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VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN
The Mahamudra Lineage
Talk One of Three
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Checked by Linda Huber

AMBASSADOR FRANK BERLINER: Gentlemen, on behalf of the San Francisco Dharmadhatu, I would like to welcome all of you to this intensive training session entitled “The Mahamudra Lineage.” And our teacher this weekend is Ösel Tendzin, who is the dharma heir and regent of the Vidyadhara, the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche. Ösel Tendzin has served as Trungpa Rinpoche's regent since 1976, when he was formally empowered by Rinpoche. At that time, he became the first westerner ever to hold the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of vajrayana Buddhism. Since that time he has been teaching the vajrayana throughout the world. We have not seen him in a very long time, and we are honored and delighted that he is here. And sir, for everyone's behalf, we request you to turn the wheel of the dharma.

VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN: Thank you. I appreciate your patience in sitting here. What did you do while you waited? [Laughter.] Tonight we are beginning our weekend on the mahamudra lineage, and in particular these teachings are based on the instructions of the Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, and in general based on the teachings of the Kagyü lineage, which is known as the command lineage, or sometimes called the lineage of the sacred word. And what that actually means is that from teacher to student from the beginning, everything has been transmitted completely and without anything being left out up until this present day. So *ka* could be “command,” or at the

same time it could be “word,” and *gyu* means “continuity.” So, the continuity of the teachings are intact.

In India, in Bengal, in the eighth century, the mahasiddha Tilopa uncovered the wisdom which is known as the mahamudra, studied with four great gurus, but in reality said that, “My guru is Vajradhara,” that is to say, primordial wisdom itself is his teacher. And from that, our lineage extends and expands. And the main point in hearing that is that such primordial wisdom already exists, and it is not a wisdom that comes from outside, it is not a wisdom which is gathered particularly. So Tilopa, a great mahasiddha, said right from the beginning, “I am awakened.”

In terms of Buddhism in general, the main point is that all of us possess what is called buddha nature. But in terms of vajrayana in particular, that buddha nature is expressed as complete confidence. So when Tilopa says, “I am Chakrasamvara,” which is a meditational deity you might become familiar with sometime, he is not particularly bragging. What he is doing is saying that we have that innate wisdom, which is unconditional and which is not born from a cause. Now that particular teaching has been passed down, and in particular Trungpa Rinpoche's way of teaching was that such wisdom is experienced by everybody, all the time.

However, we miss it. We miss it due to a variety of reasons, but primarily because of actually just ignoring what is. When we ignore the fact of our own existence and what is, then we miss the wisdom of it. Now in this lineage we talk about ordinary experience as that which illuminates the mind, wakes up the mind. To what? To itself. Ordinary experience means that as we live our life there are two situations that happen: mental activity based on ignorance and mental activity which is illuminated, in other words not based on any particular cause. That mental activity which is based on ignorance is called ego, production of ego, which is the identification of mind in a particular form, such as human body.

Now it is a bit insulting, I think, to say that this human body is the result of ignorance. At least it appears that way to an ignorant mind. However, if you actually look into it, you will see that such a human body as this is nothing but

trouble. Although it is possible to speculate on how good it would be if “dot—dot—dot,” and especially here in California how easy that is to do—I mean, the food is good, the weather is good, if you do your exercises, and, uh, whatever it is, and if you think right, it'll be right. However, if you really look at it, our experience of this body is one of hassle. From when we are born, things are uncomfortable. As we grow, things are uncomfortable. As we get older, things are uncomfortable, and the prospect of dying is an uncomfortable thought.

So, in some ways we are stuck with this illusion that we cling to that everything is going to be all right. Trungpa Rinpoche used to say that, “People say things are not as bad as they seem.” He said, “Well, they are as bad as they seem.”[Laughter.]

Now what happens with mind when it actually perceives the truth about impermanence of this body? Well, there's grasping. What can I do to produce the best possible happiness with what I've got. Well, if we tried physically and we tried to live forever—and what happens there is we ignore the fact that everything that is composite has to decay. So, we try and create philosophy of living, which is based on if we do the right thing, it will go on, it will just go on. Or, if we can't do it physically we try to do it intellectually. If our minds are so, how shall we say, high, if we embrace the highest concept or the highest philosophy, then that philosophy will take over this problem and let us coast through eternity.

What else do we do? We try to do it spiritually. Oh yes. We learn the best techniques. We go to the great gurus, the best ones, so that we can keep the consciousness forever pure. However, it appears that all of those things result in some kind of anxiety. So we can't hold on to anything particularly.

And therefore, it is very good to be able to see things as they are, very clearly. It is the most excellent condition, so to speak, to be able to see things clearly. Now often we find that that interpretation, or at least the common interpretation of the Buddhist approach to seeing things as they are, is something without any life, doesn't have any juice to it, there's no excitement maybe, or there's no pleasure in it. Why, that's simply because we have become

habituated to the fact, or to the ongoing fact of our own discursiveness, our own mental projections, our own habitual clinging. We just get in the habit of thinking that if anything at all is taken away from us, we will surely dissolve into oblivion. So life becomes the increasing struggle to hold onto anything at all.

However, if you really look at things as they are, there is tremendous passion in every moment. There's tremendous vividness or vitality in every moment, but not because of anything particularly, that's just how things are. The nature of one's mind is totally empty, at the same time totally luminous. And we know things immediately. If mind projects onto the space, then phenomena becomes whatever it is. And there is an instant recognition. There's really no time that it takes to know. But because of habit, we become dull to that particular reality, and we begin to think that there is a process that we have to go through, which we invent every moment. We invent this process that we have to go through in order to know something. However, if you really look, there's no time involved. It's instantaneous. Mind and its projections are simultaneous, instantaneous. And we know, in fact everybody knows, what I'm talking about. Why is that? Maybe we never met before. We don't share the same history. Maybe we didn't even read the same books. But somehow it is easy to see when there are no habits going on, no habitual patterns going on. It's easy to see.

So the main point is that in all of our experience there is a moment without preconception, without habitual pattern, and we actually see it, see what is. And we don't say it's this or that—reality is gray with a little red on the edge of it—we don't say that. But somehow there is a certainty or confidence that might occur even in the time it takes to strike a match. And this kind of certainty begins with a notion that this particular existence is not something we can hold onto.

The process of understanding that completely is one of putting oneself on the line, so to speak, with oneself, putting oneself in contact with oneself, which in our lineage is done through what is called the practice of meditation. If it is true that in any moment one can actually see very clearly what is, without any filter or without any intellectual manipulation or anything at all—just right now, you can see—if that is the case then why do we need anything to help us

do that? Do we need some sort of meditation? Well, the truth of the matter is—do you want to come in here? [Laughter.] That's good, you interrupted my train of thought, which is great. [Laughs; laughter.] Something about the truth of the matter—I forgot what it was, what was it? [Laughter.] It is what it is, that's it. [Laughs.] Because of the habit, it is necessary to sort of place a little bit of a gap in our ongoing production of thoughts and emotions and mental conceptions, and all of the things which we think are solid. In the middle of that, we should place little bit of a gap. And we call that meditation, just a gap.

Well, what do we mean by gap? Well, we don't mean anything by gap. That's the point, that's why it's gap. [Laughter.] We don't mean anything by it at all. It's the only time when there's no meaning. Well, that's striking, isn't it? No meaning whatsoever. At the same time, it's like “aahh” [VR sighs]—no meaning. At the same time no meaning means no activity, really. And no activity means no conclusion. So, in that case you're really stuck with what is. It's a good place. It's an incredibly good, simple, honest way to look at things.

Now, meditation is generally of two types, one being meditation with form, that is to say, connecting one's mind with an object of itself, whether it be a visualized object or sound or whatever, or meditation without form, which is simply allowing the mind to be as it is. And the latter is basically what is taught by myself and Trungpa Rinpoche and Vajradhatu altogether.

To begin with, everybody simply just sits with no necessity to think about “what am I going to get out of this?” or “what's going to happen?” It's just a basically blank page. Now, there's a lot of similarity in terms of this particular lineage and, say, the Zen lineage of the Soto Zen lineage in that sense, but in this particular lineage, we talk about mixing mind with space, which is the essence of mahamudra practice. And we say in reality that mind cannot be discovered because it does not exist, in the same way that you cannot encapsulate space, you cannot say “this is space,” although people have been trying to do that for a very long time, trying to analyze and pick apart what space is, every little space, get littler and littler into the space, the tiniest little particle of existence is analyzed to see if there's any space in that space. [Laughter.] Isn't that true? And we do the same thing with our life, we try to get to the space. Why is that? Because the space is totally free. Space is

unobstructed, has no origination, has no particular end, it's unceasing, and that is a state of natural freedom.

Well, we say that the mind and space are exactly the same. But in order to have that experience it is necessary to mix one's mind with space, that is to say, one's mind as the consciousness of who you are at this very moment, whoever you are, whomever you think you are. Your sort of bag of tricks, which you call who you are, you know. Sometimes it seems it's like a very big bag, [laughter] sometimes it's a little one, but it's who you think you are, huh. Well, the practice of meditation, according to this transmission, is mixing that particular bag with space.

So what happens? Well, according to the tradition, it says that a rock meets bone. If one actually does mix one's mind with space, there comes a definitive experience, which we call the dharmakaya, or the very essence of awakening. And that dharmakaya is said to be unborn, and its nature is like space, like the sky, so therefore it's unobstructed and continuous. But in order to have that become really clear, it is necessary to have that gap in one's habitual pattern. So we do things in a very simple way. We sit, just like all the rupas or the pictures that you've seen of the Buddha or any meditation master or whatever. They just sit and assume a particular posture and look at what is. In reality, there's nothing to do. However, for the benefit of people like ourselves who are still thinking that we're going to get somewhere, and somewhere different than we're actually going to get, for people like ourselves, the great teachers of this particular lineage have passed on a very simple way, a very simple technique. That is to allow your body to be as it is, that is to say, one doesn't have to think of one's body in any particular way, just let it relax and contact the earth by sitting down, to regard one's thoughts as purely a production of one's mind, and to regard one's mind as nothing whatsoever. So those are just helpful hints. [Laughter.] What it really means is don't do anything at all.

This mahamudra, which is so profound and is so direct, simply says, "Stop, just stop. Let the mind settle itself." But it is good to know what we call dharma, the teachings of the Buddha, which are basically the expressions of your mind. It is good to know how your mind expresses itself so that if you

find that it is difficult to just let go, there's a reference to how to do that. At every particular turn of your mind, there's another reference. They say that there are 84,000 dharmas, and that's simply a number. So in other words, every time your mind makes a turn, there's a dharma for that turn. In fact, people say that the vajrayana is a somewhat complicated practice, because this particular approach I am talking about here is just space in which there is no complication. However, it seems that things do arise in space.

So because we have so many thoughts and so many habitual patterns for no good reason, the gurus of the past have presented us with wisdom become manifest in the form of such images as these. [VR points to thangka.] When you look at this thangka, that is your basic state of mind and it looks like that. You say, “Wait a minute—my mind doesn't look like that.” [Laughter.] “My mind looks like perhaps a very good basketball player, maybe a successful businessman, maybe my mother, my father, my children, George Washington. Doesn't look like that.” However in terms of the vajrayana practices, and especially introducing things like visualizations of meditational deities called “yidam,” like this, you'd be surprised how close it is. And, you know, a lot of books now have been printed about various vajrayana practices, which don't do any good particularly unless you have a teacher, but you can read in these books where just in one hand you might have ten deities, maybe more, visualized in one hand, and then there's another hand and there's eyes and ears and everywhere you're visualizing everything. You say, “Well, that's very complicated.” However, if you think about it, what you're doing all the time is making up this world in a very complicated way all the time, but from the basis of thinking that there's some point to it. When these practices are presented to you, it's not from a point of view, it's from just actually mirror image of your own mind. But before one can actually undertake them, it is necessary to actually clear out or clean out all the notions of clinging to habits. And the best way to do that is to just be, just sit.

In the beginning, it's awkward and it doesn't matter who you are, what culture or what background, if you just sit and just stop all the unnecessary chatter, for a short period of time it's very awkward because you begin to come in contact with real experience—space, unobstructed. And all you hear is an echo, first just your thoughts but at the same time your body feels terrible just

sitting there, wants to explode, jump out the window maybe, or take itself apart and rearrange itself in such a way in such a way that it doesn't bother you. All kinds of things happen. But basically the very core of it is a complete peacefulness, which is called shamatha. Dwelling in peacefulness is very basic meditation and it is the same as buddha nature. Your own nature as a buddha is completely peaceful without any movement whatsoever. However, when the mind moves and, because of its movement, images appear in the realm of space, that's called vipashyana. That is to say, awareness manifests from simplicity. And that awareness is what we call form, consciousness. Altogether it means consciousness. And that consciousness has no problem. It is luminous and awake. And that kind of experience can happen if you actually put a little wedge into your life that makes a break with habitual pattern. And one has to be careful not to be, how shall we say, theistic about this. That means putting that little wedge into my life will make me feel better and I will achieve salvation of some kind. No. That little wedge is meant to just undo the habit. As far as salvation goes, well, let's see, let's see what actually is here, in terms of what we are, who we are. So it takes a little bit of confidence. However, I would say that everybody has it because otherwise we wouldn't be sitting here. I mean it's, you know, very interesting to hear another talk on some sort of spiritual thing. However, all of you have some idea that there is a possibility of unwinding this, or untying this knot which we call "me" and this perception which we call "the world." There is a possibility.

So, the lineage of mahamudra, which is vast actually, and in particular transmitted in the Kagyü way, talks about peacefulness and awareness as being inseparable as one's actual state of being. And furthermore, we say that there is nothing to be done to achieve that because that is what is. So meditation is not a struggle to create a new life form, so to speak. It is not a struggle for you to reach a higher realm of consciousness, particularly. It is not a struggle to change the world, particularly. Although all of those things might happen if you're interested, that's not the point. The point is that there is no point. Anytime you see a point, a little dot in space, that point bleeds into space. Anytime there's a moment of awareness, that moment of awareness bleeds into space and you cannot in any way identify one moment of consciousness as being existent anywhere.

What does that mean? That means a big sky, huge, vast space. And it means freedom from all habitual pattern. That is basically what this practice is all about and what this lineage is all about. And I think the main point of that is that you can do it, you don't need any qualifications, particularly. You already impressed upon the world all of your qualifications. First, by being born you qualified yourself to suffer. [Laughter.] Just right there, you have qualified yourself completely. And by suffering, you qualified yourself to look for some end of suffering. And by looking, you qualified yourself for discovering the awakened state of mind. And then by discovering that, you qualified yourself for living as a decent human being, in this life or whatever life follows.

So it is very good to be here and talk about these things. Very nice, this is the first time I have seen the finished space of Dharmadhatu. It's good, it's really good. Dharmadhatu means, in this case— “dhatu”—we could translate as space, and “dharma” meaning the reality of space. This is it. We're in it. So it's good to be here, nice to talk to you. This weekend, by the way, is meant to be practical, not just philosophical, because it's meant to allow you to have the experience of meeting your mind face to face, so to speak, if that's possible, and if it is, it would be nice to hear about what it looks like. [Laughs.] So not to keep you too long, and that's what I have to say, and if you have some questions, probably it would be good to ask them now. I think we have microphones, which would be good if you used, because then we record it and it might be beneficial for others in the future.

QUESTION: Sir, I hope this isn't jumping the gun, but I wonder if you could speak to relating the mahamudra of devotion to the mahamudra of mixing mind and space.

VAJRA REGENT: So, if you get a student who has been around for a while, they're going to say these things. [Laughter.]

Q: I've always wanted to know this.

VR: Really?

Q: Yes.

VR: Well, I think that devotion is the natural state of mind that arises from space. And how that occurs is “no how.” So to relate it from the point of any kind of mental construct or intellectualizing doesn't work. When you feel affection for somebody or something, where did that come from? Let's say, oh, you feel sorry for somebody, or you feel that you love somebody, or you feel attracted to just the color of the sky, or you feel attracted to the color of the room, or the look on somebody's face. Where does that come from? That naturally arises from space, so I think the mahamudra of devotion and the mahamudra of simplicity are the same. But we'll talk about devotion more tomorrow, I think.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: [Laughs.] So she says, it is something I always wanted to know and— [laughter] now you're happy. [Laughs; laughter.] The gentleman in the back?

Q: Sir, how can we bring together some glimpse of simplicity or gap with living and working in a very speedy situation?

VR: I think that's the point of having some sort of formal connection with a teacher and a lineage and a practice. Although it seems to a sort of untrained mind that that is somewhat of an intrusion, in reality unless you have that connection, trying to make the world into something else can never happen. And that's why everybody says, “Well, how can I actually practice in a world that is constantly moving, and I can't seem to get the time, if I get the time it's interrupted by something, if it's interrupted it usually causes me to be angry or anxious or something like that, and it keeps on happening that way.” However, if you have a good connection with the lineage, in this case the lineage of the Buddha, and in particular this lineage, and instruction from a genuine teacher, that helps. It makes it possible to start to see the world of activity as not separate from your practice. But unless you have a connection with somebody who's actually doing it themselves, almost impossible.

Q: Well, I feel like I have that connection, and yet there's an experience of practice and my work in the ordinary world trying to overwhelm each other.

VR: They're fighting.

Q: Yes, and there's also some sense that that isn't particularly necessary.

VR: For that to happen?

Q: Yeah.

VR: Well, you see, the thing is we are all such idealists that that is really what happens to our minds when we start to practice. When we get one glimpse of mind which is unobstructed, we say that's the way it should be all the time. Not taking into account that there are habitual patterns that seem to be going on, right? So, while we're walking down the street and our mind is attracted by some fast food or something, or some fast experience of anything at all, we go that way. And, as we're [makes eating noise] [laughter] somehow indigestion begins to happen. [Laughter.] And we say to ourselves, why can't I mix my practice with ordinary life? What's the problem here? Well, it's like a dog chasing its tail. There's no real problem when you stop chasing the tail. It's the movement of your mind which distracts you, because you think it's something other than your mind, like a hot dog. [Laughter.] So, you think that's not your mind, that's a hot dog, so you might [makes "whoosh" sound], and suddenly then you say, "oh, my practice is terrible. I can't seem to get it together. [Laughter.] No matter how long I sit, you know, I spend an hour every morning, I get up at six o'clock and sit, or whatever practice I'm doing. And still, as soon as I get out of the house, something comes in, jumps in." What's that? That's your mind. But you don't see it that way. You see it as something else. So, I think what I would suggest is more practice. [Laughter.] It seems like the only antidote for that kind of—let's see, what should we say, what should we call it? —vision, is to practice with it. That doesn't mean you should necessarily give up the hot dog experience, because I don't think that that will do anything for you. It depends also individually, you know, on one's time in life and one's practice, but to think that if I get rid of all the distractions by maybe going to the mountains and that's it—well, Lord Mila did that but he did

it. We get to the mountains, and it would probably take three or four days before we're wondering what phone call to make. It's a different thing. So, in this time, in this age that we live in, and we live in these cities, and we live in this world, it is good to mix one's practice in post-meditation experience, that is to say, without trying to be formal about it, to notice what occurs as you go through your life. To just notice means to wake up. And in the process of it, when the habits begin to wear down, you start to get angry with yourself for making that left turn and getting that hot dog again. Well, don't be angry with yourself for that. It's part of the process anyway.

Q: Thank you very much.

VR: You're welcome.

Q: I'm very new to this.

VR: I feel the same way. [Laughter.]

Q: I think I'm newer to it than you are.

VR: Probably. [Laughter.]

Q: If when you sit there and start paying attention to what's there, and it's very painful, and you start looking around and what you see is really painful—

VR: Then you're getting it—

Q: Then you're getting a lot of pain?—

VR: Then you're getting it.

Q: Then you're getting it, but you don't seem—you don't look to me like you're in a lot of pain. [Laughter.]

VR: If you only knew. [Laughter.] If you only knew. I think it's necessary to not be too ambitious. Really. To be simple, and practice is the best way. And you know, all kinds of things occur to your mind, and when you try to look and see— “Well, is this me thinking this? Is this me feeling that?”—well, there's no me and the thoughts are gone at the same time. So you don't know what it is that you're thinking even when you're thinking it. So that should give you a clue just to relax and just be simple about it. And if you experience pain, well, then experience it, whatever it is. Nobody's going to protect you when you die. Nobody's going to come along and say, “That's OK, it's just death.” [Laughter.] I don't think so.

Q: I have a lot of fear about feeling a lot of pain.

VR: Well, what kind of pain do we feel? We feel all kinds of pain. The basic pain that we feel is uncertainty. That's the basic pain that we feel. In terms of the body, well, lots of things can happen with the body. You can break a leg or you can get cancer or anything can happen with the body. But, behind that, underneath that, is uncertainty. Who am I? What's happening here? That's the basic pain. Well, resolve that. That's the pain to resolve. The rest of it is going to happen anyway. In terms of karma, this body will last as long as it lasts, and you'll feel what you feel, and you can't escape death—and sickness, and old age, and all of that. Even the lady who lived so long, Adele Davis, she too had to die. [Laughter.] Even Adele Davis had to go. [Laughter.] It's true. I think we invent so much of the pain. We invent the possibility of experiencing such tremendous pain that we start to attract all kinds of mental aberrations. And the demons that we see are our own mind. And then we feel them. See, in this particular practice we are talking about transforming confusion into wisdom, taking that confusion and transforming that into wisdom. So you have to first stop.

Q: When you get to wisdom—and I'm not saying this lightly—genuinely when you get to some wisdom, I want to say does it hurt less or, you know—

VR: You mean from my point of view? From whatever I know, I would say that the... **[End Side A, begin Side B; some words not recorded]** ... and somebody said to him, talking about this practice, you know, and they said,

“Well, it seems to me that the more I practice the more upset I get. Is that the way it should be? He said, “No. [Laughter.] That's not the way it should be.” He said, “Do you think I'm doing something wrong?” He said, “Probably.” [Laughter.] I thought that's great, at least telling the truth, you know. It's not like, “Well, it's OK, just feel worse.” On the other hand, if you actually know the dharma and you study the dharma, which you have to do when you practice, because you know the great teachers from the past from the time of the Buddha to this day have said certain things in order to help people like ourselves. Because we get confused, right? And one of the things they say is, do not be upset if your practice doesn't go the way you think it should. [Pause.]

Q: Sir, how has your visit been in San Francisco?

VR: Well, what a pleasant place to live, huh? What a pleasant place to visit. The weather's good, clouds pass by, people are friendly, and actually there doesn't seem to be any problem. [Laughter.] My visit so far has been good, not bad. One could actually become bronzed in this place. [Laughter.] It's such a good place that one actually feels that we could become part of it, like a lokapala or something, you could actually become one of the statues. Now, to bring up a sore point, I was just in Los Angeles recently. [Laughter.] I always like to come here because I'm always—it's a great feeling of humor when I see how people are so preciously involved with this place. It's like, “How is your stay in San Francisco, how do you like San Francisco, how is San Francisco this time? [Laughter.] I say, well, it's pretty good. [Laughs; laughter.] There must be something about this place that invokes a feeling of how good it is. It's fine. Actually, everything's OK. I have very good friends here, and Dharmadhatu, they are good students here. They try to provide so much for me that I don't know if I can stand it. [Laughter.] At the same time I think to myself, well, it gives me an opportunity to actually examine more of whatever arises in the phenomena. And I appreciate that. So, in short, everything's fine. The gentleman behind you. Oh, you don't have the microphone.

Question: Sir, hello, sir?

VR: Hello, hello.

Q: When one has the opportunity to study further in the seminary situation—

VR: Vajradhatu?

Q: At Vajradhatu Seminary. And there's a lot of reasons not to go, how can one regard these obstacles to going?

VR: Dreams. Like dreams.

Q: But is Seminary just a bigger, juicier dream?

VR: It depends. When you get there, you find out. It could be. Depends on your honesty. Anything we do could be a dream, your practice of meditation, the same thing. But if you're honest, I don't think so. No promises.

Q: Thank you.

Question: Sir, you were talking about devotion and you were talking about positive thoughts arising, and in connection with that arising out of—

VR: Yes, I didn't say positive thoughts, but I—yes.

Q: Well, that's what you gave examples of—positive thoughts.

VR: That's right. That's right.

Q: And I was thinking about—

VR: The best ice cream altogether.

Q: —more negative thoughts—

VR: Hot dog, as well. Celestial hot dog. [Laughter.] Anyway?

Q: I was thinking of more negative thoughts, and in a way they seem also to arise—

VR: Well, let them come up, it's OK.

Q: —and in a way they also seem to be more cooked up in a way.

VR: Negative thoughts rather than positive ones?

Q: Yeah.

VR: Well, I don't think they're more cooked up than positive thoughts. I think it's just that the difference between the negative thoughts and the positive thoughts is less harshness or abrasiveness in terms of the kind of mental atmosphere, which affects one's body, which affects one's speech. Do you know what I'm saying?

Q: Yes.

VR: If you have negative approach in your thought process, then when you get angry the body gets all shaky and, you know, you start to harbor grudges and then you can't sleep and you have bad dreams, and all kinds of things like that. In terms of the quality of positive experiences such as dharmic experiences of what-not, has a tendency to make the body more settled and sleep more. But neither of them, I would say, are, you know, existent in terms of reality. It's just easier to talk about things, especially to human beings, who actually like comfort more than they like discomfort.

Q: Oh yes, nicer.

VR: It appears that way.

Q: It appears that way.

VR: It's a way to enter, to walk in, you know. It's like if you go to someone's house and they're at the door with a knife [laughter], or they invited you for

dinner and they say, “Would you like to come in?” You say, “Well, actually I have an appointment in San Francisco.”

Q: Well, when I think of devotion, I think more in relationship to the thoughts, rather than the thoughts coming up, and then I think, well, you know, this negative and positive may be—those are all thoughts coming up, but when you were talking I was thinking then of devotion as the thoughts themselves.

VR: Oh, that's pretty good.

Q: Is it?

VR: Yeah. [Laughs.]

Q: And then the negative ones didn't seem very devotional.

VR: Well, you know what happens in that case, I think they just dissolve by themselves. Yeah. If you see the thoughts arise as devotion then the negative manifestation doesn't occur. And that's terrible for the Freudians, my goodness, to think that—wow, what a bad deal. Out of business. [Laughter.] Right out of business. Mama, papa, everybody—out of business. Yes, in the back—microphone. [Pause.] I remember when Trungpa Rinpoche started teaching in Berkeley and San Francisco, the big thing was peace and Vietnam, and there was so much aggression about peace. Now I think whenever I talk about psychology, I'm close to the edge. [Laughter.]

Question: Sir, I was just wondering if you were planning to give refuge vows while you were here in San Francisco?

VR: Not this time, but I will do it in the summer in Colorado if you would like to come out there. It's not that expensive and, you know, it's good to take a journey.

Q: When will that be, is that at the beginning of Seminary?

VR: It's probably in June, yes. But you can find that out from the great, vast brain called Vajradhatu, which knows everything and does everything.

Q: Thank you.

VR: There's Mr. [Burnham?] over here.

Question: [child speaking] Sir, I wonder—well, not necessarily wonder—but, I have been having these kind of like feelings for a long time about these kind of like body, speech, and kind of like mind, kind of like things and they kind of like—it's kind of like the dog kind of like chasing the tail kind of like thing, I think I kind of got up, but it seems as if they all kind of like get on teams and they kind of gang up on each other sometimes.

VR: What does?

Q: Well, the body, speech, and kind of like mind—not so much the speech—but they kind of like start having little, various little things like making little habitual patterns and kind of like—

VR: How do you know all of this stuff? [Laughter.] Did your father tell you that?

Q: What?

VR: Did you read in a book?

Q: No.

VR: Well, tell me what your experience is, actually. How does it gang up? What do you mean?

Q: Well, they kind of like—

VR: What they? What they? Are you talking about thoughts?

Q: I think you could probably say that—about the body, speech, and the mind, kind of like—

VR: Well, let's start from the thoughts, OK?

Q: Well, when the thoughts kind of like arise, they're kind of like tackled and put into various places and then when—

VR: Who does that?

Q: Who does that? I guess it's—well, I don't know because then those kind of like body, speech, and mind kind of like gang up on it, and then it gets so confused.

VR: Yes, it does.

Q: [Inaudible: On?] where it goes.

VR: Yes, it does, it gets confused. That's right. So?

Q: So it makes it me feel so weird about even thinking them.

VR: Good. Well, you know, you have to relax a little bit, I think. You're holding it too tight.

Q: Tight?

VR: Yeah.

Q: It's heavy.

VR: Body, speech, and mind.

Q: Hum, OK.

VR: Whatever that is. Well, you know what your body is, right?

Q: Yeah, I know what my body is.

VR: How much do you weigh?

Q: Um, 70-75 pounds, somewhere around in there.

VR: How tall are you?

Q: About four feet, maybe, I don't know.

VR: When you speak, what language do you speak?

Q: Well, the language I was born with, American. Why?

VR: What language was that? What did he say?

Q: The language I was born with, American.

VR: American, American, I see. When you think, how do you think?

Q: Well, it's kind of projected from some part of my body, I think.

VR: Well, do you know where? Where do the thoughts come from in your body?

Q: Not really.

VR: They don't.

Q: Well, they do. They do come, but I don't know where. I usually—

VR: I think you have a thyroid problem. Do you know what that means?

Q: They come from the mind—

VR: One of your glands is too fast. You're talking about things you don't have to worry about.

Q: OK, well, then I guess—

VR: I don't think so. I mean, why make a problem for yourself so soon?

Q: It's not a problem for myself, it's just a problem that popped up.

VR: What is?

Q: It's kind of like—well, I didn't even get a chance to explain what my problem really was. My problem was that my mind and my body and my—well, not necessarily my speech—but my body and my mind are kind of like telling each other what to do, kind of—

VR: I don't know—

Q: —inside myself.

VR: I don't know. I don't know. Sounds complicated.

Q: I guess I'll just have to work on it.

VR: Well, I don't think you should work on it.

Q: Where does it go?

VR: Who cares?

Q: [Sighs.]

VR: That's it. [Laughter.] Good, that's it.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: You're welcome. That's your meditation practice. Do it that way.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, it's good, good beginning. Now we have a program Saturday and Sunday, which is basically the kind of sitting meditation practice we are talking about earlier, and done here in Dharmadhatu. And as I said, you don't need any qualifications particularly. You have this already qualified body, as we heard, and qualified speech, and mind. Everything's qualified. So you can come here and just sit tomorrow. And we have some good instructors, if you have not had instruction in this particular way. And we have some good ones. They arose as if from a dream here in San Francisco.

So you don't have to worry about getting sucked into a new religion, so, it's pretty open. And it is possible that you might think that you can't do it, because it seems like a long time just to sit and do nothing. In reality it's probably just about six hours, or something like that—seven, tops. Imagine that, seven hours of doing nothing. Terrifying. On the hand, liberating.

So you should try it. It's good to do. And then we'll talk more about it. In fact, if you sit it's better for me to talk about what I can talk about, because our minds can connect in terms of that particular experience and then we can actually deepen it. And a weekend is a very short time to do such a thing. However, as we discussed, there's always a gap, always just a brief moment which is so ordinary and so real. Everything is vivid and open. So let's try it.

So I'll see you all hopefully—well, if I see you all then it's going to be very crowded if you sit tomorrow. I don't want to turn anybody away. Now would I want to do that? No. [Laughter.] In any case, you don't have to worry about being embarrassed about sitting next to somebody whom you think knows what they're doing. You don't have to worry too much about that. I'm sure that will resolve itself in a matter of, oh maybe, fifteen minutes. I appreciate your patience. Thank you.