

**SHAMBHALA TRAINING LEVEL ONE  
ORDINARY MAGIC, THE ART OF BEING HUMAN  
THE VAJRA REGENT OSEL TENDZIN**

Saturday, February 12, 1984 7:45 p.m.

Naropa Institute Assembly Hall

Boulder, Colorado

Talk III, checked by Robert Walker Mar 26, 2021

(All bow.) [??]

**THE VAJRA REGENT:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome again to our final meeting of Level One Shambhala Training. I think it's important for us to realize that what we are doing is not simply a one-shot deal; that once we begin working with our own minds and bodies in this way, that we involve ourselves in what might be called a journey. I think it's healthy to respect the ignorance that exists in our environment, especially at this particular time when power is in the hands of individuals who have glorified ignorance to the point where we ourselves find excuses for not connecting to our own goodness. We live in an atmosphere which is thick with aggression. It's nobody's fault, so we need not get into blaming. On the other hand, we should take our lives somewhat seriously. And to do that properly we should have a notion of journey.

When you are about to embark on a journey, there are certain provisions you should have. Once you have those provisions then you begin to make your journey. You might have all the things you think you need: A good map, a good guide, body which is healthy and ready to make the journey, a mind which is eager to find out what lies ahead. You might have all the those and still you cannot be completely sure what will occur .

Those of you who have just begun Shambhala Training should understand that what we intend to teach is the best that we have. However, it is important again to realize that whatever occurs on your journey -- well, some of it might not be chartered, might not be part of the syllabus, might not actually be on the map, so to speak. So in that case what happens? In that case you yourselves have to find out *for* yourselves what is actually going on. You're taking a journey. You might encounter various obstacles along the way. And you might have some instruction as how to deal with those. But when it comes down to the moment, it is simply up to you.

The main point is to not take things too literally, not to trap oneself in too much expectation. Rather, it is important to understand that the journey itself, the process of making this particular journey, contains within itself the power and the dignity to evoke whatever presence of mind is necessary in order to go further. So I trust you will think about that, try to work with that idea.

Beyond tonight and beyond this weekend, whether or not you return for Level Two is not as important as if you stick with Level One in terms of how you live your life, in terms of how you relate to others and to yourself. So in some ways this particular experience is like being shot out of a cannon, suddenly thrust into a different world. Some people here might have had some idea of what that world is already, but nonetheless once you are in it it is always new and it is always uncertain. Therefore, it has the quality of vulnerability, which is the tenderness and gentleness that always occurs when we encounter our own world, the world of our minds and the world of our bodies and the world of our relationships, the world of our past, the world of our present and the world of our future. It is important that you should remember this.

Some time, some moment, without your knowing or expecting, you will probably have a flash of what happened this weekend in your meditation practice, in your relationship with the assistant directors and in your relationship with myself. And that particular flash is non-conceptual. It just happens. And then you remember in a very deep sort of way who you are and what you're doing.

What we are trying to do here in Shambhala Training is to train all of you in synchronizing your body and mind so that you don't make distinctions between the two. And distinctions between the two are purely conceptual, they're just part of patterns. And the basic way we are doing that is through the ordinary sitting practice of meditation. When your body and mind are synchronized properly, you feel healthy; healthy not in a medical sense or in a psychological sense either, although those things come along with it, but you feel healthy from the point of view of your basic being. When you sit and practice meditation in the future, you probably should connect to that, that sense of basic being. Unconditional goodness is unobstructed by thoughts or bodily sensations or emotional upheavals, they simply occur on the journey. So, synchronizing body and mind is the result of practicing this discipline and engaging yourself in the warrior's way, the way of Shambhala. And the feeling of healthiness is that sense of being totally who you are; the good parts and the bad parts together; the past and the present and the future together; mind and body together; feeling wholesome and simply and purely decent human being.

Once you feel that way you have a very direct appreciation for yourselves and for everything around you, because the present moment is a total experience, complete experience, and therefore there is a sense of gratitude that develops in one's heart, that this life is not cheap and this life is not something that should be wasted but rather this life is the one and only vehicle for connecting to the whole lineage of warriors from beginningless time. It is possible for you to transcend your petty concerns. That's the message. And it is possible for you to be ordinary, simple human beings, which will provide the world with such magic as to change that dense negativity into a joyful experience.

There is no reason whatsoever that we should suffer unnecessarily under the bonds of aggression and hatred and stupidity. There is no reason. But we have to first take it on ourselves not to confuse the issue; that is to say, not to blame the outside world for what is going on in our own mind. So please be patient. We have to train ourselves to undo the patterns which have caused us to be so stiff and so pompous and so lacking in humor. Now it is possible to do that, ladies and gentlemen. But you have to work at it. You can't expect it to just happen as if you're blowing a bubble with bubble gum and it splats on your face. You have to go and buy the gum and then you have to unwrap it and you have to chew it and you have to chew it enough to get all the sugar out of it so you can make the right impression on your teeth and then blow it up and then suck it back in and then chew it again and again and again. If you remember when you were a kid how -- how good you could become at doing that, but you had to chew it a lot.

In the same way, this introduction to meditation is simply just getting the gum. We haven't even unwrapped anything yet. But there is no particular blame in that. Things happen this way because they *have* to. Once you begin on a journey, you may start to have doubts. As you go down the road a ways you say, "Wait a minute. I don't know if I really want to do this." And then you feel a little bit upset at yourself because you packed all this stuff. You got all the instructions on how to go. You have your map, you have your guide and you're starting to feel queasy, a little bit frightened. A little bit further down the road you begin to rationalize why it is of no necessity for you to make this journey, and you begin to think that you are right and it's soon enough to turn back. You haven't gone far enough as to commit yourself to making a journey, so you can turn back.

Well, that's true except for one thing, that the impression which you make on yourself is unforgettable. The impression of going, leaving, journeying, forgetting the past or

letting the past be behind you and going further is unforgettable. And the feeling of walking on the pathway with your own feet is unforgettable. Working with your own mind is unforgettable. So whether or not you turn back, eventually you'll have to do it again. This is an interesting thought. That's what's called the appreciation of the present moment, realizing that doing it again is a waste of energy and time and a waste of this life.

So we have begun. This is our glorious beginning: irritating, joyful, delightful, frustrating, all of it. It's a beginning. I would caution you not to make too many conclusions. Just treat them all as thoughts and try to appreciate your world as it is and appreciate yourselves as you are. I am convinced that there is nothing wrong with anybody fundamentally. It's purely confused thinking, which creates confused environments, which creates disease, unhealthiness, and all the aggression that we see in the world. So if we start with ourselves and make the journey honest, to ourselves, then I think we'll do all right.

So that is about all I have to say. I think at this point if you have any questions whatsoever about anything that has happened this weekend, this would be a good time to ask them. All right. We have to get the microphones quickly, 'cause -- there is a gentleman here in a blue shirt. Would you put your hand up. There it is. [20:37]

QUESTION (M): I have two questions. The first has to do with the first day that you spoke when you used a lot of categories. And also it has to do with your book. And that is that you're a lineage holder and you're supposed to carry on a certain knowledge. At the same time you talk from your direct experience. And I'd like to know how much of what you say comes from your own direct experience and how much of it is passed on. Do you understand the distinction?

[Laughter.]

THE VAJRA REGENT: I hope so. I certainly hope so. Well, I was taught early on that one should always speak from one's -- from one's own experience, and when one did not one should say, "This is what the books say." And that's what I've tried to do.

Q: Okay, second question. The first day you said this is not a self-help course. This is -- you didn't say what this was. You said this was not a self-help course.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Right.

Q: If you wanted to take one of the self-help courses, go somewhere else. In fact, you *warned* about that. The last three days have really been very limited in that they're just a small presentation of a big thing. And it seems that it's very much like a self-help course. The self-help course would be called "How to be in the world. How to be with yourself." something like that. And I would like to know how this fits into your notion of God. And I don't want to play semantics about what God is so much as get to that bigger question.

VR: When you say this, are you talking about this weekend or Shambhala Training in general?

Q: Let's take the last three days, sure. We all did something together.

VR: How does this fit into --

Q: If this is not a help -- self-help course --

VR: Right.

QUESTION: -- it's a means of a connection to something greater.

VR: Something.

Q: Something.

VR: Uh-huh.

Q: Right. We don't want to play semantics with God.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Well, we could. [laughter]

Q: We could, but we –

VR: Well that would depend on your experience, I think. And the point about saying it was not self-help was simply to warn everybody from the beginning that the purpose of doing this is not to make your life more secure, you know, from the point of view of thinking that "Now, if I do this everything is going to be all right, I can be a better businessman," et cetera, et cetera, and all that stuff. How it fits in with the notion of, you mean, higher notions like God or whatever could be called -- what people call cosmic consciousness or any of that.

How that fits in, I think, is dependent on how you make the journey and how you relate to your own expectations and your own thoughts. I wouldn't – I think that's what I was talking about earlier. I wouldn't draw too many conclusions at this point. How it fits in? I don't know how it fits in. You have to see for yourself. Might be the other way around.

Q: Well, it is.

VR: Yes, it always is, I think. We must have answered a lot of questions with that one. Oh, here we go.

QUESTION: Just an easy one. Why do your talks start so late?

[Laughter.]

THE VAJRA REGENT: You think that's an easy one?

QUESTION: Simple. Quick.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Simple maybe, but easy, no. Well, you see there's this sequence that happens. And I don't know, this is the earliest I've been in years. [Laughter.] I really don't know. I mean, it's -- it's not, you know -- it's not a question of -- it's not as if I don't know you're here.

QUESTION: Frustrated [inaudible].

THE VAJRA REGENT: I think -- I've been thinking about you all weekend, from the moment I wake up until when I go to sleep. I told -- I told some people tonight that it must -- it's got to be

somebody's crazy idea to have me do Level One. I don't know. I don't know. [Laughter.] I really don't.

This gentleman with the red sweater.

Are they that late? I didn't know it was that late. It's only an hour or something, an hour and a half. An hour and a half, is that a long time? It is when you're sitting there, right? To sit with yourself for an hour and a half expecting something to happen, that *is* a long time. That's true. I think I remember that. [Laughter.]

See, now, if you all do Shambhala Training, you perfect it to the point where you can be late just like me [laughter], you won't have -- you won't have to *worry* about it anymore. I don't mean that to be flip. I actually don't know. I'm -- you see, in terms of my life I sort of go along and let -- sometimes things happen that come into the proposed schedule of things. Now, I try to schedule things always because I was taught that way by my teacher, that scheduling is very important. If you don't have some sort of notion of priorities and schedule in your life, then life is haphazard, so you schedule things. But then somehow things come in from the sides and somebody calls from somewhere and says, "I have to speak to you right now." And that's another forty minutes, and da da da, and there you are, then here we are.

QUESTION: We've had a chance to observe the various banners in the room for the last couple of days.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Aha. Yes.

Q: And a couple of these banners look rather like some pins people are wearing. Would you tell us about the colors and shapes in these banners and what they mean and what their connection is to the program.

VR: That's a good point. Well, these banners are -- specifically they come from the Tibetan tradition, which -- not the Buddhist tradition, but the Shambhala tradition. Actually you might say the ethnic tradition. The four figures that you see on that banner or these are from the bottom tiger, lion, garuda and dragon. Tiger, lion is easy enough. Garuda is -- no, I mean to recognize. The garuda is a -- the best thing you could say is celestial bird, and the dragon is a dragon.

So these four animals, creatures, represent four qualities of warriorship, which the tiger is called meek, the lion is called perky, the garuda is called outrageous, and the dragon is called inscrutable. Those are the four qualities of the warrior, the fully accomplished warrior. Starting from meek, which is the level of understanding basic goodness, which is more or less the first five levels of Shambhala Training, is that first one. Then the graduate program, you could say, is the next two. And then the warrior retreat and the rest is the last one. So those are four -- what -- what are called the four dignities and the four qualities. What else could I say?

That's Great Eastern Sun. And four colors represent those four dignities: tiger, lion, garuda, dragon. Great Eastern Sun is the vision. So that's what it means. Do you like them? It's nice. It's interesting, it all came from somewhere else. It didn't come from this culture, it came from somewhere else. It's interesting. I had to get used to that.

QUESTION: Is perhaps the reason you're late because of meekness or developing a meekness in your students, is one question. And the second question is about the mandalas. Are they Tibetan and do you ever use mandalas in meditation?

VR: No. I don't have any deliberate aim in being late. I don't think about it. I don't plan to be late in order to piss you off or to make you develop humility or anything like that. I'm afraid it doesn't happen that way. It's just as purely the way things go. It's gone that way since 1976. I have no excuse for that. I do know that I have been in that same situation where I've been completely frustrated about that. Of course, not in western context, just relating with my teacher, who doesn't have the same concept of time that -- that we are used to.

See, we have grown up in a world which was conditioned to -- to think that time is of the essence. But in what I've understood, is time is not of the essence, and time is elastic according to one's mind. Sometimes you think things are taking forever, like when you're getting close to the end of a meditation period and you know the person's going to ring the gong in five minutes. Well, in some cases I have seen the schedule and I've been meditating and I know it. And time becomes so stretched in that five minutes that you think it's taking another half hour. And there are all kinds of experiences like that that we have. Like for instance, if you ever have been close to dying, your notion of time disappears altogether. All kinds of things like that. So my particular approach to it is not contrived, and I'm simply trying to be honest.

As far as the mandala -- it's not mandala it's mandala -- as mandala is concerned, mandala is the suppose the translation of that could be structure. What's another translation on that?

QN: Circle?

VR: Huh? No, no, no. It's a structure.

Q: Center and fringe?

THE VAJRA REGENT: No, no, no. It's a structure, like a plan of a city or something.

Q: Fortress?

THE VAJRA REGENT: No, no. It's like a plan, you see.

Q: A map?

Q: A relationship?

THE VAJRA REGENT: Well, never mind. Structure, right. It's a structure. And it could be visual and it could be actually painted on ground. It could be a painting or it could be objects or whatnot. It's an arrangement, *that's* it. Arrangement, that's the word. Mandala means arrangement. And it has to do with how things are arranged cosmically and personally, socially. Any kind of arrangement could be called a mandala. But in the Buddhist tradition, there are mandalas which are meditated upon in order to connect oneself with the object of that particular mandala. In some sense you could say there's a central aspect and there are four corners like north, south, east and west. And there's northeast, southwest, and all the rest of it.

And then there are figures that revolve around the center. Basically it's a representation of the arrangement of one's world and one's mind simultaneously. That's a mandala. In Shambhala Training we don't work with any of that particularly until later on.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Because that's a very - kind of an advanced meditation practice. Basically what it is, unless you free yourself of preoccupation with your thoughts it's impossible to visualize those things, because you'll be trying to make a fantasy world or a gimmick out of it and it doesn't work that way.

Q: I have another nasty question. It may never have occurred to you, but why don't sit with us?

VR: It may never have occurred to me?

Q: Maybe it hasn't --

THE VAJRA REGENT: You mean the question or the

Q: The question. I mean --

VR: The question didn't occur to me.

Q: So could you answer it?

VR: I don't know. I suppose just because of my life-style.

Q: Couldn't it help us, I mean?

VR: Well, I don't know. You want to do it now?

Q: Why not?

VR: It's all right with me. Give me some of that stuff.

Q: Let's do it.

VR: Yeah, why not? Give me a -- now, I don't want to wait a long time for you to catch up with me. [Laughter.]

(The Regent assumes meditation posture on a gomden.)

Okay. Do you want me to say anything or just do it?

Q: (Shakes head.)

VR: Just do it. Okay. Just in case.

(Everyone sits for about ten minutes.)

VR: Not bad. Show and tell. Show and tell.

The gentleman here.

QUESTION: I guess I've been struck by the fact that so many people here have been diagnosed as suffering from the same thing, which is apparently an acute case of confused thought. My

question is, where does that come from? How is it that we all share or seem to share or most of us share that same condition, and where does that condition come from?

THE VAJRA REGENT: Oh, that's a very good question. That's a very good question. You see, confused thought -- well, there are different -- there are different aspects of thought, right? And there's what's called discursive thought, which is kind of like the veneer of one's thinking process. Discursive thought is that kind of continual oom-pa-pa, oom-pa-pa. That's kind of, you know, the thing that just goes on in your mind all the time, whether or not you think you're thinking or not, that's going on, right? If you practice meditation, suddenly you become aware of all these, you know, discursive thoughts. They just ramble on.

And underneath that there's -- or on top of it, depends on which way you want to look it -- is called emotions. And emotions -- probably underneath that actually -- emotions are concentrated or highlights of the thought process. In other words, if you're thinking about food and you suddenly become very hungry. and [if you're very hungry] -- you become very hungry, you start to feel pain in your body. And from that you start to feel anxiety about getting to food as quickly as possible. That's called an emotional upheaval. I'm not talking about actually being hungry, I'm talking about when your thought process drives you to the point where you have to fulfill it. You know, that's called an emotion.

Underneath that is what could be called a current of thought, like currents underground or under the ocean that create tides and waves and in relationship to everything above. That's the deepest level of thought. And that's where you get closer to the unconditional quality of what we all share. I think that's where we all share things. It's not on a discursive level, because your thoughts are different from his thoughts and her thoughts, you know. And on the discursive level you might be thinking about what happened to you when you were at -- living in, you know, Brazil or something, you know, blah, blah, blah.

But you get closer to shared experience when you have emotional peaks, and closer still when you tune into the kind of wellstream of thought, of the thought process itself, which is not identifiable as any one thing but has the notion of movement just like currents in the ocean. And that's where everybody connects.

Q: The question I had really was from the other direction. And that is, from your talks there seems to be this vision of unconditional basic goodness --

VR: Right.

Q: -- which we all share or experience of having lost the vision of at some point along the way.

VR: Right.

QUESTION: How is it that we all share that experience?

VR: Because of that wellstream that I'm talking about, which is actually -- see what we get at eventually, not to make things too abstract, is that there is energy and there is space, there is movement and there is stillness. The movement is the recognition of the space, see? And the space contains movement. So the basic goodness is, you could say, the recognition of the space, that when things begin to move that it creates a contrast. When you sit and practice meditation and your thoughts move your mind seemingly in one direction or another, you create a contrast or a contrast is created. And because of that you recognize some basic quality of existence, and that is the movement of your own mind. And that's where we all share the same experience. Is that too abstract?



Q: I don't know that it's *too* abstract, it's very abstract.

VR: Well, that's the way it is, [Student laughs.] Sunday night. You know, I could say that we share the same experience because we are all basically good and la-di-da. But you know, so what? We have to be slightly more profound than that if we're going to continue with this.

Oh, the gentleman behind you. Sorry. I was remiss in my visual memory.

QUESTION: I have a question about the self or the ego or the individuated consciousness, and actually it has two parts. The first is that, I suppose a question if you could -- if there's any validity to this, that we modern man, let's say, westernized modern man, has a different sense of that consciousness, that self, than the man of a few thousand years ago perhaps when this teaching arose. That's the first part, if -- if our sense of self is significantly different to be a different thing, or if it's just qualitatively different.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Ah.

Q: And the second part is, given the fact that we are who we are and do have this sense of self, we have thoughts, we have feelings, we also have something which I'll call will which comes -- gives us the ability, let's say, to sit. But there's also a higher quality, or a different quality, a deeper quality to that will, which we go forth in the world and use or have the potential of using. So my question really is, how does this teaching on an individuated basis as opposed to the deeper sense where we all share answer this self?

VR: I forgot the first question.

QUESTION: Is modern man's self-consciousness basically different than --

VR: No. I don't think so. Of course, I don't remember far back enough. But as far back as I can remember, I don't think so.

As far as the second part of the question, how does this teaching deal with the individual in terms of the will to --

Q: Well, forming the will, action, let's say.

VR: Uh-huh. Oh, very good point, extremely good point. This teaching is based on the possibility that the effort that it takes to perform the good deed, so to speak, to live one's life in a decent way, is not based on will; but rather it's a natural formation, just like a mountain or river or an ocean, that due to the simple elemental causes form themselves in certain ways, in the same way that one's higher notions are not directed by will, but by simple formations. And the simpler the formation, the more direct the connection to the higher notions, whichever you want to call them. The less effort, self-conscious effort, the more exact the expression of goodness.

Q: And that, you're saying, is at a certain point spontaneous without what we would call will?

VR: That's right. it doesn't demand thinking or scheming in any way whatsoever. it just is the natural condition. If you allow it to -- to present itself, it does. Just like -- just like rain or snow, earth, sky.

Q: Does the individual have any function except to be -- prepare his instrument, let's say, to have that happen?

VR: Well, I don't think that the individual is actually an instrument. You know, it's like saying that a particular rock is a special rock. Now, in some cultures, some people, they have special rocks, right? "This rock is an important rock." Why? Well, it's -- it has a powerful quality. And I think that's the same way with individuals. It's not so much that the individual by name is important, but just by expression is important. Just like that rock that some people say this is a sacred rock. It's just a rock. But still, there's something there. So in the same way with individuality. It's just another one of us. But if we get rid of the excess baggage of self-consciousness, then whatever goodness that there is in terms of our individual life, the life that we have from however long it is, will expand, shine, and therefore be seen in a different way as something more sacred, let's say. Does that make sense?

Q: (Nods head.)

VR: Individuality is not in question I don't think, or in fact is not the question. It's more the question of how we can blend our world with the actual forces in it, elemental forces in it, power of just a sunny day or the mood of a cloudy day and puddles in the street. Everything has its vivid quality and is very decent in itself. The individual is purely the contrast, in some ways, to the event.

Well I don't want to get too abstract, but I think that's the way it is in the way that we think of ourselves. If you notice, you always think of yourselves in relationship to something else. You cannot think of yourself as yourself. If you do, there's nothing. Every time you think of yourself it's in relationship to something else.

QUESTION: Is this on? I wanted to ask you if you could speak a little about how you see our culture and the wisdom of our own culture and that blending, since we are in this culture.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Well, I think that the wisdom of this particular culture is based on not giving up, which I think is quite good. It's a little stupid, sort of thick-headed, you know. That's the way Americans are seen by other people, you know, slightly dumb and pushing, pushing the point all the time. But on the other hand, it's not giving up which means that the energy and the courage to continue.

QUESTION: Thank you.

VR: Thank you, Ronnie. [Laughter.]

QUESTION: Before doing this weekend Shambhala Training I used to do some tantric yoga meditation for the last number of years. Are the two techniques mutually compatible? Do they cause confusion if you'd use, say, the same one in the same day?

THE VAJRA REGENT: Depends on what you mean by tantric. You talking about Buddhist tantric techniques or Hindu tantric techniques?

Q: Hindu.

THE VAJRA REGENT: What kind?

Q: Ananda Marg.

VR: Don't know it.

Q: Basically the technique is more keeping your eyes closed, using a mantra and visualizations.

VR: Oh, I see, that kind of thing. Are the two compatible? Not very much. Especially at the beginning not very much. You see, the whole point of keeping your eyes open is very specific actually. It's not to create another world. Let's leave it for later on to create other worlds, when we get really creative. But at this point it's best to simplify. That's the notion here, is to make -- sort of like wash and scrub the mirror of your mind until it reflects everything precisely. In that way, it's best to keep your eyes open, you know, so you don't fall asleep, you don't start to fantasize other things that are unnecessary for this particular practice. This practice does not demand anything of you except to stay awake. It's true; all you have to do is stay awake. You don't have to *do* anything.

Q: Thank you.

VR: The notion of going out with the breath is purely an indication of how to stay awake. It is not an end in itself. Labeling thoughts is not an end in itself. The simple point is just stay awake and let the awareness happen to you rather than you have to generate it. You'd be surprised what happens when you stay awake for a long time.

QUESTION: I want to ask you about duality. I liked the thought of fundamental basic goodness and being able to include passion, aggression and ignorance as aspects within the confusion. But when we are overwhelmed by our own visions, let's say, our own thinking of atrocity or atrocity that we see presented to us in the world, how can we make the transition from the strong belief that there's a flaw somewhere?

THE VAJRA REGENT: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. That's a very good point. It's like original sin, yeah. Well, you have to give in to it. I think it's the basic thing is you have to flop, flop, plop. Just like a stone thrown in a pond creates waves and circles, in the same way you have to give in to that particular kind of pressure which is -- you know, we don't even know whether or not there is any pressure. It just hurts or feels -- feels like, you know,

Andropov dies and somehow you feel bad for this fellow because he died, you know. You can say well, good for the commie rat, you know. But on the other hand, you see, he dies and somehow there's a little bit of uuh, just a little sigh, something. He died. Too bad. Why, why, why do you think that? So you have to sort of give in to that, that which is before your defense mechanism, before your original sin, so to speak. The original sin is being negative, simply being negative about this life. That's the original sin, and I'm not talking Norman Vincent Peale. I'm talking about aggression which comes up due to any kind of impulse that sort of strikes you, you know, *any* kind of impulse, you just get hit by one and sort of uugh, you know, and then you have to do something about it. Why? Who asked you? Nobody. You're doing it to yourself.

Q: It's the wrong notion of original sin.

VR: Huh?

QUESTION: It's the wrong notion of original sin. I think original sin is a --

THE VAJRA REGENT: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Let me finish before you get into the notion of original sin. We might get carried away here and let's not, let's not. Let's not think too much.

In any case, in any case before the impulse happens there is a possibility to let go and I think that you have to give in to that. It might seem dangerous, you know, like self-destruct, but it's not. It's purely becoming part of the universe altogether rather than simply standing apart from the universe as having a particular idea about oneself, which I think is original sin, you know, as being separate. Oh, oh. Let's hear it. I can't wait. Okay. Go ahead. Go ahead.

QUESTION: I mean, five minutes ago you have been asked why have we all been diagnosed as being in this particular strange state of mind. That's original sin. Original sin is --

THE VAJRA REGENT: Hm-mm, hm-mm.

Q: Original sin is covering our basic goodness. I mean, originally --

THE VAJRA REGENT: No. No. No. No. No. We have to get clearer about that. What I meant was the reason we have all the same experience is not because of original sin. It's because our same experience with our thought process is universal. In fact, there is no original sin.

Q: But I mean original sin is just think it's just the same what you say. Our basic goodness is spoiled by some kind of mental notions and there's [voices] -- I mean, the [tree of -- how do you say?]

VR: I don't think so; I don't think so.

Q: It's just spoiled. I mean, our minds --

THE VAJRA REGENT: I don't think it's spoiled, otherwise we couldn't be here. It's not spoiled.

Q: I think the only this difference is that -- that in Christianity you have grace and here you have to work. I like it better. I like that better.

VR: Listen, I hope we have some grace, otherwise we'll be in big trouble. Well, anyway, did you understand what I meant?

First questioner: Thank you.

THE VAJRA REGENT: You're welcome.

QUESTION: Well, right now I'm a little confused. I'd like you to get abstract if you're inclined at all.

VR: I'm always inclined to do that.

Q: You talked earlier about the ignorance that the world is in now. Is this merely chance that the circumstances arranged for this to happen or is there some sort of karma that's . . .

VR: [Laughs.] You want me to get abstract. It's purely chance. However, that one -- when one becomes aware that it is purely chance, then it is no longer chance. In other words, when you're --

Q: Too abstract.

VR: -- when you're confused about what's going on, right? You're confused you, say to yourself, "I don't know. I'm so confused." And who are you talking to? To whom are you talking, right? At that point you're talking to yourself, but of course there's nobody listening because you're talking to yourself. So sooner or later you figure that out, and you stop saying those things. [Laughter.] You see what I mean? Well, when you say -- if you say to yourself, "I am so confused, things are really difficult for me now because I'm so confused," who are you talking to? You're talking to yourself, right? Nobody answers. Then you begin to think there's no reason talking to myself because I don't answer. [Laughter.] And surprisingly your confusion begins to dissipate, because -- why? Because you don't put all that energy into being confused. You realize it's a futile experiment in life to talk to yourself, it doesn't make any difference. Did you ever notice that? It doesn't make any difference whatsoever to talk to yourself.

Think about it; practice some more meditation and you'll see. You talk to yourself in meditation all day long. After a while you begin to catch on about the ordinary magic. That's the ordinary magic, my friends. You begin to see there's no point in talking to yourself because there isn't any such thing, nobody answers. So when you stop doing that you become very relaxed and you start to enjoy your life a little bit. You start to delight in a person's eyes, their hair, the sunlight, rain, anything, because you're not *only* talking to yourself all the time, you see. You stop doing that. It frees up so much energy you can do whatever you *like*. Most of the time we spend talking to ourselves. Do you realize how much we -- anything that happens we have to comment on it to ourselves. [Laughter.] As soon as something happens we go, "That feels good. That feels good. That feels bad. That feels bad." We've been doing it for so long, ladies and gentlemen, we've been doing this and there is no reason to do it. Nobody is answering our call, especially when we're talking to ourselves. [Student laughs.] Why should we answer ourselves since we're talking? It doesn't make any sense.

It's like, you know, I remember when I was 14 or 13 and my girlfriend left me. And I said, "Oh, why, why?" Nobody answered. [Laughter.] And she didn't come back. It's very simple. It's very -- we can actually live a simple life. It doesn't have to be complicated. It doesn't have to be metaphysical. Metaphysical is just sort of, you might say, bullshit. Complicates your thought process; no reason to do it.

So to be abstract about it, there is no actual self. So therefore, to involve oneself with oneself is a double effort. Since you already are who you are, you don't have to think about it. That's it. If you got that, you have -- you know, you don't have to do any of the other levels. [Laughter.] You got it in a nutshell. But if you don't get it, I suggest you come back and try it again and keep trying it until you get it, you catch on to the ordinary magic. And that *is* the ordinary magic.

VR: Gentleman over there.

QUESTION: Yeah, I had two parts. How much time have you spent meditating?

VR: Oh, you mean logged? [Laughter.]

Q: Yeah, well, yeah, something like that. I was just curious about that.

VR: Well, I spent – history-wise I spent four and a half years with a Hindu teacher and the past thirteen years with Trungpa Rinpoche. That's seventeen and a half years, out of which I have done a considerable amount of practice in meditation. I don't exactly know how many hours.

Q: Just a rough guess a day, maybe four, five or six hours a day average or something?

VR: What?

Q: How many hours how many hours a day average maybe do you think that I don't know how much. I have no idea. That's why I'm asking.

VR: I think probably more like four .

Q: Four. And what -- what happens --

VR: How do you like that? Is that pretty good? Four.

Q: That's good.

VR: Anyway, what are you asking?

Q: I got -- I got the answer I wanted. The other thing I was wondering is if you could briefly say what happens with you when you meditate now?

VR: Well, there are, I think, probably four stages. The first is I become aware of my body as I sit down and assume the posture. And as I become aware of my body and assume the posture, then mind relaxes in its own way. Well, that could do the whole thing actually in a way.

Q: You're going to leave -- you're going to leave out the last two, huh?

VR: Well, to say the last two I think would be misleading at this point for your experience.

Q: Okay. Thanks.

QUESTION: Thank you. I'm having problems with my inhaling, of all things. I --

THE VAJRA REGENT: I think everybody does.

Q: I can't just forgot about inhaling. I need to live, I need to breathe. [Laughter.]

VR: The point is not -- the point is not to -- is -- how do you say this? Wait a minute. The point is not to -- is not to not -- now, wait a minute. I'll get it, wait a minute. You don't have to forget inhaling, that's not the point. The point is to emphasize the exhalation, because that produces the sense of expansiveness. If you are aware of the inbreath, don't make a big deal out of it. It doesn't matter.

Q: Thanks.

VR: Just put more attention to this sense of going out. That's the whole thing. Whoosh, let the inbreath come in, just whoosh. You see? When you set up a situation like this with the practice that we give, the first thing that you're going to be aware of is the inbreath. Because they said, "Don't pay too much attention to the inbreath." [Laughter.] So mind being what it is, or the way it works is you pay attention to whatever, you know, is pointed out. So when we said, "Don't pay attention to the inbreath," you immediately are going (inhales loudly). It makes you feel, "That's how I'm going to stay alive, because this thing going out is just going out and it just goes out and that's it." You see? Don't worry too much about it. Just feel the sensation of out, the feeling of going out, your body and mind, your self-consciousness, your thought process all rides on the outbreath as if it were a horse riding outward in a big field. Just whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, out. Then it goes out of sight and then the inbreath comes in.

QUESTION: I'd just like to ask if you could speak a little bit about within Shambhala Training the combination of the male and the female. And I don't see -- I see a sun but I don't see a moon.

THE VAJRA REGENT: I think the moon is the Shambhala Training. The program itself is the moon, is the feminine aspect. This is it.

Q: And do you feel that -- I should say I get the feeling of this -- not the group I'm sitting with but the rest of it -- being a little overweighted on the male side.

VR: It only seems that way because of the vision. You see, masculine thing is associated with eyes in some ways. When you see, you know, bright thing it's overpowering, it's sort of a masculine thing. And soft moonlight that casts shadows is associated with the feminine thing. If you notice that if you do Shambhala Training over time that it's -- the program itself is more associated with the feminine thing, whereas the vision of it is more associated with the masculine thing in terms of energy.

Q : Okay.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Yeah.

QUESTION: Thank you.

THE VAJRA REGENT: That's why I do occasional programs, because they think I might mess it up here. They let me out occasionally to do these Level Ones and things. They say, "Oh, my goodness, no, he's not going to do that."

That's a good point. That's a good point, yeah . See, this would be feminine in a certain way (points to sun). This, strangely enough, this is more masculine (points to the colors). You see, the means are more masculine, how you do things. The vision is the feminine .

QUESTION: You just changed it.

VR: Did I change that? Well, too bad. Let's try and do that again. I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it. Let's say it's in constant play. [Laughter.] Sometimes it look like one, sometimes it look like the other. I really got myself [encased] in that one, didn't I? Actually I think it's the second one, what I said. That this is feminine ultimately (points to sun). You should never ad lib and do Level One. This is ridiculous.

All right, let's think of it this way, think of it this way, that what you see is basically feminine. How you work with it is masculine. Energy. Space is feminine, energy is the

masculine. And that's what happens. So in some ways the vision of the Great Eastern Sun is feminine (points to sun), the vision. And the aspects of tiger, lion, garuda, dragon are masculine. On the -- I think on the -- you could call it the ultimate level, that's the way things are. But as you approach it, it's reversed. No, I'm serious. As you approach it, it's reversed. The vision seems very masculine because it's bright and overpowering, and the means seem feminine because they're workable. Like feminine energy, right, receptive, workable. But when you get -- actually get there, it flips. It's true.

Q: Is this ordinary magic?

VR: Yes, altogether. I can't imagine what else it would be.

QUESTION: Sir, you were talking about how we're constantly commenting to ourselves about ourselves. And I have a question about raising children in that I discover that it's actually very good practice, you see yourself doing things by relating with them, and it seems that I'm constantly commenting to my daughter the same way I comment to myself about myself. Like, "Aren't the Flatirons beautiful this morning," trying to create some appreciation, but I'm --

THE VAJRA REGENT: You shouldn't do that.

Q: I don't think -- I don't know.

VR: Is that one of the things you say?

Q: Yes.

VR: You shouldn't do that.

Q: I guess what I'm asking is, how do you not -- how do you not

VR: What?

Q: How do you not -- or do -- are they going to do it anyway?

VR : I think they're going to do it anyway. Don't worry about it.

Q: Okay.

VR: Just have another one. It doubles the intensity of how you comment. See, the more you practice, the more you practice, the more you know about what's going on. The less you practice, the more it's a dream. You have to practice a lot, because then it puts things in perspective. You cannot get away from yourself when you're sitting on the cushion, right? You there's no way you can sustain that dream.

Now, this weekend you only practiced a little bit. Your meditations have been very short periods. But say you did this for one week. You would see how the comments start to become boring, inconsequential, and after a while they lose their *power*. When they lose their power then you discover the ordinary magic. You start to smile somehow. You know it's like you relate to your daughter, when you see yourself doing those sorts of things, "Aren't the flowers beautiful?" And sooner or later you begin to smile at yourself and say "What? What are you saying?" If the flowers are beautiful, they are. And they are.



Q: So you don't need the comment.

VR: You don't really. You just have to present, see, that's the thing. If you're working with yourself or working with others, all you have to do is present it. You don't have to say "Isn't it beautiful?" You don't really have to.

Q: Thank you.

QUESTION: You mentioned that the Shambhala teachings are not associated with any particular religion.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Well, no, they're associated with Buddhism through the history.

Q: Uh-huh.

VR: Yeah.

Q: Well, what I was going to ask is I assume that they came to you through a lineage. Could you tell me what are the links in that lineage?

VR: The Shambhala lineage?

Q: Uh-huh.

VR: The links?

Q: The most immediate link. Through whom did they come to Trungpa Rinpoche?

VR: Well, I think through his root guru, who is named Jamgon Kongtrul, who also had those teachings.

Q: Thank you.

VR: That's the one side of it. Direct, you mean the personal side, how that came personally. Then there's also the sort of you might say the celestial side, you know, rocks trees, rivers, rain, any of those things. It's the same thing that's in, for instance, in Shinto when they talk about kami, that kind of thing, you know, that you see the divine or spiritual quality in something like this or this (point to flowers and hits microphone). So it's -- I think also it's part of his culture. That's pervaded the culture, the notion of Shambhala. Anybody you meet from Tibet will know about this, if you meet anybody from Tibet they'll know about this. Probably not in these words, because we're speaking English. [Laughter.] But they'll know about it. It's as if you were talking to a Japanese person about Amataratsu Kami or some particular kami or other, you know, they'd know about it because it's part of their culture.

Are we equipped to handle such a person in the back?

QUESTION: The question -- I have a question about self-help techniques.

THE VAJRA REGENT: Yes, Yes.

Q: When you talk about basic goodness and sort of relating to yourself like that --

VR: Uh-huh.

Q: -- is that the same kind of technique as the self-help? Do you know what I'm asking?

VR: Well, I think that, you know, we're talking about self-help, basically the reason I mentioned that is so as not to confuse the idea of basic goodness with something which creates a certain material benefit. We should not confuse the two, or *particular* material benefit. In other words, if you *do* this particular training, Shambhala Training, you will get some sort of benefit like a new car or something like that, or a new mind.

Q: What -- what about, you know. longing and that sort of thing?

VR: What about what?

Q: Longing.

VR: Well, what about it?

Q: Well, I mean, you might -- you know, you long to not be so tight or something.

VR: Oh, you mean is that -- is that self-help to get over that?

Q: I'm mostly asking about the technique, you know.

VR: The technique is not meant to produce particular results aside from the ones that it produces. That is to say, that what we talk about in Shambhala Training is that you already have it, there is no reason to think that it's somewhere else, right? Now, lots of people say that. I remember years ago in Los Angeles that I met this teacher who said, "The God is within you. You already have the God in you." You know, and all that stuff. And it was nice. But the point is is that you don't -- we don't need interpretations of who we are, We don't have to think about it, you see. This is who we are right now. This is it. Good, bad or happy or sad. It's not differentiated by qualities or by momentary experience, it's sort of basic. When we were sitting meditating, right, before, did anybody have the feeling of the quality of space and the quality of just being here? That's it. That's the goodness we're talking about. It's nothing else.

Q: Thanks.

THE VAJRA REGENT: So whatever you do, good luck. I hope you're successful in your life and this is the end of the talk. [Laughter.] It's delightful to talk to you, very nice, very nice.

You know, sometimes -- sometimes we feel cheated, because we want to be assured that it won't go contrary to what we want. My dear friends, don't -- don't cheat yourself. Don't worry so much about your own pleasure, your own comfort. It just hangs you up for such a long period of time. It's not important to be that way or to even think that way or the other way around. We are so edgy that we want to pick a fight with everything and say, "Well, now, this couldn't be, this couldn't be." Well, you know it all is exactly what it seems like. At the same time, it seems like a dream. It's confusing in our minds to make a relationship or to know the two. Where things seem so ordinary, just so simple like a flower, microphone or floor or ceiling,

a lamp, sun and the moon. And then at the same time things seem so extraordinary, like a shadow or indigestion.

This is ordinary magic. Don't involve yourself too much in making distinctions. Try to live your life in a simple way. And if you don't know how to do that, I suggest that you do Shambhala Training. The reason that I suggest that is because I am the co-founder of Shambhala Training [laughter] and, therefore, I know what I'm talking about. I have to. Otherwise I wouldn't be the co-founder. [Laughter.] You can -- you can -- you can actually relax a little bit with your life and work with it and try not to be so serious as to, you know, conquer everything.

That notion of journey is very important, as I mentioned in the beginning. Journeying is process rather than thinking of what's going to come out at the end. Making the journey is so much more vivid than reaching the end. You reach the end, there's nothing there. It's just you. You say, "Well, I made it." It doesn't mean you shouldn't go for it. I think you should. That's the only way to learn anything, is to make the effort. So I trust that you all will. And I trust that I will see you again sometime in this particular course. And I'll probably be somewhat later. Once you get on in the levels, I get on in my mind, you know, and it becomes more abstract. My wife is making a face. Yes, I know. Susan's going to say something. In any case, I would like to make one final bow to you and with each other. Thank you very much.

[All bow.]

Susan: My big chance. It has been a very special program having the co-founder with us for the first time at a Level One, and also this being the largest Level One program that we've ever had. I'd like to thank you all very much for being here. It's been wonderful. And in particular I'd like to thank the staff for putting on this great show. The program supervisor, Jeff Herrick; the coordinator, Bonnie Miller; and her two assistants, Jane Sunshine and John Nathan; as well as all the other staff members who have helped out. Thank you very much.

And on behalf of the participants and the staff, sir, I would like to thank you for reintroducing us to the present moment and providing the introduction and invitation to experiencing ordinary magic. Thank you. [Applause.] [Laughs.]

THE VAJRA REGENT: See you later.

Susan: Before you go, I would like to invite you all to the social we will be having here.... [tape ends]

(The talk concluded at 10:05 p.m., February 12, 1984 .)