

SIX SESSION GURU YOGA

1999 Teaching

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DRAFT



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Whoever receives the initiation into the highest yoga tantra, as a basic commitment of this practice you must recite and meditate the Six Session Guru Yoga six times a day. On the basis of this one practice you will protect the general and specific commitments, the samayas, taken during the initiation into highest yoga tantra. You must protect the general commitment, the fourteen root commitments, the eight branch commitments and the additional one, the nineteen specific special commitments related to the five Buddha families.

At the time when you actually receive the tantric vows, there is a particular verse that the disciple recites along with the Lama:

**Sang gye jang chub sem pey kun
Dag la gong par dze du sol
Dag mi kyo dor je zhe gyi wa
Du di ne ni sung ne ni
Jang chub nying por chi kyi bar
Ji tar du sum gon po nam
Jang chub tu ni nge dze pey
Jang chub sem ni la na me**

**May all Buddhas with Bodhisattvas,
Heroes and Yoginis, please attend on me!
I *Akshobya Vajra*, from this moment.
Until I reach the seat of enlightenment,
may I conceive the holy,
unexcelled spirit of enlightenment,
just as the three times Saviors
became destined for enlightenment.**

At that time this recitation actually contains all the samayas and commitments; specifically those commitments related to the five Buddha families.

Vairochana

The first one is the commitment related to the Buddha family of Vairochana. There are six commitments within this one; three related to the practice of the three types of morality and three related to having taken refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

In the first you commit to preserve all the three types of morality. The first of the three moralities is that of preserving all commitments that one has received. The second is the morality of the ten virtuous actions; practicing the ten virtuous actions, abandoning the ten non-virtuous actions. And the third is the morality of benefiting sentient beings, whereas (one) is not harming sentient beings. Those are the three related to the basic practices of morality.

The three related to refuge are: having taken refuge in the three rare and sublime jewels, Buddha Dharma and Sangha. So these three plus the three moralities comprise the six samayas related to the Buddha family of Vairochana.

Akshobya

The four commitments or samayas related to the Buddha family of Akshobya are the samayas of the enlightened body, enlightened speech, enlightened mind; and the samaya of the Vajra master.

The samaya of the enlightened mind refers to upholding the vajra, the physical vajra. This serves as a reminder of the nature of the exalted mind of the Buddha, and of all Buddhas, which is great bliss.

Next is the samaya related to the enlightened speech, which is holding the bell as a reminder of the view of emptiness.

And the samaya of the enlightened body is the samaya of the mudra or the gesture. This is to remind you that once you have received the initiation in the highest yoga tantra you should strive to abandon the view of and grasping onto ordinary appearances. That's why it refers to the body. Train yourself in the pure appearance of the deity, divine pride and pure appearance of the deity.

And the last is the samaya of the vajra master, which is to constantly recollect that the root of all siddhis, the root of all goodness, is to correctly devote yourself to your spiritual teacher. So these are the four samayas related to the family of Akshobya.

Ratnasambhava

Next are the four samayas related to the family of Ratnasambhava. They refer to the practice of the four types of generosity, and are also related to the four immeasurables.

The first is the practice of generosity, which is the generosity of giving away one's possessions.

The second is the generosity of teaching the dharma, of giving dharma and teaching the dharma in a pure, correct, unmistakable way.

The third is the practice of generosity that protects from fear. This is accomplished by viewing all sentient beings without feeling that one is closer and another is more distant from us; by viewing other beings without thinking that someone is a friend we should help and someone is not a friend so he doesn't come within the frame of our practice and so forth. So with the view of equanimity we engage in the generosity of protecting all sentient beings from fear, protecting all beings equally.

And the fourth is with the view of wishing that all sentient beings remain in the state of highest happiness, which is the generosity of giving love. So these are the four samayas related to the family of Ratnasambhava.

Amitabha

Next are the samayas related to the Buddha family of Amitabha. Here in the verse during the initiation when you take the tantric vows, it comes at the line that says, “*I will uphold the general, the secret and the three vehicles’ practices.*” So here it refers to the practices of the general--the practice to the two lower tantras, the action and performance, while the secret refers to the yoga in the highest yoga tantra. “Three vehicles” refers to the individual and the universal vehicle. The individual vehicle is divided into two: hearers and solitary realizers. The third is the vehicle of perfection, or universal vehicle. Therefore in order to benefit sentient beings, to bring the highest happiness for the benefit of all sentient beings, you pledge to engage constantly and train your mind in all these practices of the three vehicles.

Amogasiddhi

The next refers to the samayas related to the family of Amoghasiddhi. There are two samayas, two commitments that you pledge to maintain when you receive the highest yoga tantra initiation.

One is to practice and preserve all commitments that you have received without making any one of the commitments more important than another. You practice each commitment with the same strength and conviction.

The second is, in order to please the holy mind of the Buddhas, engaging in the practice of the outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings according to one’s own capabilities.

So we’ve gone through the nineteen uncommon samayas related to the five Buddha families.

So, now for the actual practice of the Six Session Guru Yoga.

Six Session Guru Yoga Practice

The Six Session Guru Yoga is a practice devised to maintain, to preserve in an easy and very practical direct way, all the commitments and the samayas that you have received at the time of the initiation. These commitments are:

Nineteen uncommon commitments related to the five Buddha families

Fourteen root vows and eight secondary vows of highest yoga tantra

Eighteen root and forty-six secondary vows of the bodhisattvas

This actually becomes a very indispensable practice. By way of engaging in and meditating the Six Session Guru Yoga throughout the day, the practices related to your samayas get done. And this is actually why it is inconceivable. Why is it inconceivable? Because just by preserving correctly your samayas and your commitments correctly you will achieve the state of Vajradhara within sixteen lifetimes. You will do this without undertaking three long eons of accumulation of wisdom and merit and without the need to engage directly in the practices and the meditations of the generation and the completion stages of the highest yoga tantra. You will do this within a maximum of sixteen lifetimes if your vows are kept correctly. This was stated by Vajradhara himself.

So with very little effort you gain a very big result. It is a very practical and indispensable practice. You can undertake the practice in six different sessions throughout the day. If that is difficult at least you should be able to do it three sessions during the day and three sessions during the night before going to sleep.

As Lama Pabongka Dorje Chang explained, among all the dharmas that had been propagated in Tibet and the practices, even such very powerful and important practices with big names such as the Thirteen Golden Dharmas and so forth, Six Session Guru Yoga is far heavier than those practices. It allows you with basically no effort whatsoever to keep your vows in order to achieve the state of union within sixteen lifetimes.

(They are called Thirteen Golden Dharmas because the great translators of Tibet went to India loaded with gold as offerings to bring back teachings. They are actually inconceivable themselves.)

Six Session Guru Yoga is an extremely important and practical thing for us to do. Since you have received highest yoga tantra initiation, you have pledged to preserve these vows and these commitments. And we are very busy people so it's difficult for us to meditate on a regular basis, isn't it? To carry out your practice fully, really to sit and to meditate and to improve your mind, really sitting in your meditation is very difficult. Therefore generation stage and completion stage practices and so forth are quite difficult. Let's be frank about that.

So here you have a practice that I believe should become your most important meditation practice, the Six Session Guru Yoga. By doing it you are able to bring within it all the most important aspects of your practice. And as stated by Vajradhara, by preserving the commitments you have taken by receiving the initiation, without engaging in meditation practices which as we all know are difficult to carry out, you'll be able to achieve the supreme result within the stretch of a very short sixteen lifetimes, compared to the three long eons it would take to complete your practices on the basis of the paramitas.

Therefore when you do the Six Session Guru Yoga in two sessions of three, do it well. Do it carefully. Go through the meaning of what you're reading and what you're thinking and what you're meditating and try to bring to your mind the recollection of the samayas and the vows you've pledged to keep at the time of the initiation. See whether your mind

matches them or not, whether you're carrying out those commitments within yourself or not. Try to bring them as much as possible, as close as possible, into your mind day by day. By doing it in this way it is quite an easy practice. Yet it is extremely important, extremely profound, and it brings inconceivable results.

Method of Keeping the Vows

I'm going to explain as is taught by the venerable Lamas in the root tantras the supreme method of keeping the purity of the vows and samayas.

Once you have received the highest yoga tantra initiation you have to preserve the general and the specific commitments and samayas of the highest yoga tantra. If you have initiation in the action and performance tantras only, you don't have these samayas and don't need to recite or practice this Six Session Guru Yoga. Only once you have received the initiation and have entered into one of the mandalas in the highest yoga tantra is it necessary to practice Six Session Guru Yoga as a means of preserving these vows.

After you receive the initiation you must recollect each and every one of your samayas six times a day and check to see whether you're keeping them purely or not. Failing to do such practice of recollection amounts to what is called a large infraction. They're not actually additional pledges, these are called **bom po gye** the eight large ones. So there's a difference from being thin and large, right? So this is a large transgression. This is like a heavy transgression, failing to recollect and inquire whether one is keeping one's samayas correctly or not six times a day. So therefore it becomes indispensable to practice the Six Session Guru Yoga. By doing this practice all of that gets covered and you don't have the danger of incurring one of these large infractions.

So if you want to have a further and deeper understanding of the vows, the commitments and the samayas taken during the initiation then here it says you should refer to the great texts such as the Explanation of the Root and Secondary Vows of Je Rinpoche, the text called the Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion and also the Feast of the Yogi's Play.

The Six Session Guru Yoga begins with "Namo Guru Manjugoshaya," the prostration to the Guru Manjushri. Then as with the beginning of all the practices of all the texts you have the prostration to the Lama, the expression of devotion and the promise of this particular undertaking. So you prostrate with devotion to the lotus feet of the glorious Lama Dorje Chang, or Vajradhara.

That was the introduction. So now we have reached to the actual practice. The next verse describes the differences in expression of worship and vows of the undertaking:

*Sang gye cho dang tsog kyi chog nam la
Jang chub bar du dag ni kyab su chi
Dag gi jin sog gyi pe so nam kyi
Dro la pan chir sang gye drub par shog*

*I go for refuge, until I am Enlightened,
To the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Highest Assembly,
From the virtuous merit that I collect
By practicing giving and other perfections,
May I attain the state of a Buddha
To be able to benefit all sentient beings.*

I go for refuge until I'm enlightened to the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Highest Assembly: this is the sangha. Up to here, this verse is the verse of refuge. I don't need to go into much detail about the motivation that should precede your actual practice--that we went through yesterday. And I know that Gelek Rimpoche has explained the practices at length and he's teaching all the time. But just for reference, when you begin in the morning before you do other things, don't sit with lots of people around. Even if your house is full of people seek a solitary corner. Sit down where you can be quiet throughout your practice and generate the correct motivation to begin the practice and then take refuge.

Taking refuge actually is not that easy. What does it mean to take refuge? In order to take refuge you must generate within your mental continuum the causes for going for refuge, the causes to develop refuge within your mind. What are the causes? The causes are mainly two. One is fear, fear of the general and the specific sufferings of cyclic existence. The other is faith, the faith in the three rare and sublime [jewels], Buddha, Dharma and Sangha that they really can protect you from those sufferings, help you get out of the sufferings. Therefore you need an understanding of the actual qualities of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

The mental attitude that you should develop while you're taking refuge is like that of a small child towards his or her mother--total surrender. Whatever comes through, whatever experience I'm going to have, whatever I'm going through in my life whether it be happiness or sufferings, all my expectations, all myself, you give up your mind and your trust is completely placed in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, in the three refuges. This is the attitude of going for refuge and is exemplified by the first three verses. So with the first three verses you should be able to bring about within your mind this attitude. Then it becomes actual refuge.

*From the virtuous merit that I collect
by practicing giving and other perfections,
may I attain the state of a Buddha
to be able to benefit all sentient beings.*

*dag gi jin sog gyi pe so nam kyi
dro la pan chir sang gye drub par shog*

This is the actual practice of generating bodhicitta. It means all the virtues I have accumulated and will accumulate by practicing the perfection of morality, the perfection of generosity, the perfection of patience, the perfection of enthusiasm, the perfection of

concentration and the perfection of wisdom, all those roots of virtue that I have accumulated I dedicate completely to the benefit of all sentient beings, for all sentient beings, in order to achieve enlightenment.

When you take refuge for the first time, you pledge to take refuge three times every day. That is what is indicated in the advice you receive after taking refuge on what is to be avoided and what is to be practiced to maintain refuge. Six Session yoga is undertaken three times during the day and three times at night, so in this way, taking refuge three times a day is covered by the practice. It also covers the commitments of the **Vairochana** family, which is taking refuge in Buddha, taking refuge in Dharma, and taking refuge in Sangha as explained before. So both are covered here.

So then the next is,

*May all sentient beings be parted from aversion and
clinging, feeling close to some and distant to others*

Sem chen tam che de wa tang de wei gyu tang den par gyur chik

And this is actually one of the commitments or samayas of the Ratnasambava family. It is also the immeasurable equanimity which is the generosity of protecting from fear. That was one of the samayas of Ratnasambava, right? Then the other one –

May they win the bliss that is especially sublime.

May they achieve the bliss that is sublime, especially sublime. This is the immeasurable love which is also the generosity of giving love. So by way of these two you have covered two of the four samayas of **Ratnasambava**.

The next two are the immeasurable compassion and the immeasurable joy which is-

*May they find release from the ocean of unbearable sorrow.
And may they never be parted from Freedom's true joy.*

The next verse is the generation of the bodhicitta of aspiration which is

*From this moment on until I am a Buddha,
May I never give up, though my life be at stake,
The attitude wishing to gain full Enlightenment
In order to free from the fears of samsara
And nirvana's complacency all sentient beings.*

In order to liberate migrators from the fears of existence and peace, until I have achieved the supreme Enlightenment I will never give up even at the cost of my life the mind wishing to gain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. So this is aspirational bodhicitta.

At this point you take the actual bodhisattva vows. Recollect the visualization of the Lamas, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in front of you and by reciting the following verse three times, you are actually receiving the bodhisattva vows from them.

*O Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and Gurus please listen
To what I now say from the depths of my heart.
Just as all the Buddhas of the past have developed
The thought of Enlightenment, true Bodhicitta,
Then practiced its stages of graded development
Following the trainings for all Buddha's children,
So may I too, for the sake of all beings,
Develop Bodhicitta and follow the trainings
Exactly as all Bodhisattvas have done.*

By generating bodhimind and repeating this verse three times, think that you are taking the bodhisattva vows again. Think that you are receiving them, that they are actually being renewed in the presence of the Lamas, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. At the end of the third repetition, generate the very strong determination that right now I have received anew the bodhisattva vows within my mind stream. At this point, you can also absorb the merit field into yourself.

The next four verses are the generation of joy. Why? Having generated two types of bodhicitta, the bodhicitta of aspiration and the bodhicitta of engaging bodhicitta by taking the Bodhisattva vows your life has become truly meaningful. By doing this I have become a bodhisattva, I've become a child or heir of the Buddhas. I'm worthy of being called child of the victorious ones. Then you recite this verse:

*At this moment my life has become truly fruitful,
For, having attained an endowed human body,*

It means being a human being has achieved a real meaning.

*Today I have developed the true Buddha essence-
Bodhicitta, and thus have become Buddha's Child.*

At this point you meditate joy.

The next verses are the generation of awareness. By having taken the Bodhisattva vows you are born as a child of the victorious ones, the Buddhas. Therefore I'm not going to engage, from now on, in any action whatsoever which will stain or contaminate the victorious child, which is you yourself. You generate strong awareness of the fact that you have this responsibility. Therefore I'm not going to contaminate this family with wrongful or unwholesome actions.

The next part covers one of the samayas related to **Akshobya** which is the samaya of the Guru, the samaya of the Vajra Master as explained before, that of devoting oneself to the Guru in the correct way. This is the visualization of your own root Guru rising in the aspect of Vajradhara. The visualization is covered in the verse from *In the sky before me* down to *Dza Hum Bam Ho*.

*In the sky before me, on a breath-taking throne of jewels
On a mandala seat of a lotus, a sun and full moon,
Sits my root Guru, the All-pervading Vajradhara,
With a blue colored body, one face and two arms,
Holding vajra and bell, and embracing his duplicate consort.
He shines resplendent with all the marks of a Buddha,
Adorned with many dazzling jeweled ornaments,
Draped with fine garments of enchanting, heavenly scarves,
Even the mere remembrance of him dispels all my torment.
With a nature encompassing every supreme refuge,
He sits cross-legged in the vajra position,
The three spots of his body marked with three letters.
Light beams forth from the Hum (at his heart)
And invokes Guru Vajradhara from his actual abode.
DZA HUM BAM HO. They (merge to) become non-dual.*

Here it says then you visualize in the sky before you a marvelous throne, a lion throne as usual, a jeweled lion throne.

*Even the mere remembrance of him dispels all my torment.
With a nature encompassing every supreme refuge,*

You visualize your own root guru in the aspect of Vajradhara as the text explains. The lama is the embodiment of all objects of refuge and sits in the vajra position. His three places are marked by the three seed syllables: white OM at his crown, red AH at his throat chakra and blue HUM at his heart chakra. Countless rays of light are emitted from the HUM at his heart invoking Lama Vajradhara from his natural abode, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the Lamas in the form of countless Vajradharas. You recite Dza Hum Bam Ho: Dza you invoke them and they come on the top of his crown; Hum, they enter into him; Bam, they mix, like water mixes into water; and Ho, they become inseparable forever. In this way you cover the samaya of the Vajra Master, practicing correctly the Guru devotion of **Akshobya**.

The next is prostration and here, as has been taught in the Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion, it explains that one should, with deep devotion, prostrate three times a day to one's Guru:

*I bow to your lotus feet,
Oh my jewel-like Guru Vajradhara,
Your kindness heralds an instantaneous
Dawn of great bliss.*

The meaning of this is that due to your kindness, in one instant I'm able to achieve supreme enlightenment. One instant refers to one life. In a very short life due to the kindness of the Guru you are able to achieve everything. The kindness of the Guru is precious, is precious like a jewel. Therefore I prostrate to your lotus feet.

Now next are what are called the eight prostration verses to the Father and eight to the Mother, Heruka and consort. In the English text it says they are to be recited only by those who have the Mother Tantra initiation. It does not say this in the Tibetan text.

OM I prostrate to the Bhagavan Lord of the Brave ones Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you whose brilliance equals the fire that ends a great eon Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you who have an inexhaustible crowning top-knot Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you with bared fangs and a wrathful face Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you whose thousand arms blaze with light Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you who hold an ax, an uplifted noose, a spear and a skull staff Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you who wear a tiger-skin cloth Hum Hum Phat.
OM I bow to you whose great smoke-colored body ends all obstructions Hum Hum Phat.
OM I prostrate the Bhagavati Vajra-varahi Hum Hum Phat.
OM To the queen of the female Arya practitioners, invincible in the Three Realms Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you who destroy all fears of evil spirits with your diamond-like means Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you whose eyes empower those who sit on the Diamond Throne not to be conquered by anyone Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you whose wrathful body of psychic heat can desiccate Brahma Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you who terrify and dry up the demons and thus can vanquish all other forces Hum Hum Phat.
OM To you who triumph over all that can make you ill-tempered, excited or stupefied Hum Hum Phat.
OM I bow to Vajravarahi, the consort who overpowers lust Hum Hum Phat.

These are actually extremely beneficial verses to recite. The Heruka Tantra has fifty-one chapters and in the thirty-eighth chapter of the Heruka Tantra the inconceivable benefits deriving from continuously reciting these verses is explained extensively. For instance, reciting continuously particularly while you are with your Guru, when you are going to meet your Guru, while you're meeting your Guru, while going on pilgrimage, while going to temples, while entering places, while walking, while sitting.

While you're reciting these eight verses of the Father and eight verses of the Mother it is extremely beneficial if you visualize yourself, the environment and all sentient beings as in the nature of the actual Heruka. Whatever you're doing, wherever you're going, keep the divine pride of being Heruka. Emanate offering deities from your heart. They turn towards you--visualize that they are singing these praises to you by making prostrations.

Whoever accompanies someone who is reciting these verses receives the blessings directly of Lama Heruka, his consort Dorje Phamo, along with the twenty-four dakas and dakinis dwelling in the twenty-four places of Heruka.

We don't all have the merit to meet Lama Heruka in front of us and see the Lama in that aspect with our naked eyes. Even if we do the invocation and invite the wisdom being to be absorbed, due to the lack of merit you might not feel confident that it is actually happening. But Vajradhara stated in the Root Tantra that for one who recites these verses, that person along with whomever is nearby or accompanying, directly receives the blessing. Heruka father and mother are inseparable with him or her. Even if we think our practice is not so profound or powerful we still receive the blessing and so do those who are around. By reciting these verses, you yourself, the sentient beings in the environment and the environment itself will receive the blessing from Heruka. This is a very powerful practice; just reciting these verses and doing as much as possible. Reciting and doing these praises is more beneficial than directly, actually making offerings and praises to the Buddhas of the ten directions.

So I'm able to read to you and explain the benefits of the Eight Verses of the Father and Mother Heruka, due to the kindness of Gelek Rimpoche. He has so much concern for and pays so much attention to the texts. The house is full of texts so while I'm here I have the chance of going through and reading so many texts, and that's why I am able to explain.

So after this you have the verse of the offerings.

*All things I possess and what is not mine
What is actually placed here and what I mentally create,
I present you an ocean-like cloud of these various offerings, outer, inner and secret.*

This verse covers the samaya of **Amoghasiddhi**, that of making various offerings; outer, inner, secret and suchness. "All the things I possess and what is not mine." You have the offerings that you directly arrange on your altar--the offering bowls, light, food and so forth that actually belong to you. But then you offer also what doesn't belong to you: the flowers in the meadows or trees, pure environment, mountains, lakes. Don't restrict yourself to the little that you are able to arrange in front of your images. That would be too small. With your mind you have no obstacle in offering. You can offer whatever is available in existence. With offering water you can offer entire oceans, rivers, lakes. Even water that appears to be muddy. Bless it by reciting Om Ah Hung and with your mind offer to the Lamas and all the Buddhas. Even whatever is inside the malls and supermarkets-- vegetables, food, meat--whatever is there, activate your mind and offer, bless it and offer to the Buddha. That is not to say that you should only conduct your practice of offerings in this way, not spending anything directly for offerings. That also doesn't work. Give as much as you can physically. You are making offerings because of the need to accumulate merit, correct? Your direct effort is what constitutes a real accumulation of merit. On top of that you enhance your practice of offerings by visualizing and multiplying the offerings in your mind to the Lamas, Buddhas and

Bodhisattvas. As it says here you make outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings and present it to the Lama, the Gurus and the Buddhas.

Next is the mandala offering. This is based on the advice contained in the **Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion**, which says you should make mandala offerings to your Guru at least three times a day. The mandala that you offer is -

*The body, speech and mind of myself and others,
Our wealth as well as our virtues amassed in the past, the present and the future.
An excellent jeweled mandala together with a mass of Samantabhadra's offerings-*

The way of offerings according to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra is that the offerings that you make keep multiplying themselves like oceans of clouds of offerings, filling up a sky with offerings. The offerings are made up of the individual's virtues accumulated in the three times as well as everybody else's virtues. They are generated in the aspect of mandala and the offerings of Samantabhadra. So I offer to my Guru who is the Yidam and the Three Jewels and ask, please bless me with your compassion.

*I envision these all and present them to you.
O my Guru, my Yidam and the Three Precious Gems.
Accepting these in your compassion, bestow on me waves of blessings.
IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI.*

So now the next is the request to the Guru which reflects the stages of the practice of devoting oneself to a spiritual teacher as explained in the Lam Rim. Devotion to the Guru through mind and through action. This next verse covers the practice of Guru devotion through the mind. Here it says,

*I humbly beseech you, my precious Guru,
Just as the Buddhas of the three times and the ten directions have tamed sentient beings,
You too enact the Buddhas' deeds in countless realms,
Taking the form of a saffron-robed monk.*

*I humbly beseech you, my precious Guru,
Esteemed by Vajradhara, for those of meager mind.
As a field of merit more holy
Than the endless circles of infinite Buddhas.*

It means that the Guru himself is the superior merit field, superior to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas amassed together.

The next verse reflects the practice of devoting oneself to one's Lama by way of action:

*Every supreme and mundane attainment
Follows upon pure devotion to you, my protector,*

*Seeing this I forsake my body and even my life,
Bless me to practice what will only please you.*

This actually amounts to the essential practice that encompasses all the samayas and all the vows. By correctly devoting yourself to a spiritual teacher by training your mind and your actions and by applying practice with your actions, that practice actually encompasses all the samayas and all the practices. This is the supreme practice as explained in the **Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion**. In brief you should undertake the practice of correctly devoting yourself to the spiritual teacher by way of reflecting and realizing the eight advantages of doing so as well as the eight disadvantages of not doing so and rejecting those. Once guru devotion has been developed, on that basis you undertake the actual practice of training your mind in faith, devotion, in recollection of his kindness and in the lama's actions.

Next is the absorption of the Lama:

*Requested in this way, my supreme Guru
Comes to the crown of my head.
Once more he gladly (merges with me),
We become of one taste.*

At this particular point it says in the comments, by recollecting whatever is one's understanding of emptiness, absorb yourself in the meditation of bliss and emptiness and this constitutes the ultimate Guru Yoga. In this way this becomes the accumulation of wisdom merit. It is the supreme protection and also it covers the eleventh root samaya, which is recollecting the view of emptiness.

So now just go through the text:

*With the pride of being Vajrasattva
I embrace (my consort) Bhagavati
While holding a vajra and bell symbolic
Of the secret of Great Bliss simultaneous
With the secret of (voidness) free from the mental fabrication of true existence.*

This covers why you absorb the Guru into your heart and meditate the wisdom of great bliss. From that very mind that realizes the wisdom of great bliss, you arise in oneness with the Guru, in the aspect of the deity. Here specifically it is Vajrasattva embracing a consort.

This covers the samayas of **Akshobya**, the vajra, the bell, the mudra. These three samayas are covered through meditating yourself in the aspect of the deity, embraced with the consort, holding vajra and bell, in the unity of yourself in oneness with the Guru, the actual wisdom of the Great Bliss, the simultaneous wisdom of Great Bliss.

A simple explanation: the vajra represents the nature of the entity of the simultaneously born Great Bliss. The bell represents the nature of emptiness. Embracing the consort, being in union represents the samayas of vajra, bell and mudra.

*From this moment on, without any sense of a loss,
I send forth my body, and likewise my wealth,
And my virtues amassed throughout the three times
In order to help all beings, my mothers.*

So from this moment on without any sense of loss I dedicate. It means I offer, I dedicate, and it doesn't belong to me anymore. I dedicate my body, my wealth and my virtues amassed in the three times in order to help all beings, my mothers. By thinking this way and by making this determination you undertake the practice of the Bodhisattvas, the generosity of giving one's body, one's wealth and all the possessions along with the roots of virtues. Here you cover the last two samayas of **Ratnasambhava**.

At this point you recollect all your vows and commitments and it says if you are a fully ordained monk, you should recollect and go through all your individual liberation vows as well.

The root vows of the Bodhisattva:

Praising myself and belittling others. This is quite clear.

Not sharing my wealth (possessions) ***or the Dharma.***

This refers to not practicing one or all the four types of generosity: generosity of giving wealth, material giving and dharma and so forth.

Not forgiving even if others apologize.

If you have arguments with someone or there is some litigation, or something happens and the person later on regrets and comes and apologizes, not forgiving them in that case breaks one of the root Bodhisattva vows.

Denying the Mahayana

Taking offerings which were intended for the Triple Gem

Abandoning the Dharma

Disrobing monks and nuns

This is like acting as the principal cause for someone to disrobe.

Committing the five heinous crimes,

Holding distorted views

Such as the Three Jewels doesn't exist, that karma and so forth don't exist.

***Destroying places such as towns,
Teaching voidness to those untrained
Discouraging others from full enlightenment,
Causing others to break Pratimoksha vows,
Belittling those who follow Hinayana,***

Discouraging the individual liberation, that's what it means.

Proclaiming false realizations,

This means boasting about realizations that one actually doesn't have such as clairvoyance. Saying, "I've realized emptiness" or acting in such a way that another person assumes you have realized emptiness or must be clairvoyant or something like that.

***Accepting gifts of what has been taken from the Triple Gem,
Passing false judgment,
And giving up Bodhicitta,
These are the eighteen root downfalls***

These are the root Bodhisattva downfalls that one should not engage in. Four factors must be present in order to break sixteen of these vows. Two of them like the wrong views and giving up Bodhicitta don't require those four factors, which are,

***Not regarding these as detrimental
Not forsaking the wish to repeat such behavior
and having no shame or consideration, are the four binding factors which must all be present for sixteen of these to be complete. But for the other two, holding distorted views and giving up bodhicitta, these (four) are not needed. I shall guard myself (from all these downfalls).***

You engage in that behavior again and again because you have not reflected upon the disadvantages of such behavior. As a result of that you keep engaging in it and also after awhile you even enjoy doing it. You take pride in doing this and you have no shame or embarrassment. You're not feeling shame because you are behaving in a way that breaks a vow you have taken but you're not thinking that you shouldn't take an action that breaks your vow. And you're not embarrassed, you're not worried about what others might think if they knew you were behaving this way. So if these four are present then you actually uproot the root vows. For the two, abandoning bodhicitta and wrong views the root vows are broken simply by engaging in them. The four attitudes do not need to be present.

So now going through the fourteen root tantric vows, the first is

Despising or belittling my guru; disregarding any practice; speaking badly of my vajra brothers; abandoning love for any being; giving up wishing and entering bodhicitta; scorning the teachings of sutra or tantra; revealing secrets to those who are unripe; abusing my own aggregates; denying (or doubting) voidness; remaining close to malevolent people; not recollecting the view (of voidness); causing someone to lose his faith; not upholding my word of honor; despising women - these are the fourteen root (tantric) downfalls. I shall protect myself from them at the cost of my life.

I shall abandon the four basic non-virtues, as well as liquor and misbehavior; devote myself to a holy, protecting guru; treat my dharma friends with respect; cultivate the ten virtuous actions; never withdraw from the Mahayana; avoid walking over or showing disrespect (to a sacred object); all these (additional) pledges I shall honor.

So now the first. The first is the most important one among all the root tantric vows, especially in tantra. The guru here refers more specifically to the tantric Guru, the Lama from whom you have received initiations, from whom you have received explanations on tantric practices, explanations of root tantras, secondary or explanatory tantras or explanation on tantras in general. In particular if with a scornful mind, you are despising or belittling the Guru or you just think, “Who is this Lama,” this breaks the most important vow. If from the depths of your heart you think this way of such a Lama you have broken the root of everything, the most important tantric vow of all. If you speak belittling words or say something that sounds like you are despising your Guru or if your Lama gets angry and you say something disrespectful but you are not despising your Guru deep in your mind, you break a large vow, one of the eight large ones, but not a root vow.

The second is disregarding any practice. What does it mean? It means that whatever vows you’ve taken--the vows of the individual liberation, the monks’ vows, the five precepts, the Bodhisattva vows, the Tantric vows—if you disregard any practices in the context of your vows, even the very subtle ones, even something that appears to be not a major one, then you break the second of the root tantric vows. By thinking *if I don’t do this practice, it’s not really breaking a major one, it doesn’t matter*, then you are breaking this vow.

So the third is speaking badly of my vajra brothers and sisters. What does that mean? What are vajra brothers and sisters? When you take the initiation together you are born during the inner initiation, when you are first generating yourself as the deity by entering the Guru. So you are born as vajra brothers and sisters. Any time you get angry with a vajra brother or sister and you engage in anger towards them directly, through others or by talking about it to others, you break the third root tantric vow, which is speaking badly of my vajra brothers and sisters.

So the fourth is abandoning love for any sentient beings. If you think of someone you know in a particular situation and you abandon a wish for him or her to be happy, that is abandoning love. The fifth is giving up bodhicitta, the wishing and engaging bodhicitta.

The sixth is scorning the teachings of sutra and tantra by thinking highly of the Mahayana while putting down the tantra practice or vice versa. That is breaking the sixth root tantric vow.

The seventh root tantric vow is revealing secrets to one who is unripe. What does it mean? It means speaking about the secret mantra to those who are unripe, those who don't have faith, who have not received the initiation and so forth. Showing them the image of your deity practices or your implements, the samaya substances such as vajra, bell and so forth. That's breaking the seventh root tantric vow.

This is not referring to the vajra and bells that are for sale and so forth. It refers to one's own samaya substances--your vajra and bell and whatever samaya substance you have for your practice, that should not be shown. That should be kept secret.

Abusing my own aggregates: For instance thinking, *how is it possible that with this body of flesh and bone I can also achieve enlightenment* and so forth? So putting down one's aggregates.

The next verse is abandoning emptiness. Here [in the Tibetan text] it says, "the nine emptinesses." It means by upholding a view that is discordant with the view of the perfection of wisdom, you are abandoning faith in the view of emptiness.

So here the next is being close to malevolent people. It means being close physically and even engaging in conversation with people who are actually enemies of the teaching, of the doctrine, or someone who's openly against one's Lama and so forth. Even being physically friendly or verbally friendly, engaging in conversation and so forth with such people is breaking this vow. But because such people are sentient beings they are the object of compassion and love so you should not physically or verbally engage with them but you should not abandon them mentally.

The eleventh is not recollecting the view of emptiness. Once you have understood the view of emptiness to whatever extent you understand within the Madhyamaka, be it the Svatantrika or the highest, the Prasangika, forsaking that and not recollecting that, not practicing that is breaking this vow. Taking that mind and looking for understanding of inferior views or incompatible views, or if you stop putting efforts into recollecting the view of emptiness, then you are breaking this vow.

The twelfth is, [in the Tibetan text] it says, "causing someone to lose his faith." If someone is a suitable vessel for general practice of the Mahayana and in particular for the Tantra practice and seeks support or advice for engaging in that, instead of helping you discouraging it saying, "Oh, that's not going to happen anyway, what are you doing?" Or "I'm not going to help you with that," and so forth.

Two different explanations for the thirteenth, which says, “Not relying on the samayas.” It says [in the Tibetan text], “Not upholding my word of honor.” Here it means not relying on samayas. From the point of view of the highest yoga tantra, the problem comes for instance during tsoh offerings and common practices where you have to take the substances such as the bala and mandana. You regard them as dirty or you don’t accept them. That is one way of breaking this vow. The second way of breaking the vow is from the point of view of the yoga tantra, thinking that the vajra and bell and other outer samaya ritual objects are useless. If you think, instead, that it is better to focus on just the inner practice and forget these things, that is breaking the vow.

There are two interpretations for the fourteenth, which is despising women. For sure there are emanations of Dorje Phamo or Vajrayogini among women, for sure and not believing in that, by thinking that’s not true, that among women there are not emanations of Vajrayogini, that is a root transgression. It is in common with both yoga and highest yoga tantra. Then the second interpretation is a root transgression common only with the highest yoga tantra—that is despising a particular woman, a single one, talking about a specific woman badly.

Especially in the practice of the Mother tantra there is a particular emphasis on this point, on considering women as the actual emanation of Dorje Phamo, Vajrayogini and worthy of offering, prostrations and circumambulation. If you actually do this, go around and whenever you meet a woman you circumambulate counter-clockwise and make prostrations, it will look very weird. But in your mind one should actually uphold that kind of view, that kind of respect, considering all women as Vajrayogini, as the very source of the wisdom of great bliss. Along with that, mentally reciting for instance the eight praises as has been explained before and so forth. On the other hand, girls should not become arrogant about themselves because of this. This should not be a cause of arrogance.

So we’ve gone through the fourteen root tantric vow. Next are the secondary tantric transgressions, the eight large ones:

Relying upon an unqualified consort.

Sitting in union without the three recognitions. [This is entering into union with the three recognitions]

Showing secret substances to an unsuitable vessel.

Fighting or arguing at an offering ceremony, during tsoh.

Giving false answers to sincerely asked questions and so forth

(Staying more than a week in the home of a Sravaka;

Boasting that I am a yogi, although I am not;

Teaching the sacred Dharma to those with no faith;

Conferring mandala rites without full preparation;

Needlessly breaking the Pratimoksa or Bodhicitta vows;

Acting in contradiction to the teachings of the Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion)

And so these are very important practices and vows. You should request Gelek Rimpoche to go through these practices in detail.

To conclude there are the verses that give an abbreviation of all these vows, for a quick recollection.

*I shall never transgress, even in my dreams,
the most minor rules of the pure moral trainings
of the pratimoksha, bodhicitta and vajrayana vows.
I shall practice according to the Buddha's words.*

“I shall never transgress, even in my dreams, the most minor rule of the pure moral trainings,” so the Pratimoksha or the individual liberation, Bodhisattva and Vajrayana vows. “I shall practice according to the Buddha’s words.” This means that continuously I should exert myself in recollecting and practicing these vows, avoiding as much as possible breaking them even during my dreams. This means you have undertaken a huge commitment.

*As Buddha intended, I shall uphold
the complete sacred Dharma of insight and scriptures
as gathered together in the three types of vehicle
and four tantric classes.
I shall liberate all beings by whichever means is suited to each.*

As the Buddha intended I should uphold the complete sacred Dharma of insight and scriptures as gathered together in the three types of vehicle and four kinds of tantra. As much as possible I should train and engage in all the practices included in the Buddha’s teachings. I shall liberate all sentient beings by whatever means is suited to each. And I should, on the basis of this training, engage as much as possible in benefiting sentient beings. This is a true superior practice.

So this is the oral transmission of the extensive and the abbreviated form of the Six Session Guru Yoga. If someone is in an extreme situation of being busy and having lots of activities to do, for the time being you can do the abbreviated form.

This is a short explanation of the Six Session Guru Yoga up to the fourteen root tantric vows. It went quickly partly due to shortage of time and because Gelek Rimpoche actually resides here with you. This is a very important practice. You should seek teachings from him.

My activities here are finished. I have not heard that among this community there is disharmony please from now on try to be as harmonious as possible. The majority of you

have received initiations and tantric teachings together from me but also from Gelek Rimpoche such as the Heruka Five Deity and so forth. That means you are vajra brothers and sisters and this is a responsibility that you have to carry. Avoid as much as possible even talking, despising, chatting or just talking to each other in a belittling way. Because of that you will get caught in it like a fire burning and it is very destructive. So that should not happen. You should take care to be as harmonious as possible.