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VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN

The Mahamudra Lineage

Talk Two of Three

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VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN:

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. So we have had some time to experience, in our own way, the reality which we call the mahamudra, through the practice of sitting meditation. And I thought it would be good to continue our discussion in terms of how practitioners like ourselves can further whatever glimpse occurs of unmistakable, uncontrived reality through the practice of meditation.

The practice of meditation has different aspects according to the stage of the journey. And in these particular teachings you will find that the gurus of the past and the present will talk about full-blown awakened state, spontaneous enlightenment all at once. However, we should not mistake that discussion to mean that there is no particular path, and that enlightenment, or so-called enlightenment, is simply a matter of, sort of like a popgun, you put a lot of air into it and then you pop it. You have enlightenment. It's quite the contrary. In fact, my teacher would say that people would ask him, “Well, in terms of enlightenment, which is best? Is it the gradual path or the sudden path?” And he would say that you practice gradually and suddenly you attain enlightenment. And Milarepa himself said that one should “hasten slowly.”

But in terms of this particular path, what was transmitted by the Eleventh Trungpa to myself and to his students, was that the practice of meditation is

fundamentally and continually what we do. It doesn't matter how many different twists and turns one's life makes, still we always come back to square one, basic reference. And that basic reference we call mahamudra. Now, in the poster it gives a discription of this mahamudra which is rather awesome. "Stretching across time," et cetera, et cetera. But this mahamudra is nothing more than this present moment, this mind which is unfabricated. And this particular mind, which we call the essence of nowness, is totally uncontrived, unfabricated, without any impurities whatsoever. To recognize this is called recognizing the dharmakaya.

Dharmakaya is the essence of buddhahood. *Kaya* means "body;" *dharm* means "reality." So the essence of buddhahood is the dharmakaya, and the dharmakaya is experienced as this uncontrived mind. Or, this uncontrived mind is experienced as the dharmakaya. This glimpse, which is called nothing but ordinary, is just a simple opening to what is. It has no particular quality. The only thing we can say about such a glimpse is that there is no memory in it. And that which has no memory cannot be called a thing. So when there is no memory, there is no way to categorize. When there is no way to categorize, the mind remains unfabricated and free.

So in that way each of us actually experiences the total enlightenment. And that experience is not something that has to be bargained for, has to be bought, has to be won by extraordinary pursuit. Not at all. That experience is everybody's experience. In fact, everybody here, one time or another, experiences mind without any preconception. Just a simple moment, in which the past is not pressing on your back, in which the present is not fascinating you, in which the future is not making you feel afraid. It's just simply a gap. Nothing more than that. When that gap occurs, all that we consider to be ourselves, the mask, so to speak, that we wear, falls away, and without any preconceptions there's just the simple experience of what is. That particular experience is called the dharmakaya.

Now in one's life one experiences that generally when there's some shift that occurs, or change. But then again, it is so ordinary, so completely ordinary, that there is nothing to say, nothing to remember. And yet, when it is pointed out by an authentic teacher, we say, "Aha! That's it! That's it." And then we rest in that. And that resting is extremely important for practitioners like ourselves. To be able to rest one's mind in "that's it" is to allow the karmic patterns to subside. When the karmic patterns subside, one is able to actually...see. So in

order to practice this mahamudra, it is necessary to allow the mind to settle itself. To rest in its own, natural state, which we call this unfabricated dharmakaya.

Being in that way is called *shamatha*, which might be translated as “tranquility,” might be translated as “peacefulness.” Resting as it is. Resting as it is. Basic, unfabricated state. That's your shamatha practice. And when you experience that in your sitting practice, then the thoughts subside, the body becomes relaxed, and restlessness dissolves, and there's a certainty which falls upon one's state of being. In that certainty, there is no friend and no enemy, no good and no bad, and at that point one sees the mahamudra which is stretching across time. And again, as we talked about last night, that actually is a seal, a seal of awareness.

This practice — we call it practice from the point of view of a path — that is to say, how we practice our insight into reality. How we practice it. Well, one could say, “Why does one practice it if one has an insight into the reality?” Simply because that is the natural way. When we practice this shamatha, we allow everything to fall, or float, without any bottom, or top, or sides. This state of mind, or this state of being, is totally transparent, just like the thoughts. And, in fact, one sees or feels one's body to be transparent, and actually one sees the phenomena to be transparent at the same time. So the experience of shamatha is an emptiness which is transparent. And that transparency is experienced as light, such as, light. Light in this case means “totally clear.” In our lineage, we call it luminosity. Luminosity means that the mind's ability to cognize itself and its projections is totally clear. So there is no doubt whatsoever in what is happening. So altogether, this transparency, which is empty, is at the same time totally clear. And that is called resting the mind in shamatha.

When one rests the mind in that way for a period of time, then one begins to see that the nature of the mind in stillness is not different than the nature of the mind when it moves. So, therefore, when thoughts arise, and they might [laughter] they don't necessarily have to, but they might, or when the mind begins to take shape from a thought to an image, and from an image to sense perceptions, and from sense perceptions into a world or an environment, none of that process is obstructed. None of that movement is in opposition to the basic nature of the mind itself. It does not have to be fussed with at all. Now that process is seen as insight, or what is called vipashyana.

In vipashyana, which is the natural outcome of resting the mind, one sees the absence of any particular cause, first cause so to speak, or origin. When one sees that there is no origin, then the manifestation is unobstructed, And when the manifestation is unobstructed, there is total vision. That is to say, there is no doubt about where things are and what things are. And “who dat who said who dat who said who dat?” In other words, ego, the notion of mask, falls away. And one has no pretense about who and what we are, one is. There is no pretense. And at the same time, there is a natural inquisitiveness into whatever arises. And that inquisitiveness is not like somebody looking at somebody. That inquisitiveness is a continuous and spontaneous meeting of mind and projection, or mind and phenomena, let's say. That meeting is like a dot, [snaps fingers] or like spark, [snaps fingers] or like a light, [snaps fingers]; like a thunderclap. It's very clear and very immediate, constantly. So, in that case, with vipashyana, there's no problem with movement.

Normally speaking, in our everyday experience, we have a big problem about deciding what to do, choosing one thing over another thing. Well, maybe not such a big problem, but a problem. Something sort of feels out of sync maybe. And that is because, in our arrogance and our ego-filled mentality, we pick and choose this over that, simply due to ignoring the fact that this and that are simultaneously happening. So sophisticated people are said to have good discrimination. When they are sophisticated they can tell you what is good food, what is bad food; good wine, bad wine; what is the right place to go, the wrong place to go; what is the right material to wear, what's the wrong material to wear; the right thing to say at a cocktail party, the wrong thing to say. Now, in the world of dharmas, all of that can be taken to a rather incredible height of absurdity, and is. However, even if we're not talking about callousness, what we are talking about is that all of that kind of discrimination is, purely and simply, crude. A crude version of free and unobstructed mind.

When vipashyana occurs, then there is no necessity to deliberate in order to choose or in order to attract oneself to one phenomena or another. There's no need for time. That's very ambitious, I think. On the other hand, it actually is true. That when your meditation practice becomes continuous, that is to say, when resting starts to expand, the quality of certainty starts to expand, then whatever the mind encounters, it encounters directly, and therefore there's no need for time. At that point the enjoyment of phenomena, or the appreciation of phenomena and the appreciation of one's mind are simultaneous. That is to say, what appears as movement and what appears as stillness are the same.

Then, sentient beings are happy. At that point, what is called happiness is achieved. And happiness, which we don't generally use in the tantric language, but I thought, being so tantric as I am, I might as well. What we normally say is that is the experience of bliss, mahasukkha in Sanskrit. That when the phenomena and the mind join, or meet, co-emerge is the word we use, arise together spontaneously, there's an experience of bliss, emptiness, and luminosity. That is called the practice of mahamudra. In order to further that practice, in fact in order to have that practice come to any sort of fruition at all, it is necessary to develop particular framework in practice, and that framework is known as devotion.

Devotion is the empty-hearted quality of longing, without which no real progress can ever be made in practice. Why is that? Because the empty-hearted quality of longing shatters the very veneer of this mask of the practitioner themselves. In other words, one cannot hide one's feelings in front of the guru. That would be like trying to deceive one's mother. [Laughter.] Although we all have tried, we never have succeeded. [Laughter.] There is always a suspicion that mother knows, and mother does. But in a different way. Mother doesn't exactly know what it is you did, but she knows you did something. [Laughter.] And in terms of the guru, the guru always knows when your ego trip is coming out. And you become more and more subtle in trying to disguise such a thing. In fact, you start to explain to the guru how it is that you understand non-ego. And the guru says, "Yes, that's right, that sounds like it." But, basically, the guru knows that it's simply your mind, talking to itself. That doesn't mean to say that there is no meeting of the mind and the guru. In fact, that's the whole point.

However, for the student, in order to actually meet the guru's mind, that is to say, to uncover this dharmakaya free from any fabrication, one has to have the feeling of surrendering whatever occurs as one's ego trip. Or one's realization; I think they're basically the same, at least up to a point. One has to have the feeling of surrendering, almost constantly. And without the authentic guru, one cannot imagine such a thing, because there is no testing ground for one's surrendering, there is no real feedback. Well, we could say that in reality there is no need for feedback because everything is self-existing and without any complication. However, students like ourselves who need to climb this particular mountain should not become too complacent or arrogant about what we know. Or what we think we know. We should constantly put ourselves in the situation of dropping it, or letting it float, so to speak, without any bottom,

top, or sides. And maybe there's a suddenness to that which makes one lose one's breath perhaps [gasps]. But then there's always a [exhales...] after that. So to put oneself in the situation of being able to surrender one's ego to the teacher is the best way to accomplish this shamatha and vipashyana.

The word *devotion* brings up probably different things in people's minds. But in the vajrayana practice, in the vajrayana lineage, devotion seems to be the primary and fundamental description of relationship that there is. The primary aspect of that is the devotion of a student for his teacher. But beyond that, there is the devotion of the mind to its projections, and its, all of the phenomena. Which means devotion to all sentient beings. Which means that all sentient beings are merely the projection of one's mind. But the quality of devotion is undeniably empty heart, and *great* longing. And devotion is all-encompassing in that it cannot even *suspect* that there is a concept in it. Such suspicion never arises. That's real devotion. But normally, or generally, when we talk about devotion there's a feeling of some sort of subservience, or even stupidity.

Now one has seen, probably often, especially in Southern California, the theistic quality of being devoted to a teacher, which usually appears to be somewhat...sort of ecstatic. Feeling of...high. And devotion produces great bliss which winds up being some sort of babble. It's either your body's babbling, or your mouth is babbling, or something's babbling. You don't know what, actually. Well, that kind of theistic notion means that we are considering the object of devotion to be outside, therefore we must either get to that, dissolve into that, let that take us up to wherever that is, or do something else.

But in a nontheistic practice of devotion, such as in this lineage, in the buddhist lineage, devotion means actually giving up resistance to the ordinary quality of life and the ordinary quality of relationship, especially between yourself and the teacher. Because the teacher points out ordinariness. No exalted states of letting go of your fear and habit and all of that; quite the contrary. The guru, the teacher, points out the ordinariness in a cup of tea. And because you see it in such an ordinary way, your devotion increases. And therefore when you meditate, and you practice the technique that was given to you by your teacher, your mind assumes an ordinary pose. Therefore it does not need to manipulate whatever arises. That's true devotion.

Yet, at the same time, devotion is very romantic. In fact, our lineage is the great romantic lineage of all of the vajrayana lineages. And if you read any of the songs of the teachers, they say, right off the bat they say, “My guru is so great, and I am so little. And I have made such a mess of this. And if you were here now I would feel good. But you're so far away. And I am such a helpless creature. My meditation is poor, I cannot even sit for five minutes without thinking something. My intention is on again, off again. I want to help sentient beings, but then again I don't know how. What I know as wisdom, what I see as wisdom, is just like a flash of lightning in the sky, it appears and then it's gone. Help me do this right.”

You say, “Well, doesn't that sound like you're supplicating some other being somewhere?” Well, if you really get it, no, you're not. You are actually expressing your broken heart, which is so great and so vast that it encompasses all of the petty concerns of our phenomenal existence. That kind of devotion is what happens in our lineage. You cry, you laugh, you feel silly, you feel underwhelmed, overwhelmed. You feel like you want to do it, you want to attain enlightenment, and you feel at the same time that there's no enlightenment to attain, except your guru's face. Except to remember your guru's face. That seems to be it.

That face of the guru is called Vajradhara, or the primordial dharmakaya. And to remember that means that every time you sit down to practice meditation, you sit in that way. You suddenly and spontaneously tune into your guru's mind, which is your own mind. And all of the complications become transparent. When your practice meets the guru's mind, so to speak, or in other words, when your propensity to be restless dissolves and you actually look straight into what is, you meet your guru's mind face to face. At that point it is like old friends meeting after a long time.

So this practice is all-encompassing and stretches across time in its realization. And it happens — the realization, that is — happens simply in the time it takes to strike a match. The practice happens all the time, continually. Now, many of you have just started sitting, and my intention this weekend was to present to you, or to paint, to kind of finger paint actually, a view of the enlightened and practical aspects of this particular path. What you have to do is to do it. What I have to do is to watch that you don't do it improperly, so that nothing goes wrong. But the truth of the matter is this path is so direct and so

simple that you would have to be really hard core to mess it up. [Laughter.] So if you have any questions, please feel free to ask them.

Did anybody find it? [Referring to audience microphone.]

Question: Sir?

Vajra Regent: Yes.

Q: It seems as though there is always a lot of doubt that's arising as well. Maybe you could talk a little about that.

VR: Well, I think that doubt is kind of like the quality of restlessness which happens when our minds are not settled. Doubt is sort of like picking over somebody else's plate of food. However, in the beginning if you use doubt as a kind of stepping stone to open up your mind, that is good. Doubt meaning cynicism. Especially in our way, cynicism is sort of like how you sit down on a cushion; it is so totally cynical, it's just like, flop. And basically, "fuck you." [Laughter.] And that's kind of, you know, attitude of certainty. That kind of thing. However, when doubt starts to be a preoccupation, it's picking over somebody's leftovers. They're walking around the table and say, "You didn't eat that, and you didn't eat that." At that point, you should just throw it out, like an old shoe. Basically when doubt becomes like that is because a lack of devotion, lack of real, not wanting to feel how possible it is that this thin glass is going to shatter and break and fall apart. [Snaps fan.] Not wanting to do that, you see.

That's why it's good to meditate. Because meditation puts you there all the time, every moment, there's such a this-that quality, in-out quality. It's almost like, "Who dat who said who dat?" Who's meditating here? Constantly. And, you know, usually people think, "I don't want to feel that all the time. My heart's beating too fast, the whole body doesn't feel right; I want to be sort of relaxed and, you know, confident. I don't want to have any doubt." But you can't do it from the point of view of intellectualizing; it doesn't work. So doubt which is a stepping stone is very good; doubt which is a preoccupation is "veddy bad." [Speaks with Hindu accent; laughter.] And if you have it and you know you have it, then you should get rid of it.

Q: Well, it seems like you can't try to get rid of it, really.

VR: Oh, yes, you can.

Q: I guess you could practice.

VR: Oh, yes, you can. You practice, that's how you try. The only trying we know in our lineage is to practice. There isn't any other trying.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Everybody here is so intelligent that if they fool themselves they know it. Unless like I said if you're really hard core then you proclaim yourself, and you gather disciples, et cetera, et cetera [laughter].

Gentleman in the front, here.

Question: This evening at dinner I opened a fortune cookie, and it said, "Trust him, but keep your eyes wide open." Since I wasn't thinking about anyone else consciously, I was wondering if this might apply in some way to the relationship between teacher and student.

Vajra Regent: I think so.

Q: Can you elaborate on what that might have been saying?

VR: I think it says it all.

Q: [Laughs.] Okay.

VR: It's my experience; that's exactly what it's like. "Trust him" doesn't mean abrogate your intelligence. "Keep your eyes wide open" doesn't mean waiting for a mistake. Although I have never met a student who wasn't waiting for a mistake. [Laughter.] It's all right. Catch me if you can. [Laughter.]

Question: Sir, you said that this is all a projection of our mind?

Vajra Regent: What do you mean by "this?"

Q: I think you were referring to this immediate moment?

VR: Now, now don't be too sure.

Q: I was wondering if you could elaborate.

VR: [Laughs.] No, I can't; because that's it! You know, in our lineage, it always says that when you experience that this is all a projection of our mind, that is ineffable, indescribable. You can't say what "this" is. However, I could say it is the consequence which arises from us being together. That is our mutual projection. Of the mind, your mind, my mind, doesn't matter whose mind [laughs] really. That's what "this" is.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Look at that! [Laughs.] Right there, in front of you [VR is directing person with microphone].

Question: Good evening.

Vajra Regent: Good evening.

Q: I have a problem with shamatha sometimes in that I sit down and try to rest my mind in shamatha—

VR: Mmm hmm.

Q: —and it's, you know, it's like a charnel ground of energies, of what's in the environment, what's happening with me –

VR: Everything, yeah.

Q: — what's happening with other people.

VR: Crows and jackals.

Q: Yeah. [Laughs; laughter.] And it doesn't feel particularly conducive to developing peace.

VR: Ah, you still expect so much.

Q: Well, yeah.

VR: Well, that's good, that's good. But how to expect; that's even better. I mean if you want this so-called gem called enlightenment, then you have to be very, very humble, because the dakinis will not give it to you like they gave it to Tilopa. "Hello," Tilopa said, "I am Cakrasamvara." He was so totally humble that he seduced the wisdom out of them. In your mind the wisdom is there already, but you must seduce it. So when all that chatter begins to go on, you should be like a patient lover. You want that meeting, don't you. I mean, we all do. But usually we're much too speedy to have it happen.

Q: Well, some days it feels like it's, you know, I can ride it and it's okay, and other days it feels like it's riding me.

VR: No, no, no, no, no; it's more seduction than that. It's not riding it at all. That's what surrender is all about and devotion is all about. You have to present a kind of soft spot for yourself. "So lie down here, would you. This is a nice bed." [Laughter.] "Look; the atmosphere's really good. Birds are singing." [Laughs.] You shouldn't be so hard on yourself. Too much expectation. There is no ideal state. Doesn't happen that way. Provide a little bit more passion for yourself; I mean, you have it anyway. But when you sit down to practice, passion goes out the window. It becomes business. Practice is not business.

Q: Well, I'm just, you know, I'm just trying to settle my mind.

VR: Why?

Q: Really.

VR: Let the mind settle itself. Don't try to do it. That's called the mahamudra practice. It's very humorous.

[SIDE TWO]

Q: I'm sorry; it's very what?

VR: It's very humorous to allow the mind to settle itself. The kind of cackles that come out of it are really amazing. [Laughter.]

Q: Well, okay. But it doesn't feel that way sometimes.

VR: Well, try it again, but do it without any hope of accomplishment and without any fear of accomplishment. Just let it sort of float like a feather. And when it hits the ground, then wake up [snaps fingers] and just get right into it. You have to allow yourself that, anyway. Well, see if you can remember that when you sit next time.

Q: Yeah, it's a good one. [Laughter.]

Question: I wonder if you could, is that feeling of like empty heart you mentioned in terms of devotion, is that like lack of confirmation of any of your trips, or –

Vajra Regent: You can't buy it from me, Ed. It's all yours.

Q: Okay. [Laughter.]

Question: Hi. I was wondering if there's a difference between love and compassion, or where one starts and the other ends, or something.

Vajra Regent: [Laughs; laughter.] Well [laughs; laughter] it all seems to blend together somehow. Like, hmmm, Jello. Love is a word, compassion is a word; it's all the same thing. I mean, it's just a tender heart. We talk about one thing or another in order to make ourselves sit up straight. Basically, that's it. The rest of it is, you know. If you're saying, "I love you," you mean the "I love you" part with the other person, one person, "I love you." Or, "I love you," meaning "I love all of you." Or I love my mother, I love my child, love my friends, I love my truck [laughter]. It's the same thing; it's that feeling of separation, longing, rather. Feeling of longing, that wants to be complete, wants to be, you know, have the orgasm, wants to happen that way. But love in a relative sense, ordinary sense, what we could say is that love means a feeling of affection toward one's world, a person or people or things; and compassion means that

that love becomes wisdom, expression of wisdom, where everybody and all things are considered equally in one's love.

Q: Thank you.

Question: Sir, last night you mentioned that at the age of eight you concluded that you would never commit suicide for any reason. What circumstances occasioned that axial decision?

Vajra Regent: It just happened. There wasn't any particular external phenomena to indicate that that should be so. I was by myself. And even now, the way I explain it is simply in words, but the experience itself was a complete certainty as to, the, you could say, the sacredness of being.

Now the only reason I told that story is just to point out that undeniably, from as long as we can remember, there has been some sort of connection with the quality of enlightenment. Actually, that's not why I told the story. I told the story to make myself important. [Laughs; inaudible] Joel. [Laughs.] I don't think there's any external circumstance which one can point to, particularly, and say, "That was it. That was the day or the time," you know, the old pond jumped in the frog. Doesn't happen. It's just like hiccup or something, or a sneeze or something like that. Something that wakes you up suddenly and totally. And you say, "Oh." And it's not really, you can't really put it into words. You can't say, "Well, this experience was — ." In our lineage they say it's an experience told by a mute. A dream, told by a mute. We have such a short time to get into this tantric language. It's sort of nitty-gritty; it's like chewing on gristle, but it's a very precise language. But a dream told by a mute is the best way to express that kind of thing. The way I said it was like, "I would never commit suicide." Same thing.

So, is that it? You do? No. [Laughter.]

Question: My name is Tia.

Vajra Regent: Hello, Tia. We talked last night.

Q: Yes, we did.

VR: Yes, we did. Have we met before?

Q: No.

VR: Really? Hmmm.

Q: My question is about, I don't know if I can ask you this; I need my voice to come back. At a point in what you were describing tonight, when you were talking about, let's say, thought and or — okay, activity and stillness being coemergent?

VR: Yes.

Q: Okay. At that point, it seems to me to say, “thinking,” while you're meditating becomes redundant.

VR: At that point it is.

Q: So, after practicing and having this habit of doing that for a while, to let go of that, one doesn't know what to do.

VR: Good.

Q: Yes.

VR: Yes.

Q: So, it's, you feel like you really don't know how to walk.

VR: Float.

Q: I won't say anything back, but I don't know how to, you know what I mean?

VR: Just get more into it. It's kind of like, the problem always that we have is letting go of all this concern. Just let it go and let it float. There's no ground. None.

It's okay; it's not bad. You'll see. Just keep going. [Laughs.] It's like parachuting. Mmmm, yes. [Inhales sharply.] All the breath leaves the body. And the mind is suspended in space. Get into that, but not with any mechanism. If you find yourself starting to try to manipulate how it is that you're going [exhales] whew, outbreath, thinking, go back to the technique.

Good show! Well, ladies and gentlemen. Short time, but good time. We take advantage of the time in this lineage, this mahamudra lineage. We like to make it into anything we like. So we made it into this particular seminar, which was a way for you and me to become friends. And also a way for me to pass along to you a little bit of what was given to me. The reason I do that is because I think, I know and think that it is good for you. You will be delighted to find out that if you practice this dharma, all your cares will vanish and you'll become just like an elephant in the jungle, walking without any hesitation. And whatever small vegetation comes up, doesn't come up for long. [Laughter.] You will like it if you do it. You have the potential to be the emperor of this universe. But you should do it this time. If you think, "Well, I'll wait a little bit until I get my new clothes," it won't happen. You're already set up; you have your whole court, the queen, and the ministers, and king, queen, whatever, court — everything's set up. You don't need anything else. You just have to be it. Takes a little bit of work, though. Maybe your crown is a little tight, but I think if you're a king or a queen, you can handle that. So, this is a short time, as I said. And for those of you who are practicing this dharma for quite some time, I would say, look into the very mirror of your mind, that emptiness which is the wish-fulfilling them, the guru. For those of you who are not practicing for such a long time, I would say, look into the very mirror of your mind, which is the reflection of complete wakefulness, and see where the guru is, if there is such a thing at all.

In any case, it's been very good, and I appreciate your inquisitiveness and your straightforward questions. And I hope you like it. Because if you like it, you'll do it again. And if you do it again, you'll develop it. And if you develop it, then all the buddhas and bodhisattvas will be very pleased. And when they are very pleased, then the world is in harmony.

So, please, open invitation. I would like to work with you further. There is a path developed by the Trungpa Tulku, the Vidyadhara, and it is propagated by Vajradhatu around the world, and especially here, Dharmadhatu, in Los

Angeles. And it's very precise and very simple. You can do it, step by step. Don't expect it to be easy.

And that's it! So thank you. Appreciate it, very much. Here comes the cake. [Laughter.]

NINA TOUMANOFF: On behalf of all of us, Sir, please accept these offerings. May we see your face first thing when we wake up in the morning, and may we see your face continually throughout the day, throughout the smog. [Laughter.] Please live a long time, and teach us forever.

VR: Thank you.

Audience Member:

Truth arises like a phoenix from the ashes of my mind.
You burn up samsaric gobbledygook with your terrible smile.
Your command is simple: Do it now!
To disappoint you is to disappoint the entire lineage.

VR: [Holding up vajra.] This is called a *vajra* in Sanskrit. It means “indestructible skill in taming wild, crazy sentient beings.” [Laughter.] As long as the blessings of my lineage and root guru continue to manifest in this particular body, I will do so.

[END OF TAPE]