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“The Life & Teachings of Naropa”

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Talk Four of Four  
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VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN:

Good evening. This is our final meeting together in discussing the life and teachings of Naropa. At this point we should understand that Naropa’s relationship with his guru was extremely direct, and there was no deception involved. A person such as Naropa who had traveled along the Buddhist path, who had accomplished the three disciplines of the hinayana, who had also accomplished practice of the paramitas, was ready and quite strong enough to interact, to relate with the guru principle, in other words the directness of his own mind. That’s the guru principle, as manifested in the body and presence of the guru, in this case, Tilopa. So we are talking about someone who is well disciplined, well-schooled and has tamed his mind. But we are also talking about someone who is not deceived by that.

But there is a little problem that Naropa encountered. That is, having been confirmed, having understood the expression of his guru, he still had this kind of sentimentality about the whole thing. And Tilopa said to him, it seems that you still hanker after the guru, some kind of fascination with the guru’s spirituality, which makes it separate from oneself. Because of that, because there is some kind of

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lingering preoccupation with the spirituality of the guru outside of one's own mind, in other words outside of one's own spirituality, because of that Naropa had to actually wear down his fascination with that which is real.

You see, it's very easy to talk about one thing or another. But in Naropa's case, the preoccupation with the guru's spirituality is a much more definite thing. Much more sense of contact with one's own basic intelligence. And also a sense of black and white, positive and negative, spirituality and absence of it. And that kind of interplay that goes on between. The notion of separateness. Tilopa said you still seem still to be attracted by the teaching of the guru who understands reality as bliss. Your emotions still seem to be unstable since you hanker after the instruction of the profound meaning of reality by the guru who understands it in blissfulness. Hanker not for this, nor for its opposite.

This notion is that because of some kind of fundamental belief in separateness, which starts from belief in ego, I, notion of oneself as an entity which continues and is solid, as opposed to everything else, and therefore the notion of other arises. And other in its most prominent form is guru, in terms of spirituality. The ultimate other is the one who knows. In this case Naropa still had some kind of poverty mentality, some kind of clinging to ego. But very, very fine point with Naropa. So fine that it actually became a thorn and that he had to actually work it out completely, fully, constantly.

Tilopa sat motionless for a year, and Naropa finally circumambulated him and with folded hands said, please tell me something. And Tilopa said, follow me. We talked about this last night. So that kind of commitment, devotion and dedication, is based on no deception on Naropa's part. He still knows that he doesn't understand. At the same time, he's still fascinated with wanting to know, wanting to understand. So being such a scholar as he was - you know, we all sort of different bent, Naropa was a scholarly person. We all have different kind of expression, it really doesn't matter, this happened to be Naropa's vehicle. Being such a scholarly person, then Tilopa's methods were very harsh and very rude, actually, not intellectual at all, very earthy and mundane. Walking across the leech field, jumping out of a building, that kind of thing. Had nothing to do with any kind of concept. Because at that point it came right down to a little point of who am I, a little dot. And that particular little dot cannot be approached by any kind of analysis or intellectualization. Neither can it be approached by any kind of intuition or good feeling. It has to be approached directly without any of those.

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So Naropa's fascination with the spirituality of the guru is pretty much in keeping with our own life and how we approach the teaching, and we really think somebody knows, and that we ourselves have to find out. Now that's the basic setup of our devotional world. And that's okay if you are quite clear that you are not going to give up, even though you're disappointed. You know, the whole sense of separateness between what is wisdom and what we think of as ourselves is a fiction. But as long as we support that fiction by belief in other, something outside, and belief in ourselves as separate from that, we must actually get to the point. Recognizing that we do actually continue that way and believing that way. At the same time we have this suspicion that it's not true, that it's completely a joke, and some kind of false reality, a false statement of reality. Then we must actually get to the point.

So Naropa did such thing. He wasn't anywhere near as analytical as we are, just from the point of view of belonging to Dharmadhatu. That's big deal to us. Now do I really want to join a group, and indulge in this sort of organizational world? Now what's the point of paying dues and spirituality, I mean... That's just, I suppose, where we are, but we're talking about Naropa now, who paid his dues lots of times before he met Tilopa. Not only did he pay his dues, he actually taught other people how to pay dues. But he realized he was holding out, and that holding out he had no choice but to find the guru who could actually bust that bubble. Not because the guru is some kind of heavyweight boxer who could knock his teeth out particularly. But he realized that that deception was so thick and so continuous that some kind of final discipline was necessary. Final discipline means based on non-thought. Discipline based on non-thought, that discipline cannot be encompassed by one's opinion. So the clearness of his mind plus the deception that he understood made him go toward the guru.

And not only toward the guru but follow that guru's instructions. When we talk about following instructions we're not talking about those things that happened to him on his journey trying to follow the instructions. That was basically his confusion. But after whole series of twelve years, at that point he began to follow instructions. And he got some very decent instructions. And I think we could read at this point. What happened was that through his dedication and his perseverance, he finally got to the root of any kind of ego problem. At that point he was somewhat fascinated by being awake, and he went out and he did a few things. He defeated some tirthikas in debate. "Tirthika" means people who believe in that one upstairs. And he sort of made a name for himself, more or less. But his feeling was that one

should do that. Since one understood, he had to go out and show people and make some kind of statement. So he had still some kind of push involved. So lot of things happen like that.

But at this point there's one thing that Naropa hasn't quite realized, and that is how to unify one's intuitive understanding with one's action. Do you understand what I'm saying? One's intuitive understanding with one's action. Naropa's case, learned scholar, more than learned scholar at this point, adept, accomplished, and still there was some gap. So there was further teaching from Tilopa. And pardon us for the translation of this. It's somewhat based on the translator's approach of trying to appease the Western intellectuals, so that they could understand this sort of thing. If we had to do it, which we probably will at some point, we wouldn't translate it this way. So actually, Mr. [Steve] Baker and I have changed a few words in the translation to make it more straightforward.

[The verses, including the retranslated terms, are inserted here in their entirety for clarity. Retranslated terms are indicated in bold.<sup>1</sup>]

MR. BAKER: [Reads]

*Naropa Understands the Meaning of Coincidence*

*The way in which he realized the intuitive understanding of the relation of coincidence or **one-taste** is five-fold:*

- (1) The statement as to the fact of being deceived by all that is created by mind;*
- (2) The request to be relieved of the fear that bewilderment might encroach on **enlightenment**;*
- (3) The statement as to the rejection of attachment to the appearance of samsara and nirvana as either bad or good;*
- (4) The request to be enabled to cut off all imputations by giving up attachment; and*
- (5) The statement as to transcendence pointing to itself by itself.*

*Once Tilopa, surrounded by a host of spiritual heroes and spiritual powers, appeared in the sky and sang:*

*Ah, Naropa,  
Without the permission of the guru, the daka,  
Without inner experience and intuitive understanding,*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*, trans. H. V. Guenther, 90-93.

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*And while still not free from spontaneous attachment,  
Do not act, Naropa.*

Naropa thought, "Does this mean I should listen to the dharma?" As an answer came the words:

*To listen to the dharma is like drinking salt water;  
It means that you still crave, Naropa.*

Naropa reflected, "Since I am a great scholar, does it mean that I must teach?" Again, the answer was:

*By extending the limits of words  
The meaning is not understood, Naropa.*

"Then does it mean that I should meditate?"

*When spontaneous craving becomes free in itself,  
Do not meditate on this experience, Naropa.*

"Or, does it mean that I should act?"

*Where the subject-object realm has been transcended  
Action is not possible, Naropa.*

"Does it mean that I shall look at being **myself** as **unoriginated**?"

*Since **enlightenment** is not a content of mind,  
You cannot see **unoriginated** being, Naropa.*

"Does it mean that the result, the goal, will be reached by itself?"

*Where there is no longer wishful thinking or despair,  
No result need be affected, Naropa.*

"If there is nothing to be done, then the desire to do something must be bewilderment. I shall ask the guru to resolve my doubts."

Tilopa answered:

*Listen, great pandit Naropa:  
Until you understand that all  
Appearance due to interdependent factors has never come about,  
Do not fail  
To accumulate merit and knowledge, which are like the two wheels of a  
carriage.*

*Towards the teacher who points out the unoriginated  
Let appearance, rising red and white, and the capacity*

*For thought, fly like a crow from off a ship.  
Enjoy the goods of earth, Naropa.*

*Until you understand that spirituality, self-aware and radiant,  
Is the same as the spontaneous rising of appearance,  
By experiencing it with attachment  
You fetter yourself, Naropa.*

*While all that is without and is within  
From the start has never been and is beyond both thought and words,  
Knowing that remembered experiences are but accidental  
And untrue, act as you will, Naropa.]*

SB: [READS] [Reads]

*Naropa Understands the Meaning of Coincidence.*

VR: Coincidence means the arising of the notion of oneself and action.

SB: [READS] [Reads]

*The way in which he realized the intuitive understanding of the relation of  
coincidence or one-taste, is five-fold.*

VR: One-taste in this case means no difference between me and other, based on non-substantial quality of myself and other. Therefore there's no difference in the experience.

SB: [READS] [READS]

*The statement as to the fact of being deceived by all that is created by mind.*

VR: That's number one. Say that again.

SB: [READS] [READS]

*Number one: The statement as to the fact of being deceived by all that is  
created by mind.*

VR: That's a definite thing one should understand, that all that is created by mind is deception. That's what happens when you sit—you understand that.

SB: [Reads]

*Number two: The request to be relieved of the fear that bewilderment might encroach on enlightenment.*

VR: That's some kind of genuine notion that teaching is necessary, that you would like to hear teaching because this particular fear arises from duality, and habitual thinking has to be relieved of itself.

SB: [Reads]

*Number three: The statement as to the rejection of attachment to the appearance of samsara and nirvana as either bad or good.*

VR: That is, having practiced one realizes that good and bad are equal. We're getting back to this idea of one taste, or the whole of reality is one thing. That whatever occurs in your experience, that labeling it good or bad, or experiencing it as good or bad, is rejected as false.

SB: [Reads]

*Number four: The request to be enabled to cut off all imputations by giving up attachment.*

VR: And this means that, realizing that the teacher possesses the profound instruction to actually cut the root of good and bad or the belief in good and bad, one requests of the teacher to give us that instruction.

SB: [Reads]

*Number five: The statement as to transcendence pointing to itself by itself.*

VR: That is the teacher's statement that one's own mind is intrinsically pure.

SB: [Reads]

*Once Tilopa, surrounded by a host of spiritual heroes and spiritual powers, appeared in the sky and sang...*

VR: Oh, forget about that spiritual heroes and spiritual powers—that's a translation problem.

SB: [Reads]

*Ah, Naropa,  
Without the permission of the guru, the daka,  
Without inner experience and intuitive understanding,*

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*And while not still free from spontaneous attachment,  
Do not act, Naropa.*

VR: Good. Now that means that, even though you have some inkling of awakened state of mind, and you have some assurity in your life, do not teach unless you are empowered to teach. Otherwise, it's dangerous.

SB: [Reads]

*Naropa thought, "Does this mean I should listen to the dharma?" As an answer came the words-*

VR: Wait. Naropa thought, does this mean I should listen to the dharma? That's basic fundamental doubt creeping in on one's own intelligence. That one feels secure and pretty much certain about non-substantial quality of one's own ego and others, one's own sense of self and others. At the same time there's message, don't preach that. But then there's some kind of doubt that occurs out of that, so we think further, "Wait a minute, maybe I'm not sure."

SB: [Reads]

*As an answer came the words:*

*To listen to the dharma is like drinking salt water;  
It means that you still crave, Naropa.*

VR: Drinking salt water means you would like to taste something, because you still have doubts about your fundamental sanity. But salt water, as you know, makes you more thirsty.

SB: [Reads]

*Naropa reflected, "Since I am a great scholar, does it mean that I must teach?"*

VR: So we come to another alternative. If that's the case maybe I should do something else, maybe teach. That would help me.

SB: [Reads]

*Again, the answer was:*

*By extending the limits of words,  
The meaning is not understood, Naropa.*

VR: In other words, you can talk about your own state of mind for a long time. Basically people get bored.

SB: [Reads]

*“Then does it mean that I should meditate?”*

VR: Well, maybe I should go back to basics. Since people are bored maybe there's something's wrong with me.

SB: [Reads]

*When spontaneous craving becomes free in itself,  
Do not meditate on this experience, Naropa.*

VR: When you realize that even the meditation practice won't save you, and you feel delighted about that, don't hold on to that. And practice some more.

SB: [Reads]

*“Or does it mean that I should act?”*

VR: Well, in that case, maybe I should do something about it. What?

SB: [Reads]

*Where the subject-object realm has been transcended,  
Action is not possible, Naropa.*

VR: Well, since you already understand [that] this nor that has any substantiality at all, what are you going to do? How can you believe in anything at that point? Or even do anything? You seem to be deceiving yourself about your sense of spirituality.

SB: [Reads]

*“Does it mean that I shall look at being myself as unoriginated?”*

VR: Which is somewhat extremely powerful thing. That we actually flip-flop in our practice. When we practice really hard and actually sense egolessness, we have this thing that occurs—should I look at myself as that? [Laughter]

SB: [Reads]

*Since enlightenment is not a content of mind,  
You cannot see unoriginated being, Naropa.*

VR: Well, if you look at yourself as that what do you see? Do you see anything? Fundamentally, you can't figure it out. Not only that, you can't even be happy about that, or sad about that. Since mind from the very beginning unoriginated, the question itself does not arise.

SB: [Reads]

*“Does it mean the result, the goal, will be reached by itself?”*

VR: Ah, then maybe I don't have to do anything at all [laughter]

SB: [Reads]

*Where there is no longer wishful thinking nor despair,  
No result need be affected, Naropa.*

VR: So why are you thinking that, even that?

SB: [Reads]

*“If there is nothing to be done, then the desire to do something must be  
bewilderment.*

VR: Come back to square one, all the way back to square one. If there's nothing to be done, then that desire itself must be bewilderment.

SB: [Reads]

*I shall ask the guru to resolve my doubts.”*

VR: And that's honest. Then we come to honesty.

SB: [Reads]

*Tilopa answered:*

*Listen, great pandit Naropa:  
Until you understand that all appearance due to interdependent  
factors has never come about,*

VR: Okay. All appearance, oneself, others, things, the world, due to interdependent factors. In other words, due to habitual ignorance we think it is so, but basically it never has come about. In other words ladies and gentlemen, the whole thing never happened, just as you thought. It's very simple to say, but please listen: Goes much farther beyond what you think, because what you think has come about. But this reality we're talking about has never come about. It never happened—it is. So due to interdependent factors, which is kind of continual, habitual karmic patterns, if you looked for the beginning of that, tell me the moment you were born, do you remember? Tell me what you remember from the last moment.

SB: [Reads]

*Do not fail  
To accumulate merit and knowledge, which are like the two  
wheels of a carriage.*

VR: That means that, recognizing that, do not fail to practice and study dharma, because that is the only vehicle—wheels of a carriage—that can actually transport you out of this kingdom of confusion, this realm of confusion. Do not fail to act properly, practice, speak properly, live properly, think properly. Do not fail to do that, because basically, aside from that it's hopeless.

SB: [Reads]

*Towards the teacher who points out the unoriginated  
Let appearance, rising red and white, and the capacity  
For thought, fly like a crow from off a ship.  
Enjoy the goods of earth, Naropa.*

VR: Whatever you think, whatever you experience, let it fly like a crow from off a ship. Enjoy your life, your world completely. Since the whole thing is non-substantial why cling?

SB: [Reads]

*Until you understand that spirituality, self-aware and radiant,  
Is the same as the spontaneous rising of appearance,  
By experiencing it with attachment,  
You fetter yourself, Naropa.*

VR: Ego is no different than enlightenment. If you hold on to a moment as a memory, then you have ego. If you let it fly like crow from a ship, then it's enlightenment. That's moment to moment, without memory. Say that again?

SB: [Reads]

*Until you understand that spirituality, self-aware and radiant –*

VR: Self-aware and radiant means like the sun doesn't need a generator, doesn't need awareness outside of itself. You see? As you practice you should begin to feel, understand, that your thoughts and your notion about yourself are self-emanating thoughts, self-emanating emotions. That they don't come from anywhere at all. They come from themselves. And radiant means that they are actually quite clear. There

isn't the confusion that we think, when we realize that thinking by itself, doesn't come from anywhere.

SB: [Reads]

*Is the same as the spontaneous rising of appearance,*

VR: That is the same as notion of subject and object, oneself and other. That's the same as the notion of the awakening of one's own enlightened mind. So.

SB: [Reads]

*By experiencing it with attachment,  
You fetter yourself, Naropa.*

VR: If you continue to make distinctions between what's good and what's bad, then you can never experience the totality of intelligence and Buddha nature.

SB: [Reads]

*While all that is without and is within  
From the start has never been—*

VR: Have from the start, all that you thought that's here and there, has never been, has never been, never happened. It only happened as a memory. It continually is, but it never happened as a memory. Did you hear that sound of a car? Is that reality? It's not here anymore, but did it happen? Oh yes, it happened but it's never been. Comes another one. Is that inside or outside? All that is without or within has, from the beginning, never occurred. This is real thing, let's not just piddle around here, okay? Please sit up if you're going to be here. Otherwise, what are we doing, Disneyland? [Laughter] Which probably is better at some point, at least precise.

SB: [Reads]

*—and is beyond both thought and words,*

VR: Is beyond both thought and words, how do you understand that? How do you understand that, is beyond both thought and words. Saying the same thing, but saying it differently

SB: [Reads]

*Knowing that remembered experiences are but accidental  
And untrue, act as you will, Naropa.*

VR: Knowing that remembered experiences are accidental. Now think about that. Remembered experiences are accidental, which actually, when you think about it,

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cuts any sense of ego entirely. That anything you remember is purely an accident, it has nothing to do with you. That notion of you is completely nonsense. And memory is accidental. Say it again?

SB: [Reads]

*Knowing that remembered experiences are but accidental  
And untrue,*

VR: Act as you will, Naropa.

Thank you. If we have any questions we could have discussion at this point. Wait, wait, otherwise they'll be an accident.

QUESTION: Thank you. The idea of remembered experience being accidental, it seems that we all have certain patterns and if we—

VR: We do?

Q: We were to walk into the same room we would all come away with something different, and it might be pretty predictable, from the people involved, the type of thing they would choose to—

VR: Wait, wait, wait—predictable from whose point of view?

Q: Well, perhaps from the person who would see and remember, and from other people who knew him well. Don't think so?

VR: Predictable only to yourself. The other people just have vague suspicion.

Q: Okay. Well, even if it's predictable to oneself, it seems it's not completely accidental. There seems to be some sort of patterning there.

VR: That's completely accidental—

Q: The patterning itself is completely accidental—

VR: Absolutely. One hundred percent. That's why it's predictable to oneself.

Q: Uh-uh.

VR: I beg your pardon?

Q: That seems contradictory.

VR: Yes, it does.

Q: The patterning and the predictability—

VR: Accidental.

Q: —is itself the accident.

VR: That's right. Well, think about it. Patterning and predictability—accidental. We think—

Q: We take an overview of something that is already fallen together, and we create a pattern from it.

VR: Well, then we have to wonder who's the "we" that takes that. And is the pattern "we." Obviously, we think the pattern is other than "we," or "me." So the fact that the two of them come together is purely accidental, and the "me" and the pattern.

Q: The experience of self and the pattern that happens—

VR: Completely haphazard. We have no idea how that happens, but we think that's "me."

Q: That they coexist in a moment.

VR: They're called co-incidence.

Q: Oh, and so action and the experience of self arise spontaneously—

VR: That's right.

Q: —but have no real connection to each other.

VR: Well, they do in one sense, but they don't in another. Action and experience of oneself have absolutely no relationship to each other. But action and the sense of being are completely connected.

Q: I'm not sure about the difference there—action in the sense of a being?

VR: No, not a being.

Q: Oh, the sense of being are connected.

VR: Yes, not connected, same thing.

Q: As action.

VR: No, no, same thing! [Laughs]

Q: [Laughs] But action and the sense of being are the same thing?

VR: Yes. Is anybody cooking fish? [Laughter]

Q: Why fish?

VR: I beg your pardon?

Q: Why fish?

VR: Hopefully. Well, depends on who's here to eat it.

QUESTION: It seems sometimes that ordinariness or the pattern-like quality of life goes away somewhat, and it seems totally strange that things are not patterned—

VR: We seem strange to ourselves, same thing as the patterns. If we seem strange to ourselves, the patterns are really strange, outside, foreign. Gasoline is 85 cents to a gallon. Isn't that weird? Why should it be? After all, gasoline comes out of the earth, and put in cans and pumped into pumps, and pumped into the gas tank. Why should that be so strange? But it's pretty strange that now it's 85 to a dollar when it used to be 60, maybe before used to be 40.

Q: I don't mean particular events—

VR: I do. I do. Particular events. Forget about the general hoo-ha. In particular, one event, one moment. Just like that, one moment you can actually understand. So don't be too general, please. Gets like a thick soup—there are so many things in it that one can't distinguish one taste from another. On the other hand, if you're quite clear about it, when you taste carrot, it's carrot. And we don't even care what carrot means, but it's just carrot.

QUESTION: How do you get from now and now and let it fly like a crow from a ship, to intentional actions like putting on suits?

VR: You work really hard at not believing in yourself. You work really hard at not thinking that the suit is you. Suit is just a suit, and skin is just skin. And then underneath the skin is bones, underneath that is veins. Underneath that there's a liver and kidneys and heart and arteries and tissue. And underneath that there's nothing whatsoever. And that's how a crow flies from a ship.

Q: Thank you.

VR: There's nothing there, it just is what it is. The fact of the suit is what's called appearance. See, what we're talking about tonight is Naropa's enlightenment. He understood that appearance as a thing is not different from no self. In other words, in every thread of the suit, of the tie, of the underwear, of the body, of the veins, there's no thread of self. So whatever you put on, it's the statement of the awakened state of mind, whatever you put on, because you wear it without wearing it. That's a

good point, thank you. That's an excellent point. But look at this. You see this? This is a suit, in a way.

Q: Uh-huh.

VR: Yes. Does it mean anything? No, not really. But yes, really, in the sense that it means exactly what it says.

Q: Well, there seems to be some choice.

VR: Up to a point. After that there really isn't any. Because there need not be. Choice is only when we're confused. When we're not confused, there isn't any choice because there doesn't need to be. Things are actually what they are. You see, choice comes in when you have a doubt, when you have some sense of, "I could buy this or I couldn't." You know, that's why they put these tuna fish and cat food and everything, TV goes round and round. Because people think, "I could buy Borax or I could buy Ajax, or could buy..." Do you see what I mean?

Q: Yes.

VR: I could, you know—some kind of choice. Everybody's afraid to be who they are, you know. Just what you are is just fine. What's the problem? They say, "Well, you should like Ajax instead of Comet. Or Fluoride instead of..." Well, here we are. This is it, threads, and who cares? If you try to put your caring about what you wear and what you are out into the world, you get slapped around like crazy. People are slapping all over the place, saying, "Oh, that's what you think you are? Ha, ha, ha!" [Laughter] And they give you a little thing, and then you say, "The reason I think I am..." [Laughter] We fall right into it. We fall right into it. Don't you realize that's samsara's game? That's ego's game. This suit was bought by me in Miami, Florida, at Bal Harbour Shopping Center, and it cost me big bucks. And it's my basic smile on the whole world, this suit. And the same thing as the rest of me. You see what I mean? That's my fellows here, and these friends, where they come from and all of you. And it's yellow and red, gold and blue, and exhibits itself quite straightforwardly. The way it happens that way, well, I don't know [laughter]. It happened to be a suit, that's where we live. As far as I'm concerned, it could be gold robe and a big hat, or could be just little, bitty thing. Depends on where we live, that's all. As far as I'm concerned, they can all have a good time, the whole host of samsara, they can have a great time if they like. But basically, I stay here, always, just stay here. That's the whole point. You know, when people start getting upset if they burn a hole in their suit—t cost them eight hundred dollars, a thousand dollars, a custom made cashmere suit. And they got drunk one night and ... [laughter]. Or if

they're so wealthy they say, "Oh well, just another suit." Arrogance, one way or another. Wear what you wear, be what you are, hair, eyes, everything. That's it, as far as I know [laughs].

Gentleman with the ever-present smile.

QUESTION: You talked mostly about the qualities of things in reality, the reality of things, and it seems like there are other things, like—

VR: Other things other than things? [Laughter]

Q: Well, not nouns, like feelings.

VR: Feelings are things, are they? Hot things? Cool things? Anyway, what are you talking about? Sorry to kid around, just a little joke.

Q: I wonder about dealing with, let's say, when you get stuck?

VR: We do?

Q: Well, in a sense you get stuck.

VR: Well, I think everybody gets stuck, yes. Then that's why we try to deal with things. When we get stuck we try to deal. "Now listen, if you give me some time with this anger or this passion, or the whole thing, then I'll be good later on, I'll be better." We're going to deal with the emotions, huh? Great. I'd like to see somebody deal with emotions. It's like eating your own feet [laughter] and then trying to walk. You can't deal with it, my friend. The dealing is for psychologists and psychiatrists, and they get paid a lot of money, \$50 or \$75 depending on how renowned they are for picking brains. Forget about that dealing with it. This particular path has nothing to do with dealing with anything. We don't make any deals here, none whatsoever. You want to make deals, pay money to a psychiatrist or psychologist, pay them some money, and they'll make deals with you, and try to *help* you. There are no deals here. It is what is, your emotions are what they are. Who's dealing with what? Are they so outside, these emotions you're talking about? Where are they?

Q: They seem to be ever-present, unshakeable.

VR: That's right! That's called intelligence, awakened state of mind. They are ever-present, unshakeable, are what they are. Now who's talking about that? You tell me. Who's talking about emotions—mister—what's your name?

Q: Cohen.

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VR: Mr. Cohen, who possesses emotion? Or who experiences it somewhere? Cohen? You do that? Do you have emotions?

Q: Yes.

VR: You do? Oh, where do you have them? Where do you have them?

Q: Wherever I am.

VR: Well, where are you?

Q: I'm right here.

VR: Yes? And do you have emotions right here, right now?

Q: I guess not.

VR: Really?

Q: [Laughs] I don't—if everything's just a memory...

VR: Well, anyway, Mr. Cohen [laughs], it's good to kid yourself and we have a good time, laugh, laugh, laugh. But on the other hand, if your tooth hurts, you go to a dentist. And if you can't go to a dentist, you hook up a little thing to the doorknob and pull it out by yourself.

QUESTION: Sir, what's the difference between "is" and "occur"?

VR: Just a matter of movement. "Is" is before "is occurred." But there's no difference really, just a matter of movement, like wind and space. That wind occurs in space, right? When you see the trees, right? When the wind blows and moves the trees, what do you think is happening there? I mean, seriously.

Q: I don't know what you mean.

VR: Well, did you ever look at a tree, and the wind is blowing the leaves?

Q: Sure.

VR: What do you think is happening there?

Q: There's motion of the air disturbing the leaves.

VR: Yes. Disturbing the leaves?

Q: Moving them

VR: Moving them. Well, that's same thing. The motion of the thought process or the energy in space is disturbing the space, or moving the space. That's all that's happening, not much more than that.

Q: And that would be the distinction, why Tilopa would say that it never happened?

VR: That's right. Appearance and emptiness are the same thing. When you actually-listen, when the wind blows the trees, where did the wind come from, let alone the tree? When we see the wind blowing the leaves—whoosh—depends on the kind of tree, which makes a different kind of experience [laughs]. But still, same thing. Where did the wind come from, let alone the tree? It's interesting. How do we think, let alone who are we? It's interesting. The tree and the wind is the same as "who am I" and "I think." *Je pense alors je suis*, who cares. That's a good point, Herb, interesting.

QUESTION: I have a sense that my question doesn't make sense, but I want to ask it anyway because I'm stuck on it. When you said that ultimately it comes down to "is," but we apprehend everything as "happened" or "occurred," I want to ask why is it that we—

VR: Doesn't matter

Q: It doesn't matter?

VR: Why doesn't it matter? That's another point, isn't it?

Q: I'm not there yet, I'm very stuck on the why, because it needs to make sense—

VR: Good, you should sit a hell of a lot. You should sit and practice sitting meditation a lot, because sitting meditation is working with the first why, the very first why. When you sit you're working with the very first why, to begin with. Why me? And then, why it? Then you realize that both of them don't make any sense. They never happened, me or it never happened. So my dear, you have to practice and plunk yourself down on a cushion for a very long time, seemingly endless time. Find out for yourself. Don't ask me. I don't know any why's. I just taught what I've been taught, that's it.

Q: I guess thought doesn't provide the answer.

VR: Not to me. I don't know about you.

QUESTION: Is it possible for there to be no wind?

VR: No, there's always wind, same as there's air and earth and fire and water, all the rest of it—trees. Are you trying to say can you stop being you? Is that what you're trying to say?

Q: No.

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VR: You're talking about actual wind?

Q: No, no—

VR: Well then, what are you talking about?

Q: The things that move us, and that, you know—

VR: Move us? Yuck!

Q: [Sighs]

VR: It's yuck, isn't it? Yuck! It smells, doesn't it? Or does it? Well, if we're talking about wind in the air, I don't see how there could not be wind. I mean, there is wind. If we didn't have any wind, then the trees would never move. And trees do move and we notice that. Same thing if you didn't have any thought process that you wouldn't notice that there was mind. Then you wouldn't realize that there wasn't any, because wind of thought process and mind as tree are basically same thing. Why would you like to get rid of that? Don't try and get rid of that, you know. It's yuck, when you look at it as yuck. But when you look at it as wind and trees, it's pretty good, actually. It's something that's quite natural, pretty straightforward.

Q: I just thought there was—

VR: No there isn't, never was.

QUESTION: I have a question about something you mentioned the other night, that the guru is a manifestation of enlightenment and at the same time a manifestation of your own neurosis. I think I understand the first part of that, but I don't understand the part of the guru as a manifestation of your own neurosis.

VR: [Inaudible]

Q: Some sense of throwing it back?

VR: Well, does a pig have feet? [Laughter]

Q: Does a pig have feet [laughs].

VR: Or is it just roast pork? Buy it in the supermarket, it's packaged and it costs \$2.79 a pound, or whatever it does. It's called roast pork, but it's actually pig and has feet, even ears and a tail. Now, tell me about what you mean by neurosis and the guru.

Q: Well, the guru seems to be the manifestation of brilliance.

VR: Which is it, the pig or what you buy in the supermarket?

Q: I don't get it.

VR: All right, let's try something else. What did you say, brilliance and what?

Q: I think that was it.

VR: Guru's the brilliance.

Q: Yes.

VR: And the opposite, or whatever the neurotic thing is?

Q: I guess I'm referring to me.

VR: Really?

Q: Yes, it's that kind of dichotomy of guru or teacher being the brilliance and the—

VR: [Laughs] Yes, and you being what?

Q: I'm not sure at this point.

VR: Mm. Anybody else?

QUESTION: I was wondering what it means that to listen to the dharma is like drinking salty water?

VR: Well, it means that if you try to quench your thirst by accumulating dharmic knowledge, it's like drinking salty water. You'll always be thirsty again. In other words, you can't rely on accumulating teachings as some kind of safeguard.

Q: So then the dharma isn't the answer either.

VR: Yes, it is. It's the answer to salty water.

Q: But I thought you said the dharma was like actually drinking it.

VR: I didn't say that. That's what Tilopa said. It's like drinking salt water when you—let's do it from A, B, C, okay? A, B, C. [Speaks slowly] When you try to listen to dharma as some kind of clinging to security, it's like drinking salt water. You will become much thirstier after you drink it. That's not really listening to dharma, if you cling to it as some kind of salvation.

Q: I think I got it.

VR: Good! [Laughter] That's good! Great! [Speaks slowly] Maybe I should talk like that all the time [laughs; laughter].

QUESTION: Back to all appearances have never come about, didn't the car just happen?

VR: Did it?

Q: Didn't it?

VR: It did.

Q: It did.

VR: Didn't it? [Laughter]

Q: Yes, it did.

VR: It did.

Q: Yes.

VR: Yes. Well, it never happened. It's gone. It came about, and it left. Is that same car here?

Q: No.

VR: No. You remember which car it was?

Q: It was a Ford.

VR: What year? [Laughter]

Q: [Laughs]

VR: License plate?

Q: Missed it.

VR: Color?

Q: Green.

VR: Missed it. It was green and white [laughter]. Well, still we're here, you know.

Q: That's where it comes back to, is—

VR: I think so.

Q: —is we're not here either.

VR: Well, we're not here either.

Q: Right.

VR: Yes, but we're here.

Q: Right.

VR: Right.

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VR: But Ford -

Q: It's not here either, either.

VR: Yes it is. [Laughter] It's parked outside. It's waiting for you! [Laughs; laughter] Don't we get surprised? We get so surprised by that kind of thing, you know. We get a letter from an old friend [inaudible]—Ford, green and white, still exists, or doesn't, does it? You call the old friend and the friend says, "How are you?" And you think, "Doesn't exist." Hang up, says, "Does exist." Sure, this seminar exists as well, but doesn't. We're finished, but we're not.

Q: And that's the same sense in which we exist, now but we won't.

VR: As well, yes. Same kind of thing. Exists in the moment, but as far as the past and future...

Q: Thank you.

VR: Whatever, but it's true, even whatever.

Well, I guess that's it. Does anybody have one last hoo-ha? No? You have so many hoo-ha's, we could go on and on [laughter]. Somebody else has something to say? Yes. Lady in red. This is the final hoo-ha.

QUESTION: I was wondering when you were going to pass this way again?

VR: Ah, that's a good point. I'm thinking maybe next year, but I'm not sure. It depends on how life goes, karma and flow of events in one's own mind, and the situation around one. It depends. One never knows, you know. We could make a lot of plans, but... I would like to come back here again, but I think you have to get a lot more people here. I mean to talk to, because I can talk to a hell of a lot more people in Boston and New York and San Francisco, that kind of thing. And I think that's better, because I like to talk to more people—talk about dharma. You know, if I talk to the same people over and over again, well, it's like beating a live horse. You understand you have to practice, but if I talk to new people, people that come around, I think that's important, from the point of view of importance [laughter]. At least from the point of view of being this particular person in this particular life, I think that's important. So how many people can you get around here next time?

Program Coordinator: Not knowing, I hesitate to reply.

VR: Ah! See, that's the whole point of Dharmadhatu in general—not knowing, I hesitate to reply. For myself, personally I would say twenty-five. I mean, personally, you know, because I'm a little shot. If I were a big shot like a Buddha, I could say

10,000. But I would work on twenty-five [laughs; laughter]. Considering Dharmadhatu members could actually attract. So many, you know, so many people come in and out. How many people have never heard a word of dharma before here, raise your hand. First time you ever came to, more or less. *Uno, dos, no mas? Tres*, three people. And all of you have heard me before and you heard me again. Isn't it wonderful.

The last part of our seminar is this: Naropa was told by his guru, "All right, you understand, now act for the benefit of sentient beings, don't keep it to yourself. Act as you will, Naropa." That means that every action, every thought, is not for your benefit. But basically, you understood, and if you understand, you have no choice but to expand and encompass all sentient beings. And that's it. That's the culmination of our great seminar, is that whatever you understand you can never keep, but actually must go out and expand further. The more it goes out, the less there is of you, and the more it goes out, the more people benefit. The more people benefit, the less there is of them. And the less there is them, the more there is of it, this world, intelligent world, which doesn't depend on individual existence as such, but actually celebrates individual sanity as much. And I think that's pretty much it. We could be together, live together quite fully, harmoniously as individual nobodies, who manifest spontaneously the awakened state of mind in all its complete manifestation, as red, blue, yellow, green, white, whatever. As what we are, who we are, engineer, street sweeper, doctor, file clerk, anything. That is awakened state of mind. What is, is what is.

That was Naropa's realization as well. Therefore, he dedicated his life to teach. And he taught the great translator, Marpa. He met his student, Marpa, and transmitted everything to him. And that transmission has come down to this very moment, and we are grateful to that great practitioner Naropa, who understood his guru's teaching and transmitted complete teaching to Marpa, who transmitted to Milarepa, who transmitted to Gampopa, which come down to the Karmapas and the Trungpa lineage. And we have it, and it is not cheap, it's worth something. So we should practice.

I think that's about it for our seminar. We have such a short time to talk about these things. We could go on for months and months talking about this teaching of Naropa, whose is an example of a practitioner who had very keen awareness and discriminating awareness. And because of that great devotion, because he knew that to seek the ultimately real was not to hang on to any sense of self-deception. So therefore he put himself through all kinds of fantasies of himself and worked hard

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to find that teaching which expresses the ultimately real, the mahamudra, the great symbol, the great expression, the ultimate expression of itself, the mahamudra. That is, one's mind expressing itself. So we should act in that way. We should practice in that way, no matter what it takes.

I thank you very much for your attendance here and your patience.

MR. BAKER: In the—

VR: Don't be nervous Mr. Baker.

SB: I'm not nervous, just trying to think of what to say.

VR: Don't try to think of what to say.

SB: On behalf of the I.T.S. participants, and from myself, from my heart, I would like to thank you for your fearlessness in the face of self-deception, for your exertion in the face of laziness, and for your ruthlessness in the face of neurosis.

VR: Ignorance.

SB: Ignorance, thank you [laughter]. Ignorance, that's it [laughter]. And I would also like to thank you for your help in—[laughter, laughs].

VR: You're welcome.

SB: I would also like to say please come back again soon.

VR: Ah. Well, thank you very much Mr. Baker. On behalf of Dharmadhatu and the people here, thank you very much. Well, I was thinking tonight that I should come back here again. I was also thinking tonight that people should work hard. Personally, I don't care. I talk about dharma all the time anyway. But if we hang on to our little purse on the side, our little coins of dharma, and try to enrich ourselves by our little purse, it never works. So if I come back, that would be, well, like some kind of suction to get me back. Otherwise, I won't be back next year at all, and that's true. I won't, because I have my own ideas, you know. I would like to take a retreat for a long time, and practice for a long time. I would like to do that. But if you get me back here, it should be on pretense, okay? Otherwise it would be better for me to practice, and for you as well. We could have a lot of seminars, things like that, but should be some people who would like to hear more of dharma aside from you, which you heard a lot already. So that's kind of a flower that would like to bloom, needs a lot of water, needs sunshine, needs teaching, needs exertion, so let's do it.

So maybe we'll see. Next year will be an interesting year. Either I'm practicing by myself, which I suppose couldn't happen anyway, or I'm here, practicing with you.

**[END OF RECORDING]**