

Glimpses of Vajrayana
An Online Course on the Tantric Teachings of Chögyam Trungpa
Taught by Judith L. Lief

Talk One: Basic Training

JUDY: Good morning. Welcome to this third annual Profound Treasury retreat. We're now beginning our study period. Welcome, retreatants, and welcome online folks. It is an honor to be here with all of you, and so inspiring that people are willing to take time—valuable time—from your lives to spend studying and practicing and accomplishing the buddhadharma.

To begin with, it's good to note why we're all here. You may wonder why you're here.

[*Laughter*] I sometimes wonder why I'm here. But I think we're all here because of some connection to one another, and also due to the great buddha activity and benevolence of the great Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Each of us, in one way or another, has a personal connection with the dharmic energy that Trungpa Rinpoche set in motion. Some people never met the Vidyadhara in person, but they *are* meeting the Vidyadhara. They're meeting him, and oddly, amazingly, after teaching between 1970 and '87 in (00:02:00) North America, the ripples of the buddha-activity energy continue to flow, and I think that is a sign of a great master—that their energy continues to flow out and touch people. Not indirectly, not from afar, but very directly, right into the heart and core.

Last year we had a little talk in our program by Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche, who arrived somehow. He was talking about the idea of how some people feel they've missed the boat, and that's kind of deluded, and some people think they're on the boat, and that's also deluded. [*Laughter*] Basically, we're all blessed to be here. We're the recipients. We're like the . . . caught on a hook of compassion—[*inaudible*], caught on a hook of compassion. For some reason, something has been awakened in us before we even begin. Something has been awakened in us: maybe a word, maybe an image, maybe a video, maybe a tape, maybe a single paragraph or one particular book—something. It's not so much the books are so amazing, but they touch something within us that is eager and ready to blossom—to emerge—and that's really what the dharma is all about. It's bringing something to life that we get a glimpse (00:04:00) of, we have a suspicion about, we touch from time to time, but somehow doesn't always feel accessible or really flourishing, and we want more: we want to develop, we want to grow, we want to realize and to be of greater benefit to ourselves and other beings.

So this talk is called “Basic Training.” I called it basic training and then I thought I should call it “Basic Training That Never Ends.” [Laughter] Many times we think we’ll just do basic training and then we’ll go on to the main show; we’ll see the opening act, but we won’t really be there because we’re just waiting for the main star to appear. Sometimes people think of the past like that. Everybody wants to be advanced, as the Vidyadhara said in his talk last night—everyone wants to have a PhD, but nobody wants to learn the alphabet or even know how to wipe their bottom. So “Basic Training That Never Ends.”

These retreats, of course, are based on the teachings of the profound, brilliant Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and are particularly focused on the writings in the three volumes of *The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma*, as well as other teachings within his opus of works. In particular, we need to recognize that the (00:06:00) teachings found in these books came from a particular setting, a particular context: the thirteen years of Vajradhatu Seminaries. They were three-month training programs of which Trungpa Rinpoche was extremely proud, he was proud of the format that he developed for those programs. They alternated periods of sitting meditation and periods of study with the main course taught by himself, and other arrays of courses taught by his students.

There are two interesting things right from the start that he emphasized: the importance of joining study and practice. Without practice, study is just kind of amusement or entertainment of your mind; it’s not transformative. And practice without study can just be kind of dull and vague and not that helpful. So alternating intensive study and intensive practice was a new form, unlike forms that were common in Tibet. In particular, the emphasis on sitting practice and group sitting practice was unique among Tibetans teaching in the West. It was heavily influenced by the Zen tradition in the US; *sesshin* was actually the term we used for group sitting, and he saw the value of that for the training of the Western minds.

The other thing, in terms of the context of the Vajradhatu Seminaries, is that every single seminary (00:08:00) was based on what’s called *lamrim*—L-A-M-R-I-M, lamrim, “stages of the path”—a map of the journey for practitioners from beginning to end. You could say that his teachings focused on the practical, what would be useful—for example, if you wanted to take a gorilla and make him into a buddha. So beginning with the gorillas, ending up with Buddha, what’s the recipe? What are the stages, what do you need to do?

So in particular, as the three volumes make evident, the seminaries were based on a progression from hinayana to mahayana to vajrayana, the three main stages of the path—*yana* being “vehicle.”

Vehicle means what can transport us forward, so there's some kind of movement and development in our life understanding, in our practice. I sort of think of them as concentric circles, in a way: hinayana being the core, the mahayana expanding, and the vajrayana kind of exploding. They're also sometimes compared to building the foundation of a house: you build a strong foundation, then you can put up the walls, and then finally you can put a golden roof on top and you have a solid structure.

Over the years I have come to appreciate more and more (00:10:00) how much emphasis the Vidyadhara put on creating a foundation—to knowing something about the fundamentals of the Buddhist path, to knowing the importance of the mahayana, and to going slowly and methodically. It became very clear to me as I began to study and practice that this was not a quick thing—that it was actually a way of life, a way of life that's kind of ever-unfolding and enriching but doesn't really have a particular endpoint. “Well, now I'm over it, now I'm there” —wherever *there* is—and that whole notion wasn't quite the point because as we go into vajrayana more and more, you'll see there is no *there* there, there is no . . . nothing there. It's *here*. That's it. That's all. So that is where the dharma can happen.

I'll talk a little bit today about really foundational, important teachings and practices in the hinayana and mahayana that will make it easier to really reap the benefits of Vajrayana. I wanted to introduce one more term, though. There's hinayana, the narrow vehicle; mahayana, the great vehicle; vajrayana, the adamantine vehicle, or diamond vehicle, otherwise known as *tantra*. Another term, though, is *ekayana* (00:12:00)— E-K-A-Y-A-N-A, ekayana—and that means “one.” There is basically only one path, and we are just looking at it from different angles. It's one journey. It's not like school, you know, where you graduate grade 3 and then you go to grade 4—it's different than that. So in terms of the ekayana and the . . . there are certain principles that go through all the yantras.

So what are we doing altogether? Well, we're working with our minds; we're working with our emotions; we're working with our way of being in the world; our relationship to other beings; we're working with our relationship with the environment; we're stepping back and taking a look at our life—we're *willing* to step back, interrupt the momentum. There's incredible momentum, I think, as you know, incredible momentum in just regular life, you know? Just endless things, always, to do, and endless opportunities to feel behind on every little thing, like e-mails. They just keep coming. I don't know who thought of them and why they thought it was a good idea. [Laughter] But it's like once you start, they just rain down like a stream and you're like, “I feel buried!” and you spend half an hour just like *delete, delete, delete, delete, delete, delete, delete, delete, delete, delete*—oh, oops, I deleted the wrong

(00:14:00) one—*delete, delete, delete, delete, delete, delete*. Like that. And then there're schedule books—with those little squares in each day—and they get filled up with things, and it's very rare to actually be able to step back and, you know, think what we're doing. We could just blast right through and never have a thought about it, just skim through on the surface of things, because we will not run out of things to do or things to think or dramas to have. They'll never stop.

So it's so precious that we have this opportunity to sometimes step back and think, "Wait a minute. Is this what it's about?" I just send my last e-mail, do my last meeting, and then I keel over and die? [*Laughter*] It's possible to do that—very possible—and it's a little bit sad, I think.

So that's what we're doing: we're taking a look at ourselves, our relation to others, our relation to phenomena; this is sometimes called "going back to square one." We're also, by saying that, taking a step back and looking at our lives. I want to emphasize how personal the dharma is. It's not a subject that's external, to kind of, I don't know, digest and regurgitate, although it is good to try to understand it, but it really comes alive at the very personal, at the felt, (00:16:00) level—the felt level. It's not simply a conceptual . . . it's not based on cleverness. You can't get ahead by cleverness alone. It takes digestion.

So there're a lot of guidelines. Before we launch into actually talking about hinayana and mahayana and doing some practices together, the guideline for how to practice and how to study is to not overthink it—to be simple and wholehearted. The Vidyadhara has said, "It's not how much practice you do, it's how genuinely you relate to it, how wholehearted you are." And in terms of study it's usually asked, How do you study this kind of material? It's kind of like studying everything. First there's the aspect of trying to just understand it—and that's called hearing, traditionally. It's just trying to figure out what does this term mean, what are some of the key topics of the talk, and just what we're used to, you know—just trying to follow the logic, etcetera. But that's just the very outer level of study—that's just the starting point, although it's important.

The second aspect, traditionally, of the three is contemplating. So it's hearing and contemplating. And by contemplating—that is, taking the subject and applying it to your life, testing it (00:18:00) against your own experience and judgment, seeing how true or untrue it is, how it might be expressed in various ways, how it might arise in the midst of the circumstances of your life. It's really wrestling with the material and chewing on it and investigating it and not skimming over it (you have the term and then you move on, without really letting the depths of that term begin to resonate somehow). So that's called contemplating. It's not just musing about it, but it is mixing it up—I say "mixing it up" with the topic sometimes, so you can tell a little bit about your understanding . . . you should test your

understanding over and over again—that’s part of contemplating, testing your understanding. Especially if you’ve heard topics many, many times, it’s good to come back and say, “Well, you know, do I really understand this? Do I have any clue why I’m doing this? I’ve heard it a million times, but what is it really? Why, out of all the various things that could be said within a tradition, are these things said? And what’s not being said, and why is that? What’s being emphasized and what isn’t and why?” At one point Trungpa Rinpoche said that a good way to test your understanding of dharma is —can you explain what you’re doing to your grandmother. [Laughter] You know, because it’s very easy to have a lot of terms and a lot of lists and bells and whistles, (00:20:00) but then there’s no boat under which the bells and whistles are whistling around, you know; there’s no weight to that information—it’s facile, it’s glib. So we should always question ourselves, especially when we start talking to other people and we find ourself having said all this stuff and then we think, “That was BS. I have no clue what I’m saying”—you know? And that’s always an interesting point.

The third in this trio: hearing, contemplating, and *meditating*. Meditating, in this particular instance, doesn’t refer just to sitting practice or other practices; it means there’s a stage reached where there is no longer even a hair’s breadth of separation between the topic of the dharma and your own being. It’s completely part of your gristle and your bones and your lymph and your blood flow. It’s not a question of trying to remember and then repeat, but it’s coming directly from your experience. You actually see it, you actually feel it, you actually know it in a different way totally. So that’s the approach to study. The approach to practice: simple, simple, simple, simple. Approach to study: really working with the material, questioning—being inquisitive, being critical—not being afraid (00:22:00) to say the wrong thing, not being afraid to be honest about your confusion or your doubt. There’s no way to go through the hearing, contemplating, and meditating as though you’re putting frosting on a cake and then presenting a good appearance.

There are a couple of other general themes throughout what we’ll be doing and terms that you may need to know. One of them is the term *shinjang*—S-H-I-N-J-A-N-G, shinjang—and that has different translations, but one of them is “being thoroughly processed.” It’s sort of like, I don’t know, Velveeta. You know, something like that. That is the notion that what we’re doing, we’re actually processing ourselves—we’re obviously going through a process, which means processing. There’s a sense of almost like if you take a bunch of pebbles and put them into those rock tumbler things and they bang around and they keep making a lot of noise and they bang and bang and bang and then they come out as really shiny and beautiful little polished stones. In some ways we’re polishing ourselves, like from our pebbly

nature; we're polishing and shining it. (00:24:00) Sometimes this quality of shinjang, of being processed, is described as both harsh and gentle. There's kind of a harsh quality to being a little pebble flopping around with rough grit to become shiny little stones. At the same time, there's a gentle quality because then you're all smooth and nice at the end. So the quality of shinjang: sometimes the dharma can feel very harsh, and we'll talk more about that, but it's also very, very gentle. It's taming, but in order to tame, we have to face certain things.

And one more general theme that's setting the stage for what we're doing, to keep in mind—and it came up in the talk in the video as well—is the notion of theism and nontheism. That becomes extremely important when we get into the vajrayana, but it's important all along, and it's a subtle thing. I mean, it's not mainly designed to describe different spiritual traditions, it's mainly pointing to different states of mind. The theistic mentality is that part of us that wants to be spoon-fed, that wants to be saved, that keeps feeling that we're not adequate so we need to find something or somewhere out there to say, "There, there, everything's okay, I'll take care of it," blah, (00:26:00) blah, blah. It's the hope for escape, hope for salvation, etcetera. And nontheism is the more bare ground where we're thrown back on ourselves, and this comes up in the way the Vidyadhara talks about refuge vow, for instance—becoming a refugee. When you think refuge: "oh yeah, everyone's going to take care of me." No. Refuge is becoming like a refugee; you're on your own. So the buddhadharma, the Buddhist path, is very much something that you do and no one can do for you and no one will do exactly the same way. There're lots of guidelines, there're lots of skillful means and methods and insights, and then the rest is up to you, what you do with it. That's the nontheism.

So I wanted to review the first two yanas. How many people have studied the first volume? *[Majority of audience hands raise]* Excellent. How many have studied the second volume? *[Majority of audience hands raise]* Great. So this will be a review. And if you haven't, it will be less of a review. *[Laughter]* (00:28:00) Some people don't like the hinayana, but I do. I like it. What I like about it is that it is so honest and straightforward. *Hinayana* means "narrow vehicle"—not in the sense of narrow-mindedness but in a sense of paring down to essentials. In talking about the three-yana journey, it's also important to note that it's not talking about the schools of Buddhism that also are sometimes labeled "Hinayana" and viewed as kind of a negative term. This is talking about a stage of the path. And I've pointed out many, many times the whole notion of the three-yana journey is a vajrayana concept. It's all part of that ekayana, you know? It's not saying, "There's that journey, and there's *that* journey"; this is one journey. This is how it starts.

You might reflect on how your journey starts. What is it that started it? Did it have a start? What is the starting point? It's said the starting point is your own self. (00:30:00) But the basic question is who are you? What are you doing with your life? What is this life about? What is our actual experience? And there it becomes very nitty-gritty, very grounded. It's not at all a dreamy yana; it's saying if you're going to think of other realities, you're going to think of other ways of being, you have to first have some clue of what's going on right now with you. Sometimes this is talked about in terms of the idea of self-reliance, sometimes it's talked about in terms of focus on what's called the relative truth—ordinary, everyday experience that we have. We can't bypass that. A lot of times we would like to bypass that because it's kind of a drag sometimes. But it has said no, you can't bypass that, you have to start with that.

Another thing, in terms of the seminary teachings and the Profound Treasury teachings: Every year, hinayana, mahayana, vajrayana. Every year, hinayana, mahayana, vajrayana. It always came back to hinayana and built from there, like combing your hair from the roots to the ends. He also always (00:32:00) presented, within each yana, the teachings in terms of three basic principles: one is called *shila*, which means "discipline"; one is called *samadhi*, which means "meditation"; and one is called *prajna*, which means "insight/knowledge" or "direct, intuitive perception." So in looking at your path or your practice, it's also good to have those three principles in mind: as you go through your day, what is your behavior, what is your view of what you're doing, and where is the awareness, mindfulness, in it? Each of them kind of poses a question. It's like those little blinkers: the is *prajna* flickering, and the *shila* is kind of dimmed out. Where is the *samadhi*? You don't know. So those three are very, very important.

So I'm going to review a little bit of the hinayana and mahayana from that viewpoint. And I'm going to start with the *prajna* and the hinayana. *Prajna* is like . . . you could talk about it as some of the view, or the principles, or the outlook, or whatever, in the hinayana, some of the key points. When the Buddha obtained enlightenment, sitting under the tree in Bodh Gaya, his very first formal teaching was on what is called the four noble truths. He could have talked about anything (00:34:00) but that's what he decided to talk about very first. Interesting. And at one point, Trungpa Rinpoche said if you could understand the first noble truth, it would be amazing. So instead of saying, "Oh yeah, four noble truths, blah, blah, blah," he said, "Nobody is willing to actually look at the first noble truth." And Barry touched on that a little bit in his introduction to the Sadhana of Mahamudra, but in fact this world is completely filled with suffering. I think sometimes here we are, you know—you look around the room—here we are in the middle of North America somewhere and having the incredible privilege of being able to come to

something like this—to have the time, the money, the circumstances. It's amazing that we're here. And sometimes when people talk about the first noble truth in this kind of setting, people think of, you know, psychological distress and difficulty with their relationships and whatever, their feelings of inadequacy or self-hatred or their this or that, problems with their parents, or various little things.

It may be hard in this kind of bubble of North American-ness within our globe to really get at what this is talking about. This is talking about war and oppression and (00:36:00) poverty, and, I mean, all you need to do is read a few papers to get some sense—I think it's important to do—of what most people are dealing with nowadays. Slavery. Slavery's a huge thing—human trafficking. The way women are treated around the world is horrific. There are wars all the time, everywhere. There are many, many people dying needlessly for having not enough food. There are people whose education is just shot—they're in a war zone, they start school and then there's no school—and then years later, they're supposed to have to figure out how to deal with their life. I read that even plants have wars. I used to think that plants were kind of benevolent, that they just sort of sit there and grow, but actually they send out chemicals to kill the other plants around them, and at the slightest opportunity they invade and take over territory. There're wars and conflict and heartbreak and real suffering, and it doesn't seem that it's ever not been, as far as I know. And that reality . . . sometimes it's hard to take, actually. You know, I find it hard to take.

There's a teacher that I admire a lot, Joanna Macy, who's a longtime environmentalist and Buddhist, and she deals a lot with the question of despair, because even if you're not in the situation, how much can we allow ourselves to know what's happening in the world and how we're benefitting from the suffering and oppression of other people? It's the reality, you know. (00:38:00) You buy your little thing, but what has that actually come from? *Who*, actually, was enslaved to make your little gadget or this or that?

The first noble truth is like opening ourselves to be pretty clear eyed. It's not the same as having a guilt trip or feeling that we should beat ourselves up because we happen to be so lucky as to be here. At the same time, we can't pretend that everything's just hunky-dory. And so the first noble truth says, "Well, reality is there's a lot of suffering. There's a lot of suffering." Samsara is endless; you know, we just sort of run around, cycle around different realms. And the thing is, even in the most fortunate circumstances, even then there's suffering. Some people seem to have everything, and we all want to be like them—we want to have everything too—until we actually talk with them and then they say, "Oh my god, things always are falling apart." And it's so difficult in every realm, and it goes on and on, because

the first noble truth is not just about humans, it's about animals as well. And to think about that for very long, that's difficult too. Can we be in reality? Can we start with just reality, without shying away? That takes a big step. So I think that's interesting, the first noble truth. And fortunately, that's not the only one. [*Laughter*] (00:40:00)

But there are two bad guys and two good guys, I suppose you could say. The second noble truth is . . . well, there's a lot behind all this. There's kind of a swirling ground of ignorance and denial and just stupidity: not wanting to see, fundamentally taking the mistaken view that we're the center of everything and therefore having a sense of alienation between self and other, self and environment—a big split view. We need to have that kind of split view in order to do all the devastating things we do. If we actually felt a sense of nonduality, then we wouldn't be trashing the environment because it would be trashing our own selves. We have to feel “other”—you have to feel other—from our environment, from our world, in order to cause the kind of chaos that we tend to cause. It's like almost a self-protective thing, but it's also pain of alienation, isolation.

Once that system is set up, as you can study in the hinayana volume in detail, then (00:42:00) poisonous kinds of emotional patterns come up. It's fed by this basic duality, by this split. So, you know, some of the problems come up because of greed: everybody wants unlimited resources, but that becomes very closely connected with aggression. Well, how am I going to get those resources? You guys have it and I don't, so I'm going to have to go take it, and you're going to fight me and we're going to have a war. Passion, wanting to hold on to what we have, not wanting anyone else to take it away. There's a continual kind of fuel of the various kleshas that keep us struggling. Struggling is the nature of samsara. We have something, we struggle to keep it; we don't have something, we struggle to get it; we want people nearby, we struggle to draw them in; we're tired of them, we struggle to get rid of them; whatever. Struggle, struggle, struggle.

So the third noble truth is that we don't have to do that. It's the reality of the possibility of cessation. I mean, I think when we begin to take a look at things, it just feels overwhelming, like we're just sort of stuck and there's nothing to be done. It's very easy to feel that way about pretty much everything. But (00:44:00)—and I suppose you could say this is a goad or it could be inspiring or it could be provocative—there's the notion that we mutually create this experience and each of us has a role in contributing to this big mess. You can't cop out with the excuse “That's just the way it is. That's just the way I am. That's just the way it is. Okay, enough, go on to something else.” No. Actually, some part of us is awakened. This is so important in the third noble truth—the notion, suspicion, that the things that

really are so painful and difficult, we don't have to do them. We don't actually have to do them. We have the potential to do otherwise—thus the notion of cessation. And of course this is being taught by the Buddha, in that case, not me, and so that gives one example that that's actually possible; someone's demonstrating—manifesting—that it's possible not to buy into this whole system.

And the fourth noble truth—so important—is there's practice, there's a path, there's a kind of a map that was generously laid out so that people can have some tools to say, "Okay, I know that it's a mess, I know—I have glimpses all the time that I don't need to be caught up, but it's not always obvious how to get from here to there." (00:46:00) Sometimes this just makes you feel worse; you'd rather just not know there's any other option. There's an image of . . . If you grow up in a slum, you see children in a slum or whatever, and they never go more than two blocks this way or that way, and that's reality. And they're perfectly fine until somehow they take the wrong bus, and they end up in the fancy area of town, and suddenly they feel really bad. They say, "Oh, I didn't know there was all that." We're like that. We're in a slum and there's a third noble truth, and suddenly we see that there's Park Avenue or something like that. "Huh, I never knew about that. How come I'm not there, and what do I have to do?" And so there's a notion of the path.

The quality of that path is multifold, and I won't talk too much about it since I'm just reviewing, but basically it means working with your mind. There's tremendous respect for the power of how we think about things, and so a lot of change has to begin there. A lot of things we do are because of our false perceptions, our false interpretations, the colorations and distortions, so the starting point in a path is really looking at that, beginning to have a sense of do we really know how we think about things? And when we see how we think about things, do they seem to make any sense? Are we just (00:48:00) seeing our own projections? So . . . keep track of time. Yeah, yeah, okay. I guess I won't say anything more.

That's really the key view in the hinayana that you should all know and respect, and of course there're many others. I'll just label them, jog your memory of teachings on the . . . it's called egolessness—that sounds overly philosophical, perhaps, but the notion of no-self, that what seems to be so solid and real is questionable, that there's no . . . that we live in a vast web that's totally interdependent and that everything we do registers and has an effect, karma. That was all prajna. The practice emphasis in the narrow hinayana path is on shamatha and vipashyana, as you know. Briefly, shamatha is the calming and focusing of the mind. And that's what many people mistake for meditation altogether—just getting calm, take a chill pill—but it's tied directly with (00:50:00)

vipashyana, clear seeing, which is clarifying the mind, brightening the mind, and relaxing the mind outward.

And finally, there's discipline. It's important to always have these three in mind, because meditation can't just be totally extracted from the prajna and shila. Discipline, in the hinayana, fundamentally is one of restraint. It's not doing everything you think of doing; it's kind of embodied in the whole sitting posture. You're just still, you're not being drawn out every which way by your senses, you're refraining from a lot of things you might consider doing, such as killing, stealing, lying—those kind of things. So there's a sense of, you could say, paring down—paring down—and then you are left with a question of what's really essential, you know, as a human experience? How close are we to our immediate experience as it arises? Can we be there in a dispassionate way, without struggle, with some kind of clarity and insight?

I wanted to also review the little bit about the mahayana. The hinayana, again, is the ground—we go back to it over and over again. (00:52:00) There are times we really need restraint, and there are times we need to let loose. The mahayana is kind of a natural outgrowth from the hinayana. We find, oddly, that when you simplify and pare down and come into some kind of presence, that something begins to kind of pull you out, pull you outward. There's kind of a birth or, I don't know, a fertile kind of uprising of interest in the world. Previously, we weren't really able to see much of the world because the world was us—that was our entire preoccupation, pretty much. So when we begin to settle down, relax that sense of self-absorption, then the world becomes brighter and more interesting and we seem to really take an interest. And there's also a kind of interesting arising. Because of being so nitty-gritty and no-nonsense, no BS, right here now, this is what's happening right in front of me, right here—something romantic arises. There's a sense of kind of (00:54:00) surprising warmth and interest in others, then in the environment and in everything—the objects of our world. So that stream of compassionate or loving energy has been kind of plugged up because we're so preoccupied with our own little thingies. But when we have little gaps, preoccupation kind of loosens or is not working completely, and then there's a whole other, much bigger world that kind of displays itself and captures our attention.

So *mahayana* means “big.” There's a sense of expansion. We can narrow down and there's a natural expansion and it's kind of like an in-breath and then an out-breath. Because the in-breath, the ground, is so pure and so solid, the expansion can be so much more. So in terms of shila, samadhi and prajna in the mahayana—I'll just touch on them—the view of prajna is one of emptiness (00:56:00) and compassion, and that's said to be the shocking quality of mahayana. But also there's the quality of

discovery, of what is called *bodhichitta*, “the mind of awake.” The mind of awake. And traditionally, the discovery of bodhichitta is so important, again, as a ground for going into the vajrayana. It’s said this possibility of awakening, this kind of opening of the heart, comes as a bit of a surprise, and it comes right in the midst of all our confusion, right where we don’t usually look. So it’s both—both the nitty-gritty of samsara, and then the mahayana says, “Wait a minute, there’s this whole other thing happening, but it’s in the same place.” This other thing happening is bodhichitta, and it’s right here, right in the middle of all this.

The practice in the mahayana builds (00:58:00) completely on the ground of shamatha-vipashyana, but there’s a greater emphasis on the postmeditation and practice in life, in the midst of activity. The emphasis is on *lojong*, “mind training,” and on *tonglen*, the practice of exchange, exchanging self and others. And there are many, many practices, all based on arousing compassion; circulating the energy so that we become able to manifest the power of compassion, kindness, and love without being in any way depleted; tapping into boundless energy of awakened kindness. You’ll hear more about this, and we’ll be doing tonglen, which you probably all have done . . . powerful mahayana practice.

And of course, in terms of shila, the image of the bodhisattva is that of not being afraid to mix it up with anything in life, in terms of cultivating wisdom and compassion. The image of a bodhisattva warrior is not holding back for some special, perfect situation but just launching into whatever situation is there, seeing it as fertile ground for awakening (01:00:00) everywhere: in the difficult things and in the ecstatic things, challenging things—doesn’t matter. Dirty, clean, doesn’t matter. And that’s what’s so cool about working with paramitas and working with the slogan practice. A lot of times, people try not to make mistakes, but the bodhisattva says that’s where everything’s really happening, man. The mistakes is where the best fertile ground is. So there’s a quality of not only expanding a sense of what practice is but also expanding your sense of what teaching is out there—broadening that, seeing it—more of it—and having less sense of limit of what is or is not practice. So in the hinayana, really clear distinction: what’s to be cultivated, what’s not to be cultivated; samsara, nirvana; what’s good, what’s bad—and that’s important. Otherwise the mahayana can seem kind of dreamy and wishy-washy. At the same time, it’s very romantic. It’s very infused with a kind of energy and lightness—light and warm energy. (01:02:00)

So here we are, with the ground of hinayana and mahayana generously provided, and the ground of mutual practice generously provided by you, and tomorrow we’ll launch into the opening,

into the precious vajrayana, and I guess we have run out of time. I know there's food coming up—the precious foodayana [*laughter*] is about to arrive—and in subsequent talks, there will be a lot of time for dialogue, but I wanted to make sure that we reviewed before we moved forward. It's so difficult to lay out just the basics in such a galloping fashion, so please accept my apologies for that, but I wanted all these ideas in this structure of things to be rattling around in your minds and taking root there when you come back, and in your discussions. So thank you. Do we dedicate the merit?

ALL: [*Chanting*]

By this merit may all attain omniscience.
May it defeat the enemy, wrongdoing,
From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death,
from the ocean of samsara, may I free all beings.

By the confidence of the Golden Sun of the Great East,
May the lotus (01:04:00) garden of the Rigdens' wisdom bloom;
May the dark ignorance of sentient beings be dispelled;
May all beings enjoy profound, brilliant glory.