

Osel Tendzin, "Aggression: The Ground of Psychosis" July 24, 1981, Psychology Symposium
Naropa

This is an uncorrected transcript, transcriptionist Robert Walker, completed July 30, 2016.

Label: The Vajra Regent Osel Tendzin, speaking at The Naropa Institute Psychology Symposium on Friday, July 24, 1981. The subject is "Aggression, the Ground of Psychosis."

Female introducer: Before we get started I'd like to introduce each of the speakers who will be presenting during this symposium. Jeffrey Fortuna, and Bonnie Rabin will be speaking in the morning. Doctor Edward Podvoll will be speaking tomorrow night. Doctor Antonio Wood will be talking on Sunday morning, doctor Clifford Scott on Sunday afternoon.

Our speaker tonight, Osel Tendzin, is a foremost student of the Venerable Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and in 1976 was empowered by Rinpoche as a holder of the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages in Tibetan Buddhism. He, in his experience of working with people, among other things, has directed the Maitri Project. He was with the Executive Committee of Karme Choling Meditation Center and is the Executive Vice President of Nalanda Foundation and Vajradhatu, an association of Buddhist Meditation centers. Tonight he will be speaking on "Psychosis: The Ground of Aggression" [sic] "Aggression, the Ground of Psychosis"! Excuse me. [Laughs].

Thank you very much. I'm glad you clarified that for me. [see just above] [pause]

I would like to welcome everyone to this symposium. Our intent, I suppose, is to illuminate the object of our mutual gathering together. In that respect, I would like to open our discussion by suggesting that the nature of human existence is based on the intention to achieve. And we can look at that intention in two ways: that such intention is motivated by fear or such intention is pure in itself. We're not particularly concerned at this point about the object of the intention, but just simply stating that the intention to achieve is the nature of our human birth. It is the spark, the generator which produces the energy to continue with our lives, to overcome obstacles, to succumb to obstacles, to create pleasurable situations, to create destructive environment. This intention that I'm speaking of is known in some circles as the "will to live," or "... to survive," and is explained in either psychological or biological or philosophical or political or social terms. But, in whatever terms it is described, it is simply and directly the very source of whatever life we know.

Taken negatively, this intention centers around survival based on threat. In other words, our existence is constantly threatened by the very elements -- the world and the environment -- that we live in. And so, that being the case, we must use the energy of that intention to "conquer."

Taken from the point of view of pure intention, we could say that there is the absence of threat and absence of the notion of power *over* phenomena. Strictly speaking, this intention has no particular form. That is to say, it is not describable in terms of concept, conceptual thinking, that includes description by sense perception, that is to say, "it smells like this" or "it feels like this" or "it looks like this" or "it tastes like this", or whatever -- strictly speaking. *Loosely* speaking, this intention is described as "ego," which is characterized by name and form: "I -- smell -- a flower." (I'm not trying to do a "Dick and Jane" on you here; I hope you understand that. I'm just trying to be simple, direct.) So there's strictly speaking and loosely speaking, in terms of this intention that we're talking about here.

Strictly speaking we call it ego because ego itself is bound by conditions. The notion of “I,” “me,” and its extension -- that is to say “I am” -- is bound by condition, condition which involves sense perception and the result of sense perception, which is, in this case, what we call “our world.” When we say “bound by”, we are actually describing or, in this case, imprisoning the energy of pure intention, simply because every time we extend ourselves, that is to say, we become *aware*, that awareness is limited by its own description. (16:50)

And that's another definition of ego: “awareness being limited by its own description.” When intention is free in *itself*, this is to say, that sense perception, environmental awareness, bodily sensations, and all the rest of it that makes up this notion of “I,” are not connected to a central event or central notion, then the achievement, or the sense of achievement, is also liberated.

In the previous case, achievement is *hounded* by itself, constantly badgered by itself, because any kind of achievement is completely intertwined with the notion of *boundary*, that is to say, definition. When achievement is not imprisoned by definition, then it is free to express itself, achieve itself,

Now the interesting point here is that the two are not particularly separate -- which I suppose is the fly in the ointment, so to speak. What makes people crazy and what makes people sane is the fact that the two -- the negative notion of intention and the pure intention -- are not particularly separate. We can't really say that sense perception, when free from boundary, does not exist. Sense perception certainly *does* exist. We can't say, also, that *description* is useless, because description is continuous. As long as we have sense perception and a thought process and a body, there is some sort of description which will always be going on.

So if these two seemingly conflicting notions are not separate, then how are we to distinguish between that which is necessary to keep and that which is necessary to discard? Aggression is the result of unfulfilled desire to achieve. Again, let us be clear on this point. We're not talking about the object of the achievement at all. It could be butcher, baker, Indian chief, doesn't matter. Whatever. But the sense of not being fulfilled in one's desire to achieve something is that which gives birth to aggression. So you could say that, strictly speaking, or plainly speaking, that aggression comes out of the marriage of pure intention and distorted intention.

If we ourselves are interested in helping other people liberate themselves from pain, suffering, psychotic states, we ourselves must understand the origin of such psychosis. At the same time, we ourselves must understand the origin of our own sanity, because the two are not separate. I think any of you, any of us who have had experience with psychotic states, either our own or others, realize that the line between psychosis as a destructive element and psychosis as the purified intention is a transparent line. If we are interested in exploring this topic, we ourselves must have the attitude that the two notions of human existence, that is, fulfillment through aggression or fulfillment through nonaggression, are basically not separate. It is with that kind of ground, that kind of understanding, that we can actually make distinctions which are not based on ego. Distinctions based on ego are always self-references. Distinctions which are pure intention are based on the absence of any kind of self-preference, our self-gratification, -involvement, anything you want to call it -- self-consciousness.

If we are going to do this weekend symposium, it seems to me that we must take into account two things: that we are educated, superbly educated in our own point of view, and at the same time, we are superbly frightened that our own point of view is non-existent -- that is to say, is pure. We're actually

frightened about our own pure intention in some ways. If we are going to make this symposium juicy, shall we say, textural, and I hesitate to say *meaningful*, but I think I will -- meaningful -- that we must acknowledge our expertise and our empty bottom, trap door, so to speak.

As far as the topic of tonight's talk, how to relate this with, what is it? "aggression as the ground of psychosis", yes, is that pure intention is constantly trying to achieve perfection. And that perfection is frustrated because our notion of perfection is bounded by or described by what we think of as ourselves. And since we cannot actually describe ourselves completely we become resentful of not being able to achieve our own perfection. Therefore we invent ideal states which do not last, and therefore we panic when they don't, and we become involved in overwhelming struggle to recreate some sense of that perfection, which creates aggression to ourselves and aggression to the rest of the world, so much so that we feel that we are constantly trapped, cannot get out of any kind of hell of our own making.

The only possible release from that particular kind of world is to actually unlock, or unhinge ourselves, so that we can give birth to what's called discriminating awareness -- that is to say, to allow the unfolding of this particular process of pure intention and impure intention to happen without the interference of our own interpretation, so that eventually we can be able to discriminate, and therefore help other beings. If you have any questions, they would be welcome. (30:21)

There's a gentleman in the back with a blue shirt. Could you wait for [the microphone?] Yes, thank you.

Q1, male: Would you describe please what you mean by "pure intention?"

VROT: Well, pure intention is conditionless. It's almost as if saying that, it's like a thunderstorm and the energy that is produced by lightening in a thunderstorm. It doesn't have any particular reason to strike the tree. It's absolutely pure from the point of view that it is not based on survival, and it is not necessarily concerned with life and death, survival, reputation, good and bad, and all the rest of it. So the key word is "unconditional". Pure intention is unconditional. At the same time, it is no different than survival or intention based on ego, that is to say, "I would like to do something with my life. I would like to succeed in my life; I would like to do something meaningful." It's not different from that.

At the same time, if we are to actually help anybody, we ourselves must make a distinction between the two, just in terms of practicality. Am I making sense to you? I mean, you can help somebody, or you can work with somebody from the point of view of that which has gone before, and that which you are familiar with, but there is an element, always, of unconditional intention, that is to say unconditional spark of energy, which doesn't have anything to do with an historical reference. We have to blend those two, to know the difference, and to know basically which is which, or else we are talking to people from the point of view of history -- or we are talking to people from the point of view of spontaneous understanding.

Ah-hah. Gentleman over here with the beard. We have to wait for microphones here because they are recording these things. We are recording these things.

Q2, male: Thank you. I'd like to ask you if you could elaborate a little bit more about what you mean by discriminating awareness, and how that helps to resolve the problem of seeking perfection. (34:00)

VROT: Well, discriminating awareness is that awareness which actually can differentiate between intention which is not based on condition and intention which is based on the notion of “me”, myself. How is that -- what is the second part?

Q2: How does that help to resolve the problem of one seeking perfection?

VROT: Well, very simply speaking, the “seeking perfection” which is based on ego, has so many different variations that it can't be pinpointed at all, actually can't know what that perfection is because it is, like ego, like ourselves, we feel good one minute, bad the next; we feel elated, then we feel depressed, then we feel calm, then we feel agitated. So the way we feel actually is a reflection of that intention. You know, how we feel. How we feel is pretty much a mirror image of our perfection, so to speak. So when it's based on ego, it has absolutely no definition from the point of view of ego. It can't be possibly defined; it's always changing, constantly.

From the point of view of pure intention, we can isolate that perfection, actually isolate it, so we know exactly what it is that we are trying to achieve, and we are not fooled, particularly, by the constant ups and downs of our own mental states.

Q3, female: I'm feeling a little, my work with psychotic patients in which the state seems to be very diffused, it's like very rudimentary ego development --

VROT: um-hm

Q3: -- very scattered [so] it doesn't sound like what we're talking about here.

VROT: um-hm

Q3: -- and I wonder whether you'd talk a little bit about that.

VROT: Well I think if you're talking about working with psychotic patients, I would say that, if your point of view is that “that is a rudimentary ego development”, I think you're wrong. I think that a psychotic person, a person who exhibits psychotic states of mind, is sort of like a perfectionist gone mad. Basically, it's not rudimentary at all; it's very complex, so complex that it short-circuits itself. So you might say “rudimentary” from the point of view of teaching a baby how to put the spoon in the mouth --

Q3: Yeah

VROT -- but that intention is already there on the part of that person, (37:05) in fact, has already experienced that.

Q3: Well that might be true of *some* psychotic states that I see patients in, but some, if you look at their emotional level, it's so primitive, that somewhere I'm don't, I'm not making the connection.

VROT: Well, you see, but what I'm saying is that, it appears primitive only because they have become so frustrated that they short-circuit themselves and *become* primitive. In other words, if things don't work out for you, just on an ordinary level, let's say, on our ordinary sane level [light laughter], that is

to say the way we deal with paying the bills and all that ordinary level, which is basically sane and workable, when things don't work out for us we drop (whew!), a little bit, the energy drops and we feel slightly panicked and slightly confused when things don't work for us. When someone who is called a psychotic drops, it is because they accelerated their view, their intention, to achieve something, to such a point that it dropped in proportion to the point that they accelerated.

So it's not primitive -- it's primitive only from the point of view that they refuse to remember the basic "paying the bills" point of view, you know, basic, just, flush the toilet and go ahead with the whole thing. Refuse to remember. But don't buy into that, please, because every being, unless there might be some instances, which I don't think we're talking about, where people are born with some mental deficiency, some kind of damage that way, but we're talking about someone who has gone through their life and arrived at this particular low point -- we must take the attitude or at least we must understand that that journey happened because of some sort of intention. In order to re-awaken their sanity, we have to understand that that *happened*. They didn't just, by circumstance, fall there. See what I mean?

Q3: Yeah, and I understand the intention, I mean, everybody has intention but yeah, I hadn't understood the drive for such perfection because I don't see, can't see that.

VROT: Well, where did you come into the picture?

Q3: As a staff person in a mental hospital.

VROT: Right, when they're already there.

Q3: yeah [laughs]

VROT: But somewhere, something went completely wrong with their desire to achieve.

Q3: Yeah the histories go way back.

VROT: Way back. Yeah. It's important to know history up to a certain extent. After that, it doesn't make any difference, but to understand from the point of view of working with somebody, that that intention, whether it becomes almost cave-like, you know, grunt level, is still there. That intention to achieve is still there. Achieve -- well, when I say "achieve", I hope you understand I don't mean "become something particular." It's this kind of like longing to be --

Q3: Right, yeah

VROT: -- longing to *be*. We have to communicate from the point of view that we understand that that person actually *has* that --

Q3: Yes, that I can understand that --

VROT: -- and they have created such a horror story for themselves that they don't believe that there's any possibility to relieve that situation that they're in. You know, hot is extremely hot; cold is extremely cold. There's no escape from even the elemental factors, right?

Q3: Yeah. Thank you.

VROT: you're welcome.
Hello, John?

Q4, male: Just to see if I can get what you're saying (41:35), you're saying that the longing, the pure intention is the longing to be, and the distorted intention is the longing to be *something*, and that not achieving, becoming some-*thing*, the failing of that, causes a sort of rebound against being, the whole thing of being.

VROT: Altogether. Yeah. The rebound against being a human being altogether. And even the body is disgusting. Everything is (pheww).

Q4: uh-huh

VROT: But on the other hand, let me say again, (42:03) that those two things are wed.

Q4: are wedded?

VROT: Yeah, wedded, that's kind of like they are partners.

Q4: That's the tricky part, right?

VROT: It certainly is, and that demands some sort of real clear awareness on our part if we're going to work with people, that those two things are *not* all that different. It's just simply like, ah, if you see that it's a cloudy day, you say, well, "there's no sun in the sky." But actually there *is* sun, but there *happened* to be clouds covering it. In the same way that pure intention is wedded to intention, clouded intention, that is, ego-centered intention.

Q4: So working with someone like that would be, are you saying something about being able to help them distinguish?

VROT: Exactly, being able to help them distinguish between the two. Yeah. It doesn't matter what level you start on. But that's the key point. If you're going to bring somebody back, it always involves being able to distinguish between that which is real and and that which is a fantasy, right? It's very simple. And that, of course, depends upon your own understanding of the two. If you don't know the difference yourself, you're hopeless, and basically all you're doing is charging a fee for no reason.

Q5, female: I sense rather a romanticism.

VROT: Could I have rather a microphone there, please?

Q5: I sense rather a romanticism. Would you possibly expand on your idea that there is a transparent line?

VROT: Yes, I think that the romanticism is sort of an intrinsic quality that, without the romanticism,

we have basically what's called just a "steel-gray world," that we can construct very tall buildings. (44:29) But can we really without romanticism?

Q5: I meant the romanticism of psychosis, which is what I've been sensing.

VROT: Same thing as the World Trade Center, as far as I'm concerned.

Q5: What does that mean to you?

VROT: Well, that we can construct the World Trade Center, which is basically, as far as human beings are concerned, in the long run, useless. But what a romantic idea to make such two tall buildings together that stand out against the sky and glitter, gleam in the sunlight, fantastic. Our desire, fulfillment, romantic, eh? How much energy to make those buildings; how much electricity; how much does it cost the city of New York or the people there? (45:26) Are you with me or are we going in different places?

Q5: Of course not! [Laughs.]

VROT: Well, then we seem to be communicating. [laughter]

In the back, please?

Q6, female: In answer to the first question and the last question you were saying that there was no difference between pure intention and distorted intention.

VROT: Not separate. I didn't say there was no difference; I said that they were not separate.

Q6: So that, are you saying within the distorted intention situation, there's pure intention there, regardless of how distorted the person might seem to us?

VROT: Well, I think we have to be a little more precise than that. That's kind of like a therapeutic, whatchacalit? It's like a prescription to say that within distorted perception we must understand that there is pure -- uh, [corrects himself] within distorted intention we must understand there is pure intention. Well, that can only go so far; that will only take you about a half an hour into it and then you're finished.

Something more than that. I'm talking about that you actually *see* that there is no difference, like when you see a patient, you see a *patient*. *That* kind of sense is what I'm talking about, that there is really discriminating awareness going on between *this* one and *that* one. [Did he mis-speak? I mean it seems that he's saying there *is* a difference, a discrimination between the therapist and patient, between pure and false intention, but that they are *not* separate.] At the same time, you see that they are not separate. At the same time you see that, from the point of view of pure intention, right? Not separate. From the point of view of ego -- very separate.

Q6: Thank you.

Q7, male: From the point of view of pure intention, as the will to survive, what is it that you will to

survive?

VROT: From the point of view of pure intention?

Q7: Yes.

VROT: What survives?

Q7: Yes.

VROT: Well, the interesting point there is that, from the point of view of pure intention, survival is itself -- that is to say, there is no struggle. In terms of pure intention, there's no struggle. Survival still exists not as a, shall we say, an exhibit in the museum of natural history, I'm not talking about that. Survival, from the point of view of pure intention, is the continuous unfolding, unfolding, of one's own pure intention.

Q7: And how is struggle connected with that?

VROT: How is what?

Q7: Struggle. I mean, if the two intentions are wedded --

VROT: Struggle is *not* connected with that.

Q7: Then I'm not following what you were saying about the two being connected.

VROT: Well, the two are connected because it is impossible to help anybody unless you see that pure intention and intention based on ego are not separate.

Q7: Well, that's what I'm asking, is how are they connected in this particular case of not struggling?
How--

VROT: How are they connected?

Q7: Yes.

VROT: By you. You make the connection. They're not connected by anything other than your own perception of it.(49:21) They're not connected by any particular law or principle of the universe, or anything like that.

Q7: So the trick is to understand how you -- how the individual connects those two.

VROT: ah-hah-hah-hah-hah. The trick is to understand that there is no trick. [Laughter.] That's seeing the thing clearly, that there basically is no trick.

Either side, you have trick. You have the ultimate trick or the relative trick. You got the trick which is based on "Me got to go. Me got to be bigger," and then you have the other trick which is "No me.

[laughter.] No bigger.” [Laughter.] We're trying to talk about here is that discriminating between the two, one understands that there -- basically, as a human being motivated by / with the intent to achieve, we realize that that intent in itself is unconditional, that is to say, there is no trick involved -- in *being*. In being there is no trick. There is no *deal*, there is no deal. There is no contract. There is no, what do you call it?, one of those things that binds one thing to the other. It's very interesting because it leaves you quite wide open. At the same time, your mind is sharp and clear. You may have no ground underneath you, but you are not falling, particularly, [haaaah breathy sound] because your mind is sharp and clear.

Gentleman here?

Q8, male: I'm not clear at what point in this process you've described the psychotic person, the psychotic's path departs from the path of the non-psychotic.

VROT: Well, at the part where frustration with what you want to achieve becomes fantasy and desire to the point where that fantasy is a complete imagination of a blissful realm or -- what do you call it? See what it says here. Yeah, you imagine that everything's perfect.

Q8: So, in other words, we all have this.

VROT: You're right. You said it. You said it!

Q8: Ok, thank you.

VROT: You said it. You said it.

Mustache? Oh, look who it is. Hello.

Q9, male: Just dropped in for the weekend.

VROT: Ah, that's wonderful, so did I.

Q9: Well, in my own clinical practice I've been impressed again and again how psychotic people have the ability to involve everybody around them in the psychosis and many times I've found myself helping them to maintain their psychotic state.

VROT: Right.

Q9: And, the only(53:08), there are all kinds of systems and ways of thinking about it, and they all work great for about three sessions, and then somehow it doesn't work anymore.

VROT: Well it isn't exactly -- that's exactly what I am saying. We have these two choices, right? -- of being extremely paranoid ourselves about the psychosis of somebody else, at the same time, we have this sort of humanistic view that “that psychosis is no different that our perception budoop budoop budoop.”

Q9: Well I've found the only thing that has enabled me to work at all with psychotic people has been

my own sitting practice, and, um, I think, and in this symposium there seems to be a little bit of a hidden agenda, that in the announcements before this talk it's mentioned that there will be sitting practice at eight o'clock in the morning and there was sitting meditation instruction available, and so on. I was wondering if you could say something about how that effects working with people.

VROT: Well sitting meditation, as far as the Buddhist point of view goes, is placing oneself in the nature of unconditional intention. If you place yourself in that nature of unconditional intention, then you can develop discriminating awareness. If you don't do that, you can never do it. You'll always have an opinion. You'll always have an opinion. It's not to say that sitting meditation, according to the Buddhist tradition, is the *only* way that you're going to achieve that, but whether it's sitting meditation in the Buddhist tradition, or a struggle or discipline of some kind, eventually we have to come to the point, to that very pin-point, which is very small, like a small little dot, where there is unconditional intention. Therefore we can be helpful. Other than that, it's nice to talk.

Q9: Thank you.

VROT: Ah-hah. Again.

Q10, male: I think it's been implied, and we all take for granted that the psychotic person has a distortion of reality --

VROT: yes

Q10: However, the word "reality" hasn't been used. I just wonder if you might explain your own approach to the idea of talking about a psychotic person as being out of touch with reality or having a distorted reality.

VROT: My own approach to talking about a person who is out of touch with reality? Well, that's very interesting. Let me see if I can actually describe it to you, that whatever I encounter in my life has its own echo or reverberation. When I experience that echo or reverberation, it's contrasted to the notion of "myself". When it's contrasted to the notion of myself, I begin to experience the texture of the relationship between myself and that which is perceived. When I experience that texture, I look into that. When I look into that, I don't look into it from the point of view of trying to find out. I just simply look into it.

Q11, male: Would you say that the critical fact in working, or in the person becoming so-called "psychotic" is in his perception of his description? --

VROT: um-hm, um-hm

Q11: and would you care to explain how he got that description?

VROT: I certainly would not. I certainly would not. That is something that I would never dare to do.

Q11: Wouldn't you say that the reason why Buddhists support meditation is that you have, the person tunes in directly to himself, whereas, in non-Buddhist traditions, since people don't take the time to tune in to themselves, that their perceptions of themselves are by-and-large picked up from others, and

it's dealing with these others descriptions that they --

VROT: That's very interesting. [VROT and questioner talk over each other].

Q11: [unclear] of their problem.

VROT: you know, that's very interesting because we can't really isolate the moment where it's others' descriptions or our own.

Q11: Well, in other words, if you're accurately described by another -- of course that's supposedly the function of teachers and counselors, etcetera --

VROT: Yes.

Q11: --to help the person come to an understanding of themselves --

VROT: Describing something, yes. We talked about that. Yes.

Q11: The problem then comes in to the educative process, in which somewhere along the line this person -- since generally speaking we don't tune in to ourselves -- this person picked up a mis-description --

VROT: a miscue.

Q11: A miscue, yeah.

VROT: Absolutely.

Q11: So helping him get that miscue corrected, is that the critical factor in releasing him from his hang-up? Is that the --

VROT: a hundred percent, absolutely. That is to say that you yourself have to understand the miscue. There's no way you can release anybody from suffering -- whatever their psychosis or neurosis is, unless you yourself understand the miscue. You've gone through it in some way. I'm not talking about the fad of -- which has been, I suppose it's it's an old fad -- of trying to trace back your miscues until you experience the past in some vivid sense. I don't think that's really necessary. In fact I think it's sort of like masochistic in some ways. But that just relating with somebody on the spot, that you can actually see the missed -- the miscue is the other person in some ways or yourself. If you say, "How are you today?" and someone says, "Well, I'm feeling alright." There's something just in that little exchange that is cue-miscue. And as I said earlier, the two are wedded. I suppose the rock bottom sense of what I'm trying to say is that anything based on self-importance is likely to cause confusion.

Q12, female: Can we help a psychotic become normally neurotic?

VROT: I beg your pardon?

Q12: Can we help a psychotic become normally neurotic.

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VROT: Can we help the psychotic become normally neurotic. Well, that somehow has a little reverberation of *Alice in Wonderland* to me. Sure. [Laughter.] If that's what you're after. It seems awfully lazy to help a psychotic become normally neurotic. That means that they can do the same thing you can do. I don't mean you personally, but any of us. We can certainly turn the heat up from sixty to seventy-two.

Q13, female: How is it best for a therapist to proceed when -- (63:30)

VROT: I beg your pardon?

Q13: How is it best for a therapist to proceed when he or she is fully aware when he goes in to be with a person in therapy -- if the therapist is feeling the ego-aspect of intention rather than the space of pure intention.

VROT: Well, that's what we're talking about, aren't we?

Q13: Yes.

VROT: Yes. So how can I say how you should proceed if you're not feeling one or the other? [laughs]

Q13: No I'm saying if a therapist is feeling quite neurotic themselves at the moment is it --

VROT: Well who's talking? You know what I mean? It's as simple as that. Who is talking to whom? If you are the *therapist*, heaven forbid,

Q13: Hm

VROT: and you're talking to a *patient* -- heaven help us -- the distinction that you have to make is so precise, so precise, so clean. Unconditional. Everybody knows that. Everybody here knows that. I'm just repeating old stuff, basically. Everybody knows that. It's to the degree that you actually practice it; basically it comes down to that.

Q13: Thank you.

VROT: It's self-evident in that way.

Q14, male: It seems that the key to working effectively with the psychotic state of mind is the development of discriminating awareness. Do you know of any other way to experience or practice or develop unconditional intention besides the sitting practice of meditation.

VROT: Um-hm. Getting hit by a car [some laughter] is one way. Burning your fingers on a stove is another way.

Q14: Do you recommend that? [Laughter]

VROT: It totally depends on your insurance policy. [Laughter.]

Q14: Thank you.

VROT: If you feel very vigorous you might be able to dance with, you know, the trucks and all that, minor damages. No, in that case it wouldn't work; sorry.

Do I know any other way? Personally? No. I'm not saying there aren't other ways, but personally, according to my discipline, no. And that doesn't mean that I haven't practiced others. I have practiced many disciplines in the past fifteen years of trying to achieve some state of naturalness, shall we say, spontaneity, where you're not constantly thinking about what you should say next and what you should do next and how you should figure out the world so that everything becomes perfectly strategized and ok for you. I've tried a lot of different things, but as far as I have seen, the best way is to allow yourself to do nothing, and that's called the practice of meditation. Good training.

Gentleman behind you? Yes?

Q15, male: From this point of view that you've been speaking from, do you see a healing or curative seed in the process of psychosis itself. There have been some therapists such as Jung or Laing who see such a curative process --

VROT: No. Nope.

Q15: Could you explain a little bit about your feelings about that.

VROT: Well, there's too much excitement there, and there's too much sense of cure. Even though the language doesn't say it that way, the truth is it's blown up from the point of view of "we can do it for you". My apologies to those gentlemen, whoever they are; I never met them, but my gut-level feeling is that there is some publicity there which is slightly leading.

On the other hand, you know, how can they help it? Somebody says, well, there's this guy Laing or whatever he is in England or in wherever they are, they're doing a great job on *nuts*. And they can really crack the nuts. So *Time Magazine* goes over there, or something, and they take pictures of him standing on his head -- I remember those articles years ago, saying this guy has really got something going.

[abrupt transition]

Q16, female: In becoming what you are, have you had to go through much dis--

VROT: I beg your pardon?

Q16: I said, in becoming what you are now, have you had to go through much distorted intention?

VROT: Myself.

Q16: Yes. [Laughter.] Any?

VROT: Well you know, that's, I'm very appreciative of that remark. [Laughter.] On the other hand, I'm suspicious. When you say "what I am now," I'm not quite sure what you mean. [laughter.] What do you

think I am now, anyway?

Q16: What do *you* think you are now?

VROT: Eh. Dollar a point. [Laughter.] I'll ask you one, you ask me one, we'll do a dollar a point. What do I think I am now? You want to know for sure?

Q16: Um-hm.

VROT: I think I'm the Vajra Regent of Chogyam Trungpa. That's what I think I am now.

Q16: And what about the earlier question?

VROT: What was that?

Q16: The distorted intention.

VROT: Of what I was then?

Q16: No. [Laughs] Did that have anything to do -- you must have had to go through some of that to understand it.

VROT: Huh. This is -- I -- I don't think we have all that much time [Laughter.]

Q16: [Laughs]

VROT: I could summarize if you like but --. Yes, yes, I did go through a few things, you know, like birth and a few other things, but anyway, what is your point? [pause] To arrive at a particular place of certainty something has to happen? Oh yes, sure. Same thing if you're dealing with a so-called patient, there's always always a journey involved, something's happened. That's what I was saying earlier. That, a person isn't just born -- unless there's some kind of, you know, what do you call it, physiological problem -- psychotic, or something like that. There's some huge disappointment going on.

Q16: Someone distinguished pure intention from distorted intention is longing to be versus longing to be *something*. Is that right?

VROT: Longing to be something is not particularly distorted.

Q16: That's what I --

VROT No. Longing to be some particular *thing* is distorted.

Q16: It is? Ok, that helps me. Thanks.

VROT: Well, don't take my word for it. (73:18) [Laughter.] I'm serious about that. This is simply my experience. That, in my experience, that longing to be some *particular* thing has always produced pain, and always produced uh -- well, as far as I know of psychosis, which is a little bit limited, in my own

psychotic experience which, if I could say that, is limited to a few episodes, but not continual, you know. But from that I draw these conclusions. And if my hand is shaky, and a drawing looks imprecise, and I beg pardon for that.

Well, ladies and gentlemen -- ah well, one more gentleman.

Q17, male: I was wondering how you *define* psychosis.

VROT: Myself.

Q17: No, well, I guess, that's your experience.

VROT: As exaggerated thought process. That is to say, when you have thoughts, you have thoughts that are basically three types of thoughts: thoughts that are oriented toward pictures, oriented towards words, oriented toward, what we call, abstraction, that is to say environment. That when those particular thoughts become exaggerated, any one of those -- environment means "body", thank you, body means not only *this* body but the *body* of this room -- any of those things in themselves become exaggerated. That is to say, that thought is simply a arising of energy within space, that's what I would call a thought. That one of those particular things becomes vibrating very fast, it colors the space in a certain way. When that happens, it becomes exaggerated. We call it an emotion.

What are we talking about? I'm sorry. Psychosis.

Q17: You're defining psychosis.

VROT: Yeah. Alright. When those exaggerated thoughts become uninterrupted, that is to say, it vibrates at that same level of intense speed for an extended period of time, then we call that psychosis, because at that point there's no *contrast*; there is simply one exaggerated thing going on all the time.

Q17: Thank you.

VROT: You're welcome.

Well, ladies and gentleman, I think you very much for your kind attention and your presence here at this particular conference. Again, let me make one point which I always like to make; it's my favorite point. It reminds me that I don't exist. That is to say, if we take these things to be simply a matter of entertainment or a matter of content -- that is to say, that our life could be filled up by a particular content for a certain period of time, then we are certainly missing the point.

Take it in such a way that is useful to you. For the rest of this weekend, be pragmatic; at the same time, don't lose your sense of the sky, the clouds, the stars, the mountains, the reality of this earth. Sometimes it's poetic, lovely, and sometimes it's whether or not the garbage man came on time. But those two things, again, are wedded. And please make the best of this opportunity. Try to be open and, at the same time, don't lose your own place. You have your experience, so whatever you bring with you to this particular symposium is worthwhile; we appreciate it. Thank you very much, and I hope to see you again some time.

