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VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN

Shambhala Teachings: Primordial Confidence

Chicago, Illinois

Talk One of Two

November 21, 1987

VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN:

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this discussion on the Shambhala tradition.

Tonight we have decided to talk about confidence as a means to introduction to these teachings of Shambhala. It would be appropriate, I think, for me to describe at least in brief how these particular teachings were introduced in our world and how their application has continued. The teaching of Shambhala is an ancient tradition based on the quality of warriorship inheriting human beings like ourselves. It is said that the kingdom of Shambhala exists in various levels. According to the Tibetan tradition Shambhala is located somewhere north of Tibet, protected by mountain ranges, and as the story goes this particular kingdom is populated by beings who have gentleness as their basic nature, inquisitiveness as their state of mind, and confidence as their state of being. In other words this particular kingdom is what we might call enlightened society, ruled by an enlightened ruler called a *rigden*—it's a Tibetan word—and a place where peace and harmony abide. According to this tradition beings like ourselves can actually find this kingdom if we have pure hearts and a pure intention. However, if we have gross intention, degraded thoughts, and aggressive mentality we will not be able to find it. So, this kingdom is considered to be both a myth and reality. A myth for those who cannot find it and a reality for those who can. In our particular time the vidyadhara, the eleventh Trungpa tulku, Chögyam Trungpa, who recently died, set in motion the teachings of Shambhala for the modern world. These teachings based on an ancient

tradition have been spoken in modern language, modern up-to-date language. Introduced into our world, the Western world, in a way which is easily understandable and in a way which relates to our society in this present time in this present day. The brilliance of these teachings and the directness of these teachings have to do with the fact that Trungpa Rinpoche himself was a holder of the Shambhala lineage and therefore directly connected to its essence. Having himself perfected the disciplines of Shambhala, he managed to speak a language of Shambhala in a way that could be universally comprehended and in a way which touched the life of people like ourselves, touched our everyday life very directly. In working with him we introduced these teachings as what is called Shambhala Training. Shambhala Training is a vehicle for understanding the wisdom of Shambhala, and like most things in the Western world, in our modern world, training is organized in sections so that people can go through each aspect of the teaching very directly and steadily and continuously. That is simply the feature of our modern society. However, if the teaching is a truth it should be applicable in any society and at any time. Except, of course, if there is extreme chaos where people do not know how to live anymore. However, in this time although there is a great chaos in the world there is still some sense of decency and some sense of continuity. The teachings of Shambhala talk about a primordial nature of beings, and primordial nature in this case is the nature that has no particular beginning, no middle, and no end. This nature is not brought about by a cause, nor is it defined by a time or place, nor does it need to be understood in terms of shape or color. This primordial nature is the very fabric of what is in ourselves and in our lives. According to Shambhala teachings all beings possess this primordial nature which can most accurately be described as basic goodness. Goodness not in relationship to evil particularly, but goodness from the point of view of a totally pure unobstructed way of being. Totally pure in the sense that no hint of aggression or hatred, no hint of meanness ever enters into such nature. According to Shambhala teachings we all possess that nature. Also,

according to Shambhala teachings that nature is obscured due to the various conditions of society, the various conditions which create what is called setting sun mentality. Setting sun mentality is that which is growing dim, fading, falling away, decaying. Setting sun mentality is based on wanting happiness for oneself alone, wanting possessions, wanting power and fame for oneself alone. Setting sun mentality is based on cowardliness and fear. Great Eastern Sun, as we call in the Shambhala Training and Shambhala teachings, is the vision of the warrior, Great Eastern Sun mentality is the brilliance of the sun at noon. The brilliance of the sun as it illuminates the entire landscape and shines indiscriminately on all objects, things, people, places. Brilliance that also nurtures as well as illuminates. This Great Eastern Sun mentality is the confidence of the Shambhala warrior. Shambhala warriors understand primordial nature as basically good. Shambhala warriors understand that there is no particular reason for any of us to live a degraded life. And this understanding is not based on any notion of territory, any notion of have or have not. This kind of understanding is purely primordial in nature, and everybody has it, everybody experiences it. All of us in our life experience this nature. So what seems to be the problem? If we look around at our world what we find is some reason to be paranoid, or at least so it appears. Some reason to think we must protect what we have at all cost. Some reason to think that lurking behind is some shadow or some little corner, somewhere is an enemy. Some reason to think that if we do not hold tightly on to what we have or we think we are, there will be disintegration, disillusion and chaos. This setting sun world, this setting sun mentality, is always fearful, always paranoid that the next minute everything is going to go wrong. It's a mentality that has absolutely no humor. It's a mentality which is self-serving constantly. But the warrior of Shambhala, understanding that all this attitudes and things are simply due to not understanding the basic nature, not understanding, and fearing the basic nature of experience of who we are, what we are, that warrior relaxes in goodness and looks at the world in a non-biased way, in an inquisitive way.

To have an inquisitive mind is not simply to be intellectually stimulated. To have an inquisitive mind is to look at all perceptions and all the phenomena that come about in our life without any particular bias. There is no real way to see things clearly if we always have some point of view and some opinion about what should be or what could be, who we are, or who everybody else is. We can never see things clearly that way, and the warrior of Shambhala, first of all, having felt good in himself or herself allows himself or herself to just look and see what is, just appreciate the world as it arises moment to moment, appreciate the perceptions and appreciate the sensations, appreciate the body that we have, appreciate the relationships that we have, appreciate the moment that we live in. That kind of inquisitiveness, that kind of mind of openness and inquisitiveness is like having three hundred sixty degree vision all around all the time. Now, if we really think about that we can get even more paranoid. That kind of feeling that, "Oh, if we have to do that means we have to see everything," and there still are things we really don't want to look at because we have ideas about what is beautiful and what is ugly what is exalted what is degraded, et cetera. However, with the real sense of goodness in our being, in our very nature, and looking at the world and appreciating the beauty and the ugliness is all part of warriorship, all part of being really a decent human. I think it also might be a little paranoid in the sense that thinking that way means that we actually have to stay awake, be aware of things, we can't just take things for granted, we can't take things as well, that's the way it is, or that's how our point of view is, or we can dismiss the rest of it. But the inquisitive mind in the warrior sense is just like the facets of a diamond being turned around the light: everything reflects perfectly, beautifully, all the colors, all the specter, and light bounces all such diamond in a way that brightens up everything. In the same way our mind when inquisitive in that way can be the source of illumination, brightness. Can be the source of actually exposing to ourselves a very rich world, a world of magnificent detail. When we look at the world in that way then we begin

to drop our heavy-handed attitude about for and against, friend and enemy. At the same time we become more clear about what we mean by living a life which is gentle and good and decent, and living a life which is not. Because we open ourselves to look at things exactly as they are in their most clear and minute detail then we can see how is that we manage to deceive ourselves, how we manage to settle for what is available, what is comfortable and entertaining. At the same time we begin to see how is it possible to be sluggish in life, not to really tap into our own basic warriorship and one's own basic confidence. Why is it that we don't have confidence when—sometimes we think it's okay, sometimes we think we are right on it, so we manifest confidence, but any little hint of discrepancy in our attitude emerges, confidence goes out of the window [snaps fingers] just like that, and then we play catch up, try to get it back, try to feel strong again, perhaps we repeat certain slogans and beliefs, "I know I can," "I think I can," "I know I can, I think I can." Try to think positively or something like that. Or we put on the right clothing or, you know, go to the right parties, say the right things. But underneath this uncertainty, whether or not we can make it through to the next day. It seems that if we look around and even ordinary everyday experience has confidence already in it, or like dogs and cats, they are confident and somehow we seem to lack it, sort of funny that way. But confidence in the Shambhala sense is not confidence that is pushy particularly, confidence that comes along and says, "Well, I'm confident and it doesn't matter the rest of you particularly because I'm going to march along and live my life. As long as I don't feel it, well, then, too bad." Although this kind of confidence doesn't go very far and doesn't produce any goodness in the world. Anybody you know who has real confidence has real gentleness at the same time, and real inquisitiveness. Confidence is a first thing and just when you look at somebody. You look at the way they are, how they manifest. We can see that they are at home at their own body. And their body moves through space, there's no obstruction in the space and the body. Confidence also manifests when people

Speak, what they say and how they say it. When a person has confidence, then there's no need for harsh words, there's no need for language which is abusive. There's also no need for sloppiness. In the person's mind what you can see is that their mind is there overall sensitive composure, or what we might call spaciousness. When a person has confidence you can tell that they are not thinking all the time, not simply running down their full processes all the time. Now, I hope you know what I'm talking about. In our own experience we do that when we don't feel confident, we seem to crank up a lot of thoughts, a lot of mental activity. But the warrior in the Shambhala tradition who is confident is at ease in the body and in the world, gentle and accommodating in speech, precise and clear and spacious in mind. Being in the presence of such warrior is uplifting without any particular cause or reason. According to Shambhala teachings, this kind of expression of warriorship which is primordial confidence based on real gentleness, is everybody's birthright. We have not just simply being born as human beings in order to haphazardly go through life until we finally goodbye when we die and they close the coffin or they light the fire or whatever it is, when we finish our memoir or something. We are not born in this particular life just to be confused, just to be bouncing around from one experience to another haphazardly. According to Shambhala teachings, we are born in this life to realize primordial confidence, to realize our own basic nature as the nature of goodness itself, and therefore to actually transform this ordinary world into the kingdom of Shambhala. This perceived world of madness, to transform it into enlightened society. Now, this idea is not very new, obviously, all of you have the same notion or somewhat the same notion or you wouldn't be here. Throughout history there've been teachings involving enlightened society, there have been societies themselves which have manifested those kinds of expressions, which in Shambhala terminology we would say express Great Eastern Sun vision. Throughout history there has been this thread of enlightened warriorship, of primordial confidence, always. Certain times in history where

there's a waning of this attitude, sometimes it comes to the top and it manifests beautifully. At this particular time in our world when it seems that things are falling apart, the ordinary concepts of what is real strength and what is real confidence—they don't seem to be holding together too well. In this particular time people like ourselves should contact our own basic goodness, or own basic quality of gentleness and expand it so that we can do a little bit to ease the fear and confusion that is existing now. If we look at the events of the recent six months in the world, you see that so much of what goes on depends upon how settled people are or how jumpy they are. When everybody's mind is like live wire then any little event causes aggression, any little miscue causes fear and paranoia, any little lapse into confusion causes the imbalance in the harmony of things. This time is a very important time, I think, and it will be for a while, where people like ourselves will be interested in value, the real value, not so much the material value because we know that material value is based on whim. We could say we can blame our computers—stock markets fell five hundred points because of computers. I don't think so. I think what happens is that when the notion of confidence becomes shaky, then people lose track of what is actually happening and start to do fairly wild things, start to do haphazard things, start to jerk their body around, start to agitate themselves and their minds. Start to say things that have no basis, and then the situations become confusing and people say, "Well, I'm going to get out of this quickly, sell!" This time is important for us to work on our own basic nature. To uncover our own basic natures and to maybe perhaps relax, relax our tightness about who we think we are, relax our tightness about being so afraid of living the next day, the next moment, being so afraid that something is going to go wrong. Well, easy to say. Who is going to start? Who is going to first do that? The truth is we are all related to each other and we can't get away from that. No matter how we try to keep our own separate space, our own personal space, how we try to fortify our life with the kind of confidence which is only based on external things, no matter

how we do that, eventually we are going to come into contact with something that is not pleasant, which really doesn't go along with our way of thinking. And unless we have an open inquisitive mind, we won't be able to relate to it. And we can relate to the chaos and indiscretion that happens in such a situation like this then we will never be in touch with our own goodness, with our own gentleness. We will become hard as a rock psychologically. We become frozen and we can't relax, we can't smile. Don't you ever see dogs in a circus and they seem to smile and [inaudible] ... sense of humor, and we lose our sense of confidence. We are not smiling like human beings anymore, we are smiling like a dog. It doesn't fool anybody. It doesn't even fool ourselves. So, Shambhala teaching is aimed at really kindling the fire of this notion of goodness, just putting a small part, a little match into this kindling wood which is already here, we all have it. Shambhala teaching is, like any other teachings, meant to ignite the fuel that is already there. So, in coming here presenting this to you my intention is simply to present the possibility that we all can live up to ourselves, so to speak. All of the higher values of our lives, of our minds, of our society, are there and available for us to manifest, to be. Nobody needs to describe it much further. My basic feeling is that we all know pretty much what it is all about. Being alive. And it's very painful when we can't actually be genuine, when we can't actually be uplifted in a certain way. It's very painful to be depressed, it's painful to have to think about whether or not we want to go on to our next appointment or answer the telephone or sweep up the apartment. Shambhala teaching is meant to work directly with primordial confidence and doing the ordinary things of life, primordial confidence is the way. For most of us, since we are so caught up in believing in this myth about things, the notion of relating to ordinary things, to ordinary life with confidence is not very exciting. However, I can assure you that from the point of view of this teachings and from the point of view of the experience from those who have passed them on, the most ordinary thing is the most completely true and simply real. Combing your hair,

brushing your teeth, is an act of confidence. That kind of ordinary mind and that kind of ordinary experience is what we call basic goodness. That kind of perception of the ordinary things of this world is what we call inquisitiveness without a memory, and that kind of manifestation as a warrior we call it primordial confidence. I use the term "warrior," and that is one of the terms that is central to the Shambhala teaching. We should understand that when we say "warrior" I'm not talking about someone who makes war. Warrior in this case is the translation of the Tibetan word which is *pawo* means "the one who is brave." Brave enough to be gentle, brave enough to be inquisitive, and brave enough to be confident about the simplest things in life. So this is meant to be an introduction to these teachings. In terms of method the Shambhala program, which we call Shambhala Training, has borrowed from the Buddhist tradition the practice of sitting meditation, which is the cleanest and the simplest way of working with your mind. Because it does not involve an external object, nor does it involve a particular goal, because it simply involve being in the moment without any particular conclusion, it is considered the most efficient way of working with the mind. This practice of meditation is what we might call formless meditation in that sense. It doesn't need any external support. All you have to do is to sit down and be with yourself and just do that. There are certain instructions about how to work with your thoughts, how to work with your breathing process. All of those instructions are meant to be simply an aid to relaxation. But the basic practice of meditation is simply to sit and be with oneself without any project in mind. It's very difficult when we are so used to thinking constantly and so used to having something else to do, something to go to next, something else we have to complete, something else we have to think about. In this case the practice of meditation has nothing to do with none of that. It is just simply being and at the same time being aware of what occurs in one's thought process, one's body, one's environment. Just being aware of it without any particular notion of having to change it, manipulate it, or comment upon it. So this kind of

practice is an expression of that primordial confidence that we were talking about, and therefore Trungpa Rinpoche uses and is using this practice for thread in Shambhala Training for people to get in touch with that kind of warriorship which we've been talking about. So as far as the process, that's the basic thing. As far as expression, what we have in Shambhala Training is a series of levels meant to illuminate further and further the basic goodness inherent nature of us.

So I think that is all I have to say. I appreciate the fact that you are here and that you have interest in those things. Perhaps if you like to have a discussion about what has been said we can do so. We have microphones available and if you care to ask a question, please raise your hand and someone will bring the microphone to you.

[Question] Just the other day I felt that I was in the state of confidence and experienced the shift that was immediate—it seemed to me to be immediate, vivid, and involuntary—into a different state which I felt was one of total lack of confidence. I was wondering if you could say a bit about that shift, what goes on there, perhaps add a bit to me. It seemed totally instantaneously to me.

VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN: I think that is of the heart of the matter. When we talk about confidence, we are not talking about confidence as something that we have the same way we have a possession. We are talking about confidence as something that is continually. Now, when you feel confident about what you are doing and there is a sudden interruption or shift as you say and the bottom falls out, then you are left floating in space and you don't know where the confidence went. The only thing you can do is sort of grab around with your mind and try to find out, like I said earlier, play catch up, try to find out how you can get it back there. I think that the main cause of that kind of shift is the fact that we put so much attention on ourselves and we lose sight of what's happening around us. So the confidence becomes a

personal thing rather than an environmental thing, and we put so much emphasis on ourselves
[gap in tape?]

Q: Sir, is there some way that mind can be inquisitive about setting sun world without buying into it?

VR: It has to be inquisitive about everything whether it is ugly or beautiful. It is not that garbage is somehow dumped on the street and we would like just to sort of walk around, but that garbage is made of peoples' desires, some experiences. What's left anyway. Which is very interesting if you think about it, because the garbage of our world is based on our minds. We make the garbage because of our complicated way of doing things. Because we simply create a lot of mess, you know. I think [laughs] if someone is inquisitive about that mess, there will be more and more basis for confidence, because we can't create an enlightened society by thinking that enlightened society means no garbage. "Sorry, no garbage allowed within this gate," you know, that's what people do. Especially in the West we have exclusive communities with the gates coming down and fellows with the guns, and, "Sorry, no garbage in here." But I think we could be inquisitive into the nature of what is not pleasing as well as what is pleasing. That means that we have to have real confidence to do that, because if you don't have confidence, if you do that from the point of view of false confidence, basically you will be hurt, either that or you will become a fanatic of some kind and say, you know, "I'm going to march right through this garbage."

Q: There are certain areas of my life where I feel this primordial confidence, and there are certain areas of my life where I don't feel it at all, and I was wondering if you can make some comments about that.

VR: Well, when you feel such confidence, do you know where it comes from? You just feel it. When you don't feel it do you know where it went to?

Q: No, I think that when I do feel I don't think I ever had it

VR: [Inaudible]... it's true isn't it? When we don't feel it, we never had it. We are just some way becoming a wormlike creature looking for a rock. When we have it, we are flying in the sky, no problem. However, neither of those is primordial confidence, those are just experiences based on conditions. Primordial confidence, you can say, is the thread of experience between both of these things. Feeling strong and feeling weak. It might be hard to understand, but really, when you think about it, in the moment of weakness there could be tremendous confidence, and in the moment of strength there could be tremendous confidence, both, because depends on how open we are to really feel our own nature. Before [inaudible] real nature we are going to pick and choose our experiences as either good or bad according to how we imagine we should be. Nobody likes to be compromised, embarrassed and made a fool of, even to oneself, nobody likes that. However, there could be tremendous wisdom in that if you understand that top and the bottom are the same. The top half of these experiences and the bottom half of these experiences are totally connected. It's not like that one is separate from the other. All of our experiences are totally connected. That's the good part. That's the basically good part. That means you don't have to think so hard about who you are. However you cannot just say glibly that everything is connected in that way therefore confidence when you don't have it you still have it, when you have it you still have it. I think it takes a little more than that. One has to experience oneself. That's why we offer this training, Shambhala training, so that you can be experienced rather than just talk about. This is good, just to connect with each other as far using these words.

Q: I don't know what to say right now, but if I am to refer to some of the statements you made regarding making mess and not knowing what to do with the mess, Shambhala teachings seem to be very attracting to me. I've been here just two or three or four times with the teachings, and my understanding of the teaching seems to be very complimentary in terms of where I came from, I came from Africa. It sounds to be a like challenging school. Let's get

back to the statement you made in terms of if we accept ourselves as mess makers and looking at the society, looking at ourselves, and our history and thinking of Shambhala teachings seems like we take it for granted that we probably created some messes. Now, the [inaudible: complement?] between the one who created that mess and the one who has become that mess, how would you explain the Shambhala teachings and how is it going to [inaudible: complement?] both cases the cause and the effect?

VR: Well, I think in terms of the Shambhala teachings, first of all it's important to recognize how we make a mess, and that has to do with working with ordinary perceptions, ordinary experiences, everyday life. The training involves, means to put the spotlight of awareness on the very minute detail of moment-to-moment experience. In that way we can see how we create the mess. In terms of having created the mess already, it works in the same way. If you realize how a mess has been created, then it's possible to clean it up. If you don't realize it, then you become the mess, and you continue to become the mess because you sink more and more into the messiness of your mind, your environment, your society, and everything like that. But the fact of the Shambhala teaching, which is so direct, is that you can do it in one shot, you can do in one shot—you can realize the mess and the creator of the mess and therefore clean it up and don't create further mess. So you don't have to go through a complicated process in terms of the cause and effect because basically the cause and effect of the mess is one's own understanding, one's own real feeling about things. If you understand your own feelings, your own heart, mind, body, then little by little, maybe it's a very large mess, it's possible. Depends on our life. Sometimes maybe we have a very large mess, and I think sometimes it will be a little bit frightening when we start to realize what the cause and effect of things are, and you made the mess. And you start to think, "I'll never be able to clean that mess up. It's too big a mess." I think that's what happens in the world, why people like ourselves aren't confident about the fact that we can actually change the climate of the

world. Change the aggressiveness of the world. Because we look at it and say, “This is too big. This is too huge a mess.” With Shambhala teachings we start to work with ordinary things, very ordinary experiences, moment-to-moment experiences, start cleaning that mess, and that has to do with the whole thing, the whole big mess, but that's why it's really necessary to really know, know in this case I don't mean know by your thoughts, but to really know that confidence doesn't come from anywhere. The same—talking to you it doesn't come from a particular exulting experience or a particular low experience, it's primordial, just is and that [inaudible: underneath?] is good [laughs] it's very simplistic this Shambhala teaching. And you know, even to say “basic goodness” is kind of a something [inaudible] drive to the museum to say such a thing, you know, it's some sort of maybe ancient children's book to say, well, basic goodness is the way. The simplicity of the teaching is the power of it to relate to everybody, everywhere.

Q: I was wondering you mentioned earlier that the moment where we are in today there are a lot of things happening in the world, and to start with ourselves, you know, to relate to each other and through Shambhala create a better world or whatever. Is it that you said there were other times in history where it was more enlightened or whatever, could you talk about that? I mean...

VR: Sure, it depends on what... if you look at expressions, let's take the Western world, since that's really what we are familiar with, expressions of, we might call enlightened society in the Western world. Most of us are so much locked in with the present events that we don't have much perspective on things. However, throughout society and history there have been times and people and expressions of warriorship that were magnificent, in music, in architecture, in art, in philosophy, in just making things good for people. Even we can look back in the Western history with the Greeks and the Romans and the [inaudible] any of that. Inside all that stuff there's always been a lot of aggression and warfare, but the were times or

periods when there's peace and harmony and great expressions of basic human dignity, and we can look at any society, if you care to study it, you'll find that, you'll find that happening. That's why Shambhala teachings are not new, they are not based on any particular thing, even though we talk about Shambhala as this mythical kingdom or real kingdom. The notion, the message of Shambhala is that for endless time this teaching has been present, When you happen to go and see a particular thing from the past, a work of art, and you see the majesty of it, at the same time you also see that somebody really thought about this, somebody really put the heart into this and made this for everybody to see, and those things are beyond any ego trip or there are any personal nonsense. Those things are still existing right here in Chicago. True enough. And throughout the world it's just that our minds are not inquisitive enough to see that way. We are just talking about what's happening to me now, you know. But what we are talking about here is a possibility of really tuning into something that's always been happening, always been happening, and just expanding it for everybody. Sometimes when you visit a friend and they prepare you a dinner, the way they put it on the plate and present things, the atmosphere, that's Great Eastern Sun vision. It could be very humble, fair. It's not supposed to be, you know, like a wonderful dinner, exotic thing, but just simple, and yet makes you suddenly feel uplifted. It's easy to tell. But, you know, without giving specific example, you could look at history and study history and see what is Great Eastern Sun, what is setting sun. What is Shambhala vision in terms of the past, present, and future? You can see it. There are times in the society where decency prevails, goodness prevails. It has to do with the family and it has to do with domestics in a way. Domesticity is really important in the Shambhala world. Anyway, it's all there. [Inaudible] in the Western world and the Eastern world as well. Societies that a lot of us had no idea about have practiced basic goodness for centuries. Now, what happens is that when setting sun mentality becomes so strong, then the forces of goodness become weaker, therefore it's necessary for—

and that's not some kind of morality statement—it's just necessary for us to brace up a bit and not fall prey to that kind of plague which we are in position right now not to do. Sounds often political but it's not, it's really not [laughs].

Q: What do you do with your anger?

VR: Anger usually has to do with feeling inconvenienced. Also been insulted and all the rest of it and what you do with it. Well, I think the warrior has to chew it very thoroughly and swallow it. Not spit it out but really chew it and what the texture of the anger is. Otherwise you just spit it out at somebody else, and you won't even know what it is. Later on you feel terrible, your body is all shaken up, you're nervous, rattled, and if you really got any sensitivity you feel some sense of remorse, and if you don't you feel some sense of righteous indignation. If you really want to work with anger you have to chew it as it arises, it comes out, you have to really chew it, feel how is it like without necessarily expressing it. But it takes long training, takes good discipline to do that. First, you have to have a mind grounded in basic goodness. Habits don't go away easily. That's why they are called habits.

Q: Many times when I'm fearful I'm aggressive because I don't know what to do. If I try to set aside that aggressiveness I become very confused, I just don't know what else to do. Sometimes the situation can be let go and you don't have to do anything, but sometimes the situation really calls for some action. With the Shambhala training and with the getting in touch with the primordial confidence will that confusion still be there and we'll know what to do with it, or will it go away?

VR: I didn't bring my crystal ball tonight. I think you have to find out by yourself. Basically, Shambhala Training is meant to be a vehicle for you to find out for yourself whether that confusion will be there or whether will not be there. For me to say yes or know wouldn't make any difference. You see, you really have to do with yourself in a certain way. It's good to have [inaudible: friends?]

Q: Is basic goodness the same as God?

VR: I don't know what God is. What do you mean by God?

Q: What is told in my tradition of Christianity I suppose is...

VR: Not the same. In fact, the point is that basic goodness is not a thing—well, God is not a thing either, but basic goodness is not embodied or nor is it a personal object of [inaudible] at all. It's not something that exists neither outside nor inside. Could resemble God, except no beard. I don't know but... [Inaudible: ?] If you talk about in the principle of a God or godliness or goodness from the point of view of seeing God as good, I mean there's all kinds of ways of looking at that. In terms of theology I would say no, it's not, because in terms of Christian theology this universal creator... basic goodness is just what is.

Q: From what you say it sounds similar to the experience of grace from my perspective.

VR: Very close, that's very close. In this case, grace without having to supplicate in order for to be there. Grace without necessity to invoke that grace. That gracefulness is inherently right now. So there's no two step process. I think that's some of the difference of the theistic version and this particular [inaudible: ?] but the feeling I think is basically the same.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to close our event tonight with again my thanks for your patience and your inquisitiveness and your confidence. I'm delighted to be here in Chicago. I haven't taught here for quite a while, and looking forward for the rest of the weekend. We have a program tomorrow for those of you who would like to have some experience of the meditation practice, and also you and I can meet again, talk. It's a very short time tonight, tomorrow, but still it's enough at least for beginning. For those of you who have not practiced meditation or had an experience of this particular training, it will be good if you do so. It doesn't take much, not a lot of time particularly, just tomorrow. That's all. I realize we all have busy lives, but sometime it's good to let go of the busyness just for a while. Let's see

how it is. So we have that program tomorrow, Shambhala Training, and I hope you can take part of it. Thank you for being so kind.

[END OF RECORDING]

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