

Six Session Guru Yoga

An Open Version

Based on a teaching by

Khen Rinpoche Geshe Lobsang Tarchin

Taught by

Lama Dvora-hla

Diamond Mountain, September 2010

Class 3, Part 1

(Mandala)

Introduction

Ok, so we have started this teaching. This teaching originally is a tantric teaching, it's designed by lamas for people who received initiation into what is called "Highest Yoga Tantra". There are four classes of tantra, so this is for people who have received the highest class of tantra. Most lamas now just give the highest yoga Tantra because they say that we live in degenerate times, and the lower tantras just aren't powerful enough to get us out. We need big cannons to push us out of samsara.

So that's highest yoga tantra. And why should a person want to gain initiation into highest yoga tantra?

Audience: Because it's the fastest way to get enlightened

Teacher: Yeah, that's true. But what makes it so fast?

Audience: You're closer to your lama

Teacher: You're closer to your lama. Another way of saying the same thing, is: because of the tantric vows.

Of course, you need initiation. Initiation is like permission to practice the tantric vows. What makes the path fast, is your tantric vows. So one goes for initiation to beg the lama for permission to be granted the tantric vows, and then to keep them. That's the main cause.

We already started, we had two classes of this. I took the practice which is tantric, and I pulled out of it all the parts that can be taught openly. So you have received a version which can be practiced without initiation, and it's actually a very very beautiful and powerful practice even without initiation.

Not to replace initiation, not to replace tantra. Eventually you want to get there. **What will get you there is this kind of practice.** It creates enough virtue in you, that you will meet the tantric lamas and the tantric teachings and you will be able to enter the fast track.

This is what creates that virtue, the practices that are in that little booklet.¹ So we went over most of the booklet, we spent two classes in reviewing what's in the booklet.

The Importance of the Six Session Guru Yoga Practice

What this does, is organizes all the most important elements in a practice into a nice daily ritual that you can do; it's a collection of recitations along with the meditations that go with them. And that's just so very very powerful and creates such strong seeds in you.

So today we'll finish that booklet, but before we do that I wanted to read to you, paraphrase to you, what my lama, Khen Rinpoche – I'm teaching from his commentary – what introduction he gave to this whole book.

He came to the United States in the early 70's. And at that time there was very little dharma in the United States, certainly almost no tantra. There was big ignorance. Not that we have changed much, but there's a lot more teaching that came to the West since then, a lot more. Much thanks to him.

People have approached him and asked him to teach them tantra. And at first, when he was asked to teach tantra, he said: "Ah, you're not ready". For years he refused to even mention it. So after maybe 10-15 years of teaching dharma in the United States, at some point he felt that some of his students were sufficiently prepared. And they came and asked him for initiation, so he said, Ok, I'll check with my lama.

His lama was Trijang Rinpoche, who passed away since. But he was in India, and he wrote to him and said, well, my students here, some of them are ready, and I'm planning to organize a trip to India, bring them all to you, and you initiate them. (It wasn't such a big group, it was a few people.) But then the reply he got from Trijang Rinpoche was: "Are you crazy? *You* initiate them!"

So, he started initiating people. And one of the things that you do immediately after initiation is you teach people what it is that they're supposed to practice. Initiation without a teaching plants very very powerful seeds in you, but you can't do much with just initiation. You have to be taught what to do.

So then he started teaching, and he says: "People come to me and they ask me: can you teach me this sadhana, or this sadhana, etc". So then he asks in his introduction: "But what is the most important thing that you should learn? What is the most important thing that you should ask me to teach you?"

He said to his students, the most important thing is the Six Session Guru Yoga, which is known in Tibetan is **Tun druk**, Say:

ཐུན་བྱུག་

Tun Druk

Which means **six times a day**.

He says, it is such an unbelievably holy and important practice, and therefore, he says, you should rejoice and be very very happy that you have the opportunity to hear those

¹ The text for this open practice.

instructions. And as a teacher, I should rejoice for having the chance to teach even this kind of instructions.

And then he says, if you happen to be so lucky to hear that teaching, how should you listen to such a teaching?

1. He said, most important as you listen to this teaching, is **to develop a very very strong wish that all beings become enlightened**, that all beings can find happiness and be removed from suffering. This is most important in your motivation. That's one.
2. And then second is that **you yourself will reach enlightenment in this life time**.

So this should be the motivation to teaching this material, and to listening to this material, so both for the teacher and for the students, same motivation.

He also says, and this is intended for people who have tantric initiation: "If you *have* taken Tantric initiations and yhave your commitments that come with that - which of them is most important"? Assuming that soon you *will* have the tantric initiation, if you don't have it already – then of all your commitments, he says, this one is most important. **The Six Session Guru Yoga is the most important**. Why?

Now, the version I gave you is maybe half the size of the tantric version. I have kept almost all the parts aside from the tantric vows. So in the last part of your booklet, you have listed the bodhisattva vows, the root bodhisattva vows – there's another 46 secondary vows that are not listed there.

For the tantrika - they would get the same thing. Most of the material that you don't have in your booklet would be a list of the tantric vows, which is a much longer list. So what I'm trying to say is that the parts that you have contain most of what is in that practice that precedes the vows, with very few omissions that were specific, unique to tantra.

So in other words, what I'm trying to convey, is that you have a very very holy and very powerful practice in your hands. So whatever he says that's intended for tantrikas, applies also to each of you, because you have a practice that if you practice daily, will get you out of suffering – for sure. For sure.

The Importance of Keeping Your Vows

He says that if one has tantric initiation and practices daily the sadhana that they received through the tantric initiation,

- The most advanced practitioners, and even medium level practitioners, they can achieve ultimate enlightenment, even within one life time. If you have the tantric initiation.
- Then, there are other tantric practitioners, not as fortunate – still they can achieve enlightenment in the *bardo*, immediately after this life. That if they practice well, that [the death] process for them, is not really a death process, it's a process of enlightenment, it's a practice of enlightenment. **The processes that happen during death, they ride on them to become enlightened**. Most Tibetan lamas, that's what they do.

You hear stories about lamas who, as they're dying, they sit in meditation for a few days or for a few weeks –because it's not death for them, it's enlightenment for them. Very very holy, very very holy, very beautiful. So those are medium level practitioners ☺.

- Then, he says, even the lowest level practitioners – they can achieve enlightenment in the near future. Near future means a few lifetimes - that's a “near future” compared to eons of suffering. So they can be doing their sadhanas, and it may take them a few lifetimes.

However, he says, even those practitioners, they may be doing all their practices very nicely, reciting the mantras, doing the sadhanas – he says, here's his wording - if they don't care about keeping all the bodhisattva and tantric vows properly – including the secondary vows – just like in bodhisattva vows [where] you have root and secondary vows, same in tantra – you have root vows and secondary vows -

If they don't keep them properly, he says, not only will your chances of achieving enlightenment *completely* disappear – he says *completely* disappear - but you will never reach the goal, no matter what other practices you may do, or how well you're doing them.

So in other words, he's trying to let us know and to appreciate how extremely important it is to **keep the vows properly**. And then he quotes from the scripture, he says: Even without having meditated, you can reach the goal of enlightenment within 16 lifetimes, if you remain free of downfalls.

So this is for tantrikas, people who have initiation – so if you don't, you should strive, do what you need to get it. And this practice plants the karmic seeds to get it.

So then, if you have received such initiation, even if you don't do your sadhanas and your meditations and your retreats, he says – this is from the buddha – you can reach the goal within 16 lifetimes, if you remain free of downfalls. Meaning, **if you keep your vows properly**.

Which is not easy, because those vows mainly apply to your thoughts. You can imagine, how easy it is to become critical of the lama. How extremely easy it is. "Oh, I don't like what they're saying". “This looks like a cult to me.”

It's *so* easy to break them - we do it every moment. So easy to break them. But he says, if you don't break them, then even if you don't do your sadhanas you'll reach enlightenment within 16 lifetimes, Ok? Which is not to say you shouldn't be doing your sadhana – because then you can eliminate all suffering within one lifetime.

And then Khen Rinpoche - his teachings were always in a very popular language. He was speaking to everybody in the audience, in the simplest possible terms. He was joking and trying to just reach people. That was his forte, he was extremely skillful with that. Just using very simple language reaching people that way.

So he would say: A buddha's promise is not like those made by politicians running for office. So you have politicians running for office, and they make promises, sometimes they keep them, most of the time they don't even remember they promised. Buddha's promise is not like that. He said: Buddha is infallible - he just quoted from the buddha, about those 16 lifetimes, etc, He said - a buddha does not make promises lightly. There's no reason for a buddha to lie to us, absolutely no reason. So he's infallible, and we can trust the buddha.

Getting Habituated to Good Habits

So talking about keeping vows – he said, it's very easy to become used to a bad behavior, like a bad pattern. You know, one day we get lazy and we don't get up to do our practice, the next day we get even lazier, and then it's ok to not do our practice, and like that. It's very easy. So we become used to a certain negative behavior, then it becomes a bad habit, and bad habits are very hard to break.

But he says, just as we have bad habits, we can also develop good habits, right? Same way, just like we develop a bad habit. We can start getting ourselves used to a good behavior, and develop a good habit. Good habits, he says, are much more powerful than bad habits.

Because the source of a bad habit is a falsity, is some misunderstanding.

It's thinking that if I stay in bed longer, somehow I'll be happier.

Now, did anyone ever become happier from being lazy? It doesn't work. So bad habits are based on just stupidity, on misunderstanding, right? On wrong view.

On the other hand, **good habits** – when we push ourselves to do effort in the dharma, or effort in helping people, or so – they **are based in a correct view. So they are based in truth.**

Truth is much more powerful than a lie, then something false.

So it's much more worthwhile to develop those good habits, he says. Not only that –

<p>If you develop the good habit of keeping the vows properly and not breaking them, that behavior will follow you into your next life.</p>
--

So how will it express itself in your next life? Well, maybe this is your next life from the other one, right? So how do you experience yourself now?

You're here, right? You're attracted to this. It didn't come from nowhere. You had seeds for that, you had seeds to be attracted to dharma, or else you wouldn't be here, in this weather, in those tents, and you wouldn't be going through this hardship.

So by having developed those good habits in the past, and probably studied with lots of lamas, and heard lots of dharma in the past – now you hear dharma and you want it, it attracts you. So that is a good habit that you have already developed and it just expresses itself this way in this life.

If you go and reinforce it now in this life, and take vows and keep them nicely, then even if you don't finish all the path in this life, you will have better and better conditions in your next lives. Because of your karmic seeds, you will project yourself in conditions that are conducive to practice. You will have what it takes to have a nice successful practice. You will find teachers, you will have leisure, you will have the financial needs, the health, the mind. You will be able to continue on your path even stronger and even faster and even sweeter.

So then he says, if that is true (and how can it not, right?) then whenever you hear about teachings about the vows, and dharma teaching, you should feel very very happy. You should feel unbelievably happy, understanding where this leads, and

where it came from, also. **You should rejoice in your own goodness, because it's only your own goodness that brought you here, right?**

We say that everything is a projection from our mind. You could not be projecting this if you weren't really really good in the past. Impossible, impossible. Because it doesn't come from nowhere, it doesn't come with no cause. So you have those beautiful seeds, so you should be rejoicing.

He says, because the vows that are listed in the Six Session Guru Yoga – the bodhisattva vows, the tantric vows – because they come from the buddha, if you begin practicing them nicely, you will get a lot of blessing from the buddha. And as your practice improves, he says – [it] may not even take as long as 16 lifetimes. You may not need 16 lifetimes, this is like the top figure. You may be able to reach the ultimate goals much sooner than that.

So summarizing this introduction, he says:

Therefore, taking the vows and keeping them properly is a hundred times more important than regularly doing all other practices. All other practices, including tantric practices, he says – this is a hundred times more important.

And so the practice was given by the buddha, and then came very high lamas, and organized it into this very very nice, well written, well organized, and easy to practice way to plant all those amazing seeds in us.

This particular version that you have was written by the first Panchen Lama who's one of the greatest buddhist teachers ever. We have a few “greatest”, but he's one of them.

Much of what we teach comes from him. Lama Christie was teaching [from his teachings]; The Mahamudra came from him, what Geshe Michael was teaching from the *Lama Chupa* came from him, this comes from him. We have the *De Lam* which is a lam rim type of practice that comes from him.

He wrote maybe 250 books and essays and a lot of poetry. He was an amazing enlightened being. Anyway, so this is based on his writing, and you have Geshe Michael's masterful translation into English, those of you who speak Hebrew - you have translation of that into Hebrew directly.

**So you should really really rejoice.
It's extremely fortunate to hear this teaching.**

Ok. So let's go back and finish up.

How to do the Practice

So this is a six time a day practice. It means you do it six times a day, three times in the morning, three times in the evening.

Then, it has three parts:

1. Beginning on page 1, all the way up to the end of page 5 – all of this is considered Part One. And in part one, you can see, the first part is to be repeated three times, and then there is a part on page 2 also to be repeated three times. So here is how you do that:

You start with Part One – as it is here, you go all the way up to end of page 5, then you repeat Part One a second time. When you repeat Part One the second time, you don't need to do the three time repetitions, just go once through the whole thing. You finish the second time, you go back and do it a third time, Ok? Three times Part One.

Finished Part One, you go to Part Two:

2. Part Two begins on top of page 6, and continues all the way up to end of page 7, so two pages, Ok? That's Part Two.

You begin at the top of page 6, you go all the way up to where it says commitment to the vows, in the middle of page 7. There you skip the first paragraph, "I will follow the words of the victors: So you do page 6, middle page 7, then you skip one paragraph, and continue till the end of page 7.

This paragraph you skip, first time, **then** you do Part Two a second time. When you come to the second time, you don't read all the vows anymore. So you just do the first paragraph on page 6, and then you skip to the commitment, Ok? Middle of page 7, and finish.

Then the third time is the same as the second time.

Again, Part Two: We do it three times in the morning, three times in the evening, Ok? It begins on the top of page 6. First round we read all of page 6, up to the middle of page 7, we skip one paragraph, we finish. Second time, we only do the first paragraph on page 6, then skip the whole next section – the bodhisattva vows and the top of page 7 - and continue till the bottom of page seven. So this first paragraph that we skipped the first time, replaces the individual listing of the vows, and same for the third time.

So you've done three times Part One, three times Part Two, then you do once the last part which is on page 8. Is that clear?

Three times Part One, three times Part Two, then you do once Part Three, this is the last page.

Question: What's the reason for skipping the listing of the vows [in the second and third times?]

Teacher: Ahh☺ you'll see, because they want you to do the practice, they don't want you to tire of it, so they give you a discount ☺. But really, really you can skip because you are doing the six time a day book, right? Which really is a much more powerful way of following up with your vows, so it's Ok if you skip, provided you do the book.

You do the same thing in the evening, before you go to bed. You do this in the morning, you do this in the evening.

Now, one way to do it – is as I just described, you read. But that's not going to be benefiting you very much. If you really want to plant the seeds nicely, it's not just reading, it's meditating. So we have described how to do the meditations up to page 5, and if you're interested, it will be on the Diamond Mountain website and you can listen.

Summary

I'll just say a few words to summarize what we did in the other classes.

Taking Refuge

So there's descriptions there how to do the visualizations and how to do the refuge. So you go through the taking refuge visualization, which is a very very important part of the practice.

Refuge never leaves you. How long? Rinpoche is asking this question, how long?

Until you reach enlightenment, you cannot give up refuge.

They say that even after that - the Buddha never gives up refuge. But he can't, even if he wanted to. That's all he's doing.

We still have bad habits so we are in danger of not taking properly refuge. So we need to be taught and advised and given the vows, and etc.

So we begin by making the visualization of the merit field, and go through the refuge.

The Four Infinite Thoughts

Then there's the beautiful practice of The Four Infinite Thoughts which is very very powerful because it plants in us seeds to develop bodhichitta. And bodhichitta is that strong desire to benefit beings, to devote my life, really, to benefit beings. So it gives meaning to my life, it makes it worth living, otherwise why? just consume, get old, and die?

This way, while I'm consuming, getting old, and dying, in the meantime I'm doing something very very beautiful and powerful –working to develop myself so I can be of benefit to all beings. And The Four Infinite Thoughts, they plant the seeds so when those seeds ripen we actually develop this wish in our heart, we actually develop this very strong compelling thought. It's more than a thought; it's a state of mind in which all thoughts are sitting.

For a bodhisattva, that's all they do, working for the sake of beings. Perfecting themselves so that they can be even more of help to beings, and that's the whole reason for the practice, that's the whole reason for tantra. There is no other reason. There is no other reason.

Pure Motivation

Some people take very high practices, very advanced practices, working with the yoga, with the winds, with the channels, partner practices, what not. People take them. If you take them without this very very pure motivation, they cannot work for you. They will not work for you, and actually they can cause a big spiritual disaster.

The higher you go in the practice, the more holy the practice, the easier it is to turn it into a disaster if it doesn't come with a pure motivation, because the higher the benefit that comes with the practice, the bigger the risk that you'll fall spiritually.

So therefore very high practices, that's why we need initiations, and qualified lamas, and good preparation, and vows, and all that. Absent those – people can get damaged

and they do get damaged. And we're not talking just about physical damage or financial damage, we are talking about spiritual damage – which is much worse. Much worse. Because it can affect you for many lives.

So these beautiful thoughts, as we practice them, we practice them towards all sentient beings, which makes it so powerful, because our object is just so huge and vast, we want to help them all. We want to bring them all to happiness, and even to ultimate happiness. And the way we have described how to practice them, it's not only wishing that they be happy and not have suffering, etc., but also That we ourselves will do that.

resolving to do it ourselves. And then, looking deeply, how can I accomplish that? how can I actually be of help to all beings? And realizing - I need very powerful methods, and then going again for refuge to my lama, asking my lama to help me.

The Commitment to the Wish for Enlightenment

Then on the next page comes the commitment to the wish for enlightenment. After we have practiced the Refuge and the Four Infinite Thoughts, then we resolve: Ok, I'm going to commit myself to this way of thinking; I'm going to spend my life with the *thought*, all I'm doing will be infused by the thought of wanting to help beings. So this is a very beautiful promise.

*I swear now that I would rather die
Than ever give up this Wish.*

I swear now that I would rather die than ever give up this wish. It's just a very very strong wish to benefit beings.

Commitment to Act like a Bodhisattva

And then the next section, is natural evolution of the first section: Where we resolve to not only develop the wish in our heart, but also to practice, to actually become capable of helping all beings. And this is taking the bodhisattva vows.

So the next section really, which you repeat three times on the first round, is taking bodhisattva vows, and you can do it every day, you should be doing it every day, six times. You take the Bodhisattva vows where you promise to train yourself in the six perfections of the bodhisattva as they are expressed through the bodhisattva vows.

The Bodhisattva vows really is an organized beautiful method to train ourselves in the six perfections, to become a perfect being.

The Six Perfections

Do you know what the six perfections are? I'll repeat briefly for you.

We talk about a bodhisattva, meaning a being who has resolved to benefit others. "Ok, so I want to be of benefit to others, but how will I do that"? So then, they strive

to bring themselves to perfection. There are six fields, six areas in their beings which they are trying to perfect.

1. One is **giving**, develop their **generosity**. Develop from ordinary generosity to exceptional generosity, to extreme generosity, and then perfect generosity. So we talk about four areas of generosity:
 - a. One is giving material things, money.
 - b. Then, it's giving shelter, protection from fear. That's the second area
 - c. The third area is giving love to beings, attention, time. This all goes into the same category,
 - d. And the fourth one is giving them dharma, giving them a teaching that will allow them to develop themselves and not be as dependent on us, right?

Those four areas, and the bodhisattva practices to develop them to extreme levels.

Now, it's hard for most of us. Each one of us is at a certain level in our ability to give. From wherever we are, we can go to the next level. There is always the next level, until you have perfected giving and you become a second level Bodhisattva.

On the first level, a Bodhisattva just develops their giving to perfection, to ultimate giving. And there are beautiful stories about the Buddha, before he was a buddha, he was a bodhisattva already with the wish for enlightenment in his heart. There are beautiful stories how he meets the hungry tigress and he gives his body to her, and other such beautiful stories in the *Jataka Tales*.

Sometimes we get a little bit scared off by those stories: "If I give my body, then how... what?" so Master Shantideva in his *Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* – a very famous buddhist text – he says: don't worry. You begin with carrots and potatoes. You give them carrots and potatoes, you develop your giving, the day will come when for you to give your arm or your leg will be same as giving a carrot or potato. No problem, no problem. And there are such stories, too.

So, giving is the first perfection.

2. Second perfection: Once we have practiced giving to a second level, naturally we become less attached, right? We are more willing to give. As we become less attached, it's easier for us to restrain ourselves. See, if you're very attached for example to yourself; I'm very attached to me, to my happiness, to having things my way. Because I'm so important, I'm so attached to me.

So if somebody wants something that is in conflict with what I want for myself, then I get upset, or I get uptight, or I'm going to get into a fight or I'll try all kinds of things to have it my way, right? That's if I have attachment. Once I have practiced giving a lot, I am less attached, and then there's more space to listen to what other people need

Not be so disappointed if it doesn't happen the way I expected. So it doesn't happen my way. So what? You become lighter, easier to restrain yourself, because you won't be willing to harm other people to get what you want. So naturally, you will develop your morality better, and that's the second perfection.

So a bodhisattva will develop **morality** nicely, actually to an extreme level, to a perfect level.

3. As you develop your morality and learn to restrain yourself, then naturally, what develops? **Patience**, right? So you're not getting your way, and so what? You don't have to jump up and down because they told you what you didn't like, or they didn't tell you what you did like. You become more open and patient with what appears, pleasant or unpleasant.

So that's the next perfection, the perfection of patience which a bodhisattva develops.

4. Then, once you have mastered that area, with that, a lot of mental afflictions go away. They can lessen to a large degree, or completely go away. So then, you know, when we are mentally afflicted, our mind, our energy is swallowed by the mental affliction. If the power of the mental afflictions lessens, there's a lot of energy that frees up. So it makes us happy, and gives us more time.

We're not busy with being upset and talking about this person and thinking what should I do now with this person. You have better things to do, you become happier, there's more freedom in your mind, there's more joy in your mind, you don't waste your energy on being upset with other people

Naturally develops what we call **joyful effort**. You become joyful, and you like helping people. So naturally you will be doing good for people and you will be happy about doing good for people, whether they help you or not. **It's not about whether they help you or not, it's about you doing good to others.**

So that's the perfection of joyful effort.

Those are the first four. Then there are two additional perfections:

5. Perfection of **concentration** –developing single pointed concentration, a concentrated mind, gives you such an amazing dimension to your life which you can't get otherwise.

Things taste better, they smell better, you're much faster in your thinking, in your memory. All your practices are enhanced, big time. All your practice becomes efficient, and you begin to progress on the path very fast.

So this is the perfection of meditation which you absolutely need to develop.

6. And then, with that perfection, once you have developed/perfected meditation, then your focus is excellent, you have excellent clarity, you can easily get high wisdom, you can easily understand the nature of reality. So then develops the last perfection, which is the **perfection of wisdom**.

Alright, so this was a fast tour through the six perfections.

So this is what commitment to act like a bodhisattva is. A bodhisattva commits to perfect those perfections. So, you say, aren't they supposed to be helping people? What are they doing on their cushion? They're supposed to be helping people. They are. They do perfect their giving, for example, right? They do that, that's their very first perfection. But then, by reaching the higher perfections, they go back.

It's not like: now they're practicing meditation, they don't need to be giving anymore. Their giving is enhanced by so many factors because they're clearer, they understand better what beings need, they are more efficient, their thinking is sharp. They are able to help being in so many more ways. So it is a linear scale, but they always go back, and reinforce the former perfections, until they get fully enlightened. And once they

get enlightened then they can actually help beings in infinite ways which aren't available to us now.

Rejoicing

So, having taken those vows, now there's a paragraph on rejoicing, and rejoicing is – **you're just happy about the meaning you're giving to your life.** Now that you're practicing like a bodhisattva, for the sake of beings, you're not wasting this precious human life anymore. So you're rejoicing about that.

Not only that, you know that you are on the path of becoming a buddha, so you're like a child of the buddhas, you are continuing the lineage of the buddhas, so it's a source of great great joy.

Not only is it a source of great joy, it's also a responsibility. And Rinpoche describes it like: If you're born a prince, you're going to be the future king. So on one hand, you have all the goodies of a prince – you have a nice palace, and all the enjoyments, etc. But then people are looking up to you, you can't just misbehave, right? We all know what happens when a prince misbehaves – all the newspapers... all the Paparazzi's... you can't do that anymore, it puts a responsibility on you.

Same here – once you enter this path, it puts a responsibility on you. You're joining a very pure family, the family of the buddhas, a very noble family. So then you say: I'll never disgrace this noble family. I will never disappoint my new parents, the buddhas. I will act purely. **So you rejoice, and you assume the responsibility,** which is very beautiful.

My Lama

Then, the last part, on page 3 – is the part with the lama. [It] has to do with the understanding that: beautiful resolutions I made now, but how am I going to make all of this happen? I can't, I'm weak. I'm human, humans are weak. They can't do much. They can feed so many people, they can help so many people, they can fundraise for so many people, but then there's millions other people, or billions other beings, not just people. So I need help. Where will I go for help? I go to my lama.

So then, the **Tun Druk**, the six session practice, has a beautiful section on the lama.

The Three Cushions

Where you first envision the lama, the lama is sitting on cushions, they say:

- The child of the lake – which is a lotus,
- the great disks of the sun
- and moon.

The lotus, the sun and the moon, they represent renunciation, bodhichitta and correct view.

- a. **Renunciation, which is understanding that there's nothing here in this life that can really benefit me, that can really help me.** There's so much suffering in life, so much suffering.

- People constantly lose their wealth, their family members, their friends, their reputation, their health. We constantly lose things. So there's a lot of suffering in this life.
- Things change constantly, and we can't control them, they're out of our control,
- and we are getting old and dying. Even if we're doing everything right, we're getting old and dying.

So we realize that there's so much suffering, and we realize that even things that go well now – whatever we have now – ah! I'm still able to talk! Well – there will be a last word! There will be a time when I will no longer be able to talk, there will be a time where I will no longer be able to see what I'm seeing now.

So even the good things that we still have – we have to lose. So renunciation comes from understanding that part about our life, and resolving to not spend our life in pursuing things that we have to lose anyway. That's renunciation. It doesn't mean I'm just going to sit now and do nothing. It means I'm going to direct my energy in a direction where I can actually gain happiness, and not spend my life on trying to get things that it's impossible for me to keep. None of the worldly things I can keep, right?

So that's renunciation, that's the first cushion, that's the lotus cushion.

- b. The sun cushion is **bodhichitta**, is the realization that my condition, which I just described, applies to all my fellow beings, they're all in the same condition. So bodhichitta strives to help them all, not just myself.
- c. And then, the moon cushion on that throne represents **correct view**, the wisdom which, if I gain, will help me actually achieve ultimate happiness, happiness that I don't have to lose, that I will never lose, that will only grow and be reinforced, and I will be able to lead beings to that happiness, by gaining it myself.

So those are the three cushions, and **on those cushions sits my lama**. Why is he sitting on those cushions? **He achieved all of them**, and he's teaching me how I can achieve them.

Who's my lama? My lama is the person who's teaching me how I can be happy, that's my lama. And he's sitting on those things, this is what they teach me.

So it's very beautiful, they use all those visual aids to help us assimilate those very important ideas.

So Beautiful

My root Lama is,

So lovely the heart aches to see.

We always picture them very beautiful, very powerful. Beautiful outwardly and inwardly. They have very high spiritual qualities, which I'd like to have myself. In my lama I see the qualities which I want to have myself.

Removes all my Torment

It says:

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

We can teach about this for weeks, but one way of seeing that, is: Thanks to their teaching I'm able to remove all my torments.

Where did this being come from? If everything is my projection I cannot meet such a high being if I don't have those seeds. Impossible. Impossible. All I see is completely controlled by my karma. So if I meet such a being, it's because I have been good. I have been really good for a very long time, over eons, so it may have been like a seed here and a seed there and a seed there, and all of these seeds now collected, and I'm projecting a holy being that teaches me a way out of suffering.

So that's a source of great joy. If **I entrust myself to their hands**, I'm Ok, I'm out of trouble. **I'm letting that sweet kind part of me that caused me to project them, to guide me.** I'm giving myself to that part of myself, really. **I'm resolving to give myself to that part.**

Lama's Kindness

And then, it ends:

*It is only by Your kindness
That I can achieve my goals.*

What is their kindness? Mostly their teaching. What they're teaching me. That's their kindness. And that kindness will help me achieve my goals. And we bow at their lotus feet.

Now we have met this amazing being that will help us achieve our goals. **That lama is our own projection, and it comes from the purest part of me.**

I have pure parts, and I have impure parts. How do I know we have impure parts? Hey, I'm still in a body that gets old and sick. That's an impure part. However, I'm meeting my lamas – that's a very pure part. I want to reinforce that part, so eventually it will eliminate the other parts completely. So how to do that?

One way to do it is to begin developing my reverence to those lamas, my love for those lamas, my dedication to those lamas, my devotion to those lamas.

Making Offerings to my Lama

And one beautiful way to do it, listed here – is by making offerings. We go and we make offerings to our lamas. So again, because of our ignorance, we see the lama out there. The lama is sitting on the lama throne, I'm here, they're another person.

Why should I give them what I have? I also need to be happy!

But see, that's an ignorant thought. Because the lama is not out there, the lama is coming from me.

<p>The lama is <i>my</i> purest part. Giving to <i>them</i> will make <i>me</i> happy. It will reinforce the holiest part in me, because they are an outward expression of the holiest part of me.</p>

So there's a paradox here: On one hand I'm saying, lama is a projection of me, they're coming from me. Oh, then you could say: "Well then' give to yourself, why are you giving to them?" That will not work. It will not work.

Why? Because in my mind, when I think of me' I have an attachment to a me, I have a wrong view of who I am, I don't understand who I am, selfishness comes in, self grasping comes in. Motivated by selfishness and self grasping I'm only reinforcing suffering. So with an ignorant mind, giving to myself will not help me, cannot help me, never has. Never has. At this level where we are, with our ordinary minds, we cannot achieve the same thing by giving to ourselves.

If you get any of that wisdom you realize [that] **our best chance is by giving to the lamas**. I want wealth? I need to give money to my lama. I want health? I need to give a massage to my lama. I want a good partnership? Hey! I'm rejoicing when my lama is getting married, you know? I'm helping arrange her marriage. That's the most powerful way, because my lama is a projection of my purest part. That's the most powerful way.

Now, outwardly it appears crazy. Why does it appear crazy? Because we all want to be happy. And so far, ordinary beings, normal people, they're trying all the time to be happy by doing what? By going to the shopping malls, and on the cruises, and the spas, and they're trying to give to themselves, and they're getting old and they're dying. And they're losing everything. Because that way doesn't work. Because they're reinforcing the base part of their being.

The way I can actually gain ultimate happiness is by giving to my Lama. That's what this one says. So here, this is a beautiful way, you just sit on your cushion and you give to them, right? You don't even go anywhere. Just in your imagination you give them. Of course, that is not to replace actual giving, but if you do it in your imagination that's also very powerful. It also plants very strong seeds in your mind for abundance, for wealth, for health, for paradise, really.

So it describes here a practice of giving. You give them what? It says, you envision all the good deeds, all the good words, all the good thoughts that you and every being has ever done, and you imagine in your mind – they are like jewels, like pearls, like precious stones, like precious gems, and you put them on this model which represents the entire world, and you offer it to them.

And before you do that, you arrange it nicely, and we also added last time – you not only arrange it nicely, you multiply it. You make it into a huge offering.

So you can make like an arrangement of flowers and you imagine: there is a beam of light coming out of each flower, there's this holy bodhisattva sitting on the top of the beam, and he is having his own wreath of flowers, or arrangement of flowers. And on each of those flowers, there's a bodhisattva. **So you just make it huge huge huge huge. The bigger, the better. You can't give too much to your lama, impossible.**

And certainly this doesn't cost you anything, except a little bit of exercise of imagination, right? And it's very powerful.

Asking for Lama's Blessing

So you do this, and then you beg them, at the end of this section, to:

*Give in to Your compassion,
Accept my offering,
And grant Your blessing
To my mind.*

And we talked about blessing. What kind of blessing are we asking from our lama? Spiritual realizations. And we spoke about it that the Tibetan word for blessing in

བྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱབ

Jin Lab.

Jin - is to give,

Lab - is to transform.

Give me transformation. We're asking my lama, please give me a transformation. Please transform my mind, please transform my being, please make me more generous, more patient, more moral, more concentrated, more wise. This is what we're getting from our lama. This is a blessing

So if you practice for a while like that, and you're getting sweeter and more kind and more generous, etc, that means you have received the blessing of the lama. That's how they give you the blessing.

Beseaching the Lama

This is still a review for the sake of you who weren't here, and for the rest of you.

So then, the next part on top of page 5:

*I beseech You, my precious Lama,
You are nothing but a play*

All those [lines].

And remember, this is **Six Session Guru Yoga**, this is using the lama to gain realizations, right? This whole practice is like that.

So one way we're using the lama, taking advantage of having a lama, is by – "**you sit there, I'm going to give you offerings**". Does the lama need my offering? No, they don't know where to put them. But we need to give, because we are so poor in virtue, we need to give to our lama. So "you sit there, I'll give you offerings". That's one aspect.

Developing Faith and Reverence to my Lama

Then, the next aspect comes: Developing faith and reverence for my lama. Because a lama appears to me in a human form. So sometimes I'm thinking, oh maybe that's an enlightened being, but sometimes they don't quite act like an enlightened being. They go to the bathroom, so are they enlightened? Would buddhas go to bathrooms?

So we have doubts. We have doubts. Sometimes they get upset. Sometimes they're not clean. So we doubts, are they enlightened beings or not? If they're not enlightened

beings, they cannot take me to paradise. Because a person cannot take me to paradise, only an enlightened being can.

**For a lama to be able to take me to paradise,
I need to give them the power.**

If I don't, if I sometimes think: oh, maybe they're qualified, and sometimes say: Oh, no no no, today they said something that I don't like - as long as I have my doubts, I will not enable them to take me there. So a huge chunk of the practice is to **develop reverence and faith in the lama**, so those are the next sections, which express who my lama really is.

Because of their compassion, they appear as humans, to match our level

Because we cannot directly interact with enlightened beings in their paradise form, which is a light form. We cannot communicate with that, because we are too too low, we have veils of ignorance, we cannot communicate on that level.

So they appear to us as human, but this section on top of page 5, reminds us actually who they really are. That they are an emanation of a very high being. Very high beings, buddhas can emanate in ways, because of their compassion. They don't have to emanate, they can sit in their paradises and just enjoy, and they do.

**But because their compassion is also developed to its maximum,
they appear as humans, so that we interact with them.**

We can only hear a human talk to us, at first, later we can also hear other things, but at first that's all we can hear.

So because of their compassion they appear in ways, in which we can communicate. So this section describes: They are pretenders, they pretend to be human, they appear to me. Because that's what I need - I need a human lama that I can interact with so they can tame me.

They use the word to tame - לאלף

How do they tame me?

By teaching me the vows, for example, to tame my wild mind, to restrain myself from harming others, for example. To develop my ability to be kind to others. They tame mostly my selfishness, they tame my pride. [It's] extremely difficult to teach somebody who's proud, because they know already. Extremely difficult.

So

- they will do a lot of things to tame my pride, which I won't like. All the things that the lama does that I don't like are because I'm proud.
- And they will tame my self-grasping which I won't like either, because I will feel it as a threat to me, which it is.

It's their job to take away "me" from me, because I can't get enlightened, I can't get totally happy as long as I'm attached to a false sense of a "me".

The Holiest Object

So they're doing all of that. And then it says:

*You are
An object holier for me than
All the great assemblies,
All the many trillions,
Of Buddhas that there are.*

Why?

**Why is my lama holier than all the trillions of buddhas that there are?
Because of all the buddhas that there are, he or she came to me.**

They are doing this work with *me*. So no matter how many buddhas are there, this one is helping me. And really, all the buddhas come through that lama, really they do. So it's just our dualistic mind that has that distinction. Really there is no distinction. All the buddhas come to me through my lama. There are beautiful stories like that

The Crying Bodhisattva

There's the story of the crying bodhisattva. There's this bodhisattva who stands in a market, he has already met the buddhas and bodhisattvas, he had many buddhas teach him. But then he realized that he has to find his own lama, his personal lama, before he can get enlightened. So he wants to go to his lama and give him an offering but he doesn't have any money, so he stands in a market and offers his limbs, his organs for sale. So he can have money to go and make an offering to his lama.

But then the demons come and they don't want him to get enlightened and they silence his voice. So he's unable to voice anything, so he's crying.

That's how the story goes. It has a happy ending.

There are other stories. In the tantric tradition there's many stories.

Naropa's Test of Marpa

*Have you heard of **Naropa**? Naropa is a very central figure in our tantric lineage. The tantras that we're teaching came through Naropa. Naropa had many students. One of his famous students was **Marpa**. Naropa was Indian, Marpa was Tibetan. He came down to Naropa to study with him. So the story goes: Marpa is with Naropa, and he's fast asleep. And Naropa comes to him, and shakes him, wakes him up:*

Get up now, get up now, all the angels are in the sky, come. So Marpa wakes up, he looks up in the sky, he says: Oh, wow, a whole Mandala of angels! So Naropa says, well, now make prostrations. You have to decide, whether you're making prostrations to me first, or to the angels in the sky?

*And he thinks, "Well, Naropa is going to still be here tomorrow, but this is going to disappear." So he makes prostrations to the angels in the sky, and immediately they disappear. **Because they all come from his lama.***

And Marpa was a very very advanced practitioner, and the story continues and says that because of that major mistake in understanding who the lama is, when Naropa transmitted his main tantra– Vajra Yogini, he did not give it to Marpa. He gave it to only two students, and they did not include Marpa.

That's the story.

So this was the top part of page 5.

The Essence of the Practice: Lama is Key to All Happiness

And then comes the bottom part of page 5 which says: Ok, since my lama is such a holy figure for me, they're so important for me, they are such a crucial essential ingredient of my path to enlightenment, then there's this resolution; the student now turns to the lama, and says:

*Bless me to see, my Savior,
That everything I could ever
Wish to attain,
The highest goals and those of the world,
All of them come
From taking myself to You
In the proper way.*

Highest goals and those of the world

Highest goals - nirvana and enlightenment.

Those of the world – are spiritual goals that we can achieve on the path – flying in the sky, clairvoyance, telepathy, miracle powers – all of those. They come to advanced practitioners. So they're called worldly goals because they're not our goal, they're like a temporary goal that we can also lose later if we don't keep up the practice.

They're useful because they help us help other beings, but they are worldly goals. Ultimate goals are to become enlightened so I can ultimately help all beings. So he's asking the lama: "Help me to understand that all the goals – the temporary goals, and the highest goals – all of them come from taking myself to you in the proper way".

Meaning, respecting you in a proper way, treating you in a proper way, thinking about you in a proper way, and serving you in a proper way.

And that's a key understanding in this Six Session Guru Yoga, is that understanding, it's like the essence.

The essence of this Guru Yoga is the understanding that my lama is my key to all the happiness there is.

It's my lama.

Riding the Good Karma: Commitment to Serve and Please the Lama

So this is what I'm going to serve. I'm going to reinforce that gateway to all happiness there is.

*Bless me that I be able
Only to please You,*

**Very very important. A practitioner who is serious on this path,
will do all they can to please the lama
and will never do anything to displease the lama.**

Very important. With the understanding of who the lama is, understanding the emptiness of the lama, understanding that lama is not coming from outside to me, they are my projection. They're coming from my goodness.

**If I displease that lama, I am acting against my purest seeds, I'm
damaging my purest seeds.**

It's so hard to find a lama, because we have so little goodness in us. So, if a person already found a person that appears to them as a lama – it's extraordinary. It's extraordinary goodness that they have done. It uses up a lot of goodness that I have done in the past, therefore it's so easy to lose that lama. Because I just used up those seeds, I used up my credit, and I don't know how to replenish that credit card, because I can't do in one life so much good, I can't, I don't know how to.

So once the lama appears, I'm hanging on to that, because I have to ride on that to replenish my kindness, to replenish my goodness, to multiply, to reinforce my goodness. So a practitioner who understands that, the workings of karma, will never do anything to displease that lama, and will seek everything to please that lama.

So that's a very important pledge that one makes here.

*Bless me that I be able
Only to please You,
Giving away for it even
My body and my life.*

If I understand that this is just one life, and the next life could be much less fortunate than this one, then of course in the service of my lama who leads me to ultimate happiness, one life is nothing.

Good thing is, that you really don't need to give away your life for that. **A lama doesn't want that from you, they want you to use your life to get enlightened**, but from my side I need to understand that this is more important than this current life. To give it the right importance.

(Mandala)