

Samaya

The Tantric Vows

As explained in Dzogchen Ngeton Tenzin Zangpo's The Excellent Chariot, Guide to the Dakinis Heart, Translated to English by the Third Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche

Samaya presented in condensed form. Otherwise:

- ❖ Those associated with maturing empowerments
- ❖ Those associated with liberating instructions
- ❖ There are actually 100,000, but 25 are essential.
- ❖ But this can be condensed into three.

1. Samaya of Body
2. Samaya of Speech
3. Samaya of Mind

Who needs to practice these?

Those who have received the maturing empowerments.

“When the maturing empowerments are present in one’s state of being, the samaya vows need to be maintained.”

The main point: “Turn away from all forms of vice and practice only virtue.”

Long Explanation of the meaning of Body, Speech and Mind:

1. Samaya of Form [Body]

- a. Don't act disrespectfully to Vajra master, buddhas, bodhisattvas, yidam deities, dakinis, your brothers and sisters, vajra siblings, nor toward any sentient being, nor toward the five elements or your own body.
 - i. Refrain from:
 1. Taking their lives
 2. Stealing from them
 3. Abusing them physically
 4. Abusing them verbally
 - ii. Don't have distorted sense of pure view.
 1. Don't do anything that involves vice or negativity.
 2. See environment and its inhabitants, as well as your own body as all divine, they are all the yidam deity.
 - iii. Make prostrations and offerings, sing their praises and do other such things.
 - iv. Meditate on the development state of the divine yidam deity.

b. Benefits.

- i. Temporary benefits.
 1. Your body will be free from illness.
 2. Your body will be of benefit to beings.
 3. You will be pleasing to the eye.
 4. All who touch or see you will be set on the path of virtue.
- ii. Ultimate benefits.
 1. You will arrive at the Vajra Seat.
 2. You will benefit others wherever you happen to be.

3. Once you die you will work for the welfare of sentient beings with an infinite number of manifestations.
 4. Your form blazing with the marks and signs you will gain mastery over the great, enlightened activities of the buddhas and work for the welfare of others.
- c. Consequences if it Degenerates.
 - i. Short life and ill health.
 - ii. All sorts of undesirable things will take place.
 - iii. Those who see or touch you will be reborn in lower realms.
 - iv. Ultimately, the inescapable sufferings of Vajra Hell.
2. Samaya of Speech
 - a. Do not deviate from what the Vajra master says.
 - i. Do not belittle the Buddhist scriptures from the Buddha down to ordinary people.
 - ii. Avoid being angry or harboring malice towards any word or sound, whether it comes from the elements or a living being.
 - iii. Act with respect and devotion thinking of every sound as enlightened speech of all the buddhas.
 - iv. Never depart from the recitation of mantras.
 - b. Temporary Benefits
 - i. Your speech will be pleasing and everyone will regard what you say as the truth.
 - ii. Gods, spirits and humans will do your bidding.
 - iii. You will understand the tantras, scriptures and key instructions.
 - iv. You will be able to compose all manner of poetry and treatises, a multitude of dharma words having burst forth from your mind.
 - v. All the malice and ill-will of those who listen to your speech will be pacified.
 - vi. All of your aims will be accomplished.
 - vii. You will be liberated in one life.
 - c. Ultimate Benefits
 - i. The emanations of your speech will carry out the welfare of beings and turn the wheel of the dharma in a faultless manner.
 - d. Consequences if it Degenerates.
 - i. Temporary results.
 1. Vice that will cause harm to everyone, to both yourself and others.
 2. None of your aims will be accomplished. Instead they will be ill-fated and illness, malicious forces, and depression will beset you.
 - ii. Ultimate results
 1. You will have no chance to escape the lower realms.
3. Samaya of Enlightened Mind
 - a. Eliminate every unvirtuous thought to the point that thoughts do not arise for a moment.
 - b. Without breaking the continuity of virtue and bodhichitta, benefit others to the best of your ability.
 - c. Never stray from the cycle of completion stage.

Condensed Samaya Vows

From Dakini's Heart Essence

Ho! Just as the victors of the past kept their vows, I, too, will give up all violence,
Practicing virtue in body, speech, and mind.

Outer Vows

I will always keep and safeguard the vows Of the layman, novice, and fully ordained— All
the vows of individual liberation.

Bodhisattva Vows

Nor will I turn my back on
The disciplines of restraint [from committing negative actions],
Of gathering virtuous qualities
And working for the benefit of others.

The Three Tantric Samaya Vows

I accept, will not give up, and will practice each of the Three Jewels,
And will not let go of my guru or my yidam deity.

As the samaya of the Buddha, first among the Three Jewels,
I will apply myself to the true, essential reality.¹

As the samaya of sacred Dharma, second among the Three Jewels,
I will distill the very essence of all the vehicles' teachings.²

As the samaya of the Sangha, the third and final Jewel,
I will look upon reality; I will behold pure awareness.³

And as the samaya of the lama and the yidam deity,
I will take my very own mind, my pure mind, as a witness.⁴

¹ This means to “apply yourself to the ultimate ground, path and fruition, rather than applying yourself to those of the Lesser Vehicles...” page 89

² “The eighty-four-thousand approaches of the Dharma Are all included in bodhichitta.” page 89

³ Not falling into any extreme, clear, non-conceptual, not nihilistic void, settling naturally into a timeless state, beholding reality.

⁴ Have sincere pure perception, complete the approach and accomplishment of the yidam, these are the three ways not to be ashamed of yourself.

Five Buddha Family Vows

As the samaya of the vajra family,
I will not abandon bodhichitta
Or the mudras of vajra and bell.⁵

As the samaya of the jewel family,⁶
I will always be generous in the four ways.

As the samaya of the lotus family,
I will explain the teachings of the three yantras.⁷

As the samaya of the karma family,
I will work for the welfare of beings.⁸

As the samaya of the buddha family,
I will not lose sight of the three mandalas.⁹

As the Great Glorious One of the supreme family,
I will keep the vajra samaya¹⁰ and will not waver!
For the benefit of all sentient beings,
May all my vows be totally pure!

⁵ This is commitment of emptiness and compassion; of skillful means and wisdom; holding the mudra of appearance and emptiness, not giving up bodhisattva activities.

⁶ The four ways are generosity of dharma, fearlessness, material generosity, love.

⁷ Any of the nine vehicles should be taught in a way that the teachings match the student.

⁸ One should work for the benefit of oneself until that bears fruition, then work for the welfare of beings with a positive and altruistic attitude.

⁹ The physical mandala of the deity [your body], the verbal mandala is mantra, the mental mandala is concentration.

¹⁰ Maintaining all the vows from the outset is the vajra samaya.