience the state of awakening. That is why, from this point of view, the taking of human life is more harmful than taking any life.

But, when you take this precept for the Nyungney, for the two days, it is to not kill any beings at all, be it a little creature, be it human beings, be it whatever. Not to kill intentionally any being. If you did not intend to, but suddenly, somehow it happened unintentionally, that is a different story.

II. Not to Steal: The second precept is not to take that which is not given to one. Again, not taking anything that is not given to one. There is no excuse if it looks like the other person doesn’t need this. Whether the other person needs it or not, whether it is a big thing or a small thing, the point is not to take anything that is not given to one.

III. No Lying: The third precept is not to tell lies. The general precept is not to tell a spiritual lie, meaning: not to deceive one’s teacher or not to wear the mask of the Dharma, trying to deceive other people, telling lies. In general, this is what the regular vow implies.

But here, not to tell any lies whatsoever is what is meant. Even in the way of a joke, which to a little extent could confuse somebody or create unnecessary apprehension or hesitation. One is not to lie even in the way of teasing or kidding someone.

IV. Not To Have Sexual Relations: the fourth precept is not to have sexual relations at all. Here again, since it is for a very short time, it is very strict. One will not have any kind of sexual relations. Not only that, but one is not to make any gestures such as smiling in a romantic way, or making gestures that might be quite romantic, that might distract others.

The Four Branch Vows

V. Not to Take Intoxicants: the fifth precept if not to take any intoxicants at all, be it alcohol, be it drugs. It is very strict because of the time situation: one should not even smell to see whether it is good quality or not. It is that kind of situation, because a certain amount of clinging and attachment is involved with that.

Not taking any intoxicants is like a fence. It protects the other Four Precepts. Once you get intoxicated, you might do everything. So, these are the Five Main precepts.

VI. A. Not to wear unusual ornaments, perfumes or anything to make oneself look ostentatious, out of pride, arrogance, attachment, to want to look good, beautiful. Whatever one regularly wears is a different situation. Not to make a big deal out of it and try to draw someone’s attention by trying to look different, more attractive, whatever may be one’s ideas behind this.
VI. B. Not to engage in any kind of games, dancing, singing, jumping around: Basically, these are all distractions. At this time, since one is engaging in very specific and disciplined practice, one is not going to invite any distractions or entertainment that might be distracting to one’s very special practice.

VII. Not to use a higher bed or higher throne: not to use other than what one regularly uses, not to make oneself look elevated. The point is to not have such ideas or not to put such ideas into practice.

VIII. Fasting – Not to have untimely meals: The first day one does not have supper. The second day one does not eat nor drink, at all. It says not to have untimely meals, meaning, other that the meal that is given or prescribed for such a practice, that one will not indulge oneself in untimely food.

If one engages in such a practice in such a special month as this one (the month of the Buddha’s Parinirvana), that of the month that the Buddha overpowered or conquered all negative hindrances, it is said by the Buddha himself, that the benefit of such a practice will lead one to ultimately experience such a state of realization as that of his.

Not only that: one physically and mentally engages in the practice. It is a very special practice, because there is a total involvement in that one’s body engages in doing of the prostrations and meditation. In this way, one’s body engages in the practice. One’s speech engages in the practice of reciting of mantras and recitation of the liturgy, the sadhanas.

One’s mind engages in the practice with the visualization of the deity, the meditation practice, as well as generating of the enlightened attitude. Thus, in this way, one is very fully involved in the practice from the Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana point of view. It is a total involvement in the practice of the Dharma.

The Commitment of Keeping Silence

On the second day, there is, other than the recitation of the practice, the commitment of keeping silent, which is also part of the Vajrayana practice commitment. The purpose is that by keeping silent, one is not causing distraction, causing insult, abuse, whatever, and those unwholesome things that we usually cause to others through our speech. By keeping silent, we may have in the future transcended those patterns of having to be born mute, having to be born dumb or ignorant, completely stupid like animals. This is not only for ourselves, but by keeping silence, may this practice also cause sentient beings to transcend the sufferings of stupidity, and the sufferings of not being able to use one’s tongue in a clear and proper way. Transcending the suffering of not being able to communicate clearly and precisely and beneficially.
The Fasting Commitment

The fasting on the second day: In our lives we have been indulging in all kinds of food, causing all kinds of harm to all kinds of beings, directly and indirectly. This time, through this fasting, whatever negative patterns one has accumulated from indulging in all kinds of food, creating all kinds of negative patterns, all of these may be purified. For the purification of such patterns, one does the fasting, and more so, because of the harmful patterns that one has accumulated, there is the possibility of one’s being born in the realm of pretas, that of the hungry ghosts. Through this practice of Nyungney fasting, may all sentient beings and oneself be able to transcend the birth in the lower realm of the hungry ghosts. With this attitude, and in order to help oneself transcend such birth in the lower realms, one keeps the commitment of the fasting.

The Proper Attitude

As one undergoes this practice, because of the very extravagant and very spoiled habit one has had, one might feel a little strain, a little hardship. But at this time, one should have a very clear and determined attitude. One cannot deny that one has been involved, one’s body has been involved in doing all kinds of negative things. There is certainly a good possibility that has created hell for oneself. At this point, when one is going through a little difficulty, one must bear this, of course.

By being able to bear this pain, this momentary difficulty, may one transcend the suffering of having to be born in the lower realms, especially that of the hell realms, where the intensity of the suffering is unspeakable. Not only oneself, may all sentient beings who could be born in the hell realms transcend such possibilities.

More precisely, through your practice, may this practice cause the liberation of beings who are suffering in the hell realms at this particular point in time. With this attitude, understanding, and determination you commit yourself to the practice.

The Nyungney Schedule

The first morning we will start the practice somewhere close to 5 a.m. Rinpoche would like everyone to be up at least by 4:30 and washed and ready by 5.00. You will then come to the Shrine Room. The Precepts will be given to one. You will repeat after Rinpoche and then you take the precepts, the transmission which has been explained. After you get up, and until lunch time, you may have some liquids to drink, like tea or water, but no solid food, not even a grain of solid food.

Then we will have lunch together. It is said according to the Vinaya disciplines: one meal at one sitting. Therefore, you will have the meal at one sitting. Before you sit down, make sure you have everything you need. If you have sat down and you thing you don’t have something you
need, make sure you ask someone to pass it to you. There might be some people who are not
doing the practice who could help, making sure that everyone gets whatever they need and
whatever they want to have.

But once you have sat down and started your meal, you are not going to stand up. You only
stand up when you have finished eating. If you have not finished eating and you stand up, that
means you have stood up for good. You will not sit down again to restart your meal. You will
eat at one sitting.

After the lunch, there will be short breaks here and there. You may continue drinking tea and
water, after lunch, but you will not eat any solid food, not even a grain of solid food.

You can stay until 10 p.m. in the evening, drinking and talking, though of course it is not
necessary to do so. But Rinpoche would like you to make sure you go to bed by 10 p.m. at least.
Once you have gone to bed, it doesn’t matter when you get up, an hour after you went to bed
or whenever. Once you have gone to bed, onwards: silence. You will not talk even if you get up
after one hour. And you will not drink anything, not even a drop of water. From that time,
bedtime onwards, one begins not to eat, not to drink, and silence.

On the second morning when you wash your face and brush your teeth, you will make sure you
do not swallow a drop of water.

While we are doing the practice, it is not necessary that you go out for a stroll, but in case you
have to go to the bathroom or feel you really have to go out for a little stretch, etc., you may do
so. When you return to the Shrine room, go up to Rinpoche and receive the purification water
and drink it. That’s the first day.

On the second day, after you have gone to the bathroom and returned to the Shrine Room, you
will still come and get the purification water [from Rinpoche], but you will not drink it. You will
just sprinkle it in your hair.

As far as being able to follow the practice: the first day we will go over it and make sure
everyone is able to follow and keep up with everyone else. After 10 pm of the first day,
throughout the second day, until the morning of the third day. you will keep silence, you will
not eat or drink anything.

On the third morning, you come back to the Shrine Room at 4:30 or 5 a.m. to do the final
session of the practice. You will still be keeping silence, and will not have taken any liquids or
food.

That third morning, when we have completed the final session and at the end, Bardor Rinpoche
will come with the purification water. We will then all drink the purification water. That is the
conclusion of the practice and the fulfillment of our Precepts and commitments. that we can
then break the silence as well as break the fast.
Rinpoche would like to encourage everyone to participate in this very special practice with sincerity, and with joy. There is definitely a great cause for joy because it is a very special practice, a very special opportunity. It is miraculous that one has such an opportunity at this time to work for the benefit and liberation of all sentient beings. If this is not a joyful time, then when else is there? And of course, from the point of view of benefit, there is also cause for great joy.

So Rinpoche would like to request everyone to do this with sincerity and joy. Even if you are going through a little difficulty, feeling a little tired, a little thirsty, whatever, here and there, you are fulfilling a very important purpose. Of course, any difficulty is bearable. Don’t be a coward, don’t withdraw. Be very strong, and the benefit will be yours. If you are not very strong, the benefit would not be yours. There would be the benefit of doing the practice but not the benefit of doing it sincerely. You would amplify the difficulty by ideas of how difficult it is. It is not difficult, as you will witness.

As far as keeping silent is concerned: since we are not used to this, we may be tempted to talk. It is just a question of reminding oneself that one has made a commitment not to talk. Just a matter of giving oneself a reminder, and you will find it is not necessary, either, to talk.

If you are not mindful of your commitment and you happen to utter a word, it is not breaking the vow, in terms of the totality of the vow. It is like a crack in the pot, a hole in the bag. It is not that the bag is totally out of use, or the pot. But still, the hole or the crack is not what is desired.