

CHAPTER 7: SAMAYA COMMITMENTS

Tibetan: རིམ་ཁང་བདུན་པ། (Seventh Lecture Hall)

Location: Volume 1, Sections 01-07-01-01 through 01-07-05-01

Tibetan Lines: 9704-10476

Total Liturgical Lines: ~773

Following the comprehensive presentation of empowerments in Chapter 6, this chapter focuses exclusively on **samaya** (dam tshig)—the sacred commitments that bind the practitioner to the path of Secret Mantra. Longchenpa explains that receiving empowerment without maintaining samaya is like receiving seeds without planting them; the potential for awakening exists but cannot actualize without the proper conditions.

The chapter presents a **hierarchy of samayas** ranging from conventional commitments (rules to be kept) to the supreme samaya of Great Perfection (nature beyond keeping). This progression mirrors the Dzogchen path itself: beginning with discipline, maturing into recognition, culminating in spontaneous presence.

SECTION BREAKDOWN

Section 1: 01-07-01-01.txt (195 lines)

Topic: Definition and Classification of Samaya

The chapter opens with the fundamental definition and classification of samaya commitments.

Definition of Samaya: "Samaya is the binding pledge—the vajra cross, difficult to traverse, certain in aim."

The Essential Nature: "Generally, that which is called samaya is the mind itself, unbroken, free from all deception and guile."

Two-Fold Classification: - **Root Samaya** (rtsa ba'i dam tshig): The three—Body, Speech, and Mind - **Branch Samaya** (yan lag gi dam tshig): Twenty-five specific commitments

Seven Categories of Samaya: - 1. **View Samaya** (lta ba'i dam tshig): Maintaining the correct view - 2. **Conduct Samaya** (spyod pa'i dam tshig): Proper tantric conduct - 3. **Practice Samaya** (sgrub pa'i dam tshig): Commitments regarding practice - 4. **Common Samaya** (thun mong gi dam tshig): General commitments - 5. **Body-Speech-Mind Samaya** (sku gsung thugs kyi dam tshig): Specific to three doors - 6. **Branch Enumeration Samaya** (yan lag gi dam tshig): The twenty-five branches - 7. **Crucial Certain Samaya** (gces par nges pa'i dam tshig): Essential definitive commitments

The Teacher-Student Relationship:

Four Types of Teachers: - 1. **General Teacher** (spyi'i bla ma): Honored by all as teacher - 2. **Drawing Teacher** (dbugs 'byin pa'i bla ma): Who draws one to connect with Dharma - 3. **Empowerment Teacher** (dbang bskur ba'i bla ma): Who bestows samaya and vows - 4. **Instruction Teacher** (man ngag gi bla ma): Who gives instruction and transmission

Four Types of Vajra Siblings: - 1. **General Siblings** (spyi'i mched grogs): All who have entered the teachings - 2. **Close Siblings** (nye ba'i mched grogs): Those of one Dharma-family - 3. **Mixed Siblings** ('dres pa'i mched grogs): Those gathered by one Guru - 4. **Extremely Mixed Siblings** (shin tu 'dres pa'i mched grogs): Those who received empowerment together in one maṇḍala

Consequences of Samaya Decline: - **Body decline:** Leads to vajra hell - **Speech decline:** Leads to darkness and muteness - **Mind decline:** Leads to madness and uninterrupted suffering

Methods of Repair: - Extensive scripture reading - Gaṇacakra offerings - Lamp rituals - Offerings to the guru

Section 2: 01-07-02-01.txt (91 lines)

Topic: Body Samaya

This section details the **nine body samayas** (three outer, three inner, three secret).

Outer Body Samaya: - 1. **Not stealing** (ma rku): Avoid taking what is not given - 2. **Avoiding sexual misconduct** (ma 'khrig): Proper sexual conduct - 3. **Not killing** (ma bsad): Abstaining from taking life

Inner Body Samaya: - 1. **Not despising one's body** (lus la mi bkur): Recognizing the body as sacred - 2. **Not despising parents** (pha ma la mi bkur): Honoring one's parents - 3. **Not despising vajra siblings** (rdo rje mched grogs la mi bkur): Respecting sangha

Secret Body Samaya (regarding the Guru): - 1. **Not stepping over the Guru's shadow** (grib ma la mi rdeg) - 2. **Not holding weapons in the Guru's presence** (mtshon cha mi thogs) - 3. **Not stretching legs or lying before the Guru** (rkang pa 'grangs chog min) - 4. **Not showing one's back to the Guru** (rgyab kyis mi phyogs) - 5. **Abandoning playful ornaments** (rgyan rol spangs): Not wearing umbrellas, ornaments in bedroom

Signs of Samaya Decline: - **Limb sickness:** Physical ailments indicating broken commitments - **Sense-power sickness:** Loss of faculties - **Organ sickness:** Internal organ problems

Repair Methods: - Clay images (for minor breaches) - Deity statues (for moderate breaches) - Offerings of vajra and bell (for serious breaches)

Section 3: 01-07-03-01.txt (96 lines)

Topic: Speech Samaya

Following the same structure, this section presents the **nine speech samayas**.

Outer Speech Samaya: - 1. **Abandoning falsehood** (rdzun spang): Truthful speech - 2. **Abandoning slander** (phra ma spang): Not dividing others - 3. **Abandoning harsh words** (tshig rtsub spang): Kind speech even to ordinary beings

Consequences of Breaking Outer Speech Samaya: - **Falsehood:** Gadfly body in future lives - **Slander:** Rebirth in northern bad migrations - **Harsh words:** Endless suffering

Inner Speech Samaya: - Proper Dharma discussion - Accomplishment speech (mantras, recitation) - Meditative speech (not speaking during meditation)

Prohibitions: - Not grieving inappropriately - Not blaming or scolding fellow practitioners - Not disparaging vajra siblings

Secret Speech Samaya: - Not disparaging the Guru's mudrā (consort) - Not disparaging the Guru through word or deed - Maintaining secrecy of teachings

Karma Multiplication: - Breaking samaya with vajra sibling: **7 times** the sin - Breaking samaya with lineage guru: **100 times** the sin - Breaking samaya with root guru: **10,000 times** the sin

Section 4: 01-07-04-01.txt (385 lines)

Topic: Mind Samaya and Supreme Samaya—THE MAJOR SECTION

This extensive section presents the **nine mind samayas** and culminates in the **supreme samaya of Great Perfection**.

Outer Mind Samaya: - Abandoning harmful intent toward all beings - Abandoning harmful intent toward the Guru - Abandoning harmful intent toward vajra siblings

Inner Mind Samaya: - Abandoning wrong views about established tenets - Abandoning wrong meditation - Abandoning wrong conduct

Secret Mind Samaya: - Not holding the Guru as ordinary - Recognizing the Guru as the nature of all Buddhas - Understanding that harm to Guru is heavier than any other sin

The Four Degrees of Samaya Damage:

1. Contradiction ('gal ba): - Repairable same day - Minor breach through momentary anger or distraction

2. Degenerated (nyams pa): - Repairable within one month - Moderate breach through ongoing negligence

3. Crossed (bzhar ba): - Repairable within one year - Serious breach through deliberate violation

4. Loose (lhod pa): - Requires 2-3 years of intensive practice - Complete abandonment of samaya

Repair Methods for Each Degree: - Confession to the Guru - Gaṇacakra offerings - Recitation of hundred-syllable mantra - Deity practice and self-visualization

Supreme Samaya of Great Perfection:

The section culminates in the **non-dual samaya** beyond conventional rules:

Trekchö (khregs chod) — Primordial Purity: - Recognizing all appearances as illusory like mirage-water - Seeing through the nature of mind directly - **Samaya:** To recognize that which cannot be kept or broken

Thögel (thod rgal) — Spontaneous Presence: - Recognizing self-arisen wisdom's qualities - The natural display of luminosity - **Samaya:** To remain in what is spontaneously accomplished

The Ultimate Samaya: "The supreme samaya is primordially guarded, spontaneously accomplished, self-liberated."

Beyond Keeping and Breaking: - Conventional samaya: Rules to be maintained - Supreme samaya: Nature to be recognized - The Dzogchen practitioner ultimately transcends conventional samaya while never breaking it

Scripture Citations: - Essence Meaning Aspect-Taken (snying po don gyi cha lta ba) - Sky-Iron Fire Blazing (nam lcags me 'bar) - Crystal House Stacked (shel gyi khang brtsegs) - Lotus Klong (padma klong) - Co-Arisen Near-Taken (lhan cig skyes pa nyer lta ba) - Supreme Trunk of Samaya Arrangements (dam tshig bkod pa'i sdong po mchog) - Consequence (thal 'gyur) - Jewel-Stacked Wheel (rin chen brtsegs pa'i 'khor lo) - Glorious Sky-Not-Exhausted (dpal nam mkha' med pa)

Section 5: 01-07-05-01.txt (6 lines)

Topic: Conclusion and Bridge to Chapter 8

A brief transitional passage pointing toward Chapter 8's presentation of the primordial **Ground** (gzhi), indicating that samaya commitments ultimately rest upon recognizing the nature of reality itself.

"Having established the samaya that binds and liberates, now the Ground itself shall be revealed."

KEY TECHNICAL TERMS INTRODUCED

Samaya Classifications

- **Samaya** (dam tshig): Sacred commitment, binding pledge
- **Root Samaya** (rtsa ba'i dam tshig): Fundamental commitments of Body, Speech, Mind
- **Branch Samaya** (yan lag gi dam tshig): Twenty-five specific commitments
- **Supreme Samaya** (dam tshig mchog): Non-dual recognition beyond rules

The Three Doors

- **Body Samaya** (lus kyi dam tshig): Physical conduct and respect
- **Speech Samaya** (ngag gi dam tshig): Verbal conduct and truthfulness
- **Mind Samaya** (sems kyi dam tshig): Mental conduct and view

Teacher Types

- **General Teacher**: Honored by all
- **Drawing Teacher**: Connects one to Dharma
- **Empowerment Teacher**: Bestows samaya
- **Instruction Teacher**: Transmits teachings

Vajra Siblings

- **General**: All Dharma practitioners
- **Close**: Same Dharma-family
- **Mixed**: Same Guru
- **Extremely Mixed**: Same empowerment

Degrees of Damage

- **Contradiction** ('gal ba): Minor, same-day repair
- **Degenerated** (nyams pa): Moderate, month repair

- **Crossed** (bzhar ba): Serious, year repair
- **Loose** (lhod pa): Severe, 2-3 years repair

Supreme Samaya Terms

- **Trekchö** (khregs chod): Cutting through—primordial purity
 - **Thögel** (thod rgal): Direct crossing—spontaneous presence
 - **Primordially Guarded** (ye nas bsrungs): Never lost, never kept
 - **Spontaneously Accomplished** (lhun grub): Effortless perfection
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READING GUIDANCE

For Practitioners: This chapter is **essential for all Vajrayāna practitioners**, as samaya maintenance is the basis upon which all tantric accomplishments depend.

Key understandings: 1. **Samaya is not punishment:** The hell descriptions are accurate karmic mechanics, not threats 2. **The Guru is paramount:** Harm to Guru is worse than harm to all other beings combined 3. **Hierarchy of severity:** Sibling < Lineage Guru < Root Guru (7x < 100x < 10,000x) 4. **Repair is always possible:** Even complete breakage can be repaired through sincere practice

Practice implications: - Maintain awareness of samaya in daily conduct - Respect the Guru as the embodiment of all Buddhas - Protect the vajra sangha as spiritual family - Ultimately, rest in the supreme samaya beyond keeping

Warning: The terrifying descriptions of hell-realms and karma multiplication are not meant to create guilt or fear but to inspire **careful attention** to conduct. The Vajrayāna path is powerful and therefore requires strong container.

For Scholars: Note the sophisticated structure: - **Progressive presentation:** Outer → Inner → Secret → Supreme - **Numerical organization:** 3 roots, 25 branches, 7 categories, 4 degrees - **Soteriological arc:** From discipline to recognition - **Integration:** Conventional ethics transcended but not abandoned

Critical Points: 1. **Conventional vs. Supreme:** The relationship between keeping rules and recognizing nature 2. **Guru devotion:** Theological basis for Guru yoga 3. **Karma mechanics:** Multiplication effects in samaya context 4. **Tantric ethics:** Different from sūtra ethics—more intense, more immediate consequences

Scripture Citations: - **Tantra of Supreme Samaya** (dam tshig mchog gi rgyud) - **Self-Arisen** (rang shar) - **Various Great Perfection tantras:** Listed above

QUALITY NOTE

Chapter 7 Status: A++ Exemplar Standard

All sections have been upgraded to exemplar quality with: - Proper <tantra>, <list>, and <ornament> tags - Complete sentences with sophisticated punctuation - Technical term precision with Sanskrit and Tibetan - Majestic Vajra Speech cadence - STRICT capitalization per project standards

Files Polished: 5 sections, ~773 lines

Primary Focus: Root and branch samayas, three doors, four degrees of damage, supreme samaya

CONNECTION TO CHAPTER 8

Chapter 7 established **samaya** (dam tshig) as the path; Chapter 8 will present the **Ground** (gzhi) as the basis. These two chapters form a critical pair: - **Chapter 7**: How to maintain connection (samaya) - **Chapter 8**: What we are connected to (the Ground)

The progression: 1. First understand **empowerment** (Chapter 6)—the door opens 2. Then understand **samaya** (Chapter 7)—stay connected 3. Then understand the **Ground** (Chapter 8)—what is realized

The supreme samaya at the end of Chapter 7 already points to Chapter 8: the samaya beyond keeping and breaking is precisely the recognition of the **primordial Ground** that is spontaneously pure from the beginning.

For Dzogchen practitioners: The samaya of Trekchö and Thögel are the doorway into the direct recognition of the Ground presented in Chapter 8. Understanding samaya as "primordially guarded" prepares the mind for understanding the Ground as "primordially pure."
