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Good morning everyone. This is our final morning together in this present context, and I feel extremely good in terms of how things have gone in a short amount of time. I have a few points that I would like to address, and then we'll open it up for some questions. Then you have discussion this afternoon.

I would like to emphasize that as we go ahead with our work, our practice, and our responsibilities as leaders and servants of the dharma, our intention at the beginning is important. Whether you are engaging in activity that is meant for the dharma at your center or at home, it's good to have a little space – as it says in the six ways of ruling – a little benevolence, patience, and openness. It's important to allow your mind to separate from what you're about to do and look at why you're doing it, to generate a sense of intention. At that moment the intention can be as pure as you can make it, as pure as you can drum up. We are really doing this from the heart, for the betterment of others – from a single being, to the center, to the world. We need to create that kind of intention before we go ahead to engage. I'd like to see this whole thing as a practice.

In Tibetan when we talk about practice, we sometimes say *nyam su len*, “bring it into experience.” *Nyam* means experience. How do you make this your experience? Somebody tells you what they want to do and you have an empathy in terms of what they're saying, but it's your experience. What tends to happen for a lot of us is that we sort of conceptually know what we're supposed to do, and then we experience it. The experience may not live up to what we thought it was going to be, so we're a little off balance.

The notion of practice is to bring what happens into our experience: *su* means “here,” and *len* means “to bring.” You bring what happens into your experience. To practice means that you're going to bring in what's out there so that it's yours. In that context, this whole thing that we're doing is practice: we're saying that we have the aspiration to benefit others, so now we are taking that aspiration and bringing it into experience by doing something, sometimes just by talking with people.

We need to see our life not as being holy – except for those of you from the Abbey (that's why you get to sit in the front) – or overly sacred; what we're doing is practice. It's not formal practice, but it is practice in the sense that we're all trying to take an idea that inspires us, one that strikes us heart-wise, mind-wise, and wisdom-wise, and bring it into our experience. From that point of view, this work that we are doing is practice, so it's important for us to look at it that way. If you think it is practice, then it becomes practice.

The practice of meditation isn't practice if you're not practicing when you're “practicing.” It's the same thing as just sitting still or waiting for a bus. You're just waiting. People have waited in many queues all over the world and

they have not attained enlightenment. But here you can bring it into experience. Begin to think of your whole career – whether you are in a three-year post or are a kasung or a center director – as a *seshin*, from a macro way to a micro way. In the marathon world we talk about these big cycles, the many months of running, which all come down to everyday cycles. This is the same kind of situation. You have your overall practice, where you have to have a deep understanding of your purpose, and then you have your daily practice. What makes it practice is your attitude. Just as in formal practice, there are going to be discursive thoughts. And just as in meditation, you are going to counter those thoughts with mindfulness and awareness. So be mindful of what you're supposed to be doing and aware of what your purpose is. Your responsibility is to be aware of what you're supposed to be doing. If you become unaware, then you begin to drift. These are meditation principles and techniques, and they apply to what we're doing.

Just as in meditation practice, we have *dralas* and *döns*. Dralas are things that support you, and döns are negative forces. Dralas can lift you up, carry you forward. Döns prey on a weak mind, and particularly on a nonmindful mind. The dön can be personal – you get sick. It can cause problems in your projects; there are many manifestations. Ultimately döns are not substantial, they are empty. But in terms of how we deal with things, we're talking about a very relative world.

Another way of talking about this is to say that you will have *maras*, different kinds of obstacles arising. Those maras will be fueled by lack of awareness, which gives rise to certain kinds of negative emotions. Resentment builds, taking over your whole mind, and then more and more obstacles occur. Or maras can come from aggression or desire. They can also stem from simple laziness, not doing what we're supposed to be doing. Disheartenment, not knowing why we're doing this, is another form of laziness. Disheartenment is the quality of *shunpa* in meditation, which means that the mind is shrunken. Everything becomes much more difficult: it all seems bigger than it is. What was very easy, right in front, now seems very far away. Those of us working in this situation need to know this.

By the way, I would say that when you work for the dharma, generally when you're doing good things more obstacles arise. That's just the way it happens. In the story of the Buddha and his four cycles before he became enlightened, he's attacked by various maras through the night. There's the quality that good activity provokes a level of obstacle. This is nothing we should fear. That's why we do practices. Lamas in monasteries will do *pujas* to overcome obstacles for a particular project.

This has to do with culture, I think. Khandro Tseyang's father, His Eminence Namkha Drimed Rinpoche, does divinations. If someone asks him for a divination about a project, he might tell them that there are certain obstacles, and suggest doing, for example, 10,000 repetitions of a Tara practice. In the

Tibetan tradition, one offers donations to the monastery and the monks do the practice with the intention to remove obstacles. This is not a matter of just wishing that they go away. They say there are usually four kinds of karma in terms of completing a project: karma that is going to happen, karma that is dependent on what you're doing right now, karma that's probably going to arise, and then there's a certain undecided karma. That undecided karma is where practice comes in. And practice can sway it. For example, in Tibetan medicine when someone is sick, you do certain practices and all of a sudden the illness shifts. There's an undecided karma.

On the Discovery Channel they were talking about dark matter. There's all this stuff that the universe is made of. Scientists don't know exactly where it's coming from, but it has impact. As we live our lives, there are certain unseen elements. From a Buddhist point of view this unseen element is what these practices shift. We live our lives in a two-dimensional way: there's me and there's that thing. As a community we need to support each other and we need to practice. We also need to realize that our mindfulness, our awareness, and the ability to bring practice into our experience are essential.

In our tradition when we say that it's time to roll up our sleeves and get down and do it, that doesn't mean that becoming more dualistic. It means bringing in more mindfulness, more awareness, more relaxation, more benevolence, and more genuineness; that's rolling up our sleeves. If we have this attitude, what we're doing does become a practice; we learn from it. One of the most miserable things that can happen at the end of our life is to feel that our life was a waste; what we did didn't matter. It's the same thing with our work. We want to avoid the attitude, "So I dedicated five years of my life to Shambhala, to the vision, to buddhadharma, and all I got for it is older and more worried. On top of that, I've lost five years of my career, and I have to get back to it somehow." We don't want to have that kind of feeling. We want to cultivate the attitude that good work is going to affect our practice. Why? Because we are developing virtue and understanding. As we make decisions, we learn from what's happening, just like in practice.

We're in a unique position because we've already decided to jump into the soup. Once you jump in the soup, you can't pretend you're not being cooked. Sometimes we like to say, "Oh no, I'm not being cooked," but it only takes looking over the rim of the pot to know what's happening. It's too late to decide whether or not you want to be part of the soup. That's why we have oaths and vows. The flame is karma, and it's being fueled by other people's intention. It's all happening. So if you feel funny when you get up in the morning, now you know why.

We need to be better prepared for our roles so that we have a breadth of tools that we can bring to our responsibilities. I'm talking about principles of the six ways of ruling, the bodhisattva paramitas, and tantric teachings on drala and

dön—all of these. So make this your experience, and make it something worthwhile.

I would also encourage you not to make it fulfilling your role overly personal. Don't get attached to the responsibility; the more attached you get, the more you will suffer. There's a difference between doing the job and attachment to it. I don't want to sound cold or unemotional, but in terms of my own role, there's a part of me that really couldn't care less. It doesn't matter. I feel like that attitude has been helpful. Yet clearly I'm dedicated, and I'm always trying to be more dedicated. But when we become very attached, the ego has a way of mixing itself with that responsibility, and according to Buddhist law, that only produces suffering and *klesha*. We don't need to fight the currents of reality.

What we're talking about is enlightened culture, how we go about creating something. We need to enjoy what we're doing. There's a story that the Vidyadhara tells about his teacher, Sechen Kongtrul Rinpoche, in Sechen Monastery in eastern Tibet, from whom he received many teachings. He completely respected his teacher. Then one day he accidentally walks into the bedroom, and Sechen Kongtrul Rinpoche is lounging back with his feet up drinking tea. Rinpoche says that he was very startled, and Sechen Rinpoche says, "What, you don't think I can just relax? Do I always have to be what you think I'm going to be? This is dharma, too." Dharma isn't just one thing, it's all aspects of what we do. We need a sense of balance and purpose.

In terms of what we're doing, the message is that we can bring it into our experience. As you know, one of the obstacles of meditation is forgetting the instructions. If we begin to lose our focus—whether it's the breath, the *vidam*, or a contemplation—we need to come back. In terms of leadership, forgetting the instructions means forgetting our purpose. We need to support each other in remembering. So I would encourage all of you to keep coming to these gatherings, to have mini-gatherings, and to keep remembering what we're doing, what the focus is. Sometimes we think we have a big problem but when we remember our purpose, that dissipates. It's also important to remember that if you get angry or if you think something's not right, that's okay. As we say in tantra, that can be purified. You'll all have ups and downs, but you need to remember the basic purpose of this activity.

In business and other places these days there's a cultural shift from people simply doing their jobs to group communication. People need to communicate and once we do, the project moves along more quickly. In this way we have an ability to move forward. As leaders you need to know what you would like to do at your center and come up with some sort of vision. It's an interesting exercise to come up with a vision of what you want to happen. While that may not be exactly what happens, it does give you some kind of focus. You are visualizing the ideal, and then you move things along in that direction. This can be both general and specific. It's the same thing as practice. If you're visualizing a deity, you understand the general principle, but you have also the specific focus. If you

don't have a specific focus, you can't tell when you're wandering away from it. Then it's easy to get lost.

In our time here we're making a shift. We've allowed for a lot of transition to take place, and now I think the community as a whole wants to move forward. We're already doing that. So for the benefit of our community and everyone else, we as leaders need to lead people forward. People have gathered; now we need to lead them somewhere. If you do not lead people somewhere when they're ready to be led, the energy begins to dissipate and we lose it. We need skillful means in working with everyone, including people with issues or questions or problems. Of course you have to talk to them, but you also have the responsibility of making sure that things are moving forward. Otherwise you'll also lose the individuals that you've already gathered. We have built a certain momentum. We have an ability to move forward and we need to do that.

As I've presented certain practices we've discussed the philosophy behind doing them in a particular order and why these core practices are unique to Shambhala. So after a while there should not be a question about our particular path. If our understanding of the path is solid, we can be working in many other areas: community events, integration, and how to effectively take this message out. The job of the Shambhala mandala and practice centers is to make sure that the education and practice are taking place. That education and practice is for a purpose: to contribute to society. In Tibet if somebody goes into three-year retreat, their society respects what they're doing. There's a supportive environment that we don't have in the West. We're providing a community where people can practice. They may not understand how that practice can extend into their lives. But we know that the more effectively an individual practices, the better life will be. Practice is not just practice; it's life. We are here to provide the overall picture.

Shambhala is the format in which this particular transmission gets taught. There's always a balance. If you go out, that means you're going "out" from somewhere "in." If you don't know what "in" is, there is no "out." People say, "I would like to go out and do such-and-such," and I say, "That's great, but where is your 'in'?" So we're developing the core, which is not sectarianism or narrow-mindedness. Our situation is unique in the sense that we do have a blend of tradition. Dharma, like anything else, reacts to whatever environment it enters. We are not creating little Tibet or little Japan. However, the Tibetan tradition has to be totally respected because it is unique. Because it was so isolated, it was able to preserve the genuine dharma. Right now that tradition is still the best source for complete training and understanding. But over time all that will shift; it's already happening from the generation before my father's, to my father's generation, to the next generation, and on down. The shift will continue to take place. More and more this will become the place where the tradition is held.

We can't be arrogant and say, "Oh, we do it as well as the Tibetans." It is incredible arrogance to say that in thirty years we could do what took twelve or

fifteen hundred years for those people to develop. Sometimes people ask me why I'm studying particular texts and I tell them it's because they are the best and most genuine source. We need to understand that; it's part of my own and others' responsibility to translate that. Right now, there's no place in English where you can go where the dharma is unobscured in that way. We're still in the process of bringing dharma from the source and understanding it. The Tibetan situation is already dissolving. The Tibetans themselves are rebuilding, but for a different kind of person. The Chinese culture is in there now; the ground has shifted. As we rebuild Surmang monastery, I have said to Khenpo Tsering that we have to plan for the future. We can't just pretend 1959 didn't happen and go back to how it was before. We have to educate a new group of lamas who can adapt and teach Tibetans, Chinese, and Westerners.

At the same time, those of us here who have been steeped in the dharma have a unique role because no matter what our understanding, we're able to communicate directly. Empowering our teachers so that we have a common view is very important. Teaching and moving in a similar direction for a certain purpose is very important. This applies to the acharyas, with whom I recently met. I have encouraged them to think about what they're teaching and how it helps in terms of the curriculum and basic practices of the Shambhala mandala, in addition to encouraging beginning students to go to dathün and seminary. If we're not proud of what we have to offer, then something's funny. We don't have to proselytize, but when someone asks if they should go and the answer is, "Well, it's up to you; you can do whatever you want," instead of "That's a great idea," then what's wrong with that program? I've been to centers where someone tells me they're not sure what to do next, and when I suggest going to this or that program, they tell me that nobody has given them direction. "I've just been doing a lot of open houses, and no one's told me exactly what to do." I suggest a week of dathün or another program. "Oh, that's helpful." Well, why didn't someone tell him that? It's either because we feel that it's proselytizing, we're shy, we're uncertain, or whatever. If you have a problem with that program, you should be talking with Allan at Shambhala Mountain Center or Jane at Karmê Chöling, suggesting how to change it so you can recommend it to people. There has to be more coordination in this way.

I've also implemented term limits, originally at the Dorje Kasung level, so that we can come into our role, feel good that we're able to do our job, and have a clean finish at the end. That way our energy doesn't dissipate. We're not like General MacArthur, fading away. This is an issue for us: we have a great beginning when we put somebody in a position, and when it's over, we're not sure exactly what happened. It's important because having a society means that one stays in the society. If somebody feels that once they've done their job they fade away, that's not good. If they now need to focus on practice or family, that's great—we shouldn't think less of them. After a few years they may be ready to take on another position.

In terms of the acharyas, I've said that their initial term as my representatives is five years. After that, we'll see if they still want to go ahead. There's a lot of work involved and I don't want them just fading away, either. Having a term gives them some definiteness. Since our meeting at Dorje Denma Ling in August, I've been meeting with the acharyas individually – except for Allyn, who keeps running away to Mexico. It's been really helpful because they're mostly treated as a group, but they are individuals with lives to live; some of them want to do more at certain times and some of them want to do less. It's also important that they all know what they're doing so they can help the centers. These are all essential elements.

We're all supporting each other. That also applies to teachers who are visiting, whether they are Tibetan lamas, Zen roshis, or Theravadin monks. Now we even have a few Jewish rabbis. It's important for these teachers to feel that they are supporting what Shambhala is. For a while I had a looser approach, but at a certain point a loose approach doesn't really help a center because you have teachers coming in and teaching all kinds of stuff. Then I arrive and someone says, "By the way, So-and-So Rinpoche gave this transmission; I don't know what to do with it, because he's gone." We need to keep a balance of being open and at the same time realizing that it is our center. In the period when my father was present, he himself would issue the invitation to other teachers. Now I would like to do the same thing. Whatever teacher is invited to teach, the invitation should come from myself. I've gotten phone calls that such-and-such a teacher has showed up somewhere and I don't even know who they are. It's awkward because they aren't sure who invited them. They assume that because a center director extended the invitation, it must be me inviting them. When they find out it wasn't me, they feel embarrassed. It's just as if someone shows up at your house thinking you invited them – "Who invited you?" – and it turns out that the invitation came from a neighbor or another guest.

For example, years ago I invited Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso. He's a great teacher, especially for some of the older students. He has a lot of knowledge and I have a good personal connection with him. I remember talking with him at the Delhi monastery. I invited him to teach and he said, "Okay, if you want me to come, I will come." He usually doesn't make long-term commitments – and still doesn't, really – but this was for a certain purpose. Every year he checks in and says, "Is this is what you want?"

Also, the world has changed. In the days of my father there were only a few people around, and now there are more and more rinpoches and other teachers. It's important to be clear that those individuals who are coming into our centers are here to support what's happening, rather than coming in with their own agendas. Khandro Tseyang's brother, Jigme Rinpoche, when addressing the acharyas, said that it's important for people to know who's who and what's going on. It's a bit of an education for us, an opportunity to be open-minded, but not naïve.

What's important for me is to hear from you is something like, "We're thinking about a certain kind of program, and we heard that this teacher was very good at such-and-such. We've thought it through, and we'd like to invite her for to teach for two years because this is what we need." Then I can say, "We would like for you to go to this center and it would be great if you can impart these teachings." Then the situation has some support. We're not being closed-minded, but caring about what we are doing. This will be an ongoing situation. Clearly it's my responsibility to give some of the key transmissions for our community, so I will uphold that and continue to do those transmissions.

Another consequence of our gathering is that it seems to be reaffirming our structure at present. We have these different aspects of government: the Sakyong's Council, the Mandala Council, the Congress. In terms of the Sakyong's Council, our approach was just to create it and see how it works, without saying solidly, "This is it." It seems that it's working well. At this point the Council is more like what a cabinet would be in that it is composed of individuals who have portfolios. Although there are some very intelligent people who are good at what they do, they don't have a portfolio. The Mandala Council is important because when something new is unrolled, there are issues to be discussed; the practice department heads are the ones who really feel it. I am pleased at how our structure has evolved from an organic process of things coming together.

Having the Sakyong's Council, the Mandala Council, and the Congress allows feedback to come to me apart from everything else that goes on. Compared to what happened at the last Congress, this gathering is a little more proactive. You all have a certain degree of understanding because you have problems being brought to you. Sometimes people seem to want the experience or the pleasure, however you want to say it, of telling me what all the problems are. It's a true test for me. I've found that I'm a really good tantric practitioner; I don't see any difference between pain and pleasure. Of course I don't mind hearing what people have to say, but it's a bit of a problem when you come to me and say, "This is what's wrong." I say, "Well, of course, but that's not why you're in your position." You need to say, "This is wrong, I've thought about it, and here's what I would recommend." That would be truly amazing. I'm sure you all go through the same thing in various ways. It's not that we don't want to hear criticism or complaint – that's fine, it happens – but there also needs to be a flip side.

I think that when we gather it's important to have a certain amount of venting; that obviously didn't occur this time. But there are times when that can happen on one level; on another level you need to know how to move things forward. For example, at the Vajrayana Seminary, there used to be discussion groups after my talks. I heard from the discussion group leaders that these had a tendency to become large therapy sessions with people just talking about what they felt. Then at the end they might discuss the talk. I pointed out that there are two things that need to be done. One is that people really need to know the

material because they're in this program to learn; another is that we need to divide it up so that people can talk about their experience and have another time when the discussion leader stays on topic: "This is what the talk is about and these are the topics in tantra. You should know it, because next time you're in retreat, you're going to wonder what to do." We need to come up with a format that allows both situations to take place. I've often noticed that when it comes to dharma, people want to share, because it's the closest thing to their hearts. It's human nature to communicate our feelings, so that is something that definitely needs to take place. In this culture, sometimes this is the only family we have in terms of expressing things. But if you decide that's your main method of administration, it's not going to go very far. We need to decide how things will take place.

When Khenpo Namdrol—obviously one of the greatest living khenpos—teaches, there are very few people you can ask deeply technical questions. When he came to the West, he hadn't had a lot of experience here, and he was teaching profound stuff. At some point he asked me, "Are there going to be questions?" I said, "Yeah, there's going to be questions." There was a gap, and then he said, "Will there be some of those funny questions?" And I knew exactly what he meant. He said, "I don't know a lot about boyfriends and girlfriends." Okay. So I got up in front and said, "Look, if it's some kind of personal thing, I don't want to squash it, but this is not the guy to ask. But if you want to know how the mandala of Kunga Sangpo relates to Garab Dorje and Vajradhara, this is the guy to ask. So have a little of self-discipline." Some people responded, "This isn't dharma; I can't do whatever I want." I said, "That's kindergarten dharma, now we're a little more advanced." Within our own mandala, we have to realize that's separating dharmas; it's always fluctuating and changing. It's clearly not like dharma all business. That would be no fun either. It has to be a good mix.

At this point, I'd like to ask my wife to say something.

Khandro Tseyang: Good morning everyone who is gathered here, especially Lady Diana and the leaders of Shambhala Centers all over the world. I'm thankful to you all for helping Rinpoche in his activities in propagating the dharma and the Shambhala lineage. I'm very happy to be here. Last night the Werma Feast was powerful with all the community together, which made me very happy. I felt very powerful and blessed.

I thought it would take me a while to adapt to this great new change in my life, but with the kindness and understanding of my husband, Rinpoche, and the support of our sangha, I feel comfortable; I'm more and more relaxed and at home when I'm with you all. I also had a very good time in Halifax. People there were also very supportive and nice and understanding. They left a lot of space, which I felt was important at this point because we are just beginning our new life together. So it's been wonderful, and I want to thank you all for making this transition easy for me.

From my side, I would like to give you the best of both our cultures in the best way as I can, and I also feel very fortunate to have been able to meet Rinpoche and to be his wife, and also to be connected to Shambhala and the lineage. I hope that I'll be able to propagate the dharma and help in his activities. I just pray that our union may bring very powerful spiritual potential in the Shambhala lineage and the Ripa lineage. My commitment also is to bring higher spiritual attainment in the nonmonastic community, which is our community. I wish and pray that I will help in propagating the dharma in the best way as I can.

That is all I have to say. I wish to be here again with you all, and I thank you all. I hope that you all feel that I'm more relaxed this time than the last time. It's been really helpful to be with you, and I'm sure that next time I'll be even more comfortable and relaxed. So thank you all very much.

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche: I'd like to thank Lady Diana for coming. It's very special and fortuitous. When we say "family lineage," we really mean it. Various people asked me various questions, and I said, "I think it would be best if you'd just talk to Lady Diana." When I mentioned this to her, she was incredibly gracious and said, "Okay, if you'd like me to come, then I'll be there." She's in the middle of an important time in her own career in terms of riding and training, and she's had a lot of success, which no doubt is due to her perseverance and the blessing of her husband. So I would like to thank her. It's very helpful to have her support in being here, and also the friendship, support, and counseling of the Lamens. They have to depart a little early, which I gave them permission to do.

Just one more thing I would like to mention is that there will be a Congress in Cologne in May, so I would like to invite everyone to come yourselves or send someone from your center. Obviously this is an international community. Many of you have who have traveled—I think Richard has the most experience here—know that it is becoming more and more international. Soon I go to India for my third and final wedding to my lovely wife. James Hoagland just finished the DVD of the wedding in Halifax and my brother Gesar was editing and working on it for a while. We wanted to get everything just right, so as we were looking at it and reflecting on how nice it was, we said, "Wait a minute, we should do it again!" It was kind of a strange experience. After that, I will go to teach in Singapore and Taiwan, now that my book has come out in Mandarin Chinese. It's apparently doing well.

The notion is that Shambhala is very much emerging. I like to think that it's coming out in the modern world, as opposed to just the Western world. Things are shifting, so the quality of international community is important for us to understand. Obviously the foundation is here in the States and Canada and in Europe. I think Europe has also come a long way; those of you who have been there have seen the strength of it. Chris Tamdjidi has done excellent work, as

have Ed Kaiser and many others who have worked a long time for it. We have a new Kalapa Center in Cologne; Eva Wong came there and said “no” 700 times to various buildings then finally she said “yes” to one building. So we were able to get a good building. I think the auditorium has the capacity to hold about 300 people, so part of the Congress will be held there. There we will continue this gathering and celebrate Shambhala culture and try to understand what that is. Again, there’s probably an evolving understanding of what we’re doing and training, and at the same time, it’s just this movement of gathering is important.

Those are some of the points. If people would like to ask some questions, please come up to the microphone.