



THE TEACUP & THE SKULLCUP

Chögyam Trungpa on Zen and Tantra



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Judith L. Lief and
David Schneider, Editors

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NOTE ON TERMS: Sanskrit and Tibetan terms, when defined, are shown in italic at first instance. Tibetan terms are spelled phonetically and no transliteration is given. Since “Zen” is a specific type of Buddhist school of thought, it is always capitalized; “tantra”—literally translated as “continuity”—is a broad general term for vajrayana. It is shown in lower case. Diacritics are used on Sanskrit words in the title and in the direct quote from *The Life and Teachings of Nāropa*, but not used otherwise.

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INTRODUCTION

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY of 1974, Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche began teaching the first of two seminars on Zen and tantra. He was in the early phase of a North American career that would last seventeen years, and would be a potent force in the spiritual constellation of the continent. Beginning very modestly, Trungpa Rinpoche would eventually give hundreds of public and private seminars, comprising thousands of individual teaching talks. The record of his published work—still far from complete—includes scores of books, among them volumes of poetry and calligraphy.¹ Despite his inveterate curiosity, his wide-ranging, multicultural education, and a seemingly boundless range of endeavor,² Trungpa Rinpoche focused the bulk of his enormous energy on his students. In his first three years in North America (1970–73) he taught fundamental topics of the Buddhist path and view of mind, always with a strong emphasis on the practice of meditation, and on the example of the vajra masters in his lineage. His uncompromising yet charming style attracted many students in these first years, and of these no small portion were from Zen sanghas. The talks in this volume appear, from a thirty-year remove, to signal a turning point for the community. Acknowledging the strength and discipline

¹ He was a vigorous artist as well, mounting several full-scale environmental installations, writing pieces for theatre and film, and—despite working mindfully and utterly without hurry—producing an astonishing number of original calligraphs, drawings, photographs, and lithographs.

² As a teacher and meditation master, he met with and counseled professionals from the fields of psychology, medicine, business, and education, founding in this latter branch a collegial institute for learning in 1974 that developed into the fully accredited Naropa University.

gained from Zen influence, Trungpa Rinpoche distinguishes the two traditions, and points out the path on which he intends to take his students.

If, in these first years, Trungpa Rinpoche emphasized the Tibetan vajrayana, he could scarcely have done otherwise: he'd been thoroughly trained in the system since early childhood, and was by nature as well as by training a crazy-wisdom, tantric adept. He literally embodied the vajrayana. In America, he'd given many talks describing tantra. More significantly and more famously, he had in his talks and demeanor created an atmosphere that itself seemed tantric: an atmosphere at once electric and ordinary, mysterious and simple, clarifying and confusing, boring and magnetic.

By the time he gave the seminars in this book, Trungpa Rinpoche had only begun to present the full structure of the nine-yana path. During the three months prior to these talks, he had convened and taught the Vajradhatu Seminary—the first of thirteen such three-month programs—in which he detailed the Buddhist path from beginning to end. His manner of presentation was modern and sometimes shocking, but the path he described, and the texts upon which he based his exposition, were classical. Also classical, and also shocking to the new seminarians, was his introduction of a higher level of discipline and academic study. He worked in a systematic way, portraying the nine yantras almost as a surveyor or cartographer would, and he expected people to keep up. As for fully entering his students into the vajrayana with transmission and empowerment, he was on the verge of it, but had not yet done it.

Trungpa Rinpoche had, on the other hand, made profound commitments to these students, and he was about to accept them formally as tantric disciples. The tradition at this point was to warn people away from such irreversible commitment, to put up obstacles, and at the very least, to make sure they knew what they were getting into. Later in the summer of 1974, he taught explicitly, extensively, and publicly on tantra, in a series of fifteen talks at the first convocation of the Naropa Institute in Boulder.³ But in the wintry days at the beginning of the

year, Trungpa Rinpoche seemed interested first in making distinctions, pointing out to his students (and other assorted listeners) how a tantric path might differ from the style and feeling and emphasis that had grown up in his community so far—a style that he cheerfully admitted owed much to Zen. “I think we are closer to Zen. We may be practicing Zen in the spirit of tantra,” is how he put it, chuckling, when questioned in the second of these lectures.

This act of distinction, subtle but definite, was carried out with utmost respect for both traditions. That he should feel respect and devotion to his own crazy-wisdom lineage and tradition is normal. That Trungpa Rinpoche should display affectionate, penetrating insight with regard to Zen is remarkable, attributable possibly to a number of close friendships he'd forged with Zen masters in North America. Through these friendships, one can feel his respect for the Zen tradition altogether, and how it led to his using certain Zen forms for his public meditation halls and rituals. Possibly one can feel as well why so many Zen students were drawn to Trungpa Rinpoche. For whichever reason they came, these practitioners had a definite effect on the emerging character of his “scene,” and he developed in return a humorous, teasing—sometimes mocking—approach in dealing with these people. He was not above puncturing a student's arrogance by calling something they'd said or done “very Zen,” or of lamenting—as he does in these talks—his American students' misreading of the most functional aspects of Zen form, turning basic routines into aesthetic contests. In 1978, Trungpa Rinpoche criticized Zen students to the great amusement of his audience, remarking that “although they might have excellent posture in the Zendo, the minute they take off their robes and go off in their apartments, they develop their own little neuroses. They ... carry on hanky-panky of all kinds in their apartments—un-Zen hanky-panky!”

³ Later edited and published as *Journey Without Goal*, Prajna Publications, 1981.



Suzuki Roshi

His first and most significant encounter with Zen teachers in North America was with Suzuki Roshi, founding abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center. Suzuki Roshi, his wife Suzuki Sensei (mostly known simply as “Okusan”), and Trungpa Rinpoche and his wife Diana Mukpo, were all introduced in May of 1970 by Rinpoche’s publisher, Sam Bercholz. During a visit to Zen Center, an immediate affinity—what everyone

who saw it called a “heart connection”—sprang up between the two teachers. Trungpa Rinpoche later confided to his wife that Suzuki Roshi was the first person he’d met in America who reminded him of his root guru in Tibet, Jamgön Kongtrül. He went on to say that in Roshi he’d found his first spiritual friend in the West.

By 1970, Suzuki Roshi had been living and teaching in North America for a dozen years, working intensively with the American students who’d joined his sitting practice, and the community that had grown up around him. With the purchase in the late 1960s of Tassajara, a monastery deep in the mountains of Los Padres National Forest, and the publication of Suzuki’s first book, *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* in 1970, the Zen Center had begun to grow rapidly. Suzuki Roshi often discussed the challenge of presenting traditional Zen Buddhist dharma in a cultural vacuum, to American students who fit no category that he, a Japanese teacher, was familiar with. He struggled with this, and his struggle gave rise to innovative, powerful teachings and a vigorous community.

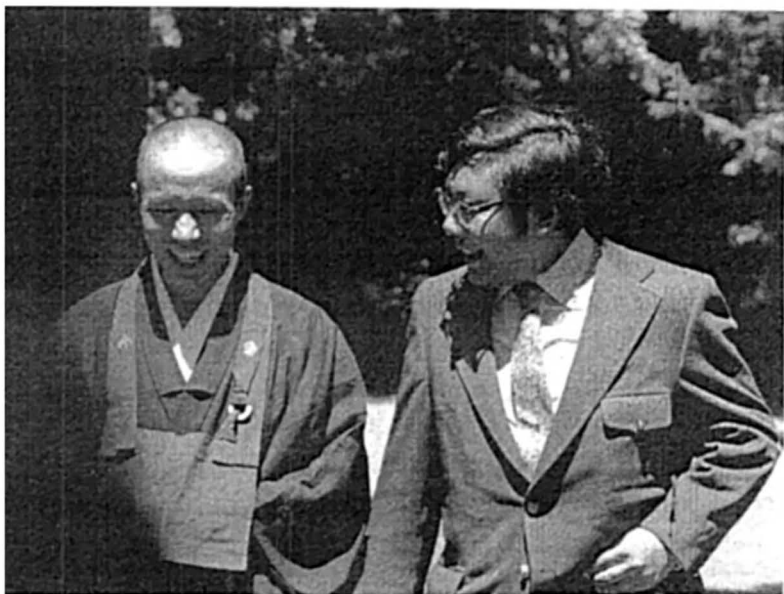
According to biographer David Chadwick, Suzuki Roshi was familiar with Trungpa Rinpoche’s work, as Roshi had read *Meditation in Action*, and had heard praise from his own students who’d met the young Tibetan. On this first visit, Trungpa Rinpoche was quite interested in how Suzuki Roshi taught the technique of counting breaths during sitting meditation, and the Tibetan also took careful note of forms and atmosphere at Zen Center. During his first years in America, Rinpoche had stressed sitting meditation for his students—distinct from other practices or pujas in the Tibetan traditions—but had not given a standardized technique. When he finally chose a uniform style of practice for his students, Rinpoche too placed emphasis on breath as the primary object of meditation, but differently from Zen. The instructions for posture also were slightly different—more relaxed—and the method of working with thoughts also varied from the Zen style. The practice was different, but as he said “not so different.” He adopted Zen sitting cushions known

as *zafus*, but had them sewn in red and yellow instead of Zen black; he incorporated the Zen practice of alternating sitting and walking periods throughout a practice block, but instituted a variable, as opposed to predictable, schedule. As he did with many forms he encountered in the West, Trungpa Rinpoche blended aspects that seemed to be working for American students with the traditional Tibetan ways he'd inherited; he created forms that were fresh and that fit.

In their subsequent meetings and in letters, Suzuki Roshi and Trungpa Rinpoche shared ideas for furthering buddhadharma in America, among them exchanging students and teachings, founding a Buddhist university, and creating a dharmically oriented therapeutic community. Trungpa Rinpoche did send several of his senior students for training to Tassajara, and with Suzuki Roshi's blessing, used experienced Zen Center practitioners to lead extended sittings—day-long (*nyinthün*) and month-long (*dathün*) retreats—in his burgeoning scene in Vermont and later the Rocky Mountains.

An example of Trungpa Rinpoche's regard for Suzuki Roshi is that during the first dathün in North America, he allowed the rule of silence to be lifted only once each day—for a reading from *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. But the most striking expression of veneration is that from their first meeting, until his death in 1987, Trungpa Rinpoche had placed on every shrine wall, in every center associated with his work, a picture of Suzuki Roshi. The only other photos above the shrine were of Trungpa Rinpoche, the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, and Trungpa Rinpoche's closest root teachers; that Suzuki Roshi's Japanese face looked out from among Tibetan lineage holders was powerful poetry. It was also fitting, for Suzuki Roshi referred to Trungpa Rinpoche as being "like my son."

It is relatively difficult to manipulate *shamatha-vipashyana* for personal aggrandizement, or to make a trip out of *shikantaza*, as Roshi called the purest form of Zen sitting. But both teachers ended up working patiently (if occasionally wrathfully) to keep their students on a goal-



Trungpa Rinpoche with Kobun Chino Otagawa

less path. The America they found themselves in resembled a spiritual jungle: it was fertile, opulent, and rich; it was also overgrown, chaotic, and full of danger for the seeker. Suzuki Roshi and Trungpa Rinpoche shared between them the disappointments and loneliness they felt in walking through that jungle, and in leading others through it.

The next important Zen connection Trungpa Rinpoche made was with the soft-spoken, powerful master Kobun Chino Otagawa. When Rinpoche had asked Suzuki Roshi about calligraphy, Roshi directed him to Kobun, as the young teacher liked to be called, living at that time about an hour's drive south of San Francisco. Their actual meeting turned out to be almost accidental. Trungpa Rinpoche had come to Los Altos to consult with a group of psychologists. Abe Maslow, Anthony Sutich, and others, including Sonja Margulies, editor of the influential *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, wanted to meet Trungpa Rinpoche

because of his startling presentation of psychology as integrated into spiritual life. Margulies happened to be studying Zen under Kobun, and when Rinpoche arrived, she made a point of introducing the two.

“They hit it off immediately,” Margulies recalls. “They were both young men—Asians out of their cultures—both had married young Western girls—Kobun, a red head, Trungpa, a blond—and both had young children. They had a lot in common.” Beyond that, both men had admiring connections to Suzuki Roshi, were poets, would prove themselves master calligraphers, and both had an intuitive ability to speak the dharma to Western students, though in very different styles. On this early visit they did calligraphy together. Kobun had a variety of fine Japanese brushes, including a very large one. Rinpoche had never worked with a brush of such scale—indeed Tibetan syllables are usually written with a stylus—but he delighted in working with this one. Through the years, Trungpa Rinpoche developed a unique style of writing, blending brush calligraphy with the various scripts of formal Tibetan calligraphy.

Kobun, having trained at Eiheiiji Monastery in ceremony and ritual, helped with these aspects of practice at Zen Center when he first came to America. Starting in the middle 1970s, as Trungpa Rinpoche gradually introduced more discipline and form to his community, Kobun performed this same role for Vajradhatu. He taught students the traditional approach to chanting, drumming, ritual procession, and most invasively for the students, Zen-monastery-style eating, with *oryoki* bowls. Kobun introduced *oryoki* practice with care and a certain trepidation, for it is an intimate, inner practice of the Zen tradition. Trungpa Rinpoche prized *oryoki* practice highly, and though it met resistance among his students, he repeatedly did his best to encourage the practice.

Another important stream of teachings flowed into Shambhala-Vajradhatu through connection to Kobun: the practice of the way of the bow, *kyudo*. In the mid-1970s Kobun introduced Trungpa Rinpoche to

his own kyudo master and family friend, Kanjuro Shibata Sensei, twentieth in a familial succession of bowmakers to the throne of Japan. Trungpa Rinpoche invited Shibata Sensei to teach his martial art to the Shambhala sangha, and to take up residence in Colorado. Over time, Shibata Sensei acceded to both requests, moving with his wife to Boulder and propagating a form of kyudo that he felt cleaved to its spiritual roots. Sensei scorned what he termed “sports kyudo”—purely trying to hit the target and win competitions. In Shambhala, Shibata Sensei was able to pass on the profound heart of his tradition. Mrs. Shibata, herself a master of several Japanese *do* (ways) introduced students to the profundity of *kado* (the way of flowers) and *chanoyu* (tea ceremony).

When Trungpa Rinpoche created Naropa Institute in 1974, fulfilling another part of the vision he'd shared with Suzuki Roshi, he asked



Trungpa Rinpoche with Kanjuro Shibata Sensei



Trungpa Rinpoche with Eido Shimano Roshi

Kobun to help with the place, and to look after it in the future. Kobun visited Naropa every year until his tragic death in the summer of 2001, guiding the school with his own elegant, understated presence and his serious practice. At the time of his death, Kobun held the Wisdom Chair at Naropa, and numerous of his artworks graced the campus.

The friendship between Kobun and Trungpa Rinpoche remained through the years as it had begun—gentle, loving, creative. “It was like family,” observed publisher Sam Bercholz. “There was absolutely no one-upmanship; they connected in a way that was simply like sharing food and drink. Kobun was always just there.” Indeed, early in their friendship, Kobun and Rinpoche pledged to be reborn as brothers throughout their lives.

In 1971, Eido Shimano Roshi hosted a visit from Trungpa Rinpoche. Eido Roshi—known then as Tai-san—was a student of the great Soen Roshi, who’d sent him to the West. Tai-san had been eager to come, and had learned a very good English; he’d first visited New York in

1963, serving as translator to Yasutani Roshi. Eido Roshi was by 1971 a dynamic, macho-tending Zen teacher of the old style: he favored things Japanese and strict. He could on the other hand create an electrifying atmosphere through dramatic use of Zen forms, as well as his intense personal presence. He was also a talented artist.

Eido Roshi and Trungpa Rinpoche met together a number of times in Eido's home in New York, at least once together with Soen Roshi himself. On this occasion, Eido Roshi warned Trungpa Rinpoche—famous for making his students wait hours for a talk—that if he were to come to meet Soen, he would have to be on time. Rinpoche arrived a very correct ten minutes early. The masters all did calligraphy together and were served sake by a devoted student who'd bizarrely kept the bottle against her body for three days. She'd been told that sake tasted best at "human body temperature."

Eido Roshi was in equal measure suspicious of and fascinated by Trungpa Rinpoche. "Who is this guy?" he asked a student who knew them both. What Roshi seemed to want to know was how Trungpa Rinpoche could be an acknowledged lineage master, and scholar with a devoted following, and at the same time have habits like smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and conducting extramarital affairs with his students. Every time Eido Roshi had ventured into these behaviors—and it seems he ventured fairly often—he suffered unpleasant consequences. The student explained that Rinpoche hid neither his drinking nor his philandering, that deceit and shame played no role in his approach, and that he genuinely seemed to love all his students, not only the female ones with whom the intimacy developed to a point of physical love.

Eido Roshi came to Karmê Chöling after Rinpoche's death in 1987, where Trungpa Rinpoche was to be cremated. Unable to stay for the ceremony because of prior commitments, Roshi meditated with Rinpoche's body, met with his wife and eldest son (the present Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche), and performed private rituals. He also left as a gift

a box of priceless incense that was subsequently used at the cremation. Roshi felt so touched at Karmê Chöling that he stayed until the last minute before his flight, soaking up the atmosphere of devotion, and of the mindful, cheerful, indefatigable preparation that had been going on for many weeks. As his car finally raced at illegal speeds toward the airport, he proclaimed to his attendant over and again that he'd at last seen the greatness of Trungpa Rinpoche; he'd seen Rinpoche's greatness in the environment of Karmê Chöling and in the comportment of his students. Roshi announced to his stressed driver that Trungpa Rinpoche was in fact *kami*. This nomination from Shinto tradition would have pleased Trungpa Rinpoche very much, as it refers to a larger-than-human energy usually associated with environments—rivers, valleys, mountains, springs, and so on; such energy could also be found associated with noble clans, nation-states, and genuine spiritual practice, and is in many ways equivalent to the Tibetan term *drala*. Invoking and manifesting drala had filled the last ten years of Trungpa Rinpoche's life and teaching.

It was at the 1976 ceremony installing Eido Roshi as abbot of Dai Bosatsu Monastery in upstate New York that Trungpa Rinpoche met Maezumi Roshi. This complex and important friendship post-dates the talks in this book and is thus beyond its scope, but perhaps one story might be included, to show how Trungpa Rinpoche had begun to assume a "care-taking," advisory role toward the Zen teachers around him.

Dennis Genpo Merzel (now Roshi) acted as Maezumi Roshi's attendant at the Dai Bosatsu ceremony, and in this capacity he scurried around between events, inviting people to come to Maezumi Roshi's room for tea and refreshments. Trungpa Rinpoche accepted the invitation, and sat next to Genpo during the palaver. At one point Rinpoche leaned over and quietly asked, "Are you Roshi's attendant?"

Until this time, Genpo had only thought of himself as Maezumi Roshi's student, so he replied, "Sort of." "Then you should never leave



Kwong Roshi

his side!” Rinpoche told him sharply. Genpo felt this direct address as a wake-up call—for himself personally, and for the entire Zen Center of Los Angeles community—on how to attend their teacher.

The fatherly approach Trungpa Rinpoche took toward young Zen teachers went quite a bit further in the case of Jakusho Bill Kwong Roshi. Bill Kwong had been a close and important disciple of Suzuki Roshi’s, and had, with the help of Zen Center and Richard Baker, gotten an excellent piece of land in the Sonoma Valley on which to establish a Zen practice place after Suzuki Roshi’s death. Trungpa Rinpoche visited him often at what came to be called Sonoma Mountain Zen Center; he made sure as

well that Kwong was invited to any of his appearances in the San Francisco Bay area, and given a good seat in the front row.

But there were demands as well. Kwong was asked to come help with the first dathün in Colorado, and Trungpa Rinpoche heightened the communication between them, not allowing empty forms to suffice. When Kwong replied once in an automatic way to Rinpoche's inquiry, saying he was "fine," Trungpa Rinpoche fixed him with a stare, and a vigorous "What!?" that left the young Kwong feeling he'd been "crushed to pieces," with the fragments falling into Trungpa Rinpoche's palm. On another occasion, Trungpa Rinpoche sat rolling a *vajra* in his hand—a symbolic thunderbolt/weapon/scepter used in tantric practice—and Kwong asked somewhat idly what it was. Trungpa Rinpoche simply handed it to him, as a gift.

That golden vajra sits today on the main altar at Sonoma Mountain, and in the middle of an open grassy hill a few hundred yards away, a portion of Trungpa Rinpoche's bones lie in a beautiful, copper and cedar, Japanese-style reliquary hut. Another hundred yards further on, down a winding path to a shady grove of oak and laurel, some of Suzuki Roshi's ashes are buried beneath the kind of stupa he preferred—a large, shapely granite boulder. Thus the two teachers are in a kind of characteristic posthumous proximity. Both Kwong Roshi and Kobun observed that while Zen is full of shadow, indirect allusion, hiddenness, mystery, and moonlight, the vajrayana taught by Trungpa Rinpoche radiated with sunlight and brilliant color and clarity and openness.

In the talks in this book, Trungpa Rinpoche uses exactly this kind of aesthetic contrast to tease out the differences in the two paths. Where Zen aesthetic, based in the yogacharan tradition of "mind-only," leads to statements of refined simplicity and elegance, tantra needs no statement at all, opting for the naked bluntness of things as they are. Where Zen leads to a clear, open, lofty mind, tantra points to ordinary mind, the lowest of the low. Trungpa Rinpoche pictured such differences for his

hirsute audiences as being comparable to a beautifully dressed noble person (Zen), as opposed to an unemployed, unshaven samurai (tantra), or like the teacup and skullcup of this book's title. That the tantric aesthetic was rougher stemmed not from its lack of sophistication or practice, but rather from the notion that refinement or self-conscious artistic statement were no longer necessary for the tantric yogi.

These varied approaches to art and aesthetic expression, Trungpa Rinpoche says, derive from the philosophical roots underpinning the two traditions. Scholars and surveyors of Buddhism have long been fond of placing Zen in categories, associating it with this or that textual tradition. (The great Edward Conze's "mahayana Buddhism plus Chinese jokes" is not atypical.) When Trungpa Rinpoche places Zen at the highest development of the mahayana, he does so not based on sutra allusion or historical accident alone. He recognizes Zen as an insider, with the sure feeling of one whose entire life had been devoted to learning and (more so) to practicing the paths of Buddhism; he recognizes Zen as one who himself had grown up in a monastery, and knew intimately how the training felt and worked on a student; he recognizes Zen as one who had studied devotedly at the feet of his teachers, and knew the crucial function of "warm hand to warm hand" lineage transmission in Zen.

In these seminars Trungpa Rinpoche praises Zen as an "extraordinary development of precision"; he calls it fantastic, he points out how with its sharp black-and-white distinctions, and exhausting monastic schedule, Zen leads to a full realization of *prajna* (wisdom). Then he goes on to say that tantra was a further step. And yet there is no sense of hierarchy imposed—or at least no clear one. While Zen stands as the fruition of mahayana, Trungpa Rinpoche posits, crazy wisdom reaches the fruition of vajrayana, the third great aspect of the Buddhist path.

It is startling that Trungpa Rinpoche could posit tantra as an evolution of Zen, a step beyond it, while conveying absolutely no sense of belittlement. But that is exactly what he manages in the seminars, through

sympathetic insight and admiration. The matter of their relative status for him is not clear-cut in any case. In other talks on Zen, Rinpoche acknowledged that it would definitely be possible for Zen practitioners to attain tantric realization, and he mentions Suzuki Roshi as an example of someone who had done it. He further allowed, in the commentary on the Zen “oxherding” pictures included in this volume, that the latter illustrations portray tantric understanding. He wrote, “. . .the final realization of Zen leads to the wisdom of *maha ati*” (the highest level of tantra). According to Rinpoche’s commentary, this is portrayed in the seventh drawing of the sequence. The eighth, ninth, and tenth pictures—all further steps on the Zen path—show different aspects of tantric enlightenment. Thus on the one hand Zen leads to tantra, but on the other hand, the Zen path, seen through its art, accurately describes tantric fruition—how could this be? Perhaps Zen and tantra are not what one thinks.

ON TRUST IN THE HEART (HSIN-HSIN MING) ¹

Attributed to Sent-ts'an, the third Patriarch of the Dhyana Sect

Translated by Arthur Waley

The Perfect Way is only difficult for those who pick and choose;
Do not like, do not dislike; all will then be clear.
Make a hairbreadth difference, and Heaven and Earth are set apart;
If you want the truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against.
The struggle between “for” and “against” is the mind’s worst disease;
While the deep meaning is misunderstood, it is useless to meditate on Rest.
It [the Buddha-nature] is blank and featureless as space; it has no “too little”
or “too much”;
Only because we take and reject does it seem to us not to be so.
Do not chase after Entanglements as though they were real things,
Do not try to drive pain away by pretending that it is not real;
Pain, if you seek serenity in Oneness, will vanish of its own accord.
Stop all movement in order to get rest, and rest will itself be restless;
Linger over either extreme, and Oneness is forever lost.
Those who cannot attain to Oneness in either case will fail:
To banish Reality is to sink deeper into the Real;

¹ Trungpa Rinpoche was very fond of this poem and encouraged his students to study it. It was a standard reading during full-day group meditation sessions held in the early seventies called *sesshins*, following the Zen convention, and later referred to as *nyinthüns*, a Tibetan term meaning day-long sitting. In teacup-skullcup fashion, other standard readings included poetry of the great mahasiddha Saraha, and the writings of ati masters Petrül Rinpoche and Jigme Lingpa.

Allegiance to the Void implies denial of its voidness.

The more you talk about It, the more you think about It, the further
from It you go;

Stop talking, stop thinking, and there is nothing you will not understand.

Return to the Root and you will find the Meaning;

Pursue the Light, and you will lose its source,

Look inward, and in a flash you will conquer the Apparent and the Void.

For the whirligigs of Apparent and Void all come from mistaken views;

There is no need to seek Truth; only stop having views.

Do not accept either position [Assertion and Negation], examine it or
pursue it;

At the least thought of "Is" and "Isn't" there is chaos and the Mind is lost.

Though the two exist because of the One, do not cling to the One;

Only when no thought arises are the Dharmas without blame.

No blame, no Dharmas; no arising, no thought.

The doer vanishes along with the deed,

The deed disappears when the doer is annihilated.

The deed has no function apart from the doer;

The doer has no function apart from the deed.

The ultimate Truth about both Extremes is that they are One Void.

In that One Void the two are not distinguished;

Each contains complete within itself the Ten Thousand Forms.

Only if we boggle over fine and coarse are we tempted to take sides.

In its essence the Great Way is all-embracing;

It is as wrong to call it easy as to call it hard.

Partial views are irresolute and insecure,

Now at a gallop, now lagging in the rear.

Clinging to this or to that beyond measure

The heart trusts to bypaths that lead it astray.

Let things take their own course; know that the Essence will neither go
nor stay;

Let your nature blend with the Way and wander in it free from care.

Thoughts that are fettered turn from Truth,

Sink into the unwise habit of "not liking."

"Not liking" brings weariness of spirit; estrangements serve no purpose.

If you want to follow the doctrine of the One, do not rage against the
World of the Senses.

Only by accepting the World of the Senses can you share in the True
Perception.

Those who know most, do least; folly ties its own bonds.

In the Dharma there are no separate dharmas, only the foolish cleave
To their own preferences and attachments.

To use Thought to devise thoughts, what more misguided than this?

Ignorance creates Rest and Unrest; Wisdom neither loves nor hates.

All that belongs to the Two Extremes is inference falsely drawn—

A dream-phantom, a flower in the air. Why strive to grasp it in the hand?

"Is" and "Isn't," gain and loss banish once for all:

If the eyes do not close in sleep there can be no evil dreams;

If the mind makes no distinctions all Dharmas become one.

Let the One with its mystery blot out all memory of complications.

Let the thought of the Dharmas as All-One bring you to the So-in-itself.

Thus their origin is forgotten and nothing is left to make us pit one
against the other.

Regard motion as though it were stationary, and what becomes of motion?

Treat the stationary as though it moved, and that disposes of the
stationary.

Both these having thus been disposed of, what becomes of the One?

At the ultimate point, beyond which you can go no further,

You get to where there are no rules, no standards,

To where thought can accept Impartiality,

To where effect of action ceases,

Doubt is washed away, belief has no obstacle.

Nothing is left over, nothing remembered;
 Space is bright, but self-illuminated; no power of mind is exerted.
 Nor indeed could mere thought bring us to such a place.
 Nor could sense or feeling comprehend it.
 It is the Truly-so, the Transcendent Sphere, where there is neither He
 nor I.

For swift converse with this sphere use the concept "Not Two";
 In the "Not Two" are no separate things, yet all things are included.
 The wise throughout the Ten Quarters have had access to this Primal Truth;
 For it is not a thing with extension in Time or Space;
 A moment and an aeon for it are one.
 Whether we see it or fail to see it, it is manifest always and everywhere.
 The very small is as the very large when boundaries are forgotten;
 The very large is as the very small when its outlines are not seen.
 Being is an aspect of Non-being; Non-being is an aspect of Being.
 In climes of thought where it is not so the mind does ill to dwell.
 The One is none other than the All, the All none other than the One.
 Take your stand on this, and the rest will follow of its own accord;
 To trust in the Heart is the Not Two, the Not Two is to trust in the
 Heart.

I have spoken, but in vain; for what can words tell
 Of things that have no yesterday, tomorrow or today?

PART ONE

THE AWAKENING OF PRAJNA



VERY PRACTICAL JOKE

In Zen, there is that faint smile—the big joke quality, the morning star quality—taking place all the time, which provides comic relief. There are little glimpses, little crumbs of light-handedness in the midst of the enormous black robes, black zafus, and black heavy-handed environment that goes on in Zen. The way Zen people seek prajna is extraordinarily precise.

IN THIS SEMINAR we are going to examine the different conclusions of Zen and tantra. If we begin to discuss the two approaches, we will be lost. If we take a glimpse at the conclusions, we might have something more concrete. The reason is that all of us are more or less thoroughly involved in, or at least interested in, the practice of meditation.

At this stage in the Buddhist development of America, both Zen and tantra have become extraordinarily seductive. In comparing the two, we are not talking about competition between them or which is best. Instead, we are looking at the landmarks that have developed in the Zen tradition, as well as the landmarks of the tantric tradition. Although we are mainly talking about different landmarks, we still cannot dismiss the gradual, linear process in which the teachings were presented by the Buddha. We cannot dismiss the turning of the dharma wheel of the *sutra* teachings

of the hinayana and mahayana and of the teachings of both lower and higher tantras. We still have to go through that linear approach.

First comes Zen. In the Zen tradition, the basis of life or the basis of discipline is accuracy. We could quite safely say that: it is accuracy. To a certain extent, it is the accuracy of black and white. In the Zen tradition there is no gray, nor is there yellow, red, green, or blue: it is black and white. That is the *paramita* of meditation: dhyana practice, Zen practice, or Ch'an. The very nature of black and white brings a student of Zen into a highly disciplined place, without any escape. A practitioner of Zen or Ch'an has been cornered by the choicelessness and also cornered by the lack of entertainment. So we could say that Zen is a practitioner's lineage, and a Zen student is a traditional practitioner in the mahayana school of discipline, the highest one of all.

Another branch of the mahayana school, which developed in Tibet, can be seen in the Gelukpa tradition. In India, the Nalanda and Vikramashila universities developed a school of logic in which, instead of doing pure sitting practice, you replace the sitting by the practice of sharpening your intellect. This demands that the basic sophistication of intelligence is raised up to the highest point, as much as one can, to the point of limitlessness. At that point, ordinary logical conclusions and logical debates become meaningless, and one develops higher thinking—the epitome of the highest way of relating with the reasoning mind.

In the Zen tradition, it seems that the whole approach is intuitive. The student's mind is put into situations of practice and into the simplicity of discipline, so that the student does not have a chance to use his or her intellect or logical mind at all. The only use of logical mind such a student could develop is the choice at the beginning to decide to go to such and such a temple and study under such and such a master. That is the student's only intellectual choice; and that choice may be tinged with emotionalism and intuitive feelings towards Buddhism and committing oneself to it. But

beyond that, once a student has entered into Zen discipline, there is no place for intellect. It is simple and direct. For example, if you are composing your own verses about the dharma, the master catches you if the slightest intellectualization comes up. Such intellectualization is cut down and swept away along with the dust on the meditation hall floor.

A dichotomy arises at this point, in that Zen logic is constantly engrossed with relative reference points. We could almost say that if a person doesn't have any relative reference to the world, it is impossible for that person to understand Zen.

"If, as it's been said, prajna is neither big nor small, then what?"

"Since it has been said that prajna is neither big nor small, then I don't know."

"That's it! You don't know."

Not knowing prajna, you are confronted with the choice of whether you should associate yourself with prajna as large or small. But you have lost your choice because you have no hold on either of them and you are bewildered. At that point, in the middle of bewilderment, a very refreshing glimpse of a gap begins to appear in your state of mind. You caught something—or you missed it.

Ironically, the Zen tradition is largely based on dichotomies and paradoxes of all kinds, but those paradoxes are more about feeling, rather than purely about logic. It's like ordering a meal in a restaurant. Most people don't think in terms of the chemical interaction between certain foods or the combinations that would bring health, happiness, and pleasure—they order food according to what they desire. You choose based on what you intuitively desire or need; you lack something and you want to fulfill it. You may desire a certain particular dish that sounds tasty—but then another dish also sounds tasty, so how do you choose between the two? You don't know. Then somebody gives you a dish. They push it onto your table and say, "Take it and eat it." You are handed this plateful

and you have no idea what it is. That was the choice: a choice was made because of your uncertainty. You were confused by the two simultaneous extremes and now you have no idea what it is. In the same way as you have no idea what it is, because of bewilderment and confusion—as well as prajna—Zen students are extraordinarily receptive and open.

From that point of view, Zen could be said to be the biggest joke that has ever been played in the spiritual realm. But it is a practical joke, very practical. However, there is a difference between a joke and a trick. One of the problems that we in America have ended up with is that when people try to be “Zennie,” they do that by being tricky. A lot of seeming charlatans have managed to escape, to get away with that. Not only do they get away with it themselves, but they impose their egohood onto others. Their trickiness undermines others’ openness, and the whole thing feels so extremely awesome and reverent, so solid and solemn. In the name of Zen in this country, a lot of people were misled. We should pray for them—if they still survive.

One of the most important and powerful principles, the utmost essence of Zen, is the principle of prajna. Prajna is a state of mind in which we have complete clarity, complete certainty. Such an experience is very rare, but at the same time very precise and penetrating. It can only occur in our state of mind for, say, once in a hundred moments. The nature of prajna starts with bewilderment. It is as if we were entering a school to study a certain discipline with great, wise, learned people. The first self-conscious awareness we would have is a sense of our own ignorance, how we feel extraordinary stupid, clumsy, and dumb. At the same time, we begin to get wind of the knowledge; otherwise, we would have no reference point to experience ourselves being dumb.

The first glimpse of prajna is like that. There is a sense of confusion, stupidity, and utter chaos, in that you have no systematic way of organizing your mind or your intelligence. You are all over the place, and you

feel that your existence is a big heap of apology. The minute you walk into such a learned circle of great teachers—of art, or science, or whatever else—your footsteps sound louder and louder and louder and your shadow becomes thicker and thicker, as if you had a gigantic body. You feel so clumsy entering into such a circle. You begin to smell your own perspiration, and you feel big and clumsy and in the way. Your whole being, trying to communicate with such teachers, is a gigantic attempt to apologize that you exist. Strangely enough, that is the wind of prajna. Knowing one's own stupidity is, indeed, the first glimpse of prajna, very much so.

The interesting point, however, is that we cannot consistently be stupid. Our stupidity is not all that well fortified. There are certain gaps in which we forget that we are stupid, that we are completely bewildered. Those glimpses, those gaps where we have some room—definitely that is prajna. This is demonstrated very beautifully in the Zen tradition of monastic discipline. From morning to evening in Zen training periods, every activity has been planned and taught. In the morning you are dealing with sitting practice, at mealtimes you are dealing with oryoki, how to eat food, how to unfold your napkins. Then there are walking practices and study period, cooking duty and cleaning duty. Even when you are sleeping, you may be sleeping in the temple or in the meditation hall, on duty.

Whatever duty you are assigned, all of them are a challenge and a mockery. They are making a mockery of you, making you feel completely bored and extraordinarily inadequate. The more you become associated with learned people, that much more self-conscious you become. It is extraordinary discipline, and it is an extraordinary, extraordinary joke—but it's not a trick. Such a big joke is being played on you that you find that the environment around you, where you practice, has no room for anything else. Occasionally, you indulge in your confusion. That's the only break you have—indulging in your confusion and bewilderment.

Strangely enough, such discipline works, and prajna gradually grows.

In Zen discipline, you can sleep for only four hours a night, and the rest of the time you spend either sitting, working, or doing something. Getting into such definite, real discipline in the fullest sense provides you with enormous boredom and enormous uncertainty. At a certain point, you find that you are so tired and sleepy that the boundary between the day and night begins to dissolve. You are uncertain as to whether you are awake and functioning in the daylight as a normal, ordinary human being, or whether you are dreaming the whole thing. That is prajna all-pervading. When the boundaries begin to become fuzzy, that's where prajna is taking hold of you.

Zen discipline is fantastic and extraordinary. Such an approach is obviously not the dream of one person, or one person's idea; it has been developed throughout generations. The drowsiness and sleepiness and confusion and extreme heavy-handed disciplines you go through bring out the underlying light and clarity within your being. It's not particularly exciting or beautiful at all, it's a big drag: your clumsiness and your laziness and every worst thing you can ever think of is being brought up. A big joke is being played on you; and at the same time, there is constantly room for prajna. One is halfway through prajna and confusion—it's happening constantly.

The only thing that keeps you in such a setup is your romantic notion towards the practice and discipline—your heroic approach to the path. Then there is the secret that only you know, or maybe only you and your teacher know, which is that a very secret and subtle love affair is taking place. You want to go on and you are getting something out of this. That is prajna, that you are getting something out of this. It is very smart and very business-like. Halfway through, you wake up in the morning and you see the morning star. You say, "Ah, it's morning; that's the morning star," then you fall back to sleep. Seeing the morning star is a glimpse of

prajna. But you're still too lazy to write down, "I saw the morning star when I woke up in the morning." You think, "Never mind about that."

The prajna that the Zen people talk about is trying to catch yourself halfway through. It's almost a kind of subtle double-take. You are just about to be confused, then you—Ahhhhh! [Trungpa draws in a breath] Something happens! Then you go on confusing. But then, something else comes up. There is a little jerk taking place constantly. In an ordinary situation of laziness, if you are in prison or an ordinary concentration camp or something like that, that dynamic doesn't take place, because your attitude is entirely different. You are not seeking enlightenment; you are just trying to get through the time. In this case, being in such an institution may physically seem equal to being in prison or a very skillfully organized torture chamber. Nevertheless, there is that faint smile—the big joke quality, the morning star quality—taking place all the time, which provides comic relief. There are little glimpses, little crumbs of light-handedness in the midst of the enormous black robes, black zafus, and black heavy-handed environment that goes on in Zen.

It's very interesting to see that the way in which Zen people seek prajna is extraordinarily precise. We could say that it is much more accurate than those logicians in Nalanda or Vikramashila. Zen has a more organic, more definite, more direct way of approaching the underlying glimpse of prajna. In Zen, prajna is only a gap; there is no chance to redefine prajna in any way at all. Prajna simply means, "transcendental knowledge." *Pra* is "transcendent," or "supreme," *jna* means "knowledge," so prajna is the wisdom of knowing; it is to know who you are and what you are.

One of the problems with such an approach and experience is that however much you talk about the sameness between samsara and nirvana, between that and this, between prajna and non-prajna, still you are subject to choice. Although you say, "Not here, not there, it's everywhere," you are still going from here to there. There is the awareness that you are

making a particular journey and that journey is going to lead you through a certain process. You have no chance to speculate more than that, because you are hassled by your schedule, your practices, and your mindfulness of details, which cuts down unnecessary bullshit, you might call it.

We could say that the Zen approach is a beginner's point of view—like a Heath Robinson illustration of a pancake machine—of how to produce prajna in an ordinary person who is confused but still inspired. Latching onto that process is based on a combination of a mahayana spirit and hinayana discipline. That seems to be one of the basic points of the Zen tradition of Japan, as much as we know. There also seems to be a faint emphasis on goodness, being good. A notion of being morally pure and kind and precise goes along with it always. Processes such as recycling your food or eating your meal completely and cleaning your plate are very general examples of the mahayanist attitude of not polluting the air of the universe. *Bodhisattvas* should not become a nuisance to other sentient beings—moreover, you should save them.

QUESTIONS

STUDENT: You talked about the prajna all-pervading as the fuzziness between morning and evening, sleeping and waking. Is that broken by wanting to define things? It seems that you immediately want to define it, you want to know it.

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: I think so, yes. There is an enormous attempt to make yourself clear and definable—but even that attempt becomes fuzzy.

S: That can get very confusing. You want to be clear-minded about everything you're doing and everything becomes fuzzy, and then it keeps going around.

CTR: That's why I referred to it as a joke.

S: Very funny!

S: How does the bodhisattva go about saving sentient beings?

CTR: By having trained himself or herself first. Basically, when you learn how to feel about yourself, you show that to others.

S: Would you say something about your emotional dislike for Zen as well as your intellectual dislike?

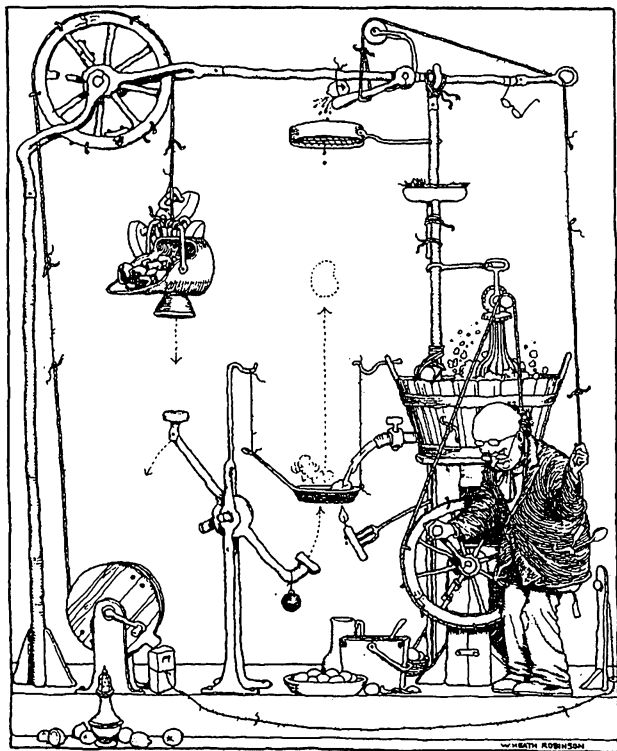
CTR: It seems that the Zen approach does not allow room to be disliked. Of course, we get very complicated in America, since we have a very similar, but entirely opposite, approach toward military discipline. Such discipline seems to do the same thing; nevertheless, this is mahayana, the compassionate path, which is of course entirely different. But Americans could get confused between the two.

In Zen, you are not allowed to be liked or disliked, because you have no chance, you have no room. Your practice and your schedule are constantly being run by others. Not "the other" alone, but the others. You have no chance to speculate about anything at all. Disliking only takes place, I suppose, when your sense of humor and awareness—or your appreciation of big joke—becomes sour. Then you begin to interpret that joke as being tricked. By then, no doubt, your practice is also waning.

S: What did you say about the pancake machine?

CTR: In English literature, there is a writer called Heath Robinson, who wrote a story about Professor Brainstawn. Professor Brainstawn is constantly inventing machines. He invents a pancake-making machine made out of buggies and brooms and things. There's a candle underneath the pan and a hammer below, and when the pancake is ready, just before, the hammer hits and the pancake flies up and bounces off. Heath Robinson's

notion of making a pancake is comparable to the Zen tradition of producing prajna. It seems to be the same kind of approach. Everything is a homemade machine, but it still works.



S: Outside the monastery, does the joke work the same way?

CTR: Definitely, yes, very much so, because you get the Zen syndrome anyway. That is, there is a dichotomy, then a back-and-forth, and finally you find nothing. That pattern takes place all the time, whether you are in a monastery or outside. But before you go out, you are supposed to have a really good shot of the actual practice itself; otherwise, your discipline ceases to exist.

S: Do you think that Zen disconnects itself too much from the organic, that it doesn't acknowledge the process?

CTR: It simply doesn't acknowledge excuses or explanations: when you are mindless, you are mindless; when you are mindful you are mindful.

S: Zen doesn't follow the process that one finds in tantra, for instance, the more gradual approach.

CTR: It doesn't. That's true, it doesn't. Also, in Zen monasteries they don't eat brown rice, but white rice.

S: It seems that there's a big difference in terms of discipline, at least at this point, between our communities—Karma Dzong, for example—and what you described as Zen discipline. It's more up to us in ours and seems to be more based on self-discipline. The opportunity for discipline is there, but it's up to us, rather than, as you said, being imposed by others. Why the difference?

CTR: We use real machines, rather than Heath Robinson's contraption, to make pancakes. It seems that the scientific American mentality is more cunning fox or roadrunner than stubborn mule or donkey.

S: Part of the seduction of Zen seems to be aimed at yielding something that feels as if it's just the opposite of what you are trying to do when you are practicing Zen practices. I mean, there is a desire to get the black really black and the white pure so that you release some power that feels very full and all-pervading. I don't see the difference between that desire and the desire that aspires to the full range of colors available through tantra.

CTR: That's precisely why I said that particularly in the west, the audience is like cunning foxes or roadrunners. Because of that, a lot of American Zen students take pride in practices that seemingly were designed to

develop boredom—but instead of getting bored, they develop a lot of romantic notions about the whole thing. Immense attention is paid to accuracy, and subtleties become a work of art, which is a bohemian kind of approach. That seems to be the problem. Zen practices are supposed to provide real boredom. You should be really cornered by them.

S: Would you say that you are training your disciples to be one or the other? Foxes or roadrunners?

CTR: I don't think so. All Americans are roadrunners, if I may say so.

S: They seem to be running on different tracks: one's running a mile and one's running a half mile.

CTR: There's no point in changing your character.

S: It's definitely changing the discipline.

CTR: Yes.

S: Doesn't that relate to character at all?

CTR: I don't think so, character is character.

S: And discipline is discipline.

CTR: Yes.

S: With reference to what you were saying about prajna, it seems you said that when everything becomes kind of confused and hazy, there is a precision of sight, rather than when you sort of stop and see something clearly. Am I understanding you correctly?

CTR: Yes. You can't stop, because once you begin to stop, you have lost it.

S: Is stopping trying to gain a reference point?

CTR: Yes. But then you have destroyed it. You cannot stop and catch it.

S: So you really can't do anything better, in a sense.

CTR: Yes. The only thing to do is to keep up with the routine and the practice.

S: It seems that the pancake machine is a very indirect way of making pancakes. How does that relate to the more direct or precise way?

CTR: It is very precise, as far as we can go and as far as the order of the universe goes. There is no other precision; that is the closest we can get. It is enormously precise, compared to some of the other attempts that have been made. That's it. And it works.

S: But wouldn't it be more precise and direct to make pancakes in a frying pan?

CTR: Then you would not have to work with the machine, which is full of intelligence. That way would be based on your being too lazy to use your machine: you just want to do it. It would be like killing an animal and eating its stomach out instead of warming it in the fire. It's very gruesome.

S: What I hear you saying is that there's a rather innate fundamental difference in the character of the person from America, as opposed to the person who's from an eastern country—more than something learned, something fundamental to our nature.

CTR: Yes, I think so. It is not purely cultural or genetic or psychological, but it's the accumulation of how somebody inherits somebody else's insanity. It's a kind of plague that went around in America—a different kind of plague than what went around in Japan or Tibet, for that matter, a different kind of sickness. It has nothing to do with culture, particularly, but still, such plagues are contagious.

S: What is a roadrunner? Sorry, I don't know.

CTR: You must know what a roadrunner is. The bird—like the roadrunner you see in cartoons—that runs so fast that when it tries to break its momentum or speed, it vibrates.

S: Could you say something more about the jerk that happens between areas or spaces of confusion? “Jerk” in my understanding is clear thought, but it's still a dualistic type of awareness. Then you go back and forth until, you say, you have nothing. Is that what you mean, that the jerk is not particularly what you are after? I mean, it is what you are after—clear perception—but it is not the ultimate outcome. You don't just expand that.

CTR: Well, not quite. The essence or the marrow of that can be expanded. You can expand the essence of it, but not the process. The jerk produces a clear space—you cannot artificially recreate that clear space by providing an artificial jerk. So it's almost as if prajna is the after-effect of the jerk, not the jerk itself.

S: Not the clearness of the jerk?

CTR: The jerk itself is not clear; then, usually, you panic.

S: Seeing both sides.

CTR: Yes. Then you panic; then you can get confused; and then you might find something clear. It has phases. If you could view the jerk process like a slow-motion movie, you could see that first you panic, then you jerk, then you get confused, and then you have a gap of not knowing what to do next. That not knowing what to do next is a crumb of prajna. It is literally a piece of prajna. Then you go on from that, speeding along again.

S: Don't you go on from there to the next point: feeling really great to have these experiences?

CTR: I don't think so, no, because then you are already acknowledging yourself, and that's quite different from the jerk.

S: It eliminates the whole experience.

CTR: Yes, it does.

S: Is the prajna overlaid by hesitation?

CTR: Hesitation is one of the first signs of prajna: panic, jerk, confusion, and hesitation. It is the thinning out of all the heavy-handedness—and then prajna begins to dawn. It is very, very, very, very subtle and minute—almost hardly there—but it is so potent, it happens to be there.

S: At that point, or gap, would it help to reflect on the process before slipping along, rather than keep on going?

CTR: You can't stop yourself at that point. However, there is obviously a point to acknowledging that and reflecting back. Again, that is not very accurate, it is just sort of finger-painting what happened, very crude. Nonetheless, acknowledging that something did take place is encouragement, which then provides patience and discipline on the future path. The whole thing is a Heath Robinson contraption.

S: I was thinking about those cartoons of the roadrunner. Wile E. Coyote always tries to catch the roadrunner. He shoots bullets at him, and the roadrunner runs faster than the bullets. He tries to blow him up with dynamite and blows himself up instead. He rides jet-propelled bicycles and smashes himself up again. If Americans are roadrunners, how do you ever catch this roadrunner? Or is it absolutely totally invulnerable?

CTR: You don't catch a roadrunner; the roadrunner catches itself. It finds its own fault, in its own speed, which is not fast enough.

S: You mean the bird becomes scared of its own shadow and can't get away?

CTR: I don't know exactly how it goes—

S: When the roadrunner gets away he goes, "Beep! Beep-beep!" And a mule when he throws somebody just kicks his feet up in the air. Are there any qualitative differences between those two?

CTR: I think so, yes. No doubt!

S: Like what, for instance?

CTR: Maybe the mule practices judo.

S: But maybe the roadrunner is a master of chado [tea].

CTR: Anything you say.



PRECISION AND VASTNESS

In the tantric tradition, the experience of life is regarded as an endless ocean, a limitless sky—or it is regarded as just one dot, one situation.

[Ed. The talk begins with two readings from The Life and Teachings of Nāropa, by Herbert Guenther, read by Robin Kornman.]

The blind do not see by tarrying
And the deaf hear not,
The dumb do not understand the meaning
And the lame walk not.
A tree does not grow roots
And Mahāmudrā is not understood.

The sky-flower, the Dāka riding on the foal
Of a barren mare, the Oral Transmission,
Has scattered the hairs of tortoise, the ineffable,

And with the stick of a hare's horn, the unoriginated,
Roused Tilopa in the depth of ultimate reality.

Through the mute Tilopa, the ineffable resisting all attempts at
communication,
The blind Nāropa became free in seeing Truth which is no seeing.
On the mountain of the Dharmakāya which is the ultimate, the deaf
Nāropa,
The lame Mati [Mar-pa] ran in a radiant light, which neither comes
nor goes.
The sun and moon and Yeshe Dorje [dGyes-pa rdor-je]—
Their dancing is one-valueness in many.

The conch-shell has proclaimed its fame in all directions,
It has called out to the strenuous, who are worthy vessels for
instruction.

The focal points, Cakrasaṃvara—the world
Is the wheel of the Oral Transmission:
Turn it, dear child, without attachment.

Tantra is generally referred to as the vehicle that provides instant enlightenment. Its means and its method are the various meditative practices and techniques. Here again, we can only see these techniques and methods, or relate to them, as landmarks. We are discussing tantric experience rather than tricks, such as the notion that merely by applying certain applications, we are going to attain enlightenment. So the highlights and what are related to the highlights provide the most important understanding of tantra. As a typical example, there is a tantric expression: one-taste, or one-value. The notion of one-taste has the sense of being here now and relating with what is there. In other words, being

more aware of the landmarks of your life, rather than regarding all things as schooling, purely an educational system you are going through.

We could compare tantra with what we discussed previously about the Zen tradition, that Zen deliberately tries to provide chances to understand prajna, to realize prajna, and to develop the prajna principle within you through the application of certain physical disciplines. The Zen approach of trying to be here now seems to be slightly different from the tantric approach: in the Zen tradition, being here now is still relating with a journey or a process. Keeping to a certain schedule provides a fixed attitude to life—almost to the point of acknowledging yesterday, today, and tomorrow, rather than purely acknowledging today, or being in today. As another example, you clean your house or you clean your kitchen in a Zen way. Obviously, there is a sense of intelligence that tells the cleaner, or student, that it is going to be clean at the end, that you are going to produce an immaculate Zen kitchen. That is already understood. But still, the notion of journey and of perfection provide less sense of one-valueness.

In the tantric tradition, the experience of life is regarded as an endless ocean, a limitless sky—or it is regarded as just one dot, one situation. Therefore, the idea of “not-two,” or the *advaita* principle, is an important principle in tantric Buddhism. It is “not two”; but “not two” does not only mean “be one.” If you do not have two, you also do not have one. It is just “no,” rather than even “not.” So nothing is left behind to provide a source of reference point, or a source of meditative indulgence, or for that matter, a source of disappointment, at all. It is one-value—which means no-value.

The epitome of *shunyata* is only expressed in the vajrayana teachings, we could quite safely say. In the teachings of the hinayana or mahayana schools, we have seen only a partial glimpse of the shunyata principle. The reason this is so is because there is the acquisition of a hammer to

break the cup. Breaking the cup—the discovery of shunyata—is no doubt the highest cardinal truth and the highest realization that has ever been known in the realm of buddhadharma. But in order to realize this, one has to acquire a hammer, which has been sold in the form of intellect, or in the form of books, or in the form of practices. However, the hammer itself begins to be regarded as more valuable than its function of breaking the cup: it has been decorated with sacred symbols and with sutras written all over it. That is what is called the realization of shunyata as “not” rather than “no”: that the hammer has to demonstrate the mortality of the cup by hitting it and breaking it to pieces. Although it seems to be the same, in the tantric tradition, which is the tradition of a warrior without a sword, one does not need a hammer. One does not have to acquire a pair of eyeglasses or a powerful microscope to examine the dharmas. One uses one-value eyes, one-value mind, one-value bare hands to show the mortality of the cup. It is a very brutal approach, I suppose you could say, a very direct approach.

Vajrayana has often been regarded as the yana of means, and people have taken that as literal; but that’s not quite right. In vajrayana terms, the idea of *upaya* as “means,” or “skillful means,” is entirely different from how means and methods traditionally are described. Here, the method or means is itself vajrayana. They are not a way, even, or a particular style: the method and means are the same as the actual realization itself! In other words, generally there is a feeling, or attitude, that when we talk about method, it refers to the way that one travels from A to B, which is quite different from the tantric approach. Because of perceiving skillful means in that way, as a way to take a journey from A to B, the journey ceases to become the goal.

Of course, we could say that in the mahayana and hinayana traditions there is also the notion of path as goal and goal as path: cutting down ambition, speed, aggression, passion, and so forth. But there is a certain

faint attitude in reference towards the path you trod on: it should show a definite footprint after you have left, so that you could look back and appreciate how you trod on the path. That creates an inspiring example for your fellow students. It is like going on vacation and taking snapshots so we could bring them back home and show them around: we actually did go, and we did enjoy ourselves.

Tantric upaya, or skillful means, has the distinctive characteristic of approaching things very directly, very precisely and thoroughly, without even recording them in our memory bank. Such recording has been the problem. When we record things in our memory bank, we try to remember them again. We dig them out of our treasury or attic, where we store our junk; and we find them currently valuable, useful, and informative. But this usefulness and these skills we apply create what are called “habit-forming thoughts”—and these habitual thoughts tend to create a clouding-over effect to clarity.

In contrast, tantric methods or means do not develop habit patterns at all. Patience and diligence in the tantric tradition means simply patience and diligence on the spot, rather than trying to train our memory bank and our habitual patterns, as if we were training an animal or toilet training a baby. In fact, a major difference between the mahayana and hinayana teachings and tantra is this: that the principle of the *mahamudra* experience—seeing clearly and precisely the function and energies of the universe as it is—has nothing to do with memorizing or recapturing anything.

If you have read *The Life and Teachings of Nāropa*, you probably remember the story of the prajna principle of intelligence in the form of an ugly woman who approached Nāropa and asked him to admit that he did not know the sense but only the words. Well, he obviously did know the sense behind the words; otherwise, he couldn't know the words. Unless you are magnetic tape or something, as long as you have a brain, you would know the meaning behind the words. But in that story, the

sense being referred to is the direct sense. That direct sense does not need and is not dependent upon any causal characteristics that provide memory, on any mental habit, on anything at all! It is the direct sense, the fresh one, the straight one. So it seems that the purpose of tantra is to destroy the habitual memory bank, so you could see precisely and clearly, without any distortion.

The spontaneity that develops from the tantric tradition and the sense of respect for the guru are immediate experience, rather than parental memory or habit-formed memory. Although spontaneity and frivolousness may seem to be quite close, they are entirely different. Frivolousness is a panicked form of spontaneity, in which you look for some immediate occupation in order to save yourself from egohood and the neurotic pains that you experience. In other words, it is saving face. In order to maintain yourself in a certain way and still survive, you keep on latching onto occupation after occupation and responsibility after responsibility. Although you may not actually have that responsibility, having the title of responsibility creates enormous security. You make yourself available, useful and efficient, compulsive.

The spontaneity of the true nature is based on having a notion of being and a notion of oneness. There's no need for panic. Everything is clear and precise and you are acting upon it, depending on what the situation demands. In doing so, one may take different approaches: sometimes one has to be tough and sometimes one has to be gentle, but that is dictated by the situation, which is seen very clearly. Again, there is no goal orientation at all, other than what is required at that very moment. Whenever there is goal orientation, there are possibilities that spontaneity could turn into frivolity. Such spontaneity seems to be the style of vajrayana practitioners' approach to life. Sometimes you might think that vajrayana practitioners are extremely accurate and intuitive, and sometimes their style may be dangerous, explosive—potentially explosive.

There seem to be differences in the landmarks of tantra and Zen. Nowness is the landmark in the tantric tradition; in the Zen tradition, basic form or formlessness is the landmark. That does not mean that the fundamental tradition of Zen depends purely on an external shell or color or mask. But still, as much as we might say there's no Buddha, there's no Zen, there's no zazen, there's no gong, and there's no zafu—we are still talking the language of form. That is not regarded as undesirable or desirable, particularly; but that's how it goes, so to speak, that is how it is presented.

In the vajrayana teachings, the question of, “Is there something or isn't there something?” is not particularly the big issue. If there is something, okay, let it be; if there isn't, okay, fine—but it is this. That is why the tantric tradition is regarded as most dangerous of all: those who still have some sense of existence and who are searching could come to vajrayana teachings without first going through the mahayana shunyata principle, and the hinayana footing. Vajrayana sounds much closer to the confused mind of egohood, if you haven't gone through the journey. That is why it is regarded as very dangerous.

The tantric tradition is the tradition of sudden enlightenment, the school of sudden enlightenment. But in order to achieve a sudden glimpse of enlightenment, one has to develop in a gradual way, to be able to glimpse it. So we could say that in either Zen or vajrayana—whichever we are talking about—there is no power that is truly sudden, truly instamatic and automatic. Instant enlightenment is impossible.

The tantric approach to life is a straightforward view of reality, so straightforward we can't even think of it. At the same time, that view is indestructible; that understanding is imperturbable. For ordinary people, that view is frightening—it has such precision and such conviction, because there is no need for compliments or acknowledgment. That is why the term “crazy wisdom,” *yeshe chölung*, has been used. Crazy wisdom

ceases to look at limitations and is completely penetrating: it does not know curves or bends of this or that, beliefs and ideas, habits. It is like a laser beam. That is why it is called *vajra*, which is an “adamantine, indestructible essence.” In the tantric language, *vajra* pride, *vajra* anger, *vajra* passion—all of those are transcendental and indestructible, in the fully enlightened sense.

In the tantric tradition, the question of poverty and richness has never been raised, because that wasn't the issue. For that matter, there is even less emphasis on saving all sentient beings: it is automatic, so there's no need to talk about it. It is useless to say, “I have a heart, I have a brain, I have a head, I have arms,” since if you are in a situation to say “I am,” one presumes you automatically have those things in order to function or to say, “I am.”

So if you have some kind of mahamudra penetration of *vajra* awareness, there is no need to count up the details of your need to be practical. You are not particularly trying to be practical, but you already are. You live a very worldly life in a *vajra* world. That world does not take possession of you, but you become part of the world and all mankind—and all sentient beings are part of you. So the work of the adept of *vajrayana* is compassionate action, in any case.

The practitioner's work is communication, relating with energy and so forth; and that brings the notion of visualizations and mantra practices. Visualizations are not regarded as developing magical powers, nor is visualizing regarded as imagining. But you begin to associate with such basic truth that you automatically have a sense of the visualization you are practicing. The visualization becomes a natural situation rather than something specially imposed on you, as if you were trying to imagine another culture's view of God. Everything has to do with seeing the nature of reality as it is. Mantra, for example, is just the sound or utterance of the universe, which has been developed in a certain formula. But that

formula has nothing to do with your repeating the divine and sacred names of God, particularly. The sacredness of the vajrayana tradition is being there, being true, rather than something other than what you have and what you are.

When we talk about God, we have the general attitude of relating with an extraordinary being or entity. Whether we say God is within us or God is outside of us, still there is a feeling of a very special place for the name of God. We view the existence of God as something other than what there is; its highest attribute is that it is beyond our world. We have no idea how and what and why God functions or conducts his activities. We do not have any idea of how or what he is; therefore, we feel awe and respect. It's beyond our little mind's function to even measure.

In the case of vajrayana, it is entirely different: you are not awe-inspired by the truth, but you are struck by the truth. It is so brilliant, so bright, so obvious, so clear. We are talking about a different kind of sacredness here. In this case, the experiencers can perceive the sacredness or truth: they can see it and they can function in it. It is no longer a mystery. It is very real. At the same time, it is questionable; nevertheless, it is so.

What has been said about the vajrayana approach to sacredness is that it is the ordinary mind. Because it is so ordinary, it is super-ordinary; therefore, it is sacred. It is sacred in the sense that it could be perceived: we could see it and get a glimpse of it. That particular wisdom is called [long pause] "wisdom born within." [Long pause] It is called coemergent wisdom. Whenever there is energy, there is wisdom: they emerge together. One cannot separate the two at all: they are coemergent.

So the world is the vajra world. From that point of view, the world is the divine world, or the world of God, if you want to call it that. The world contains that; that contains the world. It is the vastness of the vajrayana approach and the bigger style that makes vajrayana unique. It is the precision and the definitive accuracy that makes the Zen tradition

prominent. It seems that you need both of those; they both seem to be necessary.

QUESTIONS

STUDENT: How is the *skandha* of perception related to memory?

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: Memory is something more; it goes further back than that, to the beginning of duality. Memory has to do with the volitional activities of karma, right at the beginning, which starts with the skandha of feeling. As the memory bank is created, the karmic volitional action is being created at the same time. Therefore, the skandha of perception is more an outcome of that original manufacturing process.

S: Is there a Tibetan parallel to the Zen tradition that tantric practitioners would go through?

CTR: I think any Buddhist monastic system is generally identical with the approach of the Zen tradition, naturally. The Theravadan monasteries in Thailand or Burma as well as the mahayana version of monasticism of certain schools of Chinese Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism have a similar kind of approach. But it doesn't seem that a real hard core of sitting practice has been given importance in the Tibetan tradition. I think that is one of the differences: in the Zen tradition, as we know it in Japan, the entire ceremony is built around sitting practice, and the ritual takes place in the context of sitting practice. In the Tibetan tradition, the sitting practice is an occasional space that happens within the ceremony, because the Tibetan tradition is heavily influenced by vajrayana rituals.

The closest to the Zen tradition in a Tibetan monastery, I suppose, is the Gelukpa school. There, a lot of emphasis is given to the practice of logic. Logical debate is a way of creating black and white sharpness in

your mind, which is a branch of Buddhist contemplation. One branch is simply sitting practice; the other branch is intellectual training. So it seems that the Gelukpas got the intellectual training part, the logical debate, and that branch is closest to Zen practice. Both Zen and Tibetan Buddhism inherited the monastic system from Nalanda and Vikramashila and other great Buddhist universities of India. The techniques practiced in the Zen tradition have generally been the beginning Buddhist meditation approach, how one would begin with any Buddhist meditation. Systematic meditation practices would follow that kind of pattern.

S: You said that even though truth can strike you and that you are struck by its precision and clarity—still it's questionable. Can you explain what you mean by questionable? I think I recall reading a definition of truth in which you say that if it's questionable, it's not truth. Can you explain that?

CTR: "Questionable," here, means that you can't take pride in it, that it's still open.

S: How is energy experienced in tantra?

CTR: I think largely as emotions and things derived from emotions, and as sense perceptions. The energies of the sense perceptions are seen as part of the working basis. Without them, there is no interaction. There is no oneness, even.

S: We perceive energies through the senses. Is that what you mean?

CTR: Well, in the Buddhist tradition, the senses include mind, which is a sixth sense.

S: And is there a location for the mind?

CTR: I don't think so. That search has been tried many times, but no one has ever found it.

S: I thought that one of the main focuses of the Kagyüpa school was the actual meditation practice, rather than the training in the mantra and mandala. Wouldn't that seem to be more comparable to Zen?

CTR: Curiously not, actually. Kagyü meditation practices do not stem from mahayana meditation training. Kagyü meditation practice is based purely on vajrayana style. You might follow the same schedule of sitting, such as meditating for twelve hours and things like that; nonetheless, the meditation has a different flavor.

The Zen tradition we have been talking about is that of hinayanists who developed into mahayana, and then brought in a Buddhist monastic system that included sitting, or some kind of like training, in relating with prajna. From that point of view, the Gelukpas' approach is much closer to Zen than that of the Kagyüpas—or the Nyingmapas, for that matter.

S: In the Gelukpa tradition, is their training of the logical mind towards the awakening process? Is that something that they focus on?

CTR: Not particularly. It is just to train your mind so you can think logically. Their approach to logic is very precise and definite—so that you have sharp insight and respond to logic. That's it. And it is same with the sitting practice.

S: Is that insight, in some ways, an equivalent to prajna?

CTR: It is in many ways, but at the beginning it is rather a strain, because you just learn to argue very cunningly. You become a master arguing person. You know how to get around. It's like becoming a lawyer or something: you know how to tackle the other side and get away with it. But when you get deeper into doctrinal things, you cannot do that, because those doctrines become very tricky, once you play with them. With notions of prajna, and things like that, there is an automatic reactor

in them as well as in you—so you get beaten back unless you think clearly on those subjects.

S: How does memory function when one is no longer attached to habit—when memory is no longer used as a way to establish oneself?

CTR: You see, memory is no longer regarded as an intelligent thing. It is habitual patterns being recorded—and they come back to you as instinct, as animal instinct. It is like a computer: you program certain patterns, and it feeds back that way, depending on how you program it. As an intelligent functional thing, logical thinking is different from memory. It functions by the energies of the moment: the energies are the fuel, and your intelligence is the flame that thrives on it.

Whenever there is an emotional response or an emotional upsurge, that much the insight responds to it. So the whole thing no longer becomes a defeat—it becomes recycling energy into wisdom. That is precisely why the notion of alchemistic practice—metal changing into gold—has been used as an analogy in tantra. In terms of memory, there is no memory, but there is an immediate response. It's like the elements. You can't program fire to burn certain things and not burn other things. Fire just burns, on the spot.

S: So the immediate response never comes out of your store consciousness, or out of your past, your history?

CTR: Well, you don't have a store consciousness anymore at that point. You are out in the *dharmakaya*, or whatever you would like to call it, and there is no problem with lack of energy. There is so much energy and so much chaos and confusion all the time, which is enormous. That is why the vajrayana practitioner's function is to work with sentient beings. There is no limit to his food and his response to working with others. He doesn't have to keep his own separate kit, as a ration of the memory bank.

S: At Tail of the Tiger, we seem to do quite a bit of sitting. I wonder if you could say something about that, in relation to the fact that it seems to be closer to Zen than tantra.

CTR: Yes, I think we are closer to Zen, so far. We may be practicing Zen in the spirit of tantra.

S: Rinpoche, in tantra, is there a tradition, as in Zen, of archery? Is there the concept of something other than necessarily a religious discipline, such as flower arranging or tea ceremony, that you pursue to the end?

CTR: I think we should discuss that next session.

S: I thought that Zen had a tradition of the warrior without a sword. Is that only found in the vajrayana? A lot of people were talking about the sword cutting through the ground of ego. And you talked about the hammer breaking the cup, which only happens when you have gotten far enough out so that nothing strikes at you with your sword. Do they meet at the lower levels?

CTR: Well, the tantric approach is completely “no,” rather than “not.” That is the philosophical saying, or slogan: you say “no,” rather than “not.” In tantra, the cup is no, because it is a vajra cup. The cup is indestructible.

S: Then there would be no point in the sword.

CTR: In the vajrayanist world, the sword is the same as the cup. It’s all vajra.

S: And in mahayana and hinayana, their swords are cutting off the ground?

CTR: Yes, because the cup is mortal—and to demonstrate that, the cup can be broken. That is why the tantric tradition is seemingly very

dangerous—because it might be much closer to the eternalism of ordinary, confused belief that things could be solid and definite and immortal. However, one difference is that in tantric tradition you don't try to prove anything. There is nothing to be proved, particularly.

S: At some point the sword just drops away?

CTR: Well, the sword is the cup. The hammer is the cup. You might use your hand as well, just to make it simpler. Your hand is the sword.

S: One thing I'm trying to understand is that at the earlier stages things are mortal and you are cutting through that.

CTR: You are cutting through that, yes.

S: And at some point, you cut through and you realize that everything is indestructible, or the sword breaks the suffering?

CTR: Yes. It is the same thing. At the tantric level, it doesn't prove anything: the cup breaks, okay, that's fine. The cup is broken, but it is still the activity of vajra. And the cup is still there: in its absence, it is also very much a cup, a vajra cup, as much as it is. It doesn't say anything very much. So what?

S: Do all things contain a glimpse of vajra in them, at whatever level of the path?

CTR: That is what tantric practitioners would say: that even at the early level, there is a vajra element. That element at the mahayana level is seen as impermanence and shunyata. Seeing the indestructibility is tantric—a complete tantric practitioners' world.

S: Could you say something about the tantric view of imagination?

CTR: Imagination is not particularly necessary. Things are already imagined. That is one of the highlights of tantra: things are as they are—

in a complete sense, not only in the mahayanist sense.

S: I was wondering what you could say about imagination, per se, somewhere below the vajrayana level.

CTR: Imagination could be energy of a certain level, but that doesn't mean that imagination is creative, particularly. Generally, when we talk about imagination, we mean being an artist, or being able to improvise with whatever is available: being imaginative. But in this case, imagination is just one of the faculties of mind: it is *pranidhana*, a Sanskrit word meaning, "imagination," "vision," or "aspiration." Pranidhana is one part of the tantric tradition. It is part of the abhisheka of tantric practitioners: a person gets a certain vajrayana name, and those names come out of pranidhana inspiration, or imagination. So there is a role for imagination.

S: Yesterday you talked about the practice of Zen as being a joke, not a trick—a joke in the sense that predictability becomes exhausted, and in that exhaustion, there's a gap and you get a glimpse of prajna. I've been noticing a certain predictability: the lecture is scheduled for a certain time, and you are always at least an hour late. Then I get tired and perhaps that helps me to open up.

CTR: Well, I haven't put it into categories, but I think it is up to you. You're welcome to improvise.

S: Are thoughts basically silent?

CTR: I wouldn't say so, when they're in love.

S: I'd like to return to the discussion of a connection between memory and knowledge. In my experience, if I recognize something to be true, it's as though, "Oh, yes, I've really known that all along, but I just didn't realize it." It is as though I have recollected it. In that sense, it's not exactly memory, but more like a recollection.

CTR: You see, that is the whole point. You cannot develop wisdom unless you cut down the memory. You put a stop to the memory. You may have had a memory that something about this is important—but now you know it, so you do not need that memory anymore. You cut yourself, at that point. At that very point, memory has been cut—and that is real wisdom.

S: You are not depending on memory.

CTR: Yes, yes.

S: But this is something else. Doesn't it mean anything to you when I say that a recognition of something as true seems as though it had been there all along and suddenly it came forward clearly, that it's not new?

CTR: Well, it is not exactly new, but neither is it old.

S: Yes.

CTR: In that case, in fact, the uncertainty, which is part of the memory, is what kept you confused. So you cut the uncertainty, which is a part of the memory, and you make a big jump. And, finally, you are there, out in the open. There's no mystery about it.

S: In tantra, you have often described the relationship of the student to the teacher as being like that of a martial arts student training with a master. I was wondering if you could say more as to what the war is in tantric martial arts training, and who the enemy is. Martial arts training seems to imply war of one kind or another. So why is it called martial arts training?

CTR: Martial arts is just martial arts; it doesn't need a war. It is a very interesting sociological question, in that you can develop all kinds of martial arts, and you don't have to have a war, as such. In fact, if there were a war, you could not practice proper martial arts, because the whole

nation would be in a panic, and you would be part of that, as well. Your training would become just functional, and you would become one of the mass productions.

S: Nevertheless, it is called martial art, rather than fine art, or any other kind of art.

CTR: Well, sure, why not? It is definitely a military thing.

S: That's what I'm getting at!

CTR: Yes, sure, but that doesn't provide any problems. It really doesn't. Your approach is a typically utilitarian, or functional and pragmatic, western approach, if I might say so—that you don't build a bridge if nobody's going to walk over it. I mean, what's the point of sitting and meditating if that is not going to do anything good for the society?

S: I don't think I meant that. It's just that all the words that are used in defining various things are so precise.

CTR: Oh, I see. Yes. I'm sorry. The point is that we could definitely use the word martial in the sense of its own indestructibility.

S: Its own indestructibility?

CTR: Yes, like the vajra principle we have been talking about. It is not preparing for warfare as such, but its own indestructibility.

S: Learning how to deal with—

CTR: How to be.

S: How to be.

CTR: Not how to defend, but how to be.

S: [Long pause] But “martial” implies—[Uproarious laughter]

CTR: Have you seen—I'm sure you have seen—the wrathful figures, the wrathful deities, tantra guards? I mean, who are their enemies? Nobody! They are very compassionate ones. They are so compassionate, they are armed to the teeth!

S: This kind of indestructibility doesn't have anything to do with being eternal? With eternity?

CTR: Not at all. Absolutely not.

S: Does this analogy of martial arts also hold with other arts? Would there be a point in painting a fine thangka without ever displaying it, or practicing music without playing in public, or things like that?

CTR: I think so, yes. It is self-existing art, definitely—rather than for display, or for exercising your territory.

S: So the point isn't at all the display.

CTR: No. If the public happens to come across it, they are welcome to take a look, but it is not specially designed for that. Otherwise, the whole thing becomes very commercial, and you lose your value, basically—then we don't have a chance to have no-value, one-valueness. [Trungpa Rinpoche has a hearty laugh.]

S: I still need to clarify what you said about memory. In fact, memory is not needed when one is living in the vajrayana? Is that it? I understand memory as it functions in my world, or in the everyday world: you go to work every day, and you remember how to get to work, because you did it yesterday. You remember the past. Or you're writing a book and you remember where you are, because you remember what you wrote yesterday. Now, the difference between that, and the "now" experience of vajrayana—is it that you are not remembering the path to work because you did it yesterday, but rather the path is living in you now, as a living experience?

CTR: Generally, we do not remember yesterday. We don't really remember or really go back to yesterday, in any case. The past is imprinted in us this present moment, and we only think we are seeing yesterday.

S: But it's right now.

CTR: But it's right now. You might have a memory of your dead father, for instance. That doesn't mean you see him there, but your memory of him is present. In the same way, there is generally no such thing as going back to the past.

In the tantric tradition, the idea of memory is the habits that breed a certain style of continuity of neurosis—which does exist. In fact, you have a very clear, precise insight of how to get to the office and of how to finish your work or your book. That's no problem. Traditionally, it says that without memory the mind is nine times clearer. I don't know how that statistic came up, but that is the case.

S: It seems that rather than trying to bring something dead back to life, it is already living.

CTR: Yes. And at that point, there is no desire for eternity anymore.

S: You said that everything has been imagined. In that case, if you paint a painting, is the thing that keeps it from being a restatement of an existing thing, what you said—the self-existing action? Is it the action of painting itself that keeps it as a direct form, instead of a restatement of something that already exists, which would take it away from directness?

CTR: I think that depends on the nature of the work. But, basically, it is something like that.

S: And if it were not done in a tantric way, then it would be more of a Zen-like approach of restating something that already exists?

CTR: Something like that, I think. We'll have a chance to talk about that in our next session, I hope. Art is a particularly important point: the difference between Zen and tantra is in art, and what has been produced.

S: The difference comes with the directness?

CTR: The directness or the reliving of something or other. We should probably stop at this point.



ARTISTS & UNEMPLOYED SAMURAI

What a work of art is all about is a sense of delight. Touch here, touch there, delight. It is an appreciation of things as they are and of what one is—which produces an enormous spark.

IN FURTHER COMPARING Zen and tantra, it seems to be necessary to study the two approaches of gradual understanding and sudden enlightenment. As we discussed already, the only real possibility is gradual development—sudden enlightenment is somewhat based on an occasion within that experience of gradual journey.

One school of thought developed based on the realization of shunyata, emptiness. Predominantly, shunyata means being without ground, without standpoint. On the basis of the shunyata principle, the nonsubstantiality of things as they are, the teachings of impermanence and egolessness of the hinayana discipline developed. However, going beyond the hinayana approach of egolessness, impermanence came to be seen as an actual path, journey, or mechanism to attain realization—immediate realization—as a very tangible, definite experience. That school is called the *shunyatavada* or the *madhyamaka* tradition.

Madhyamaka means believing in nonsubstantiality and realizing nonsubstantiality as the basic ground of reality. Seeing nonexistence as the ground we could work on, although the whole approach is groundless, provides an enormous standpoint. It provides a platform, if you would like to call it that, to stand on, to step on, to work on. Within that basic approach of nonsubstantiality—the nonexistence of things—from a largely phenomenological level, we could say that things have no origin. Therefore, things do exist. You are not you; therefore, you are. You might find it difficult at this late time of the day to grasp such a subtle point of philosophy. [Laughter] Nevertheless, your fuzziness might help you to realize that subtle logic intuitively.

You do not exist because you have no ground, you have no basis; because of that, you do exist. Shall we simplify? You are subject to death, you are subject to mortality; therefore, you are alive. Your deathness depends on how much you are alive. If you are fully alive, that much is death accentuated, because you are fully alive and radiate exuberant youth or exuberant old age. You function thoroughly; therefore, you exist. Your existence, on the other hand, is based on your nonexistence, because you are just about to decay and die.

The reason a person could be called dead is because he or she was alive the minute before. That is the basic logic of the hinayana approach. The mahayana approach to the real meaning of shunyata is: either alive or dead, you are. That seems to be quite simple to catch, or to understand. Either alive or dead: you are. Your existence is largely based on nonexistence. Your very reference points are worn out because you move so fast in the restlessness of your mind and emotions that your ground wears out. It is like building a castle on an ice lake.

Within that basic phenomenological experience of things not having real substance or basic solidity—as you probably experience right here and now, being tired, and things being late—underneath, it is shaky and

soft, jellified. Our trying to sit on a chair and listen to this particular talk is like building a castle on the ice: it could tip over any moment. It's not so much that the castle is nonsubstantial, but the whole thing is nonsubstantial. It has an air of impermanence, which is more than impermanence—it is a whole environment of impermanence. Things don't hang tight, but they hang loose. That seems to be the point of shunyata, that things do not have any hold or tightness, but they are all loose. They are so loose that even the joints don't squeak. Oiling doesn't help, because it is already too loose.

With the basis of such openness, such a loose approach, various schools of philosophy developed. One of the first mahayana schools is called the yogachara school. Popularly it is known as the “believing-in-the-mind” or the “mind-only” school. The scripture you heard last night, “Trust in the Heart,” is from a similar school to the believing-the-mind school. The believing-the-mind school is not so much based on belief, but on trust. It is based on the integrity of consciousness being kept, while meanwhile, those loose joints disconnect themselves in the realm of shunyata.

A moderator and commentator take place to keep track of those loose ends. However, within the realm of reality, things don't connect themselves; they are all subject to confusion, chaos, and impermanence. They are fundamentally without soul, without substantiality.

Yogacharans do not believe in autonomous existence as such, but in soul-lessness, egolessness, nonexistence. We could examine very carefully this particular approach, or philosophical tradition. Yogachara is the school of Buddhism that produces art and appreciates aesthetic consciousness. It includes archery, flower arrangement, and similar approaches to the world of art. This yogacharan world of art is basically to pay respect or tribute to the existence of consciousness—which, in turn, appreciates the spaciousness of shunyata, the desolateness of shunyata, and the aloneness of the shunyata experience. Shunyata experience is being spotted very

precisely and beautifully. A poet produces poetry out of this; artists produce works of art out of this.

*Sky, utterly blue,
Only white dot has been seen.
I feel lonely.
Seagull.*

*The sky deceived me
By showing me the horizons.
I feel guilty and lonely.*

*Empty apartment.
Table, teacup.
Flies buzz.*

*Exhausted audience, [Laughter]
Invigorated speaker. [Greater laughter]
The ceiling is the only congregation.*

Very artistic! You compose poetry or paint pictures. You can't just be. You can't hang loose in the shunyata: you have to be conscious of something or other, to give life to it, even. You have to express its looseness or its desolateness, the real meaning of desolateness, in a work of art. A work of art cannot be perceived if you have no idea what it is all about—and what a work of art is all about is a sense of delight. Touch here, touch there, delight. It is an appreciation of things as they are and of what one is—which produces an enormous spark. Something happens—clicks—and the poet writes poems, the painter paints pictures, the musician composes music. That is the yogacharan approach, we could say, which is synonymous with the Zen tradition and the traditions that developed around it.

Flower arrangement, or *ikebana*, for instance, is a mahayana expression of Buddhism. Sitting alone on a black zafu is no longer bodhisattva activity. Not really. You have to relate with the people, culture, and environment around you. It is all around you. Traditionally, the *ikebana* schools of Japan developed out of temple arrangements: the monks would walk out in the woods and chop down big pine trees, carry them back, put them in big cauldrons, and place them with old shoes and rocks in disused cauldrons without bottoms. When warriors came and offered their swords and helmets and armor to the temple as signs of their nonviolence, the monks used those as part of the stuffing to hold up the pine tree.

But Zen teachers found that too proud, just to stick a piece of pine tree in the middle of a pot. Arrogant as it is, bringing the pine tree into the house, to an indoor situation, is much more proud. That tree says, “You should not have moved me from that beautiful landscape and put me in your scene here. I will not belong to this particular world.” So they begin to put in another branch, which complements the pine tree, symbolizing earth; and then a branch that bends down, symbolizing man, which stays in the middle of the arrangement. And they put in flowers. So the traditional flower arrangement developed—with the three principles of *shin*, or heaven, man, and earth—to make sure that the pine tree is happy where it is, in spite of that all-powerful, gigantic image of Buddha overlooking it. Nevertheless, the flowers are supposed to hang themselves nonchalantly, as flowers, as they are. [Chuckles]

Later on, flower arranging became a domestic thing. In the court houses, drawing rooms, and tea ceremony rooms, people would arrange the flowers in the same way: upright, which justifies the sky and space; then sweeping along the floor, which manifests the earth; and an occupier in the middle, which manifests man. Things developed in that way, going so far as deciding to put in flowers, depicting the law of nature.

Arranging flowers is not so much Zen from the point of view of prajna

or shunyata, but more from the paramita level. A flower arrangement is made to make the plant comfortable and to make the people who view the plants and these ikebana arrangements comfortable and happier, so that they don't feel awkward and stiff—as they might feel, on the other hand, if the flower arranger has definite ideas of arranging flowers and arranges his flowers that way, and then admires his own arrangement. Next to that arrangement a person feels terribly bad, because it is a precise portrait of the artist, rigid and awkward. Such an arrangement is not inviting.

Any kind of arrangement can be developed according to this highest point of yogacharan philosophy. It does not purely apply to ikebana, alone, but to placing things in appropriate places. And there the element of tantra begins to trickle in—from the realization of mahamudra. This element is somewhat unnoticed by the Zen tradition, but it has been seen in that way. Picking a place is similar to what Don Juan talks about as “choosing your spot.” It is about where to be, where you place yourself, as well as how to organize a spot, or where to create the central focus of energy or attention.

Choosing a spot is an interesting point in that you have to be aware of the space in general, which is shunyata's space: loneliness, looseness. Then one dawn of consciousness begins to arise in the midst of the whole thing, and you place your object, which is slightly off-centered. You move it further, but that doesn't seem to be quite right—it is too deliberate. [Rinpoche arranges things on his side table.] Then you make it a little bit more off-centered—maybe that's the case, but that's not quite so, so something else goes with it. [Rinpoche gestures at his arrangement, to audience's laughter.]

That is arranging things as they are. But a lot of westerners disagree: they say that if you have to prune the branches for a flower arrangement, it is unkind to the plants. “Shouldn't you just leave them as they are? They are beautiful as they are.” But from the yogacharan point of view,

they are not: they are sloppy as they are. They should be shaped and trimmed; they should be trained in the bodhisattva way. They should be made more generous, more disciplined, more patient, more meditative, and so forth.

There is so much beauty in the yogacharan experience of things as they are—enormous! We could talk gallons and gallons of ideas—tons and tons of it! But at the same time, compared with vajrayana teaching, the approach that evolved is somewhat too delicate: very genteel, very delicate. It has the potential for guts, as in chopping down trees, branches, and so forth. That's good. But, at the same time, by arranging things in a certain way, you might insult your guest, your flower teacher, or your tea master. If you sit in a crooked way, your Zen master might hit you on the back. Gentilities of that nature are obviously dualistic, one way or another.

In the tantric tradition, such arrangements and such appreciation of things also take place, coming from the yogacharan tradition, the believing-in-the-mind, or mind-only school. But there is something beyond that school, which is what we discussed already as the ordinary-mind school, as opposed to the mind-only school. This is a revision of the yogacharan school—the approach we discovered right at the beginning, when the Zen master chopped down a big pine tree, planted it in a big pot, and arranged things around it for the genteel court room or the drawing room of the emperor. The tantric approach is much more direct, deliberate, and gross. It is the fashion of an unemployed samurai. When samurai are employed by a certain tribe, they are clean-shaven, they are well-groomed, they dress well, their knives are sharpened. When samurai are unemployed, they are very gruff and rough. Their knives may be rusty, they are sloppily dressed, and they are slightly grumpy. [Chuckles] That's the tantric approach!

Tantric practitioners are not employed by either the laymen or the priests. They are as they are. That is why they are called *siddhas*. Siddha

literally means, in Sanskrit, “he who works with miracles,” or “power over miracles.” But at the same time, the miracles are things as they are—literally—the literalness of things as they are. So vajrayana is very direct, very definite, obvious. It is the notion of the unemployed samurai, or the martial arts teacher who runs out of students. And siddhas are the tigers and lions and leopards that roam about in the jungle, without preying. They do compose poems; they do create works of art; but they are quite different from the yogacharan tradition of gentility. They provide poetry very directly, very simply:

I drink fire,

I breathe in the earth,

I wear clouds,

I ride on universe.

I am the warrior,

I swallow sun and the moon,

I wear the stars as my jewelry.

I am the conqueror of the universe. [Long, big smile at audience]

Unemployed samurai. Somewhat horrific—and heroic, maybe. But heroism is not particularly the point. Such inspiration comes from nonidealism in a work of art. Instead of drinking out of a beautifully molded teacup, you drink out of a skullcup. Instead of beating a drum that is beautifully painted, you blow a thighbone trumpet. That is an entirely different approach to poetry, to a work of art. Instead of destroying the ego by poisoning, by the message of shunyata or egolessness, you cut it in half—one big slash.

QUESTIONS

STUDENT: Rinpoche, when you were talking about the yogacharan school, you said that there was trust in some overall consciousness to

keep track of the loose ends. Does that sound familiar?

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: Yes.

S: In madhyamaka, is it just trust?

CTR: Madhyamaka is a general school, and yogachara is a part of that.

S: Okay. Then in vajrayana, is it trust in anything, or—

CTR: Just trust.

S: Does the path to the ordinary-mind school go through the mind-only school?

CTR: The mind-only school is the beginning of the vajrayana message being planted in the mahayana, where the Zen tradition belongs. Then there is the development of the ordinary-mind school, which is the mahamudra school.

S: But it is the same kind of path as the hinayana-mahayana path?

CTR: Yes.

S: Would the tantric practitioner still see the balance coming from the glass and the pitcher, or is he in a place of abruptness?

CTR: He would certainly see that.

S: But that niceness no longer happens?

CTR: There is no longer any question of making an emphasis on aesthetic appreciation—but just things as they are, seemingly.

S: At that level, when you are moving things around, is the assumption that, in that kind of spatial arrangement, everything has its place, that there is a place for everything in essence?

CTR: Always, yes. Always. But that's a tantric message, actually.

S: Is that an intuitive thing?

CTR: It is entirely an intuitive thing. The only way the teacher can teach you such an arrangement is, if you make mistakes, he just dismantles the whole thing and makes you arrange it again. That is the only teaching method that can be developed—and it was done that same way in the early ikebana schools in the Japanese tradition. The teacher won't tell you anything, he or she just dismantles things.

S: So when things hit that point, you pick up the vibration?

CTR: The color, texture, solidness, or whatever. Yes. You are supposed to pick it up intuitively.

S: And one last question: in the "I am the conqueror of the universe, the heavens, I wear the clouds..." where is the ego in that? It seems like it's beyond egoless. I mean, I'm confused. "I am all those things, I am an unemployed samurai..." When you say all those things, that doesn't seem to be an ego-oriented statement; and yet in each one, each phrase starts with "I." It's sort of like breast-feeding the ego, in a way.

CTR: We have a problem with the English language, that's all. It is purely a matter of grammar. I often thought of developing a special language that does not need to use the word "I" and articles. That would be much simpler. There would no longer be any suggestion of ego. It is just a linguistic problem. For instance, you say, "He possesses the greatest work," as opposed to "The greatest work is his." It turns out to be pidgin English, but it makes more sense, from a non-ego point of view. Maybe in a hundred years' time Buddhists will speak pidgin English, non-ego English.

S: In describing the similar approaches of yogachara and tantra, you explained yogachara, as I understood it, as a person being involved in a

process in which he or she is swinging back and forth between two poles. The practice seems to be that kind of thing: you put yourself into that, submit yourself to it, and then just intensify that.

CTR: Yes.

S: In contrast, when you described tantra as the sword's cutting ego, it seemed that there was a major difference there, in that one would have to discover the sword and make some kind of a leap. It is not that you just say, "I'm going to sit here and freak out until my thought process crumbles and I can see through," but something has to be done. Is that a quality of the tantric approach?

CTR: I think so, very much, yes. There is a real situation taking place, without any doubt. You are not afraid of anything at all. You are right there all the time. That is why the poetry of the earlier school, yogachara, is so indirect; but the poetry of tantra is very direct.

S: For the students, it seems that there are tremendous possibilities for paranoia.

CTR: That is part of the protection of the tantric tradition, generally. Paranoia or fear should be created, so that tantrikas do not trip on their egos or end up in vajra hell—which is a very direct approach, definitely.



WILD ZEN, CRAZY TANTRA

Mantra should be an onomatopoeic sound. The bubbly sound you hear on grandmother's stove, cooking broth, is mantra.... Whenever you reflect your mind to that bubbly sound of broth cooking, it immediately brings you back home. That's the mantra principle.

OBVIOUSLY, THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION is important for both Zen and tantra. Naturally, there are different ways of improvising meditation practice from the point of view of these two forms. Both Zen and tantra may seem to have an unrealistic, impractical quality, in that we are discussing end results, or landmarks—the final stage of development of the two approaches. In discussing Zen as the end result of sutra teaching, and crazy wisdom as the end result of tantra teaching, we are comparing the golden roofs, not the foundations or the buildings. We should be very careful about that particular point. At the same time, there is the question of how to begin.

As far as tantra is concerned, it is a long path. We first have to go through the complete sutra teachings thoroughly and fully—and finally we arrive at the conclusion that the phenomenal world is its own representation,

without needing any further spokesman to tell us anything. Seeing the phenomenal world and experience as they are, we develop conviction and power. Conviction does not necessarily mean pure and absolute reassurance. Conviction, here, is more catching the fever of crazy wisdom: there is a wind of crazy wisdom taking place. One catches the wind, the smell, and one then begins to dance with it, get high on it. The only way to create such a mutual relationship between the tantric teachings and your conviction is by developing the threefold vajra principles: vajra body, vajra speech, and vajra mind.

Vajra body is the phenomenal world seen very clearly, very solidly, in its vajra-like nature and, therefore, transparent. The world is *thaljin*, a Tibetan term that means “penetration.” Penetration does not have the sense that there is an obstacle, and you cut a hole through it; penetration, in this case, means that there is no obstacle at all—even the toughest surfaces are transparent.

In Naropa’s songs, the analogies of a rabbit’s horn, a tortoise’s hair, and flowers blooming in the sky are the expression of penetration—that impossible things are possible. That is the meaning of penetration in the tantric way. It is conviction. Obstacles are unknown to you, rather than that you gain victory over obstacles. Unemployed samurais are still good. They are as well-groomed as the employed ones—in fact, much better—which brings a sense of joy. Penetration through form is not associated with destroying or gaining territory—there is no connotation of victory whatsoever. Penetration has the sense of penetrating the sky, penetrating space. It is another expression of clarity. That is vajra form.

Vajra speech is *mantra*. *Man* is “mind”; *tra* is “protection,” so mantra is “protecting the mind.” What is meant by protection of the mind? What do we mean by mind, and what do we mean by protection? We mean that mind is already vajra in nature. It is without a base, without ground; therefore, it is vajra, indestructible. Mind is indestructible because there

is no ground. If there is ground, it ceases to become indestructible. Since there is no ground, therefore, it is imperturbable, indestructible. Groundlessness. One-flavor.

Mind usually functions in a certain form—“minding business,” as we say. You get involved in certain relationships and situations and in certain activities—spiritual, or domestic, or whatever their nature may be—you are minding them. Minding is a form of concern. It concerns you or your relationship to somebody else; and your concern, in turn, concerns the other. Concerns may be large and small, good and bad. Some concern, or minding, is painful in nature: it is largely aroused by discomfort. It may also be that extremely comfortable situations develop, in which case comfort becomes a source of concern, in that we may not be able to hold onto it, evolve ourselves through it, or work with it.

From this point of view, we could quite safely say that mind equals worry, and worry equals pain. Obviously, it is not very pleasant. So minding, or having a mind at all, is cumbersome and somewhat displeasing. But then you might ask, “If I don’t have mind, how can I seek pleasure? How can I determine happiness?” The Sanskrit word *manas*, or “mind,” is described in Tibetan texts as being so because it minds projections. It minds. It is the minding business: minding projections, minding reflections. If your finger is hurt, your brain is hurt. It is the same for your heart, your lungs, your head. The pain is predominantly in a certain part of your tentacles, your limbs; nevertheless, it sends a message to central headquarters, which feels threatened, uncomfortable, and calls for another policy to be set up. It is like a highly efficient bureaucracy—one that is so efficient, so utterly efficient, that finally it becomes totally unworkable. Because of its efficiency, it calls for failure. It is like one man running a large country.

But in this case, in talking about mantra, when we say mind, we are not referring to that painful mind, that worrisome mind. Mind, here, acts as a simple receiver, without complications or machinery behind it. It is simply

radar, without a system, clear and precise. Usually, complications follow afterwards. We are not at all talking about something other than mind—we are talking about the same mind—but that mind has the simplicity of intelligence at the beginning. Later, it is not appropriate to maintain the simplicity, because the mind needs further reference points, and further reference points bring further mechanisms. You have to employ more and more office workers and technicians to maintain that simplicity, so internally it becomes very complicated. In contrast, here we are talking about what we might call the “first mind,” or, using a similar phrase from the tantric tradition, the “ordinary mind.” That is the mind, *manas*.

Tra, “protection,” is not so much that you have to protect the mind. In fact, if you try to protect it in the ordinary sense, you create further complications of it. The mind is already in a protected state if you leave it alone, simple and ordinary, as it is. So the mind is already protected, and protection means acknowledging that protected state. That is mantra. The ordinary mind acknowledges its protection; protection is the acknowledgment of its own existence. In that sense, mantra is similar to the Sanskrit word *dharmata*, or in Tibetan, *chönyi*. *Dharma* is “reality”; *ta* is “itself” or “isness”; so *dharmata* is “dharma-ness.” *Dharma* is acknowledged by realizing its isness, or *ta*; therefore, it is *dharmata*, *dharmata*. That *dharmata* principle is not a philosophical concept; it is experiential. The *dharmata* is seen; therefore, there is *dharmata*.

The expression of *dharmata* is the speech principle, or mantra. Speech, here, means that which binds the highly active, or the mind, and the least active, or the body, together. Body, in this case, is just form, a thing. It may be transparent, but it is still existence. We could say that existence [body] and the energy of existence [mind] are brought together by speech or voice, which is tantric symbolism. When we talk about voice or speech, we are not talking about languages or musical tones, but about two types of entity being expressed by one manifestation, which is voice, speech, or

mantra. So mantra becomes one of the most powerful means for bringing mind and body together—one of the most powerful of all.

Mantra is incantation, as has often been said, and mantra could also be interpreted as “slogan.” In modern India, political slogans are referred to as mantra in Hindi. Mantra is a proclamation of something or other. You might ask what you are proclaiming by saying things like OM MANI PADME HUM. Mani means “jewel”; padme means “lotus”; hum means “bring about,” or “concentrate”; om is opening, clearing the air. So what you are saying doesn’t make any sense. OM MANI PADME HUM—so what? Where’s the power coming from? What is it all about? It’s not a sentence. It is different from a prayer. It is quite different from when we say, “For what we are about to receive, may the Lord be truly thankful.” [Trungpa repeatedly and deliberately enjoyed altering this traditional mealtime prayer. Ed.] It’s quite different than that! [Laughs]

With mantra, we are not talking to anything, particularly; we are just being there and uttering these highlights, almost telegraphically. *Mani*, the quality of jewel; *padme*, the lotus of compassion—just the highlights are referred to. Mantra is not regarded as something you read to help you get yourself together and formulate a policy. It is quite different from saying, “Be careful.” Mantra is just a statement of things as they are.

Mantra should be an onomatopoeic sound. The bubbly sound you hear on grandmother’s stove, cooking broth, is mantra. It talks about hominess, grandmother-ness, culture, and the past. It reminds you as grandchildren of the smell of the broth, the sound of the broth, the smell of the grandmother, and the feelings of her home—the sense of warmth that’s created when you visit your granny. Whenever you reflect your mind to that bubbly sound of broth cooking, it immediately brings you back home. That’s the mantra principle.

In tantra, mantra is used in a slightly different way: it is used in a more cosmic sense. Like the bubbly broth, what you say does not have to be a

sentence that's put together properly; instead, what you say is a telegraph, onomatopoeic sound that brings you home, so to speak. In this case, home is the ordinary mind. So you have certain messages, or mantras, that bring you home.

There is a story of a *lotsawa*, or translator, who was famous in the New Translation tradition of Tibet. He was trying to translate a tantric text, and he came across three verses in seven syllables that said, "Rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta." *Rakta* is a Sanskrit word which literally means "blood." He decided to translate it, "Blood, blood, blood, blood, blood." Then he thought maybe there was esoteric language involved, maybe blood meant "passion." So he said, "Passion, passion, passion, passion, passion." But it still didn't make any sense in the context of the rest of the verse. "Maybe," he thought, "it's something not very pure and clean. Maybe it's aggression." And he put, "Aggression, aggression, aggression, aggression; aggression." It didn't make any sense. Then he tried alternating them: "Passion, aggression, passion, aggression, blood." [Laughter] It still didn't make any sense. Then he looked up an early translator's translation of that text, that of Vairochana, and he found that Vairochana had translated that passage as, "Passion is blood; it is transcendent blood; therefore, it is passion. Therefore, it is blood, which does not exist at all." And so forth. According to the story, the translator wept. He was just about to tear up his manuscript, but then he felt so inspired by the wisdom of the early translators. He compared himself to a firefly and said that his teacher was like the morning star and the early translators were like the sun and the moon. The only thing he blamed himself for is that he had poverty mentality in translating—that he didn't have greater vision.

Mantra is a kind of sign language, but it does make sense. Somehow it makes real sense, whether it is the utterance of HUM, OM, AH, HRIH, or whatever. Mantras have basic qualities within them, but they can only be seen if you are on the ordinary-mind level. Mantra is speech therapy,

so to speak, speech skillful means. Skillful means by way of speech is the only channel toward crazy wisdom. You are almost there, in terms of crazy wisdom, because things are very precise and direct. You don't need any interpreter, any modifier or commentator. You see things directly, with no doubt at all; therefore, it is precise and direct.

Coming back to the Zen tradition, the *koan* principle is the same as mantra in many ways, but it has an entirely different background. It does not come from mahamudra inspiration, but from the inspiration of prajna and shunyata experience. Shunyata experience is precise. It doesn't dwell on any particular reference point or approach to anything at all. It is very clear—and that clarity creates the mind that we have been talking about. Instead of ordinary mind, it is clear mind. It is the mind-only-and-no-other-than-the-mind area, which is not ordinary but transcendental. So it is extraordinary mind. As opposed to tantra, where it is very ordinary mind, in the case of Zen, it's extraordinary mind. In some sense, that is saying the same thing, but in fact it is slightly different.

When you have extraordinary mind, you go up. There is the notion of higher and greater: you go up and your vision begins to expand. From the simple practice of black and white of the Zen tradition, you expand your vision a little bit more, beyond purely relating with black and white. You are expanding into greater awareness, greater depth. "Arouse yourself! You are buddha. Not only do you have buddhanature, but you are buddha itself." This is a different kind of conviction, of a larger scale—which seems to be different from the not-two, one-flavor, one-taste level. It is greater. But greater in this case has nothing to do with big or small; it is just great, nonesuch. It is great in its own existence, without comparison. It is thinking larger.

The Zen tradition seems to expand its vision at the level people begin to use koans. Like mantra, koans don't make any sense. Nevertheless, koans are translated into an individual's national language; whereas

mantras have never been translated into a national language of any kind. Mantras are kept purely onomatopoeic. Seemingly they are Sanskrit, but even that is uncertain. Scholars find that the extreme mantras don't make any sense in Sanskrit. They supposedly are in what is called the language of the dakinis, a kind of Sanskrit version of gibberish. Koans, however, are not at all gibberish. They are very simple words put together, such as "sound of one hand clapping," "cow's dung is buddha," "there is no Zen." Very simple little logical conclusions of that nature.

Maybe I shouldn't give this game away but students take great interest in this message: to find out how cow's dung is buddha.

"Everybody has buddhanature. Therefore, a cow must be buddha, and, therefore, a cow's dung also could be buddha." You come to that conclusion, you go back to your master, and you write it down. But if you approach it that way, he'll be so outraged and upset: "That's not the point. Go back; think more. Find out more, stupid fool."

You come back again: "The cow's dung is buddha because there's no difference between good and bad. Everything is within the oneness of enlightenment."

"That's worse. That's very cheap. How could you say such a thing? Terrible."

"I find that cow's dung is revolting; therefore, my mind must be buddhanature experiencing this revulsion. Therefore, cow's dung should be buddha."

"That's a trick! You're trying to get away. You are supposed to get something out of this, rather than trying to play smart!" [Students were laughing uproariously throughout this exchange. Ed.]

It's very tricky. With each of those steps you are exposing your deceptions. You have different kinds of facades. You are truly inspired and highly enthusiastic, and you try to keep with the language of the party, or the party line—which doesn't work. So then you try to be semi-honest,

but without knowing how far you should go. It doesn't help. Then, if those things don't work, you try to play something tricky, supposedly cute, or cunning. It doesn't do it. In fact, the problem is not so much the play of the language, but that you yourself have not heard the verse properly: "Cow's dung is buddha." You haven't actually listened to it and you have not heard it properly at all.

"Think about it. Work on it more and more."

This might sound too corny for you but, in fact, an obvious point is that the cow's dung doesn't have to qualify by being buddha, particularly. Buddha is another way of saying "is." So you have, "Cow's dung is." You are rather uncomfortable if you come up with such a statement, if you dare to cut down the koan that was given to you, twist around the words, and instead of "buddha," put "is." Nevertheless, that seems to be the best answer we can ever think of—at this stage anyway.

"Never mind about buddha. It is cow's dung." Full stop. You feel slightly foolish that after all this expectation building up, you finally could answer the koan.

"Look what you came out with. It's good."

This is similar to the story of a calligraphy student studying under a master calligrapher. The student did the character about twenty times and everything was wrong and not quite right. Then the teacher went to the bathroom, and the student did something very quick, because the master wasn't watching him. The master came back and said, "Who did that? That is a masterpiece." This story is involved with giving up ambition. Sometimes satori experience is an enormous letdown. Disappointing. But there it is. That is another kind of mantra: there it is. Applying trickery to the seemingly smart, sharp, and highly devoted mind—cutting that down—brings about the wildness of Zen. Wild Zen.

The difference between Zen and tantra is that tantra is crazy and Zen is wild. We could quite safely say that, I think. The wildness of Zen is

outrageous, like the story of the master burning a wooden image of buddha to keep himself warm, or the guy living underneath a bridge. There are all kinds of stories of masters who are wild. But wildness in that sense is rather comfortable. You would prefer to have a wild kid—or husband or wife—rather than a crazy kid. It is somewhat in keeping with the bodhisattva's approach of following the great path: on that path you could be wild.

Wildness seems to be slightly different than craziness. Listening to Naropa's or Tilopa's songs, you pick up on the craziness. They are not so much talking a pure language of contradictions in saying, "rabbit's horn," "tortoise's hair," all those contradictions. "The mute speaks, and the deaf listen." It could be said that these contradictions are the same as Zen phrases. But the way such images are used—why mute, particularly, why deaf?—there is a kind of haunting quality in those phrases. Just reading such verses makes a lot of people angry, in fact. If *The Life and Teachings of Nāropa* had not been translated by Professor Guenther, a lot of people would feel it unfair to even publish such a book. So thanks to Guenther—and to these languages. The Naropa book has become a prominent work of scholarship, one of the best in the literature of tantric Buddhism, apart from the Milarepa songs.

There are possibilities, when you are meeting a crazy person, of not knowing what he is going to do to you. He is seemingly friendly and nice or he's seemingly aggressive, but there is uncertainty, a feeling that trickery is involved. You might call it warped mind, but it is the crazy-wisdom nature. In fact, if I may say so, it is we who have warped minds. When somebody is truly straight, we find it completely irritating. I mean, that is the nature of crazy wisdom.

We have a different kind of feeling about the wildness of Zen: it's outrageous, but it's fun. It produces lots of new material for scholars to speculate on. Logicians might find interesting points in it. Practitioners might find it exuberating, challenging.

This discussion of Zen and tantra has nothing to do with one technique being superior to the other, necessarily. The wildness of Zen is based on prajna, or the transcendental-knowledge principle; and the crazy wisdom of tantra is based on the mahamudra principle. That seems to make the difference. It is absolutely necessary to go through those two stages: wildness and craziness. One has to go through wildness to begin with; then one ends up in craziness, or crazy wisdom. That seems to be necessary. It seems to be the only way.

QUESTIONS

STUDENT: It seems from what you say that prajna is somewhat limited. Could you explain the limitation of prajna as opposed to crazy wisdom?

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: The limitation of prajna is the sense of faith, trust, and belief. There is enormous faith. In the mahamudra, faith is not particularly the point; being is more important. Being. In prajna there is a hint of how wild you may be, but it is still in keeping with something or other.

S: So there is still an element of tradition or reference point?

CTR: Yes, the element of a norm.

S: What is that norm, in prajna?

CTR: I suppose, itself.

S: Prajna.

CTR: What else? There is nothing. Everything is nothing—except nothingness, which is prajna itself. There has to be some thing: form is empty and emptiness is form. You have been cut from both sides, but there is still the cutter. There is still the sword, which is prajna.

S: How does crazy wisdom operate?

CTR: It is not in keeping with any landscape. If the crazy wisdom person is supposed to build a road, a highway, it will be built like the robins would build it. [Rinpoche gestures in the air.] It would go through fields and villages and houses and mountains—straight. If prajna built the road, it would be the same as what we have now: in keeping with the landscape, very gracious, maybe with ornaments around it.

S: Is it possible that when one really is crazy, that in the craziness “straight” could be anything, including going around or making curves?

CTR: Straight means cutting: you can’t cut in curves. If you have a sharp blow, you cut the whole thing. In this case, it is the ultimate cutting. It does not depend on anything at all, and it doesn’t come back, because it has no allegiance to the right or the left. It is That.

S: Would you say that prajna is like cutting with scissors—and the other one like stabbing through with a knife? Something like that?

CTR: Yes. Shotgun.

S: Short job? [Laughter]

S: Who aims the gun?

CTR: I suppose the person who is using the gun. [Laughter]

S: Could you explain a bit more about the body as being the energy of existence?

CTR: The body is just the ground to work on. Mind is energy and body is existence.

S: It’s just solid form, a vehicle?

CTR: Transparent solidness.

S: If one is knowledge and the other is being, why aren't they the same?

CTR: Knowledge is somewhat based on heritage.

S: Well, if you really know something, it means you are it, in a sense.

CTR: You cannot be it, because you still know it. When you know something, it is being put into your mind, and you are being trained. You may be producing a masterpiece, but you still are separate from that knowledge. In contrast, being is obviously there.

S: I have some trouble with the indestructibility of vajrayana. You said it was easy to see vajrayana as eternalism, with its deities, but that it wasn't eternalism. However, I do not see how indestructibility is different from shunyata, from impermanence. Is there any difference? Is vajrayana indestructibility different from the shunyata principle?

CTR: In the shunyata principle, there is a sense of experience. The experience may be indestructible; nonetheless, you are dependent on your energy, your fuel. In the case of the vajra-like quality, or indestructibility, of vajrayana, things are no longer experienced.

When we talk about experience, it means experiencing something other than you. You might have some experience that is one with yourself, one with shunyata. Nevertheless, it is one with shunyata, so it is separate. You could say that the water poured in a cup is indivisible from the cup when the water is in the cup. But if it is indivisible, why do you have to say that there is something to be indivisible from?

In the case of vajra nature, there is no experience. One doesn't have to say "union," or "indivisibility" at all. It is a sense of being. You don't have an energy shortage, so to speak, and you don't require any fuel. You have no dealings with extremes anymore: extremes are also included. It is fearlessness.

S: So Vajrasattva, vajra being, wouldn't necessarily be operating from shunyata?

CTR: No, not at all. He would be operating from an entirely different kettle of fish.

S: Is it true that we have no way of knowing that our perceptions are accurate?

CTR: [long pause] Where did you hear that? [Laughter] That's not true. We do have a way of knowing our perceptions are accurate. To begin with, your pain is accurate: it is your perception, another kind of reality. Then, as you go up into the vajrayana level, each time there is rejection or you are pushed away by something or other, each of those rejections is accurate. The loneliness is accurate. I mean, there is no way of knowing from the beginning level to the end level; but there are reference points, relative references to accuracy happening all the time.

S: You used "not two" in reference to tantra. When I met a Rinzai Zen master, he used a particular method of holding up two different things and saying, "not two." Would that be the shunyata "not two"?

CTR: In the tantric sense, "not two" also means "not one."

S: He did make a oneness.

CTR: "Not two" to the extent of whether we should trust in zero, either—even that is questionable. "Not two" is like saying, "not one hundred," but a much simpler way of putting it.

S: In the Naropa seminar, you mentioned at one point that Naropa dealt with one of his visions by talking to it, and you said that that was like someone talking to Zen, which isn't what you do with Zen. Yet Naropa was talking to Zen. That seems to be different from the use tantra makes

of Zen, the way it addresses it, or takes it further. I wonder if you could explain that.

CTR: I don't see any issues there, particularly. It seems that tantra takes Zen further, definitely. But any beginner vajrayanist has to go through Zen training, or Zen-like training. Probably it wouldn't be called Zen as such, but you have to go through that level of mistaking wildness for crazy wisdom.

S: I see.

S: Could you say a little more about ordinary mind, as distinct from what Suzuki Roshi calls beginner's mind? I thought I understood you to say that there is a connection between mahamudra experience and ordinary mind.

CTR: Well, mahamudra experience is ordinary mind. Another way of presenting ordinary mind is that the ordinary mind is the perceiver, and mahamudra is the subject you perceive. Ordinary mind is big mind, I suppose, according to yogacharan philosophy. It is the solid mind, the mind which comprehends everything, like the mahayana approach to sanity.

The ordinary mind is often experienced in the form of enormous letdown. "If this is the experience, then there's nothing to it." Then it begins to flower and thrive—because it is so ordinary. It's like when somebody shows you a trick and you find it very simple; but when you play tricks on others, they find it very fascinating. The simplicity becomes enormously fantastic in the later stages. But at the beginner's stage, it is an enormous letdown, because you have all kinds of expectations about it. One asks oneself, twice, "Are you kidding me or is it really the case?" But it happens to be—it is really the case. That is a kind of ordinary-mind experience. It is simple and clear. That's why it is magical and why it is referred to as magical in the tantric tradition. It captivates you because of its ordinariness.

S: That only happens when you haven't fully realized ordinary mind. Wouldn't—

CTR: At the beginning, you don't know what this is all about, and you expect something. Then it is presented to you, and you have that letdown. Usually, such an experience only takes place in abhisheka ceremonies, during the fourth abhisheka. The ordinary mind is presented to you, and you find it very disappointing.

S: Do you think that it's important for a person to choose the tantric path or the Zen approach—to make a conscious decision and relate with that?

CTR: I think there is no particular point in trying to choose either of those. Just practice. That will lead you into certain states naturally. It is an organic thing.

S: Do you think it's a hindrance to the principle of nondwelling when you become absorbed in meditation?

CTR: Absorption seems to be based on ego, yes. Your whole mind is clouded over in any kind of absorption.

S: What do you do at that point?

CTR: It requires meditation in action, and working with the emotions, chaos, and depressions—rather than just dwelling on ecstasy. Everybody is bound to have the raw and rugged aspect of life. No matter how smooth one's life may be, there still is an element of that in anyone. That seems to be the saving grace, in fact—the chaos that takes place in one's life.

S: From the viewpoint of Zen, the activity that we have been engaging in the last three days would be either garbage, or it would be aimed at driving a person to practice, to realize the ground of being, and to find the fool in what he is. What I'd like to ask is how in the tantric tradition a person is saved from the substitute activity of talking about shunyata and trying to get definitions, such as prajna, exact. How is a person driven beyond that to practice and realization?

CTR: From the tantric point of view, it is simply a kind of dance that takes place. You could be dancing in the middle of a garbage pile or you could be dancing in a palace. Everything doesn't make sense—what we discussed—but everything that's been discussed is a good show!
[Laughter]

S: Many of the things that you have been discussing were really crystal clear from the experiential viewpoint; but short of that, the mind would be tempted to engage in this kind of quasi-logical discourse, trying to define, and really acquire—acquire as a substitute—some knowledge of both tantric practice and Zen, for our comparison. And you seem to be adding so much more on the back—

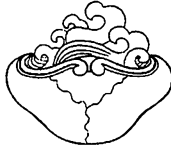
CTR: Well, that's good. The more you are confused by the stuff you have collected, that much more do you have to sit back and sort it out. That seems to be the general point. In fact, nobody can sort anybody out, really, by talking or even by demonstrating. You are collecting more memories and more ideas. So the only thing to do is to help yourself, in any case. This is supposed to be the best contribution, but it could be fatal.

S: I might just summarize then, that Zen and tantra are comparable, in this sense. The activity that one is engaging in here is really a kind of seduction. If you engage in it thoroughly, then you come to a kind of brick wall, which is where you have to get anyhow.

CTR: That's right, yes. Well said! At that conclusion, maybe we should end our seminar.

PART TWO

THE NET OF DISCIPLINE



TRAPPING THE MONKEY

If we try to rush toward this monkey or to catch it by chasing after it, that exaggerates the monkey's paranoia so that it is impossible to catch. The only way to catch this mind-monkey is to camouflage a trap with earth that is seemingly still. Then, hopefully, the monkey will step on that ground and become trapped.

IN DISCUSSING ZEN AND TANTRA, we should first understand what seems to be their common ground and affinity: the practice of meditation. Zen and tantra can be understood if we understand basic meditation practice and its meanings and applications. Since both Zen and tantra belong to the Buddhist tradition, they both have that process. The Sanskrit word *dhyana*, which is connected with the word “zen” means “concentration,” “stillness of mind,” or “dynamic stillness”; and the Sanskrit word *samadhi* means “absorption,” or “entering further into a wakeful state.” So *dhyana* comes first and *samadhi* comes later.

According to Buddhist tradition, when we talk about meditation, we are not referring to meditating upon something or entering into a particular state. Fundamentally, meditation is about training the mind without using any technique. Meditation is a process of training, and

that training is the goal as well as the path. Such training is very gradual, very slow, but very definite at the same time. There is a sense of simplicity. One cannot just embark immediately on the practice of Zen, or dhyana practice, but one has to go through the beginning of the beginning, which is called hinayana discipline, or the narrow path. This is very important. So dhyana, or Zen, could be divided into three categories: the beginner's level, the intermediate level, and the final level.

At the beginner's level, there is what is called "training your mind." The mind is like a crazy monkey, which leaps about and never stays in one place. It is completely restless and constantly paranoid about its surroundings. The training, or the meditation practice, is a way to catch this monkey, to begin with. That is the starting point. Traditionally, this training is called *shamatha* in Sanskrit, or *shi-ne* in Tibetan, which means simply "the development of peace." When we talk about the development of peace, we are not talking about cultivating a peaceful state, as such, but about simplicity. If we try to rush toward this monkey or to catch it by chasing after it, that exaggerates the monkey's paranoia so that it is impossible to catch. The only way to catch this mind-monkey is to camouflage a trap with earth that is seemingly still. Then, hopefully, the monkey will step on that ground and become trapped.

Like the trap, the practice of the development of peace is one of imitating stillness. You are pretending to be still, although the mind is, of course, constantly jumping and restless. Nevertheless, that is the basic starting point, in which you use what you have: your body, speech, and mind. That is, you use the breathing, your eyes, and the movement of your body as a way of camouflaging yourself in the stillness. But that doesn't mean that you have to stop breathing or completely stop moving.

Another form of camouflage is to go along with the rhythm, so that the stillness pretends to be movement at the same time. In this form of camouflaging, your mental attitude goes along with the breathing, and

you visually go along with whatever is in front of your eyes. There is also in Zen a tradition of *kinhin*, or walking meditation, which is similar to the breathing practice. The only difference is that instead of a subtle sense of attention and wakefulness, in walking practice, the whole process becomes much more definite. The moment your foot comes down is more the point, and the sensation of your feet as they carry you around: touching the ground, lifting, putting weight on them, and so forth. Such practices at the shamatha level may almost seem to be competing with stillness, in that they use movement, but all of them are based on trying to capture this crazy monkey by setting a trap. Therefore, taking on the physical discipline of being still and the discipline of carrying out a certain schedule every day is necessary.

At the beginner's level, most of the emphasis is put on the sitting practice, on working with the breathing and walking. In everyday life, being awake and paying attention, bare attention, to what you are doing also becomes important. The way to do that is not so much by trying to slow down your physical movement or by deliberately trying to speak more softly, but by a sense of presence. It is by a glimpse of wakefulness, a sense of bare attention without any purpose or object behind it but just taking a look or a glimpse at oneself. In extending your arm, touching your cup, lifting and drinking; talking and experiencing speech, your own speech and other people listening to you; and in physical movement, you are constantly being there with just bare attention. In doing so, you just touch on the verge of that particular activity rather than wholeheartedly plunging yourself into heavy awareness practice. You are just touching the highlights—which acts as a kind of teaser, in that awareness is suggested or implied—rather than constantly plunging in really deeply, which provides further discursive problems—thoughts, rebounds, reactions, and all kinds of things. So the idea is to touch just the verge of activities, just pinpoint the verge of activities, which tends to bring a very strange form

of slowness or stillness, somehow, that is not deliberate. If you are trying to hold onto awareness very hard, then your activities become rigid rather than slow and peaceful. In this case, the practice is just touching the verge of awareness, which brings a sense of slowness and peacefulness.

We are trying to trap this mad monkey. We have no idea what this monkey is or where it is wandering or even who this monkey is; but at this point it seems to be unnecessary to talk about who or what this monkey is—we are just practicing our entrapment. That seems to be one of the first disciplines of the practice of meditation. It is a very important basic foundation for dhyana practice, or Zen practice, if you would like to call it that.

That seems to be the starting point. Before going on, it would be good to concentrate on trying to understand what we have already discussed and also to have a chance to sit and meditate, so that we have an idea of what we are discussing.

QUESTIONS

STUDENT: How long should the beginner practice daily—short or long periods?

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: At the beginner's level it has to be a definite amount of time: traditionally, forty minutes. Hopefully, starting from forty minutes, you could go up to three hours a day—although that doesn't mean three hours in one stretch of sitting, particularly. There may be a certain amount of hesitation that you are unable to do this, which is completely untrue—you can do it! However, you never experienced such a reference point before, so you are afraid of doing it. Therefore, in order to surprise yourself, so to speak, it seems to be good actually to plunge into sitting practice, doing it for a lengthy amount of time, time

permitting in your daily lifestyle. There is really no set pattern, but one should do a sizable amount of sitting practice. And of course, if there is more hesitation, then one has to push further; and if there is too much ambition, then one has to minimize.

S: Do sitting practice and practices like *t'ai chi* or other forms of moving meditation have the same effect as walking meditation for a beginner? Would it be just as appropriate to use those forms?

CTR: *T'ai chi* and similar practices are more of a dance. In contrast, the physical act of walking meditation is not regarded as a dance, it is purely functional. You don't try to put emphasis on anything except bare attention. So, at the beginning, the whole thing has to be very simple. There's very little emphasis made on aesthetics, particularly, beyond what is there already. Walking is purely functional; otherwise, we're not able to provide the camouflage for the monkey.

S: The watcher principle and bare attention—is that the monkey also?

CTR: We can't know that yet! [Laughter] Probably we should talk about that later. You see, the watcher is different from the notion of bare attention, because the very meaning of bare attention is "just a touch," and the watcher principle is more than a touch—it watches very sincerely. So there is light touch and there is sincere touch.

S: In the book, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, the author, Tung-Pin Lu, talks about following your breathing so that there is almost no sense of breathing. The practice of breathing is almost eliminated. He talks about smelling a delicate flower or something like that. Is that the kind of light touch you are talking about?

CTR: We are not talking about gentle breathing at all, just natural breathing. Breathing could be shallow or rough, depending on the state

of the person's body, but the bare attention is a very gentle touch. You are not heavy-handedly being watchful, which breeds further restlessness. You are just teasing, almost, just touching the verge of awareness. That brings a sense of organic process, in which you are not providing any struggle, you are just suggesting. Therefore, mindfulness practice is known as *smṛti*, which means "recollection," or a sort of resting consciousness. You are working with the sense of being alive—your mind is functioning and your body is functioning—rather than struggling to live. That's why in the famous story of the string player who asked Buddha whether he should tame his mind or let it go, Buddha used the analogy of tuning a stringed instrument. He said that if you go to extremes that doesn't make a good sound, so it has to be a balanced approach. The sense that you are just barely doing it may seem to be rather dissatisfying at the beginning; but, in fact, in the long run it has more impact than being heavy-handed.

S: Do you see meditating with a mantra and meditating by breathing as serving somewhat the same purpose or could you talk about the differences between them?

CTR: In the Buddhist tradition, working with a mantra is not recommended as the starting point. The simple breathing technique is definitely recommended. It depends on your attitude. In a lot of Hindu traditions, of course, you start with the mantra immediately, as the equivalent of using the breathing. In either case, it is a question of whether the mantra or the breathing is serving as a camouflage or just serving as a further sensation for the monkey, which depends on your attitude. However, at the beginner's level, a mantra is not being used as a magical spell, or mystical power, but purely to interest your mind, like the breathing, so that you could develop a sense of stillness. So it is a different way of using mantra at the beginner's level.

S: Would the implication be true that repeating the names of God, which is supposed to be done by Christians and Muslims, is also not exactly a mantra?

CTR: The Jesus prayer, for instance, is similar because you have the sense of a concept at the beginning, but you are repeating the prayer so often and so many times that at some point the conceptual mind begins to get confused. In that way, because so many repetitions take place, the repetition of the prayer acts as a kind of camouflage. I think those sorts of practices are common to all meditative schools.

S: Is it possible to avoid the watcher by identifying yourself with the outbreath, or by becoming absorbed in the outbreath, or is that too heavy-handed an act?

CTR: It is not so much a question of absorption as a question of intelligence—the intelligence of experiencing the breath as it is carried out, and then finally letting go when the outbreathing stops. So there is a sense of intelligence rather than any hypnotic quality. Mindfulness implies you are still intelligent, that your intelligence is still functioning. So it has to be a very light touch rather than being completely involved in it. The problem seems to be that if you are completely involved in any technique, that tends to provide all kinds of restlessness and fundamental chaos. At this point, at the beginning, the purpose is not to bring out chaos—although fundamentally it is. At the beginner's level one has to learn to settle down with oneself. That's the problem at the beginning, so we try to rehabilitate ourselves with our mind.

S: In the process of settling down, in many traditions they talk about very rapturous or pleasant things that happen if you do that, particularly in mantra meditation systems. I wonder what is the relationship between extremely pleasant states that could arise while sitting and the process

of the watcher as you are describing it? I mean, what does one do if something really groovy happens while you are doing a mindfulness meditation?

CTR: I don't see any problems, particularly. [Laughter] You see, there shouldn't be any opinions as to what should happen to you. It is an open-ended question. The whole thing is just an experiment, so anything could come and go. There could be a fantastic cinema show. You might hear music and see visions or have distorted sensations in the body, feeling that you have enormous arms, a small body, or a heavy head. You might keep hearing classical music or jazz or pop songs. All kinds of things happen. Sometimes it feels completely nonexistent and sometimes it feels wretched. But I don't think it really matters very much, particularly since this is not yet entering into samadhi. At the beginner's level, whatever happens, if one tries to prevent it, it somehow becomes a problem. Therefore, letting it come is the best way of avoiding it.

S: What about trying to encourage it?

CTR: That is the same; it is doing the same thing. That is why the technique is very important. Because you have some ongoing mutual earthly things happening with your body, your breathing, and your walking—there is no doubt, it is not a dream but reality.

S: Is there a danger in going into this kind of meditation if there's no invocation and dispelling of demons or spirits that might want to possess you or enter into you or have a negative influence on you? Are there any dangers that you have to do anything to avoid?

CTR: Where would they come from? [Long pause; laughs] The very notion of danger you are working with is another kind of opinion, another idea. So you are working with that very thing. That idea might produce all kinds of further terrifying thoughts: spirits, ghosts, vampires, titans,

or what have you. Since you are working with that particular situation already, the question of whether you can get hurt is like saying, “Could a razor blade cut itself?” But wait and see what happens—this afternoon!
[Laughter]

S: Does noise interfere with the effectiveness of meditation, if there’s music or noise on the street?

CTR: I don’t think it matters very much [snaps fan], as much as the meditation cushion you are sitting on—which is also not an object.
[Snaps fan]

S: What about the irritation that comes from this wild monkey?

CTR: The whole point of trying to trap this wild monkey is that the behavior of the monkey has to be accommodated; otherwise, you can’t catch it.

S: How do you accommodate it?

CTR: By sitting and breathing. [Pause] It’s very simple.

S: You said at the beginning to try to be on the verge of attention. If there’s a tendency to go into experiences and lose yourself in the experiences, does that mean some element of consciously holding back the tendency to rush in, or does it just happen more naturally in daily situations through sitting practice? It would seem that you would get into a very complicated process if you tried to hold yourself back, but if there’s a tendency to go in, how do you find the verge?

CTR: The point is that when we talk about touching the verge, we are by no means talking about being tentative or halfhearted. It is still wholehearted, but you don’t make a big deal out of it. You let the energy arise in your mind, and you let awareness just be there, rather than

awareness minding the business of what's happening. So there is almost complete control by the awareness; but at the same time, the awareness is no longer dogmatic. It is accommodating awareness, just a moderator—a very precise one. In many cases, when you begin to practice and to develop your discipline, you find that awareness actually comes to you: forgetfulness becomes awareness. So forgetfulness is the other side of the coin of awareness. The awareness invites you rather than you trying to get it—which is not particularly a great achievement, but it happens to anyone who practices a certain length of time, particularly if there is a sense of discipline. If a willingness to practice is involved, that also brings a sense of openness to you. That commitment is very important.

S: I don't understand how to identify with the outbreath and why to identify with the outbreath rather than both in- and outbreath.

CTR: This is a particular technique called, "mind mixing with space." In this tradition, inbreathing has the notion of confirming one's existence and outbreathing is an expression of openness. On the outbreath, you have plenty of breath inside your lungs, so you can breathe out. There is a sense of generosity and a sense of not being paranoid or feeling under attack. The outbreath also has a sense of openness, expanding yourself into the atmosphere, into space. It is a gesture of letting go and a very literal attempt to imitate the notion of egolessness. Inbreathing is regarded as just a gap. You breathe in anyway, but your attitude is that it is just a gap, and you go along with the outbreathing. That is what is called the "mixing mind and space" technique.

S: Would this not be a development of personality that is essentially called in Western psychology schizoid?

CTR: I suppose so.

S: Thank you. [Laughter]

CTR: You're welcome.

S: Is it better to follow your breath farther out rather than closer in?

CTR: Mm-hmm. You see, the breathing is a sort of life force that takes place in space, according to this approach. It has nothing to do with anything inside your body, particularly, at all. That is the tradition of mind mixing with space.



BEAUTY AND ABSURDITY

When you attain enlightenment, you never leave your fellow sentient beings; you still work with them constantly. You return to the world, which is the expression of compassion.

HAVING DISCUSSED the ground—how the basic practice of dhyana, or the tradition of Zen, could be developed—the next stage seems to be the question of how concentration produces appreciation. At this stage, you are actually trapping the crazy monkey. So it is a twofold process. First, you develop a sense of accuracy in relating with your thoughts and your mind—with the neuroses and all kinds of things that develop in one's mind. Secondly, you put all that into a certain perspective, as workable. You make a relationship with your thoughts, you work with the thoughts. So this process could be represented by the analogy of trapping the crazy monkey.

The traditional analogy for the monkey-mind is an ox or an elephant. In Tibetan we call that mind *sem*. Mind, or *sem*, is the intelligent state that relates with objects. It is fickle in nature, constantly moving, and

this movement leaves impressions behind. The mind leaves impressions, and it also takes on the burden of others. Mind is a constant state of movement. Sometimes, extraordinarily, the mind extends itself into speeding along very fast; and at some points, it seems to slow down, but that is also an expression of speed. Whether it is slow or fast, the nature of mind is restless, completely restless. At times, there may be room for irritations or obstacles to pass through, but even the occasional stillness of mind lasts no longer than a fraction of a second. That is the definition of mind.

Awareness, or intelligence, is quite a different and separate category from the mind. The intelligence, or consciousness, has less speed and does not carry a burden. It also expects some hospitality: this particular intelligence expects to be accommodated. Intelligence or awareness is therefore referred to as the rider or herder who works with the ox or the elephant or the monkey. Awareness regards the mind as its property; intelligence, or consciousness, is the owner of monkey-mind. The idea is that the monkey is supposed to have been domesticated a long time ago, but, somehow, we did not get around to it. So now we have this big project of setting a trap and trapping this monkey.

The schema is that there is consciousness, which is the intelligent aspect of the mind; and within consciousness, the most sane aspect is the awareness fraction or portion. The monkey-mind is caught in the trap because of the constant practice of sitting meditation, which provides a camouflage. Being completely still, it is complete entrapment. But at this point it is still a game. We are uncertain as to whether we are going to trap the monkey or not; it is uncertain; it is still a challenge. It could be regarded as a big joke, but nevertheless we are pursuing it and going ahead with it.

One of the problems with the monkey-mind is speed. The intensity of the speed, instant by instant, has prevented us from taking a good look at

this particular monkey, so it has become a myth. We are uncertain, and question whether such a monkey exists or not. But the monkey-mind is finally caught in the trap purely by constant patience and forbearance. As practitioners, we do not react against the displays that monkey has provided us: the discursive thoughts and subconscious gossip. The monkey has provided us with all kinds of things, but we continue to remain still. We are faithful to the technique of awareness of breathing and walking.

By the practitioner's sheer discipline and sheer patience, the monkey finally feels that there is no life around it or around the trap. As the monkey begins to relax a little, but still practices its inquisitiveness—suddenly it is caught in the net by our sheer stillness and faithfulness to the technique. The monkey struggles and tries to get out of the net, but that net was well-prepared a long time ago by highly accomplished craftsmen, who handed down from generation to generation the tradition of how to provide such a good entrapment. Every knot in the net is well-produced, and it is very tough and functional. So now the monkey mind cannot get out of this trap. Knowing that as well, the monkey makes only feeble attempts, a kind of tokenism. Another analogy for this process is that of capturing an elephant or an ox, as demonstrated in the Zen ox-herding pictures.

In the end, the monkey turns out to be not all that monkey-like in strength and solidity—it turns out to be a gorilla! It has power and strength, and it is worthwhile training this gorilla as a vehicle. Sometimes it is ferocious, sometimes slightly stupid, but nevertheless it is very powerful. So that is another realization: this monkey-mind is not all that feeble. It is not as weak, inquisitive, and speedy as we thought it might be.

In the practice of meditation, in dealing with this gorilla, once we have captured such a creature, we have to examine it and study it. We cannot just do something with it without knowing its habits and its behavior—patterns that might have to change. This is called vipashyana practice,

or in Tibetan, *lhakthong*, which literally means “clear seeing.” *Lhak* is “superior”; *thong* is “seeing”; therefore, *lhakthong* could be translated as “superior vision” or “clear seeing.”

Now that this mind has been captured by the discipline and techniques we applied, we have to examine it carefully to see what we can do with this animal and how we can use it—whether we could use it as a farming ox or a vehicle or a baggage carrier. So we look at this discursive thought finally entrapped in the net of discipline and see what we can do with it. This provides a first step, some hope, because after all the trips that we have gone through, the hypothetical ceases to be hypothetical. It finally becomes reality. After all, we are not kidding ourselves and pretending to be meditating, we are actually doing something with our mind—and this is the proof.

Lhakthong is called clear seeing because it is awareness of every detail and at the same time it is very spacious. It goes beyond a breathing exercise alone. There is a sense of openness and a sense of appreciation of the environment around oneself. The focus on the breathing is no longer the important point—you focus on the totality of the breathing. The space around you becomes extremely important and extremely powerful. At that point, mindfulness becomes awareness, which is the next stage of practice.

Awareness also means comprehension. In other words, you cannot just be aware without being intelligent. The notion of wakefulness still continues at this level, but awareness not only means seeing; it means that seeing, as well as the product of seeing, is being perceived properly. So first you see something, but you do not quite perceive it. Your vision has to be very clear to see properly. Then, having already seen, there is still constant discipline, which continues afterwards. Having seen things as they are, the object you discovered comes back to you and you begin to comprehend. That is, you begin to understand what you have seen, rather than purely seeing. That is the difference. It is like the difference

between things perceived through a camera lens and things perceived by a human mind. One is completely mechanical: things can be seen as clearly as possible by a macro lens, but that lens does not transmit its message back. In the case of consciousness, the awareness process is a level of perception that utilizes what is seen as a part of its working situation. Through awareness, you get a very abrupt, definite, and clear perspective of the spontaneous working of perception and reality—suddenly! Vision and perception happen constantly; and with lhakthong, seeing and knowing take place at the same time.

We now realize that this gorilla has all kinds of potentialities. This gorilla can be trained in domestic manners, in every sense of the word. At the same time the intelligence, the conscious mind—which is the hunter of this gorilla—has established its ownership and trust and understanding. At this point, the speedy mind becomes somewhat workable—even highly workable.

On one hand, in this hinayana approach to the Zen tradition, the aesthetic appreciation of Zen poetry, or poetic vision, sometimes make things more complicated. On the other hand, as things become more inspiring in the Zen tradition, and somewhat fun, we have koans of all kinds appearing. These koans are composed by the herdsman who captured the ox and who is the possessor of this gorilla. The herdsman questions all kinds of things, so koans generally come in the form of questions, as a way of producing something to test this monkey-mind. There are known to be one hundred predominant koans, some of which are based on quotations from the sutras and the various *gathas* that Buddha spoke in his teaching. According to the sutras, the Buddha's speech was sometimes prose and sometimes in the form of song or inspiration. When the Buddha spoke poetry, the verses were called *gathas*, and some koans are products of those *gathas*. We find *gathas* in the sutra teachings, the *abhidharma* teachings, as well as in the *vinaya*

teachings; but predominantly in the sutra teachings. Those three types of teaching—sutras, abhidharma, and vinaya—are what are known as the three baskets or, if you like, the three gospels, of Buddhism. The vinaya contains teachings on discipline; the sutras contain teachings on practice; and the abhidharma contains teachings on metaphysical understanding. A lot of koans come from those sources.

Koans contain such familiar phrases as “does a dog have buddhanature?” and “what is the sound of one hand clapping?” These questions—koans in the form of questions produced by the Zen masters as synopses of the essence of the sutras—have a very powerful impact on the monkey-mind. The monkey has now been caught in this net and has been trying to struggle, but finally it gives up struggling. It is hopeless, and quite possibly pissing and shitting profusely. The monkey is looking for some entertainment—and along comes a koan! That koan looks very colorful. It looks like a simple biscuit: “Here, try this!” The poor monkey doesn’t know whether it should eat it, examine it, or hold onto it. It just doesn’t know. The koan looks appealing, but the monkey doesn’t know whether it is food or whether it is something else, maybe a toy. That is how the koan produces inquisitiveness. The nature of koans is to arouse your inquisitive mind. These biscuits do not look like biscuits, they look like pieces of rock. Some of them look like flower petals or icicles or pieces of dung. So the monkey has enormous trouble trying to find out what he should be doing. The koan, or the biscuit, is supposed to be eaten. You are supposed to chew it, but that still doesn’t sound quite right. You chew it and you chew it and you chew it. And finally, “Ah ha! It’s food! Why not swallow it?” There! You’ve got another koan solved!

So you go through a hundred of these koans, each of them of a different nature. But you don’t get any result after you have chewed it and swallowed it. You end up saying, “So what?” That is supposed to be the point of a koan: to say, “So what?” Okay, I know what the sound of

one hand clapping means—“So what?” It is not just a naive, reactionary, resentful “So what?” but it is an appreciative “So what?”—something of a relief. But it still contains a question constantly.

If you read a translation of Basho, his poems and haikus often expressed enormous sentimentality over something very insignificant. “There is a violet flower on my slipper”—he was so amazed by that. “On my very slipper this very violet flower. On this mountain path, how beautiful, how fantastic it is! How simple and how beautiful and how colorful it is!” His poetry has a childlike quality, almost absurd and simpleminded. But from the point of view of very simplemindedness, that approach is Zen. The monkey has swallowed the biscuit! In the Zen aesthetic tradition, which is connected with yogacharan philosophy, there is beauty in simplicity. Feeding the captured gorilla biscuits could be a very beautiful thing to do—but at the same time, it is absurd. Therefore, the combination of beauty and absurdity brings another dimension to life, an appreciation of life.

According to yogachara, the world is made out of mind. The monkey’s net and the monkey itself, and the place where you caught the monkey, and the owner of this particular animal are also made out of mind. Yogacharans call this mind, which is the owner of the monkey, the self-illuminated mind. The herdsman who captured the ox is the self-illuminated mind. The appreciation of things as they are becomes vast and open. One of the basic points in the understanding of Zen tradition is to discipline and train the wild animal of mind, which should have become domesticated a long time ago, because this wild animal has buddhanature—not just buddhanature, but it is buddha. So Zen is largely based on the idea of what is known as the trusting in the heart, or believing in the heart. Every experience we might go through has the potentiality of truth—everything—including the confusion. So Zen involves not only the sheer discipline of a stiff orthodox moralistic approach alone, but also involves

an enormous sense of humor and enormous aesthetic appreciation. Zen is based on seeing that the whole world is made out of mind, which comes from the development of mindfulness and the awareness of seeing things precisely, directly, and openly.

QUESTIONS

STUDENT: What happens to the gorilla after he's eaten all the biscuits?

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: He comes back tomorrow and gets fed a lot more biscuits.

S: How many biscuits are there?

CTR: There are a hundred of them.

S: After all this has been done, what is left to feed the gorilla?

CTR: Well, maybe that might be the time for him to come out of his net. By then he should pull a plow or drive a tractor.

S: At first you said that the consciousness or awareness is the owner and should be the tamer of mind, and later you said that all things are included in the mind. You brought it back together and said that the tamer, or the owner, was part of the mind, as well. I was wondering if you could say a little bit more about how that break occurs and how it comes back together.

CTR: In terms of mind, the whole thing is included in big mind. It is mind's world. It is a complete big world. But within that world—you might say the human world—there are businessmen and salesmen and bakers; there are cooks, servants, and there are taxi drivers; there are presidents. All kinds of things happen within that big world.

S: Rinpoche, when you say that in Zen or yogachara there is this idea of one mind, that everything is mind, are you simply saying that everything that one individual can experience is his mind? Do you mean a person experiences everything as an expression of his mind or do you mean that in fact there is one mind in the universe that expresses itself in each person, but also expresses itself in the woods, in the air, in the sky, and the trees?

CTR: It is fundamentally a purely phenomenological approach, which includes oneself. This kind of phenomenological experience includes oneself and everything. Therefore, there is the possibility of writing poems. The poet gets enormously amused that he could see a tree out of his mind or his mind out of a tree, which is bent down to a rock, which is another aspect of his mind. There is a frog jumping underneath, which is another part of his mind. So you begin to see the facets of beauty and interest that go on there. One mind can produce tree, rock, and frog, simultaneously existing.

S: Does he think that is his mind?

CTR: According to yogacharan theology, so to speak, it is all supposed to be mind—it could be a mind, whatever you would like to call it, but it is still one's mind.

S: Does he imagine the frog looking at him?

CTR: Yes, he is viewing it. He is writing the poem himself.

S: The frog?

CTR: The poet, who is frog.

S: That seems a little bit too nondualistic! [Laughter]

S: Is this big mind in Zen experience dwelling in shunyata, without the

willingness to cross over?

CTR: It is still dwelling on shunyata, definitely so, because you have created your universe, which neither belongs to the others or this one, but is total. Totality.

S: In that sense there is probably still a fear of losing shunyata?

CTR: I think so, very much, because shunyata is regarded as a treasure. Often the discovery of shunyata is referred to in the Zen textbooks as the treasury, the treasure, the jewel, the gem. There still is a sense of value, a sense of the preciousness, that imitating the Buddha is very important.

S: Rinpoche, is there anything in the Tibetan tradition that serves the same functions as the koans do in Zen?

CTR: There are actually Tibetan koans, which were taught to the Tibetans by Chinese Ch'an masters such as Kamalashila, who came to Tibet in the eighth century. So Ch'an masters taught Ch'an Buddhism in Tibet, the influence of Ch'an carries over from the Ch'an tradition to the early Kadampa tradition in Tibet, founded by Atisha Dipankara. The Tibetan tradition of the Kadampa school, instead of the sudden enlightenment that Zen presents, has put more emphasis on the benevolent practices and work of a bodhisattva. In that context, a lot of koans developed, which the students would repeat to themselves as they sat and meditated. A rough translation of one such koan is, "Try to be the lowest of the lowest and the highest of the highest; therefore, you have nothing to gain and nothing to lose." Those bodhisattva koans may have slightly moralistic overtones, but such benevolent koans are presented and there are lots of them.

S: Are there tantric practices involved in Zen?

CTR: Tantric practices involved in Zen? I do not think so. The closest

thing to the magical aspect of tantra we can find in the Zen tradition is the cosmic joke that has been played on you. How frivolous is the sun: it rises, it sets. That kind of mentality. There is a lot of humor involved in that, so I suppose you could say that is closest to tantra.

S: I am not quite clear about what you are doing here. You are presenting Zen and describing it. But at the same time, obviously, you are presenting your own teaching at the same time, such as when you describe the different stages of meditation practice. So are you saying you are a Zen master? Or that the Zen teachings and your teachings are the same at this level? Or is this just basic Buddhism? Perhaps we should clarify that a bit.

CTR: I would say this is just basic Buddhism, and that we are going through Zen territory. Definitely it is basic Buddhism. Zen does not particularly belong to the Japanese tradition or the Chinese tradition as such. It is part of the evolutionary thought of schools that developed throughout the Buddhist journey of philosophy and the practice of meditation. From that point of view, I could say that I am a Zen master or a tantric master or a hinayana master or whatever you would like to call it. Is it clear?

S: I think you are basically talking about hinayana and mahayana stages of the path.

CTR: Yes.

S: Is the Buddhist journey still continuing? Is it developing or is it completed? You said that the journey from hinayana to vajrayana is lineal, and I wondered if it ends. I mean, has it ended historically or are there new developments, new discoveries?

CTR: The historical development has by no means ended at this point;

experiential development is still taking place. It is like school: we first go through grade school, then grammar school, high school, university, and so forth. While education is constantly happening to us in that way, the educational system has gone through that process already.

S: I smoke tobacco occasionally, and I regard it as mildly neurotic and mildly pleasurable and somewhat detrimental to my health. I suspect that it negatively affects my meditation. How do you feel about your cigarette smoking and mine as well? [Rinpoche is chuckling and smoking; laughter] No, I am serious.

CTR: Is that a Zen question?

S: [Laughing] Oh, I don't know if it's a Zen question.

CTR: Let me tell you about my personal experience with smoking Marlboros and an occasional pipe a long time ago. I don't find it particularly detrimental to my health. When I do smoke, I do it. The cigarette ends, I put it down, and watch throughout the process. And you have accomplished another occupation in your life, as much as your toilet flushing down.

S: At the point of development when all is seen as mind, can that mind develop the ability to perceptibly direct material, at the point where duality is truly seen as illusory?

CTR: You have to go beyond duality and you also have to go beyond nonduality at the same time. You have to return to duality: that is the final goal. It is like the ox-herding pictures: finally, you return to the world, with a big belly and with the ox behind you. That picture, returning to the world, is the final point. So you have duality; then you discover nonduality because of duality; then you transcend both nonduality and duality because of them. So you have to go through that three-fold

process. In fact, that's precisely the purpose of what is known as the three-yana principle—the hinayana, the mahayana, and the vajrayana. When you attain enlightenment, you never leave your fellow sentient beings; you still work with them constantly. You return to the world, which is the expression of compassion.



DYNAMIC STILLNESS AND COSMIC ABSORPTION

When we talk about intellect here, we are not talking about intellectualizing things, or analyzing things. We are talking about intellect in the sense that things are already elucidated, already disentangled. Your only job is to see them and not be afraid of seeing such nakedness.

IN DISCUSSING the evolution towards tantra from the hinayana and mahayana traditions, the question seems to be how basic intuitive practice leads toward intellectual discipline. From this point of view, shamatha and vipashyana practice are connected with intuition; and the vajrayana, or tantric tradition, is related with the intellect. But let me make it quite clear that when we talk about intuition, it is not purely a simple aperi-
instinct form of intuition; rather it is intuition in the sense of clearly seeing things as they are, without any questions, without any doubt.

Within intuition there is enormous room for discipline. When there is less discipline, there is less chance to see the clarity. So discipline and intuition work hand in hand, and the combination of the two slowly produces a sense of intellect. It is like rubbing two sticks together, producing a spark: the spark is intellect and the two sticks are intuition

and discipline. So the discipline of meditative practice, the basic training of mind, the development of peace and awareness—all those processes are extremely important. They are the workings of the intellect, on the way to tantra.

A portion of the practices in the early stages of the hinayana and mahayana is known as the Zen tradition, which is a school of meditation. Zen practitioners have devoted their lives completely to sitting practice and to dissolving questions and answers by wholeheartedly disciplining themselves in sitting practice. That intense discipline of training the mind and developing fantastic, extreme precision brings another kind of perception, which leads towards samadhi. Samadhi, as I described earlier, literally means “absorption,” or “holding still.” In Tibetan, it is *tingdzin*, which also means “holding still.” Tingdzin has nothing to do with the effort of holding still—it is being still. Ultimately, you are without any reference point to make sure that what you are holding, or what you are developing, is a big deal. Instead, you are simply just being—in a very direct, very simple, very precise, and very dynamic stillness.

Absorption in this case is not restricted to the sitting practice of meditation or going into a state of a trance: absorption is the totality of experience. Every aspect of your life is included: the world of emotions, the world of conflict, the world of intellect. Everything is included. Therefore, it is absorption in the larger sense—in the cosmic sense, if you like—and this notion of cosmic absorption is what is called tantra. In tantra, there is continuity: *tantra* literally means “thread,” or “continuity.” That absorption or continuity is what continues from the spark developed through discipline and meditation. That spark continues—and finally it produces dramatic fire, fantastic flames.

At this level, the trained monkey, who is still caught in the net, has finally relaxed. The monkey is settling down and beginning to work with its master. It is willing to follow any orders the master has given. It is

willing to do anything. It is not so much that the monkey has been badly beaten or starved to death, and therefore it has had to tune in to survive. Instead, there is comfort, a sense of hospitality and safety. The speediness of the monkey-mind has been completely changed. The monkey has had a change of attitude in which it begins to realize that rushing around, gallivanting here and there, does not help. The only thing to do is just to relate with what is there. If the monkey relates properly and thoroughly, a net to hold it down will no longer be necessary. So, in that regard, freedom has developed. The monkey has been well trained—not by sheer pressure but by sheer hospitality.

At the beginning, of course, when the monkey is caught in the net of discipline, that isn't very nice. It is somewhat uncompassionate. Nevertheless, it is the first lesson that it is creating its own problem, which is why it has been caught. Then the monkey begins to eat this food of spiritual antidotes—or anecdotes. The monkey begins to make friends with itself more, as much as it makes friends with each biscuit it is fed. There is a sense of openness, restfulness, and trust.

This is precisely the point where samadhi or absorption can be achieved—when there is a sense of trust in oneself. Having developed a sense of trust in oneself, slowly that expands its expression outward, and the world becomes a friendly world rather than a hostile world. You could say that you have changed the world: you have become the king or queen of the universe. On the other hand, you can't quite exactly say that, because the world has come towards you, to return your friendship. It tries all kinds of harsh ways to deal with you at the beginning, but finally the world and you begin to speak with each other, and the world becomes a real world, a completely real world, not at all an illusory world or a confused world. It is a real world. You begin to realize the reality of elements, the reality of time and space, the reality of emotions—the reality of everything. That is the absorption we are talking about.

When the monkey has been thoroughly trained, and has completely become part of the owner's household, there is no problem. The loneliness of the owner and the struggle the owner faced trying to train this monkey is no longer necessary. The owner has finally found a companion, rather than purely a pet. This is known as the union of joy and meditation. The owner begins to dance with this gorilla, who is now a good friend. The owner begins to explore together with the gorilla, to climb up trees, eat fruit, take long walks, swim in the ocean. All kinds of things can be done because the world is friendly and the monkey is friendly and the owner himself is friendly. So an interesting reaction is that in trying to tame this monkey, the owner has also made friends with himself, without knowing. The notion of compassion has approached you from the back door, from that point of view. You realize compassion, you realize friendship, friendliness, and openness.

Earlier, we looked into the poetry and the aesthetic appreciation of Zen, and at this point, we might contrast that with the roughness, directness, and piercing quality of tantra. This does not necessarily mean that becoming a tantric master or tantric adept makes you clumsy, crude, and inartistic. In fact, it is the opposite: your level of appreciation of aesthetics becomes higher; it is at a much greater level. The pine tree and the rock and the frog—composing such poetry and appreciating such a poetic scene was still like watching a stage show. Now you become the actor on the stage as well as the audience at the same time. You are infested with appreciation in yourself, so you do not have to comment, or to congratulate the world for how beautiful it is, particularly. The world is—is what? It's not particularly beautiful; it's not particularly ugly. The world is. Period.

In the tantric tradition, there is a lot of emphasis on pleasure, on appreciation of one's body and appreciation of the environment. A kind of transcendental sybaritic attitude develops in the tantric tradition, which is another form of absorption. It is not so much that you are indulging

in pleasure as such at the tantric level, but the world ceases to become hostile. The absence of hostile forces is nothing else but hospitable, without any conditions. There are no common enemies to fight; there is no struggle. But at the same time a dynamic challenge takes place—it's not all that lovey-dovey! There are enormous challenges to face, and these forces come at you as you are experiencing yourself and life around you. The reality and the nakedness of emotions, and the reality and nakedness of sense perceptions become piercingly irritating, because there is no defensive mechanism to protect you from the world. Since there is no mechanism created to shield you from all that, nothing to shield you from the brilliance and vividness of the world—like wearing a shade to protect yourself from glaring sunlight—the whole thing becomes much more demanding. That is the notion of absorption.

In the tantric tradition, there are basically what is known as the four orders of tantra. The first one is *kriyayoga*: this is based on a notion of purity and cleanliness, in which the purity is being seen as it is. Then there is *upayoga*, which is based on seeing that the purity and cleanliness is also a means of action. Rather than simply involving yourself in purity, you are exploring the world, exploring your life situation in an awake, very wakeful way. Then there is *yogayana*, the third one, in which action and the discovery of purity are one. That is, activities complement purity and cleanliness. You are transcending any hang-ups, leftovers, or hangovers, transcending any kind of preconceptions. Action and experience are combined together, and therefore it is fundamentally pure and approachable.

The fourth one is called *anuttaratantra*. Anuttaratantra is connected with experiences that are completely transcendent. Even the notion of unity is transcended. There is no point in making a big deal about nonduality or unity, particularly. The notion of oneness is a belief, a trip; therefore, the notion of nonexistence is also a trip. So there is no belief,

no notion. That is why it is called *anuttara*. *Anuttara* is a Sanskrit word, which is the same as the Tibetan word *lama*. *La* means “above,” and *ma* makes it “those who are above or superior,” or “higher persons.” *Anuttara* means “none above.” *Anuttara* transcends even aboveness. No notion of above or below is necessary or important. The notion of a higher level of spirituality or lower level of spirituality is no longer an important issue.

The sense of space and the sense of time become more precise and direct here, because you begin to realize the sacredness of the universe. The universe is not regarded as sacred as opposed to ordinary, but one just begins to realize being aware and being mindful—and also, being. You begin to realize your time and your space. That is known as the activity of the victorious one, the fearless one. A person spontaneously chooses a spot in relationship to the world, and relates with a certain time. The notion is that there is no choice. The choice is never thought about, but at the same time there is awareness and mindfulness of the highest level. That is why it is absorption, completeness.

From this point of view, the teachings of Zen are the vanguard of tantra. The heroic attitude derived from the Zen tradition is, from the tantric point of view, still a conditional one, because you are making a statement of this and that. In the tantric tradition, there is no need for making a statement about anything at all: things are as they are. Finally this monkey-mind has become a part of the inspiration, a part of the intellect—of the highest intellect.

When we talk about intellect here, we are not talking about intellectualizing things, or analyzing things, as in the ordinary notion of intellect. We are talking about intellect in the sense that things are already elucidated, already disentangled. Your only job is to see them and not be afraid of seeing such nakedness. That seems to be the highest point of intellect: not being afraid of the nakedness of reality as it is. In a certain tantric tradition, that is known as the realization of ordinary

mind, *thamal gyi shepa*, ordinary mind being that no one thing is better than anything else. When you try to say this is much better than that one, that is further better than this one, this is again much better than that one, then you have nowhere to go: you are completely and constantly escalating. With *thamal gyi shepa*, or ordinary mind, therefore, nothing can go up. But now there's nothing: there is no highest or lowest, at all. It is very ordinary, just ordinary experience.

That seems to be one of the basic points of tantra—the experience of ordinary mind. This ordinary mind is different from the Zen tradition of ordinary mind. In the Zen tradition, ordinary mind has the connotation of being simple and at the same time poetic. It is aesthetically ordinary and beautiful, like the ordinariness of the pine tree and the rock and the frog. That is a very ordinary scene: there are no jewels, no gold and silver. It is just a simple rock, a simple pine tree, and a simple frog, which is another form of ordinariness. In contrast, in the ordinariness of the tantric tradition, there is the needlessness of description of anything at all. It is super-ordinary; it is completely ordinary.

Altogether, there seem to be three journeys, or levels, in the Buddhist tradition. The hinayana is based on the discipline of seeing directly; the mahayana experience is one of openness and friendliness; the vajrayana is the experience of greater precision. You see the world from its own place, but at the same time it is a transcendental view. It is an aerial view of the world, in that you see the orders of the world functioning, as they are.

QUESTIONS

STUDENT: You mentioned in *Meditation in Action*¹ two ways of meditation—the Buddhist approach and another approach based on ego

¹ *Meditation in Action* (Shambhala Publications, 1969) is reprinted in *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, Volume One. Shambhala: Boston & London © 2003 by Diana J. Mukpo.

and an outside force you become united with—and you said the end point may be the same. Would the end point in a tradition, such as a Hindu tradition, where there is a uniting with some other force, be the same ordinariness?

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: The point seems to be that if there is a notion of unity, that is still a struggle. This is no reflection on Hinduism as such, but it is a reflection on individuals' attitudes as to what they think Hindu doctrine, or Hindu teachings, should be. The notion of unity has the connotation that you are fighting some kind of common enemy, which might create separateness or a state of partisan chaos. So unity is a feeble attempt to bring something together. But that whole approach is based on being defensive, or project-oriented. That is, we try to achieve unity, and finally we say, "Let us celebrate that we are united, that we have done it!" But that celebration is somewhat achievement-oriented, in that we have gained victory over some threat from somewhere else. So, from the tantric view, and perhaps from the Vedic tradition of Hinduism as well—possibly it is the same—the notion of unity is not even important. Instead of unity, there is ordinary mind. Ordinariness rather than anything special.

S: You said that in meditation there are two different schools, or approaches.

CTR: There are not exactly two different schools, but two different attitudes students use: looking outward and trying to find an answer or looking at oneself and trying to discover an answer. In both schools students have to give up their trips, so to speak. However, the answer cannot be outside or within! That is the function of tantra—to transcend those two approaches.

S: You mentioned the absence of hostile forces, but the existence of dynamic challenges, to a person who is along the path. Do those dynamic

challenges end at a certain point, and if so, when? And how do you interpret them?

CTR: Dynamic forces are regarded as adornment, as further richness, as an expression of being alive. They continue constantly; otherwise, there's no life to it. There is no energy to return to the world and show confused people the path. There's no working situation, no dynamic force.

S: I don't understand what dynamic stillness means. Can you say a little more about it?

CTR: You could say it is a state of being that is extremely intense. It is just being—but it is indestructible. That state of being or stillness cannot be challenged, because it does not admit the logic of possibilities of challenge at all. It has never known challenge.

S: To me, as I experience them, the difference between the state of consciousness that is most important in tantra and that which is most important in Zen is that in tantra it is more like what we refer to as being spaced and Zen it is much more like being stoned. Do you want to comment on that? As I experienced them, from having practiced for some time, there is this distinction. Do you experience this also, or could you comment on it?

CTR: Well, I think what you said is quite accurate in many ways, but at the same time, it is not accurate at all! The notion of stillness like a rock could also be very spacious. If you can really be a complete rock that does not allow anything else in but rockness, so there is no choice, then it's really blunt, very stubborn. That stubbornness brings enormous space. At the same time, in tantra, space could also become a kind of rock—but maybe on a larger scale in which the whole of space is filled with concrete.

S: But the experience itself seems to be sensed or experienced or consciousness-oriented in a way that is simply different. You made reference to a poem by Basho, the Zen poet, in which he is obsessed with the violet, or the flower, or the butterfly on his slipper. This almost childish obsession with the immediate effect, which is so visible in Zen art—this sort of flourishing flow of almost an immaturity at times but at other times a tremendous depth—is very different than tantric art, which is very highly elaborate. I don't know if you follow what I'm saying, but there is a very big distinction in the consciousness states.

CTR: There is, definitely there is. But that doesn't mean that there is a contradiction, particularly. It is like the evolutionary differences between an adult and an adolescent.

S: Is there any situation you've come across which is enough to give one experience in both?

CTR: I don't think so. It would be like saying you could be old aged and a baby, or infant, at the same time. I suppose you could, metaphorically speaking, but experientially that is impossible. You cut your umbilical cord a long time ago and now you are old like a baby—that doesn't quite make it.

I think there is no one particular complete thing in the Buddhist teachings, at all. People have to go through a process; and each experience that they go through in that process is a unique one, for its own level of consciousness. You have to go up and up and up, and finally, you have nowhere to go up and you have to come down completely. You relate with yourself as the lowest of the lowest. You become a grain of sand.

S: But there are many colors in the spectrum of a rainbow.

CTR: Sure.

S: They are not better or worse, they are just different.

CTR: They are different, but they are not particularly better or worse, as you said.

S: Would you agree, then, that tantra is more like being spaced and Zen is more like being stoned?

CTR: It's a matter of opinion, actually.

S: Would you put it in those terms?

CTR: Sure, yes, if you like.

S: Do you perceive it this way?

CTR: If you like.

S: I'd like to know if there's anything similar to the koan in the tantric tradition, especially as it developed in Tibet. And if there isn't, there seems to be an awful lot of emphasis on the use of deities and bodhisattvas, as seen in the tremendously crafted, beautiful illustrations you find in Tibetan art. From what I'd heard, the meditator is trying to develop concentration in order to reach a certain stage of identity with these illustrations, in the sense that he tries to see the deities—the wrathful deities and the joyful deities—as being more or less just manifestations of his own mind. Is this analogous to the koans in the Zen tradition?

CTR: I suppose you could say so, roughly. But at the same time, koans are working on sounds and word combinations, using very simplified phrases or poems. The closest to that seems to be the mantras that developed in the tantric tradition. The difference is that a mantra doesn't make any sense. Mantras are just simple cosmic sounds.

S: Is a koan supposed to make sense?

CTR: The koan is supposed to make sense unless you lose the sense of it—then that is the flash! Mantra doesn't go through that process; it is just a cosmic onomatopoeic noise. As far as music is concerned, musically, it makes some sense. It has tones, it has vowels and consonants. But, at the same time, mantras are supposed to be regarded as an expression of space. There are no challenges involved for students who are involved in mantra, as there are with a koan. You work with the mantra as an expression of space. Then you begin to realize a manifestation of space, according to how it has been colored by your own emotions, concepts, and ideas. It is the same as the deities: the deities are discovered because of your own state of consciousness.

S: Would *mandalas* be similar to mantra?

CTR: The mandala is just a geography, giving you a map of spiritual development: where you are at, which location. Mandalas are connected with the idea of absorption. They give an aerial view of things as they are completely.

S: Are you supposed to make sense out of the mandala in the same way you are supposed to make sense of a koan?

CTR: You are supposed to know your own spot. That's it.

S: When you're in this ordinary experience, you say there is essentially no defense, no organized shade or protection from the world. But is there not some way you can stop experiencing aggression and different things like that as directly painful?

CTR: From that point of view, there is no such thing as real pain: pain is pleasure and pleasure is pain. There is experience, but experiences are not regarded as conditional experiences. That is very difficult to perceive if you are trying to perceive it. You have to know it, you have to be it.

S: You have been referring to the oxherding pictures frequently, and I was wondering, are the last three pictures considered vajrayana, or tantra?

CTR: It seems that the pictures the tantric tradition is involved in are the blank space and the two spaces after that—"Reaching the Source" and "In the World."

S: The next question is, since these pictures came from the Zen tradition, it must be a sort of paradigm that the tantric tradition and the Zen tradition are a very similar experience.

CTR: There is no similar work of art that is equal to that, but there is a Tibetan tradition of an elephant-herding picture. That picture doesn't go as far as the no ox, no herdsman; it goes up to the level of discovering the ox or discovering the elephant.

S: The feelings or ideas of karma and grace: how do they relate on the path to the practice of this kind of meditation?

CTR: Well, you are discovering yourself. You can relate with the *herukas* or *dakinis*, rediscovering your potentiality in the form of dynamic energy. You begin to realize your own potentiality in the form of enormous, tremendous energy. You practice the appropriate *sadhana*, and you recite the mantra according to that.

S: Could you elaborate on the notion of choosing your spot spontaneously in time and space?

CTR: That's a question of practice and experience, rather than something I can describe with terms, particularly, but there is a sense of being what you are. There is also a sense of knowing your environment, and knowing that there are no hostile forces to disrupt your continuity. Having those situations, you begin to have a feeling for a particular spot, a particular area of the mandala. You begin to develop a sense of self-existing power. You

have conviction and fearlessness; you have authority as to how to handle the universe. It seems that you don't need any permission from anyone.

S: I'd like to introduce the question of death. When you say you reach the point where there are no hostile forces, isn't the fear of death, which most people have down there somewhere, especially as they get older, a hostile force? What do you have to say about that?

CTR: It's a question of whether you regard your life as completely under your control. Then even birth or death, sickness or old age, or whatever you experience—accidents, eating lunch and breakfast, going to sleep—all of those things become deliberate acts. Within the spontaneity, you are actually doing it. You have reference points as to what you do with your life. Your life is very, very precious and sacred, so a sense of deliberateness is always there. Therefore, death doesn't come as a shock, because when you want to die, you die. It is just like stepping out of someone's house and saying "good bye" to the world. There is a sense of conviction. It's not a question of death alone. We could be terrified that the sun sets at a certain time, beyond our control, or that we are late or we are too early, because that is beyond our power. If relationships are made with all those situations that go on in life, death becomes simply one of those situations.

S: And birth?

CTR: And birth was a rehearsal, I suppose, for dying.

S: In a large part of the Tibetan written tradition, there is a lot of mention of karma; while in the Zen tradition, there are very few mentions of karma. I've noticed that you seldom use the concept of karma, seldom talk about it. Why is that?

CTR: I think I've mentioned karma a great deal in past teachings. Recently,

we have been talking about American karma and Tibetan Buddhism, and we have been talking about our own individual coincidence that we have arrived at this particular situation together. The notion of karma is one of the most important points of the Buddhist tradition. It means that your world is not dictated by a higher power, a cosmic power, external deity, or God. Instead, your functioning in life is constantly a result of your previous actions. That process happens constantly. People get messages constantly—if they are speeding or if they are slowing, if they are tripping out or not, whatever they are doing. Constant answers come to you, which is karmic expression—cause and effect. It is very mechanical, maybe even scientific.

In the Zen tradition, practice is purely based on the practice of meditation. The Zen tradition is no longer regarded as a philosophical school at all. Zen Buddhism functions in Japan and comes from China. Chinese Ch'an Buddhism evolved and developed within the basic framework of Buddhist philosophy, at a time when the whole country had already accepted the notion of karma. Therefore, in Zen, karma is not particularly important. For you personally, as you sit and practice, there is no point in getting paranoid about your karmic consequences. The sense of sitting is more important than speculating about the consequences of sitting. That seems to be the basic point.

S: What's happening to the monkey when the person gets dreamy? Where does dreaminess fit in?

CTR: Just dreams, I suppose. Nothing happens. You wake up. It's no big deal.

S: Is dreaming maybe the monkey of the intelligence running around, playing its own game?

CTR: It could be doing anything, eating a banana.

S: I think the point was that you feel you have more control over the monkey when you're awake than you do in your dreams. You certainly have none then.

CTR: You still have control as to what you do when you're awake, which is connected with practice. You can't meditate and sleep and dream at the same time; that's why there is the need for practice. The emphasis on practice is because it is the only time in your life you can steer your karmic situation.

S: You said that the highest function of the intellect is seeing things as they are, which means that they are already elucidated and not requiring further elucidation. Is the Buddhist tradition part of things as they are, and doesn't the evolving of the Buddhist tradition require a further elucidation? I'm not sure what you mean by things already being elucidated, because it seems that there is a whole system of intellectual or conceptual thought to elucidate further what is.

CTR: The point is, when you see things as they are, either you see it or you don't see it. There are no stages or levels, particularly. According to Buddhist tradition, there is a problem at the beginning of seeing things as they are. Having seen things as they are, there is also a problem of how to handle it, rather than whether seeing things as they are is valid or not. That is why the non-spiritual-materialistic approach is necessary and important. Having seen things as they are, you don't dilute what you have seen; you just leave it alone. You do not make a trip out of it. Even before you see things as they are, you do not make trip out of it! Otherwise, you cannot see things as they are!

PART THREE

OXHERDING



OXHERDING PICTURES

TRUNGPA RINPOCHE ENCOUNTERED the ten oxherding pictures at the home of his publisher, Sam Bercholz, in the hills above Berkeley, California. These very drawings by Tomikichiro Tokuriki sat amidst other Zen lore assembled by the haiku poet Paul Reps. When Reps published this collected material in 1957 with Tuttle and Co. under the title *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, it had an immediate, strong effect on the spiritual seekers and Beat-generation readers.

Trungpa Rinpoche's close student Michael Kohn (Sherab Chödzin) reports that Rinpoche was excited by this Zen representation of stages on the path when first he saw them in 1971, and that he began composing his own commentary.* The work continued, as Trungpa Rinpoche decamped from Berkeley and returned to his fledgling community at Tail of the Tiger (Karmê Chöling) in Vermont.

"The material was very potent and over my head. I remember the sessions as conveying that powerful sense that often surrounded Rinpoche in those days, of conveying the whole of the very essence of the teachings

* *Trungpa Rinpoche's commentary begins on page 116.*

in one glorious dispensation. The continuous invisible golden smile... the Cheshire cat had absolutely nothing on him.”

Commentary by Chögyam Trungpa:

THE TEN OXHERDING PICTURES are a well-known Zen representation of the training of the mind, a process so basic that it could be considered fundamental to all schools of Buddhism. A deeper way of looking at it is in terms of the spiritual development from *shravakayana*¹ to *maha ati*.² In the Tibetan tradition there is an analogy of elephant herding, but it refers mainly to the practice of shamatha. The symbolism does not go beyond riding the elephant. In the oxherding pictures, the evolutionary process of taming the bull is very close to the vajrayana view of the transmutation of energy. Particularly, returning to the world as an expression of the compassion of the *nirmanakaya*³ shows that the final realization of Zen automatically leads to the wisdom of maha ati.



一
尋牛

1. THE SEARCH FOR THE BULL

The inspiration for this first step, searching for the bull, is feeling that things are not wholesome, something is lacking. That feeling of loss produces pain. You are looking for whatever will make the situation right. You discover that ego's attempt to create an ideal environment is unsatisfactory.



見跡

2. DISCOVERING THE FOOTPRINTS

By understanding the origin, you find the possibility of transcending this pain. This is the perception of the four noble truths. You see that the pain results from the conflicts created by ego, and you discover the footprints of the bull, which are the heavy marks of ego in all play of events. You are inspired by unmistakable and logical conclusions, rather than by blind faith. This corresponds to the *shravakayana* and *pratyekabuddhayana*⁴ paths.



見^三牛

3. PERCEIVING THE BULL

You are startled at perceiving the bull and then, because there is no longer any mystery, you wonder if it is really there; you perceive its insubstantial quality. You lose the notion of subjective criteria. When you begin to accept this perception of nonduality, you relax, because you no longer have to defend the existence of your ego. Then you can afford to be open and generous. You begin to see another way of dealing with your projections, and that is joy in itself, the first spiritual level of the attainment of the bodhisattva.



得^四
牛

4. CATCHING THE BULL

Seeing a glimpse of the bull, you find that generosity and discipline are not enough in dealing with your projections, because you have yet to completely transcend aggression. You have to acknowledge the precision of skillful means, and the simplicity of seeing things as they are, as connected to fully developed compassion. The subjugation of aggression cannot be exercised in a dualistic framework—complete commitment into the compassionate path of the bodhisattva is required, which is the further development of patience and energy.



五
牧牛

5. TAMING THE BULL

Once caught; the bull is tamed with the precision of meditative panoramic awareness and the sharp whip of transcendental knowledge. The bodhisattva has accomplished the “transcendent acts” (paramitas)—not dwelling on anything.



六
騎牛
歸家

6. RIDING THE BULL HOME

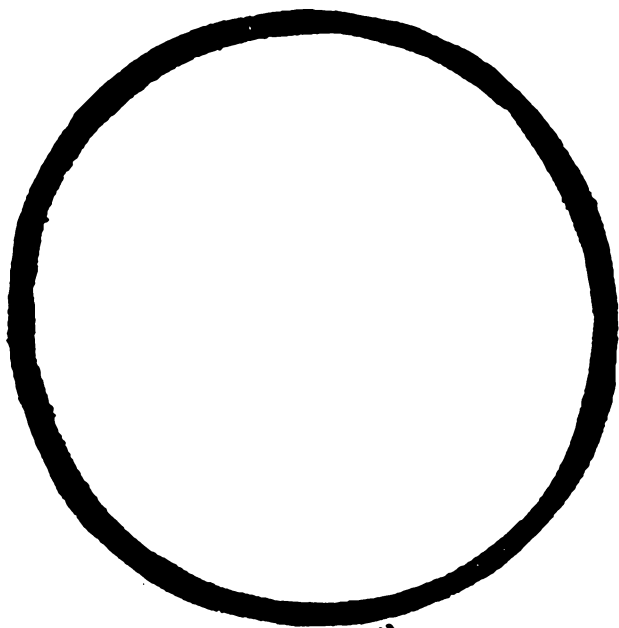
There is no longer any question of search. The bull (mind) finally obeys the master and becomes creative activity. This is the breakthrough to the state of enlightenment—the vajralike samadhi of the eleventh *bhumi*. With the unfolding of the experience of mahamudra, the luminosity and color of the mandala become the music which leads the bull home.



忘^七
人牛

7. THE BULL TRANSCENDED

Even that joy and color become irrelevant. The mahamudra mandala of symbols and energies dissolves into maha ati through the total absence of the idea of experience. There is no more bull. The crazy wisdom has become more and more apparent, and you totally abandon the ambition to manipulate.



八人
得忘牛

8. BOTH BULL AND SELF TRANSCENDED

This is the absence of both striving and nonstriving. It is the naked image of the primordial buddha principle. This entrance into the *dharmakaya*⁵ is the perfection of nonwatching—there are no more criteria, and the understanding of maha ati as the last stage is completely transcended.



九
還返
源本

9. REACHING THE SOURCE

Since there is already such space and openness, and the total absence of fear, the play of the wisdoms is a natural process. The source of the energy which need not be sought is there. You are rich rather than being enriched by something else. Because there is basic warmth as well as basic space, the buddha activity of compassion is alive, and so all communication is creative. It is the source in the sense of being an inexhaustible treasury of buddha activity. This is, then, the *sambhogakaya*.⁶



昭和辛卯夏
富吉郎
画並刻摺

十人重手

10. IN THE WORLD

Nirmanakaya is the fully awakened state of being in the world. Its action is like the moon reflecting in a hundred bowls of water; the moon has no desire to reflect, but that is its nature. This state is dealing with the earth with ultimate simplicity. You have transcended following anyone's example. It is the state of "total flop" or "old dog." You destroy whatever needs to be destroyed, you subdue whatever needs to be subdued, and you care for whatever needs your care.

NOTES

¹ shravakayana (Skt): “vehicle of the hearers.” It is the first of the three “vehicles” on the practitioner’s path that can lead to realization. It is part of the hinayana path.

² maha ati (Skt): “great completion.” The highest tantra and the final stage on the path of realization. Trungpa Rinpoche says: “Things are as they are, very simply, extremely simply so.” Ati yana is regarded as the “king of the yanās...the ati approach is a larger way of thinking...larger view.” [Chögyam Trungpa, *Journey Without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha*. Boston and London: Shambhala, 1985.]

³ nirmanakaya (Skt): “emanation body.” “At the nirmanakaya level, something’s actually taking place. Those long-winded descriptions and ideas, those intangible, unbiased, unconditional ideas and thoughts of enlightenment are finally captured in this particular sieve of the human mind... Immense space, created through the process of enlightened awareness, is finally manifested on earth.” [Chögyam Trungpa, *Glimpses of Realization*. Vajradhatu Publications, 2003.]

⁴ pratyekabuddhayana (Skt): “vehicle of the solitary realizer.” The pratyekabuddhayana is one of the two hinayana vehicles; it describes the path of one who has realized one-and-a-half-fold egolessness due to insight into dependent arising, without relying on a teacher.

⁵ dharmakaya (Skt): “body of dharma.” “At this level, intelligence begins to appear in terms of the awakened state or enlightenment, as opposed to samsara. After this level, a separate reality apart from samsaric confusion and nirvanic liberation does exist. That’s where the actual awakening aspect begins. The utterance of the dharmakaya according to the maha ati tantra of Rigpo Rangshar is, ‘I am unborn; therefore I am intelligent. I have no dharma and no form. I have no marks. I am the charnel ground where all existence is exposed. Since I was the origin of kindness and compassion, therefore I have transcended the definition of shunyata, or any ideology...I shine brilliantly; therefore I have never known the darkness.’” [Chögyam Trungpa, the *1974 Seminary Transcripts: Vajrayana*. Vajradhatu Publications.]

⁶ sambhogakaya (Skt): “body of joy.” “Joy has nothing to do with pain or pleasure, but it is the body of stimulation...All kinds of perceptions could be experienced from the stimulation that comes from the dharmakaya of the origin...In terms of speech and movement...the expression is experiencing sense perceptions very clearly and precisely, and understanding them as they are. There are no blurry visions at all. Everything speaks for itself. In seeing the phenomenal world, the experience is very direct, definite, and clear.” [Chögyam Trungpa, the *1974 Seminary Transcripts: Vajrayana*. Vajradhatu Publications.]

Part Four

SUZUKI ROSHI

SUZUKI ROSHI

A Recollection of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

The following essay was composed on the occasion of Suzuki Roshi's death, at which time Trungpa Rinpoche also created the calligraphic tribute entitled "Solitary Rock."

THE VENERABLE Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, founder and abbot of Zen Center, San Francisco and Tassajara, Carmel Valley, California, died on December 4, 1971. He taught on the West Coast of the United States for eleven years. Personal contact with him, and exposure to his written works, inspired thousands of people to a living experience of Buddhism. The style of his teaching was direct, thorough, and without ambition.

His way of working with students transcended cultural barriers, as well as any others, reflecting his real being. Roshi's style shines through as part of the living lineage of Dogen-Zenji; it is direct experience of living Zen. His quality of not dwelling on any particular trip provides an extraordinary situation in contrast to the militancy of American Zen.

At Tassajara in June, 1970, I first met Roshi, an old man with a piercing look, who quite ignored the usual Japanese diplomacy. All his gestures and communications were naked and to the point, as though you were dealing with the burning tip of an incense stick. At the same time, this was by no means irritating, for whatever happened around the situation was quite accommodating. He was very earthy—so much so that it aroused nostalgia for the past when I was in Tibet working with my teacher. Roshi was my accidental father, presented as a surprise from America, the land of confusion. It was amazing that such a compassionate person existed in the midst of so much aggression and passion.

On my second visit, he blessed my child. The ceremony was short but thought-provoking. There was a sense of care and accuracy, a sense that energy was actually being transferred. We had a talk together over tea in the courtyard garden at Zen Center. Roshi spoke about the fact that Americans name only their biggest mountains, unlike the Japanese, who name them all. American Buddhists are too concerned with pure form rather than with spirit, an insensitivity which comes from being drunk on their power as conquerors. They can't be bothered to name the smaller mountains and the details.

At my last meeting with Suzuki Roshi when he was sick in bed, he expressed tremendous delight at the situation that Buddhism in America could be a fundamentally creative process. His death was a happy one, for he was satisfied with the practice of his students, and he felt that they had really been exposed to the teachings.

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi is a rare teacher in American Buddhism. Recalling the Buddha, dharma, and sangha is the traditional way in which people are inspired to work towards buddhadharma. Roshi's way of relating, as an example of complete commitment to other beings, is the same kind of inspiration. His openness and conviction cannot be

questioned. His example as someone walking the path of the *tathagatas* is very solid ground for others. He was a person who dared to utter the lion's roar of Buddha. His positive vision of American Buddhism is one of the most powerful and creative messages that the American spiritual scene has heard.

—Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche

¹ *This is the literal translation. The translation in Garuda: Tibetan Buddhism in America reads, "A solitary rock is majestic. In memory of Suzuki Roshi. Chögyam."*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors were pointed to these talks by the indefatigable Fabrice Midal, whose research and seminal biography, *Trungpa*, have opened the door to an ocean of memoir, reminiscence, and further biography. Much gratitude is due him.

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Vajradhatu Publications Directors Cheryl Campbell and Ben Moore stood solidly in support of this project from the beginning, for which we are very grateful; and we appreciate as well the ever-meticulous copy-editing, indexing, and production management of Ellen Kearney. Thanks also to Alice Haspray and John Sell for their careful proofreading.

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The hope is that these talks by Vidyadhara Trungpa Rinpoche will open, clarify, and inspire the minds of practitioners and aspirants from authentic traditions. May it fall into the right hands, and may there be many of them!

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