



**JOURNEY
WITHOUT GOAL**

The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

Study Guide

Kalapa Recordings

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Journey without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha

This seminar on tantra was given by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche at Naropa Institute (now Naropa University) in the summer of 1974, the first year of Naropa. The seminar was edited into the book *Journey without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha*, which should be the main reference and reading material for the DVD class.

Chögyam Trungpa took an approach to Vajrayana Buddhism that is unique in its experiential flavor. He felt that the sacredness and secrecy of tantra should be guarded. At the same time, he felt that there was much that could be shared with a general audience. The DVD series *Journey without Goal* reflects both of these qualities.

In working with the book and the DVDs together, students need to be aware that some material from the original lectures was condensed in the book or inserted into another chapter. Questions and answers were not included in the book per se, although some material from the questions and answers has been interwoven into the body of the book.

The DVD series was piloted in Halifax, Nova Scotia, as a weekly class over a period of about four months. During this period, *Journey without Goal* was the focus of the Monday Night Class at the Halifax Shambhala Centre, which presents the teachings of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche in lightly edited formats, so that students can experience his teachings in the way they were originally presented. The format used was to play the body of the talk, then to break into discussion groups, and then to come back together to watch the Q and A on the DVD.

Pointers and other ways to use the material:

- 1) It proved helpful to have a special discussion group for newer students. For many of them, this material proved challenging.
- 2) The material could be presented to Vajrayana students only.
- 3) This material is often studied by students preparing for an advanced program.
- 4) The course can be broken into two sessions. It's daunting for people to commit to such a long class.
- 5) You can also select a sub-group of the talks, rather than trying to watch all of them.
- 6) The book can be the main focus, in which case you might use only two or three of the DVDs to supplement the discussion from the book.
- 7) This series of lectures was given as the second seminar in a two-part series on the Tibetan Buddhist Path. The first series of DVDs is available from Kalapa Recordings as the two-volume DVD series *The Tibetan Buddhist Path*. For the ambitious individual or group, the study of both of these seminars in sequence is highly recommended.
- 8) Generally each talk clearly corresponds to a chapter in *Journey without Goal*. If this is not obvious, information will be given. For additional readings, consult the *Journey without Goal* syllabus available from Shambhala International for the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies course.

Here are the talk titles, followed by length of talk and length of questions:

1. The Tantric Practitioner	28 min	16 min
2. Vajra Nature	31 min	24 min
3. Mandala	42 min	16 min
4. Nontheistic Energy	32 min	16 min
5. Transmission	45 min	18 min
6. The Tantric Journey	34 min	40 min
7. The Vajra Master	39 min	35 min
8. Visualization and Body, Speech and Mind	48 min	12 min
9. Abhisheka	47 min	25 min
10. The Five Buddha Families	52 min	18 min
11. Being and Manifesting	43 min	17 min
12. The Question of Magic	43 min	21 min
13. Anuttarayoga	36 min	19 min
14. Maha Ati	39 min	25 min

***A note on the original audience: Viewers will notice the countercultural appearance of many of the folks who attended the original talks in 1974. If you are introducing the DVDs, you may want to say something about people's appearance. It may be important to point out that the teachings themselves are timeless and stainless. On the one hand, Chögyam Trungpa certainly addressed the specific audience and the specific time in which he taught. However, this never interfered with his primary goal of presenting the purity of his tradition. It simply added some local color here and there!

1

The Tantric Practitioner

(Please Note: This is Chapter One in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 28 min. Questions: 16 min. Overall: 48 min. Date: June 15, 1974

This is the first talk of the seminar on tantra given by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche at Naropa Institute in the summer of 1974. The seminar was edited into the book *Journey without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha*, which is the main reference and reading material for the DVD class. However, students need to be aware that some material from the original lectures was condensed or inserted into another section of the book and that questions and answers were not included, although some material from the Q and A has been interwoven into the body of the book.

Introduction: The first few minutes of the talk are an introduction to the course as a whole. The Vidyadhara emphasizes that the course is a theoretical introduction to tantra, or a “hypothetical situation,” one that gives students an idea of the path of tantra, which they may embark on in the future or may be approaching at the infant level at this time. He stresses that tantra, or Vajrayana, can only come out of a complete comprehension of Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism to begin with.

Ground: Who is studying tantra?

- First, we need to ask who the tantric practitioner is, rather than concerning ourselves with how to practice tantra or what it is.
- The Vidyadhara introduces the meaning or definition of tantra, or the Tibetan gyü, as “continuity.” This relates to the continuity of our personal experience and our commitment to the Buddhist teachings, which is like a thread that runs through our experience of the Buddhist path.
- Inquiring about who is practicing tantra takes us back to the Hinayana teachings. We have to look at egolessness, or the absence of self, which is also the absence of God. When we don’t have a conceptualized divine being, the situation is very open.
- We use all kinds of relative reference points to either convince ourselves that we do exist (“I have a name; I wear clothes; I eat; I sleep”) or to convince ourselves that we don’t exist (by burning our birth certificate) to avoid being drafted.
- Discovering nonexistence in the Buddhist tradition has nothing to do with destroying relative reference points. Rather, we don’t use any reference points at all.
- Trying to see ourselves without any reference point at all may make us feel more lost and confused. This may help us to realize the beginninglessness of the thread of tantra but we still feel heavy and lost, like a jellyfish or a robot.

Path: A sense of humor enables us to dance with the situation, beyond our confusion.

- We are still trying to find ourselves, and something that we can't put a finger on is being a nuisance.
- We can't get rid of the confusion or the flatness, but we begin to see how even the flatness, lack of inspiration, solidity and confusion are dancing constantly.
- When we can dance with our situation, it becomes somewhat uplifted. However, something is still very confused and ambiguous.

Fruition: Discovering the seed syllable of ambiguity.

- Ambiguity is called a seed syllable when it becomes a starting point rather than a source of problems.
- The discovery of nonexistence comes from experiencing both the energy of humor and the "thingness" or form of confusion.
- Form does not prove energy, and energy does not prove the existence of form, so there is no confirmation, just ambiguity.
- However, at this point, the feeling of being lost has the quality of freedom rather than the quality of confusion.
- This has to be a personal experience. Then we begin to feel that we really do not exist, and we begin to feel the big joke behind the whole thing.

Conclusion: A truly ambiguous talk, which the Vidyadhara says we may find confusing or even irritating, but he stresses that this examination of nonexistence is the only way to begin on the path of tantra. He ends with a discussion of how tantra is not a vague spiritual process but something precise, rare and unique, which we need to value and approach properly.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) Can you tell us what the readings are for each class?
- 2) Is the idea of egolessness here similar to the understanding of emptiness or sunyata?
- 3) How can we make these teachings work in the American style?
- 4) What is the difference between the Hinayana understanding of egolessness and what you spoke of today?
- 5) I heard you say that some people are more tantric by nature than others. What do you mean by that?
- 6) If you're not fascinated by sights and sounds but you are more preoccupied with who is experiencing them, are you less tantric by nature?
- 7) You used the word "inaccessible" to refer to the Vajrayana teachings. Why?

2

Vajra Nature

(Please Note: This is Chapter Two in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 31 min. **Questions:** 24 min. **Overall:** 56 min. **Date:** July 16, 1974

Introduction: Out of the experience of nonexistence, the tantric practitioner discovers vajra nature, a state of being based on indestructibility and total clarity. This is a fundamental quality on the path of tantra.

Ground: Nonexistence leads to the experience of indestructibility or vajra nature.

- Having experienced the humor, openness and freedom of nonexistence, we discover complete indestructibility, which is unchallengeable, immovable and solid. This is the quality of vajra.
- This can only come from recognizing that nonexistence is possible, being without reference points or philosophical definitions of any kind.
- We may speak of people being indestructible because they are so skilled or have mastered so many proofs and tactics. From the tantric standpoint, this kind of securing oneself with gadgetry is a source of destructibility, not indestructibility.
- In the tantric view of indestructibility, there is no ground, no basic premise and no particular philosophy except one's own experience.
- We cannot trick ourselves into realizing the state of immovability. It only comes from the genuine experience of nonexistence.

Path: Vajra nature is hardheaded and unyielding and does not cooperate with seductions or deceptions of any kind.

- This is different from boycotting the seductions of the samsaric world. We see them clearly but we do not yield to any of them at all.
- Being hardheaded implies that one is not taken in by anything at all. Such hardheadedness or "vajra-headedness" is a quality of toughness and not being seduced.
- Vajra truth is the hard truth, such as the truth of death. Similarly, vajra nature is based on hard truth. We cannot challenge or manipulate it in any way at all. It is both direct and precise.
- Vajra or *dorje* in Tibetan means adamantine or having the qualities of a diamond. Like a diamond, vajra is tough and also extremely precious.
- Some teachers and students of tantra in America have misunderstood this quality of vajra. It is extremely dangerous to play with tantric energy, which is like touching a live wire without a buffer. It could be suicidal. It could become a spiritual atomic bomb that destroys others and us.
- Working with tantra is not like planting a little seed and watching it grow. We have to start with the understanding of nonexistence and the recognition of how rare and precious and extraordinary tantra is.

Fruition: Vajra nature is a combination of indestructibility and total clarity. It is the total experience of tantra, the experience of the enlightened state of being.

- Vajra nature is an experience of sanity that is based on clarity, which comes from the practice of meditation throughout the journey of the three yantras.
- The clarity of vajra nature is ostentatious and has immense brilliance. It is very joyful and has potentialities of everything.
- This clarity is different from either the clear light described in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* or the luminosity described in Mahayana. Vajrayana clarity has more humor, subtlety and dignity, and is utterly outrageous.
- Things are seen as they are, but they are also seeing us precisely. We are totally exposed and open, which allows a meeting point to occur. That point is called vajra nature. We realize we cannot chicken out; life is not a rehearsal.

Conclusion: The experience of vajra nature, which combines indestructibility and clarity, is superior to any other approach to spirituality, even within the Buddhist tradition. We need to understand this quality as we go through the further discussion of the path of tantra.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) You said that you see things as they are and they see you, too. Is this because you are totally exposed, open and willing to be seen?
- 2) Being involved in a Hinayana meditation practice, should one avoid experiencing direct energy?
- 3) What is the relationship between nonexistence and being?
- 4) How does vajra nature relate to the vajra family in the five buddha families?
- 5) How can tantric teachers make mistakes if they are enlightened?
- 6) Why are you teaching tantra to us when you tell us we should practice a Hinayana approach to meditation?
- 7) As we become more open through meditation practice, we receive positive feedback. Is that dangerous?
- 8) If impermanence is one of the three marks of existence, what is indestructible?
- 9) When you referred to Hindu teachers, were these teachers presenting left or right handed tantra?

3

Mandala

(Please Note: This is Chapter Three in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 42 min. Questions: 16 min. Overall: 60 min. Date: July 19, 1974

The talk begins with a discussion of the importance of relating with this material seriously. The Vidyadhara talks about how tantra is both precious and dangerous. Frivolousness kills the sense of true freedom in relating to the material. Tantra is also *rangsang* or self-secret. If the student is taken over by frivolity, they can't hear or see the reality of the tantric teachings. This warning and reminder are necessary for us to hear.

Introduction: This talk concerns the three world or tantric mandalas: the outer mandala of sense perceptions and outer relationships; the inner mandala of the relationship with our body; and the secret mandala, which is having a sacred relationship to our emotions.

Ground: Outer Mandala.

- By mandala we mean interlocking relationships, rather than a magical circle. Our perceptions—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, and thinking—are constantly being coordinated into a mandala.
- Mandala is the coordination of one point with another. It's like having to edit both the visual material and the sound and coordinating them together when you make a movie. We experience that sense of relationship or coordination constantly. We step into a restaurant and experience all the sights and sounds and we have a feeling about the place from that. That is mandala. It is an actual relationship and a personal feeling.
- The outer mandala principle is relating cohesively to the situation. Mandalas are the general patterns, pleasant or unpleasant, that link us to the world. It's a sense of circulation, rapport, relationship.
- What we perceive in the world is not poisonous, but if we don't relate properly to it, *how* we perceive can become confused and create problems. We have to recognize that phenomena are ours and relate properly to them.
- Fighting with our phenomena doesn't help. The idea of leading a tantric revolution is misguided. The world could evolve itself according to our enlightenment.
- In the nontheistic approach, the world is a totality in itself, rather than being divided into God and the Devil.
- Mandala is a totality; it has a universal quality. It is made out of both good and bad, but the totality is not a grey compromise.

Path: Inner Mandala.

- The inner mandala is connected with how we handle our bodies in terms of awareness or our sense of reality. We have never regarded our bodies as sacred property; we don't have art in our everyday lives.

- This is more than learning good table manners, which can still come along with fundamental crudeness. Relying on what we have been told rather than how we feel is a big problem. We may be perfect actors but there is still a lack of real feeling or connection.
- The real tantric approach to body is very personal and real. We relate to life with intention, deliberateness and confidence. We just do it.
- Deliberateness is necessary, but the heart of that deliberateness is freedom.

Fruition: Secret Mandala.

- This is the mandala of the sacred realm. It consists of simplifying our psychological behavior, our meditative behavior, into a sense of awareness and openness that has no hesitation in dealing with emotions.
- In the secret mandala, all the emotions are interwoven. There is a continuous web. No one emotion is a big deal, but all emotions are a big deal. They all contain the seed of both enlightenment and imprisonment.
- We need to relate with all the hidden corners and little areas of irritation, which are actually important.
- If we get outraged and are about to strangle someone, we manifest all the emotions at once and we manifest the secret mandala at once. There is no “how to do it.” We did it already.
- (From the questions) However, exploding on the spot is not the point. We have to recognize the emotions as sacred and real and relate with them properly.

Conclusion: In our experience and on the path of tantra, we can't separate the three mandalas out. They occur simultaneously in our experience. They are reality and they express our contact with reality, through sense perceptions, the body and our emotions—which are the three mandalas.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) How do we know the difference between doing something with confidence and not doing something right?
- 2) How does one relate to the world when it's hostile? What's the practice?
- 3) If the mandala is a series of concentric circles, what's in the center?
- 4) Could you explain the second mandala further?
- 5) I'm trying to understand the relationship between my emotions and me. Could you say more?
- 6) What is mandala on the Hinayana and Mahayana levels?

4

Nontheistic Energy

(Please Note: This is Chapter Four in the book *Journey without Goal*. Additionally, only the audio form of this talk is available on the DVD; no video recording of this talk exists.)

Body of talk: 32 min. Questions: 16 min. Overall: 49 min. Date: July 22, 1974

Introduction: This talk discusses the nontheistic approach to working with the natural self-existing energy that arises in dualistic situations, that is from the apparent gap between self and other. Although dualism is ultimately illusory, from the tantric point of view we acknowledge its apparent occurrence and do not try to suppress or ignore it or the energy it generates. The theistic approach to dualism attempts to conceal its existence and the discomfort that produces. The nontheistic approach knows that because things are separate, they are also unified and can coexist. This approach allows a direct and open relationship with the energies of our world.

Ground: The nature of energy.

- Conventionally, energy is thought of as power, like electricity or an energetic and hard working person who inspires others to follow their example.
- Another kind of energy is continuous, self-existing, all-pervasive energy that occurs naturally.
- This “transparent” energy occurs constantly in all situations, positive and negative, such as our emotional relationships or our personal beliefs. Like flint and steel constantly striking against each other, our interaction with the phenomenal world constantly produces sparks of energy.
- According to the tantric tradition, this energy arises from the realization of duality—that you exist and the other exists (“...which is false, of course, but who cares?”).
- The “deceptive game” of duality and the energy it produces occurs constantly as you and the elements of phenomenal world work with each other.

Path: Theistic and nontheistic approaches to duality

- The question is how we can work with the energy of duality. The theistic approach tries to bring self and other together, as if the energy of duality were not occurring at all. This approach, which is grounded in the desire to make ourselves comfortable, actually provokes further energy rather than smoothing things out.
- The theistic tradition of spirituality may allow more room for deception than the nontheistic approach which is much harsher, more skeptical and unyielding, even somewhat outrageous.
- In the nontheistic tradition of Buddhist tantra, we do not view ourselves as having been created, but we are some kind of being (or non-being).
- From this point of view, there is a sense of continuity without panic or hysteria. This continuity includes the apparent separateness between ourselves and the world.

Fruition: Nontheistic energy

- In the nontheistic tradition, there is a sense of continuity, openness and “zeroness” rather than “oneness,” due to the absence of the dualistic barrier.
- Tantra means “continuity” or a “thread” of openness that runs through our life from beginning to end.
- From this point of view, because energy is separate from you, energy is part of you; separateness could not exist without you.
- In the nontheistic tradition, energy is vital and important. The world is viewed as purely a psychological process.
- From the point of view of Buddhist tantra, you do not need to rely on feedback to work with energy or develop *siddhi* (Sanskrit: Power). Rather you relate with all situations—life, friends, enemies and so on—simply and directly as much as possible.
- This approach is “decentralized” in that we do not centralize energy within ourselves. Rather, nontheistic energy is spreading, opening, and all-pervasive in nature, constantly expanding like the light of the sun and moon.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) The Buddha said that the definition of an arhat is one who has stopped the outflows. Can you comment on that?
- 2) You said that the nontheistic tradition is superior. What, then, is the attraction of the theistic tradition? Additionally, what is the attraction of the nontheistic tradition to its practitioners, since it has no “payoff” in the theistic sense?
- 3) In Talk 3, you discussed how positive and negative feelings define the totality of the three mandalas. Tonight I believe you described accepting and rejecting as sparking dualistic energy. Is that correct?
- 4) You speak of God as an experience of going inward, but couldn't we call “God” the experience of what is beyond us?
- 5) What do you mean by “work with the energy?”

5

Transmission

(Please Note: This is Chapter Five in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 45 min. Questions: 18 min. Overall: 65 min. Date: July 24, 1974

Introduction: A powerful talk on the nature of obstacles to genuine spiritual transmission, the preparation for transmission and the nature of that transmission itself. The questions and answers are also particularly potent.

Ground: Preparing the ground for transmission by examining our basic level of sanity and discipline, appreciating critical mind, and recognizing wishful thinking as an obstacle to transmission.

- If we haven't made a relationship with suffering, frustration and neurosis, the feasibility of transmission is remote.
- Not dealing with this basic level of our experience is like giving tranquilizers to children when they misbehave. Enormous problems arise when we do the equivalent in the spiritual realm.
- When students are given false promises and think they can avoid dealing with the beginner's level of preparations, they blame themselves when things don't work out. But the problem is the indoctrination they have received, not anything they have failed to do.
- To prepare for transmission, we need to sharpen cynicism and critical mind. Transmission is like receiving a spiritual inheritance. We have to become worthy vessels in order to inherit our spiritual discipline. We have to drop the attitude that we will be saved. The questioning mind is the basis of receiving transmission.
- Stressing critical intelligence is not just a response to Western gullibility. This is actually the traditional approach. It is the lineage holders' responsibility not to give an inch and to keep up the tradition by being faithful to what we have been taught and to our own integrity.
- No unnecessary concessions should be made to presenting dharma in the West, as though Westerners were like Martians. It is more enlightened to view the world as one global situation. We are all samsaric people who also have the potential to become enlightened.

Path: In receiving transmission, the genuine attitude of the student is to be humble and open, like an empty teacup.

- Pragmatically speaking, if you are going to pour tea into a cup, the cup must be at a lower level than the teapot. This has nothing to do with spiritual trips or higher consciousness. It's a simple logic that water has to flow down.
- One cup is not better than another because it's made of silver or gold. A cup is a cup, as long as it is a container that can hold water or tea. Similarly, we are simply students who want to know and learn and receive instruction. We feel our cupness, thirsting to receive teaching.
- Being a cup is very powerful. There is a sense of pride.

- The teapot cannot wait to fill the cup with knowledge or teachings. The pot is magnetized by the cup and equally the cup is magnetized by the teapot, the teacher. A love affair takes place.

Fruition: Transmission is the extension of spiritual wakefulness from one person to someone else. The teacher extends his own inspiration rather than giving it away. The teacher generates ongoing wakefulness and inspiration without being depleted. For the student, transmission is like being charged with electricity.

- Transmission requires the dynamic expression of our emotions. Our passion, aggression and ignorance are like three wires that are ready to receive transmission. The teacher is like the electrical generator.
- The formal ceremony of transmission, or empowerment, is called *abhisheka*, which literally means “sprinkling,” “bathing” or “anointment.” In the abhisheka, the teacher is also like the electrician who knows when to throw the switch.
- In abhisheka there is a sense of destruction, a sense of flow, and a sense of fulfillment. What is destroyed is anything disorganized or confused and any misconceptions about abhisheka.
- It is said that it’s better not to begin the tantric path, but that if we begin, we had better surrender. The little games of our personality have to be given up.
- After that, there is a sense of flow and of fulfillment. We begin to see the reality of what is possible in tantric experience.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) Does abhisheka happen all at once or as a process?
- 2) Have your students received transmission?
- 3) To whom or what do you surrender?
- 4) You said earlier in the summer that the function of the teacher is to tell the disciple to do it himself. How does that relate to this?
- 5) In Chicago, you said that you might have overextended yourself. I didn’t understand that. How does that relate here?
- 6) Suppose everyone here at Naropa wanted to receive transmission from you. That involves a personal relationship with the teacher. How could you handle that?
- 7) What is the vessel’s responsibility, once it has been transmitted to?
- 8) As we proceed on the path, do we reject inborn emotions?

6

The Tantric Journey

(Please Note: This is Chapter Thirteen in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 34 min. Questions: 40 min. Overall: 75 min. Date: July 26, 1974

Introduction: A discussion of the basic meaning of yana and the tantric journey, accompanied by a discussion of kriya yoga yana, the first tantric yana. At the very end of the tape, there is a discussion of the importance and meaning of nyinthuns, or all day meditation practice.

Tantric Journey.

Ground: The ground of the tantric journey is the understanding of nonexistence or egolessness, as already discussed. We need to continue to question reality and to ask who the perceiver of reality is, as the ground of our journey on the path.

Path: With the understanding of egolessness or nonexistence, we begin to develop the knowledge of egoless insight.

- Without this knowledge, there is no way to understand the tantric journey or tantric experience.
- This is also the basis of the difference between theistic and nontheistic traditions.
- In comparing theism and nontheism, we are not arguing about the existence of God but about the existence of the *perceiver* of God.
- There may be a seeming dichotomy or contradiction between the idea of having no struggle yet wanting to take a journey and having ambition. The ambition is essentially that we are inspired into oneness, this very moment.
- We can let the dichotomies or contradictions exist. They make us intelligent and cause us to question the path, so that we are not so gullible. This is good.

Fruition: Continual journey. It doesn't matter whether we experience it as a forward or backward journey. What is important is to keep moving on the path.

- It is somewhat like aging. As we grow old, we may feel that we are becoming more infantile or we may not enjoy the physical process of growing old. Nevertheless, we have no choice. We should regard the whole thing as a learning process.

Kriya Yoga

Ground: In order to see the vajra or tantric world properly, we have to see it in a highly purified way.

This is the viewpoint of kriya, the first tantric yana.

- Kriya literally means “action,” so kriya yoga is the yoga of action.
- Kriya is based on purity or cleanliness, which here is seeing reality from the sharpest or clearest possible perspective.

Path: In kriya we see that there is both purity and dirt in the emotions. Initially, when emotions occur in a spontaneous way, they are pure or undefiled. Then we overlay all kinds of logics and attempts to possess or justify them, which is the impure quality of our emotionality.

- According to the *Vajramala* and other texts on kriya yoga, emotions are separated into pure and impure types. Pure emotion is the original flash of instantaneous experience. This is an experience of wisdom, or jnana.
- As our emotions deteriorate and are diluted by our overlays, they become ordinary passion, aggression and ignorance, which are regarded as dirt or impurity.
- The original purity is vajra nature, which is inherently pure and cannot be contaminated. It is like the moon behind clouds, which is not fundamentally affected or obscured by the clouds.
- One should see the neuroses clearly, look at them, study them and then flush them down the toilet.

Fruition: Having related with our impurities or garbage, the way to purify ourselves is by surrendering.

- Ego has all kinds of tricks to turn this to its advantage, but fundamentally, we should just surrender completely.
- In kriya yoga, there are visualizations as part of the practice, which are based on identifying with our inherently pure psychological state of being.
- The innocent or pure aspect of our being is seen as a deity, the embodiment of living enlightenment.
- Kriya yoga’s approach to life is based on segregating the good and pure from impure experiences and attitudes contaminated by egocentricity.
- However, we are not trying to relate to something abstract but to real immediate experience.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) You said we should feel the purity, recognize the neurosis and cut through all that. Why is purity first?
- 2) You said that we dare to visualize our innocence in kriya yoga. How do you visualize that?
- 3) You spoke of getting rid of egocentricity and neurosis. How that this differ in tantra from the Hinayana and Mahayana understanding?
- 4) Could you explain more about the phantom you mentioned in connection with egolessness?

- 5) I don't understand the difference between a theistic and nontheistic outlook. Can you explain more?
- 6) Would you say the bodhisattva has the same attitude as the tantrika, but is more naïve?
- 7) You said the continuity of nonexistence is the basis of tantra. Tonight you said that we take pride in the purity of our existence. Is there a contradiction here?
- 8) If the emotions start out pure, how do they become impure?
- 9) Does this purity of kriya arise from faith in one's own being?
- 10) You said neurosis is to be cast out. What does the purification entail?
- 11) What's the difference between jumping into a fire, as Naropa did, and which is positive, versus being gullible, which is a problem?
- 12) Are there mutual qualities shared by innocence and cynicism, since both are pertinent to tantra?

7

The Vajra Master

(Please Note: This is Chapter Six in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 39 min. Questions: 35 min. Overall: 75 min. Date: July 29, 1974

Introduction: A discussion on the ground of the working relationship between student and teacher in tantra: How to be a Vajrayana student, the nature of the vajra world, and relating with a Vajrayana teacher, the vajra master, as the only means to connect the two.

Ground: A good Vajrayana student should be in a constant state of panic in order to relate with the vajra master properly. The proper approach is like riding on the razor's edge.

- In Hinayana, the teacher is a sage or mentor who gives us instruction. In the Mahayana, he or she is a spiritual friend who guides us on the path. In Vajrayana the relationship with the vajra master is powerful and somewhat dangerous.
- If our direction is completely wrong, the teacher has the power to cancel our relationship to the vajra world. Essentially, this is the power to destroy, if there is no genuine continuity to be continued/supported.
- Knowing this, the student should be in a state of panic. Such panic overcomes self-smugness and sharpens the clarity of our perception. Panic is the source of openness and the source of questions, the source of open heart and open ground.
- This is like riding on a razor blade. Either we could do so easily, like a child riding down on a banister, or we could be cut in half.
- Traditionally it is said that it is better not to get into tantra, but if we must, then we should take it seriously. We could develop vajra indestructibility by following the path, or, if we pervert the path, we could find ourselves burnt up like a little piece of charcoal.
- The teacher also carries a heavy responsibility. A teacher who does not properly respect the law and the tradition of tantra can be punished as well.
- Why is there such a heavy price and such an emphasis on this secret? It is because practicing tantra is working with extremely powerful energy. If we don't do it properly, it's like grasping a live wire with our bare hands. We could get a huge, even fatal, shock.

Path: The point of tantra is to reintroduce us to the energy and power of the world. It is not that we wake up into a magical world, but rather that developing a tantric sensitivity exposes us to a different state of being.

- The tantric world is *this* visual, auditory, sensory world, which we haven't explored properly. We lost the freshness and curiosity of childhood and instead have become somewhat numb.
- So tantra is re-viewing and rediscovering the world. There is a mutual process of opening between the practitioner and the world.

- There is a naked sort of electricity that we discover. It is like having no skin; experience is so immediate and real. Our suit of armor is punctured from both inside and out. There's no time to insulate ourselves.

Fruition: The third element in this process is the teacher, who introduces us to the possibility of such a true world. It is essential to have the guidance and involvement of a vajra master capable of transmitting the vajra spiritual energy to us.

- The vajra master conducts himself according to the tradition. The process of working with the student is a very definite and deliberate process. The vajra master touches us, smells us, looks at us, and listens to our heartbeat. That process, which is done according to tradition, is known as abhisheka or empowerment.
- Abhisheka is sometimes translated as “initiation,” but there is no tribe into which we are initiated. Rather, the vajra master empowers us and we receive that power, so empowerment is a better translation.
- It is absolutely necessary to have a living teacher who transmits tantra as a living experience.
- Dharma cannot be transmitted from the sun or the moon and stars. It can only be transmitted properly from human to human.
- It is extremely difficult to find a true tantric situation and to meet a true tantric teacher. However, it is worthwhile.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) What did you mean when you said that the vajra master has the ability to destroy the student. Did you mean that literally?
- 2) Your description of the tantric world sounds like an experience I had at nine years old, when I was ill. Can you tell me if this was the same kind of experience?
- 3) If the vajra master commands the universe and is beyond karma, how can he be punished or burnt up?
- 4) Our discussion group leader mentioned vajra hell. What is that?
- 5) Is the vajra master a magician?
- 6) Wouldn't the state of nakedness and rawness you described come about as a result of many forms of Buddhist and other practice traditions?
- 7) What is the relationship of Buddhist tantra to Kundalini?
- 8) Is the power of the vajra master the same as one-pointedness? Is there a distinction between energy and power in tantra?

8

Visualization and Body, Speech and Mind

(Please Note: This is Chapters Seven and Eight in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 48 min. Questions: 12 min. Overall: 60 min. Date: July 31, 1974

I. Visualization

Ground: In order to undertake the tantric journey and the practice of visualization, we must first be grounded in both in the Hinayana and Mahayana paths and in our connection to earth, reality. This is the meaning of samaya.

- Samaya is also the expression of our commitment to our life and the choices we make.
- Samaya in Tibetan is *tamtsik*, which literally means “sacred word.” The fact of life, the actual experience of life is samaya.

Path: In the tantric practice of visualization, we visualize what is known as the samayasattva. We visualize a deity that is connected with our own unique qualities and our commitment to our life and ourselves.

- We are given a particular deity by our vajra master, who knows us personally and is familiar with our style.
- The deity that we visualize or identify with is part of our makeup. We may be outrageously aggressive, passionate, or bewildered. Whatever our makeup is, that complex of emotions is connected with enlightenment.

Fruition: Having visualized the samayasattva, we invite another level of being or wisdom into our visualization, the jnanasattva.

- Jnana means wisdom. It is a state of wakefulness or openness.
- Jnana could also be called a fundamentally cynical attitude toward life, which is also a humorous attitude.

Conclusion: The goal of all tantric traditions and practice is to bring together the lofty idea, the jnanasattva of humor and openness, with the samayasattva, the bodily or physical orientation of existence.

II. Body, Speech and Mind

An important principle in the tantric tradition is the role of body, speech and mind, which becomes vajra body, vajra speech and vajra mind.

Ground: The sensory world of body includes shapes, colours and sounds, but it has another aspect, because of the phenomenal play between existence and nonexistence.

- Things are there because they are not there. A crescent moon is a crescent moon because it is not a full moon. That kind of back and forth play is always part of the mandala of body.
- Usually we experience body, shape or form as such a hassle that we can't deal with or solve simple problems of logic like this.
- In the vajra mandala of body, we can work with and relate to this play of experience.

Path: We approach the role of speech with similar logic, but there is a much more dance-like quality.

- In the mandala of speech, the world is seen as a world of syllables or letters. Everybody and everything has its own symbol. We can read the world in the same way that we read a book.
- We panic if there is no new reading material. From the tantric perspective, that panic is called neurosis.
- We could have a lighter, more humorous view than this.

Fruition: The level of mind is very simple, almost to the point of simplemindedness. At the tantric level, the positive experience of nonexistence comes about when the mind is completely tuned into the magical possibilities of life.

- At the level of the vajra mandala of mind, subconscious gossip is completely cut through. Mind is completely open.
- This vajra experience of mind creates a continuous celebration in dealing with life directly and simply.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) In the *Dhammapada*, Buddha said: If it has anything to do with body, it is not what the master meant. Is this correct and how does it relate to our discussion here?
- 2) Does the relationship of the samayasattva and the jnanasattva have anything to do with the concept of yab yum?
- 3) What is involved in reading the world?
- 4) Is the mandala of speech related to the space of sound?

The tape runs out after this.

9

Abhisheka

(Please Note: This is Chapter Ten in *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 47 min. Questions: 25 min. Overall: 73 min. Date: August 2, 1974

Introduction: Talk Five, “Transmission,” is much more about preparing oneself to receive transmission and the energy of transmission. This talk deals much more directly with the ceremony of abhisheka. It is an extremely powerful talk.

Ground: The student’s trust in his or her own sanity, as well as trust in the lineage and the teacher, is the psychological preparation for abhisheka. The teacher also lays the ground for the ceremony of abhisheka with various preparations, including establishing an atmosphere that is free from spiritual materialism and genuinely based on the contemplative tradition.

- Trust in the tantric sense means the actual experience of trusting oneself and having compassion toward ourselves without any self-indulgence. Then situations become very workable. Struggle is a learning process and becomes the fuel for the flames of our energy.
- This provides the ground for taking on further samayas, or commitments, to the teachings and to our root guru or vajra master, who actually gives us abhisheka.
- The teacher sets the date for the abhisheka and chooses the students who will participate. In Tibet, traditionally the date was set six months or so in advance. Students felt suspended for that period of time, not knowing exactly what to expect, although they were preparing. This was a powerful part of the experience. Also the chemistry of the group chosen to receive abhisheka was an important element.
- Corruption in the tradition in Tibet led to people regarding taking abhishekas like collecting stamps or important credentials. Jamgön Kongtrul the Great took many abhishekas but his attitude was completely different. He established the Ri-me school, which means “without bias,” as an ecumenical approach based on the genuine contemplative traditions, in order to create a powerful practicing lineage.
- Jamgön Kongtrul’s approach has some similarities to the approach of George Fox, the founder of the Quaker school of Christianity.
- In Jamgön Kongtrul’s writings, he describes the proper way to treat tantric students in a ceremony of abhisheka. The real ceremony is providing a space for the meeting of two minds, rather than taking advantage of a student who is awestruck and doesn’t know what to expect.

Path: In receiving abhisheka, the student should be guided with gentleness and kind attention, as a mother guides her infant to learn to drink milk and eat solid food. When this is done, the students are able to go from a basic experience of oneness to an ability to connect with the five buddha principles through the five parts of the outer abhisheka.

- The first abhisheka is the abhisheka of the jar or the vase, which is connected with purifying oneself. It is based on the practice of bathing in a river using a jar to scoop up water. Somewhat similar to Christian traditions of christening or baptism. Connected with vajra family.

- Having bathed, it is time to put on clean clothes. The second abhisheka is the crown abhisheka. The whole outer abhisheka is connected with the symbolism of coronation. Those receiving the abhisheka are like young princes and princesses. The crown that you receive has five prongs representing the five buddha families. Connected to ratna family
- The third abhisheka is the abhisheka of the vajra. You are a young ruler, hanging out with nothing to do with your hands, so you are given a tantric toy: the vajra. It is both a weapon and a scepter. Connected with padma family.
- The fourth abhisheka is the abhisheka of the ghanta, or bell. This signifies proclaiming. You have something to say. Connected with karma family
- The fifth abhisheka is the abhisheka of name. The vajra master pronounces your tantric or secret name by ringing the bell, crossed by the vajra, above your head. Connected with buddha family.

Fruition: Having received the abhisheka, there is an immense sense of psychological progress and change that takes place. We actually feel that we have become a ruler of some kind. There is a sense of graduating to the tantric world and being able to appreciate its richness directly.

Conclusion: [Some of this comes from the excellent questions and answers. The Vidyadhara speaks personally about his upbringing in Tibet. A real must see.] Abhisheka plays an extremely important part in the tantric literature and experience. You become part of the teachings and they become part of you. Then you are no longer an entity separate from the teachings. You are an embodiment of them.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) Is there a correspondence between stages of an abhisheka and the ten bhumis?
- 2) You said that you become a real person in the Vajrayana. How do you experience your feelings as a real person?
- 3) From your description of the abhishekas, it seems that there is still some individuality. Is that so?
- 4) How does abhisheka relate to the life example of Shakyamuni Buddha?
- 5) Did Buddha receive abhisheka from someone? Did he have a spiritual friend? If not, why do we need one?
- 6) How much domain over the kingdom of subconscious gossip can one develop without a vajra master?
- 7) Does the vajra master still sit?
- 8) This description of abhisheka stressed gentleness. Other talks emphasized panic and destruction. How do the two approaches relate?
- 9) Aren't there more than five divisions in some abhishekas?
- 10) You talked about trust tonight. In your book *Mudra*, you say, "Do not trust." How do these two attitudes relate together?

10

The Five Buddha Families

(Please Note: This is Chapter Nine in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 52 min. Questions: 18 min. Overall: 71 min. Date: August 5, 1974

Introduction: An evocative and detailed talk on the buddha families. The chapter in *Journey without Goal* contains information that students may want to study as well.

Ground: Tantra is not a vague spiritual process. It is very specific and very special and real. We need to be able to identify ourselves with tantra and realize that it's not the same old thing. It's unique, magical, outrageous, mind-blowing and extremely simple at the same time.

- Tantra is one of the most advanced spiritual principles, which was developed by siddhas of the past. It has been handed down through an ear-whispered, secret language. A tantric culture and a tantric revolution took place in India. We are the descendants of that.
- Any academic institutions devoted to Buddhist thought up to this point (1974) have not touched the pith experience of Vajrayana. The future of Buddhism, not just Tibetan Buddhism, depends on the ability to transmit the experience and realization of Buddha. That's what we are doing in this class and at Naropa in general.
- In all tantric traditions, there are four principles that always apply:
 - Not being ignorant by having only a one-pointed reference point.
 - Vajrayana always provides numerous skillful means for the students.
 - By applying all these methods, it is not too difficult to practice, so practicing Vajrayana should be a natural process.
 - Vajrayana is aimed at people who possess sharpness, in the sense of openness rather than intellectual approach.

Path: In tantra we relate with the details of everyday life according to our makeup. To relate our lives with tantric experience, we have to understand certain details of tantric experience. The tantric discipline, which allows us to connect our own experience with the principles of Vajrayana, is based on the five buddha family principles. They are called families because they are an extension of ourselves in the way that a family is an extension of a person. At the tantric level, people are divided into the five families and we run across people from each family every day. All of these situations are fertile and workable.

- Vajra family is the family of sharpness, crystallization and indestructibility. The symbol of vajra is the vajra scepter, which has five prongs, which cut through any neurotic emotional tendencies. Vajra is so sharp that it is like holding a heap of razor blades in our hands. It is sharp, cutting, biting-cold winter. All of the intellectual disciplines are part of the vajra family. Vajra family has a sense of openness and perspective. The confused or neurotic expression of vajra is associated with anger and intellectualization, being uptight because we are so attached to our sharpness of mind. Its element is water.

- Ratna family is symbolized by a jewel. It represents richness and extending constantly, expanding like a flood or an earthquake. The confused expression is expanding heedlessly and indulging in our world. It is like swimming in a mixture of butter and honey, which is very hard to remove from our skin. Its element is earth.
- Padma family literally means “lotus flower” and is represented by the lotus, which blossoms in the mud. It is connected with discrimination at a very refined level and is involved in desire and seduction. In the confused state, there is no discrimination about what is magnetized or drawn in. When padma neurosis is transmuted, it becomes precise and aware. The quality of seduction is real openness and being willing to share what we have and what we are. Its element is fire.
- Karma family is symbolized by a sword. Karma literally means action, and here has nothing to do with karmic debts or cause and effect. It is the energy of efficiency and fulfilling actions effortlessly and directly. The neurotic expression is being irritated by sloppiness or inefficiency in the world. The epitome of karma family neurosis is wanting to create a uniform world, without concern for anything more profound. Transmuted, it is action fulfilling its purpose. Its element is wind.
- Buddha family is associated with the element of space. Buddha energy is the foundation, or basic space. Neurotically, it is spaced out and indulging in ignorance and sloth. We couldn't care less. When it's transmuted, it is spaciousness, accommodation and a quality of completely open potential.

Fruition: Without the five buddha families we have no working basis for relating to tantra. Vajrayana is so outrageous, and it can seem like purely a distant goal. The five buddha families provide the means to work with ourselves and our world. They bridge the gap between mystical experience and everyday life.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) What are the Maitri Space Awareness postures and how did you develop them?
- 2) What is an “exit family”?
- 3) How do you become a certain buddha family?
- 4) Could you say more about the four principles you described at the beginning?
- 5) In a mandala, where are each of the buddha families? What is their colour?
- 6) Does a vajra master have a dominant buddha family?
- 7) If the buddha family is in the center of the mandala, does this imply it's more fundamental?

11

Being and Manifesting

(Please Note: This is Chapter Eleven in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 43 min. Questions: 17 min. Overall: 61 min. Date: August 7, 1974

Introduction: An extraordinary talk about the three kayas and how they relate to our ordinary, everyday experience, as well as to our relationship with the vajra master.

Ground: In the simplest, most ordinary way, we perceive reality in terms of our experience of body, emotions and basic bewilderment or mindlessness. Dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya are the tantric principles that correspond and transcend those ordinary levels of perception, just as the five buddha family principles relate to our ordinary experiences of personality and the textures of reality.

- There is no tension or contradiction between the samsaric and the tantric descriptions. Rather, the principles of the three kayas show us how we can relate to the levels of body, emotions and bewilderment that already exist in our being.
- Body: Our actual physical body. There are many types of bodies, some fat or thin, some that are fully functional, some that can hear but cannot see, etc. In the Sutras, Buddha tells Ananda to take care of his body for the sake of the dharma. Similarly, relating to the body is extremely important in tantra. However, there is a difference between relating directly to body versus making a big trip about our bodies. We are confused about the experience of body and we don't fully accept our body and our world. But we cannot get away from this world.
- Emotions: This is not a different world but another perspective. We color our world with our emotional reactions, including depression, resentment, passion, aggression and ignorance.
- Bewilderment: This is more fundamental than the ignorance of emotions. We are stunned or fixated and determined to hold onto the solidity of our experience. It is as though we had a big, heavy Chinese wok on our head all the time, pushing us down. It makes us feel that we can't relate to any spaciousness at all.

Path: There is a definite tantric approach to these three levels of experience, which is called the three kayas. Kaya is a Sanskrit word that means "body." Nirmanakaya, or the body of emanation, corresponds to the experience of body discussed above. Sambhogakaya, or the body of joy, corresponds to the emotions. Dharmakaya, or the body of total space, corresponds to bewilderment.

- Dharmakaya: Dharma means "law," "norm," or "truth." The first kaya is called dharmakaya because the dharma speaks in accordance with the language of ignorant people. The starting point for hearing the dharma is confusion. Dharmakaya is the original state of being that transcends our mindlessness. It is a state of complete freedom, almost beyond freedom.

- Sambhogakaya: This kaya looks at the emotions that arise from the complete spaciousness of dharmakaya. In the sambhogakaya, emotions manifest as the five buddha families. There is accommodation for dualism, because at this level, duality is not seen as a problem or a threat. There is a sense of celebration that the emotions are no longer seen as a threat.
- Nirmanakaya: This is the body of existence or manifestation. It is the manifestation of our mind and body, but it is also the manifestation of those who have gone through the other two kayas, represented by the teacher.

Fruition: The teacher manifests on the nirmanakaya level in order to teach and communicate with us and with the details of our perception and our experience. In relating to the teacher, we relate to all three kayas simultaneously, as we witness them in the teacher. As we develop ourselves up to the level of the body of the teacher, or the nirmanakaya, then we become able to experience the sambhogakaya, in which our emotions are transmuted and workable. Finally, we begin to tune into the open, all-pervading space of the dharmakaya. All this is possible because the teacher is, in some sense, a magician or conjurer. He has achieved total space, conquered the level of emotions, and he actually exists in an earthly body.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) The first questioner gave a long statement on vegetarianism, which the Vidyadhara seemed to enjoy. There was no question.
- 2) I have a feeling for the transmutation of experience in the dharmakaya and the sambhogakaya, but I don't understand how this operates in the nirmanakaya. Could you explain further?
- 3) Would you say more about your statement that the dharma speaks the language of confusion?
- 4) Did I understand you correctly that the dharmakaya – which speaks the language of confusion – conquers the neurosis of the emotions and comes into physical manifestation in the body of the vajra master? Students relate to this physical manifestation and then move to the emotional level and then beyond that to the level of space?

12

The Question of Magic

(Please Note: This is Chapter Twelve in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 43 min. Questions: 21 min. Overall: 65 min. Date: August 9, 1974

Introduction: An astounding talk about the nature of siddhi and the four yogas of Mahamudra, which are described as four levels of magic in the Vajrayana.

Ground: The Sanskrit word for magic is *siddhi*, which means actualizing or working with the energy that exists in the realm of experience and of physical being.

- This is in contrast to Western notions of magic that are associated with mysteriousness and acquiring impossible powers. Reading comic books is subconscious feedback from our childhood that magic is something extraordinary.
- One of the problems with this view is that it causes us to view the universe as a nuisance that we must overcome. Another problem is misunderstanding the role of ego and thinking that magic is about ego achieving enormous power.
- In genuine mystical traditions, whether from the Christian, Jewish, or Buddhist traditions, mysteriousness has nothing to do with real magic.
- To overcome these mistaken views, we need to start at the beginning and give up the idea of sudden enlightenment. We need to progress slowly and deliberately along the path. Then we discover that there is a genuine, magical aspect of the world. The greatest magic of all is to be able to control and work with our ego and with our mind.
- As far as tantra is concerned, magic is working with the real world on a completely ordinary level. Magic is completely relevant to our world, our life and our path.

Path: To discover magic, we have to go beyond the normal boundaries we establish for ourselves. We have to step over the threshold of samsara, beyond what seems reasonable. We have to give up our heart and brain. Beyond that, we discover the four levels of magic.

- The *Tibetan Book of the Dead* describes the brilliance we encounter in the bardo, which seems too bright, and we shy away from it. If we do this, then a soft, gentle light appears and when we go towards it, we find ourselves back in samsara.
- We have to step beyond the boundaries, which sometimes feels as though we are going beyond basic sanity. We feel that we have given up so much, but there is more to give. We have no idea how to give our heart and brain, but we can do so and when we do, the real magic begins.
- The first level of magic is one-pointedness. This is not like the one-pointedness of Hinayana meditation practice. That is like using a very sharp needle to sew our cloth together. One-pointedness at this level is like using a very dull, blunt stone needle that crushes the obstacles, very directly. Emotions are dealt with very directly, in their own place. There is no politeness.

- The second level is simplicity or noncomplication. We no longer have to exaggerate ourselves or use any form of spiritual materialism to build ourselves up. This kind of simplicity is not romantic or simplistic. It is quite direct. It is self-existence: fire burns by its own simplicity but still has its own energy. A rock is magic because it just sits there without getting bored.
- The third level of magic is one taste. Because of self-existing simplicity, things do not need any reference point. One taste is a one-shot deal. When students say that they feel pain and frustration for no apparent reason, there is some magic in that. They feel thenowness of the pain—or of the pleasure—as it is, personally and directly.
- The fourth level of magic is nonmeditation. Here, meditation is contemplating an object or visualizing something and identifying with it. Nonmeditation means not meditating on anything. It is beyond the reference point of subject and object, providing a contrast to our normal sense of wanting so much. Magic here is an expression of nongrasping and nonaggression. It is also an expression of total energy and power.

Fruition: We might wonder what is so magical about this. But we haven't experienced these four levels of magic personally and we have no idea how powerful they are. The great Indian pandit Naropa said that practicing tantra is like trying to ride a burning razor. Maybe he was right.

The questions are an essential part of this talk and they contain the punchline of the whole discussion. Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) In the biographies of the mahasiddhas, all kinds of magic happens, such as stopping the sun. What does this mean in light of our discussion here?
- 2) You talked about approaching the threshold that you have to step over. Where does the inspiration come from to step over this threshold?
- 3) Can you enter into these threshold situations volitionally?
- 4) Would the moment of breaking through the threshold be a moment of inquiry or of humility?
- 5) Would you share an example of how you have used magic to change your karma?
- 6) A lot of energy goes into constantly wanting, as you mentioned. What happens to the energy in the state of nonmeditation?
- 7) If nonmeditation is magic, what is meditation in relationship to that?

13

Anuttarayoga

(Please Note: This is Chapter Fourteen in the book *Journey without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 36 min. Questions: 19 min. Overall: 56 min. Date: August 14, 1974

Introduction: Anuttarayoga is a bridge between the lower tantric yanas (kriya, upa and yoga) and the higher yanas (mahayoga, anu and ati). From the point of view of the lower yanas, anuttara represents the highest achievement. It includes many tantric practices, such as Kalachakra, Chakrasamvara and Guhyasamaja.

Ground: We have already talked about the principles of body, speech, and mind. In anuttarayoga, there is a particular emphasis on speech, not as voice or verbal communication alone, but as a principle of energy.

- Through body, speech and mind we relate to the phenomenal world. In tantra, we could almost say that this relationship is not even religious, particularly. Rather, it could be viewed as a nontheistic approach to developing sanity and openness.
- Speech is particularly important in anuttara. Here it is speech-like situations, any interchange that takes place in our world, whether in the realm of hearing, seeing, smelling or other sensory aspects of the body.
- Speech is a link between our body and us and between our mind and us. Speech brings mind to the cognitive level and body to the energetic level.
- Speechlike interchanges take place constantly in our life. They are an expression of energy. This is not a crude expression of energy, like a gunfight taking place in a bar in the old West. Rather, the energy we are speaking of here is self-existing energy that takes place constantly: The energy of aggression, of passion, of depression, excitement, uncertainty, etc.
- Here, we will discuss this view of energy as presented in the Kalachakra tantra.

Path: Nadi, prana and bindu are the three types of energy that we are discussing. They are a description of how energy works in anuttara yogayana.

- Nadi: Is like a channel. Energy needs a channel, a way to journey. Nadi is this specialized path. It is like a railroad track, in that it provides a path or pattern that our energy follows. The phenomenal world has already created these pathways or channels for us. We don't have to set the system up.
- Prana: The metaphor for prana is a horse looking for a rider. The metaphor of the horse has to do with conviction rather than speed. The pathways of nadi are already set up for us. Prana is the horse that rides on these self-existing tracks in the world.
- Bindu: Bindu is the rider of the horse of prana. It is a particular type of consciousness. We have to distinguish bindu from the more mechanical aspect of mind, *sem* (Tibetan). *Sem* responds to reference points, while bindu is more the sense of consciousness taking a journey. It is more of an awake quality.

- An analogy for all three energies is that bindu is a radar system mounted to the tracks, or nadi, through a wheel, which is prana. Bindu guides or controls the journey. The whole process is based on energy.

Fruition: At the highest level of anuttarayoga, we transcend this way of seeing the journey. Greater openness and expansion begins to occur. We see the journey more like the unfolding of a flower. The monogram EVAM symbolizes this greater openness.

- E is the level of basic accommodation or openness. In this space, the existence of buddhas and sentient beings is saying the same thing. At this level, sorting out buddhas and confused beings is irrelevant. E comes straight from your heart. You breathe out: ehhh. It is the sound of opening up without particular definition or reference points.
- Having that enormous space, then you have VAM. E is the mother and VAM is the son. The two are not in conflict, however. VAM principle is the energy that exists within the E of nonduality. It represents discipline within the spaciousness of E. It is one-pointedness.
- EVAM is a central monogram of the Kalachakra tantra. It is also the personal seal of the Trungpas.
- In anuttarayoga, we can use any form of confusion, doubt or hallucination that we experience in ordinary everyday life. First there is an experience, and then there is the echo of that experience, where we question it or have second thoughts. VAM is the first sharp vision and E is the shadow or echo around that.
- We have a sharp vision first and then a shadow around it. So we are seeing EVAM constantly. This is the basic approach of anuttara: allowing doubt and including it in our journey.

Questions asked by the audience:

- 1) Do the tantric yogas involve movement and postures as is taught in Hindu yoga?
- 2) Your discussion of emotions in tantra is quite different from an ordinary view. Can you say more?
- 3) Are preconceived ways of relating to life nadi?
- 4) In anuttara, one sees doubt and confusion as helpful. Is this view appropriate for a new practitioner?
- 5) I've heard about vajra hell and it scares me. How can I avoid it?
- 6) How do nadi, prana and bindu relate to tantric deities?
- 7) How do these three energies relate to the gunas from Hindu tantra?
- 8) Where does anuttara fit into the six yantras?
- 9) In the analogy of track, wheel and radar system, what is the function of the radar?

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Maha Ati

(Please note: This is Chapter Fifteen in the book *Journey Without Goal*.)

Body of talk: 39 min. Questions: 25 min. Overall: 73 min. including closing remarks.

Date: August 16, 1974

Introduction: In the last talk of the seminar, the Vidyadhara talks about two main topics, maha ati and crazy wisdom. He also makes closing remarks on people's practice and on accomplishing the first summer of Naropa Institute.

Maha Ati

Ground: The Buddhist journey is like walking on a winding mountain path. Maha Ati is looking down from the summit and seeing all the terrain that has been covered. It is panoramic awareness. Ati is associated with enormous space and total openness.

- In ati, we are not talking about space as opposed to a boundary but total spaciousness, total openness.
- Ati yana is regarded as the imperial yana. The Tibetan for this is *long gyur thap kyi thekpa*. It is imperial rather than regal, because a king still has other countries he could conquer, whereas the emperor rules over all the territory.
- Everything discussed in this seminar has been from the point of view of the spaciousness of ati, which has allowed us to view the yantras from the point of view of spaciousness and inevitability.
- Atiyoga is sometimes defined as that which transcends coming, going and dwelling. It is more than the tantric idea of *advaita*, or "not two." Here we are seeing things from the point of view of true reality, beyond any slogan or belief. It is seeing things as they are.

Path: From the perspective of ati, the rest of the yantras are trying to comfort us or provide us with increasingly sophisticated toys. At the level of ati, we are no longer fascinated by any of these toys or gadgets.

Fruition: The experience of maha ati is that, while we are trying to build a zoo or a city as ultimate gadget, the sky falls on our head in the form of a gigantic blue pancake. No one has ever thought that might happen. It is a new level of surprise or shock. In maha ati, we are not talking about gaining or losing ground, but we are talking about gaining headroom. We are interested in how space could provide us with a relationship to reality.

Crazy Wisdom

Ground: Traditional definitions of craziness are quite different from the tantric definition of crazy wisdom. We know about an American Indian warrior named Crazy Horse, who had tremendous courage. Being crazy is also associated with being absurd, on the verge of lunacy. Or we speak of someone being crazy about honey or something else. We may call someone “crazy” if they don’t agree with us or buy our trip. Or our grandparents’ orthodoxy may seem crazy to us. None of these is crazy wisdom.

Path: Crazy wisdom is the basic norm or logic of sanity. It involves relating properly with the world and having tremendous knowledge and resourcefulness. On top of this absolute knowledgeability, or wisdom, the craziness begins to descend. Wisdom does not exactly go crazy, but on top of the basic logic or norm of sanity, craziness as higher sanity or higher power and magic can exist.

Fruition: Fearlessness is an attribute of crazy wisdom. Fearlessness is the power and energy to do what needs to be done, to destroy what needs to be destroyed, nurse whatever needs to be nursed, or whatever the appropriate action is.

- Bluntness is also associated with crazy wisdom. Here it is the notion of openness and spontaneity, but it is not at all random or coincidental. It comes from seeing things as they are.
- So crazy wisdom is absolute perceptiveness, with fearlessness and bluntness.
- The openness of crazy wisdom is created by the environment. The crazy wisdom person is just an activator, just one of the conditions that have evolved in the environment.

Concluding remarks: These actually follow the questions and answers. Rinpoche makes a powerful statement about not perverting or getting “zonked” on what people have heard. He says that everyone has received a powerful and true message that they can survive beautifully by doing nothing.

Some questions asked by the audience:

- 1) In following the tantric path, do students necessarily have to go through practices like the six yogas of Naropa?
- 2) When the ati traveler looks down from the summit, does he not see the world as dualism? Can the ati person still function as a human being?
- 3) Is there compassion from the point of view of maha ati?
- 4) What is so great about having a blue pancake fall on your head?
- 5) Is the ambiguity that brought us to the path the same as maha ati?
- 6) What you have taught us about tantra seems far away from me. How should beginners approach tantra?
- 7) In relating to the various aspects of the path you’ve presented, is there a reason to try to be more than what we just are?

NB: The quality of the video image is poor at the end, during the concluding remarks, but it is also very powerful and worth sitting through!