

## Palpung Shenpen Tharchin

### Guidelines for Group Chanting from Lama Linda and PST center leaders

#### If you're following the chant leader (umze):

1. Chant audibly if you're comfortable, but always make sure you can hear the umze clearly.
2. If you're not sure of the tune yet, please chant softly until you're familiar with it so you don't confuse people around you.
3. Always respect the pace, tune, and pitch the umze sets,\*\* even if you think it should be faster, slower, etc. The only exception: if the umze makes a serious error, such as skipping a section, chanters can fall silent, which allows the umze to realize their mistake.
4. Traditionally, only the umze chants the first few syllables of a new section. There's no set rule for when to chime in; somewhere between 2 and 5 syllable is about right.
5. Never get ahead of the umze or fall behind; keep their pace. (See #3 above)
6. If the umze stops in the middle of a line (to cough, breathe, drink, etc.) support them by continuing to chant so they can blend back in without a gap.
7. The umze will signal the end of mantra recitation by chanting the mantra once in a loud voice. Traditionally, chanters fall silent and allow the umze to chant this repetition alone.

#### Guidelines for umzes:

1. Lead fearlessly, don't worry about small mistakes.
2. Chant loudly enough that everyone can follow you.
3. If you lose your place or forget the tune at any point, stop and let the other chanters lead until you get re-oriented.
4. The umze sets the pace and tune for each section by chanting the first few syllables at the beginning of each section (the ka den, or voice seat) alone.
5. If at any point you notice other chanters have fallen silent, make sure you're in the right section; find where they are and join them rather than start over.
6. That said, if someone is overchanting you and drowning you out, just do your best. If possible, you can speak to them later, alone and gently, to clue them in to protocol. Or you can remind the whole group about guidelines at an appropriate time rather than single someone out. If it doesn't get better, remember impermanence.
7. If you realize you need to change the pitch (go higher or lower), you can do it without ado any time in the chanting. Cultivate the skill of reading the room and adjust as needed to make it as easy as possible for everyone to chant along.
8. Ideally, take your breaths in the middle of lines to avoid extra pauses between lines.

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\*\* If it's hard to chant with the umze's pitch, it's okay to unobtrusively harmonize.