



**VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN
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TRANSCRIPT**

Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin

**Advanced Training Seminar (A.T.S.)
“Discipline”**

**Karma Dzong Buddhist Center
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

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Talk One

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Talk Two

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Talk Three

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Talk One of Three

March 18, 1988

Ladies and gentlemen of Karma Dzong, I'm very happy to be able to have this opportunity to present these teachings which you already know, however, which are always with you here, on top of you. And the topic for this weekend is discipline, which I feel is very timely as we begin our new year. For the most part, it seems that what we are involved with in our life, and especially our life as practitioners, is discipline, and discipline is the foundation of the continuity of any awareness or realization that comes about in our practice. And although we sometimes struggle to understand how to proceed with our lives and how to proceed with our dharma practice, we have a basic, fundamental understanding that discipline is the thread which connects all of our various activities.

And discipline is at once hard and soft. And hard is first. And first doesn't mean first as once and for all, but always first. So always first it is hard. The distinction that we make between hard and soft is purely a matter of expanding our notion of discipline. In the same way as we understand hinayana discipline to be tighter, mahayana discipline to be more open, and vajrayana discipline to be all encompassing, in the same way all of our experiences like that in terms of our practice, in the beginning is always much tighter, in the middle there's a sense of expansiveness, and in the end, all encompassing quality.

In terms of the buddhadharma, it is important to understand discipline thoroughly, to separate in our minds the conventional notion of discipline and that which we have understood through the teachings. The conventional notion of discipline is something which is imposed from the outside. In terms of the awakened mind, in terms of the Buddhist teachings, discipline is something which comes from within, something which actually awakens within one's own experience. So therefore, it is intrinsic to one's very nature, one's very being. Of course, we could actually cut this weekend very short by saying that there are actually only two situations: One is with habitual patterns, and one is without. That discipline, a disciplined way of life, is without habitual patterns. Undisciplined is with all of them, continually churning up confusion.

Now it seems that for most of us—and in this case I am not talking about people who are new to the dharma, but those people who have practiced the dharma for quite some time—we understand the quality of discipline which is necessary in order to lead one's life and to have the various experiences and realizations which are part of our inheritance, so to speak. However, it is good to refine one's notion, because the interesting thing about the dharma is that it always provides a larger context for whatever we are doing, and whatever our realization is, that very realization provides a larger context for further realization. So there is no particular point in which we say, "Well, this is it."

And I think that is extremely important in terms of understanding how we work with any form, any particular kind of discipline. The dharma is like a sieve: If you try to hold anything, try to grasp or capture anything, it continually goes through, which we have understood as a

primary type of discipline in terms of attitude. That is to say, we cannot encompass anything from the point of view of grasping. So as soon as you have some notion of your discipline and it becomes solidified, if you are truly practicing the dharma, that will actually dissolve into a larger space.

Now that sometimes is quite painful, [inaudible: even?] psychologically, sometimes physically, depending on how well you can sit. However, that painful quality, which is involved with any discipline, has either the samsaric aspect or the awakened aspect. The samsaric aspect of pain associated with discipline is somehow wanting something to be over, having to endure something until you get to the freedom. However, in the dharmic discipline, pain that one experiences is opening to freedom and is not necessarily associated with what comes next.

So in terms of definition, we could say that discipline has to do with some kind of straightness or upright quality. And in all the dharmic texts you will find discipline associated with the words “good,” or “wholesomeness” or “worthiness.” So when we approach the subject and we think about it, we have to understand that when we talk about discipline, we are talking about goodness, worthiness, or wholesomeness. So that is identical with discipline. At the same time, we are talking about freedom, which is identical with absence of neurotic upheaval and absence of klesha activity. In terms of day-to-day experience, we could say freedom from wandering mind and discursive mind, discursive thoughts, really. Freedom from that. So goodness, worthiness, and freedom from confusion brings you to being on the dot, the notion of discipline.

Discipline also has a quality, and the quality is cooling, cooling out the heat of the kleshas, and also the quality of cleansing or purifying, cleaning out or washing. So when we approach discipline, we have first the attitude, and then we have the quality. And the quality also involves the understanding of discipline, which has to do with processing or taming the mind. Because we have innate goodness, obviously, but due to habitual patterns and kleshas, that uprightness becomes bent or confused, and therefore we apply discipline, the discipline of practice in this case, to straighten out, like pressing a fabric which has wrinkles.

And the result of discipline is strength. Now strength manifests as the absence of sleepiness, laziness, or dullness.

In terms of our involvement with discipline in the three-yana way, the first thing we recognize in ourselves when we actually connect with discipline is the fact that we have a direct and personal connection with the Buddha. Now that's really important in a certain way because the feeling of how to be comes from that connection. When we enter the dharma and we contact our teacher who is authentic, we listen to the dharma, and we practice it, there dawns in our mind a feeling of similarity with the Buddha. Now, that similarity in its essential form is beyond thought. The closest we could say is it's a feeling of sitting up straight, the feeling of upright and truly straight. Now we could visualize that in the form of a thangka or statue or something, representation of the Buddha, but internally, when we actually practice the dharma, we have that connection with the Buddha—and that connection is personal, in a way. It's almost like we ourselves were there in the time when the Buddha lived, received the teachings, and practiced

the dharma according to what was taught. And that is the quality of discipline, and the quality of discipline which is the same for any Buddhist practitioner anywhere, which is very interesting when you think about it. Whether the practitioner is from Thailand or Japan or Canada or Mexico, there's that connection with the Buddha, and that connection means the connection with pure discipline and pure freedom.

So in terms of discipline not being imposed, and in terms of the connection with the Buddha himself, we should talk about body, speech, and mind. And in terms of hinayana discipline, we're talking about working with what we have in a very simple way. What is the most simple discipline or simple approach to discipline is working with body, speech, and mind, which are called the three gates, and the three gates are obviously the gates to liberation. And liberation in this case is liberation from whatever kind of attachment or clinging or grasping to an attitude of ignorance that we have.

In terms of body, speech, and mind, we should talk about shila, samadhi, and prajna. And all of the dharmas, hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana, are contained in those three aspects of discipline. Shila, which is called discipline, samadhi, which is meditative absorption, and prajna, discriminating awareness. So whether we are practicing in a hinayana way or a mahayana way or vajrayana way, we are always practicing those three things, always.

Now to begin with, shila, discipline, has the aspect of giving up your search for entertainment, which is the opposite of the ordinary logic, which is trying to find an alternative to anxiety. So the quality of shila is actually saying *no* to one's own search for entertainment. That's the hard part. The easy part is that saying *no* provides tremendous freedom, kind of relaxation or carefree quality, almost a naive quality, which is the quality of shamatha, that once you understand that it is necessary to actually say *no* to the habitual pattern of running after whatever seems to fill the gap, then there is the notion of resting. But resting in this case is naively resting, not resting with a smart ass attitude. Naively resting is the quality of shamatha, which is dwelling in peace. So in some ways, the meditation posture is the symbol of that kind of discipline, of shila altogether. Whether it's paramita or hinayana or samaya shila, the meditation posture is symbolic or representing that kind of attitude, which is upright, straight, which goes against the habitual tendencies of the body to do whatever comes into one's mind with the body. In this case, you limit that particular activity to one mode. And the same thing happens with paramita practice or with sadhana practice. Here again, have that boundary of what you do with your body.

Speech has to do with the postmeditation attitude, that is, a certain notion of dignity and formality. Speaking has to do with formality and dignity. It also has to do with having contacted that notion of being connected with the Buddha, having that buddha nature. One has a certain feeling of self respect, which is different in terms of becoming a dharmic person than it is in a conventional sense. Because when, in the conventional sense, self respect is only based on hope and fear, it comes and goes, but in this case it's very solid like a rock, like a foundation which cannot be shaken. And it has to do with expression or speech, so that one doesn't, in terms of discipline, one doesn't just cough up any old thing. And that kind of speech, we, some of us, probably most of us, had very good training in with the Vidyadhara, who was wringing

out a wet towel when it came to our habits. So we had some elocution for a while. But the point of that elocution was mindfulness and awareness, and discipline in terms of the postmeditation experience.

And finally, discipline of mind is paying attention to the whole territory, whatever occurs in your mind, paying attention to one's state of mind altogether, which includes body and speech. So when we talk about discipline, we always are talking about body, speech, and mind, and shila, samadhi, and prajna.

In terms of the qualities of shila, discipline, we talked about goodness, as we said, which means that who you are and what you are is the best possible manifestation, and that what you do, how you behave, is well thought out and well conceived, so to speak. And therefore the action is always in tune with the dharma, which means that body and mind are synchronized with the environment, so that's the whole quality of shila, discipline altogether.

And basically when we talk about the best manifestation of who you are, what we mean is that unless we get into discipline, unless we have discipline, we never make any real connection with ourselves, ever. What we have is the constant fluctuation, the constant confusion, and we never actually get to the dot of who we are and what we are. And that's simply because we haven't experienced body as body, speech as speech, mind as mind. We haven't experienced it that way, therefore, we have no relationship to ourselves. So in the case of the hinayana discipline which we are talking about now, we are talking about making a direct relationship with ourselves—body, speech, mind—on a very simple and fundamental level. And that ties back into the notion of connecting with the Buddha. When you make a connection with yourself in a very basic body, speech, and mind, then you actually feel a buddha quality in yourself.

“Samadhi” means meditation without interruption. Now, in this case, when we talk about samadhi as discipline, we are not talking about only sitting practice of meditation, we are talking about samadhi as a continual absorption into the meditative state of mind. Now meditation, strictly speaking, means no distinction between this and that. That when we talk about being one with the breath in ordinary shamatha practice, we are also talking about being one with projection—sense perception, sense consciousness, thoughts, and emotions—that there's no particular separation between the experience and the experiencer. So that is what we call samadhi, and samadhi means ongoing in this case, that it's twenty-four hours a day that one has that absorption into the meditative state of mind. Which again is brought about by discipline in terms of body, speech, and mind, with shila. So shila actually gives birth to samadhi. Although it's not linear in that way, it's evolutionary in that way. So it means meditation without interruption, or meditative awareness without interruption. So we don't need to go back to something, go back to a reference particularly. When the Vidyadhara—I was reading a transcript today—he said that in terms of samadhi, there are three parts: getting to the discipline, the discipline, and afterwards. And he talked in terms of getting to the cushion was very difficult, the practice was simple—didn't matter, you know, things happen, ups and downs, all kinds of things—and afterwards, the end, is also difficult, because there's excitement about getting back to your wicked break. [Laughter] I thought that was really good: getting back to your wicked break. [Laughs]

Shamatha-vipashyana discipline of awareness is, first of all, learning to ride the mind, which is that wandering mind, discursive mind, to tame the mind in that way through shamatha. And shamatha is the only way. And then vipashyana is that which gives birth to the sense of coolness or calming the passions, because there's a broad scope, and there's a sense of 360-degree awareness, which is cool in nature, not hot. And in this case what we talk about is expanding the gap, that gap that we originally experience in shamatha, in vipashyana becomes expanded, so that we lose distinction between inside and outside, or perceiver and perceived, experience and experiencer. So that feeling, that vipashyana awareness, is the kind of fuel of samadhi. So in that state we are free from psychological anxiety.

And also there's a notion of getting into a complete world, or a total world. That's samadhi: a total world of meditation. And one thing which is important to note is that we have the opportunity always to get into that world. When we don't care to, it's because we are putting ourselves apart from it and sitting on the edge of it, thinking, "When I really perfect this, then I can really get into this samadhi," which is a sort of backwards notion. One has already made a connection with the Buddha, therefore one is dwelling in that state. So therefore it is part of one's inheritance. So, the final aspect of that absorption is being totally here, which is being fully here, in the moment, every moment. So that's the samadhi quality of discipline.

And prajna being the last one, which is again having straightened up the body, having been careful about the speech, and recognizing the mind and all of its activity, and then expanding that through practice, then the mind becomes very clear, very sharp. Then it is possible to see all the corners in every detail, which is called prajna quality, or discriminating awareness. To be able to see even a hair in your soup, or any particular corner of your experience in your life, you actually can see it, which is very naked and at the same time completely joyful and brilliant. Prajna gives rise to every realization, every aspect of buddhahood that there is. There is no praise that can be given to prajna that is high enough, and at the same time Milarepa said, "Whoever coined that term, discriminating awareness, is a numbskull."

So the notion of prajna is clear headedness and being able to distinguish things as they are. And that has to do with living a dharmic life altogether, to be able to know what needs to be taken on and what needs to be discarded. Prajna happens when the ground is plowed through shamatha and planted through vipashyana, watered through meditative absorption, and therefore gives rise to the fruit, which is discriminating awareness. The notion of prajna again is seeing also the pattern of the world, understanding samsara and nirvana, so when we know all the patterns, there is nothing is left out. Therefore, we don't fall into the pitfalls of laziness and drowsiness and dullness. And therefore, we don't lose confidence or contact with our own buddha nature. And again, the quality of evolutionary, the evolutionary feeling of all of this is what we have already experienced in our practice, but it is good to go over it to basically plow the ground once again, because plowing the ground again keeps it from developing weeds.

The final quality of, or two qualities of prajna—discriminating awareness being one, and humor being the other one, because once you are able to discriminate, then it actually is a self-existing joke, and all the big flap about existence doesn't seem to be anything but humorous. But humor also has the quality of being interested in what's going on. That people that are not

humorous are not interested. Usually, they're interested in their own thing, and that's as far as it goes. But people that have a sense of humor are always interested in everybody's mind, because the prajna sees how the mind works. It sees the mind of everybody, it sees the mind of the world, so to speak, it sees the pattern, or patterns, of the mind. Therefore, it is interesting and humorous. Humorous, not in "funny, ha, ha"—not that kind of humor—humor from the point of view of every time the mind moves and twists and changes, it creates different colors and different shapes and different perspectives. And if you try to fixate on one, then another one appears at the same time, which is very humorous. It's like a fun house. When you're young and you're naive and scared, the fun house is terrifying because you take the appearances to be real. And when you're in that particular boat which we call existence, going to the fun house which we call samsara, there are lots of things that are frightening, and they jump out and scare you to death...eventually. [Laughter] But, in the case of developing prajna, you see the fun in the fun house. You see the apparent reality and its various manifestations, and you are not actually hooked by it because you can discriminate what is actually going on from what is just simply mental projection.

So shila, samadhi, and prajna. If shila is free from habitual patterns, samadhi is free from distractions, and prajna is free from confusion about what is worthwhile and what is not worthwhile. So that is the basic description and, obviously, in brief, about discipline, the three disciplines of shila, samadhi, and prajna in particular, first approach to it on this weekend.

So if you would like to have a discussion, that would be fine.

QUESTION: Sir, I suppose this question is asked from the perspective of the child in the fun house, but it has struck me that the sort of basic anxiety that you're talking about initially is, in effect, the fear of prajna or the fear of seeing all those details. When you said you'll be able to see the hair in your soup, my first reaction to myself was I don't want to. I'm not sure what the question is, except that how do you deal with that fundamental fear of seeing the way things really are?

VAJRA REGENT: Well, I don't think there is a fundamental fear of that. I think that when we talk about fundamental fear, we are talking on a level of discursiveness, we are not talking about fundamental. Fundamental is ignorance. The fear comes later. And I think in terms of prajna, we're not afraid of prajna particularly, although sometimes it appears that the light is too bright, and therefore we want to shield ourselves from it. That's true. But I think the fundamental quality is as bright as the fear, so to speak. As bright as the fear in terms of one's buddha nature is as bright as one's fear of it, so to speak. So I think what we have to do is get back to the basics. What is fundamental? And in order to do that, one has to get very straight, so to speak. You know, without any extraneous movement, whether it be in the mind or the body or speech.

Q: Is there not some leap of faith required that if you open your eyes, that the world will not be too shocking?

VR: Yes, there is, definitely. That's what's called discipline.

Q: Thank you.

VR: I think the main point is knowing that, understanding that there is no ego that is performing this leap. That's the main point. Otherwise the leap cannot happen, it never does.

Do we have a microphone for Uncle George? Is someone... do we have someone to take care of that? Mr. Pontius, why don't you just bring it back to him? Let's have a leap of faith here.

QUESTION: Sir, why did Milarepa think he was a numbskull?

VR: He didn't.

Q: But he said he was?

VR: No, he said whoever coined that phrase, discriminating awareness, was a numbskull.

Q: Right—whoever coined the phrase discriminating awareness was a numbskull. Why?

VR: Well, because one gets attached to the idea that prajna is some sort of thing that you can possess from either a dharmic point of view or individual point of view, or as a practitioner, whereas prajna is just like space or like the elements—it cannot be possessed particularly.

Q: In other words, even naming it, just like by naming it...

VR: That's correct. But we do that in order to tune our minds into it. And he was just undercutting any kind of belief in prajna as another god, another theistic notion.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Rather effective, don't you think? [Laughs]

Q: [Inaudible: off microphone]

QUESTION: Sir, in keeping with what you were saying prajna is, aren't we functioning on some fundamental belief, because that was at the end of your, pretty much last sentence, that there is illusions and there is things as they really are. Isn't the distinction conceptual, is it such a thing as things as they really are?

VR: Well, it's almost like saying there are clouds or not clouds in reality. We say there are clouds which hide the sun, then those clouds are real or they're just vapor, which when we shine light on them, dissipate. In the same way if we talk about things as they really are and things as illusion, then it's the same way, if the illusion is purely a configuration of a mental attitude.

Q: So what are things as they really are?

VR: Well, there's dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, nirmanakaya.

Q: But they are words, that's words.

VR: To you maybe. [Laughter] But that's what we're dealing with, the distinction between words that are just words and the words that are actually things as they are, which is okay, you know, that does happen.

Q: It's... there is... you see, the question appears to be not there is no—there is a question about experience.

VR: Are you tired?

Q: Yes, I am tired.

VR: Sounds like it. Not as crisp as usual, Tomek. Same question, but not the same intensity.

Q: Yes, I suppose I'm tired. Well, let me try again.

VR: You have to rouse yourself a little bit.

Q: See, I was sitting straight and all of that, but—

VR: That's just one part of it. Now the speech part, okay?

Q: The speech.

VR: Speech. Go ahead. [Laughs]

Q: You know... okay. So there is...the only thing I can say is brilliance.

VR: All right.

Q: I really can't say anything more, because that's, there is a...you get the brilliance—

VR: Well, we don't want [inaudible]. You see, there's a problem, that just to say "brilliance" sort of makes it a little bit deaf and dumb. There's also sharpness in the brilliance.

Q: Well, can be brilliant without sharpness?

VR: Yes, that's what some people get stuck on, you see. They get stuck on this kind of brilliant quality which blanks out the mind, rather than makes the mind more sharp. That's why we talk about discipline [of] body, speech, and mind. So that when you describe the state of awakening, you should be able to describe it so that people understand that it's not one thing or another. It's brilliant. But some numbskull said that.

Q: Well, you know, this goes all the way—anything what was said was some numbskull said it.

VR: Well, that's the humor, you see, that's what's called prajna—the numbskull part. [Laughs]

Q: Well, I will try maybe better, later better. I can't crank anything.

VR: Well, that's not entirely true—one can crank. In fact, one should sometimes. When you get into a tight spot, you should crank. [Laughter] I'm sure that is going to be quoted for some time, in various situations. [Laughter]

QUESTION: Sir, about this crank [laughter]—

VR: Go ahead, yes.

Q: —in terms of the three-yana approach to discipline that you dealt with tonight...

VR: Well, tonight we actually were talking hinayana.

Q: Well, my question has to do with development of sense of humor and prajna, and when you are in a tight spot and you—how do you know which kind of discipline to apply, the tight or...

VR: Because of your understanding of hearing the dharma, following the dharma, and listening to, and following, and being devoted to an authentic teacher, it's the only way you would know.

Q: So, that seems like from my experience, it seems like just surrendering to that—

VR: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

Q: —rather than coming up with it.

VR: Well, you know, when you take refuge, you surrender in a certain very, you know, sort of fundamental way, which is making connection with yourself, which is making connection with the Buddha, connection with the dharma, and the sangha. So that's definitely surrendering.

Q: So if you find yourself in a situation and you don't know which kind of discipline to apply and you're starting to lose it, what's happening there?

VR: You're forgetting, you're forgetting your dharmic connection, basically falling back into samsaric activity, which is laziness, sleepiness, dullness.

Q: But at the same time you're...

VR: If not that, it's agitation, restlessness, and anxiety.

Q: Right.

VR: What can we say? It's constantly the same. Any time that happens, you realize you're not—

Q: So there's no mistake [laughs].

VR: —not with it.

Q: Right. But there's no mistake in terms of applying the wrong kind of discipline at the wrong time.

VR: Well, I think that only comes into play when we become sort of, when we start to experiment with the dharma and start to edit and play with it, so to speak. You can't play with it. Discipline is what it is, you know, and that's why you have to crank it up sometimes, like exactly what you're talking about. If you start to drift and move around in your activity and go toward things which are going to pull you down, so to speak, you have to crank it up.

Q: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Sir, you used an analogy of wringing out a wet towel in reference to speech?

VR: Yes.

Q: Was it that we soak up—I'm not quite sure...

VR: No, no, no, trying to get all the moisture out that's been in there for a long time.

Q: Oh, that's what I meant, that we've soaked up a lot of things, and we're—I'm still not understanding.

VR: Yes, habitual patterns, yes.

Q: Okay, thank you.

VR: Image was somewhat a notion of labor. I suppose that's a personal point of view. [Laughs] Haven't met anybody yet who doesn't have that point of view, but... I don't see how you could, you know. That's the notion I talked about earlier, about a certain quality of pain that exists in discipline, and that pain is not the sado-masochistic bullshit of samsara. That pain is kind of like stretching or growing, that you feel it organically, there's no question about it that it hurts.

QUESTION: Sir, in relation to speech, you talked about hope and fear, and I didn't quite understand what you meant.

VR: Does anybody have a note on what I said? There was a particular reference to hope and fear.

Audience Member: [Inaudible]

VR: Ah.

Q: Could you explain that, please?

VR: Well, yes. In terms of hope and fear and self respect?

Q: Yes.

VR: That one's notion of oneself is usually based on some kind of hope or fear. That hoping that you will be proved right, or hoping you will be proved the most wonderful, beautiful, powerful whatever, and fear that you will be stupid and ugly and all the rest of it that happens on the other side of being the best. So that kind of thing evolves in terms of speech, because speech is how you express your notion of yourself, right? Usually, in communication with people you say, someone says, "How are you?" and you say, "Well, I'm okay, but, you know, last week I had a..." Or you get into further discussions about who you are, and then you get into further discussions about who you are, you know. And you begin to feel panicked at a certain point because your speech has lost all resemblance to reality. [Laughter] And it is now describing anything that fills the gap, and the other is not there anymore. Now, that happens very quickly, in everybody's experience, very quickly. You know, in your dealings with your family, friends, business associates, the milkman, et cetera, et cetera. "How are you?" "Oh, I'm fine." You know, and we could have just ignorance, and then after that we have hope and fear. So speech is a particularly important discipline in terms of how you relate to being on the dot, you see? Saying exactly what is happening and what you are. So it's good to notice that all the time.

Q: It's, it seems to be that it's the speed that makes it—

VR: It could be speed, but it also could be laziness, it also could be indulgence, passion, aggression, ignorance. It could be any one of those, not necessarily speed.

Q: I'm just wondering why hope and fear is more in relation to speech than it is with body— why isn't the same thing happening with body?

VR: Well, because when you're working with speech, you're working with your sort of psycho-physical environment. When you're working with body strictly, you have pain and pleasure. When you're working with speech, you have hope and fear. I mean, you know, of course, it all is simultaneous and evolving as we're talking about, so it's not like you could say that body, speech, and mind are distinct entities that we are trying to sew together with some logic here. We're just talking about how we experience things. And it seems like hope and fear and speech are very much related.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Back, all the way in the back.

QUESTION: Sir, at the beginning of your talk you spoke of putting the heart always first.

VR: The heart?

Q: Yes.

VR: Did I say that?

[Audience member tells Vajra Regent the word is "hard."]

VR: Hard–H.A.R.D. Hard, oh, I'm sorry, a speech problem. [Laughter] Hard is always first. Hard. Sorry. Latin people, the t's and the d's become sometimes mixed. It's true.

Q: Could you put that a little further in context, considering that [inaudible words]...

VR: Well, the first thing with the body is that it's hard to sit. With the speech, it's hard to say things distinctly, slowly, clearly. With the mind, it's hard to notice what is actually going on every moment. So that's hard.

Q: Thank you.

VR: What was the second part? Do you remember, Mr. Brown? Hard, and what's the second part?

Q: I'm going through my notes right now.

VR: Go ahead, go ahead, let's see if you have it.

Q: Sounds like what I wrote down after that, sir, was the beginning was tight, the middle was broader, and the end was all encompassing.

VR: Okay.

Q: And so I think that you would fall into the middle category...

VR: No, no, no, no, let's not get too complicated. The beginning it's hard and easy.

Q: Is easy?

VR: Yes.

Audience: Soft.

VR: Soft. [Laughter] Wait a minute.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Soft. Easy is the third one. [Laughter] Actually, that's true. [Laughs] Hard and soft.

Q: [Inaudible question: off mike]

VR: I have to work on my elocution. [Laughs; laughter] Thank you. Maybe it's the sound system. Hopefully it's the sound system! Hard and soft. Heart and thought, no. That's good. I'm glad we could clear that up before we leave this evening.

Q: [Inaudible].

VR: Perhaps.

Well, good. Now we have spoken a little bit about discipline. What I would like to cover in this weekend is paramita, shila paramita, and the samaya shila, so we talk about three-yana approach altogether.

So now we should close with the closing chants.

[END OF RECORDING]

Talk Two of Three

March 19, 1988

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. There is some good news and some bad news. What would you prefer to hear first? [Laughter]

Audience: Bad news.

Vajra Regent: [Laughs] That's right. This is an interesting gathering we're having here from the point of view of—we are sort of like the congregation, the Buddhist church of Halifax, and at the same time it's a gathering of practitioners, every one. So we are practicing our religion, so to speak. And the fact that we are discussing discipline is the powerful aspect of this particular religion, altogether. In fact, you could say that the essence of Buddhism is discipline, starting from Buddha himself sitting and actually conquering the four maras with his body, speech, and mind of uprightness, and giving up all particular hope and fear. Abandoning hope and fear, sitting upright, and just completely opening to the whole of phenomena, which manifested as the attack of Mara. And because there was no resistance to such an attack, everything became the symbols of enlightenment.

We are discussing paramita tonight, shila paramita. And I thought it would be good to talk about how to say *no* to oneself, because that appears to be the kernel of discipline altogether. Last night, we talked about discipline as the proper view and the proper practice and the proper activity in shila, samadhi, and prajna. And tonight we are continuing that discussion from the point of view of paramita.

Now, obviously, when we are talking about paramita, we are talking about expanding one's vision and one's involvement in the dharmic practice to encompass much more—much, much more than in the hinayana discipline. However, we are also talking about an evolutionary process, or an unfolding process. And as we have studied and practiced ourselves, we realize that there is no particular separation between hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana, except in terms of realization of a greater awareness each time.

But in order to put things in proper perspective, we should have a clear understanding of the difference between hinayana discipline and mahayana discipline. And the basic difference is the expansiveness of the view. In fact, we are not talking about a different kind of posture, we are not talking about a different kind of practice, we are not talking about a different kind of motivation or connection, but we are talking about an expanded view, expansive view.

Now, discipline is said to be the source of all virtue. Whatever virtue arises in life, whatever is good and wholesome that arises in life, comes out of discipline. And by definition we are talking about discipline, we talked about last night as upright, wholesome, good. Also we are talking about discipline tonight in the paramita sense in terms of proper conduct.

Now, altogether we would say that the buddhadharma means this: not causing harm. In essence, the essence of dharma is nonaggression. That's what makes it dharma, the quality of nonaggression. And proper conduct has to be that conduct which is based on that truth, the dharmic truth of nonaggression as being the enlightened behavior.

So, according to the mahayana discipline altogether, the first aspect of proper behavior or proper conduct has to do with oneself. And that having to do with oneself is understanding that it is not proper to make a big deal out of oneself. No matter what, that is considered to be improper conduct. Now, what is making a big deal out of oneself? Everything. But in particular it has to do with, on a body level, the notion of indulging in sense pleasure, and how we actually relate with sense perceptions and sensual activity altogether. And that—we are talking about pain and pleasure, because, as you know, you can get off on either in terms of indulgence. So the mahayana notion of shila, one actually has the duty to say *no* to oneself.

Now, I think everybody understands this, but just in case: *No* means *no*. It doesn't mean maybe, it doesn't mean sometimes, it doesn't mean later on, it doesn't mean if or when, or what if, or how about when. *No* means *no*. In terms of sense pleasures and sense indulgence, the mahayana version would be to actually say *no* to extremes, such as overindulgence in excitement or overindulgence in depression, overindulgence in passion, aggression. And at the core of this overindulgence is the notion of “me” as a big deal. The “me” quality, permeating everything. “Me” want to do this. “Me” like this. One has to appreciate the all-encompassing quality of what *no* actually means. Because the *no* that you say to yourself is *no* ego. No ego ever. Not Ever Ego.

That is pure discipline, basic discipline. And it manifests in everything that you do, everything that we do. The quality of a bodhisattva, the quality of a would-be bodhisattva is not to stick the “me” into things. Not to have this “me” hanging around, which makes everything painful, causes pain to oneself, causes pain to others. And that “me” is a big me. And *no* is a much bigger *no*. It's a huge *no*. It's *no* like the sky is *no*.

Now, I think it's important for us to understand that when we are talking about discipline, we are talking about some sort of effort, some sort of quality of pushing against or going against habitual patterns altogether. So when we talk about saying *no* to oneself, the first thing we have to understand about that or recognize about that is how much “me” is stuck into everything. And sometimes it's quite subtle. And sometimes we go along thinking, “Well, you know, that's just ordinary activity, and ...” But when we see how much “me” there is in it, it's revolting, it's disgusting, and also humorous.

Now, hopefully, in our discussion from yesterday on prajna, we can actually see that. We could see the revulsion that exists in having “me” plastered on every aspect of phenomena. On the walls and floor and everywhere is me, me, me, me, me. The whole world's made out of me. And it's funny, and it's humorous. At the same time it's revolting. So we have to start saying *no* to “me,” “me-ness.” That has to do with how we—again body, speech, and mind—how we behave, and how we project. And especially from the bodhisattva ideal, which we know of as making one's life the vehicle for enlightenment for oneself and others. And it's pretty obvious

that if “me” is everywhere, others don't fit in. They can't get in. There's too much “me” that's covered everything, so how can anybody else take part?

So, the first saying *no* has to do with appreciating how vast *no* actually is, and how penetrating *no* actually is when you think about it. And everybody here has thought about this. There isn't anybody who has practiced this discipline of dharma that hasn't thought about saying *no* to themselves when they realize habitual patterns are arising and taking shape and coloring the whole environment. However, we think we have time to work this out. Well, that's a question of more “me.” And there should be more *no* and less “me,” because the *no* part is actually the liberation, freedom from those habitual patterns. And, you know, when you are dealing with a child, let's say, your own child, and they're in danger, you say, “Don't do that. Stop that.” And you wait later to explain why you said that. You don't go around saying, “Now listen, if you stand on the edge of that roof for very long, you might fall off, and then your bones would break, and it would be very hard ...” Stop. Don't. Move back. That's the kind of attitude we have to take in terms of our own habitual patterns. It is difficult, hard in the beginning, hard to do. *Hard*.

However, it has a very interesting effect once you begin to say *no*. Once you begin to say *no*—and that means keeping your body in a particular way, keeping your speech in a particular way, keeping your mind in a particular way, which basically means not indulging in excitement or depression—once you start behaving in that way, we begin to have a feeling of twenty-four hour-a-day involvement in your practice, which is quite liberating. You know, when we approach practice from the point of view of time off, and the wicked break—you know, the wicked break part we talked about last night, and being practicing and then taking the wicked break—that wicked break is “me.” And when we say *no* to that idea of taking a break, then we feel, actually, we start to relax, because we have a feeling that we are involved in a twenty-four hour-a-day discipline. Because nobody wants to be halfway into this, none of us do. It doesn't make sense. This is not the Sunday-go-to-meetin' religion. [Laughter] Nor is it, you know, the kind of Upper East Side New York gathering of people interested in the esoteric teachings. It's actually commitment to a whole life.

So the relief actually comes from the *no* in terms of our body, speech, and mind. When we actually say *no* to the habitual patterns, then we feel discipline as being continuous. And there's a lot more energy to do everything. At the same time, opening up to a vaster vision and a profound vision means connecting again to the Buddha. It's very hard in the beginning to understand the completeness of the Buddha's realization. And yet at the same time we have that connection to that totally awakened state. We have the connection, and we have that connection to the Buddha as the teacher. So once we begin to say *no* in terms of that kind of activity which makes things sloppy and degraded and aggressive, we have more connection with the Buddha than ever. We feel very totally connected, which is a kind of liberation, a freedom.

And in some sense we have to be uncompromising with ourselves. And the more you get into discipline, the more uncompromising it is. The less you can say, “Oh, I'll just leave that for now” and, you know, deal with that later on. Like “Gone with the Wind”—what did she say?—

"I'll think about that tomorrow." The more you get into discipline, the more you can't do that, because you begin to realize that it's the same thing—tomorrow, today, right now—it's the same thing. So we have to be a little bit hard on ourselves, quite a bit hard on ourselves. And that means we have to actually control the notion of indulging in laziness and excitement and depression and aggressive activity altogether. When that happens, one actually has the quality of shamatha. That's where shamatha actually is full blown. When we say *no* to that attraction to extremes, then the mind begins to experience equanimity, or continuity of solidly sitting, solidly being. That's the shamatha quality. So that's sort of saying *no* to yourself. That's the first part of shila paramita.

The second part is having done that, there's a further *no* that comes about, and that *no* is saying *no* to anti-dharmic activity. So the first one is the body discipline, now this is the speech discipline. Anti-dharmic activity means realizing that hearing and contemplating and meditating are the basic blissful activity of the path, and that one is attracted to that more than to the samsaric activity. So in the second aspect of discipline, one has to gather dharmas, gather the dharmas. And gathering the dharmas has a lot to do with actually studying the dharma and pondering over it, having it become a living experience in one's life, to actually think about dharma twenty-four hours a day. To actually think about dharma. Let's say, well, thinking, thinking, thinking. Yes, definitely, but in this case, the discipline aspect of thinking about dharma is like displacing old water, stagnant water, with new water. It's the same kind of activity of the mind—it's thinking in any case. But in this case we are putting in something and having something else flow out. That something else is that extraneous quality of indulging in samsaric activity and anti-dharma activity altogether. So gathering the dharmas means to saturate one's life with dharmic thinking—study, practice, path quality altogether. So this is the kind of samadhi aspect, or absorption, so that one's whole life is bound by dharma everywhere.

At the same time that includes the teacher, appreciating the teacher. Without the teacher, the source of the dharma, then it would be very difficult to say *no* to dharmic activities because it would just be a dry kind of intellectual pursuit. With the teacher, you have a living example of dharma, so therefore, one can emulate that. Once there's a certain kind of confidence, when you have a genuine teacher, you have a certain kind of confidence that you can say *no*. Otherwise, you might think you're not strong enough, not disciplined enough. You don't have enough courage, so to speak, to say *no*. But when you have a teacher who embodies the dharma, who actually does say *no*, who actually lives *no*, then you feel inspired to do so, yourself. So in the mahayana discipline and paramita discipline, the teacher is the central figure, of central importance.

So basically when you say *no* to anti-dharmic activities, what you are doing is developing a kind of appreciation for dharma, which is again the notion of twenty-four-hour-a-day involvement in dharmic activities. Now this is very interesting. We should contemplate this for a minute. You know, we talk about gap. In our early discipline we learned to appreciate gap, because that's a break from the samsaric pattern. And now what we seem to saying is we're filling up every gap with dharma. So there's no gap anymore, there's just dharma, dharma, dah, dah, dah, dah.... *no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no*, [loudly] **NO, DON'T DO IT**. Don't even think it. Get it?

So, from that, appreciation occurs, and that's further realization of one's connection to the Buddha. And basically, the path that we are on is recognizing oneself as Buddha. And at first, this Buddha is far away, almost like a vision in a dream or something that miraculously appears in one's life. Then Buddha becomes closer in terms of the qualities of Buddha. One begins to adopt them and actually be like a buddha. And finally, one actually is. So, in terms of the paramita quality here, we are talking about [one] hundred percent involvement with dharma all the time, and appreciating one's life as dharmic activity. So, we are saying *no* to extraneous activity.

And the third aspect of *no* quality is saying *no* to neurosis altogether, which has to do with bodhisattva vow of benefiting others. If it were not for this vow, all of the previous *no*'s wouldn't add up to a giant, big *no*, which it has to. It has to become giant *no*, huge *no*, vast like the sky and deep and profound. That *no* has never been heard by anybody. Its sound is inconceivable. But benefiting others is how that *no* becomes one's own experience, living experience. And we started with getting rid of the "me" in terms of ordinary activity. Then we get rid of the "me" in terms of dharmic or anti-dharmic activity. And finally we get rid of the "me" altogether in terms of one's mind. The neurotic quality is the ignorance about who you are, right from the beginning. That ignorant quality, which makes us manifest in all the various ways of stupidity and hatred and pride and jealousy, all of that stuff. And that can only happen if we dedicate our activity to others. And obviously, it's the same thing again: if there's too much of oneself, then you can't benefit others, it's impossible.

But in order to do that, one has to be genuine and truthful and not beat around the bush, which is very difficult. Because saying *no* to oneself is the first part, but saying *no* to others is very difficult, especially if you are in a position where someone is asking you to say yes or no. Hardest thing to do is say *no*. If you want to benefit others, if we want to benefit others altogether, then we have to give up any pretense, and we have to give up this notion of going around the obstacle, or going around the other, so to speak. You know, if you can't say something direct to your friend, you write them a note. And the note says, "I didn't have time to talk to you, so I thought I would drop you a letter." Doesn't work. When someone wants to put their ego out, it is your duty as a bodhisattva to say *no*. You can't let that ego infect the environment. So you have to have confidence to do it. But that confidence is based on all the *no*'s that you have already done with yourself. If you've done it with yourself, then you can with others. And basically, if you don't have any compassion, then you won't say *no*. You will make excuses for neurosis, yours and others. You will make excuses, and you will say, "Well, you know, that's the way things are." That's not the way things are. If we really care to benefit others, then we have to have a disciplined mind, and that means being able to say *no* when we actually see that it is important to say *no*.

Now we know, all of us, that habitual patterns are very ingrained and very strong. But we also, we must cut out the bullshit about who we think we are and what we're doing. We must make it very, very simple. And that means saying *no* to neurosis altogether. Basically, *no*. And as Buddhists, we are—and especially taking bodhisattva vow, we have an obligation to make that environment such. If we don't let anybody actually trample on the dharma. And the dharma in this case is not just Buddhism as the dharma. The dharma is the sanity, the basic

sanity of our existence altogether, who we are as human beings, that's the dharma, in this case. There's a lot of embarrassment, perhaps, and maybe some fear, lack of confidence in oneself, afraid that we might become too hard or too soft or anything like that. But, my dear friends, when it comes right down to it, we all know when bullshit is happening in ourselves and in others, and we shouldn't second guess that, because we have really, if we have compassion at heart, then we have to say *no*. And that *no* could be very forceful *no*, could be very quiet *no*, but in reality it has never changed. It's just *no*. That's the discipline of the Buddha.

So it is said without discipline, it doesn't matter how many practices you do or how many teachings you've heard, how many abhishekas you've received, how many books you've read, how many great teachers you've met, without discipline there would be no accomplishment. But with discipline, all the virtues of human existence become manifest. You, yourself, as a bodhisattva, have an effect on the world when you have discipline. When you come into a room, your presence makes everybody upright and feel good. When you speak, your speech is like music. And the quality of your mind is expansive and clear and open, so the environment is never clogged up with extraneous discursive qualities. These are the results of discipline, and how a bodhisattva actually manifests. So that is the good news. The good news came right at the end. [Laughs]

So, if you'd like to have a discussion, please, let's do so. Here in front. Mr. Hasty.

QUESTION: My question has to do with depression, and I don't know how to say *no* to that kind of train of thought. You say *no*, and then what? You know...somehow it feels like it pervades my being when you say *no* and nothing happens. It just—

VAJRA REGENT: You don't say it strongly enough. You have to yell at yourself.

Q: More like a firecracker. Stop myself.

VR: Yes, yes. You just say *no* [weakly; laughter]. That's not the giant *no*. [In falsetto voice] It's a little bitty *no*. *No, no*. [Laughter] I hope you understand what I'm saying. You really have to yell at yourself. It takes some effort to do this. Everybody's scared, you see, you're frightened. If you say *no*, what's left? Emptiness? Chaos? The end of comfort? That's what we think. But *no*.

Q: Thank you.

QUESTION: Sir, I have a question about getting sucked in by others when you feel that you are pulled out of resting in meditative awareness. For example, in working a regular job and the kinds of things that people that you work for are asking of you and the way that they would like to relate to you, and they have their own set of rules.

VR: Yes, which is usually the case.

Q: Yes. Well, it's very easy...I often feel that I am sucked in all the time, and I don't know, on the spot there's not...

VR: Is there a water cooler in your office?

Q: Yes.

VR: When you feel that way, go and get a drink of water.

Q: Well, I'm interested in talking about on the spot when it's happening.

VR: Yes, get right up, and go get a drink of water. Let's not strategize this *no*. *No* cannot be strategized. And, you know, if you think you're sitting there and saying "Ooh, this is happening, this is happening [very rapidly] *no, no, no, no, no...*" Just *no*. Whatever it takes. Sorry.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: You can't negotiate with samsara. It's totally corrupt.

Q: Well, that's the feeling that you get. I mean, you feel like you could say–

VR: [Inaudible] You know, it's interesting because we're trying to make the best out of, you know, the piece of shit, saying, "Oh, look, this isn't shit, this is a chocolate mousse." [Laughter] It's not chocolate mousse. It's a piece of shit. [Laughter]

Q: I feel like I still have a further question about this. Which is that, I guess it has to do with the fear of saying *no*–

VR: Yes.

Q: –to somebody else.

VR: No. I think to oneself first. If you can say *no* to yourself first, then it's much easier to actually say *no* to somebody else. You can't say *no* to somebody else if you haven't done it with yourself. Doesn't make—you know, it will not happen. It won't make any sense to try and do so. You will be a liar and a cheat and a thief. So first you have to perfect the discipline of body, speech, and mind oneself, and therefore, it's possible to dedicate one's activity for the benefit of others. But you can always tell when you're bullshitting, because there's a lot of discursiveness involved and a lot of strategizing, you know, trying to figure out what the situation is, what the politics are of the situation. Things are much more real than that, you know. We might say that there are vajra politics, but we shouldn't kid ourselves to make our little world into such a big deal that we say, "Well, we're partaking now in the vajra politics." I think it'd be best to simplify things, you know. To know what you are dealing with all the time. If you are involved in samsaric activity or in the world of samsara, and you are in that world, then you have to know you are in that world. And what you have to say *no* to is your fantasy about what's going to come out of that. Do you know what I mean?

Q: I think I do.

VR: Yes. It's like you would want to make it into something because, you know, there's a lot of fear that if we don't, we'll be stuck with a very plain existence. And reality is very plain.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: In the back.

QUESTION: [Inaudible]

VR: No, we can never do without the recording.

Q: One obvious, obvious question seems to be, how does the notion of nonaggression fit with the idea of the giant *no*?

VR: That's because the giant *no* is such a *no* that it never hurts. Like prajna is said to be a sword which cuts two ways—the perception and the perceiver simultaneously. The blade is so fine and so sharp that there's never any pain, it's just shhtttt ... [makes the sound of a blade cutting] *no*. So it's the essence of nonaggression. Aggression comes when the blade is dull, and we start to hack. In the name of discipline, we start to hack at ourselves and other people, you know. And we proclaim that as *no*, but it's not *no*—it's just more “me.”

QUESTION: Sir, I'm confused about your statement of saying *no* to someone else if they're affecting the sanity in the situation?

VR: Mm-hmm.

Q: And later on you said that first you have to perfect *no* in your own body, speech, and mind before you—

VR: Well, I don't know about perfect, but you have to at least try it.

Q: Okay.

VR: At least do it.

Q: I'm confused on how you can determine whether it is appropriate for you to be saying *no* to someone else.

VR: Why are you confused about that?

Q: Because at the same time you're talking about the idea of the *no* being, not being painful, and saying *no* to someone else could be painful.

VR: Could be painful.

Q: To them, yes.

VR: Yes. So what's confusing about that?

Q: Well, then it sounds like hacking. It seems like it's more like *no* that's hacking rather than...

VR: You should be able to distinguish the difference between hacking and cutting straight through. If you can't, then you'd better say *no* to your own wandering mind.

Q: Okay.

VR: We have to push ourselves to not be ignorant and lazy and stupid about what we actually know to be true. And you can always tell if what you're doing is bullshit or not because of the discursiveness involved. You can always tell. You can tell whether or not you are philosophizing or making a psychological deal out of things.

Ah—which is something I wanted to mention, by the way. Part of this giant *no* is to give up the whole notion of therapy altogether. It is complete nonsense. I'm not saying that if you are a therapist, you shouldn't suddenly not be a therapist. I'm saying you should take your time and not be a therapist later on, the sooner the better. Why promote that in the world? Why should

we promote that in the world, the notion that you can't deal with it yourself? Why? Why should we continue that? I was thinking about Sigmund Freud writing all those books about psychological bullshit and vomiting up words in volumes, and people reading that. What pollution that is in the world. Tremendous pollution in the world. And people taking that as some notion of how to appreciate themselves, over and over and over again. Reality is very boring and very plain. It has nothing to do with complicated idea. I meant to say this in relationship to what we mean by discipline altogether. If you really understand that things are exactly as they are, then maybe we could cut out the whole mental institution idea altogether. Maybe we could just do away with that. Let it wither and die, just like habits. We should just take the juice out of it, so it sort of like becomes sand and then crumbles. And nobody will remember that it ever existed [laughs]. That's my wish, actually, that all of that leaves the world entirely at some point.

QUESTION: Sir, I have trouble with condemning a whole field of human activity out of hand.

VR: I thought you might. [Laughter]

Q: It's just that I guess maybe I was lucky...

VR: It must be the voice of Canadian conscience coming out [laughter], or we could say human conscience altogether.

Q: No, but I met some people—

VR: We want to equate Canadian with human, I don't know. [Laughter] Melvin, is there really a point to talking about this?

Q: Yes, sir.

VR: All right.

Q: I mean, it's only based on my own experience, and maybe I was just lucky, but I met some people in a particular circumstance who fell into that whole sphere of activity called therapy. And I thought what they were doing was very decent and very good and very dharmic.

VR: Are they still doing it?

Q: I hope so, yes. So I just don't know whether you can—everything that goes under that label can be condemned, of therapy.

VR: Well, I don't expect to convince anybody of that. That's just my wish, that that actually leaves the world altogether at some point.

Q: Okay, I made my point. But I don't understand.

VR: You don't understand.

Q: No.

VR: Well, you have to work on it.

Q: But, well, how can it be? What about those people who were doing those decent things? They surely can't be included in that.

VR: I think basically, if they understood dharma, they would not be doing that. It's a question of saturation.

Q: Yes.

VR: Now, when you have, for instance, if you have ink and paper and a brush, when you make a mark with the ink, the paper absorbs it, right? In terms of dharma and discipline, it's the same, that it's important that the ink be absorbed into the paper. In terms of our own world and this particular age, it is important that dharma actually saturate the whole environment. In that way, sentient beings will not suffer from confused thinking and necessity for therapy. So what I am saying is that that should be gone from the world altogether. There should be dharmic activity, and therapy is not dharmic activity.

Q: [Inaudible: Bread?]

VR: He never did like therapists, he still doesn't. Doesn't like therapy. It's not even the point. When Naropa Institute, years ago, I talked to the psychology department, I said, "If you are receiving money, there's something funny about this." If you are charging an hourly wage to help people, there is something funny about this.

QUESTION: Sir, in relation to this, in your talk you mentioned that—

VR: In Chicago Dharmadhatu there are fifteen sangha members seeing a dharmadhatu member who is a psychologist. Yes. This is what happens, the degenerate quality that happens. And the Buddha said that the dharma can only be destroyed from the inside.

Q: Sir, you mentioned working to help others in your talk from having cut through "me." When you cut through me, you can help others. Perhaps could you say a little more about what are the qualities of helping others that are appropriate? Ways in which one actually helps others.

VR: If you can transmit *no* to other people, that would be the best.

Q: And that's mainly just by not doing everything you have to say *no* to. So you don't have to do all that much, you just—*no*. Is that what you mean, sir? Just, you don't do all the stuff you say *no* to. That's the main...

VR: Well, [with a British accent; questioner has a British accent] I'm not actually from Dundee, it's near Dundee, well, they live near Dundee, but they're not from... [Laughter]

QUESTION: Sir, I would like to ask you about the second *no*. There was quite a bit of discussion about the dharmic *no*...

VR: The dharmic activity, the dharmic activity.

Q: The dharmic activity. If you could, because, you know, technically, it was obvious what you were saying.

VR: Well, basically what it means is to actually immerse your mind in the study of the dharma. Technically, basically, that's what it means.

Q: I would—

VR: But if you have, for instance, if you have a livelihood–

Q: Yes.

VR: Right.

Q: Right.

VR: And you have to, you know, support–what? What are you supporting with your livelihood? Are you supporting your dharmic activity? That's the basic question you have to ask yourself.

Q: Yes.

VR: If you are, then by whatever means you are doing so should promote that kind of experience in your mind and in your environment when you have more time to study the dharma rather than less.

Q: I think it's maybe personal, but I think, I'm sure it applies to many of us, that there are periods in our lives, you know, we had time to actually study and practice. And by circumstances which...I quite feel strongly leads to dharmic activity...

VR: I'm not so sure.

Q: You are not so sure? You mean that these activities could be curtailed?

VR: What I'm meaning to say is that perhaps these activities are mind produced through discursiveness and confusion.

Q: Could you be a little more specific in–

VR: Sure.

Q: What I mean–I just want to understand it more.

VR: I am saying you should question your activity altogether from that point of view, from *no* point of view.

Q: Yes, from *no* point of view, but you could say *no*...

VR: From *no* point of view.

Q: No. Yes, you can say *no* to discursiveness. You can say *no* to, you know, various forms of manifestation of anxiety and, you know, latching to some concept, et cetera. But there is the bare bones of activity, you know, there is five to nine [sic], there is meetings, there is this, there is that. If I would say *no* to all of that, there would be, there really would be no activity.

VR: No, no. The *no* is saying *no* to the origination of all of that, all of that. The question of livelihood should be understood by everybody, because livelihood and discipline are wedded together. And it has to do with one's intention.

Q: Right. I don't question–let's for the moment– I might be wrong–but let's assume that my intention to start this activity was dharmic.

VR: No.

Q: It's impossible, you are saying?

VR: "Was" is impossible.

Q: Well, something happens in time.

VR: Nothing happens.

Q: Fine. So I will go along with that. "Is" dharmic.

VR: Okay. Then you can't bullshit yourself because you say "is," and therefore, it's continuous twenty-four hour-a-day involvement in dharmic activity.

Q: Okay. Fine, thank you very much. I—

VR: Well, that's what I mean by discipline. That's exactly what I mean.

Q: So, okay, a little comment if I just want to, if I understood. The question which you, I think to cut your *no* was the *no* to hesitation, to my hesitation.

VR: Behind. It's Uncle George again. Yes. That's not Uncle George. Is that you, George?

QUESTION: It's me.

VR: Oh.

Q: I have a feeling that a lot of this—I just want to see whether you feel this way—that a lot of this seems to be a *samsaric* hope for success and fear of failure.

VR: A lot of what, George?

Q: Well, this confusion about this *no*, or whether there's a confusion about what you're doing is dharmic or not.

VR: It's very hard to talk about. You have to feel it. You have to experience it. Even to bring it up is *no*.

Q: I'll say no more. [Laughs]

VR: [Laughs] No, no, no. You know, we don't want to get too Zenny about the whole thing. It's much more practical than discussion. We're trying to, in this particular context, evoke that quality of *no*. But not dramatically, or by trying to rehash somebody's idea. It doesn't make sense to do that.

QUESTION: The basic premise of *no* to oneself and saying *no* to others, I think you articulated it in a very understandable way. But—the "but"—but I think I feel maybe similar to Melvin, which is that I have extreme difficulty in accepting some of your views about mental health, and my feeling about it is that wishing away a phenomenon that occurs in society, which is that people are not able to say *no*, they are not able to handle their life.

VR: Oh, no, no. That's the basic *no* right there: people are not able to. That's the basic *no*. That's what makes everything degenerate—

Q: Well, I'm saying that discounting that they feel that way—

VR: Oh, well, we're not talking about that—

Q: –and a mechanism that occurs, and they're, of course–

VR: It doesn't help.

Q: –and there's–

VR: It doesn't help anybody–

Q: –and there's distortions. There are distortions within that system.

VR: I'm not talking about distortions, I'm saying basically it does not help.

Q: I can't accept that, because when you go within a facility, and the main focus is that the people are helping and guiding people to learn to say *no*, is that— you know, when you have dharmadhatu members who have the ability, and they've looked at their mind and they're working with it, and they've taken on meditation, that's a whole different thing. But when you have people who feel there's no hope, they feel that they can't say *no*, if there's a commitment to work with those people, to teach them, whatever you do, to show them that they can say *no*, I think is a very uplifted attitude and should not be eliminated, because I think it leads to survival of the fittest or survival of the sanest.

VR: Talking to, helping people with their toilet, with their basic necessities, with working with themselves on a day-to-day basis is not psychotherapy. It's just helping people. And there's no problem at all with that. When you sit in an office and listen to somebody's problems and think that you are helping them and their mind, that is bullshit.

Q: I agree with you–

VR: Especially if it costs fifty bucks an hour

Q: No, I agree with you. And I don't argue that. But I do...

VR: If you're talking about those facilities where people are really downtrodden, I mean, really, they can't handle themselves, and you are helping them, fine. It's the same deal with the nursing home, huh? What do you think of that?

Q: The nursing home?

VR: A nursing home, altogether. The whole notion of nursing homes.

Q: Ah, do you really want to know what I think?

VR: Yes.

Q: What–

VR: Because somebody called me yesterday to get into a nursing home business, and I said don't.

Q: What I feel about nursing homes, which is—as you know, I study health administration—is that I think it's an unfortunate phenomenon that's occurred, and that society should work toward redirecting away from nursing homes.

VR: Precisely. And that's the way I think about therapy.

Q: And that—I have to apologize, but I felt that what you were saying was that there should be elimination of mental health care. You seem to be making a very big leap there.

VR: No, it's the other thing, I think there should be mental health, not elimination of it. But what I'm talking about is the psychological complication, and making a profession out of working with the mind. Right?

Q: Mm-hmm.

VR: Making it a professional experience. That is bad news. The same thing with regulating care for the elderly in a nursing home. Right? Now, this fellow called me up and he said, "Should I get into this business?" I said, "Are you willing to make sure that everybody who works for you has a compassionate attitude? Will you be there to see that these people are not treated like just a piece of rotting flesh? If you're not, don't do it. Because what you will do is listen to another bureaucratic thing, another bureaucratic thing and, you know, it's a degenerative idea altogether in society." So we're not talking about people who actually want to do good and actually do good. I mean, that should be obvious. And I'm not talking about wishing away something in society. But I am talking about how we actually change things. The only way to change things is to say *no*. And you have to start somewhere. That's basically it. And we have to—somebody has to say this therapy thing is bullshit. Let's stop this. Let's have more respect for people's minds altogether than say, "Well, come back and see me next week." About what? [Laughter] I'm not trying to be funny. I actually mean this as much as I can. And the notion of trying to work with somebody's mind is bogus. There is no such thing to begin with. What are you working with? Your own projection. When we started the Maitri program years ago, Rinpoche said the curious thing that happens is when a crazy person comes into the room, you become crazy on the spot. To understand that, if you're a therapist, then you understand everything, then you stop that nonsense of thinking that you're helping somebody. Help is much bigger than that, much vaster than that. You have to become like the elements in a way, you have to become like the crazy person, which means like wind, like fire, like rain, like all the elements. Otherwise, you can't communicate to people's minds.

I get very passionate about these things. And I know that I cause a lot of a stir every time I say them. But it's not the point that I'm trying to say that there aren't good people trying to help. The whole idea is fucked from the beginning. It is! You know, if you study the dharma, and Lord Gampopa talks about the different kinds of free and well-favored birth, right? And everybody I think has studied that, and there are the ten and eight conditions for the free and well-favored birth. And when you study those things and you see people who do not have those conditions, then you understand why they can't understand the dharma. They can't understand the plain reality, just things as they are. And you don't try to give them psychological concepts or helping aids to make them feel better about the fact that they can't get it. You have to understand cause and effect and free and well-favored birth. When you understand that, it's possible then we could talk about mental health, which is what Rinpoche was trying to do in the early Maitri days, and all the way through with Naropa Institute and everything. Not try to create a Buddhist therapy, never trying to do that. And out of his kindness, he allowed people to say they got a degree in Buddhist psychology, which is nonsense.

Audience Member: How?

VR: It's like prajna, discriminating awareness is numbskull. Same thing. Same idea. Buddhist psychology. Everything is Buddhist psychology. You know, thoughts, form, feeling, perception, concept, consciousness: Buddhist psychology. What happens every day: Buddhist psychology. However, his great compassion was to allow people who are still interested in their discursive mind in that way to become part of a greater picture, bigger picture. That's the whole notion of dharmic activity altogether and benefiting others, which we're trying to talk about here in terms of discipline: you create a bigger atmosphere by saying *no* than you do by being wishy-washy about what is actually happening. [Laughs] Yes. [Laughs] I was thinking of—well, Rinpoche said when he went, when he got Rolfed, he went to Ida Rolf's son. Did you read it here in the transcript, he said that the best thing about it was that it was over. [Laughter]

QUESTION: Sir, I wonder—Naropa Institute of Canada was thinking of bringing the Maitri rooms up to Halifax.

VR: Yes, good. You bring the rooms up?

Q: Well—

VR: Good heavens. I know what they should be. We could do it—you don't have to bring them up.

Q: We're having them made and—

VR: In the U.S.?

Q: I'm not sure. It possibly will be done in Maine. There's a gentleman in Maine.

VR: I understand.

Q: Thank you.

VR: That's the interesting thing about maitri altogether, and if we went back to the original notion of maitri, it has nothing to do with this kind of philosophical idea. Basically, you get into those postures, and you stay there for quite some time, and your—whatever your neurotic thing is—becomes that posture, and things become very plain and real. There's no philosophy. If you're sitting like this. Have you done it? This is the Buddha one [demonstrates]. You sit for an hour in a white room like that, on your knees and hands. Say, well, what's the philosophy of that? Go ahead and do it and see. Well, by all means, let's go ahead and bring the rooms up. I'm all in favor of the rooms.

QUESTION: I have trouble with work—

VR: Don't ask me to sit in any of them though. Oh, that's horrible. [Laughter]

Q: —I have trouble with working with my mind without plastering me all over phenomena.

VR: Yes.

Q: I don't understand.

VR: Well, I think it's very basic in a way. Working with your mind means working with what actually is happening. If you have a lot of thoughts, how do you work with those thoughts? How do you work with thoughts?

Q: I tend to let them go.

VR: That's working with the mind. When you have strong emotion, how do you work with it? You know, like jealousy or hatred or passion or whatever. How do you work with that?

Q: Well, when I'm meditating, I let them go.

VR: How about when you're not?

Q: I just tend to feel them until they're gone. I don't, I haven't worked with the dharma in that way yet.

VR: I see. I see. Well, the first thing is during the meditation practice, you have to let things wither and die. And it's a very interesting process altogether. That's kind of like the basic *no* quality. When you're sitting—the interesting thing about sitting is that whatever happens during your sitting period has no meaning whatsoever. And that's really good *no*. That's tremendously important *no*. Because you realize that in your—when you're not sitting, it's also true that it has no meaning whatsoever, but it has a lot of references, right? Not having any meaning suddenly gets confused with your mother, your brother, your sister, your friends, your school, your room, your desire to have this or that. You begin to see all these things. When you're sitting, it's all absurd from the point of view of trying to work with your thoughts or your mind at all. You can't work with your mind. You can't. Do you know why? Doesn't exist. So in the time that you sit, from the beginning to the end, there's no problem whatsoever, because there's nothing happening. The dream comes in when you stop sitting and get up and think that that's over with now. The part where nothing's happening. Now something's happening. So that's the next step. I would suggest that you try and sit a lot. I'm serious. Very intensive thing. You should do a dathün next. Do a dathün and sit and sit with that nothing happening for a month, because basically, you know—how old are you?

Q: 14.

VR: You're 14, you're 14, some of us are 50, some of us are 30, but habitual patterns are very deep, no matter how old you are. Doesn't make any difference. Until you actually say *no* to the habitual pattern, ignorant. You could be 80 and be the same thing. So might as well start now so it doesn't continue, you know. So I think the only thing to do if you're talking about working with your mind is to put yourself in a situation where you have no choice. Dathün.

Q: Yes.

VR: Yes.

Q: That'll do it.

VR: Yes. Don't think now that because you don't understand how to work with your mind that you can't. That's not really the point. The point is that it's too unfamiliar. You have to make

yourself familiar with working with nothing. And the only way to do that is to practice. There is no other way.

Q: Thank you.

VR: You're welcome.

QUESTION: Sir, you cleared up a lot of extra thoughts in my mind about how to relate with my life. It seems like there's a lot of thinking that we do about whether something is Shambhalian or not, or, you know.

VR: Anything like that.

Q: Yes.

VR: Yes. What we're talking about is whether something is "me" or not.

Q: Right. So, it's sort of like—a lot of the stuff that I guess a lot of us do is like go to movies and read the paper and all that stuff, and thinking that we are doing it for some other reason, we have some...

VR: Higher ideal.

Q: Right.

VR: Yes. You have to say *no* to that kind of stuff. The self deception is very, very thick. It's so thick. Everything, including the dharma, we take as an ornament to "me." We should get rid of all that. We don't have that much time. Pretty soon we'll all be dead, and the bardo experience is said to be terrible if one has not practiced the dharma.

Q: A further question. I don't know if this is—this may be more bullshit—but it seems like just relating to one's everyday life, and in the sense of beautifying it, flowers and—

VR: [Laughs]

Q: —well, it seems that kind of can take the place of sitting or, you know, other kinds of—

VR: Nothing takes the place of sitting. You know that. Everybody knows that. There's nothing like it when you sit on the cushion. There you are with naked mind. Every time. You sit down, the moment you sit down and you adjust your posture— [exhales] —there you are.

Q: So you're suggesting that we get caught up too much in these other things and don't sit enough, perhaps.

VR: That could be, that could be it. If there was an "it," I think that could be it. [Laughs] My own basic experience with sitting practice when I first came to this dharma, and I think everybody's was, we learned how to sit, according to the style of our lineage. That never goes. It's always there. That's why every time you sit it's so refreshing, and once again, you know. And getting there is so difficult. Sitting is so easy, and leaving is so exciting. Back to your wicked break. I think the whole point is to make the meditative experience continuous. There's no particular formula, but as far as I can see, there's never enough sitting practice. Never enough. It's kind of like—why is that? Because when you sit, it is [inaudible: totally?] without

any preconception. And whatever arises, arises. It lingers and fades and continuously moves and changes. The mind moves and forms itself, dissolves, reforms itself. And underneath and throughout that whole thing is the basic shamatha. Equanimity.

Q: There could be an attraction for, it seems like, attraction for leaving your life behind, like not paying bills but sitting instead or something, you know? No, I'm serious about this. In my, after reading the life of Milarepa or something, it's like he closed the—

VR: When was the last time you read that?

Q: I'm reading it right now.

VR: Oh, every time you read it, you feel like that.

Q: Yes.

VR: Like sitting.

Q: But also like a lot of these little details are bullshit, but yet, I'm not Milarepa.

VR: No, no. No. Just cut that thing out altogether. The "I'm not Milarepa" part. Shall we go and re-sew the whole thing? Would you like to do that now?

Q: Yes.

VR: Really? Okay. There's birth, sickness, old age, and death. That's what happens to everybody, all of us, all the time. And you grow up, you feel pain, you get sick, and you die. Shall we do it again? How shall we do it?

Q: I'm not sure where the confusion comes in, but it's something about—

VR: Discursiveness is the confusion. You have to put a stamp, seal on your discursive mind. You have to seal it with shamatha. Just "boomb," which is *no*. That's it. And to be—to try to figure out what the origin of discursiveness is, is ridiculous. Do you know what it is? It's energy. It arises from space. So what?

Q: The question comes out of discursiveness. **[END TAPE ONE, SIDE B; BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE A; some words missing]** ...phenomenon. When you say *no*, there's no question actually left. Sort of uneasiness, but no question.

VR: I think there's a certain amount of anxiety that's involved with the whole thing, which is real, you know, kind of real blunt stuff. The energy quality. You know, what we call anxiety is simply movement. You know, on the background of space, something occurs. And because of ego, we say "me." Do you remember in *Cutting Through [Spiritual Materialism]*? Little onions and carrots popping out? Do you remember those little onions and carrots saying, "I'm here. I'm in the stew." That's what we're talking about. Get down. Be part of the stew. Don't proclaim yourself as some big deal. It runs through your whole of your existence, everything. Our guru and teacher was the best example of discipline that you could ever see. He could chew on nails. In the tantric tradition, it's called *vaidurya*, you have this substance that you can eat that is considered to be poison, but when you have discipline, you can actually chew on it. So we should stop talking about extraneous things altogether.

Q: Thank you.

QUESTION: At the risk of being redundant, but–

VR: That already is.

Q: Right. It is? We are talking about compassion all this time, we are talking about compassion here, right? When *no* happens–see, something happened today in practice, tonglen practice.

VR: Okay. Go ahead. Tell me.

Q: And it was very interesting, it was stark in that a klesha came up and energy–

VR: A klesha.

Q: Well, a klesha.

VR: Could you identify that [inaudible words].

Q: Well, anyway, an emotion came up–

VR: Okay. Could you identify it?

Q: Oh, yes.

VR: Okay. What was it?

Q: Rejection.

VR: Hmm?

Q: Rejection.

VR: Rejection. That's what's called a subsidiary klesha. What's the basic thing that's happening?

Q: Fear–it was fear of rejection, which–

VR: Jealousy.

Q: Jealousy? I thought it was just poverty stricken.

VR: Everything is. In terms of klesha, everything is.

Q: Excuse me?

VR: In terms of klesha, everything is poverty–you can dispense with the notion of poverty altogether. Okay?

Q: Okay.

VR: Everything is based on loss. What is the particular emotion, quality of it?

Q: In that case? It was–

VR: Rejection means comparison, right?

Q: Yes.

VR: Yes. So it has to do with jealousy, I think.

Q: Jealousy?

VR: No?

Q: Aggression, I would think.

VR: That's the same thing as poverty. It's all—all of klesha activity is aggressive. Come on.

Q: Oh.

VR: We should get more exact.

Q: Yes, I guess so. I thought that was—I thought that rejection was it, actually, not the rejection, but the fear of not being liked. The fear of being turned down.

VR: Oh, that's different—

Q: —or the fear of getting—

VR: Oh, that's the padma neurosis, yes.

Q: Padma neurosis.

VR: Yes, yes, yes. That's kind of like—

Q: That feels more like what it was.

VR: That's kind of like the “Oh, why don't you love me?”—

Q: Poor me.

VR: —why don't you love me?—

Q: Yes, it was like that.

VR: --why don't you love me thing.

Q: Right. So that hit, and it was in tonglen, and I couldn't do anything with it. I kept looking at it.

VR: Mm-hmm. Okay.

Q: I looked at it.

VR: Why were you looking at it?

Q: Well, I was trying to cut it, too.

VR: How?

Q: Seeing that it was just emotion and that—

VR: Seeing that it was? Takes too long. Takes too long. Exchange.

Q: Oh, I was doing exchange, and I could bring it in, but I couldn't get it out.

VR: Oh. Why not?

Q: I wouldn't let it go. I wouldn't say *no*, basically. I wouldn't let it go.

VR: So what you should pay attention to is the flip between in and out. Now, that's where, if you do tonglen, that's the main point. And when you take in the negativity of that particular emotion, which in this case being rejection, and you want to flip it, what's the flip?

Q: The flip—I didn't know what it was until—

VR: What would you like to give?

Q: Just, well—

VR: Opposite. What is the opposite?

Q: Of rejection?

VR: Yes.

Q: Accommodation. Just giving it all.

VR: Get more specific.

Q: Kindness, love to everybody.

VR: No.

Q: Rejection. Accepting everybody.

VR: Yes.

Q: Thank you. But what happened and this was—what happened was that I still obviously was struggling with that. And where it flipped was when I expanded it into taking on everyone's rejection—

VR: Mm- hmm.

Q: —taking on the pain of everyone's rejection on, then since I couldn't find acceptance, I couldn't find the thing to give out for myself—

VR: Yes.

Q: —I could just give out the compassion of that everyone was feeling the rejection.

VR: Fine. What's the problem?

Q: But because with this big *no* that you've been talking about tonight, I didn't feel, I didn't know if you were going into the compassion of the motivation for others, if touching that was what you were talking about still. I mean, I know you were, but I just kept getting stuck with if you can't get it for yourself, maybe you can get it for other people, and then it just happens.

VR: What?

Q: I couldn't get it for myself, but when I thought about other people, I could let it go.

VR: Don't pay attention to all the philosophical things that occur in your mind.

Q: That's bullshit too?

VR: Yes. Just do it. You will know when you are actually exchanging yourself for others rather than you're just doing it as a mechanical exercise.

Q: So that was too one layer over.

VR: I think so. There's a quality of awake [snaps fingers] when you do it.

Q: But if you can't do it the first way—

VR: Keep on trying. "If at first you don't suck-seed, keep sucking until you do succeed."
[Laughter]

Q: Thank you.

VR: You know where I got that? Three Stooges. [Laughter] That's what they said. The main point is don't be so philosophical about your experience of practice. That again is another layer of "me." In terms of tonglen especially, everybody has this kind of exaggerated quality of, you know, the difficulty of doing it, number one. And the exaggerated quality of the result. Just do it, okay? So, *fini*? Oh, gee.

QUESTION: Sir—

VR: Another Saturday night in Halifax.

Q: Sir, I just—when you spoke about the bardo and meeting the bardo, it made me think of how frightening it is to realize—well, not to realize, but to experience how discipline completely disappears when there is a physical problem—

VR: Yes.

Q: —when one is sick or as one could imagine, being close to death.

VR: Yes.

Q: That that is almost—

VR: Shantideva says [that] unless you have fear, then you have no discipline. Unless you have genuine fear of what's going to happen to you, you have no discipline. Well, how long shall we bullshit around the idea that we're actually going to die and it's going to be painful? Shall we think about this satin coffin, or you know, all the relatives gathering around or, we could say, everybody chanting the Heart Sutra?

Q: What do we—I guess, what do we do about it?

VR: We think very definitely about the moment of death, and we think very definitely about karma and cause and effect. If in your lifetime you cause harm to others in your body, speech, or mind, then at the moment of death all of that will come to haunt you as almost visual experience. So you should never let that out of your mind for a minute. You should have a certain amount of fear that if you don't understand it now, you won't understand it later. You can't, you know, like theistic thing, you can't depend upon the grace of the Almighty when you are about to die, saying, "Oh, I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the dharma, I take refuge in the sangha." Well, yes, sure. But how about right now?

Q: But there is some assurance that in practicing in the good times, that during those times one will be able to practice.

VR: Remember?

Q: Yes.

VR: One can never be sure that those good times will repeat themselves. The notion of discipline is constantly imprinting on the mind those dharmic experiences that one has. Constantly imprinting on the mind, which was the second thing I talked about tonight of gathering dharma. Imprint your mind constantly with the dharma, because at the moment of death, you will not remember unless it is totally saturated in your being. There's no way, if we kid ourselves about that, then we are kidding ourselves about the whole thing.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: I have this little thing that Suzuki Roshi said—especially since we're talking about therapy and the Maitri thing, which came about through Rinpoche and Suzuki Roshi talking. But this was given to me by Alan Marlowe, who gave it to me on the occasion of something or other, and this is a talk by Suzuki Roshi during zazen, not talk. He says: "Don't move, just die over and over. Don't anticipate. Nothing can save you now because you have only this moment. Not even enlightenment will help you now because there are no other moments. With no future, be true to yourself and express yourself fully. Don't move." That's discipline. In terms of bardo experience and about to die, if you can die like that every moment, then you have no fear.

[END OF TALK]

DISTRIBUTING SALT RELICS OF THE VIDYADHARA TO THE SANGHA

So now we have to distribute the salt, which is from the Vidyadhara's body. And the notion is that if the body is packed in salt, it preserves the body until the cremation. However, at the same time, all the fluids of the body go into the salt. And in our world, we say that the entire world is sacred, including the shit and piss and all the rest of it. However, we say more important to the mind is the notion of the teacher. The teacher is the most important of all the phenomena that we have altogether. So in this case the teacher, what was left of the teacher, is absorbed, the body of the teacher is absorbed in the salt.

So we would like to distribute it as what's called relic. But "relic" is not a very good word. It's not a relic. It's what's called *chömen* in Tibetan, "dharma medicine." Chömen. And the body of the guru is considered to be like a wish-fulfilling gem. And if you study any of our lineage stories, the veneration that you have to the guru is the veneration that you have to the Buddha, which is basically proclaiming sanity.

Now, what there is of the guru in terms of remains, that's what's called the medicine, the existence of the guru as medicine. Since the Buddha is referred to as the great physician, his dharma is considered to be the medicine which calms the kleshas of all sentient beings. What we say is that even the body and the Buddha himself, when he died said, "My remains should

be put in a stupa." And we are going to do that same thing with the Vidyadhara's remains. Especially at RMDC and here and at Karme Choling. But the salt, through consultation with Khyentse Rinpoche, is to be distributed to all sangha members. And the salt in which his bodily fluids were absorbed is considered dharma medicine.

So there are three ways you can look at this. One is to put it on your shrine, either in a small stupa-chöten—or in some sort of reliquary. You can actually put it in a locket, put it around your neck, or you can keep it separate and hold it so that when there's time of death or extreme sickness, you eat it. That's a big *no*. You don't want to tell your—what?—I was thinking of your psychologist. [Laughter; laughs] So this the way we have related with it when we pass these particular vials, that this, in the vial is—what do you call it?—sealed, hermetically sealed. I don't know what we say. But anyway, because salt has the quality of water in, it would, if we left it open, it would evaporate and eventually become very small, but because of this chemical process, or whatever process, chemistry thing, it's just stuck in there. It's without air, what is it?

Q: Vacuum.

VR: Vacuum, that's it. Vacuum. Doesn't have any air, so it can't evaporate. So, we have distributed these to dharmadhatus and to Boulder, Karma Dzong, and we would like to distribute to everybody here. So, you can either keep it on the shrine or locket, chöten, or just keep it separate. It is Khyentse Rinpoche's wish that these relics be distributed to everybody. Relics of the body. It's called what? Does anybody know the Tibetan? *Ku*-something. Hmm? No.

Q: I was just wondering if it's okay to give them to someone else, like a mother or father.

VR: If they're sick, yes, sure. Yes, definitely. No problem. I did that, I had His Holiness' salt, and when people were sick I would send it to them and say take this. You know, because they are so powerful in terms of the mind, you see. You know, we could spill the whole thing on the floor and no big deal. But in terms of the mind, the power of these things is very important. Do you know what I'm saying? It's not exactly the hocus pocus of the positive thinking or power of suggestion or anything like that. It's basically devotion. We feel that every aspect of the guru's existence is sacred from the point of view of devotion. Everything. If it's just a hair, we feel that way because it reminds us of enlightened mind, you see. That's the deal.

Q: Should you give it to someone who's not a sangha member or doesn't actually—

VR: It's okay if that person really has faith in it. Faith meaning openness to it. You know, you don't want to give it to someone and say, you know, like Alice in Wonderland, "Drink this." It's not particularly that kind of thing. I would be very careful about the whole thing, basically. Very careful. You know. I have sent this to people whose parents were dying and they took it. Why is it that they took it? They are not Buddhists or anything. Something in their minds said this is good. Anybody who can eat the salt from somebody's body has to have some kind of crazy wisdom. [Laughter] Something about that has to be, you know, beyond the conventional experience altogether [laughs].

We take this particular salt as a kind of like further compassion of the guru, that he actually left so much salt. We have lots of it. And a lot of it we are going to put in the ocean because the fishes are having the worst time of all sentient beings. Do you know why? The big ones eat the

little ones, eat the little ones, eat the little ones [laughter]. Of all the species that's the worst, because they're constantly... So if we put the salt in the ocean, they eat the salt, and that if somebody eats them, then it might have rebirth in a higher realm. It's possible.

Q: Excuse me, sir—

VR: So in order to pass this out—

Q: Sir, if you want to take this salt medicinally, do you just take a little of it at a time, or do you have to—

VR: You mean sprinkle it on your rice? [Laughter]

Q: [Inaudible]

VR: It's not to be taken medicinally. Come on, let's get off it. Okay?

Q: No, I guess I didn't mean that, I mean, you know—

VR: Medicinally—we're not talking about medicine here, we're talking about dharma medicine. Take it when you're, when there's real need.

Q: I'm asking if you could split the vial up, so if your mother and your father was dying—

VR: Yes, certainly, certainly. You might take it yourself if they're both dying. [Laughter] At that point you need it more than they would.

So now we're going to hand out this, and I would like to have continuous chanting of the Rebirth Supplication, so if you would please—Dapon Janowitz will hand out this to you, and I would like to do this section first, and this one. [Indicating sections of room] And please just come up and receive it in the ordinary fashion. Okay? So, we have a gong? Go ahead. [Vajra Regent and audience recite Rebirth Supplication]

[RECORDING RESUMES in the middle of the Vajra Regent speaking]

VR: Do we have a tonglen practice as well?

Audience Member: [Inaudible]

VR: How long do you do it?

Audience Member: [Inaudible]

VR: Half an hour? Really? You can do that for a half hour? [Laughter] How do you do it?

Audience: [Inaudible comments from audience]

VR: Well, the best way to do it is to first begin with exchanging the black and white qualities of aggression and absence of aggression. And then later on, you actually work from on the kleshas, from ignorance and aggression and passion and jealousy and hatred—that sort of personal thing. Then you move it into larger experience of other sentient beings. They feel sickness and poverty and hatred and war and famine and pestilence and all that stuff. Then you do it [inaudible: bigger?]. And then finally, at the end, you have all sentient beings exchanged

for yourself. It's very helpful to have that kind of attitude. Otherwise, you're, you know, in the middle of it you sort of fall asleep, or you get distracted and you think about lots of things. It's very difficult practice. Same time, if you have an idea of how the exchange happens, it's simple. As soon as you take something in, it flips [snaps fingers] and goes out. So don't take a lot of time to make that exchange. In fact, don't take any time to make that exchange.

So now, close with the chants.

[END OF RECORDING]

Talk Three of Three

March 20, 1988

Ladies and gentlemen, Karma Dzong members. We are talking tonight about samaya shila. And so far, what we have discussed is the notion of discipline from hinayana point of view and mahayana point of view. And I think it would be safe to say that we understand that discipline is the point of this particular weekend, and is the point of the Buddhist practice altogether, or you could say the practice of being a buddha, which is basically what we are about. This path that we have entered upon, this journey that we are taking is not the journey to simply become a credentialed member of some group, or to have the promise of a good funeral, or to have a promise that our family will be taken care of when we die. We are practicing being Buddha, a buddha. And practice makes perfect. And that's true. So the more we practice, the more we understand what it means to be a buddha.

Samaya shila is the vajrayana discipline. And that means the notion of actually uprooting samsaric world altogether, tearing out the roots, so that the weeds do not grow again. Now, this is no different than hinayana discipline, mahayana discipline, but in the vajrayana, it is articulated in a very precise way, from the point of view of no choice, choicelessness. And, you know, when we talked about discipline, you know, we talked about how things get tighter as you go along. But in vajrayana, they are completely tight. Even one thought makes a difference. Which is at one time a great promise and great threat. And the Vidyadhara said that the wider the highway, the more control you need in driving the car. The possibility that you could speed is greater when you have a bigger road. So when we have a vajrayana path, the highway is so big that you could speed to your death [snaps fingers] before you know it. So therefore, there's a lot more command, or commands, and a lot more sealing that's done.

You know the notion of sealing something is that it says, "This is so." When somebody seals something, "This is so." And sealing has to do also with gates: one's awareness is sealed by particular gates, the directions above and below and all around, sealed, each one. This is so. This is so. This is so. This is *no*. Samaya has to do with the sacred word or command. And it has to do with binding the teacher and the student and the teachings all together.

The foundation of all samayas is shamatha-vipashyana. There could be no sealing that happens, no real vajra claustrophobia, without a shamatha-vipashyana experience. We talked about—did we talk about the edges, of vipashyana practice? Maybe a different "we." In shamatha, we limit everything. In vipashyana, we use the limiting quality of our practice to let go of self-consciousness, and we allow things to sort of bleed around the edges. We didn't talk about this? The blurred vision? [Laughs] In vipashyana, the edges are sort of blurry. When you experience that, it's the beginning of letting go of the self-consciousness about practice. So vipashyana is said to be the fuel that burns the ego altogether. How's it go? Fuel that burns the... [inaudible response from audience]. Yes. And how does that work? It works from the point of view of when you cannot really conceptualize your practice anymore, then it starts to blur on

the edges, and then you get the sort of experience of what's called the shamatha and vipashyana mixing together.

Now what that means is that basically your discursive thoughts no longer become a problem. In fact, they start to get less. "Less" is just a word, by the way, ladies and gentlemen. So samaya is based on that shamatha-vipashyana experience. You cannot have a command understood unless there's egolessness happening. You can't say to somebody, "Do this," when there's ego in the way. You'll never get through. You can't do it yourself, and you can't do it to other people. So the shamatha-vipashyana experience is essential if we are going to understand that command seal or that samaya shila.

In terms of body, form and perception from the vajrayana point of view, form goes beyond any kind of pettiness altogether. That's a vajra notion of form—no pettiness at all. And perception is perceiving something greater. In this case, pure perception means having a sacred outlook, that everything you perceive is just not ordinary thing, but buddhafi elds. And that means that any perception that you have is transformed into sacredness. Any perception, including chocolate mousse. [Laughter] And that's the vajrayana promise, so to speak, and also the threat, in terms of body, that simultaneously goes on—that your perception can see everything as sacred on the spot, or not.

Now you understand the world is getting very small. The more disciplined we become, the smaller the world gets in a certain way. It becomes almost like a miniature. Milarepa and Marpa, Gampopa, Naropa, they said, "Well, you could do all kinds of things. You could have all kinds of yidams. But all you need is a little red Vajrayogini." The world becomes very small in a certain way when you actually are disciplined. But that smallness is like Milarepa in the yak horn. You know the story? When Rechungpa came back from India, and he was displaying so much arrogance that Mila manifested inside the yak horn, which is, you know...a horn. And he said to his disciple, "If you are so accomplished since you've been in India, why don't you come inside here with me? As you can see, there's plenty of room in here." So that's also the notion of how small the world gets. It also has the notion of a tremendous respect for the body in terms of being a mandala in itself. That this body, in previous yantras, in the hinayana, we say it's just a vehicle to hear the teachings. In the mahayana, we get more dramatic about it and say it's actually a complete bag of chocolate mousse. It's more graphic. In the vajrayana, we say it's the mandala of all the buddhas.

Now, how did we come to that? It's by discipline. It's through discipline we come to that. We don't come to that because you read it in a book. In terms, you know, thinking about Tomek's comment on the first night when he said, "Those are just words." And I thought, well, that's interesting. You know, we're talking dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, nirmanakaya, and he said, "Those are just words." And especially if we talk about the body being a mandala of all the buddhas, then we are, you know, dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, nirmanakaya, we can handle that in terms of words. But the body as the mandala of all the buddhas...big words. Little words too. Little dakinis and buddhas are everywhere. The notion is that every hair pore is filled with the deity or divinity or enlightenment. Everything is filled with enlightenment. So your heart, your lungs, your kidney, everything, spleen, everything, are not just, you know, things that eventually will be cut out and donated to science, or something like that. Or they'll rot and then

basically have to be burned. But those parts of your body and the whole body itself is a mandala, therefore, it is sacred space. So it gives you a whole idea about how you treat perception of the body and how you treat your notion of what you do with your body altogether. You don't put your body in situations which are not sacred, altogether. You never, you know, you just don't do that. That's called the samaya shila of the body.

And samaya shila of speech has to do with passion. And again we are talking about, from the shamatha-vipashyana experience, what we actually do with emotional content, what we do with emotions altogether. And emotions are the sort of like dramatic quality of our thought process. And what you do with them in the lesser yantras is, first of all, you ignore them or boycott them. Rinpoche used to say, "boycott." You boycott them. That's why you say "thinking." That's boycotting those things. In the mahayana, what you do with the emotional thing is you transfer it to the bodhisattva vow. You transfer your emotional thing to working for the benefit of others, having compassion and maitri and karuna. That's what you do. In the vajrayana thing, this emotion is seen as the quality of passion, which is the binding factor of form, which is the [inaudible] of the body, and emotion, which is the quality, and that produces communication. That means you can have a sacred world beyond your imagination. The sacred world actually does exist because you can communicate with it. That's the passionate thing. The speech quality—which is the same thing as intellect by the way—binds the form, or the body, and the emotion together. It also produces whatever experience of pleasure and bliss exists in the world, and whatever experience of pain exists in the world, which is also bliss. From that point of view, we're talking about the same thing.

But finally, the samaya shila of mind is to recognize that wakefulness is the mind altogether, which is called luminosity. From the point of view of vajrayana, when we talk about mind, we say mind has two qualities: it's luminous, and it's empty. We also say other things, but that's good enough for now. And the point about mind here is that recognizing the awakening and falling asleep of your thought process is the nature of the mind. Falling asleep, waking up of your thought process is the nature of the mind. It's like realizing day and night, sleeping and waking. Realizing that. See what I mean? It's not being stupid. It's actually being awake to the process of waking and sleeping, day, night, all the things that go on in the mind. Wakefulness, realizing wakefulness. So we have body, speech, and mind in terms of samaya and shila. This first part has to do with accommodation in space. The second part is communication within the space. And the third part is wakefulness, which is the quality altogether of the space–body, speech, mind.

So in the vajrayana, when we talk about this discipline, we're talking about actually changing—uprooting samsaric existence means changing your existence altogether, your basic existence, or not changing your basic existence. Now changing your basic existence is basically the therapy approach, which we talked about last night. And that basically is editing experience to fit your own viewpoint. Whereas not changing your basic existence is real samaya, real discipline, not changing who you are. It's tremendous confidence. It's called vajra-like. That brings about luminosity. And luminosity is the quality of mind which is brilliant and at the same time, space of the quality of mind, which is fathomless or endless. That happens when you practice. If you practice in that way, it doesn't matter if you practice hinayana discipline,

mahayana discipline, vajrayana discipline, the main point, especially in the vajrayana, is to stop altogether the editing process of who you are. Just stop it. Don't do that anymore. Now, in this case, you can't even say, "don't do that," to yourself. In the vajrayana you're stuck with you, and you is just fine. So you don't have to talk to yourself anymore.

Enlightenment approach is based on, altogether, experiencing mixing your mind with the teacher's mind. And the samaya of the vajra master is the highest samaya of all. This samaya shila we're talking about, of body, speech, and mind, is encompassed by one thing and one thing only, and that is the samaya with the vajra master or the teacher or the guru. Because only the vajra master can bring you to that feeling of incredibly intense orgasm, where pleasure and pain are experienced simultaneously, which is what's called cutting through spiritual materialism.

And there is a quality of, always with the vajra master, of profundity, greater vast thinking. So, there is also a warning when you get to vajrayana that you should, if you begin it, you should finish it. Otherwise, there's a quality of actually becoming completely distorted, bent out of shape, so to speak. If, in the middle of your practice of samaya shila you say, "I'm not going to do this anymore," you will become like elephant man. See, when you get right down to it, when you have a vajra master, you are talking about completely clear mirror. And you can't... there's no distortion in the mirror, none whatsoever. So you have to look at reality just as it is, very plainly, in the face. And that means that you have to exhaust all of your karmic tendencies. And then what's left is the phenomenal world as awake, the mandala of awake.

So basic discipline in vajrayana means working with habitual patterns as the path. And really working with habitual patterns as the path from the point of view of you no longer feel afraid that you cannot accommodate what's actually happening in your life. You don't feel afraid anymore. So you just face it directly and do it directly. And that means it's not a question in your mind, it never arises in your mind whether these things are neurotic or sane. They're just activity that has to be paid attention to. You have to relate to what's actually happening.

So in that sense, when we talk about vajra nature, the final conclusion of this talk and this seminar or these talks together, is that vajra nature means that we never talk about our existence as any particular nature, because our existence is reality. Like in Platoon [referring to the film by that name], he said, "I am reality." The bad guy. But everybody was the bad guy. In some ways, that's a neurotic or perverted view of what we're talking about in vajrayana. It is so total and complete that everything is exactly what it is. And there's no second thought. There's not even first thought. That's what's called the indivisibility of bliss and wisdom. You experience the mahasukkha from the point of view of no extraneous thoughts. And you experience the wisdom as seeing that those thoughts in themselves are completely and totally and utterly empty. No feedbacks.

I had a birthday party, so to speak, at, when we were living at Dirk Ladendorf's house in Boulder. And the Vidyadhara gave me a present, which was a feedbag of a horse, you know, and a pair of sunglasses. [Laughter] Now the sunglasses were the kind, how do you say, that you can't look in. You can look out, but nobody can see your eyes. And the feedbag, which he wrote on it, "No." It was the last birthday present I got. No feedbags. And he said, "And the

other thing was so that you could see things the way I see them. Nobody can look in, but you can look out." So the vajrayana, that's what we're talking about. There are no feedbags necessary anymore. That's the experience of wisdom and bliss, mahasukkha and jnana together. So that's what we have.

I understand that these things we have covered are a lot to say in a very small space. But then again, as Mila said, all you need is a very little Vajrayogini. Your awakening or enlightenment doesn't need the kind of room you think it needs. It just needs to flip. And everybody knows exactly where that flip is. It's a question of shedding habitual tendencies altogether and uprooting the kleshas altogether, ransacking the kleshas altogether. So that you get right to the point of what the enlightenment is that you are talking about. So that's called the samaya. And there's a lot more to say, but I think that's enough, for now anyway.

So, discussion if you like.

QUESTION: Sir, what happens to the *no*?

VAJRA REGENT: The Giant No. Giant No becomes a blue pancake.

Q: I don't understand.

VR: You see, when you have the *no*, there's still room to breathe. But in the vajrayana, there's no room to breathe. So the *no* actually becomes reality. That is reality. It's not discipline. When we say samaya shila, it's not really discipline anymore. And that's the whole point of... this is the reality.

Q: So that's all that's left then.

VR: Yes. Big blue pancake. Do you remember that blue pancake?

Q: Now I do, when you say it like that. Thank you.

VR: In the back. [Speaks in Polish accent; laughter] I was thinking how...

QUESTION: Sir, there is... when you were describing in the very end, near the end, about no feedbags, it was clear to me that there is projecting out. However, there is also, you know, this, know what I mean, this... vajrayana tonglen.

VR: Well, you know, I hesitate to say this, but I might as well. There's nothing coming back.

Q: There's nothing coming back.

VR: Zero.

Q: Can I think for a-

VR: Sure [laughter]. It's ultimate purity, what we call ati. There's no need for anything to come back anyway.

Q: So it's... so I understand. So what comes back is basically confirmations, and nothing is coming back.

VR: Well, that's what we call mahamudra. What comes back is what's called the great symbol, the great expression of enlightenment. That's what's coming back, if you want to say that. If you want to work with it, yes. That's called the mahamudra, what comes back.

Q: Thank you.

VR: I can say that kind of thing, right? Nobody's going to get freaked out or anything?

QUESTION: Sir, I still have a certain amount of confusion about the sense of *no* and then getting to the vajrayana point.

VR: Yes... no.

Q: From my own personal point of view, as far as I understand, I should still be working with *no*, or should I be working, I mean, what...

VR: I think you have to work with *no* constantly. Yes.

Q: So it's not a matter of dropping *no*? It's a matter...

VR: No, I think *no* becomes a Giant No, which actually is the guru.

Q: So you never think of the *no* anymore because it's just all-encompassing. It's just...

VR: Even if you think about it, thinking and not thinking are the same thing.

Q: The same thing. Okay, thank you.

VR: This is the funny part. [Long pause] Those fog horns...

QUESTION: Sir, is there a sense of nothing coming back because there's a sense of union or completeness, or...

VR: Yes, exactly, precisely.

Q: No separation?

VR: Absolutely.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Everything is exactly as it is, including the neurosis, you see. That's the whole point of vajrayana. Why talk about it? We have gotten lots of messages from His Holiness Khyentse Rinpoche and all the different tülkus and whatnots, that the Vajradhatu sangha should always remain in harmony, not be divided, always remain in harmony, not be divided. So it will imprint on your mind. Individually, don't divide yourself into two people—the one who practices and the one who doesn't. In a group, don't divide, let's not divide in terms of the good guys and the bad guys. And environmentally altogether, let's not divide the world into good and bad. The Vidyadhara used to write these poems, “Goodie, goodie, baddie, baddie.” You know that? “Good, good, good, bad, good. Good, bad, good. Good, good bad. Good. Bad, bad good.” [Laughter] When I first heard those poems, I didn't know what he was talking about. “Goodie, goodie, baddie, baddie. Good bad, bad good. Bad, bad good.” What is that? What is he saying? You know, why is he saying that over and over again? “Good good bad bad-bad baddie

good good-good." What does it mean? It is actually transcendental schizophrenia. [Laughter] It's called one taste. It's one taste.

QUESTION: There's the idea, sir, of karma and accumulating merit, examining one's actions every day to see if they're virtuous.

VR: Si, si. Undeniable.

Q: Is that relating to, that's relating to *no* rather than whether we're being good-good or bad-bad? Okay. Thank you.

VR: Cause and effect, karma, that's the big *no* altogether. The idea, you know, the teaching and the reality of cause and effect is the big *no*. You cannot deny cause and effect, nor can you manipulate cause and effect. It is so *no* quality to it. In the vajrayana, that cause and effect is the magic. Siddhi.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: La, la, la. [Singing to a baby in the audience]

QUESTION: I don't understand samaya shila of speech as passion-

VR: Well, passion is the connecting thing. You know, like a man and a woman want to get together. Why? From a certain point of view, in the lesser yantras, there's no reason for anything to get together, because if it comes together, then it will eventually fall apart and eventually die, so why embark on that particular thing? But from the vajrayana, it's seen as discipline to come together. And that is the quality of communication, because you must communicate with your partner. In other words, you can express the fullness of your realization of enlightenment when you have a consort, when you have an opposite number. That's why we have this Chakrasamvara and Kalachakra, man and woman simultaneously. Speech is associated with, "I love you." I love you.

Q: Is that still more of the-is that along the line of no separation?

VR: Yes. [Laughter]

Q: No, I... [Laughter]

VR: That's what it looks like.

Q: I didn't mean it that way. [Laughter] Okay. I didn't mean it as a pun.

VR: Finally, we realize we are talking about we're just the sexual cult altogether. [Laughter] Now why is that associated with speech? This is very interesting. You can't try to think of speech as just purely talking, sound, although sound is really there. The binding factor: I love you. [Makes kissing sound; laughter]

Q: I think I'll have to think about it for a while. [Laughter]

VR: That's also speech. [Laughter] Yes. It amazes me that people have so much trouble with their relationships. You know the reason for that? It's not seen as samaya. It's seen as just something that you basically have to go through in order to get somewhere.

QUESTION: Sir, I have a question about–

VR: By the way, that wasn't therapeutic advice. [Laughter]

Q: –I have a question about prajna and upaya, skillful means. It seems to me that most of what you've been talking about this weekend concerns the view, big *no* being the view. When you encounter any situation, you immediately, the view is to cut discursiveness.

VR: That's not the, now you're talking about path.

Q: Well, I suppose my question is...

VR: You just answered it.

Q: The path is the application of the view.

VR: Yes?

Q: Because it seems to me that the way I get confused is, or the way we get confused, is often in a situation we try to decide what to apply.

VR: Mm-hmm.

Q: Intellectually, do we apply hinayana, mahayana, vajrayana discipline? But actually–

VR: Why should we worry about that when the teachings are so explicit? Why should we think what to apply when this very definitely said, from the time of the Buddha, from the Buddha himself to this very day, what to apply, what not to apply? We have individuality that's still poking the head up, little onions everywhere.

Q: So when that type of discursiveness arises, then, that... well, again, apply the view. It still is the same answer.

VR: The view is not something that you have to apply. The view is your basic being. The action, the path, or the practice is what you apply. And the result is the activity.

Q: So what do you apply?

VR: Cutting through.

Q: What would that mean in terms of relating with a klesha?

VR: *No*.

Q: And then skillful means comes out of not moving.

VR: Comes out of *no*. Yes, same, not moving. Whatever arises as means becomes the adornment of all the buddhas: earrings, crown, necklace.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: You're welcome.

QUESTION: Sir, there is... now it haunts me what you said, so just one last thing. What's... if there is nothing comes back, nothing comes back... what happened to the mirror?

VR: The mirror looks at itself.

Q: So mirror is in and out?

VR: Whoa-ho. [Laughter] Yes, mirror is cosmic mirror, yes.

Q: No direction?

VR: You are that.

Q: Thank you.

VR: This is pretty heavy stuff, actually. [Laughter] But you know, because we have the discipline of this environment, we can say these things. If we didn't have it, we could not. Can you imagine if we just talked, you know, let's go to the—what do you call it?—Lord Nelson, and give a talk about this. No can do.

Q: Is that because of the discipline?

VR: Discipline, yes.

QUESTION: Sir, I wonder if you could be more explicit about your analogy of the warning. You were saying that the road was much larger and so could be much faster. You could almost speed to your death. That's quite frightening in one sense, but I want to know if there's any more road signs or whatever, if there's dangerous curves...

VR: Well, when you go to seminary, Mr. Brown, you will find the other road signs.

Q: But I'll be okay till then, right? [Laughter]

VR: Yes.

Q: Thank you, sir.

VR: You will be okay till then, if you keep in mind what I said this weekend. If you keep that in mind, you'll be okay. Other than that, you will fall asleep and behave like a lazy dog.

Q: Well, thank you for the fear, sir. [Laughter]

VR: That's okay. We can put a sort of ribbon around your neck and feed you once or twice a day. [Laughter] That's not very different than what we usually do as human beings, by the way. You know that, "Love me, love my dog?" Have you ever heard that, that saying? It's an old saying from my mother's days. They used to say, "Love me, love my dog." And, you know, it's true that you can't distinguish really which is the dog and which is the human. [Laughter]

QUESTION: Sir, so when you're talking to somebody, what is it that you, what do you care about?

VR: Why are you talking to them at all? If you're not interested in benefitting others, then why talk to anybody? That's what the pratyekabuddhas found out. No reason to talk. Get away to the mountains and practice meditation. The bodhisattvas found out, "Ah! The reason to talk is to attain enlightenment. I see." Now you have to mention something to somebody, which opens the whole can of worms of neurosis and sanity. And the vajrayanists found out that therefore relating with somebody is like that—those thangkhas. There's an interesting gap there. But anyway, what was your question?

Q: What you're interested in, what...

VR: Benefit...sentient beings. What's the benefit of sentient beings? What is the benefit of all sentient beings? One word.

Q: Enlightenment.

VR: There it is. That's what you're interested in. And enlightenment is not your enlightenment. It's all sentient beings' enlightenment. Because that's what enlightenment is. There's no individual enlightenment. That does not happen. As soon as you feel enlightened, you feel compassion, and you begin to understand what is called the interdependent causation. You begin to see how the whole waterwheel turns. And how everything is interrelated, beings like ourselves and our karma and past, present, future, and everything.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Or co-dependent origination, I don't even know what it...but it's something like that. Anyway, it all fits. We talked about that in terms of prajna and seeing the patterns.

QUESTION: Sir, you said that in the vajrayana there's no fear anymore about whether you can handle what arises in your mind. If fear arises anyhow, how do you regard it?

VR: [Screams loudly] Ahhhhhhhhh! [Laughter; pause] Video. That's what this is. I didn't know. I didn't know. It's video. I know what they are. I have them at home. You put them in and you press a button and they make pictures, images, right? Video.

So, it's been very nice talking to you all this weekend. I really appreciated it. And I appreciate your practice. Everything seems very good, very solid. We're getting to the point where we don't have to kid around anymore about neurosis. That's great. We don't have to sort of make it up. We don't have to make it up. That's great. If you teach the dharma—which you should, if you take bodhisattva vow, you have to teach the dharma—you should remember not to make it up. Just follow what's been taught before, and it will open up whatever possibilities there are for fresh experience. You will find yourself saying things that come right out of space. But they're precisely in tune with the lineage and the dharma, always.

So you should think about that, you know. Everybody here should take part in the total dharmic activity of this place, in this center, Karma Dzong. That means, if you're not doing something right now for Karma Dzong, you should be doing something very soon. And there are endless numbers of activity—activities in my office, in the Karma Dzong office, in finance, publicity—anything. You should have something to do here. It's called discipline. Otherwise, you're a member of a church, and occasionally you come to little talks like these to get inspired about your practice.

I feel good that I can actually say these things. Not because I have a feeling that you people have done so well that I can say these things. It's mutual, mutual feeling. That we are actually growing, and we can be quite honest about that. That the seed of enlightenment was planted by the guru, and it's being watered by the practice, and coming to fruition in terms of our communication, which is good. There's a lot of passion here, for a place like this. [Laughter] I think probably more so in a place like this, because what can you do? [Laughter] You might as

well fuck it. [Laughter] This video hopefully will have the “X” on it. [Laughter] Is that what it is? When you get to the little store and they say, “Restricted.” “X-rated.” Only for people whose children understand. [Laughter]

Where are they? They were here last night. Saturday night, is that it? The coupons ran out. [Laughter] Berkeley's son went to dathün, no problem. I bet he will, too. That is great. A straightforward view. “I don't know how to work with my mind.” Very straightforward. And that's not a question of youth or, you know, being old, it's just a question of the mind and being honest. When we had the teenager's meeting, I said, “Well, what is your experience of meditation?” He said, “Just lot of thoughts and nothing happens, nothing.” [Laughter] That's because he's actually working on himself. That's the whole notion of discipline. You get frustrated because nothing is happening here. When you get more and more of the view, more and more of the practice and the action being continuous, then you see that it's all happening all the time, anyway. And karma is seen as the continuity of enlightenment. Different way.

So, good for us and good for everybody. I'm very happy about Karma Dzong altogether. I think it's a great dharma center. We have such gratitude to our root guru for being able to lead us to a place where we had no choice. I think that's amazing. That is what's called the activity of a buddha. Only a buddha can do that, to lead you to a place where there is no choice.

Uh-oh, here we go—wait a minute.

Karma Dzong Director Scott McBride: Vajra Regent—

VR: Yes. [Laughter]

Mr. McBride: With your powerful uprightness and brilliant humor, you have presented us the teachings of discipline of the three yanas, the discipline that gives rise to all the virtues and accomplishments of the path.

VR: Did you make this up right now? [Laughter]

Mr. McBride: You caught me.

VR: Now make something up from scratch, okay? Forget your speech.

Mr. McBride: Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin—

VR: Yes? You have to do it quickly. [Snaps fingers]

Mr. McBride: We deeply appreciate that you have presented these teachings of how we can become Buddha. Please accept this token of our appreciation and our love for you.

VR: Very good.

[Chants]

VR: So I thought I should put myself on the spot, anyway, to make a four line supplication to the root guru, who is the very nature of the mind. So it goes like this. This is not having thought of anything to say. It happens spontaneously:

Discipline which is impeccable and without a second thought is understood as the continuity of wakefulness.

This is the supreme gift of the guru, who has no partiality.

The highest and the lowest students are all the same in the self-existing equanimity of the mind.

The guru is the arising of the Great Eastern Sun, without which all of us would be blind.

We take great delight in being together.

[END OF RECORDING]