

# Six Session Guru Yoga

## An Open Version

Based on a teaching by

*Khen Rinpoche Geshe Lobsang Tarchin*

Taught by

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**Class 2, Part 1**

*(Mandala)*

*(Refuge)*

### Introduction

So the material we're covering in this course is excerpted from a tantric teaching, really. Six Session Guru Yoga, *Tun druk*, is a practice that is offered by lamas in the Gelugpa tradition to their tantric initiates.

And Diamond Mountain is doing it in a different way, our lamas are doing it in a different way, but still – they're requiring the six time a day book. The format I'm using is the traditional format, the way the Gelugpa lamas are requiring of their initiates. And it's a practice that you do six times a day, which is three times in the morning and three times in the evening.

So, for these classes which are open and not tantric, I have pulled out of that tantric practice, probably about a half of it, maybe more – that can be done in an open way, that can be done in a shared way, and can be taught openly. And constitutes a really really well rounded practice.

We are inundated with practices. In our ACI courses we cover so much material, we have all the Lam Rims and the Lo Jongs, and the Refuges, and the Source of all My Good, and A Thousand Angels, and the like.

So we have so many practices. Sometimes people say, well, I have to work also, and I have kids at home - and what should I do first? So this is a beautiful way to get a lot of the benefits of the buddhist practice.

<p><b>If one practices this one regularly six times a day, life will transform fairly quickly, because it's so powerful.</b></p>
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Of course, the tantric version is even more powerful, and everybody who is not in tantra yet, should work towards that and create relationship with the lamas to bring them into tantra. But even without initiation, if you just do the open part, like I have arranged it here, it's extremely powerful. And it's not that long. Well, if you go into the meditations you can do an hour meditation in the morning and an hour meditation

in the evening - easy. But even if you do a shorter version – still, it's very powerful. Very very powerful.

So, what you're holding in your hands is that adaptation of the original Six Session Guru Yoga, to an open practice. The translation into English is Geshe Michael's, except I have removed the parts for which you need initiation. The titles are mine - the original text doesn't have titles. I added them, but it does have comments there, comments which give you instructions how to practice which I did not include here. So those I we'll deliver orally. The titles have the content of the comments.

So, we have covered up to page two and a half, right? We covered up to the lama, And I wanted to add a few more comments before we continue.

## **The Text**

Most of our teaching relies on this [Khen Rinpoche's] book, which is a tantric text, so if you're not in tantra I'm not recommending that you get it yet. Later, when you are – definitely, please get it. Those are class notes that students took from teachings of Khen Rinpoche, my Holy Lama, who taught this material in New Jersey for many years.

There are many commentaries on this practice. This [Khen Rinpoche's book] is one. This is another one that I have read – by **Gelek Rinpoche**, and I'm including orally some of his comments, I'm not following it directly. And there are other teachings that I have received, so I'm just interjecting them in between. Mainly I'm following this [Khen Rinpoche's] text.

There's a beautiful teaching that I have received by one of my other teachers, Lama Art, in New Jersey, and who was a very very devoted student of Khen Rinpoche, just like Geshe Michael was. And a very learned scholar, very high lama, really, and very humble. He won't even allow people to call him lama. Very humble, very very knowledgeable. So I was blessed with having the opportunity to study with him for a few years. But then I started coming to Diamond Mountain, and to Israel, so those teachings were no more regular. He's still going on there, but I'm here. And he'll go on, as long as he can, he loves the dharma so much.

So he gave at one point a teaching on Guru Yoga, that was in 2002. I wanted to give some comments from this commentary.

## **Importance of Motivation**

And one very important comment, says that the benefit of the practice – and it's something that you have heard over and over, but it's very important to mention it anyway – and that's the benefit of the practice, just like any other practice, really really hangs on your motivation. Because you can say this prayer, or this prayer, or these words, or these words – the motivation with which you are doing this practice makes all the difference. Makes all the difference in what kind of karma you're collecting from it, what kind of benefit it will give you.

And motivation should be just like the motivation that we are developing when we are going for refuge. And we spoke the other day about refuge, I'm not going to repeat all of that, just about the motivation:

So first, as you sit down, you reflect on your samsaric condition: You were born into a world where everybody gets old, and sick, and dies, and where – Geshe-hla said it so beautifully yesterday – **a world where nothing works, really. Nothing works. You're trying to be happy, everybody tries to be happy, and almost nobody knows how to be happy.**

Because we are trying to achieve happiness in a very ignorant way, we don't know really how to generate happiness. So we are born into this, and as a result we must suffer, because whatever we do is not gaining us happiness. Because we don't know, because we're children. In the eyes of the buddhas we are toddlers.

So the first thought is to reflect on this condition, that we have been born into this suffering condition, and then develop a strong wish to free ourselves from this condition.

1. So first thought is: **Reflect on the condition of suffering,**
2. Second – **develop the wish to free ourselves** from this condition,
3. Third thought is to **see that everybody around us is in the same condition, and develop a strong compassion towards everybody,** seeing that they are all in a suffering world. No matter where they are now, and how they feel at the moment, they will have to suffer in this world. They either suffer now, or will suffer soon. And so develop a strong compassion and desire to free them. So that's the wish for enlightenment.
4. And then, of course comes the thought, well, **how will I do that?** How will I free them? I can't even free myself, how will I free them? And with that thought, you do the practice.

So if you do the practice with this kind of motivation, especially the last one, this very very strong thought of compassion towards your fellow beings on this planet and on all other planets who are suffering and who don't even know how to free themselves, they all want to be happy and they're all suffering.

**This very very strong desire will bring you into tantra, if you're not there already.** It will create the conditions for you to meet the lamas, and they will give you the teachings, and you will become able to actually help them, and yourself of course, in the process.

So that's why practicing whatever [practice] you're getting – the motivation will make it extremely powerful.

In tantra, the tantric practitioner - same applies to them exactly. For the tantric practice to succeed as well, one needs to be so overwhelmed with the thought of the other people suffering, that you just can't stand to see them suffering, and you're willing to do what it takes and give your life so that you can get enlightened quickly so you can help them.

## **Going for Refuge**

So then we went into refuge and we talked about the visualization you do for refuge, which is basically what you see here, in the picture behind me. One thing that I have here in this commentary that Lama Art was using, is that

## **Buddha is Fearless**

The throne is carried on eight great lions. The central figure is your lama, appearing in the appearance of the buddha, and he sits on a beautiful throne with eight great lions. Those eight great lions represent what is called: The Four Fearlessnesses and The Four Knowledges. There's a comment here which tells you what they are.

The lama who is your buddha, has those four fearlessnesses and four knowledges. They are called fearlessnesses because buddha is not afraid to proclaim his abilities. He's not shy about his abilities because he knows it's going to help people

Four of the buddha's fearlessnesses, with respect to having attained his qualities:

1. One, is **the full realization of all dharmas**. Buddha has omniscience, right? All dharmas means all things, **buddha knows all things**.
2. Two, **Buddha knows that all of his or her mental afflictions were completely terminated**, that's the second one.
3. The third one, buddha has in his wisdom, the **ability to declare which things are obstacles**. They'll tell you, "If you do this, this will be an obstacle on your path, don't do this." You may not see why not, what's wrong. But a buddha has that knowledge to see what will create an obstacle and to guide you away from obstacles.
4. And then, the fourth fearlessness, **is the ability to declare what constitutes the path to liberation**, how to liberate yourself.

So again, they are called fearlessnesses, because buddha is fearless about declaring those, announcing those, and teaching those to people, because he knows. Because he knows.

## **Buddha has Perfected the Path**

So there's a big throne and it's carried on the back of those eight beautiful lions. On the big throne there's a smaller throne, and that throne is made of three cushions: Lotus, moon, and sun. Sun is on top

And those cushions, in the open teachings, represent the three principal paths:

- The path of **renunciation** - buddha has certainly perfected renunciation,
- Had perfected **bodhichitta**,
- And had perfected **correct view**, understanding of reality.

And he is wearing golden robes, and he has the 32 major marks, and 80 minor marks that the buddha has – that's a whole teaching, a long teaching, which we are not going to do.

So this is how he appears, the central figure.

## The Essence of the Buddha is your Lama

**The essence of that buddha, is your root lama. If you see the figure in that way, it will bring blessings very quickly.**

So it's one thing to see a picture of a buddha, it's a whole different practice if you see: "Oh, there's my lama, and I'm doing my practice with respect to my lama". This brings blessings much faster.

The teaching says that

**The more faith you have in the lama as a buddha, the faster your mind transforms, the faster the blessing.**

So really really, it hinges on your faith. The speed with which you progress and are blessed, really hinges not on the lama, it hinges on your faith. It's always coming from the student.

So how do we develop that faith? We'll talk in a moment.

**The teaching says, if a student wants to progress fast, they need to do all they can to please their lama**

Seeing them as a buddha, to please them. Not because the lama needs that, if the lama is a buddha indeed, then they don't need anything from the student. But the more the student does to express reverence and faith and serve and please the lama – the faster they develop their faith, then the karmic imprint of the practice becomes extremely powerful, enormously powerful.

One thing that prevents receiving blessing, is challenging the lama. See, if your lama is a buddha, then they know it all, they have omniscience, right? So are you going to argue with an omniscient being? Are you going [to say]: "No, no, no, you're wrong, I did say that, I didn't say that?" Or [if] they will tell you: why did you say so? [And you]: No, no, no, I didn't say so, you misunderstood me.

Excuse me, who are you talking to? ☺

So yeah, you can take them as a normal being

**A normal being can't help you, they can't transform you**

So a serious practitioner, who has huge compassion, will say: "Oh my god, if they said that, there must be a reason. There must be a teaching there for me, I must have missed something. Ok? Including if it appears that they're making mistakes. And they will test you that way all the time, that's their job. All the time.

**They may appear as making mistakes, they may appear as having mental afflictions, they may appear as impure. It's your job to keep a pure view of the lama, or else you can't be blessed, you can't get transformed, the beings will continue to suffer, including you.**

So all the teachings say so about the lama, never challenge the lama, because you can't get blessings.

Ok, then we talked about the other parts of the picture, I will not repeat that today.

### **See Them as Live Beings**

One more comment that I don't think I said yesterday: When you view the Field of Merit, don't see them as pictures. See them as three dimensional beings, live beings, they're not just sitting there, ready for a photograph. They're having good time, they're joking, ☺, they're greeting each other, honoring each other, they're not silent.

What are they talking about? What do buddhas talk about? Do they talk about which café to go for a latte? ☺. In your picture they talk about how to benefit you and the world. **This whole assembly is there to figure out how to get you out of suffering.** That's how you should meditate on them. All that interests them, is you, how to get you out of suffering, and the other beings of course.

You have a huge assembly. You can see all of them because they have rainbow bodies, right? So they don't cast a shadow on each other - you can see all of them, all of them are in front of you.

### **The Lama, the Buddha, had Perfected Love**

It's important before you go for refuge to see them as looking very lovingly at you. They are very much in love with you because they have perfected love. Their love is perfect, there's nothing missing. Which means what?

a. That **they love all beings, with no exception, equally.**

b. **It's a total unconditional love**

So whatever is true for all beings – we sometimes think: "Oh, [they love] all beings, so I get just this little part of that love" ☺. Well, maybe you get a part, but you get a part of an infinite love, so how big is a part of infinity? ☺ It's infinite. So they are infinitely in love with you, and they are able to do that. They are able to be infinitely in love with all beings at the same time. That's the perfection of love.

Because we have this dualistic mind, that says: "Oh, the other beings will take away from my lama's love for me", then sometimes lamas advise us: "See yourself sitting just you and them, just you and them. Start like that. All this huge field, they're just totally in love **with you.**

But then, you remember your bodhichitta, right? And you remember that everybody else also needs to be saved because they also suffer, and then we described how you bring your mother, and your father, and the male and female parts of your family, and then all males and all females in the entire universe appearing behind you like a huge huge crowd of beings. Even though not all of them are human, in your visualization they are people, they are persons.

And all this assembly goes for refuge to your lama, and you are speaking for them. [Your] lama says the words of refuge, and you repeat after them.

## Additional Thoughts to Accompany Your Refuge

As you do that, you are thinking to yourself the following thoughts (this is the same things we already said, just rephrased: )

- a. **Buddha, my lama in front of me, is completely free.** They have eliminated all their obstacles; they have complete ability and knowledge to help me and all the other beings. They are perfect. They are just the right person I needed. They are perfect for me, to help me. **They are completely impartial.** It's not like, "Oh, you've been bad, so they won't come to you. They don't do that, **they have complete love for you.**
- b. So, when you're ready, **they will come for you,** because they are completely in love with you.

**They don't have a pay-back attitude. They don't have an attitude:** "Oh, if you do this and this, I will come to you. If you don't do this – I will not come". They don't have that attitude, like: "I will be good to you if you'll be good to me" – there's no such thing for a buddha. No such thing. They help all beings, including the greatest sinners who are in the hells. They don't keep scores with beings; they are there to help beings.

- c. **Buddha's activity is completely spontaneous, and it's uninterrupted** – they don't have any other business other than helping beings, including you, all the time. So their activity is spontaneous and uninterrupted. And, because they're omniscient, they recognize our helplessness, they know what we need and how to help us.
- d. And so, when we go for refuge to them **we are also worried about our condition now. Because in our condition now we are subject to the karmic forces.** Meaning, whatever bad deeds we have done in our body speech and mind in this life and in past lives, **will come back to haunt us,** multiplied many times. This is how karma works. So we should be very worried about that, and we talked about it, this is the fear aspect of refuge.
- e. And then, we remember that **the buddha in front of us has very deep compassion for all beings. For me and for all the beings surrounding me, and so I place my hope in this buddha,** in the dharma that he teaches, in the sangha, the aryas – people who have progressed sufficiently on the path that they can guide me. And we spoke about the different attitudes that it would be good to adopt.

## The Four Infinite Thoughts

Then, after the refuge we went into The Four Infinite Thoughts. "Four Infinite Thoughts" is a translation for: **Chatur Pramana**"– that's the Sanskrit expression.

But, really if you think about it, they are not really thoughts. They are more like feelings, spiritual feelings, or attitudes, or realizations – not just a thought. it's not just an intellectual thought, really. If you practice it well and cultivate this part well, it will grow way beyond just a thought that occurs to your mind. Actually, when I was translating into Hebrew, I had difficulty, I did not want to use the word thoughts, I called it wishes.

It is like a wish, but it's even more than a wish. So when you cultivate the Four Infinite Thoughts, it is like a wish in terms that you hope that they achieve all those things. But, remember, we have those four attitudes: not just wishing, also praying that it actually happens, and also there is a resolution there: "I'll make it happen". So it's more than a wish, even.

And then we mentioned, there is a correspondence between those Four Infinite Thoughts, and the four kinds of giving, remember?

There's four kinds of giving, the giving of:

- a. Money and material things,
- b. Then shelter,
- c. Then love,
- d. And then dharma.

And we said that the first one that is listed in this arrangement is equanimity, and that gives them protection from fear, it's a shelter, protection. Why? Because by seeing that you treat everybody equally, it relieves their fear that you may not help them. Because you're going to help everybody equally. So it is a protection from fear.

These four practices develop your bodhichitta. If you practice them nicely, six times a day - your mind will transform very quickly. And the way it will transform – three ways. Just from this little section, on the Four Infinite Thoughts:

- a. **It will protect you from doing harm to beings.** You will not harm beings because you have developed this huge love for the beings, and compassion. You want to relieve them of all suffering, how can you go and harm them, right?

So in that sense, whenever you have an angry thought, or thought of revenge or a thought of jealousy, any such thing which has the tinge or the flavor of wanting to harm in some way, or take away from someone something – these thoughts are the antidote to all this stench in your mind. Because they can't live together in your mind.

Wanting to take revenge on someone, cannot live together with the thought of wanting to free them of all suffering. Impossible. So whenever you have an angry thought or a jealous thought or a greedy thought – if you catch yourself having them, just sit down, and say: "I'm going to do the Four Infinite Thoughts." It will go away, and you will be so much happier. So it will prevent you from all the misdeeds, all the bad deeds, that come from harming and from violence, and all their nuances.

- b. **Then it will protect you also from falling into a Hinayana kind of practice,** where a practitioner practices, but with the thought about themselves. How they want to avoid their own suffering. Well, who is your object here? It's all beings.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>You're not doing this practice for yourself, you're doing it for all beings, it's an infinitely bigger practice.</b></p>
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That's why they're called Infinite Thoughts. So it will protect you from this small scope kind of practice.

- c. And then of course the third benefit, we just mentioned – **it will strengthen your bodhichitta.** And by the way,

**a main obstacle to enlightenment comes from an unexpected place – it's exactly this limited kind of mind that just wants to liberate itself.**

Exactly this mind is a huge obstacle to enlightenment.

So that's why you want to be saved from the horror of falling into the lower realms, *and* of falling into lower nirvana, which is this kind of – it's you're like on drugs. **You're in a very very high blissed out state, but it doesn't make any difference, you're not helping anyone.**

So, we mentioned it – for a bodhisattva, this is a horror. They say, "until I have perfected all my perfections and my abilities to help all beings, please may I not fall into this state. My aim is much higher than just sitting there blissed out, like on drugs."

### **Commitment to the Wish for Enlightenment**

And then we talked about the commitment to the wish for enlightenment, commit to act like a bodhisattva, where we have taken our bodhisattva vows again, and repeated that part of the practice three times, and then we went into rejoicing – all of this we did last time.

Any questions up to here?

**Question:** What are the other two ways?

**Teacher:** It protects you?

Yes, so:

- One way, it protects you from harming others.
- Second way, from falling into the lower nirvana [and lower realms]
- And third way – it will strengthen your bodhichitta, and we mentioned last time how bodhichitta is such a powerful elixir for happiness. So that's a *huge* protection.

People suffer, people in samsara suffer, so often students, come and tell me about their sufferings. If you have a sufficient degree of compassion, if you are developing your bodhichitta thoughts, if they're sufficiently advanced – you're protected. You don't need to come to the lama in that way. You'll know what to do. You'll be protected. Bodhichitta is an amazing protection.

### **Rejoicing**

And we read those verses last time from Master Shantideva's Chapter One in his "Boddhisattva Way of Life" where he praises bodhichitta, and we didn't even read them all, there's many there.

If you have done good deeds, if you have done good things in this world, the more you have helped people, the more you are protected. Sometimes if you go into meditation, or prayer, or retreat – you can envision this bodhichitta like a wall, a white

sparkling diamond wall that's protecting you, and it will. **It's like you're calling on the truth of your past actions.**

"Yeah, I have done all these beautiful things, may it protect me". And it will, it does protect you. You cannot really fall low if you have developed those thoughts and acted on them. It's a beautiful protection.

## **My Lama**

So now, the next part goes to the lama. See, this is Six Session Guru Yoga, and the way this is arranged, it gives you really the most powerful thoughts right there, right in this practice, if you do it six times a day, you are making huge progress, very fast progress.

So, as we said, the central figure is your lama there, and again, as you go to your lama, you picture your lama.

And this text<sup>1</sup> says:

*In the air before me  
Stands an exquisite jeweled throne.  
The cushions upon it  
Are the child of the lake,  
And the great disks  
Of the sun and moon.*

*Upon the throne is seated  
My root Lama,  
So lovely the heart aches to see.*

*Just thinking of Him  
Takes from me every torment I have.*

*He is, all in one person,  
Each and every highest refuge.*

Ok, up to here. So these three verses is the visualization of the lama, is how you visualize your lama. Often they visualize them as blue, you don't have to but you can see their body as blue, and the blue signifies their great compassion. Sometimes, the fact that they are just clear of any obstacles like the blue sky.

So let's go back to Khen Rinpoche, and go to his envisioning of the lama.

"The child of the lake" – by the way, is an epithet for lotus.

## **How Does the Lama Take Away our Torments?**

So, it says here:

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<sup>1</sup> The Open Version.

**Just thinking of Him [or of Her]  
Takes from me every torment I have.**

Just thinking of the lama takes away from me every torment that I have. How is that? Rinpoche mentions that the lama to you is so holy, that just remembering them, invoking their image will dispel your suffering and your obstacles.

We have so many sufferings in samsara, and one way to classify them we did last time. Another way to classify them is according to the different scopes of practitioners. So for example:

- **Practitioners of the lesser capacity** – a big obstacle to their progress on the path is that they **didn't quite get impermanence**. They don't really understand impermanence.

How do we know? Especially this is true in the west; You see people ignorantly investing their lives in getting huge houses, or huge boats, or huge cars, or many cars or many boats or many things, many many. Thinking that they'll last forever, Buying many things.

Here in the States we have catalogues, now you have everything on the internet, spending hours and hours shopping.

**It's a wrong mind, it's a mind that does not realize that this is going to go away in a second, when death comes you're going to lose all of it in a second. And even before that, by the time you finished collecting all you wanted, you're too sick or old to enjoy it.**

So this is a big obstacle. Lama, by the teachings, helps you realize impermanence, and relieves you from that obstacle to your spiritual path, because if you're devoting all your time collecting material things, you don't have time for spiritual things. So this is one way the lama dispels your suffering.

- Then, **practitioners of medium capacity**, they have a big obstacle in **believing that there is an independent self, that there is a me, a real self, that is in control**. "I'm in control of my life". "Don't tell me what to do, I know what to do". So that's a very ignorant thought that "I'm in control. And I'm able and capable now, so I will always be able and capable, and I will be able to control myself, so I don't need your advice."

Often people come with this obstacle in their mind.

- Then, **practitioners of the larger scope**, what obstacles do they need to overcome? **Self cherishing**. We all have self cherishing - a huge obstacle on our spiritual path. Taking care first of myself. First I'll take care of myself, then of you.

So lama, through their teachings, is protecting you from those obstacles and the problems that come with that, and the sufferings that will come as a result of these kind of ignorant thoughts.

By their teaching, they are saving you from falling into the lower realms, they are saving you from remaining in samsara. In samsara there is not one moment of real happiness.

Even when we think we have a happy event in our life, it's like nothing compared to the happiness of nirvana. We are incapable of having a happy thought, we don't know how to be happy. Geshe-hla likes to say, that no matter how good you are, no matter how smart you are, you can't pass a week without an unhappy thought. Impossible. And this, he's being very generous with us, very generous with us. Because in other scriptures they say – **Lama Sopa** would say, not even one second.

**Lama Sopa says: "Even one second of samsara is abominable, it's evil, it's an evil thing- even one second of samsara."**

And as long as we haven't fulfilled our own potential, even if we have reached Nirvana, we will be still under the control of very subtle karmas and kleshas. So in Nirvana you have eliminated all causes of suffering, and all mental afflictions and their seeds. But then, there are other kleshas which are not mental afflictions.

We had this talk about kleshas – some of them have to do with negative emotions – those are eliminated when you're in nirvana. . Those, you haven't gotten rid of when you reached nirvana. Actually, you're still under their control. So you will not fall back to suffering once you reached nirvana, but you cannot enjoy the amazing bliss of a buddha, for example. Even though the bliss of nirvana is not little - it's huge, It's nothing compared to the bliss of a buddha.

And **buddha's compassion**, as opposed to an arahat who is not on the Mahayana track, has a dynamic quality to it, as opposed to in nirvana where it's very static: you just sit there blissed out, like under drugs.

**Buddha's compassion is very dynamic; they constantly work for beings, it's a very different kind of bliss and compassion.**

So, the practitioner thinks to themselves:

“Well, if I haven't met you, my lama, I wouldn't be able to avoid all those torments, the torments of lower realms, the torments of samsara, and the torments of sitting in lower peace.

I wouldn't know how to avoid those torments, those sufferings. I would not how to meditate to get myself enlightened. It is from you that I hear the path, you're proclaiming the path to me.

when I remember those things, when I remember that through your teaching you are saving me from all this suffering and you're showing me the path to ultimate happiness...” –

then that practitioner develops big faith in the lama, and rejoices.

### **Faith in the Lama Creates Great Joy**

So there's a big joy, because **the faith creates big joy**. Because once you have that faith in the lama, you say: "Oh, now you're going to show me the path. I have faith in you; you're going to show me the path, and I can become totally happy, and I can get everybody else totally happy".

So with that comes huge joy.

Just imagine,

"There, I have found a person who's going to take me by the hand and lead me out of suffering",

what else do you need? Once a person has this level of faith and conviction, they're just totally happy.

**So in a way, they're already done. Because once they have this faith and conviction, they know they're on their way out, and then carrying out every instruction is just a joy, because every instruction just pushes them further towards ultimate happiness.**

So they're happy in their mind because of their faith, they're happy with what they're doing, so in a way, they're already done. Then it's just a matter of time.

So there's this big joy, and this is what he says:

*Just thinking of him takes from me  
Every torment I have.*

### **The Lama Embodies all Three Jewels**

And so, in a way, he or she

**The lama – are all in one person each and every highest refuge. All the refuge of buddha, dharma, sangha, are all embodied by this lama, because they know the path, they teach me the path, and they help me by their instruction how to get out. So they are all Three Jewels in one person, in one being.**

That's why they say,

**If one has a lama, then instead of visualizing this whole huge complicated field, you just put the lama there. If you have that faith in your lama, if you view them so purely, then they will do the same action for you, and even more.**

*He is, all in one person,  
Each and every highest refuge.*

also means, that the lama is the embodiment not just of buddha, dharma, sangha, but really,

**For the practitioner, the lama is the embodiment of all enlightened beings. All enlightened beings come to me through my lama.  
That's the only way I can meet a Buddha.  
On one hand, I can only meet a buddha through my lama.  
On the other hand, once I meet my lama,  
I met all the buddhas, all of them.  
Once that relationship is formed, once a student sees purely and clearly their lama, then it's like the lama becomes this vessel, and all buddhas come in and speak through the lama**

And if you have been teaching, you know that. Once the students see you purely, you just have to give a good class, they'll pull it out of you. If their faith is great. If not, the class will be so so, you know? And if they don't see you as a lama, you'll barely be able to open your mouth.

And it is that way. The quality of your teaching is totally determined by your students, not by you. If they see you as their lama, as their buddha, you'll be the buddha for them whether you like it or not; you'll be forced to be a buddha for them, because the buddhas just come through you, for the students. It's very beautiful.

So they say that this practice with the lama, Six Sessions Guru Yoga, is more important than any practice you can get. Because you have the wisdom of all the buddhas channeled to you through your lama, through the vehicle of your faith. Your faith in the lama brings you all this goodness.

Many people practice tantra, the two stages of tantra, and within them there's stages. And of all of those, this is the highest practice.

**This is the highest practice, the practice with the lama. Developing that faith, that conviction, that reverence, and that service to the lama. Meditating on your lama, praying for your lama's blessing, and the act of coming and entrusting yourself to the lama, just putting yourselves in their hands, "please take me, I'm yours".**

Yesterday we had this beautiful verse<sup>2</sup>, say:

ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་སྐྱ་མ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཡི་དམ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཚེས་སྦྱོང་ལྟེ

*Kyu ni lama, kyu ni yidam, kyu ni kandro, chu kyong te.*

It's this beautiful act of devotion when a student comes to a lama, and says:

**You are my lama, you are my angel, you are my protector, take me, I'm yours,  
I'm yours. I'll do whatever you tell me, anything I'll do.**

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<sup>2</sup> During a Teaching by Geshe Michael

So this is this part, where you visualize the lama in this beautiful way, and you think of them, how they are the ultimate refuge, really.

## How Will They Come?

And here Rinpoche has a beautiful comment, because, we think:

"Ok, I'm going to call the buddhas to me through the lama. Where do the buddhas live? Oh, they live in the sky, in their paradise. So I call them, now they have to hear me, they have to travel, they have to pack ☺, get dressed".

Will they come to me, will they find their way to me, will they get distracted on the way? Maybe somebody else will call? ☺". Because we think that way: they are the buddhas, they are far away.

We know that, we are limited. Our mind can travel far away. I can be in my mind on that mountain. But my body ... it will take me an hour or so to get there.

Not so for the buddha. **Buddha's body is where their mind is, because their body is an expression of their mind.** It's not a gross stupid thing. So buddhas, wherever their mind reaches, that's where their body is, right away. It's a spontaneous thing.

Now, how is the buddha's mind? It's omniscient, right? It knows all things, at all times, simultaneously. **So then where are their bodies? Everywhere, spontaneously and simultaneously.** So the moment you call on them, they're here. It's not like they have to travel and pack and get instructions and buy a ticket. They're here. And so you call them, and they appear in front of you.

And buddhas have this quality of being able to perceive all existing things directly, and at the same time see the ultimate nature of all things, directly.

If we get some teachings about emptiness, and I assume that everybody here has heard some description of emptiness – then we know that things have no self nature. And that they are projections from our mind. But then they still appear to us as having their own nature and as coming from outside of us, and coming from out there towards me.

Not so for the buddha. See, the buddha sees directly the ultimate reality. Remember: there is emptiness and dependent origination. They are two sides of the same coin. So as they see emptiness - and they're all the time seeing emptiness directly - at the same time, they are seeing directly dependent origination. So as soon as they see something, they can see how it has a reason. They can see the dependent origination of that, the karma that brought it to being.

They can see how my mind had created this thing and how this is an expression of my mind, because they have such deep deep wisdom. Really, they're simultaneously in the two realities. They see the emptiness and they see how things arise from that emptiness based on karmic imprints, on the sanskaras.

We have that division between mind and karmic seeds that sit in the mind, and then physical phenomena that appear, and it seems like: How can a physical phenomena be a karmic seed?

Well, to a buddha this is kind of a void question, a null question. They don't have that pondering. They see how things arise. To them all phenomena have this light quality, they're coming from emptiness.

You know how we say in Tibetan heart yoga: "**Sem lung jukpa chikpar**" we say that the thoughts and the inner winds they always go together, right? So our thoughts are an expression of our inner winds, and also our inner winds are an expression of our thoughts. They go together. If we have kind thoughts the winds flow in one way, if we have unkind thoughts or stupid thoughts, they flow in a different way and different places.

But that is not just limited to thoughts. It also applies to our body. Our body is also an expression of our inner winds and thoughts.

And whatever applies to my body, also applies to external objects, same thing. And if my thoughts are pure, my mind is pure and therefore my prana is pure, my world is pure. Because it's an expression of it. It's not limited to just in me, it's me and the world, and really the distinction is only because of my ignorance.

So it's the unique quality of a buddha, that they are able to be in those realities simultaneously and understand them perfectly, spontaneously and simultaneously. And this is my lama, this is the lama that I'm going for refuge [to] because they have this omniscience, which comes with this great great love for me.

**So the buddha's body is really an expression of the buddha's mind.  
And the buddha's mind is omniscient and is really everywhere.  
So that means that the buddha can emanate everywhere.  
Wherever they're needed, and however they're needed,  
because they have omniscience and they have the ability to be  
there and act there. And they will appear to me the way I need to.**

And it's not like I have to become buddhist for them to do that - they do that all the time, I'm just ignorant to that. This happens all the time. So as you practice this part of visualizing the lama, again – don't see them as a flat picture; see them as a warm, kind, beautiful loving being, wise being, whose exquisite body is an expression of their exquisite mind.

*(Mandala)*