

INSTRUCTIONS FOR A POWERFULLY BLESSED EXTENDED PROTECTOR RETREAT

1. PREPARE *(Refer to Appendix 1)*

- Buddhist swastika (printed or drawn on a piece of paper)
- Kusha grass stalks, one long and one short (from a brand new broom)

The kusha grass must be placed in the center of the Buddhist swastika. Place the longer kusha grass on top of the Buddhist swastika with the stem facing inwards and the tassels facing outwards. Place the shorter kusha grass horizontally, perpendicular to the longer kusha grass. The kusha grass can be taped onto the Buddhist swastika to keep it in place.

2. RETREAT VICINITY AND ENVIRONMENT

- Clean the room.
- Keep it clean and tidy throughout the retreat.

3. SITTING LOCATION

- Select a location where you will be most comfortable and undisturbed.
- Place the Buddhist swastika with the kusha grass on the position selected.
- Then, place the cushion over the Buddhist swastika / kusha grass.
- The cushion must not be moved from its original position throughout the entire retreat.
- **Be Mindful** not to step on or cross over the other participants' cushions.

4. ALTAR

- It is recommended to have the following items on the altar as the object of our offerings and meditations:
 - Image of Lama Tsongkhapa / Yidam
 - Image of the Protector
 - Scripture (placed on the left)
 - Stupa (placed on the right)
 - Image of one's Guru / lineage lamas

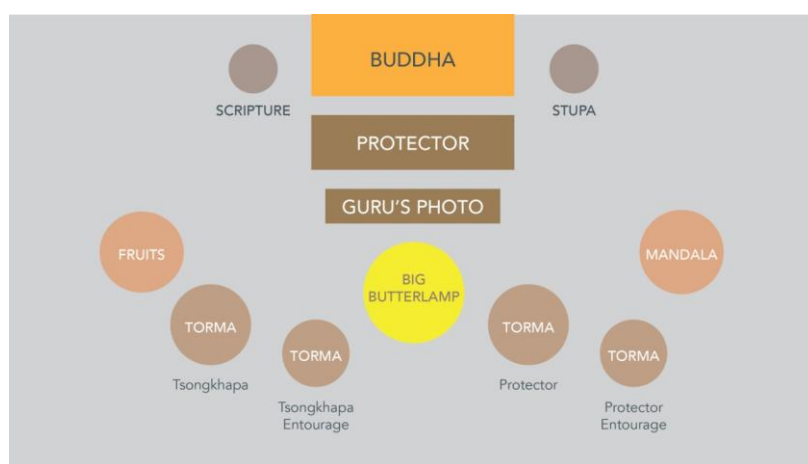
5. OFFERINGS (Refer to Appendices 2A and 2B)

- **Tormas** (Refer to Appendices 3A and 3B)

- Four sets of tormas in total
 - One (large jar) for Lama Tsongkhapa
 - One (medium jar) for Lama Tsongkhapa's Entourage
 - One (large jar) for the Protector
 - One (medium jar) for the Protector's Entourage
 - You can download a high resolution image of the tear-drop and round shaped cuttings here: <http://www.tsemrinpoche.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/tormashapes.jpg>

Buy an assortment of biscuits and cookies for the above tormas. Fill the jars with the biscuits and cookies, and place each jar on a plate. Fill each plate with more biscuits and cookies to surround the torma jars. If you have an issue with pests and insects, you can use individually-wrapped biscuits and cookies for this. Stick the tear-drop and round shaped cuttings onto the respective torma jars.

The biscuits and cookies on the plates should be replaced after each retreat session whereas the biscuits and cookies in the jars can only be cleared upon completion of the entire retreat. The torma jars **should not be moved** throughout the entire retreat.



- **Land God Offering / Land Owners Torma** (Refer to Appendix 3B)

- Prepare a plate of buns and biscuits for the Land God Offering / Land Owners Torma. This should not contain any meat or alcohol.
- After completing the recitation of the '**Offering to the Land Owners**', a stick of incense is placed in the middle of the torma. This incense stick should be unlit if the offering is done during the day, and lit if the offering is done at night.
- Then, take the torma out of the retreat vicinity and place it on an elevated place outside the retreat premises, out of reach of dogs. The incense is not brought back into the retreat vicinity.
- The purpose of the Land God Offering is to clear obstacles for the entire retreat.
- The Land God Offering is performed **only once per retreat**, during the very first session. It is not necessary to do the Land God Offering during subsequent sessions.

- **Sensory Offerings** (Refer to Appendices 4A and 4B)

- Four sets of Sensory Offerings

- Two sets of peaceful sensory offerings for the Yidam (eight bowls each, one forwards, one backwards)
- One set of peaceful sensory offerings for the Protector (eight bowls)
- One set of wrathful sensory offerings for the Protector (seven bowls)
 - You can download a high resolution image of the Wrathful Flower here: <http://www.tsemrinpoche.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ds-wrathful-flower.jpg>

- **Five Commitment Offerings** (Refer to Appendices 4A and 4B)

- Five bowls, arranged in the following order from left to right:

- Tea
- Milk
- Tsampa (roasted barley flour). Alternatively, use oats with some butter on top
- Yoghurt
- Beer



* Peaceful incense offering



** Wrathful incense offering



Peaceful tormo should be WHITE



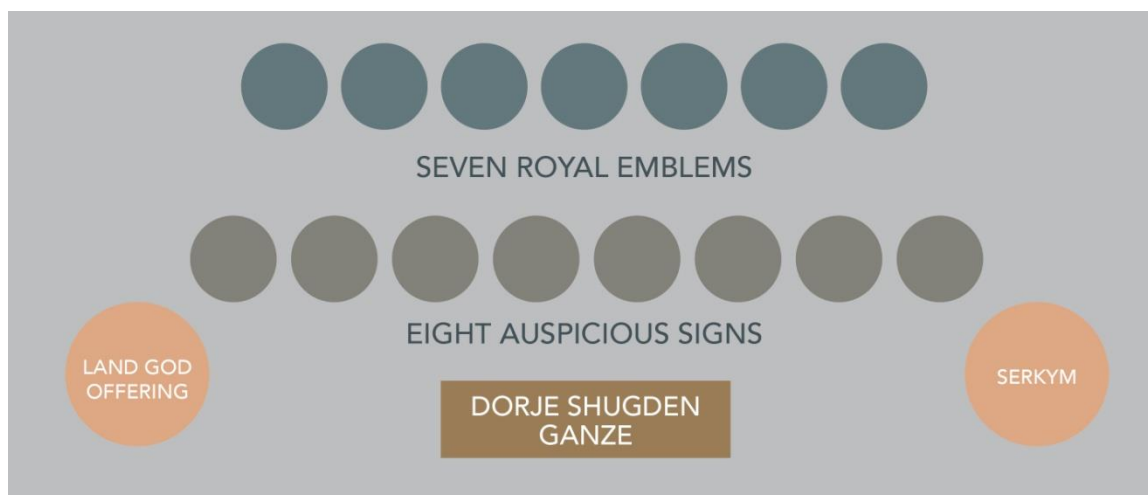
Wrathful tormo should be RED, if not, white.

- **Additional Offerings** (Refer to Appendices 5A and 5B)

- Ganze
- Incense
- Candles
- Serkym
- Water Offerings (optional)
- Eight Auspicious Signs (optional)
- Seven Royal Emblems (optional)
- Mandala (optional)
- Extra Sensory Offerings (optional)
- Fruits and Flowers (optional)

Download the high resolution picture of the Ganze offering here:

<http://www.tsemrinpoche.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ganzeDS.jpg>



6. NOTES ON OFFERINGS

In addition to the serkym offering on the altar, all participants are encouraged to offer a serkym of black tea individually if doing a group retreat.

If you are engaging in a retreat in a public place e.g. in the Gompa or at the retreat center, it is wonderful to have additional offerings of incense and candles (at your own home) concurrently with the retreat session.

Any form of alcohol and beer as offerings is not encouraged in public areas like the Gompa and retreat center.

Names or photographs of your loved ones can be put in a sealed envelope and placed under the Protector.

A picture of your secret Yidam covered neatly with a khata should also be placed on the altar throughout the duration of the retreat.

7. COMMITMENTS

Participants must observe a vegetarian diet and avoid the five black foods (meat, fish, eggs, onions and garlic).

Retreat participants must abstain from consuming alcohol, sexual activity, idle chatter, lying and any form of non-virtuous action until the entire retreat is finished.

8. RETREAT ETIQUETTE

If you are thirsty, you may drink water during the mantra recitation. However, eating is not encouraged.

You may take toilet breaks during the retreat session. After toilet breaks, you are advised to wash your hands and rinse your mouth before resuming your prayers.

Talking during the breaks is not encouraged.

Refrain from walking back and forth during a retreat session. This especially applies in a group retreat to avoid distracting other participants.

During the mantra recitation, if you cough, burp or pass wind involuntarily, go back on your mantra count by seven beads.

You have to restart the mantra count for that session if you fall asleep.

Refrain from wearing make-up or excessive jewelry during retreat sessions.

9. DAILY MANTRA RECITATION

For the daily mantra recitation target count, follow the guidelines in *Appendix 6*. This is to ensure a smooth build-up and wind-down of wind energies during the course of the retreat.

10. FINAL DAY

On the final day of the retreat, after completing the required prayers and mantras, for special auspiciousness, perform:

- **THE GURU PUJA** (*Refer to Appendix 7*)
If there are Tantric practitioners amongst the participants, include the actual TSOG offering verses [verses 63-67] and the TSOG verses of the Dharmapala. These should be recited 21 times each. If no Tantric practitioners are present, then recite according to the prayers in Appendix 7.
- **A PRAYER FOR THE BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END** by Lama Tsongkhapa. (*Refer to Appendix 8*)
- **THE KING OF PRAYERS** (*Refer to Appendix 9*)
At this point, we can open the doors of the retreat premises to share the blessings with the world.

As on all days, finish with the completion dedication and Yonten Shigyurma.

11. COMPLETION OF RETREAT

Clear up all the offerings and cushions.

All participants take turns to sweep the floor (use a broom dedicated for the retreat) and visualize that you are clearing all obstacles and negativities. The dust collected is to be disposed outside the retreat vicinity.

You are strongly advised to place the Buddhist swastika and the kusha grass under your mattress. This will help to ward off any hindering spirits.

12. NEXT THREE DAYS AFTER COMPLETION (WINDING DOWN)

All participants should continue with the same prayers with any number of malas of the Protector's mantra. This can be done individually or as a group, but it would be more beneficial to do this as a group in the presence of a well-set up altar. Thus, you can continue the session in the same retreat premises, if convenient.

You are advised to continue observing the retreat commitments as stated in *Commitments (No. 7)*.

Fruits, cakes, biscuits, chocolates, milk, yoghurt, candles, etc. can be offered daily during the winding down session.

All participants must complete 21 full-length prostrations during each winding down session.