"The Fourteen Root and Branch vows" is a text of the Sakyapa Sect. It was composed by Sakya Pandita in the early part of the eleventh century.

To the youthful Arya Manjusri, I bow down.
That which we talk of is called a root because it is like the root of a tree. If we cut the root, the leaves and branches cannot grow. In the same way, if the root of Vajrayana is not practiced (if we do not avoid the downfalls), we can not become a Buddha.
The feet of the perfectly pure Guru are resting on a lotus seat, to them I prostrate, what to speak of the celestial Buddha!
We can count 14 root downfalls.
Some ignorant persons say there are hundreds and thousands of vows (samaya). This idea should be given up. It is necessary you should understand what is said in the tantras. The roots are not just my personal opinion. If we care to think about where they are to be found in writing, we should mention the tantras of guhyasamaja and others. Moreover, they are also written of by Virwapa Lobpon. Some people say that Nagarjuna also mentioned them.
• As the result of these vows, the holders of the Vajra in this life or in future lives will gain Siddhis by following their teachers, the Vajra Gurus. So it is written.

1. If one disrespects one's Guru, that is the first root downfall. If one analyzes what disrespect of the Guru means, being a little angry with him is not disrespect. Disrespect means to say of one's Guru. "This Vajra teacher is bad, and breaks syla .... he does not follow the path of Dharma." If one thinks like this, this is a root downfall. If one disrespects him a little, it can be purified.

2. If one does not obey what the Buddha said, that is the second root downfall. One should not disregard the early sravaka teachings and the four General Principles, the Bodhicitta, and the four different classes of sins needing expiation according to the Vinaya. One should not say, "The Buddha says this but it does not matter," thus breaking the orders of the Tathagata. If one breaks the eight Basic Dharmas, this is a root downfall. These are also mentioned in the book called "The twenty sDom-pa".

3. The third downfall is to be angry with one's Vajra sisters and brothers. In Vajrayana, those who enter the Vajra Path are called one's Vajra sisters and brothers. If one gets angry with them, that becomes a root downfall. If one has in addition a common Vajra Guru, that is a more serious offense. The most serious root downfall is to be angry with those who have taken initiation with the same Teacher, using the same mandala. That is a certain downfall. Again, anger does not only mean fighting. Even if the idea of one's Vajra sister or brother being an enemy arises in one's mind, that is a root downfall. Arguing, fighting with words, can be purified.

4. To give up loving-kindness to all sentient beings, said the Victorious One, is the fourth root downfall. One should not give up on the thought, "May all beings be happy." Harboring the idea that suffering may increase and giving up loving all beings is a root downfall. More, to give up loving even one being is a root downfall. It can never happen that a person gives up loving all beings whatsoever. Even the merciless raksaasas and yaksas have love for their children.
5. To give up the root of Dharma, which is the spiritual objective of oneself and others. That is to say, the root of Mahayana Dharma is the desire to gain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. To give up the Bodhicitta means to give up that. How can one help all sentient beings if one has a feeling of weakness because one is faced with the suffering of the world? To give up the Bodhicitta, the thought of enlightenment, is therefore a root downfall.

6. The sixth root downfall is to disparage the Dharma, which is the spiritual objective of oneself and others. That is to say, to think that one's own Mahayana doctrine and the Hinayana of others both do not show the Path, disparasing them is a root downfall.

7. To tell of the secret teachings, those who are not spiritually ripe enough is the 7th root downfall. That is to say, it is a root downfall to tell inner teachings to those who have not had initiations, to show them the Vajra and bell, the kapala cup, to explain the secret rules of conduct, and the tshogs of the mandala to them. Telling the deep meanings of the secret tantric teachings is a root downfall.

8. The eighth root downfall is to disparage this body (made up of the skandhas) which contains the Five Buddhas. That is, the five heaps or aggregates (skandas) are the Five Buddhas. That is, the five heaps or aggregates (skandhas) are the Five Buddhas. That is rupa skandha, the body in the form of matter is Vairocana. The vedana skandha, feelings, is Ratnasambhava. The samjna skandha, ideations or perceptions, is Amitabha. The samskara skandha, impulses and mental formations, is Amoghasiddhi. The vijnana skandha, consciousness, is Aksobhya. Not realizing all this and saying that one's body is a lower type of thing, this is a root downfall.

9. All Dharmas are pure to doubt this is the ninth root downfall. That is to say, the nature of all things is away from extremes. Not realizing that this is so, and thinking about whether it is this or that extreme, is a root downfall.

10. Always to love enemies and harmful beings is the tenth root downfall. That is to say, those who did respect or harm the teaching of the Buddhas; loving those few who are actually harming the teaching of the Buddhas is a root downfall. But, if one thinks that by doing this one is going against what was said before about not giving up love for any sentient being, this is not contrary to that teaching. Although it is felt for the time being that one has given up loving somebody, basically this is not so. It is the same, for example, as when a mother gets angry with a child who goes on the wrong path. If this brings great benefit to sentient beings, it is not a sin, because this action is to help all beings.

11. The eleventh root downfall is to have the wrong realization of the Dharmas which are beyond words. All Dharmas have no self-nature and are beyond extremes. If one positively asserts that all Dharmas are empty, this is falling into an extreme, and so it is a root downfall.

12. The twelfth root downfall is to upset a person who has great faith. That is to say, if anyone has faith in the Buddha's teachings and more particularly in the Mahayana, and has special faith in the tantra, if one conducts oneself by body, voice, or mind in such a way as to spoil their faith, and they subsequently lose faith, that is a root downfall. If one does not act in such a manner that their faith is destroyed, but they lose faith anyway, that is not one's sin.

13. The thirteenth root downfall is not to keep with oneself the things necessary for one's samaya vows. That is to say, if at the times of celebrating the offering puja one has not the requisite articles, that is a root downfall.

14. If one disparages women who are of the nature of wisdom, that is the fourteenth root downfall. That is to say, women are the symbol of wisdom and Shunyata, showing both. It is therefore a root downfall to disparage women in every possible way, saying that women are without spiritual merit and made of unclean things, not considering their goo qualities. If one says a little against a woman, that can be purified. But if the woman disparaged is a
Vajra sister, and one considers her as one's enemy, that is the third and heavier root downfall. If the woman is not actually a Vajra sister, to give up being friendly to her is the fourth root downfall.

Next follows an exposition of what are called the "Branch Downfalls." These are like the branches of a tree. If one cuts a tree's branches, it will spoil it a little, but it does not mean it will not grow. Likewise, if one commits the Eight Branch Downfalls, it will cause harm but one will not be reborn in the hells.

If one takes on the path a Vajra partner (consort) who has not taken the vows and initiations, just thinking about it in one's own mind, by doing that one has committed the first branch downfall. If one actually blesses the secret path of somebody, man or woman, who has not had initiation, that becomes the seventh downfall.

Disputing at the time of the offering rite, that is to say, actually fighting, becomes the third root downfall, but anybody arguing becomes guilty of the second downfall.

The next point refers to showing the secret teachings, that is to say, the symbolic language used at the Chos-hdug. Using this language at the wrong time, even to somebody who has had initiation, is the third branch downfall. If, however, one mentions these words to somebody who has not had initiations, this becomes the seventh root downfall.

The teaching of a Dharma contrary to their own to those who have faith, that is to say, to those who have taken the wrong path and who have a desire to get Dharma teaching, to teach such a one a belief he does not want (mahayana or tantra) without him wishing to hear it, is wrong and is the fourth branch downfall. If by doing that he becomes upset, that develops into the twelfth downfall.

To stay seven days with a sravaka who is very proud of his faith and against mahayana and tantra, that is to say, to stay in his home with someone who only believes in hinayana, for seven days, is the fifth branch downfall. To give secret teachings to someone who has not had the higher initiations, even if he has the lower, and to give the high anuttara-yoga teachings, is the sixth branch downfall. To teach anuttara yoga to those who have no initiation at all is the seventh root downfall.

The seventh branch downfall is to show someone the physical mudras who does not know the mudra teaching, and to show, for example, hooks and lasso to someone who has even had initiations but has not had the mudra teaching. If one shows this to someone without any initiation at all, that is the seventh root downfall.

To give initiation when one has not said the correct number of mantras and not performing the things prescribed in the actual book of tantra while giving the initiation, that is the eighth branch downfall.

To lose either of the two ordinations (Hinayana or Mahayana) without need or reason is wrong. If one has sufficient reason, one is allowed to give up these ordinations.

All followers of the Vajrayana Path who commit sins of all kinds lose or finish their vows; and having done this they cannot gain the Siddhis. In this life and the next their suffering increases very much. Therefore, in order to avoid committing these sins, three times in the day and three times during the night one should recite mantras and prayers daily. Therefore, all these instructions should be followed perfectly. If one has any fault, one should purify it. If one has no fault, one should feel happy.