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The Mahamudra Lineage

Talk Two of Three

San Francisco, California

April 30, 1988

Transcribed 7/88 by Linda Huber

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THE VAJRA REGENT OSEL TENDZIN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We are continuing this discussion and experience of the mahamudra lineage, and in particular our experience of practice of meditation, which is the key point. I thought tonight it would be good to talk a little bit about how the power of this practice actually manifests in human life. Because we should understand that what we are talking about and what are practicing and what we are up to altogether is seeing for ourselves the naked reality and experiencing for ourselves the fact that there actually is no separation between who we are and what we manifest. So that kind of nakedness is at the same time extremely powerful. And it's good to know how that comes about, at least from the point of view of educating oneself—and also from the point of view of not falling into, how shall I say, possessive ideas.

In terms of experience, well, what can we say? Experience is the sort of quality of light that arises on the field of consciousness. However, that experience, whatever it may be or whatever intensity may occur, is not anything in particular, so therefore we can't say experience is the thing. On the other hand, in this lineage we put particular emphasis on experience so as to point to the natural way of being. Now, in some traditions you will find that the emphasis is on intellectual understanding. That is to say, if you know all the dharmas, then your experience will follow from knowing all the dharmas. And that's a particular way of doing it. But in this transmission, we encourage the experience as the primary vehicle — the experience of meditation, the experience of sanity as the primary vehicle —and that the dharmas that are

studied are meant to confirm that experience or not. However, if we take experience as something that we should latch onto and think that if I don't have such-and-such an experience, I am not practicing or my meditation is not going well, then that's simply a deception. And the deception, in terms of meditation practice, is very subtle. And it actually creeps in even if you think you are doing this wonderful technique and you are wonderfully technical about it, that little notion of ownership starts to sort of create a smell.

Now, it is important that we don't get hung up in that, and habituate ourselves to become experience junkies in meditation. There are people who can do that, and it has been done, and there's always another experience, and there's always another new high. In fact, I think people have written endless amounts of books about what they experienced. I remember seeing this book by Da Free John, which was *this* thick, about his experience. I thought to myself, that's ridiculous, that's totally ridiculous. "And then I went through this, and then I went through that, and then I came up and I did this. And then I did that. And then I became this. And then I was the master of the whole universe." [Laughter.] I thought, well, what is that? That is like incredible attachment to one's own thoughts — making them into a gigantic religious experience. Silly. So silly.

When we talk about experience in this lineage, we are talking about no origin, no resting, no cessation, no anything to grasp onto. Therefore, we are talking about the simultaneity of awareness and cognition of whatever occurs. And that's pure and simple experience. And it cannot be pigeon-holed as to the time, as to the date, as to the place, as to the location at all. So such experience is not grounded in any particular discernible mental fact. That's very hard to come by, in some ways, because I think, you know, everybody's used to having something to hold on to, whether it's our parents, or, you know, education, or dreams, or whatever. But when we get right down to it, experience is ineffable. We can't really describe what experience is. We can't really say, well, this is it, and point to it.

In fact, in this particular lineage, Tilopa — I talked about last night, a mahasiddha who began this line of teaching — says to his disciple Naropa, he says, "I, Tilopa, have nothing at which to point, knowing that pointing is pointing to itself, in itself." So in other words, experience is ineffable because it does not lead to anything nor does it point to anything. It's just self-existing. However, we talk about experience in this lineage because when you begin to meditate, if you don't have such an experience, then you'll be constantly

creating an illusion of experience of that. And then you will have to build up yourself as this meditator who is not supposed to experience any kind of discomfort or fear or any of the things that normally arise in the consciousness. [Inaudible: how?] they arise, or whatever we want to say, but — in this case, if you have real, good, strong experience of nothing whatsoever, then whatever arises becomes nothing whatsoever in a very vivid detail. Now, how is that possible? Well, there's red, there's blue, green, yellow, black, orange. There's hot, cold, up, down — all the rest of it. And all of that is extremely vivid in nothing whatsoever.

As you experience such a vividness, whatever we call mind is purely echo or memory. Blue, blue. [Laughter.] So that echo is also blue, like the original blue you saw. Blue, blue — again. Now, in terms of understanding how to practice properly, for all of you, that second thought or that echo should not be considered different from your original experience. Now, that's important in terms of how to keep yourself straight, keep yourself from falling into fantasies. Because as soon as you see a reflection, you begin to feel that you exist. And therefore, because you exist, you must pay more attention to the reflection than the actual thing. That's what happens. But in this case, if you practice nothing whatsoever with no object in mind, then blue, blue, blue, blue, blue, continuously blue — all the way, one hundred percent blue. Red, red, red, red, red. White, white, white, white, white. Easy, easy, easy. Hard, hard, hard. Pain, pain. Pleasure, pleasure, pleasure. Always the same. Experience becomes unified in your mind, and there's no problem with the inside and the outside.

So, one has to begin with a very simple approach and a very simple attitude. And that is, experience should be looked at as nothing whatsoever. However, and yet, experience is the key. Experience in this case means kind of like a spark or a stepping stone, jumping place, place where you can jump from — that's your experience. When you say, “Well, how was your meditation practice today?” “Well, it was good. It was a little bit discursive. It was rough. It was rugged, ragged” — whatever. Those are all just talking about the same thing. It's all talking about the same thing. It's that basic experience of what we talked about last night — unborn, unoriginated altogether. And we are trying to describe that in terms of experience, which is okay in the beginning, because you'll find out very quickly that you can't say anything much. And you say, “Well, it was good.” “It was not so good.” “It was restless, I was restless today.” Or, “I was — well, in the beginning it was good, but later on— [laughter] and after lunch it was, well —” So these particular aspects of

experience, or descriptions of experience, are kind of like stepping stones to further experience. Further experience.

So one wonders what happens then with this experience. Well, the experience begins to expand, so that the reference to experience dissolves. That's important, and that does happen when you practice. Your reference to your experience begins to dissolve in the space, and you start to have a feeling of healthiness at a fundamental level. Healthiness in this case doesn't mean good as opposed to bad. Healthiness means being settled in your body, settled in your speech, settled in your mind.

So that's one of the first marks of practice is that you feel settled. And when you feel settled, you don't have so much desire to explain what it is you feel settled about. However, if you continue to deepen that feeling of settledness, then the explanations seem to come rather naturally. If someone says to you, "Well, how do you feel?" well, you can say, "It's somewhat like this. It's not too difficult. At the same time, it's not too easy. It feels expansive, and at the same time it feels very immediate." In other words, you can say something. Because once you start to give up the competition with yourself, then it's easy in some ways to say anything, because you begin to realize that what arises as a thought is no different than the space in which the thought arises from. So you're not in competition with yourself. And that's really, a really strong point. Everybody's trying to get out of the ego problem — everybody. That's why there are so many monumental therapies and everything that costs lots of money and all that stuff — to get out of what? Ego, me, I — that seems to be the big problem, is me. Get the me out of the way, and there doesn't seem to be any problem.

In order for that to happen without straying into sort of fanciful ideas about meditation, it is good to have proper instruction. And you people know it already. But I thought I might say a little bit more about the notion of effortlessness, and the notion of actually letting go of the project of meditating. It is important to understand right from the beginning that meditation is not a self-help thing. It is not something which is meant to cure you of your fixations and problems. It is not something that is meant to change your life. Meditation is simply the natural state of being. It is who you are, as whatever you are. So, in other words, when you practice meditation, even the word practice is redundant. To practice — it's like saying, "I'm practicing, practicing." Well, in some ways, in the beginning we are. We imitate our minds, and we imitate what we think we know or what we try to imagine it would be like to be a meditator.

We imagine that we are doing it. We sit in a certain way, we get our minds in a certain way, our posture, our breath, everything, and then we are meditating. Right? Now, that's just what might be called a set-up. That's complete set-up. Now, once you're set up, it's necessary to let go and actually do it.

Now to do that means not doing anything special. It's just you recognize that that's what's happening — so that we don't cling to the notion of the meditator as someone who experiences this or that and because they experience this or that, then they become more exalted. Otherwise, all they get is a bigger ego. Bigger ego trip, the meditator. It couldn't be any bigger trip than the spiritual one. There's no bigger one than that. Even though you might think, “Oh, Lord Buddha, you are so big and I am so small,” when you sit there you think, “I am the Buddha. I know I am.” [Laughter.] Which you are. However, thinking that will not do any good.

Effortlessness. Without a care. Careless meditation is mahamudra. Like, I could care less. Care-less. Not a care in the world. Nothing whatsoever. Just like seeing an old, discarded shoe at the side of a walkway, beat up and worn out. That's meditation. Nobody's going to pick it up and say, “Well, this is great. I could wear this.” There's only one of them anyway. And nobody's going to say, “Well, I can bronze this and make it into some sort of museum piece.” It's already been done. Just, sort of carelessly, as someone walks by, they say, “Look at that, an old shoe.” Just walk on — there it is. And the same time, that old shoe might talk to you as you look at it. You might be walking by and look at the old shoe and say, “Look at that poor old shoe,” and the shoe might say back to you, “Who do you think you are?” [Laughter.] Looking at me, looking at you. So it's not particularly the Zen enlightenment we're talking about. I think in this mahamudra the shoe talks, which is interesting. It kind of puts a whole other slant on things. You can't just think that the development of peacefulness is actually the extent of meditation. There's something else going on. And that is larger than big mind, larger than a large mind, larger than a universal mind. And this particular mind—every detail is like teeth and claws, waking you up constantly. Every phenomenal occurrence is like sharpening your own teeth and having claws, just like a dragon or tiger.

So the experience of meditation is somewhat fierce, at a certain level. Well, I may be jumping the gun here. I don't think so. I think the point is we have to get beyond claustrophobia. And at a certain level, in terms of your meditation practice, meditation will come back at you. So, I think that's when in Zen tradition they sit in front of the wall, because they make it come back at

you right away. You don't have to — you know, don't waste any time, there it is. There's your mind and that's it, you know. But in this particular tradition, from that wall comes maybe a tiger. And you have to recognize that as your mind. Otherwise, you go down, down, down. And you create some other trip about life.

Now, how does that actually occur, where you really experience your own mental projections as none other than your mind? It's easy to say, but very hard to accomplish, or so it seems. Your mental projections, whether they are horrific or beautiful, or whatever — well, in our tradition we say that's none other than your very own mind. Well, what we say is that if you have devotion, then the connection between all the enlightened ones of the past and your mind come together in your meditation practice. If you have devotion, then when you practice you are not any longer practicing for anything — your own gain or anybody's gain — but you are actually connecting your mind with the lineage mind, which is the mind of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of all the three times. It comes down just like rain, just like a thunderstorm, just like hail. It comes down immediately on your consciousness, in your practice, and opens your mind to the reality of what is. That's called *adbisthana* in Sanskrit, which we translate as “blessing.” But basically it means the transmission of the awakened state of mind that occurs when a student, such as ourselves, opens their mind to the awakened mind of the lineage, the teachers. That is so central in this particular practice and so much the core of everything that it is very hard for me to talk about it. It's that ineffable quality of experience which only can be felt rather than said. But it involves having what we call devotion. And devotion means letting go. It doesn't mean giving in. It means letting go. In the western world, devotion is seen as giving in to somebody or something higher, greater. But in reality it means letting go of all preconceptions. I hope you understand, you are following me. Buddhist mind is all-encompassing. Your mind is the same as Buddha's mind. You have to let go into that. That's the point. There isn't any other point. [Laughs.] And that doesn't have a point. Buddha's mind does not have a point. You can't say, “Well, that's Buddha's mind.” Well, you could, you could, but you better be sure. You could get confused.

Devotion is heartbeat. It's saliva. It's something in your eye that you pick out. It's dandruff. It's shoes that are too tight. Devotion is phenomena altogether. The only way you know that is when you have a genuine teacher who points that out to you — points out that all of this world and all of its phenomenal structure and experience is nothing but pure, unobstructed mind,

simple, complete, without any stain or impurity whatsoever. That's what we call the world, and that's what we call experience. When a genuine teacher points that out, it is like having a blindfold taken off. And therefore, everything is seen as self-existing. Nothing happens in particular anywhere, but whatever occurs is self-existing reality. And that's called the experience of meditation. And it comes about by connecting your mind to the mind of the teacher or the Buddha, which is the same thing. And that connection is called devotion — letting go of one's own territory, letting go of one's own precious self. This precious me has to go, sooner or later. You can wait until you think the time is right, but you might die and then be thrown into a mental world of intense confusion and find yourself reborn as a dog, at best.

Devotion is like a good drink of water. There's nothing to think about. Now, in the beginning, to be devoted to somebody means to actually emulate them and appreciate their enlightened qualities. Later on, devotion means to actually recognize those enlightened qualities in oneself. And finally, devotion means to give up recognition altogether, just remain naked. That's what meditation is, ultimately — just the pure naked state of being. But we hard hearts, those of us who have made it tough, should rely on devotion, that is, we should rely on our feeling of falling in love, our feeling of softness or emotion, in order to connect with this unconditional awareness. I don't think there's any other way. If you try and do it technically, mentally, with your credentials, it will just fall flat. But if you actually connect your mind with the lineage — your teacher, and your teacher's teachers, and all the lineage of the awakened ones forever — then letting go is just like, well, falling asleep, just a matter of that moment where you actually let go of tension and, just, your hand sort of goes “shh,” opens. Now sometimes, you know, when you fall asleep and you're not quite ready to go to sleep, you sort of just jerk up, and your hand closes up again. Well, that's what meditation is like, until we actually get the idea of what we're doing. Meditation is sort of like opening and closing one's hand constantly. And when you actually lose track of the meditator, your hand opens up completely and there's nothing but unobstructed feeling and awareness. Then as soon as you think, “Ah, that's it,” [VR makes whistling noise] it closes up right up. And then you look at it and say, “Why did I do that? I should let go of that.” And then you do again. And sooner or later you begin to realize that whole process of closing up and letting go is purely natural and has nothing to do with you whatsoever. That's just what happens all the time. And that's what called effortless in mahamudra meditation. Do not think, deliberate, meditate, act — oh, it should be six [VR is quoting from *Rain of Wisdom*]— imagine, but be at rest.

So, that's a lot to say, I know. But I'm just trying to give you an idea of how to conduct yourself when you sit. There's nobody that can tell you how to do this. However, a teacher can point to certain things. That is to say, if you are missing the point or missing the no-point, or whatever, the teacher can say, "No, that's not the point. Just straighten up a little bit, do it this way." A teacher can do that. But when it comes down to the actual moment of looking at the naked reality of your own mind, there's nobody to show you that. You do it yourself by yourself. And that requires complete effortlessness. You sort of melt into it. So, it takes a lot of discipline, I think, at least in the beginning, just to remind yourself that this is what you're doing. Because, as you go along, you have all kinds of memories and references and your mind, your thoughts of past, present, future, sensual experiences, sensory experiences, everything, and any one of those things appears to be your existence in that moment and you take that experience to be yourself. But all of it is all completely the same thing, just [inaudible: blankedly?] unborn, unoriginated, spacious like the sky, with no thought whatsoever. So, if you can do that consistently, you are meditating. And then when you meditate that way, in a formal way such as like sitting, and your life as you regard the phenomena such as traffic lights and rain and sunshine and garbage and all the things that occur in the world, you regard all of that as no different than your mind. The whole world is transformed, and meditation is continuous.

So that's my talk tonight, and if you have some questions, please feel free to ask them now.

QUESTION: [End of Side A, begin Side B; some words missed when tape turned] ... unclear on it, and I don't know how it —

VAJRA REGENT: Mahamudra actually in Sanskrit means, "maha" means "great," and "mudra" means "sign" or "seal," or could be also "hand." Well, *chaggya chenpo* in Tibetan, "chag" means "hand." "Mudra" means gesture, right? Like, for instance, if you see this particular gesture [VR makes gesture] or one of these [VR makes another gesture], that's kind of like mudra, right? Great, all-encompassing gesture. That means that phenomena and one's mind are the same in a moment. That's all-encompassing gesture. Like, if the teacher or the Buddha says this, then you see reality. That's called the mahamudra.

Q: Thank you.

VR: It also refers to a whole lineage of teaching, which has to do with the experience of what's called the four yogas, or the four stages of experience, which first of all begins with one-pointedness, becomes simplicity, becomes one taste, and non-meditation. Those are called the four yogas of mahamudra. Yoga in this case means the experiential quality of being. Altogether, I would say the mahamudra [inaudible: talks?] as the sort of imprint of reality, which the mind forms on itself. [Pause.] So, in other words, it's the ground of reality, the path, and the result. It's everything. It is the glorious mahamudra. [Laughs; laughter.] It's not known by any of these people. They don't know it. Check it out. They talk about meditation, but they just talk. That isn't to say that they aren't good people, and they don't practice, and have discipline, but the mahamudra is something else.

Question: Sir, sir, you spoke of meditation, and I have — thank you very for that explanation, the idea of opening and seeing that process. If that's meditation, then what is enlightenment?

VR: Same thing.

Q: Thank you.

VR: However, if we wanted to get very technical about enlightenment, there are what's called the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment [laughter], which actually describe the levels of meditation in each stage, called the hinayana, which is the beginning stage, the mahayana, middle stage, and vajrayana, third stage. There are thirty-seven different aspects of that. And, if we wanted to talk about enlightenment in terms of hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana, we would also talk about the notion of unfolding or, like a flower opening up completely, lotus. We could talk about that. If we want to talk about the qualities of enlightenment or an enlightened being, we could talk experientially in terms of emptiness and luminosity and non- thought. We could talk about that. But basically, when you are meditating, there's no you, there's no object, and there's no in-between. There's just totality. And that's called the enlightened state. So meditation and enlightenment are the same thing.

Question: Sir, you talked about what happens with the mind as it becomes enlightened. Could you say something about the process of obscuration and what happens with the body and speech in that path?

VR: Yes. Well, what basically occurs is that in a moment, which is indiscernible and unrecognizable as time, in other words, in a moment that cannot be measured, from the what's called co-emergent space, there arises the energy which is light in essence. And mind, recognizing itself, creates what we call duality. That can either be seen as a problem or not, depending on the enlightened state and depending on recognizing the light itself as not different from one's mind. So, when light arises as different than one's mind, what happens is there is a panic and a notion of freezing. And from that, there is the beginning of subject and object, in other words, duality. From that point of view, duality becomes perception, perception becomes sensual world, and every time there is more solidity on the outside, there's more solidity on the inside. So, the ego becomes more the central headquarters, and the outside becomes the projection or either the friend or the enemy, and from that comes the whole phenomenal world — countries, races, people, Mars, Venus, et cetera. All of that comes from the mind.

Q: And what about body?

VR: Body is simply the projection that arises, or the formation that arises from the duality. In other words, as soon as the mind sees a difference in itself and its projection, then body will naturally occur from the panic, from the freeze, from the mental perceptions. And then eventually it evolves into a body. In other words, when mental perceptions become solid, they become one body or another, such as a human body or an animal body or hungry ghost or god realm, or something like that. And it happens exactly that way, endlessly. That is what's called samsara.

Q: So, in my reading of other teachers — and you somewhat refer to being attached to experience in meditation — they seem to focus on not so much letting go of the mind but experience bodily. So —

VR: I don't know what you're talking about.

Q: Yeah, I'm not that clear myself.

VR: What teachers and what texts?

Q: Well, I was thinking, for example, of Da Free John.

VR: You have to read so much. It's big, huge — to find out it's just his trip.  
[Laughter.]

Q: Yeah. Well, it's not only him, but there's a lot of things to read. It's overwhelming.

VR: Well, for you, I see no choice. We've already been through this, don't you think?

Q: Yeah.

VR: Well, do what you like, but remember, sooner or later it catches you in the back of the neck.

Q: It's got a hold on me right now.

VR: Well, it's about time. It's about time.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Life is so short. We think it's long, but in the middle of it, then we start to get the idea. At the end, we wonder, what did we waste our time doing? So we shouldn't do that now. I mean, you know, most of you are young, so, us, you, whatever, take advantage of the time. I don't know how to say that better than that, because every particular instance of your consciousness has the opportunity of waking up or not. So, anything you want to indulge yourself in is purely, you know, making the worst out of the best situation.

Question: Sir, in the beginning of your talk, you said that awareness and cognition are simultaneous.

VR: Yes.

Q: And I didn't understand what the difference is between those two things.

VR: Awareness and cognition? Awareness is just like light. Cognition is recognizing the light. So, like, for instance, light has its radiation.

Q: So, is one choiceless and the other involves a choice?

VR: No, they're both the same.

Q: They're the same. One is more specific?

VR: Um-um, same. Same. As I said last night, how is that you know what I'm talking about? How is it that I know what you're talking about. So that light and the cognition of it are simultaneous.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Oh. Ah. [Laughter.]

Q: Is that the same as the blue, blue?

VR: Yes.

Q: That's the blue, blue.

VR: That's right. Blue, blue, blue, blue. Red, red, red, red. Who dat who said, "Who dat?", huh? [Laughter.]

Q: Could I ask another question—

VR: There is no ego, you see. We're just here. We're just here. There's no ego.

Q: So, does ego begin when you don't realize that those things are simultaneous?

VR: That's correct. That's exactly when it begins, when you don't realize that. And that happens all the time, or it doesn't happen all the time. It's precisely that. It happens all the time or it doesn't. And when you sit and meditate, you know, you are sitting there and you're practicing and you're going out — breath, dissolve, breath, dissolve, you know, thinking, thought, thinking, ta da ta da — okay, everything fine, but suddenly, what happens? Before you can even imagine, you're dreaming. And as you're dreaming, you're falling asleep, or you're falling asleep and then you're dreaming. And then in the middle of the dream — pop — you see, breath, out, right? That's what happens. So you're either on it, or you're not on it.

Q: Can I ask one further question about that?

VR: Which, you know, basically, it's the same thing if you relax. But if you don't relax, then there's a real dichotomy, or seemingly real dichotomy.

Q: The Vidyadhara used to talk about first thought and second thought. Is that what you're talking about?

VR: Blue, blue, blue, blue, blue.

Q: So, you recognize the second thought as the first thought?

VR: Yeah, boundary, it's the same. It's like when you're meditating, when you're practicing meditation, and you don't seem to fall away from the technique, and you are angry with yourself?

Q: Yes.

VR: You're aware of something, right? So you're still meditating. From the point of view of awareness, nothing's changed. From the point of view of your habit of thinking that everything should be the same, something's changed.

Q: Thank you.

Question: Sir, could you say something about the seeming contradiction between effort and effortlessness? A spiritual path with no effort — you're nowhere. When you apply effort, you're always stumbling over it.

VR: You know, I think basically you have to get to the heart of the matter right at the beginning. And that's why I'm talking about effortlessness right now, rather than talking about, if you apply effort you will get to effortlessness. I don't think so. So, that's why I wanted to say effortless tonight, to get the idea right at the beginning of how to practice. And I could say, well, effortlessness is really effort, and there's effort at the beginning and then — I don't think so. Let's get it straight right from the beginning. It is totally without any mental action whatsoever, or physical, or intellectual action. There is no action necessary in order to just be. We don't have to do anything. So that's the point, which doesn't have any point, but that's the point. I remember I wrote this little

book called *Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand*, which is a little book, and there was this fellow named Tatz — is that his name or Katz, which one?

AUDIENCE: Tatz.

VR: Tatz, Tatz, yeah, Tatz. And he was writing a review for the *Tibetan Review*, which is the publication out of Dharamsala, and I was talking about the six realms, which I was describing in a psychological way, because everything arises from the mind. And he wrote in this review, he said, “It seems that this disciple of Trungpa is following his tradition in saying that things are psychological, which is really a mistake, because people don't have enough fear.” In other words, they don't really think they're going to be reborn as a dog or a hungry ghost or all of that, because they say, “Well, it's only psychological states.” Well, what does it matter? You know, in other words, you won't develop renunciation for these things because you think they're only mental states. Well, everything is a mental state — everything, including pinching yourself or dying of cancer, is a mental state. So, in the same way, effortlessness, to talk about effortlessness and effort, I prefer to begin to say effortless. And then we'll see what it takes to — you know. If your backs — you know, if you're falling [VR makes noise, indicates], it doesn't take any effort to do that. You think it does, you see. It's mental. It's a mental state to think, “I'm feeling so much pain. I have so much pain, that I can't sit up straight.” Well, to whom are you talking? Who's listening while you're saying it? [Laughter.] And what happens when you sit up straight? Is your body any less painful than it was when you were bent over? No. Nothing changes. You just sit up straight, and then you feel better for a few minutes, until you start to bend over again. And then you feel worse. Then you want to blame it on some philosophical system—which is your mind [laughs]. Well, that's a good in point in terms — that's why I'm bringing it up this way, you know. In terms of anybody who practices meditation, you have to sit on a seat and put yourself there. If that's effort, that's effort then. But the basic state of mind is effortless, because it doesn't take anything to do that. It takes a lot more to put a dinner party together, clean up your house because a guest is coming, further your career by going to the right luncheons or conventions, making the right contacts, further your career, marrying the right person, living in the right neighborhood. It takes so much effort to do that. It takes no effort whatsoever to sit just like you're doing right now. If you're hungry, have some food. If you're not, just sit there.

Question: Sir, could you say a little bit more about the raining down of blessings from the lineage, and is that the same as your karma ripening?

VR: Well, karma ripens in any case. Whether it ripens toward enlightenment or not simply depends upon your intention. But, yes, it is the same from that point of view, that karma ripens when you direct your mind toward its own object, in this case devotion being — the object of devotion being the teacher, which in reality is enlightenment. You see, the teacher represents enlightenment. It doesn't matter if the teacher is tall or short, or fat, skinny, has a great title, has no title. In your mind, that teacher is the awakened state. And directing your mind toward that is the attitude of devotion, which will ripen the karma. And when the two come together — your own karma, the teacher, and your practice — bingo. You realize in a instant just like mother and child coming together.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Well, ladies and gentlemen, I think we should close at this point, so as not to keep you up too late. It is late enough. We have one more day together tomorrow, and there's sitting practice. So you should sit like a rock, and sit like a lake, sit like a cloud, sit like a thunderstorm, sit like a cool breeze on a summer night, sit like a winter storm and ice forming on your eyebrows. Sit like a painful situation. Sit like a pleasurable situation. Sit continually — sit, sit, sit. And while you're sitting, let your mind open up to whatever occurs. Don't make it hard on yourself. Don't try to make it easy. Whatever occurs is purely the awakened state. There's nothing else that's happening. So do that in a great simplicity, and make the practice sessions very succinct and powerful, and at the same time nothing whatsoever. So do that tomorrow, and we'll talk. Good night.