

MEET & GREET EVENT
Patrick Sweeney, Lady Lila Rich and President Richard Reoch
Rigden Abhisheka Program
Shambhala Mountain Center
August 12, 2005

In August 2005, the Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche gave the first Rigden Abhisheka at Shambhala Mountain Center. Those attending the Abhisheka were invited to gather with Mr. Patrick Sweeney and Lady Lila Rich, who were also attending the Abhisheka at the Sakyong's invitation. President Richard Reoch arranged an informal reception, calling it a "Meet & Greet" event, anticipating 50 to 60 people. Approximately 250 people arrived at the event, which was held in the Sacred Studies Hall. The original format was abandoned, and Mr. Sweeney, Lady Rich and Richard Reoch addressed the gathering and then opened up the floor for questions.

**Remarks by Richard Reoch, President of Shambhala International;
Patrick Sweeney, Dharma Heir of the Vajra Regent and President of Satdharma; and
Lady Lila Rich, wife of the Vajra Regent**

RICHARD REOCH: It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you who have come to meet Lady Lila Rich and Mr. Patrick Sweeney. Originally we had the idea that this would be a small cocktail reception environment. You'd all be swirling around and some people would come up and chat with Lady Rich and Mr. Sweeney and after about 20 minutes, I would say a few words. It would all be very nice. Now I am attempting to demonstrate pliancy of mind in relation to changes of causes and conditions! [Acknowledges the hall full of people sitting on the floor facing Lady Rich and Mr. Sweeney.] So please don't mistake these very simple remarks for a talk.

The word that came to my mind when I saw all of you gathering here is "longing." [Applause] That was the root text. I suppose that now you'd like the commentary. [Laughter] First of all, I think that the sense of longing that we all have has been heightened to an extraordinary extent by the amazing energy of this past week. It was an extraordinary opportunity to sit in the shrine room on the second day of the Rigden Abhisheka, and to see the Sakyong kindly giving a talk, when it was clear he was mainly working with the elemental forces, as his father did. That was followed by the extraordinarily tender reading of the Dharmaraja Guru Yoga, an expression from the Sakyong's heart of the inseparability of all the manifestations of our lineage. Certainly that is what karmically has drawn all of us to this unique event. So we have this profound substrata of longing, which is almost pre-conscious. I think there is also a sense of belonging to an extraordinarily large family. We could call it the family of the Mukpos but I think it is also the family of the Rigdens, the family of all those who were karmically drawn to the Vidyadhara when he crossed the mountains of the Himalayas to plant the Dharma in the West, and those who continue to be drawn to the vision of Shambhala. Khandro Rinpoche once gave a talk in which she asked how many people were new to Shambhala. Only a few people put their hands up, and she said, "The rest of you are wrong - you couldn't possibly be at this talk unless you had been in Shambhala for lifetimes."

As with any family which is bound together in a deep way through longing and aspiration, it's inevitable that there will be times of strife, confusion and conflict. That happens in the most enlightened families as well as the most ordinary families. It seems to me that if Shambhala is

to be anything more than a brief experiment like a cult, if it is to go beyond the ordinary history of so many religious or spiritual groups, large or small, then we have to be able to find a way to hold deep, genuine, heartfelt, even irreconcilable levels of disagreement and conflict, and not lose the profound heart connection that binds us to each other. I cannot actually think of anything else that we are meant to accomplish.

PATRICK SWEENEY: E ma. [Applause]

RR: That is what brings us all here together tonight—you [gesturing to Mr. Sweeney and Lady Rich], the leadership of the Satdharma Center, your wonderful decision to be here, and all that you bring with you—to this extraordinary event where what binds us together is far more important, far more significant, than anything that appears temporarily to separate any of us. I think that is proven by the simple fact that not everybody who wants to can even get into this room. [Laughter] So with those very extemporaneous words I'd like to invite both Patrick and Lady Rich to share any thoughts they have with the people gathered here.

PS: Perhaps we could begin with a bow. [All bow]

Initially I want to begin by thanking Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and Lady Diana Mukpo for hosting us here. I also want to thank Richard Reoch for being the person within Shambhala who exerted himself over the last eight months to bring a process of rapprochement or reconciliation to a point of departure. It was quite a miraculous journey and sitting in this space with all of you, it's very, very poignant for both Lady Rich and myself.

On August 25th, it will be fifteen years since the Vajra Regent died. Things have been difficult. There's no way around it. Things have been difficult. As many of you know, there was what one might call a samaya earthquake, a huge rupture in the fabric of trust in our community. In a sense, coming back feels very good; but the wound is still here, still open.

Going up to the Vajra Regent's Stupa site a couple of days ago, I just sat there nakedly, contemplating all of the various projections and agendas that people have laid on this situation over the last fifteen years, all of the various conceptualizations and elaborate logics about who is responsible for the problem. Is it possible for us to somehow conceptually organize our way out of this dilemma?

It was with that same contemplation that we embarked upon a rapprochement process. Richard and I spent many, many, hours on the telephone. I actually learned how to work a computer [Laughter] to get through this rapprochement process. It turns out that, without any prior knowledge, I bought the exact same computer that Richard has.

What we found, and what I'm sitting with right here, right now, is the fact that the conceptual rapprochement process hasn't worked out so well. Big surprise! [Laughter] As the Vajra Regent put it at the time of the great upheaval, "Any attempt to legislate devotion, any attempt to legislate what we feel with the entirety of our being, fails." The attempt to conceptually orient our hearts can only fail. And yet, we want to communicate. We want to be able to hold as much of the truth as we possibly can.

One could say that absolute truth is very easy in our lineage. We talk about it as ordinary mind, or *thamel gyi shepa*. We talk about devotion as the means of realizing absolute truth. Trungpa Rinpoche was the embodiment of absolute truth. He was the Buddha. He was the

Padmasambhava of our age. And yet there are so many different relative interpretations of what happened during and after his time with us, so many different relative emanations.

What has been poignant for me during this Abhisheka has been the recognition of continuity. Trungpa Rinpoche's mind, the Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche's mind, you can't say they're one, and you can't say they're two. There's continuity. For most of the people in this room, or at least the people that I know, there is another interesting manifestation of continuity, which is that many of us saw the Vajra Regent as an inseparable spiritual entity with Trungpa Rinpoche. We saw the Vajra Regent as a manifestation of Trungpa Rinpoche's heart.

The key to any true harmony is for all of us to restore our samaya, to truly return to the sacred bondage that we experienced with Trungpa Rinpoche, and to simply relax further and further into that. The rapprochement process began for me at the feet of both Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche and Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. They instructed me that the most compassionate thing that I can do is to exert myself to heal the ruptured samaya in Trungpa Rinpoche's community. They told me that no matter how much or little influence my work might have, no matter how much or little merit or karmic momentum the Vajra Regent planted in of me in terms of relating to the dharma, the pith essence of all of it should go towards healing the samaya of all of Trungpa Rinpoche's students.

When I met Richard Reoch I knew it was time to throw myself into it yet again. [Laughter] He was new enough not to know much [Laughter] and smart enough to think there was an answer. Over and over again Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's voice rang in my mind: "Erring and erring, we find the unerring path." Mistake after mistake leads us to the unmistakable way.

This mishap lineage is a very curious thing to be part of. As many of you here know, I love the Vajra Regent. I fell in love with him when I first met him and as my relationship with him matured and the initial emotional/devotional projections started to turn into serving him and, actually, doing a lot of things that I didn't particularly want to do, I began to see him not only as an emanation of Trungpa Rinpoche but as a Buddha in his own right.

I came into Trungpa Rinpoche's community of students at a very unique time, the time between when Trungpa Rinpoche was both Sakyong and Vajra Master and when the current Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche took on his own responsibilities. Some of you here were in that unique graduating class of people who were left in the gap where what occurred was as a result of the tendril of the Vajra Regent's relationship with Trungpa Rinpoche and the Kagyü and Nyingma masters who wanted to bless and ensure the continuity of Trungpa Rinpoche's lineage. The Vajra Regent was encouraged to take on students, to give abhisheka, and to take on the karma of his students. There were many difficult situations that are still reverberating around his sexual conduct and his manifestation of power and charisma within his teaching position. There were many different opinions. I know many of the people in this room had very different experiences. For me, it came down to realizing I was in the proverbial bamboo tube. There was only one way to go. I'm still in that bamboo tube.

That's the quality of samaya that I think is the only way that we're ever going to have a true rapprochement. We could simply acknowledge that Trungpa Rinpoche offered us many different gates through which we could enter into his heart. The Vajra Regent was one of those profound gates. Like all gates, it was imperfect from the relative point of view. And yet,

the process of going through that particular gate, the process of receiving transmission from the Vajra Regent and being in the mandala of transmission with him, was the most glorious thing that happened to me in my life. As members of a vajrayana community, we must learn to hold in our minds the ambiguity of simultaneous conflicting subjectivities. We must learn to hold that within the quality of this unified Vajra family, this unified Rigden family. I could say a lot more but I'll stop for now. If you would like to have some conversation after Lady Rich speaks, then I'm more than open to that. [Applause]

LADY LILA RICH: Unlike my esteemed friend, Mr. Sweeney, I don't usually come prepared to be prepared [Laughter] with such well-structured thoughts and words. But your faces are very pleasing to see. All this week I've been feasting on the sight of old friends and also on the scene in general, the vast population in the great tent. I'm rejoicing at the existence of such a scene. People are practicing, people are working, people are learning. The Sakyong is thriving, thanks to all of your energy coming toward his work and toward each other.

Even if you've never met me you can probably understand that most of my somewhat mature adult life was spent at the feet of Trungpa Rinpoche and at the side of the Vajra Regent. In fact, I got so accustomed to that reality that "parachuting out" for a time, so to speak, could be quite instructive. [Laughter]

I want to make only one really simple public statement. I hold no ill will or enmity toward anyone, no matter how angry they may have become with my husband. I intend never to have such darkness in my heart, because I believe in the path. I believe that the path of non-aggression is the only way. If there's anything I can do to serve in any way my guru and my vajra brothers and sisters, I will always try to do that to the best of my ability. [Applause]

Discussion

Participant: Mr. Sweeney was saying that the rapprochement didn't work out so well. Does that mean that the agreement that happened in Ojai is up in the air again?

RR: There are several points about which there have been expressions of disagreement [by others]. I think perhaps one way of understanding it—I've been trying to figure it out myself—is to make an analogy with peace processes that we see in whatever that world out there is called. Once upon a time, we called it the real world, but now we know that's not true. [Laughter] This analogy is only as useful as any analogy.

Sometimes peace processes start by leaders taking a leap. Patrick took a leap and the Sakyong took a leap. I was taken along for the ride on that leap. And these processes often result quickly in some kind of statement or agreement, or some kind of proclamation. And it's very common that almost immediately after that, some people wake up and go, "Well, wait a minute! I didn't know about that. I didn't know that Anwar said that. I've been sitting beside the Nile thinking about going over to Israel to talk to them. Why didn't you let me know?" So that can happen. Then some people decide that they really have something that they need to express, and they do that. And then you often enter a period where there's a lot of controversy and a lot of commentary. Sometimes in that period people think, "Well I guess this process is finished." What people often don't realize is that, as a result of what those two leaders did, suddenly it has become normal to talk about something that nobody would talk about before. [Applause] Sometimes what happens next is that parts of what they agreed to prove easier to

accomplish than others. I think that the true test, if I may say so, of good statecraft is to see what can move ahead and what needs further discussion. I don't think there's any reason we should be arrogant about our ability to resolve in a matter of months a profound issue which divided brother from sister in this community for fifteen years to such a degree that when I first became President, I discovered it was almost an unmentionable subject. So in the sense that "up in the air" means something that we're working with, yes; but up in the air as something that is finished, absolutely not. And that's the commitment that I have made to the Sakyong and to Patrick. [Applause]

PS: Perhaps my remarks were a bit confusing since I didn't adequately make a distinction between the conceptual rapprochement and the actual rapprochement. The actual rapprochement is what I aspire to, which is a healing of samaya. For me this occurred over the two days of the Abhisheka on a very deep level. I felt that we were all able to glimpse the possibility of the Kingdom actually being realized. We all glimpsed the possibility of sitting in the same room together as one family.

The document we call the Letter of Agreement has been shredded to pieces in the minds of some people. The conceptual rapprochement that existed in my mind is in tatters. But the actual rapprochement occurred for me very poignantly the second day of the Abhisheka. I was sitting, meditating during the feast, and I realized out of the corner of my eye that Lady Diana had risen to her feet. I took note of that, and then I realized that she was actually coming in my direction [loud laughter], and that she had two kasung with her [laughter]. Then, just like Naropa, I wondered, "Could she be coming to me?" It turns out that she was. She was coming over to greet both Lady Rich and myself and to welcome us to the abhisheka. She shook my hand and then she shook Lady Rich's hand and welcomed us, and then a very interesting thing happened. This is where a little bit of the conceptual rapprochement process completely fell away and something actual took place. She offered her left cheek to me; I really didn't know what to do at that point. As you might imagine, given her email that got circulated, there might have been a few conflicting emotions. [Laughter] But then I flashed on the instructions Khenpo Rinpoche gave me before coming to this event. He said, "Patrick, it's very good that you should go to this event because it's going to be the best mahamudra enhancement experience that you could ever have. Lady Diana's letter is not bad - it's good. This is your opportunity to practice illusory body."

So in that moment of her left cheek being offered something very interesting happened. *Thamel gyi shepa*. Trungpa Rinpoche. The Vajra Regent. Karmapa. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche [clicks fingers]. Where was the resentment? Was it in my head? Was it in my heart? Was it in my left leg? Was it in my body? Was it out of my body? Was it in her left cheek? Was it in my lips? Was it in the relationship between my lips and her cheek? I couldn't find it. Without knowing what I had done, I kissed her! [Laughter] I was so shocked that I said, "Thank you very much for coming over." And then, like a dream, she was gone. So it's like that. There's the conceptual rapprochement, and then there are these moments where long-standing conceptual agendas go [clicks fingers] like that.

I'm looking at Fleet Maull. This is a man who knows how to make peace, both with himself and with others. Maybe you can say something about this journey from your perspective.

Fleet Maull: Thank you very much for putting me on the spot [laughter].

First of all, I want to thank you very much, Patrick. As well, I want to thank Lady Rich and Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and President Reoch, just for making this possible. I know there are many people in this room whose hearts are breaking and healing, breaking and healing at this moment. So thank you very much. Your remarks were wonderful and inspiring and, at least in my mind, right on the mark, so thank you.

When you talked about the resentment and you did the wonderful kind of madhyamika deconstruction with the cheek and the lips, that really came home very deeply for me. I had a long opportunity to work with resentment. [Laughter] It really was the path. From the very beginning it was clear to me that I had very actively dug myself into this hole; I was radically committed that my only way through was to take 200 percent responsibility for it. At the same time there were some fellow sentient beings very close to me who really helped finalize that situation by creating a very fertile ground for my resentment, if I wanted to go there. The world I was in was a whole world that was in your face 24 hours a day, and it seemed to have no other intention than to fill you with resentment. So I had that to work with, and I realized the truth of what you were talking about. That it was the path. And I was so grateful for my experience with the Vidyadhara. I know that if I hadn't had the experiences that many of us shared with him and that all of us have experienced with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, there wouldn't have been a way not to solidify that. Somehow the path of not solidifying doesn't mean we escape it. The path is having no escape from the agonizing and sometimes excruciating heartbreaking pain, and the resentment that follows, and the conceptualization — the resentment is the conceptualization — and the story that there is no escape from that. Yet because we have this experience of thamel gyi shepa and the ability not to solidify, we do have a way of working with it, and just staying with it and seeing where it takes us. And that to me is the profound journey that we all have to work with. Thank you. [Applause]

PS: If we have to, you have to. [Laughter]

Participant: I don't know you Patrick, but I wanted to say to Lady Rich that it's just so wonderful to see you. [Applause] Personally I have many fond memories of when you were Director of Shambhala Training. I can't remember your exact title but I remember many wonderful talks that you gave. Just seeing you is great and I'm hoping that this won't be a one-time thing. [Applause] I was thinking of the name that I was given which everyone's been teasing me about: Meek Flower. Margo Eismann told me that the tiger that's meek knows what to accept and what to reject, right? So I'm working with that. So, I'm remembering two things, one being at the first Shambhala Congress. I think that all of us who were there had the very powerful experience of taking baby steps towards healing. It meant that people who were very loyal to the Vajra Regent and people who were very angry at the Vajra Regent had to talk, and speak from the heart. It was like when Thich Nhat Hanh encourages people to really say, from each side, how people were hurt, but without judgment or defensiveness on either side. Being a family therapist and social worker, I think that one reason that it is hard to heal in any family is that problems are not confronted directly. I think part of the lesson for me in all of this is that we don't talk to each other in a genuine and honest way. That's why I appreciated, even though it was painful, I'm sure, to you especially, what Lady Diana said. I appreciated that she just spoke her mind, without fluff; even though it was hurtful, she spoke from her heart directly. I think that we all need to learn how to do that more directly with one another; with the understanding that most of us are still coming from a place of relative truth, and that no one has the absolute truth. But if we speak from the heart and confront things honestly and directly, then I think healing is always, always possible. But when we don't do

that, then how can we ever heal? Because then we only talk to the people who agree with us, and we don't really talk to the people who disagree with us.

On that note I will be honest that I felt deeply hurt by what the Vajra Regent did, but I never held on to that anger in any way towards you, or anyone who felt deeply connected to him, even though I did not. So I myself have always wished that you would feel welcome to be here. I'm speaking to Lady Rich because I don't know you [looks at Patrick], but I hope you, too, feel welcome here. I too spent most of my adult life close to the Vidyadhara, not right by his side, but close enough. And I certainly learned many things from the Vajra Regent in his talks as well. So even though I experienced that pain, I never felt I had to detract from everything that was part of him. Speaking for myself, I would wish that you feel so comfortable here that somehow this can all be embraced and we can be a family again; because of course I feel that Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche's mind, as you felt at the abhisheka, is completely inseparable from the Vidyadhara's. So anyway, I probably went on way too long, but I'm just trying to say from my heart what ... it's my "meek floweriness," right?

Participant: Mr. Sweeney, Lady Rich. Like you, Mr. Sweeney, I arrived in the middle, in the early '80s. The Vajra Regent gave me my refuge name and the Vidyadhara gave me my bodhisattva name. I guess the big event was in San Francisco when the Vajra Regent came to talk. It was like the Tower of Babel. I remember going in and we were all of one mind; and coming out and watching two of my best friends ripping each other apart, one being convinced the Vajra Regent was the Buddha, one being convinced he was Rudra. There was no hope. A few of us felt we got a transmission: that if you deviate to one side, you're fucked, if you deviate to the other side, you're fucked. You can't deviate. And it was so amazing, because the whole battle was about devotion to some degree. And then later, when Ojai developed, I noticed that some of our best, our best students went to Ojai. People who were actually trained as ambassadors, who were trained to embody holding both the spiritual and the temporal power, and how to work with that. When I was a student early on, I had a dream. And in that dream, I was delivering a message from the Vidyadhara to the Vajra Regent, and they were both dead. It was dark.

My mother lives in California, so I would drop by Ojai occasionally. I was watching our sangha here go through incredible turmoil. People, I have to be blunt here, very quickly dropped many of the more uncomfortable forms that we had. When you're in a Shambhala environment, there's a slight edge. I remember being at Karmê Chöling and I would dress well and everybody said, no, no, no, you've got to be more casual. And then I see Mr. Sweeney here holding his seat. That's a phrase I don't hear us say very much anymore. We used to say it a lot, "Hold your seat, twenty-four hour awareness." It was expressed in an absolute brilliance which people would manifest always, twenty-four hours a day. So I think that's the message—I really started to feel that something was encapsulated in Ojai. It's almost like a time capsule was planted. I would go there and people were all very sharp and brilliant. And for some reason, I think because there was so much devotion pushed into that situation, people just held on for dear life to their instructions. The rest of us went through incredible turmoil. People couldn't figure out, is the Sakyong my teacher is he not my teacher, we don't know. And things started falling apart. But I sincerely feel that this is the message. There is something incredibly valuable that you have held onto, and I hope you will bring it back.

PS: Thank you. [Applause]

Participant: I know what happened sort of, but as you say, you can't really know. There are a lot of things that I've heard and I think, yuck! But there's one thing that sticks in my mind almost every time that the Vajra Regent comes up, and I would like for one or both of you to comment on this. And that is the fact that the 16th Karmapa, I believe, said to the Vajra Regent, "The Kagyü lineage is in your hands." Based on some of what's occurring in Shambhala, I think about that a lot. I would like to hear what either of you have to say about that.

LLR: Well, the Vajra Regent was so in love with the 16th Karmapa. If anybody was ever around during any of the visits and the encounters, I'm sure they witnessed that he was nearly beside himself the whole time he was in the presence of the Karmapa, except for that certain call to duty which made him try to hold something together and be useful. [Lady Rich laughs, joined by others] And so, because of that, as you can imagine, there was just a lot of non-verbal communication, along with everything else, between them. It's probably, I'm just guessing, from being part of the atmosphere of the time, that it was really a comment about the Vidyadhara's amazing accomplishments. The vast work, the whole conquering or planting and flowering in the West of the dharma, evidenced by all of us sitting here, together, and realizing the way in which the Vidyadhara relied on the Regent to accomplish that. So he's the vanguard — I mean literally, historically, one of the vanguards. So that may be what the Karmapa was saying. [To Patrick] Do you have anything else, some specific knowledge?

PS: Well, we used to say to the Vajra Regent near the end of his life, "You're the last old-fashioned man. You're the one who is not afraid of devotion. You're the one who actually leaned in to the Vidyadhara's beatings." In the same way that Naropa leaned into his relationship to Tilopa, the Vajra Regent leaned into his relationship with the Vidyadhara. Both when the Vidyadhara was alive, but also after he passed into Parinirvana. He kept leaning into reality. The Vajra Regent had no apologies for his neurosis hanging out all over the place. His devotion and his single-minded, relentless pride in being what he called a Kagyü pig, a mahamudra junkie, a devotee of Vajrayogini, was awesome. He didn't hold back. Tilo didn't hold back. Naro didn't hold back. Marpa didn't hold back. Mila definitely did not hold back. The Vajra Regent definitely did not hold back. And as we've seen since his death, the whole guru principle has become slightly politically incorrect, and the process of devotion, the process of the teacher-student relationship as it matures through a devotional relationship, has become suspect ...

Participant: Suspect by who?

PS: By many psychotherapists [laughter] quite frankly.

I think the Vajra Regent held the Kagyü lineage as his innermost jewel, his innermost heart transmission from the Vidyadhara. And I think he saw the 16th Karmapa and the Vidyadhara as one transmissional entity. And if you review the forward that the Vidyadhara wrote to *Buddha In The Palm Of Your Hand*, then you'll get some clues, I think, as to what the Karmapa was talking about.

Participant: I wanted to speak about my love for the Vajra Regent and my appreciation for his teachings and his friendship. He actually married my second husband and me. He was a special friend of the Vajra Regent's and a golf buddy, so I had the privilege of going on a couple of trips with the Vajra Regent. One thing about him was that he could not help but

teach. Everywhere we went, whether it was an airport, restaurant, or wherever we were – on the beach— he was always teaching and people would notice that something was going on with our group that was vibrant, and they would come hang out around it. So, I just wanted to preface my remarks with that, and also my deep love and appreciation for Lady Rich, whose teachings I've also benefited from a great deal. Some of the things she has said in her teachings, I, in my teachings, I just say them verbatim [laughter]. Sorry! I try to give you credit whenever ... [Laughter] Such as, “Your heart is broken now, it was broken in the past and it will be broken in the future.” I love that one particularly. [Laughter] I do not know you, Mr. Sweeney, although I trust the wisdom of my friends who take you to be their teacher, and so I feel that I have an open mind about that and would like to get to know you better. But the thing I really wanted to talk about [laughter] was that I'm ... [pause] my heart is broken because at the time of the Vajra Regent's sickness and death, our community, our society, was not in a position to allow him to share that with us, the highest teachings of Buddhism. And I will always be heartbroken about that. I would like at some time in the future for people who were around him in those days to share some of those stories with us, and share things about the moment of his death. I thank you all very much.

PS: Thank you. [Applause]

PS: This is something that Lady Rich and I have talked a lot about. When I visited Dechen Chöling recently, I was able to spend time with Acharya Jeremy Hayward and his wife Pat Hayward, and meet with some of the European community. This point was really the most important thing for me to communicate. Unfortunately, because of the circumstances near the end of the Vajra Regent's life when this controversy broke, the actual final process of letting go, of dying, that the Vajra Regent went through, was not available to the larger sangha. It was available to some of us who served him through the very last days of his life. Many things happened during the year and a half of estrangement. His process kept unfolding. His realization kept, in a sense, shining through, as his body began to fail, as the HIV virus began to completely destroy his capacity to fight off disease. Then his realization increased and his honesty about his own path, and his honesty about his devotion to the Vidyadhara, flourished.

This has been a very painful thing, really. I feel that the Shambhala sangha at large would benefit greatly from knowing how the Vajra Regent died. As Jamgon Kongtrul said, the most important moment of a Buddhist's life is the moment of death. And the Vajra Regent met it victoriously. Not only that, the process of dying allowed him to see his own confusion — in particular the issue of not being able to fully and clearly distinguish between absolute and relative truth. There is something that happens when you sit in a seat like this. As we get higher and higher, something happens to us internally, in the sense that we can confuse absolute and relative.

Some people accuse me and other people in Ojai of being some sort of crazy wisdom Vajra Regent fundamentalists, who say that everything he did was perfect. But he himself acknowledged in the last months of his life that there had been confusion. That didn't make him the devil. He wasn't evil. There was a process of unfolding that was going on. There was a process of insight that kept building right up until the very last moment when he went into a coma. Thank you for asking that question. This is one of the projects that we are working on, which is to say, collecting the stories, collecting the anecdotes, collecting basically a chronology of what happened and how he met his death.

When the Vajra Regent died in San Francisco, he was brought to the San Francisco Dharmadhatu and he manifested something quite extraordinary. He entered into what Lama Lodro and another of the Tibetan lamas in San Francisco at the time felt was a very powerful samadhi. As his main student, it was part of my responsibility to check his heart to feel the temperature of his heart center, and to witness this process that he was going through. He kept breaking through time barriers that the Tibetan lamas were setting as to when they felt the samadhi would break. It got to a point of amazement. They couldn't believe what was happening, that his heart center was still warm. He was not exhibiting the typical signs of the consciousness leaving the body, where the blood comes out of the nostrils and it comes out of the ears and it starts to leak out of various orifices. His body remained intact without any artificial support for three and a half days. At a certain point when it was time to go for the cremation, Lama Lodro said, "You must supplicate him to come out of samadhi." Although I didn't have any idea what that meant, I said those words to the Vajra Regent. Within two hours Lama Lodro determined that the samadhi had broken and his heart center became cooler and then bodily fluids began to emerge.

I'm not trying to sell anything particularly; this is what happened. Some people in this room didn't know that all this happened. And for me, as the Vajra Regent's student, this is disturbing. That people who have a heart connection to him don't actually have access to what he exhibited at the end of his life is very sad. And it doesn't mean that the moral ambiguity of the difficult issues that occurred in his path go away. No one's saying that here. No one's saying that. It does not have to be an either/or situation. The Vajra Regent was a highly realized person; he was a pioneer in terms of bringing tantra to the West; and as a pioneer, a trailblazer, he ended up getting hit with all the arrows. We can hold both of those situations. We have the maturity at this point to hold both of those situations. He made mistakes, and yet those mistakes, those errors, became the basis for him to then go further on the path. That to me is what needs to be acknowledged about the Vajra Regent. His path didn't end at a certain point. It kept going. And his realization kept unfolding. And his errors, they *were* difficult. But they fueled his path. So thank you for asking that question.

Participant: Well, if prefaces are in order — Lady Rich, the Vajra Regent was spoken of at the Vidyadhara's request as the co-founder of Shambhala Training and behind every great man, there's a great woman, so perhaps we could say that Shambhala Training could be 25 percent due to you. [Applause.] But even if it was only 2.5 percent, it would be much more than anyone else here. And I think it's way more than that. Patrick, when you talked about how devotion cannot be legislated...I'd like to make a slogan out of that. For me, it was a cord right to the Vidyadhara, right to the Vajra Regent and to the Vidyadhara. I recognized that and it brought tears, not just because of the intelligence of this statement but because it was a cord for me in that moment. And I guess my hope for our Kingdom is that healing accelerates; and I feel it happening here. But also that complexity increases, which is also a way of saying diversity. And that statement of "devotion cannot be legislated" is really crucial. And I want to say something, not to divert attention, but to speak from my own heart. Because I've sat here with you, studying with Reggie Ray, who's not here. But I feel devotion to Reggie as a colleague and also to Reggie as a student, for the clarity of his mahamudra teachings. So there's a complexity in his situation, and I wanted to bring it here so that it isn't forgotten.

Participant: I was part of the beginning of knowing the Vajra Regent and, part of the 20 million debates and discussions that went on about what went on. And it's been years really. It

feels like lifetimes. I never really knew what President Reoch did [laughter]. But if you really never do another thing, the fact that you broke this ice, which I thought was maybe unfathomable, I really want to thank you for all of us. [Applause]

Participant: I'd like to acknowledge an important part of what started to make this happen. And that is Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. The Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche asked Khenpo Rinpoche if he could study Six Dharmas with him. And Khenpo Rinpoche said, yes, of course, we will do it at Patrick's retreat center. [Laughter] And so there was this amazing event where Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche came to Ojai and they wine and dined, and there was a retreat at Pullahari, a retreat center in California, where Patrick offered the Sakyong his house, and Khenpo Rinpoche and his entourage and Patrick were living in a hotel nearby. And Rinpoche gave teachings and then Patrick and the Sakyong would go visit the wine country, and go out to wonderful dinners. And so the friendship between Patrick and the Sakyong rekindled, I believe, at that time. They had always been friends. And I just want to say that, you know, there's a lot of sharpening of intelligence that happens through political, strategic maneuvers. But what really is important, and I respect Richard Reoch for his amazing ability to do that skillfully, and as the Sakyong was saying yesterday, how to make decisions, is to know what to accept and what to reject. And that's very helpful. But what it always comes down to is the heart connection. And I feel that this heart connection between Patrick and the Sakyong is really what is the most important thing here. And Patrick's obvious devotion to the Sakyong. What amazes me each time I go to Ojai is that you're entering a little Shambhala in the Ojai Valley and it's pristine. They do things so well. Just as the Vajra Regent did. And also, the level of practice. These people are practitioners. And that's what I feel Patrick and Lady Rich have done for 15 years, they've practiced. They've held their seat and practiced and I have tremendous admiration for that. [Applause]

PS: Thank you. It's a very important point, I think, for both Lady Rich and myself, which is to express fully our love for the Sakyong. The Sakyong and I had so many journeys together over a 20 year period of time. And as I said on May 29th in Ojai when we celebrated the beginning of the rapprochement, without the Sakyong we would all have dissolved long ago. He has held the gyü, he's held the continuity, he's held the command of the Vidyadhara, and at the same time, he's had to go through his own growth process. As I put it in Ojai, we've watched him transform from a prince into a king. We've seen the external empowerments, but as a friend, I've seen a psychological, developmental growth within him. The princely concerns have fallen away, and he's actually been willing to completely join heaven and earth and create Shambhala vision, create the Kingdom. He's pulling together and holding so many different subjectivities, so many different worlds, and he does it well. He and I have known exactly what the situation has been for 15 years and we've been able to talk without having to necessarily bring it to a point of definite resolution. We've been able to continue to sustain our friendship. At times it's been frustrating. But, seeing him up on the throne, entering into the mandala of the Rigden, then there's no doubt. He's actually, you know, achieved cross-over. [Laughter] He's gone into that realm - or he's able to go into that realm. And I realize I want to follow him there. [Applause]

Participant: I don't really know you that well, but I've always thought you were a really sweet person. [Laughter] From what I've heard since I came into the room — I came in a little late — it seems like the working out of the process is really important. I think politics is just communication, and communication is a process. You speak and someone replies and you

answer and say what you think and then you say, “Are you okay?” The Kingdom of Shambhala is not a cartoon world — it's real and this is a real process that we're going through. I think, seeing you here, it seems like things are going fairly well. [Laughter] And you know there's lots of commentary that probably doesn't mean squat. So I think the process is going well.

PS: Thank you.

Participant: Well, I'm feeling now that if anything else happens in the next few days, I'd better just dissolve into a bunch of atoms because this is amazing, and I'm so happy. But I have a question. With the things that you've said, and the communication with the Sakyong, and everything, where do you stand in terms of lineage? The Vajra Regent picked you, and then the Sakyong became the Vajradhatu and the Shambhala leader, so how do we view you, I mean, in terms of lineage, if you can answer?

PS: I'll make an initial absolute statement. Which is what the Vidyadhara said in 1975, I believe, after the Halloween incident. I'll put it to you this way. It was a controversial situation, right? And his answer was, “there's no party line.” There's no party line. There's no party line. But I can describe to you what happened to me and why I'm sitting here.

The Vajra Regent was Trungpa Rinpoche's Vajra Regent. He had the responsibility of maintaining the administrative structure. He was President of Vajradhatu and co-founder of Shambhala Training. He also was the Vidyadhara's dharma heir, and as such, the Vidyadhara instructed him to pass that lineage on in the same way that Tilopa passed it to Naropa and Naropa passed it to Marpa, etc. In other words, not in the manner of a tulku transmission but in the manner of teacher to student. If you look at the Vidyadhara's will, and you look at David Rome's addendum to that will, then it says it very clearly there. It also says that if the Vajra Regent were to make a mistake, or to screw up, that he should be dismantled. David Rome then asks, “what does that mean? Should he be destroyed or held down?” And some people interpret that comment as being the basis upon which they can then invalidate the Vajra Regent's right to pass Trungpa Rinpoche's lineage on. The Vajra Regent never felt that that was the case. The Vajra Regent asked me to be his successor in a formal ceremony in the same way that the Vidyadhara asked him to be his Gampopa. The Vajra Regent instructed me that the basic archetypal dynamic of our relationship would be the relationship of Tilopa and Naropa. He presented me with *The Life and Teachings of Naropa*, offered me a khata, and asked me in a very formal way to be his dharma heir and lineage successor. That was about a year and a half before he died. For the next 18 months, I went through a process of trying to meet his mind. During that time he bestowed upon me the Vajrayogini Abhisheka, at which time he bestowed the Vajracarya Abhisheka on me in a direct way, actually giving me his practice implements. And at that point, saying it had been done — that the process of training had reached a certain point where basically he had transmitted the lineage to me.

My samaya is to continue that. Whether people in Shambhala can accept that or not is really their journey. No party line. I can't tell anybody — I will not tell anybody — what to believe. I come here as a result of my friendship with the Sakyong. I'm doing the best I can to maintain the samaya I made to the Vajra Regent. That I would carry forward his lineage and in particular transmit the Kagyü mahamudra teachings, both the tantra mahamudra and essence mahamudra, as in the yidam of Vajrayogini, and the practices of mahamudra/shamatha and vipashyana. That's the lineage he passed on to me. Nothing more, nothing less. It's not about

politics. He didn't want me to be a copyright holder or a seat holder. He wanted me to be an authentic human being through these disciplines. And he wanted me to try and pass that lineage on to another human being. He said if I went back on that vow that I would be destroyed by the protectors of this lineage, and I would be destroyed by the inauthenticity in my own heart. Every time I've tried to waiver, every time I've tried to take a step back and not lean in to it [clicks fingers], it's been very painful. Much more painful than coming here. [Laughter] Much. This is easy compared to what it was like to run away. So for me, it's choiceless. For you, you have all the choice in the world. No party line. If you have a connection to the Regent, you have a connection to the Vidyadhara, you have a connection to what I'm trying to do, that's great. Then we can have a friendship and see. No party line. Can't be.

Participant: When I had the great pleasure to be the guest of the Ojai sangha last year, I was able to meet many people. It was a very strong bond that I felt, and it was heartbreaking to me that our communities were not in greater touch. So with all the talk about yourselves and the Vajra Regent, and all the talk recently about our societies, I was hoping you could say a few words about the Ojai community.

LLR: I'd like to use this opportunity to personally let you know of my gratitude to Patrick for his staying with the Ojai sangha, establishing Satdharma, holding the community together and practicing, practicing, practicing, studying, studying, studying, working, working, working; extending to other great teachers, bringing Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso closer to us, and all the rest of it. Someone earlier described how many of the former ambassadors came to Ojai, first to stay nearby and serve the Vajra Regent, and to be a part of his process, that Patrick has already shared. I'd just like to say how absolutely impossible the situation would have been without those people. Thank you.

PS: You know, there are two basic categories in the Ojai community. There are people who have come in as my students, who have come in recently. And then there are the senior students. And I think, and some of them are here tonight, I think some people feel betrayed a little bit about how things have gone. There is definitely some anger and resentment. Because we've put a great deal of energy, a great deal of time, and a great deal of money, into hosting the Sakyong and bringing the rapprochement process to a point of very definitive and definite departure. And it did get derailed. Not permanently, hopefully, but it definitely did. And people honestly reacted to that. But there's also, I think, a great deal of trust that it was the right thing for Lady Rich and I to come here, despite our concepts. So it's flickering, co-emergently, like that.

Participant: Actually, I've been trying to figure out what I wanted to say, and I can't. But I thought that I would be regretful if I didn't say something; because my history goes back very far. I met the Vajra Regent early, in 1971 when he first came to Boulder. He was great, but his arrival in Boulder changed everything. All of a sudden, I had this intuition or sensation that the world was about to get much bigger than the 20 students who had gathered themselves around Trungpa Rinpoche. And indeed it did. My path over the years was, well, I felt extremely close to the Druk Sakyong. And I felt very, very lucky, because he somehow continually put me into a situation that gave me the opportunity to relate to him in a way that I was so happy about. And I was very much in love with him. I actually got to know the Vajra Regent more around the time of the empowerment in 1976. And over the years, I was very much in love with him, too; the reason being that the instructions that I got from Trungpa

Rinpoche were often so cosmic [laughter] and terrifying [laughter] and confusing and also luminous, that I frequently just didn't have any idea what I was supposed to do. And sometimes they were very, very specific, as specific as, when you go to Europe and you take out a pack of cigarettes, offer it to everybody before you take one. They sometimes were on that level. But even that was like, what the fuck is he talking about? Cigarettes? [Laughter]

The Vajra Regent was, of all the people in our mandala — brilliant and wonderful as we all were [laughter] — he was the person who was able to actually help me enter into the Vidyadhara's world. And it was a luminous, wonderful, brilliant world, and it was also, for me, terrifying, because I had to give up things that I didn't want to give up. And the Vajra Regent was always there. The reason I spent a lot of time with him was because he kept coming to visit wherever I seemed to be working on the fringes of the mandala. And his presence was tremendously warm, and tremendously ... I don't know what it was, but to me he seemed to understand Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings. But the main instruction that he gave me over the years was, “Always follow the instructions of the guru.” He repeated that to me and repeated that to me, and I was trying to figure out what those instructions were.

When the whole thing exploded, I was in Europe and I was actually leading the European sangha, which was about 500 people at that time. Everybody loved going to Europe, and if there are any Europeans here...their devotion is tremendous. Everybody wanted to come and teach there, and the Druk Sakyong actually at one point gave me very specific instructions that he wanted to control that. In 19 ... was it '89, I guess ... when the atom bomb exploded? Europe became ... not a battle ground ... but it became a piece of territory that a lot of people wanted. And the Sawang at that time, who happened to be visiting me in early 1989, said to me — he was so insightful — he said, “This whole thing is going to fall on your shoulders.” That was fun [laughs].

I was getting phone calls from all over the place. I want to relate just one incident that was very meaningful to me. The Vajra Regent had actually predicted this to me early on in Europe. He said, when the Druk Sakyong dies there are going to be camps, and you'll have to decide which side you're on. As it turned out, I didn't have to do that. Here's what happened. There were people from one side that wanted to come and teach. There were people from the other side that wanted to come and teach. And I suppose everybody had their agenda. And there weren't many Americans teaching in Europe at the time. But I kind of intuited what was happening. We got together as a group, the governing body there, and we thought, we don't know what's going on over there, but it sounds really crazy. Truly, we didn't know but we kept hearing things. And there were people who would write emails and try to get us involved. But we felt that we had a pretty sane situation. And some of us felt that it was our job to protect that sangha, right or wrong, from the divisiveness that had happened here. So we came up with this plan, which was to declare a moratorium on teaching from outside; that no teachers would come from outside. Probably many people don't know this, but we came up with this plan. I had to call one of the people from the side that really didn't like the Vajra Regent very much and say we have this moratorium, I'm sorry, but we're not having any teachers, and no, you can't come. It was kind of intense, and I called the Vajra Regent, and I said the same thing. I said, “Sir, we don't know what to do but we're having a moratorium. Nobody can come. And he said to me, “Congratulations, Good decision.” That just meant a tremendous amount to me. He never tried to force me onto one side or the other and for that, I'm still grateful. He didn't do that.

My views on the whole thing have been so complicated and so unresolved. And sometimes people have tried to help me resolve them [laughter] — help that I really didn't want. But nonetheless it's not comfortable to have this whole thing. What happened? You know, what's going on? And it's not that I, you know, feel like whatever he did was fine. I don't feel that way. But my love for him and my devotion to the Druk Sakyong through the Vajra Regent remains unchanged. I felt like I had to say something. The last thing I want to say is, in this environment, which is tender ... I seem to be either crying or laughing. Nothing in between. I'm so grateful that you two came and that you did this. I didn't know what was going on out there in Ojai either. You know, I had no idea, but you've really illuminated a lot. It's so great to see you. It's so great to see you. So thank you very much.

PS: Thank you. [Applause]

Participant: Well, I, too, am grateful to see both of you. And I want to thank you, President Reoch, for your efforts in bringing this together. I'm inspired by the Sakyong's inspiration that we're here to help each other. So I'm wondering ... and I'm addressing this to all three of you ... if you could tell us what we as a community could do to help.

PS: Well, someone asked this question in Europe. So I'm a little prepared. I think the process needs space. We need space. Basically, I think everyone wants to work something out that can strengthen the samaya within Trungpa Rinpoche's world. At the same time, the problem with space, as we know, is it tends to degrade into ignorance rather quickly, unless it's met with exertion and prajna. So I think that has to be balanced. We need to give the principal people who need to work on things, space. And yet, if space is used as a way to again bury our heads in the sand and take refuge in denial, then that's a problem. So it's like holding your mind, you have to let it go, but you have to hang in there. So that's my answer. Space, but not ignorance.

RR: Well, this might seem like a rather far-fetched analogy, or just from my own experience, but when I was listening to the last few comments, I was thinking of the 7th of July. It's not particularly important in North America, but it's the day when four bombs went off in London. And Jane and I in fact were on our bicycles that day, and we saw these lines of ambulances screaming through the streets. And though the official policy was not to say that people had been killed, we just knew that from the ambulances. And some of you may have seen that. The Sakyong called me from here to ask me how things were in London, and how the sangha was. He asked me to put out a message to the community. The place that I immediately went, in trying to understand my own confused reaction to this and in the hope that whatever I would say would be helpful to the practitioners who make up our community, was to the Shambhala ngöndro. To that part of the text which says that for lifetimes we have divided into us and them. And as I said earlier, I feel that this is actually in some incredible way—it might seem odd to say this—a gift. If we could figure out with all the incredible resources, all the incredible inspiration, and all the incredible intelligence we have of all the people who have this longing for the Kingdom of Shambhala, how to *not* divide among ourselves into us and them, then maybe we could at a certain point say, well, there is a path for all those other places in the world which are hopelessly divided into us and them. So, on the one hand I think this situation cuts our own pride and arrogance about proclaiming enlightened society. But it offers an incredible opportunity to realize that we actually have to do this ourselves. Because if we don't, you know, then what exactly is it we think we're advertising? [Laughter] So I would say that the most important thing that we can all do at this time is actually to practice what we've been told to practice, and if we create that intention

throughout the vast field of energy we have, that is undoubtedly and unquestionably the foundation for what has to be done — not just to resolve this issue, but actually all the other divisive situations that we have in our community. That's what I think. [Applause]

LLR: I have a little personal experience with this. The practice that comes up in my mind is from the Werma Sadhana. Maybe some people are able to practice that, and others will be shortly. I keep hearing the lines in the sadhana section on the inner offering, which says, “all the dramas that exist in samsara and nirvana, neither more or less, I offer.” And how do you offer? Why you offer is so that they can add to the potential of enlightened society. It's in the emotional realm, and it's in the realm of communication and speech, that this offering takes place. I contemplate that, and I try to offer it in post-meditation as well as in the formal session. That's how I've worked with the path of this. Nothing very over-reaching, really. Just one communication at a time, and not holding back the fullness of the heart and the fullness of the dazzling phenomenal display, not holding back from it. Letting whatever comes come in, and expressing whatever outward without any motivation toward manipulation, not looking for a certain outcome, so that the offering is like the three-fold purity. And that's been my practice, if that's of any value to anyone. [Applause]

Participant: I really appreciate you coming very much. I really loved the Vajra Regent. Right after he was empowered in Boulder, he came to New York Dharmadhatu where I was living and he said to me, “So are you going to leave the sangha now that I'm the Vajra Regent, like everyone else?” And I said, “Well, actually, once I realized the Vidyadhara wasn't picking me, I didn't care who he picked.” [Laughter] And then we talked and I said, “Well, I'm very devoted to the Vidyadhara. Why did he pick you?” And he said, “Well, the difference is, if he told me to run naked in 42nd Street, I wouldn't even think about it, and you would never do that.” [Laughter] So, thank you so much for coming.

Participant: I would like to share a little something from my heart in this whole situation, because I feel I sit in a very unique place. I was extremely devoted to the Vajra Regent. He gave me my refuge name, and my bodhisattva name came from the Vidyadhara. I began doing Kusung shifts with the Sawang, and then very shortly afterward with the Vajra Regent. Then while Rinpoche was dying I was doing Kusung shifts with the Vidyadhara. So I was doing Kusung shifts with all three when I was in Halifax in 1985, '86, '87. And I always felt it was one mind I was working with. I was always completely devoted to all three. And, because I was the Vajra Regent's Kusung, and I felt that I wanted him to love me, I had sex with him, and he had sex with me. I was not gay and I didn't want to have sex with him. But I did, because I was so devoted to him and I wanted to meet his mind. So that has not really wounded me individually, I don't think. But what I recognize is that ... Then I went with Gesar, actually, to India when the whole thing broke, which was '88, as I remember. So I was far away, and all I wanted to do was make sure that I didn't have AIDS. And Johnny Meyer assured me of that in India. He knew, I guess. [Laughter] Even though I had dysentery and I was very sick and I didn't know what was going on. I got back and of course I had a test, and I was okay. But I couldn't give blood when the Vidyadhara was dying. I went to give blood and then they asked me this question, and I had to walk away. I couldn't give blood, which wounded me deeply. But I guess my real point in saying this is, I always held devotion for all of them — identical. Because I knew it was my devotion, it was me holding devotion to the teacher. But what I recognized that happened when I came back and I got an AIDS test and I relaxed, I just began to ignore you, and you, and California, and Ojai. I wanted to go there,

but it was just too hard - children, work, everything else. And I just gradually began to ignore it, and ignore it, ignore it and forget about it. To me that was the real poison in my own mind and I'm so grateful to see you now and when I see you speak, and when I see you walk and sit, I feel the Vajra Regent so strongly that I'm ... I'm just very moved. So, thank you for being here.

PS: Thank you. [Applause]

I don't know that tonight is the night, but I do think the issue of sexuality in the teacher/student relationship needs to be addressed. I think as a community we can't put a firewall between the Vidyadhara and the Vajra Regent. We can't demonize one, and not look at the other. The issue of sexuality in the teacher/student relationship was something that was part of our Vajradhatu culture. Actually it might be very shocking to say now, but it was almost wanted, or desired. From the perspective of 2005, given everything that's occurred in the last 15 years, there are a lot of things that we could say about it. There's been a lot of analysis that's been applied to it and there's been a lot of work to protect people from this aspect of the student/teacher relationship. I think there's a lot of prajna that we need to apply to it. At the same time, I don't think, again, that we can legislate. I don't think we can set a party line. I don't think that even you and I can, having had similar experiences.

Both of us were given an opportunity to work with two issues. One was to get over our own naiveté, and our tendency to give ourselves away inappropriately. And the other was to surrender our projections. And that is a very co-emergent edge. That was the fine line that I found myself walking on with the Vajra Regent until the day he died. He allowed me to have my own intelligence and to say “No”, when I meant no, and to say “Yes”, when I meant yes. At the same time, there was always a front visualization, so to speak, that was saying, “Who's saying no? Who's saying yes? Why? What are your assumptions? What are your fears? What are your difficulties?” Yes it's a very difficult issue, sexuality in the teacher/student relationship. But we can't ignore the fact that the Vidyadhara actually employed it skillfully, and that the Regent, as his dharma heir, inherited that play! You could say a lot of things about how he might have fucked it up. Fine. But, he inherited a way of working with people's confusion and projections. A lot of prajna needs to be applied to how we work with it. I'm very happy you brought it up.

Richard [Reoch], this is an issue that you and I have talked a lot about, because part of this rapprochement process was to identify a path of purification, so to speak, whereby the community as a whole could revisit these fundamental issues. Issues of secrecy in the teacher/student relationship. The issue of sexuality in the teacher/student relationship. Not to demonize, but to bring prajna. If we look at the fundamental archetypes of our lineage, Guru Rinpoche had two primary students, both of whom were his consorts. The Vidyadhara was a mahasiddha who, as people in this room experienced, used every aspect of phenomena to ripen people's confusion. We can't ignore that. We can't exist in some sort of lukewarm, apologetic crap about it. We really can't. That's the charge that got put into me by the Vajra Regent. And yet, “no” is “no”. If you don't have the capacity to do it, “no” is “no”. That has to be ensured. Anyway, let this be the beginning of a dialogue about it, okay? [Applause]

I mention it because it's an issue that can't be stonewalled. We have to bring it out of the closet. We have to. We have to look at it skillfully. I've been living in California for a long time. I've been circulating around the Bay Area, and I've met and become friends to some

degree with Jack Kornfield, and I've gone into different sanghas who have different ways of dealing with this issue. On the Hinayana extreme, you make rules of conduct that are absolutely beyond reproach. And at the other extreme, you err on the side of crazy wisdom, right? I think our sangha has taken the extreme path to the middle. [Laughter] An intelligent middle. That's what we have to work with in our inquiry.

Participant: Could you just finish one thing? When I heard that you were coming, and I spoke with the gentleman about the stupa, I walked up to the stupa. And I walked. And I walked around it, and around it, and around it, and around it ... and then I sat and I just prayed, for healing in our community. I think it's important that we have some kind of vision of how to visualize ... if I feel a connection with you because you bring the Vajra Regent to me, and also I have a connection with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, how am I going to work with that? So I need some visualization to work with it. And again, that's to get rid of the ignorance, because I don't want to be ignorant any more.

PS: Yeah. Well, much to his credit, President Reoch, I feel, in the letter of agreement, laid out how we can go forward with this process of purification and inquiry so that we can intelligently see the Vajra Regent's legacy and look intelligently at aspects of the Vidyadhara's legacy, where perhaps people don't want to go any more.

I think we need to conclude now. A couple of things. One is, I'd like to address the fact that the stupa that was being built up here for the Vajra Regent in a sense was aborted. The project was altered. First of all, I want to thank Mark Smith, whose devotion to the Vajra Regent I feel is impeccable. The project was born out of pure heart, pure vision. I also want to say that the Vajra Regent didn't want to have a stupa, particularly. I asked him three times, and each time he said, "No, please don't do that. Remember the legacy of Milarepa who said, if you want to actually follow my lineage, practice. Don't build thingies." However, as a sacred object, the stupa is a very powerful thing. We do have a stupa in Ojai. We did it because we couldn't not do it. I feel that the Sakyong and Lady Diana must decide how to best include everyone's devotion in this stupa. And that's my aspiration. That's my intention. It would be my request to them that they consider that there is, as I've been putting it throughout the evening, a multitude of subjectivities when it comes to the question of devotion. Perhaps it is unwise from their perspective to make that stupa singularly for the Vajra Regent. I surrender to their wisdom, in terms of what is going to be best for the Kingdom. I don't have an agenda personally. But I do want to acknowledge that I feel the project was born out of pure heart, and that it was sustained through the work of many individuals, including the Vajra Regent's son, Michael, who is here now. And that process of building the stupa, as we know from the Vajrayana teachings, creates a certain amount of power and merit. That merit needs to be dedicated somehow. That merit needs to be acknowledged. That merit needs to be allowed to move forward somehow. So my aspiration is that we figure out how to do that, so that there can be a wide net of inclusion.

Participant: Let's finish it. I want to donate right now, okay? I didn't get a chance to speak, but perhaps I will. Can I do that?

PS: If you like, why not?

Participant: The Vajra Regent touched me deeply throughout the years. I could feel his presence before he even entered the room. Maybe I'm very psychic, I don't know. He had a

tremendous amount of enlightened activity working for him all the time, I know that. And I know his devotion was there. He took a leap that nobody else was able to take. And that's why Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche picked him. He may not have always done enlightened things and he may not be perhaps an enlightened being, but he had enlightened activity and he had the power of the lineage behind him, nevertheless. And just as Patrick was saying, our own main teacher had a lot of people question his morals and standards. We have a lot of concepts about things. Trungpa Rinpoche was like being around razor blades for me. He didn't want people to love him, he wanted people to love the teachings. The teachings are what prevail even beyond the picture of the guru, in a sense. The teachings are what are most important. And the Vajra Regent taught many thousands of people. I have my concepts. And I pretty well didn't like what I saw. But truth lies in everything, not just what we think. I remember the last time I saw the Vajra Regent, on life support, hearing his breath go in and out. I heard his breath going through a life support machine. I didn't know about the other aspect of what happened afterwards. But I did feel this. At least for me there was a resolution inside that all that other stuff dissolved. And I think for him too. It felt like he had a resolution. So I took a walk on the land one day and I was just walking around, and Bill Sheffel told me he had a power spot up there by the Vajra Regent's stupa. I just took a walk, I didn't know where I was going. I walked down this road and pretty soon, there was the stupa, the Vajra Regent's stupa. I was very touched. I also noticed, it's very unfinished. So ... let's finish it. And I'm glad you're here.

PS: Thank you.

Participant: I think we have enough warfare going on in the world. We don't need it within our own community. [Applause] And thank you for being part of the Kingdom of Shambhala. [Applause]

RR: So, we're all in a mandala which has a curfew. We're all violating it. [Laughter] And I'll get into a lot of trouble as a result. So if it's alright with you, before we draw to a close, I'd just like to suggest that we practice together, just for a brief minute, so that everything that's been expressed both audibly and silently can settle.

[Group shamatha practice for a few minutes.]

PS [Reading]: "Arousing love, mercy and compassion for beings of this dark age, we should reflect and realize that we have divided the world into us and them, friend and foe. From lack of confidence in our basic goodness, we have created a schism that continually bleeds. This separation creates disharmony in our mind and body. Now is the time to heal this wound. In this degenerate time, our mind has become like a rock. We hold as our basic being, aggravation, pride and conceit. This dark age stems from lack of love and compassion. It has turned our mind against us. And therefore we have little joy. It does not have to be like this. It should not be like this. In our nature it is not like this. Therefore, we must shatter this rock of resentment and self-preservation. We must take our genuine seat as warriors, proclaiming love and compassion throughout the Kingdom."

[Dedication of Merit]