

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 2

(Mandala)

Then, on page 6 begins part two.

Commitment to Serve the Beings

*Here and now
I give away, with no hesitation,
All that I have,
For the sake of all beings,
Each is my Mother.
I give my body,
And so what I own;
I give the whole amount
Of whatever good
I shall ever be able to do,
Before, or now, or forever.*

This is so beautiful, this is the practice of giving, **this is perfecting the perfection of giving**, this is developing my giving for the sake of beings to ultimate levels, I'm willing to give away everything for the beings.

Giving

Rinpoche's comments on this. He says, that you should understand that the practice of giving doesn't mainly depend on the actual objects that you give. It is not so much what you give. The essence of giving is mental in nature.

**The essence of giving is the attitude of wanting to give,
and it's this one that we need to strengthen.**

Master Shantideva in his book is asking, how can a bodhisattva perfect their giving, if there are so many poor people in the world? So he didn't give enough, because, hey, there are so many poor people in the world? **He says, no no, what you need to**

perfect is your willingness to give whatever you have, everything. Your willingness you have to perfect. That attitude

All my Mothers

*Here and now
I give away with no hesitation
everything I have,
for the sake of all beings, each one my mother.*

Why is each one my mother?

Well, in buddhism we believe that we have lived so many times, infinitely many times. Each time we had a mother, right? So every being we meet, at some point they were my mother.

And you know, it sounds exaggerated to us,

I was once sitting with a group of Arab men, and I told them that, and one of them said: Do you mean to say that I was your mother? He was a Muslim man... Well, I got in trouble there.

But think about it. Think about your mother in this life. She gave birth to you, so she's your mother, right? Now you're not a baby anymore. **Did she stop being your mother?** No, she's your mother even though birth happened a long time ago, you were born a long time ago. **Well, maybe she's not even alive anymore, right? Maybe she passed away. Is she not your mother?**

She's still your mother! Right?

So she passed away. If it is true that after we die, we continue, we go on to the next incarnation – you don't know where she went, right? Most of us don't know, we can't see where they went. **It's very possible that you meet a person and they were your mother.**

So if in this life, while she's still alive, she didn't stop being your mother, why would she stop being your mother when she goes to her next incarnation? When does she stop being your mother? Well, she never does, right?

She's always your mother, and she may appear in a different form, in a different body, even in a different world. So you don't even know that the being you meet is not your mother.

In my formal lifetime I had a mother, I don't know how she looks like, right?

We have had infinite lifetimes. Infinite - it's not many – it's infinite – it's a lot! It's way more than we can imagine. Since billions and billions of eons we've been incarnating in the world, We had infinitely many mothers. They're all the beings. So all the beings *are* my mothers.

That's this logic.

So

*For the sake of all beings,
Each is my Mother.
I give my body,
And so what I own;*

*I give the whole amount
Of whatever good
I shall ever be able to do,
Before, or now, or forever.*

Giving away my goodness

What am I giving? My body, my wealth, all that I have. And what else? My goodness.

So I have done all this goodness in this world. Who's going to benefit from that? I will, right? Because I'm planting karmic seeds in my mind, I *have* to gain benefit from that, I have no choice. That's why the buddhas have no choice but to be in total bliss all the time, because they're doing good all the time, they can't escape it.

So if I'm smart, I'm going to give *this* to all my mothers, and then it's going to pour on me [relating to the rain that's pouring in the background]

Ok, so this is the commitment to serve the beings. Not only am I giving away all my goodness, also all the future goodness. That which I have done, that which I am doing, and that which I will do.

There's a little problem here, because can I give away my past virtue? I finished it off, I consumed it! I met my lamas, I have my good life now, my human body, I can't really give it away. So this is just a way of saying. I really can't. but I *can* resolve to use what I have in service of others. That I can. So in a way you can say, I really can't give away what I have already done, because I *am it*. It's embodying itself in my life now. **But I can give this life, I can take this thing that I have now, this life that I have now, this mind that I have now, and use it for the benefit of beings. This I can do.**

So in that sense I can give my past virtue, Ok?

Reviewing the Bodhisattva Vows

Then, comes the section on page 6. This is already now Part Two. Part Two started on page 6, where we are reviewing the bodhisattva vows. The 18 listed here are root vows. Then there are 46 other vows, which are not listed in this practice. We will not review this here because there's a whole course on them, it will take way more than the time we have here. It's 10 classes, a very very beautiful course on the bodhisattva vows, and I invite you, if you haven't studied it already, it's on the website, ACI Course number 7, very beautiful.

The Four Chains

At the top of page 7, after the root bodhisattva vows are listed, there's a little section which is also mentioned and explained in Course number 7, so I will just mention it here and not go into detail.

This talks about how are the root bodhisattva vows broken. Once you take Bodhisattva vows, it's very hard to break them, so that's a good thing about them. You have to be really malicious and evil to break them. And they say [that] in order to break one of the root vows, it needs to come with what they call "four chains".

So for example, you have vow number two, where you're supposed to give money when somebody comes to you and they are in need, and you have the money, and they have only you to come to, and you're not willing to give. Then you're breaking the vow. But they say, how will you be breaking the vow?

1. One thing is, **you have to think that it's not wrong to not want to give.** You're finding justification: "Oh, because I can't let my bank account fall below a certain level...". You think it's ok not to give. This is the first chain, not to think that the thing is wrong, to keep your money to yourself.
2. The second one, **not to want to stop it.** "So this is ok, I shouldn't be giving too much, and I should continue not giving too much", Ok? This is the second chain.
3. The third one is **to do it with pleasure and gladness.** "Yeah, it's good, I'm happy that I didn't give all this money to them. I'm happy about that, I took care of myself". Ok? You're happy.
4. And then, there's the last part – **to do it with no shame for myself, or consideration for others.** Two major factors in our practice of morality have to do with shame for myself and consideration for others.

[Shame from myself] - So often we are restrained from doing a bad deed because we are ashamed of ourselves from doing that. Maybe something is very tempting, and I would have taken normally, but what will I think of myself if I do that? So this is a very restraining factor.

[Consideration for others] - The other restraining factor is, if others see me do that, what will they think of me and will they keep their morality afterwards? Especially if I present myself as a teacher, a dharma practitioner, a monk, a nun. If I come with all these images around me and then I break vows, what will other people think and where will that lead them?

So that consideration for others, and shame from myself, are very important factors that help us maintain morality, and actually, one indication of how far you are on your path - is how well you developed those two.

So this is all described up there – that if you are not careful, you may break the vows, but it's hard to break them, you have to have all those four conditions.

Wrong View and Giving up Bodhicitta

However, it says, **there's two of the vows – number 9 and number 18, which are very easily broken even if you don't have all the chains.**

And that is:

9. **Holding views that are wrong,** for example: Not believing in karma, in deeds and consequences,
18. and the other one is: **Giving up putting all hope and trust.** The hope and trust has to do with our bodhicitta, with our desire to help beings. So it's like really giving up on beings.

Those you can do very easily. Just by sustaining the thought: “Enough of that nonsense, I'm going to first of all take care of myself, you take care of yourself. “

If you sustain this kind of thought for a while, meaning it - you have broken the vow even if you didn't have all four of the chains. Or, if you have sustained for a while the thought that you can do whatever you want and it's not true that there will be a consequence to that.

"Hey, I don't see, I have just cheated on my taxes, and nobody found out, and I'm Ok now". Thinking that there will be no consequence to that, that's wrong view. If you hold to that wrong view for a while, you have broken the vow. So those two, 9 and number 18 are very easy to break and we need to be very careful. The others are hard to break.

Three Attitudes for Keeping the Vows Properly

Remember, we started by saying that **keeping the vows is more important than anything else.**

Then Rinpoche says: Ok then how will you be able to keep those vows?

Here's what Rinpoche said: In order to be able to keep these vows properly, you should remember to keep three attitudes. Because your doing comes from your motivation. If you maintain the right motivation, you will be able to do it.

1. The first one, is **a very strong desire to learn the vows and to train yourself in the vows.**
2. Second one, is that **you must desire to achieve complete enlightenment.**

First one is strong desire to learn the vows and train yourself in the vows, second one is a very strong desire to achieve enlightenment

3. Third – **your purpose in doing all of this practice is to benefit beings.** You need to be motivated by very strong love and compassion for beings. So the more you can strengthen that compassion, like for example develop the recognition of all beings as your mother, and wanting to serve them that way. Those three.

What to do If We Break a Vow?

Then he says, if it happens that we break vows, especially secondary bodhisattva vows - which we haven't mentioned here, they're not listed in the practice - those are very easy to break, unlike the root bodhisattva vows. They have to do with helping the sick, and helping the poor, and not lying to your lama, not hiding things from your lama.

How easy it is to not tell our lama what we need to tell them? So easy.

And then I mentioned to you, the tantric vows are so easy to break, because they're mainly related to how we think. So easy to break.

So what should we do if we break them?

If the vows indeed are the key to paradise – which is what this whole book is trying to tell us. They are the key to paradise – and if it's so easy to break them – so how will

we ever reach paradise? It's very hard. And people break vows all the time. So what to do?

Shakpa

Very very important, is to practice what we call *shakpa*, confession.

Go to your lama, tell them about breaking vows. They're not going to judge you, because they're beyond judging, they come to help you. They know you're breaking vows, or else you wouldn't need them. **If you weren't breaking vows you wouldn't need a lama**, right? So they know that, it's a given.

We have mental afflictions, we have ignorance, we are unable to keep our vows, we're breaking our vows. So your lama knows that, they're not interested in judging you, they're interested in helping you, and even if you don't tell them, they know. Because they're omniscient, they know everything.

But it's your job to tell them, because you want to clean yourself of those transgressions. So

<p>A serious practitioner, if they are serious on their path, if they are tired of suffering, and if they are tired of seeing other beings suffering, they are not trying to hide transgressions,</p>
--

They are not going to not disclose them.

By opening yourself, by confessing to your lama or to a good dharma friend, that's also good. Or in front of your altar, or even in your book, you can do that. But don't keep it hidden. Then you become dirty, you're just filled with dirt and you can't have all those beautiful things that this practice can offer.

So **this is how He finishes this teaching** - he says: **If you have broken a vow, go and confess it to your lama, and then go and restore the vows**. And you can do it so easily – three times a day you are doing it. Restore the vows, resolve again, come back and start over.

Master Shantideva describes in his book: you have a mental affliction, you do a transgression, you fall down – it's like you're having this battle, and you lost the battle, you fell down. So you get up, you brush yourself off, and you continue. What else can you do? You continue.

Commitment to the Vows and to Serve the Beings

So in your part two, you go up to here¹, and then we said you skip the next paragraph on the first round. But then, on the second and third round, you come back to this paragraph, which is kind of a summary commitment to the vows in a few lines. So in the second and third round you don't list all the vows, you just come to this paragraph, and you say:

*I will follow
The Word of the Victors,*

¹ Up to the end of the review of the 18 bodhisattva root vows

(Victors are the buddhas) "I will learn my vows so well, I will practice them so well, that even in my dreams I will not act to break the vows". Very very high level. So I'm committing myself to become such an expert in the vows, and to engrain them so deeply in my mind, that it won't even occur to me in my dream to steal, or to do sexual misconduct, or things like that.

Very high level. Very high level.

3 Ways and 4 Groups

Then there is this paragraph in the end:

*I will keep, and keep well,
The holy teaching,
Just as the Victors
Have intended them:*

So this lists different teachings, which – we can't list here all the different vows, so here is like a summary commitment. **I will keep all the teachings and realizations.** Because it's not enough to have teachings, we also have to realize them, we also have to make them part of ourselves.

So whatever I have realized - I will keep, whatever I have not realized yet I will study and practice until I realize it. And then it he says:

*All that are found
In the three different Ways.*

What are the three different ways?

1. The way of the **Listeners**,
2. The way of the **Pratyeka Buddhas**,
3. And the way of the **Mahayana**.

You can say, three orientations that practitioners have. They can be oriented on benefiting themselves, or on benefiting others as well. So this talks about various scopes of practitioners: who are they including in their practice, what are they trying to accomplish in the practice. Each level of practice has its own vows and its own practices which are not listed here, they require study.

Serving All Beings

And then, there's this final line here –

*I will use any way that fits them
To liberate living beings.*

So who can do that, who can use anyway that fits them to liberate living beings? Only a buddha, right? I don't have that knowledge. In a normal mind, I don't have that knowledge.

Really we do, it's not true that we don't. Really we do, but we have obscurations.
You see, they say that the buddha is all knowing, right? Is omniscient.

How did they become omniscient? Through bodhichitta, by wanting to help other beings. By making it a practice for themselves to develop their compassion and their wish to help other beings, then they're interested in other beings, and they listen to what beings need, and then they develop the skills.

But really, we cannot project something that is not coming from us. Impossible. The buddhas projects themselves as omniscient. They wouldn't be able to do that if they didn't have omniscience in them.

We already have omniscience in us, but it's covered with obscurations, it's covered with obstacles, it's covered with impurities. Because of our selfishness, because of our self grasping, because of our wrong view, because we are so interested in ourselves, we are blocking ourselves from omniscience, we are blocking ourselves from bliss.

So really the practice is to remove those obscurations, remove those veils of ignorance, and – voila! Then we are omniscient.

So, this one says: "I am committing myself to find out what I need to do to help each and every being, in whatever way they need." Very very very beautiful, amazingly beautiful.

Amazing Seeds

Just by repeating it six times a day, can you imagine what kind of seeds you are planting in your mind? You are planting amazing seeds in your mind, they have to ripen eventually. They have to ripen. If you do it with strong intention, with the help of your lama, you will become a buddha.

Dedication and Prayer

So now we come to the last part which is a dedication. Read with me:

*...may all the virtues
I've ever been able to do,
Those like the good that I've done here,
Lead me quickly to a birth
In Shambhala, the Treasure House of Wealth,
And let me there
Come to the final end
Of the steps on the path
Of the Unsurpassed.*

I'll read it to you in Tibetan, just listen:

མདོར་ན་འདིས་མཚོན་རྣམ་དཀར་དག་བའི་ཚོགས།
 ཇི་སྟེན་བསགས་པ་དེ་ཡིས་ཕུར་དུ་བདག།
 རོར་བུའི་བར་མཛོད་འབྲས་ལར་སྐྱེས་ནས།
 ལྷ་མེད་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ་མཐར་ཕྱིན་ཤོག།

*Dor na di tsön nam kar ge wey tsok
 Ji nye sak pa de yi nyur du dak
 Nor bü bang dzö shambhalar kye ne
 La me lam-gyi rim pa tar chin shok*

This is this verse. So it says: may all the virtues I've ever been able to do, including this virtue, that I'm doing by doing this practice - I'm putting it in this huge basket.

Shambala

What is **Shambala**? It is a very good place to be born into.

See, once you die, you go into the bardo, you are projected into your future life. One of your karmas, the strongest one, the most powerful one, the one that came to the top of the line of the airplanes on the runway² – that one will project you into your future life. And you will find yourself in your new life. You will open your eyes and you'll be in a new world.

It's All a Karmic Projection

And there's so many different worlds, depending on the karma that people have.

It appears to me that these mountains and this state and this country and this world are very very solid and they are out there, and I'm on that planet. There's a planet, and I'm on that planet. But really, if you think about it, when a person is dying, their life begins to fade away from them. They're losing connection to this life, and as they're closing their eyes on their last breath, this whole planet disappears. Including the sun and the moon, everything disappears. That projection is collected back.

They have projected out this world, out of their karma, which really is out of their heart chakra. Then all the winds withdraw into the heart chakra, and the world disappears.

Like a Dream

Because all this outside very very solid and concrete and scientific world – really, all it is is my projection. Just like your dream. Just like when you dream, you have a story, and a world, and a planet, and whatever place you're in in your dream, and it

² Here – using the analogy of seeing the karmic seeds as if they were lined up like airplanes on a runway.

looks very real in the dream. And then as you wake up, it collects back into your mind and it disappears.

Same with our waking world – is just like a dream. It's not a solid world, it's made from my karma, from my mind really, projected from my mind.

Projecting Karma

So when a person dies, one of those karmic seeds that they have collected through their actions, that is very powerful, will project them into their next life.

And if the karma that ripens at the time of death is bad, they will be projected into a world of misery, into a world of suffering. If that karma is good - they will be projected into a happy world.

So in this prayer we are begging to be projected into Shambala. Here is how Rinpoche describes it: “It's a place filled with dharma jewels, and jewels of material wealth, along with every form of happiness.”

So it's a place where there's material wealth, it's a place where there is spiritual wealth – there are teachers, there are teachings. And every forms of happiness, beings there are happy. And you have all the conditions there to complete your path, if you haven't completed it yet. This is not enlightenment yet, Ok? This is a place where you can go to finish off your enlightenment.

Now, remember, this is an excerpt from the full practice. To reach enlightenment you need tantra. So that verse is omitted from here. But if you do the tantra [tantric version] there'll be a verse that precedes that one, where you can actually finish it [the path] off in one lifetime.

But if not, you can still go to a very very very high place, where you will be very happy, you will meet teachers, good teachers, and you will be able to complete your path.

So Rinpoche says: Shambala is a treasure house of jewels. If you reach there, you won't ever hear any description of a beggar or a poor person. In those worlds there are no poor people. Then he says: I hope, I wish, I pray that I reach that place, and in that place, in this Shambala, I will be able to complete all the levels of practice.

Concluding Verses

Then, the concluding verses. I am going to read to you in Tibetan.

སྐྱེ་བ་ཀུན་ཏུ་ཡང་དག་སྒྲ་མ་དང་།
འབྲུལ་མེད་ཚེས་གྱི་དཔལ་ལ་ལོངས་སྤྱོད་ཅིང་།
ཁ་དང་ལས་གྱི་ཡོན་ཏན་རབ་རྗེས་ནས།
དོ་རྗེ་འཆང་གི་གོ་འཕང་སྐྱུར་ཐོབ་ཤོག།

*Kye wa kün tu yang dak la ma dang
Drel me chö-kyi pel la long chö ching
Sa dang lam-gyi yön ten rab dzok ne
Dor je chang-gi go pang nyur tob shok*

Let's read this:

*In all my lives
May I never live apart
From my perfect lamas,
May I bask
In the glory
Of the Dharma.*

*May I fulfill
Perfectly
Every good quality
Of every level
And path,
And reach then quickly
The place where I become myself
The One Who Holds the Diamond.*

So this is the conclusion.

1. Always with my Lama

In all my future lives – meaning, all my rebirths, if I still have some rebirthing to do, if I'm not done yet. First request, first prayer is,

*May I never live
Apart from my perfect lamas,*

Wherever I go, may my lama be always next to me.

Is that possible?

Audience: Yes

Teacher: It's very possible.

If you have practiced the Six Session Guru Yoga and such practices well, if you have practiced very well with your lama, if you practiced to develop faith and reverence to your lama, and purified yourself from obscurations, and if you have served them nicely – then you have attached yourself to your lama. That's a good attachment – attach yourself to the lama - then you'll never be apart. You will meet them again and again.

They may look differently and sound differently but you will recognize them as your lama. You will know: “Oh this is my lama.” And you will just want to be with them and study with them and spend your life next to them.

It's very very beautiful, very happy. Guru Yoga is a treasure of happiness, if you do that. If you do that. Because then you'll never be alone. You're safe; actually you're safe. That's your refuge. That's a true refuge.

So

may I never be apart from my lama.

2. Always with the Dharma

And then, it says:

*May I bask
In the glory
Of the Dharma.*

So this is the second request. So the first request was to never be apart from your lama. The second request is to be reborn in a place where there is always dharma, where you can continue to practice. Where you continue to perfect yourself until you

3. Complete the Path

The third one:

**May I fulfill
Perfectly
Every good quality
Of every level
And path,**

Level and path in Tibetan is:

ས་ལམ།

Sa Lam

Sa - means **levels**,

and **Lam** - means **path**.

May I fulfill all the different levels on the path to enlightenment. Which really refers to bodhisattva bhumis, the different levels of bodhisattva, like I described to you a little bit before – first level is when you perfect your giving, second level is when you perfect your morality, etc. There's all those six levels, and there's additional four.

And once you have reached tenth level bodhisattva bhumi – you're so holy, you're almost like a buddha, you can already emanate, you can already spend most of your time meditating on emptiness. To our eyes, we wouldn't be able to distinguish even an eighth level bodhisattva from a buddha. They're just so so holy.

So “may I be able to fulfill all those levels, to practice well, and perfect myself in that way.”

4. Enlightenment

*And reach then quickly
The place where I become myself
The One Who Holds the Diamond.*

“**The one who holds the diamond**” refers to the buddha. What diamond are they holding? The diamond of perfect wisdom, perfect compassion, perfect love, omniscience, perfect ability to help beings. And that is like a diamond because it's indestructible, it's very solid, it's very strong. And from that place of ultimate wisdom they come and they act to serve the beings.

So this is the conclusion and this one you do once at the end. It's a nice place to end.

So that's all I have to say.

Questions?

Question: She's asking can you make the confession in your meditation, between you and you?

Answer: Yes, you can do, it's much better than not doing it, infinitely better than not doing it. It's more powerful to come to our lama.

Why? Because then it's embarrassing, right? It's embarrassing to admit that you've done a transgression. Then, you're less likely to repeat it later. Because if you make a resolve to come to your lama with *shakpas* – Ok, first time you come: I did this. Second time you come: I did this. Third time you come: I did this. He says, Ok, well, enough already!

So then you're more likely to change your behavior faster, so it's more powerful.

But if you don't have access to your lama, or if you're still too embarrassed, it's better to do it however you do it, than not do it.

[Repeating]: Beautiful question: How to actually practice this as a meditation?

Teacher: Initially you do it with the page. You read, you pause, and you do the visualization. If you do it six times a day, you'll know it by heart very quickly, don't worry. You don't even have to intentionally memorize it, it'll happen automatically. And if you'll put in the effort to memorize it, then it's even better, so don't worry.

Answer to a Question: Yes, you can do preliminary practice before that. Yeah, it doesn't replace everything else we taught you, but it's a very concise way to practice, and once you get into tantra, you'll get this double size. And then it becomes a commitment.

Question: It doesn't replace [the preliminaries]?

Teacher: the preliminaries? It's very good to do them. Some of them you have here: You have here the offering, for example, bowing to your lama you have here.

This is a concise way that the first Panchen Lama, in his compassion, devised. And since then, lamas have been requiring this of their students.

So I strongly recommend that you do that, it will plant beautiful seeds in your mind.

Question: The six time a day, when you repeat it the three times – you do that twice?

Teacher: The part that treats the vows, you do in the six times book. You know about the six times book?

If you go to the ACI website, acidharma.org, there will be there a section about how to keep your book. And there's a booklet out there, you should read. And that one you do not like described here, in the morning and the evening, that one you do throughout the day. Every two-three hours you open the book, and you follow up on one vow, and it's very powerful to do it.

So the section on the vows – you can do in the form of the book, it's more powerful than described here, but everything else you do as I described, twice a day, but within each session you do it three times. And go through the thoughts, through the meditations, because those are the ones that plant the seeds in your mind, and then you see them in the outside world.

Thank you so much, thank you very much, very holy opportunity to share this, and please do this, please practice this, Ok?

(Mandala)

(Dedication)