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Talk 2 of 3

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VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN: Well, at this point we have heard the description of sudden glimpse or the content of sudden glimpse as without origin and we can relate that to our experience in terms of the development of consciousness. This particular teaching is based on the mahamudra tradition and is not strictly hinayana tradition of Buddhism. But our particular lineage is the Kagyu lineage has taught this way because it is practical, understandable and also because it can cut through any kind of clinging to individual absorption, individual state of meditation which can also become a sense of security.

So in bringing up the discussion of sudden glimpse and describing it in the way we have done so far, we're actually introducing some sense of tantric element into our discussion. But I would like to emphasize at this point that there is always the danger of jumping ahead, jumping to conclusions, trying to puff oneself up and imitate some exalted state of mind.

So this Kagyu lineage emphasizes the three yana process. That is to say, having heard the description of awakened state of mind which we experience as a glimpse, as flash, then it is necessary to start from the beginning. That description is the result of practitioners' experience, those who have achieved enlightenment, have described that awakened state of mind in the way we talked about it. But they also emphasized that it is necessary, in order to achieve enlightenment and a continuous state of meditation, to begin at the beginning.

What is that beginning? As we mentioned last night, that beginning is the appearance of a reference point, relative world, and that relative world begins as a sense of panic and sense of unconscious ego. In other words, no identity as "so and so," but just first flash of energy coming off of space and freezing that energy into what's called primordial confusion, secondary ground, or what we call the eight, eighth state of consciousness, the beginning of the production of ego, relative world.

And as we talked about yesterday, that sense of primordial confusion gives birth to possibilities which are still yet unnamed. This sense of possibility is that experience of further panic which needs to take some form to solidify itself as separate from awakened state of mind. And in order to solidify completely—in other words, in order to make the objective world, the relative world as something real out there—we have the development of cognitive mind and sense organs.

So let's leave philosophy behind at this point and just on the spot drop that whole business of unborn, non-dwelling, and the whole thing, just drop it. We heard it; actually we experienced it. And that experience of nonego, egolessness, is the motivation to practice. And that is very

important; motivation is a key because all through our path—those of you who are new to this particular path and those of you have been traveling along—we all have a problem with motivation at one time or another. And that is why it is necessary to hear teaching. Because when we hear teaching, that teaching is the result of those who have experienced. When we hear their teaching, immediately we are reminded of our own basic intelligence, unconditioned. But what do we work on? We first begin to work on, not trying to recreate unconditioned mind over and over again through imagination, but we begin to work on relative reference. We begin to work on that sense of reflection. We begin to work on the projection of ego. And the first projection is again as we said, consciousness, form, beginning of identity of myself.

The difference between this teaching and all other teachings that exist in our phenomenal world, in our phenomenal experience, in what we call “this universe” or any other universe, is that this teaching of the Buddha is not based on recreating something other than what is, therefore it is called nontheistic. It does not presuppose, it does not posit a belief in something other than what we have. So what we have experientially at this point is a question, “am I real, or is that real?” Does the world exist the way I see it or do I exist in relationship to it? Basically, we come down to that question, always. Is it real, isn’t it real? So what is Buddhist teaching at this point is: let’s look at the function, let’s look at the arising of that question, how it takes shape, form; let us not consider what is real or unreal—but how do we formulate that question. And in order to do so we must include in our experience that quality of gap which we have been talking about, that sense of no answer, that sense of no reference and that quality of gap can be experienced through the process of meditation, the practice of meditation, sitting meditation as we have been taught, as we practice.

You see the main point is that we’re not interested particularly in isolating those eight states of consciousness, therefore, if we do so we can pick apart the whole thing and say “Ha! There it is.” It’s just eight things, so what? If you try and do that, what happens in your experience is that you begin to feel like you taste with your ears and you see with your nose and you remember with confusion. So it’s not a matter of isolating eight states of consciousness and saying “Aha, that was smell, that was cognitive mind, that was subconscious mind.” The process of meditation is actually experiencing the gap in that process of consciousness, that production of consciousness. By doing so then we begin to see when we see, and hear when we hear, taste when we taste, think when we think. We begin to see that we refer that whole process back to potential mind, in other words that seventh sense of consciousness, potential being, and then we begin to see, because of that gap, that when all else fails, we refer to not knowing, ignorance, eighth state of consciousness.

So meditation practice is working with the relative situation, working with function—no belief, just function. And what do we use to see that function? The same consciousness that we’re trying to see. In other words, mind has to see mind. How can mind see mind? How can I see myself? There we are back to basic ground.

So we introduce into that basic ground the technique of meditation which is a simplified version of relative reference. In other words, that is to say, in other words [laughter], that we imitate ourselves being ourselves. We imitate ourselves meditating. And how do we do that? Because of motivation. And how? Through ambition, or the driving force of energy, the spin-off of sudden glimpse. That energy is still existing, is still continuing, but it is continuing as ego, as choppy, fragmented, incomplete experience.

Ambition is also longing, a longing to recreate that sudden glimpse. So we use longing and ambition because it is the same energy which arose from space, from unconditioned mind as experience. See what I mean? Energy is experience. Although it is at this point self-centered, introspective, self-concerned, self-contained, whatever you want to say. Our object is to self-liberate it. So that same thing we talked about last night, where's Danny? Danny? Yeah, same thing he was asking, that that energy of experience of awakened state of mind can be unobstructed, continuous. So we have to have what we call path or discipline.

The whole thing is contrived from the absolute point of view. From the point of view of unconditioned mind the whole thing is completely contrived. But since no one or since nobody here is without question, therefore we must work with what is—not something different than what is because there doesn't seem to be anything else. We could make up a lot of things I'm sure. Which have been done. I don't know if I talked about it in the New York tapes but it's what I call a rip-off.

So nontheistic teaching says the only material, the only fuel we have to achieve this state of mind, this sense of free, unconditioned mind is the self-conscious mind, the one that thinks it isn't free. And it takes tremendous courage at this point to actually look at that because what the teaching is saying is that you have to start from the simpleton point of view, which in some way resembles unconditioned mind. You have to start from the point of view of being confused. And at the same time the conviction of your experience points out that nowhere else is there the material we need except right here.

So what we call a step beyond hesitation is, in this case, the acknowledgment of our own duality, our own experience of duality, separation. And also to go straight ahead, right toward it, right into it. Courage to look at simply the function without any kind of promise, without any kind of pot of gold.

This is the lion's roar of the buddhist teaching, that we can actually look at what is, without bias.

Once we begin to see that the projection of ego is without substance—what we call projection in this case is that development of consciousness which we talked about—that ignorance, cloudy mind, cognitive mind, five senses, exist independently—are not particularly related in terms of anything continuous and solid like a self for instance. Once we begin to see that the actual energy of awakened mind is of the same nature as awakened mind, then we begin to realize that the projector, in other words our sense of being stuck in ourselves, is also transparent, of the same nature as awakened mind. The question becomes the answer, or we realize the question is the answer.

To do that we must be very foolish and courageous, stubborn, ambitious, and stupid. Foolish—why? Because we know there's no hope and we're going to do it anyway. Courageous because we never looked at it before. And also courageous because nobody else can look at it but ourselves. Stubborn because there's no reward and we're still going to do it. Ambitious because we would love to find out the truth. And stupid because we realized all along we're too clever for all this. So with all that we have what's called the relative reference, what to work with.

I think that's it. Do you have any questions? In the back.

QUESTION: The way the thought process work in the confused mind, the thought process—

VR: Please, please, start again.

Q: As the thought process works in the confused mind the thoughts come and go. We attach to them at times, most the time, but in that sudden glimpse there's—in your talk I was getting the feeling that there, they're to be looked at the same quality.

VR: Beg your pardon?

Q: They're to be seen as the same.

VR: Thoughts and unconditioned mind? What are you talking about? It's all right. Take your time.

Q: Confusion arises and goes, passion, aggression, ignorance. In that glimpse, it comes and it goes the same way.

VR: Which "it?"

Q: I beg your pardon?

VR: What "it" comes and goes in the same way? Hmm?

Q: Hmm?

VR: You said in that glimpse it comes and goes in the same way. What "it?"

Q: A perceiver, a consciousness.

VR: A da da da. A perceiver comes and goes in the glimpse in the same way?

Q: No.

VR: Okay, start again. [Long pause] Are you going to tell me what he's going to say? Hmm? Say it again. I think I got it but you see the point is we should be able to say it. Say it. First start with the glimpse, okay?

Q: Okay, the glimpse is precise and clear and it...

VR: Comes and goes.

Q: It comes and goes.

VR: Right. Now the thought process you were saying?

Q: The thought process is distorted, is jumbled, in the confusion.

VR: What about that same way you were talking about? Coming and going in the same way?

Q: Okay, they're both coming and going, they just have a different appearance.

VR: Yeah! Okay, good. That's right. That's exactly right. And, is that it?

Q: No, there's something missing.

VR: Um. The x-factor. I don't think there's anything missing. I think the only thing missing is in more discipline to recognize and make firm exactly what you just said. The difference is appearance. And that's why we emphasize this particular kind of meditation which actually looks at the appearance of ego, or in this case, energy. Both come and go but they appear to be different. How is it that they appear to be different? That's our practice.

Q: Thank you.

VR: You're welcome.

Q: We have the eight states of consciousness and then we have the awakened state of mind which is a gap in the production of these eight states?

VR: No.

Q: No?

VR: No. Gap is just the experience of the absence of speed. It has some similarity to the awakened state of mind, in other words it's our reference point.

Q: So the awakened state of mind is within the eight states of consciousness?

VR: If you remember the tape, it doesn't—it's not within anything. It doesn't depend on anything, you remember those definitions? So let's not get into that.

Q: But you were saying that the eight states are a spin-off of energy.

VR: That's right.

Q: Energy that arises from...

VR: That's right. That's what I said.

Q: Is there energy within the sudden glimpse? Is that a...

VR: Um hmm. Definitely. That's what usually people think awakened state of mind is—complete zombiehood. But, not so! There is energy, and there is also space. Our problem is with the energy, in other words, as we've been saying, with the appearance of consciousness of space. Get it? Consciousness—conscious of no content.

Q: Um hmm.

VR: Now. So we work on that conscious part.

Q: Umm.

VR: Yeah, you gotta practice you know, that's it.

Q: Umm.

Q: Somewhere or other... [distant from microphone]

VR: There's a microphone [laughter]

Q: Somewhere we picked up this anti-"development of ego" bias and it keeps, is kept reinforcing itself all the time. Okay, now we're going to apply the meditation technique, and we're going to be looking with bias from the beginning...

VR: From the beginning?

Q: From the beginning.

VR: From the beginning. Except for—our little itch.

Q: A little—but that's been there all along too, hasn't it?

VR: It certainly has. Now we're going to do something about it.

Q: And what happens to the bias?

VR: You tell me. After you do it. Maybe it becomes a pink elephant. Maybe it becomes a shrine room. Maybe it becomes a Buddha. Maybe it becomes rudra, demon. We don't know. That's why it's a nontheistic tradition.

Q: Okay. It still may be completely unacceptable.

VR: What?

Q: We still may find that it's completely unacceptable.

VR: We may, we certainly may. But then it'd be too late to get the money back. [Laughter] [Laughs] Then we'll find it's such unacceptability that we might be shocked to death. [Laughs] Or, we might smooth it over and say "Well, another day, another dollar." [Laughter] But we don't know, we don't know.

Q: Where does the question come from?

VR: The question comes from the fact that we don't know. It comes from itself. The question comes from itself.

Q: The question just pops up by itself too?

VR: Just like that. Just like you did. What's your name?

Q: Chuck Young.

VR: How did Chuck Young pop up?

Q: I didn't notice. [Laughter]

VR: You could say, "Mom and Dad gave me that name." But then when you start carrying that back—you know.

Q: I'm confused about the whole idea of reference point in general. What is, what does it mean, reference point, or reference?

VR: Well...

Q: And specifically...

VR: Reference simply means that there's a division between what you perceive and you the perceiver. There's a reference between the two, right? No? Column? Gold? You-me? Right. Somehow that developed into a problem.

Q: Anything you perceive therefore is a reference point?

VR: Um-hmm.

Q: From your point of view. How is subconscious mind a reference point for the sense organ?

VR: Well, because before there's a particular cognitive sense of me and you, there's a potential for that to happen. In other words, it's kind of like swimming around when I first look at you, when you first look at the object, those eight states happen immediately, one right after the other. And the seventh one which we called—because we don't have anything better to call it—the subconscious, is not particularly sub-conscious because it's all conscious; it's a matter of potential to form the

difference between the two. See how it goes? First one is complete blind, some quivering sense of being with no reference point, first flash off of awakened state is a some quivering state of difference but not really formed. Then comes potential to be different. Then comes a state of recognizing through the senses. Happens so [snaps fingers], like that. You've got it. Just like that. So that subconscious is not really the right word; it's, that's, we just call it state of embryonic potential.

Q: So in that case, reference point is being used in the sense of some kind of evolutionary process where...

VR: That's right.

Q: Step A, because it precedes Step B, is called a reference point of Step B.

VR: Let's see if you're not tricking me there. Say that again.

Q: Since there's an evolutionary process...

VR: There is an evolutionary process.

Q: And because one step in some sense precedes the other, it's called the reference point for that...

VR: That's right, exactly.

Q: So that's different from my perceiving you and calling you a reference point 'cause it's a different use of the word "reference point" there.

VR: No.

Q: I don't see...

VR: It's just a fully blown use of the word "reference point." You see.

That's complete. Me, you. That's complete reference point. Referential world, relative world.

Q: It seems that if as long as two things are in any kind of relationship to one another, one could be called a reference point for the other.

VR: That's right. As long as two things are in relationship we call that relative world. But our question here is not whether or not that is so. It's how the process evolved.

Q: In terms of this self-consciousness of no answer, of confusion, that seems to very much have a sen..., for me, a sense of self. I have no answer. I don't know what you mean by "gap."

VR: Well, because that sense of "I have no answer" is a fully developed reference point. Meditation practice is a working back in some sense. You could say working back to that embryonic and also to that sense of totally numb state where we can't even say "I have no answer."

Q: Like numb in the sense of no experience, sir?.

VR: Uh Uh. Numb in the sense that the experiencer isn't quite formed.

Q: I guess I don't understand like experience without an experiencer, or consciousness without consciousness of consciousness.

VR: That's right. There is no such thing.

Q: Do we experience gap.

VR: What you mean we?

Q: Me? [Laughs]

VR: Sure, we do. We meditators experience the gap in the thought process because we possess eight types of consciousness. It's not all that big a deal you know. I mean don't pound your head against the wall with that. That's what I said: sit. Don't make "gap" into a philosophy. We've already heard enough about what's what, and what isn't what. Now the question is, can you recognize the motivation to practice? If that is the case, again and again, hear the teaching and regenerate that motivation. Because as you go along and you practice you begin to penetrate layer upon layer, and the closer you get to that complete fog of numbness, the less you're gonna want to practice. [Laughter] Happens all the time. It's not so you know it's not, we're not talking about a mystical whoha. Just our experience, it's the way we experience. The closer we get to that, the less we want to be awake, the more we want to be asleep. That's what's called ego, referring back, referring back. What we refer back to is the basic split, basic sense of separation. And when we refer back to it we get scared stiff and produce the whole thing all over again. "Hello, how are you?" "Fine, I'm fine." Why'd you ask me how I am? What a silly question. I never know what to answer when somebody asks me how I...yeah [Laughter]

Q: You said that ambition was a longing to recreate the sudden gap.

VR: No sudden gap. Sudden glimpse.

Q: Sudden glimpse, right.

VR: Yeah, we have to get these, all these words straight here.

Q: Okay. The memory...

VR: Yeah.

Q: The memory contained in consciousness...

VR: Mm-hmmm.

Q: Of the sudden glimpse, is that related to like the intelligence of consciousness seeing limitations?

VR: Sure, or potential.

Q: That intel—that the consciousness is actually closing off space.

VR: And recreating it at the same time. Memory, you're talking about memory?

Q: Yeah.

VR: Yeah. It lodges itself in the seventh consciousness, potential. Potential means both positive and negative. Close off, recreate, close off, recreate.

Q: So the potential is—the memory is also then potential independent of consciousness?

VR: No. No. What do you mean? Memory is potentially independent of consciousness? Memory is part of consciousness. You remember that description of unconditioned mind? Who's going to remember anything there? There's nobody to remember. There's just what is. When you have memory, you have reference point; you have a self, okay?



Q: You said that the experience of egolessness was motivation for practice. How do you mean that?

VR: Well, I mean that in the moment when there's no you, there's tremendous energy and clarity.

Q: And then there's you again.

VR: Yeah. And also there's a reference point to that non-you, no you.

Q: Is that what you mean by the "next moment"?

VR: The reference point, yah. The next moment is the phenomenal world. This. You/me. The whole thing.

Q: Then the motivation you're saying gets harder and harder?

VR: Yeah, because the more we practice, the closer we get to complete fog, complete numbness.

Q: What happens then?

VR: Remedy, you mean? What happens?

Q: No, if we get close enough to contact that, what happens then?

VR: Well, we start to get more numb. Don't want to see it, don't want to see. Just don't want to see. You know it gets less sophisticated as you go along. More you practice, the less sophisticated it gets until finally you say, "No! I'm not gonna do it, I'm not gonna do it." That's getting closer to it, you see. Getting closer to it. Then, one should go over the teaching again, one should read the teaching again, so that one's experience begins to click with those who have experienced previously, because they're going to say exactly what's happening to you. That doesn't mean, imply any belief, but it just implies some sort of a [snaps fingers] intelligence clicks, and say, "what's what's happening." That's just simply what's happening. You know. So at that point, you have to go straight ahead.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Everybody's doing that tonight.

Q: I'm somewhat confused about the idea of motivation that you said that we're motivated by our experience of nonego, and yet I was getting the feeling from what you were saying that the only way to experience sudden glimpse is through practice.

VR: No, no, no, no, no. What—sudden glimpse means that anytime, all the time, there is a sense of no ego which happens, nonego which happens. Practice is experience of gap which is a relative, which is a reference point to nonego. These are sort of technical terms here, but still we should make them. Sudden glimpse is ordinary, extremely ordinary. Gap occurs through practice, through the experience of meditation practice. You know, as you're sitting, you're thinking, first you're doing technique, then you're picturing, then you're conversing, then there's a gap.

Q: Does that gap refer back to cloudy mind or...

VR: Eighth.

Q: Eighth, primordial ignorance.

VR: Primordial ignorance, refers back to that. And then what you do at that point is you say

“technique” [Laughter] or something like that. You know what I mean.

Q: The way you use the word “gap,” from my practice I understand that to refer to essentially the time between—alright I’ve said “thinking,” I’m following my breath, and frequently what’ll happen with me is I’ll have some sort of a period of intermittent, kind of following my breath, thoughts arising, and I don’t really..

VR: Label?

Q: Well, I don’t really grab onto them.

VR: Yeh?

Q: Then all of a sudden I wake up; I realize that I’m thinking about some train of nonsense.

VR: That’s right.

Q: Right. The gap then is the time between when I was following my breath and the time—and the sudden glimpse. Is that correct or?

VR: The gap, gap is between the time where you were sort of half-heartedly doing it and when you woke up.

Q: Right?

VR: Yeah.

Q: Then the discipline that you talked about refers to trying to—alright, those—you said I was a half-heartedly doing it. I think that refers to the fact that it’s partly I seem to be following my breath, but thoughts are arising.

VR: Right, exactly.

Q: Okay, but at another time you said a thought arises and its nature is nowness. Also from my readings and my own experience suggests that those thoughts are always going to arise, the question is whether or not I become attached to them.

VR: No, that’s not the question. The question is their origin, their duration, and their cessation. Not about you becoming attached to them particularly.

Q: Then what..

VR: Wrong end of the stick.

Q: Then my discipline has to do with the—for instance shortening their duration and..

VR: No.

Q: Cutting down their frequency?

VR: No Your discipline has to do with recognizing the process of their origin, their duration and their cessation, and the gap between that and the next one.

Q: Try as I may I seem totally unable to follow..

VR: Your breath?

Q: To be aware, alright, I guess it’s, it’s, it’s inherent in the terms I can’t be aware of going to sleep,

going to sleep. But..

VR: You can.

Q: In other words, a thought will arise and I can be aware right through that thought into my normal neurotic process?

VR: Uh huh.

Q: Just go right through and be aware of doing it.

VR: Uh huh. But the only way to do that is through adding that factor of gap which is the breathing technique. In other words, you're, the technique of sitting practice that we've taught—we practice here—itsself has no reference point. So in other words some neutral space has to be included, the background has to be included, cause the background is what sees the rising, duration, and the falling. Not a "you." A "you" doesn't see anything at all. A "you" sees you watching you thinking about you thinking about what you thought. That's not meditation. Are you getting what I'm saying?

Q: Yeh, but it doesn't seem to relate to my practice or to my experience of my practice.

VR: How long have you been practicing?

Q: Six weeks. Intermittently I should say.

VR: Who's your meditation instructor?

Q: Galen. [Laughter] Again it should be pointed out though that, that I was here for a week. In Galen's defense, I was here for a week, and I'm back here, and I haven't seen him. [Laughter]

VR: Nobody's fighting here. Don't worry about the defense. I'll be your lawyer. You keep practicing, okay? It's a very short time to try and draw too many conclusions. These teachings are meant as a confirmation of your experience. If you have not experienced them as such, keep practicing. If they do not, in time, make any sense, drop the whole thing.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Of course we have a question of who "what in time" means [Laughter] To some people time goes by very slowly. Some people it goes by so fast we miss it. So.

Q: I believe you said that doubt, no, that panic as a solid entity is separate from awakened mind.

VR: Uh huh.

Q: Is that part of the function of mind?

VR: Uh huh.

Q: Awakened mind?

VR: Uh huh.

Q: Thank you.

VR: It's part of the function of consciousness. Did you say "the mind?"

Q: No, mind seeing mind.

VR: Is what part of the function? Panic?

Q: No, the—panic as a separate entity, that that's not part of awakened mind. Is that..

VR: Function? O.K.?

Q: No.

VR: Panic? Try again. Just the question.

Q: There's awakened mind, and..

VR: That's what they say, yeah.

Q: The panic that comes as part of the energy, part of the doubt...

VR: As part of the doubt?

Q: Oh.

VR: Here we go. Here we go. This is what we do all the time. Let's follow it, okay? The panic that comes from the energy of awakened mind is what we've been talking about, yeah?

Q: Well, I thought you said that that was separate from awakened mind as a solid entity?

VR: Which?

Q: The panic.

VR: Right. That becomes an entity.

Q: On its own? Like does it have its own function. Apart..

VR: It has its own function in relationship to awakened mind. That's what's called ego, you and me basically.

Q: Uh, huh. Um, well, where does mind seeing mind fit into that?

VR: Well, using the meditation technique is the use of the eight types of consciousness to look at themselves.

Q: Uh-huh.

VR: How does it do that? Because by nature mind is awake. Awake can see. Asleep can't see..

Q: Uh-huh.

VR: In this case.

Q: So that whole experience including the gap and the eight types of consciousness, does that begin, that begins with the practice? The very beginning of that whole, of the experience?

VR: What begins with the practice?

Q: The experience.

VR: What experience?

Q: The experience of, well, isn't it called an experience of seeing mind?

VR: What?

Q: Sudden glimpse.

VR: You got so many things in there, it seems like a tossed salad. Do you know what you're talking about?

Q: I don't think so.

VR: Well, ask me something else later on. Cool down. You were just making gibberish out of the whole thing. I mean, you know, no offense. Just that that's what happens. That's what we call "the world." Time magazine. It's gibberish. Basically, I think if I remember correctly I've been saying one thing after the other. The problem is it's not to try and make everything work, fit it into your frame of reference. That's not what the teaching is all about. The Buddhist teaching is not in order for you to feel better or for you to feel sure. Teaching comes out straight as it is. This is what it is. You practice, see if it's right. Practice with whatever you've got. That's what we have.

Q: Sometimes when I make a mental note to do something like take out the garbage, and I'm on my way out the door and I, I'm in the process of forgetting to do that, then I remember. Are you suggesting that there's a way of being somehow aware of that process of remembering...

VR: And forgetting.

Q: Being in touch with the, you know, the details of that.

VR: Sure, yeah, definitely. The details of both though. Remembering and forgetting: the rubbing of the two. That's when you begin to see some sort of spark, you know, you feel some sort of sense of being alive.

Q: Well, the forgetting process seems like a natural thing you made a mental note and you forgot about it, I mean, you put it away.

VR: Well, the remembering process also seems like a natural thing.

Q: It seems to happen rather spontaneously and yet there's some cause, I wonder...

VR: Sure, sure.

Q: What is the cause...

VR: Garbage.

Q: Of remembering?

VR: In this case.

Q: Pardon?

VR: In this case garbage is the cause of remembering to throw it out. What's the cause of garbage? You know, having...

Q: But why does it happen at that instant? Why doesn't it happen, you know, maybe it's too obvious.

VR: Because there's such a thing as awake. Which is not a promise, particularly. Just a kind of a subtle hint from the Buddha. But that happens because there is a basic state, basic field, intelligence which has nothing to do with the garbage per se, or the person throwing it out. Well, okay, you got to get up early. Go ahead. [Laughter]

Q: What's the difference between going straight ahead and maybe jumping back and forth really fast so you think you're going straight ahead.

VR: That's the difference. That's it. [Laughter]

The difference is is that when you have hesitation you step beyond it in going straight ahead. In other words, you have your baggage with you in meditation practice and it's called "me," Joe Blow, who came here with past, present, future, everything, whatever you want to call it. And you have motivation because you somehow have an inkling that there's something about you and also something about the environment, something about experience which is real. And you also have a doubt that that experience, that feeling is real. So in other words you have unreality. So you have all that stuff and you got it on your back and you're taking it with you. See? At some point, you say, "Let me just rest here, just for a minute. It's really heavy." That's the point when you keep going. Not from the point of view of somebody stick a knife in your back. But just from the point of view of waking up [snaps fingers] that at that point is when you fall into what's called a samsaric mind, confused world. When you would like to just take a little rest from being awake, just a moment of recreation. It happens just that quickly. But in order to recognize it, we have to see how consciousness develops, you see. That's the whole reason for the practice, so that you can recognize the moment when that happens. Okay?

Q: Okay.

VR: Hmm. Okay.

Q: Back to the gap. When during meditation practice, when you're following your breath and thought, but you don't latch onto any thought what you said to the person over there seemed to be that when you do latch onto a thought that's-and awareness is no, has stopped, is that gap? Or is it when you wake up from that?

VR: The space in between. The space in between the two. What you just said is what's called relative reference mind, ego, ego mind. Is it this one or is it that one? We say it's space in between. Okay, that was a "there is no space in between," yeah? Sit in practice, there is. Or there isn't But still, there is. [Laughs]

Q: Okay.

VR: There is. Definitely, there's, there's something there that isn't there when you look for the other thing. [Laughs] I hope everybody swallowed that one. That was terrific.

Q: In New York you talked about holding back as being an expression of egolessness. Can you talk about the difference between hesitation and holding back?

VR: Well, holding back means not, in this case, not jumping to impulse. Because you've practiced to the point where you see that impulse is that jump from eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, bababa and phenomenal world, I mean relative world. Holding back means holding on to each moment from the point of view of looking at it. If you look at it, that means that, in this case, you have nothing to gain from looking at it, except seeing what it is. So that's kind of holding back from the point of view of egolessness, means holding onto that, in other words, looking at that has no gain involved. Nobody wins, nobody loses.

Q: So hesitation would have one of, would have some reference to either gain or loss?

VR: Right. Well, you want to do it. O.K. This is it. This is the best of times, and the worst of times.

Q: Umm.

VR: Speak.

Q: What's the difference between inquisitive mind that takes some sort of interest in trying to say exactly what experience is, and the aggression of trying to figure it all out?

VR: No gain.

Q: No gain?

VR: No loss. No gain. Inquisitive mind doesn't have any result involved particularly. It just looks.

Q: Is it trying to figure it all out, is it trying to make it fit in with your preconceptions of how things are?

VR: Or the Republican party or, you know, Mao Tse Tung, or whoever you know. "You" could be "them" at this point. You know. That's how solid "you" is. You know. You say, "I'm me." But you are also Mao Tse Tung and, you know, whoever you happen to believe in at that moment. You know, Inquisitive mind is that which looks beyond loss and gain.

Q: Thank you.

VR: Good.

I think we had better close at this point because tomorrow we have again another day of sitting practice and I think also we have the final tape of the New York City ITS tomorrow. And so it's a shortened day tomorrow because we have some weddings in the evening. So I would like everybody to try their best to sit the whole day and make this a practical teaching, not theoretical one. That's important. Or else it becomes just so much hot air like everything else. It has to be applied. Foolish as it may seem, it has to be applied. It might seem like a reverse logic. How can you apply nothing to nothing to nothing? But we must connect heart and mind, as we say, together through practice, that's important. Tomorrow we have just as I said a short nyinthun day because of the weddings, so I request all of you on behalf of yourselves to do your best and sit the whole day. And we'll continue on Monday and come to our first conclusions. [Laughs]

Good night.