

## **Vajrayana Seminary 2010**

### **Study Guide for the Gateway Exam**

All readings and page numbers are from the *Entering the Vajra World Sourcebook*, except for those added from *Journey Without Goal* by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (JWG). VT signifies Vajrayana Transcripts and is for reference only. You do not need to purchase the transcripts separately.

#### **Recording 1: Introduction to Vajrayana View**

What is our motivation for studying the buddhadharma altogether? What is our understanding of hinayana and mahayana view and motivation? What is our motivation for receiving vajrayana teachings and practices?

Why is training our mind in hinayana sitting meditation and mahayana sending and taking crucial for entering the vajrayana?

What is the basic view of vajrayana? Why do we need a third yana? Why isn't hinayana and mahayana enough?

What is vajra nature? How does it compare with buddha nature?

Readings:

79 VT: Vajra Vision and Vajra Nature,

96 VT: Introduction to Vajrayana,

JWG, "The Tantric Practitioner" & "Vajra Nature," pp. 19-29

#### **Recording 2: Devotion and the Vajra Master**

What does mögü literally mean? What is true devotion? What are the various stages of developing devotion, and what are common obstacles to devotion?

How is panic an essential part of devotion?

Why do we need a human teacher at all? What is the role of the teacher in the hinayana and mahayana, and what is the special role of the vajra master in vajrayana?

What is your experience and understanding of your connection to your own teacher?

Readings:

79 VT: Devotion,

78 VT: Devotion,

96 VT: Three Kayas, from "Developing True Devotion" to the end

JWG, "The Vajra Master," pp. 55-63

#### **Recording 3: Transmission & Samaya**

How does the samaya vow build on and go further than the refuge and bodhisattva vows? Why do we take any kind of vow? [general question]

What does samaya bind us to? [78 VT and 96 VT]

What are the samayas of body, speech, mind, and the vajra master? [78 VT]

How do we keep samaya and how do we break it? [96 VT]

Readings:

78 VT: Samaya,

96 VT: Vajrayana Culture,

JWG, "Transmission," pp. 47-54

Recording 4: Ngöndro and Guru Yoga

What are the ngöndro practices a preliminary to?

Give a summary of each practice in terms of its view, meditation, and fruition. Explain how the four ngöndro practices are an expression of shamatha or vipashyana.

Why is guru yoga at the heart of it all?

Readings:

81 VT: Prostrations and Vajrasattva Mantra,

81 VT: Mandala Offering and Guru Yoga,

Recording 5: Generation and Completion Stages

What are utpattikrama and sampannakrama? How do we practice them separately and how do we practice them together?

What are the different approaches to utpattikrama? What are the three aspects of any visualization?

Why is the sambhogakaya so important in vajrayana?

Readings:

96 VT, Three Kayas, up to "Developing True Devotion"

JWG, "Visualization," "Body, Speech, and Mind," & The Five Buddha Families," pp. 65-85

Recording 6: Abhisheka & Vajrayana Practices

What does empowerment mean in the context of vajrayana? Why do we need to be empowered?

What are the different ways in which empowerment is conferred? What are the traditional four abhishekas? What are we empowered to do?

How is abhisheka an expression of the union of shamatha and vipashyana?

Readings:

81 VT: The Four Abhishekas,

JWG, "Abhisheka," pp. 87-99

#### Recording 7: Mahamudra, Ati, and Shambhala

What are the differences between mahamudra and ati in terms of view and practice? Why is it considered best to join these two traditions together?

What is the relationship between Shambhala and buddhadharma? How are they the same, and how are they different?

What is your experience of weaving together these two traditions on your own path?

Readings:

79 VT: Mahamudra,

78 VT: Ati Yoga,

78 VT: Creating Enlightened Society, pp. 115 to end