



Rinpoche went to Tawang, where the Mumpas live, as well as to other holy places in southern Tibet. There he practiced the Chod or the cutting of the ego practice in fearful cemeteries.

He also meditated in a cave at Tatsang in Parro in Bhutan. One morning, as the sun rose, Vajrayogini herself appeared in the form of a fifteen-year-old girl and woke him from his sleep, urging him to turn the Wheel of Dharma. This was necessary she said because the beings in the Himalayas were in danger of falling down the slope of wrong views regarding the dharma and their minds were wrapped in darkness. "When Domo Geshe Rinpoche received the Vajrabhairava empowerment, he directly beheld Yamantaka and the thirteen deities. While meditating near Gangrin in Lower Domo, Geshe Rinpoche lived on fruits, berries and herbs found in the deep and dense forest surrounding the cave. In Southern Tibet he survived by doing the practice of Chulen - the taking of the essence. First he did Flower Chulen; in this place he was also doing Stone Chulen (actually, Gangchen Rinpoche has all these texts - Flower Chulen, Stone Chulen and Water Chulen, by which one survives on the energy of the elements). In Gangring, Geshe Ngawang Kelsang had many extraordinary visions: The Thirty-Five Confession Buddhas manifested directly to him, and when some evil beings tried to interfere with his practice, he rose in the form of Heruka and subdued the obstacles. He also went to Upper Domo.

(At this point, Lama Caroline speaks to Lama Michel Rinpoche) "Have you been to Domo?", she asks

Lama Michel replies: "I was in Domo with Rinpoche two years ago, in 2012, it is actually nowadays quite difficult to get there because it is a very restricted area due to it being exactly at the border between India, China (Tibet) and Bhutan. If you look at the map, this area is a little triangle pointing down, inside the triangle is China (Tibet), on one side is India, and on the other is Bhutan. The monastery is there, it is not so large, actually, it was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and was rebuilt not long ago. In fact, it is Rinpoche's nephew, Kachen Wangchuck, who is taking care of the rebuilding work in Tibet. When they finished rebuilding it, there appeared a very auspicious sign.

Above the location of the monastery, there is a famous cave where Domo Geshe Rinpoche used to do all his meditating, it was there where his famous healing pill was made. Also, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche has a very strong connection with Domo Geshe Rinpoche because there are not so many healing lamas - lama healers - in the Gelugpa tradition. Lama Gangchen, as you know is a lama healer, and Domo Geshe Rinpoche has also been a very famous and powerful lama healer. The place where his healing pill was made was in fact in this small cave. I saw it from afar, although I never did go up there.



Around Domo Geshe Rinpoche there have always been many magical events. It seems that one of these last events took place when around the symbol of the monastery - a white conch - a swarm of bees made a very large bee-hive. People saw this as quite auspicious, although at a certain point it became a bit dangerous as the bees were very powerful, big and strong, with the danger of people

getting stung by them. Therefore, people from the government came and took the bee hive away. When they took it away - and I saw the picture of it - what was very interesting was that when they took the hive down, it had the perfect shape of a conch. The way it was formed, as they took it down, could be seen as having the perfect shape of a conch.

Shortly after, there was unfortunately a very strong earthquake in the whole region. In fact, I was in Tibet when the earthquake happened. At the monastery, quite a lot of the rebuilding work fell down then, the only thing that didn't fall was the area around the Stupa, where the Stupa of Domo Geshe Rinpoche is. Actually the walls of the four sides fell down but the Stupa remained standing; all the pillars and ceiling remained, the rest fell down. Just a few months ago, they received the money from the government to rebuild the monastery of Domo Geshe Rinpoche. So we hope that now, with the new reincarnation, they will be able to rebuild the monastery also in Tibet, which is not an easy place because of being on the border. Before the border it was an easy place for many people to pass, now the border has become a place where it is difficult for everyone to come to; it is very controlled. Even though there is the border, there is the project to make it open between India and China, but for now its very much closed."

Lama Caroline asks: "How far is this from Gangchen?"

Lama Michel replies: "From Gangchen, if you go by car as we have been going, it takes more or less a whole day. A very, very beautiful place. As you go to Central Tibet, it is a day's journey on the other side of the mountain. The area is very dry; the whole of Central Tibet is very, very dry. When you go there (to Domo) it is not so high, in altitude; it is lower and very green, not dry at all. In fact, there is a lot of water there, which is why it's very, very green, a very beautiful place".

Lama Caroline says: "I am asking this because just now, this biography talked about this cave in Domo, where he was meditating and where yetis were coming and bringing him food. At that time, Rinpoche's previous incarnation called Kachen Sapen-la was also around there somewhere. That is why I wanted to know how far it was from Gangchen".

Lama Michel: "He was in fact in Gangchen; from Gangchen it was a week long journey on foot!"

Lama Caroline: "They were actually called the 'three vajra brothers', that is, there was Domo Geshe Rinpoche - two lives ago, there was Kachen Sapen-la, who was Gangchen Rinpoche's past incarnation, then there was a third, I do not know if he actually was the Guru. I am trying to look this up here, in the biography. Rinpoche is always saying, or, he has often said over the years, that they used to have a yeti postal service, that brought them things, this "MeGo", as it is called, comes out of the shadows, so to speak, bringing food, firewood and things to the yogis. It says here that Domo Geshe Rinpoche and presumably Gangchen Rinpoche as well, controlled the yetis like this. The yeti, or some deity, I am not sure which, offered a vow to protect them, a vow to protect Rinpoche's life."

Actually, many of the stories of Domo Geshe Rinpoche take place around the time of Gangchen Rinpoche's past life. For example, they went together on the pilgrimage to the holy buddhist places in India; from the time when they were meditating, they were very close in their past life. There were three of them; I was asking Rinpoche today what happened to the third? He said:

'Oh, he went to the Yamantaka pureland', therefore, he is not in the human world anymore. The third was a special yogi who was once married. At a certain point, his wife had two children, they were meditating in a cave, and she was, for some reason, unable to produce milk. So he began to produce milk and fed the babies himself while cooking. He had all sorts of special, miraculous abilities and he has now gone to the Yamantaka pureland.

*Kyabje Domo Geshe Rinpoche Losang Jigme Ngak-Gi Wangchuk
giving the transmission of the Lama Tsong Khapa Guru Yoga.*



Welcome Address

T.Y.S. Lama Gangchen - World Healer

[sound of applause]

There is no need to do this, to clap your hands, we need to meditate; where you are, your mind will go and your mind is united with my mind, minds working towards the same moment.

[repeated sounds created in a bowl]

My speech is finished, thank you very much.

This is something you have to learn. It is extremely important for us to know how to use sound correctly. Sound is something that is present at every moment of our life, there is no place without sound, therefore sound is always present with us and yet very often we don't know how to use sound correctly. We don't know how to use sound for our benefit. How we listen depends mostly on us. How we relate to sound, which sound we want to keep, which sound has meaning for us, all this depends mostly on us. Sound is something very important, it is also female in nature but, at the same time, something that is part of our own nature. We have our own inner sound which we very often take for granted, we say, 'I know, I know, I understand', but when we are listening to something the real question is, where is our mind? Is it really listening? Is it somewhere else? How do we relate to this sound? Are we able to perceive it? Are we capable of truly listening? To listen correctly is an important thing for us to learn, as is how to hold sound correctly and how to relate ourselves to sound in a positive way. This is really based on our own choice, it does not depend much on external conditions but most of all on our own choice or our ability to maintain a sound. I am sorry to say that in this present day this is something that is greatly lacking, this concentration and ability to recognise the value of sound from within our own inner state. Usually we tend to see it as something dependent exclusively on external conditions, although in reality it depends very much on the way we listen to sounds, on how correctly we relate to the sound itself. If we were able to learn how to do this it would make many things very meaningful.

For example, the moment I put a singing bowl on top of my head and I ring it, are you at least able to follow the sound with your mind. I am not doing this so that everyone claps, applauds, or anything like that. We need to be able to concentrate, we need to not let our mind wander in ten directions, be pulled by many different things, we need to try and keep it, hold it within the sound, as if we are holding our mind as one with the sound. This is what we need to do, because if we are able to do this, then we can direct our mind to many different places in a correct way, then we will not have a mind that is completely loose and goes all over the place.

That is why it is important for us to follow sound correctly.

It is important for us, because in Tibetan the word 'sound' has actually two meanings, depending on the way you write it. One meaning is actual 'sound', the other meaning is 'enemy'. That is why you should be careful to use sound correctly, so that it becomes your friend instead of your enemy. The way we use sound can determine sound to be our friend or our enemy and this depends on how we actually use the sound itself.

Today I need to give a speech. I had the idea of creating a conference and since the very beginning I have put a lot of effort into it, together with my secretaries Istar and Cosy. I asked Lama Caroline to write a speech for me and again she put a lot of effort into this over a long time so everything would be prepared. Once the speech was finished I read it and agreed it was correct. Actually, I was supposed to give this speech today because, first of all, it was my idea to make a conference and I



secondly I have put a lot of effort in it. I requested Lama Caroline to write what I told her to write, and she did exactly that, then I reread it and corrected it, went over it more than once, and so on. Isthar has also put in a lot of effort, so I actually should give my speech today; but I will not. The reason is, basically, that if I just say something here and now you may listen to my speech, you will grasp a few words that I say, maybe even retain some of it, but afterwards you will forget about it. So instead I have written what I want to say very carefully and you must read it for yourselves. I could ask someone, either Isthar, Lama Caroline, Lama Michel, or anyone else to read my speech out to you, but I am not going to ask anyone to do this because you are the ones who are supposed to read it.

This is not about just listening to something once, it is a matter of listening to something again and again, which is why you should read my speech. And you should read it a minimum of three times, better still ten times, a maximum of a hundred times. In fact, you should not only read it but reflect on it; once you have reflected on it, meditate on it. To understand something and meditate on that something is the process of 'tursam gonsum' - listening, understanding and meditating. This is exactly what you should do, because there is actually no problem when it comes to being able to obtain information, to obtain texts. We have put a lot of effort in to writing this speech and it is available to everyone, everyone who has received the book. Our sponsor has printed the book for us and I would like to thank Mr Kok who introduced us to Mr Chang, with the result that Mr Chang now always does all our printing. So, Mr Chang printed this, therefore if you read it you make his job of printing it more meaningful. If we don't read it, if we just keep it on a shelf, then there would be no point in having it printed. This is one of the reasons why you should read it a minimum of three times, more if possible, and then reflect upon it. Don't just see it as a formality or something like that but recognise it as something meaningful because it truly has a very profound and vast meaning within it. So please, really read and reread with care, because if I ask someone to read it here, then you just listen, catch few words, and it is gone. What I have written is also not the sort of thing that is usually presented at congresses and conferences. It is not just something that sounds nice, that people may like, or whatever, not just something to fill the time, fulfill an obligation.

I really created it with my prayer requests to all the buddhas, my gurus and yidams, truly asking the question: 'What can I do to help people? How can I really do something of benefit?' This means that there is also the basis of love and compassion within it. It has really been done considering what is best, what is the best way to help. This is something I do constantly. In the same way, whenever I go to the Stupa, in fact, whatever I do, I am always doing it inseparably with my guru and my yidam. As you see, everywhere I go, whatever I do, I always begin with Losang Gyalwa Kungye Yeshe Nyi, Om Ah Guru Vajradhara, and so on; I am always making requests, always inseparable from the guru. Something that is extremely precious is the sound of the guru when we say in Tibetan 'Lama Kyen', which actually means: 'Oh, please Guru, please'. And when we make this request to our guru this sound is so powerful that it is actually similar to a hook that is ready to take us out of the state of suffering towards a better rebirth. The hook needs to truly connect with the ring of faith; this works very well if we have our own ring of faith. When we have a ring, then the hook is working. So, whenever we listen to this beautiful sound, when we say 'Lama Kyen', when we say 'Oh please my Guru', the sound is very powerful because it connects us directly to our guru. It is like making the connection between the hook and the ring in order to take us out of our state of fear, our state of sadness, or whichever state we might be in. The same is true when I talk about using sound in a positive way, using it as our friend, so to speak, this is very important. Whatever I say, whatever I do, I am always doing it inseparably from my guru's blessing. The Guru Buddha is always present and this makes the whole difference. Actually, there are many different ways we can transmit the dharma, which is why I am always thinking 'What's the best way? How can I find the best way to teach the dharma? How can I find the best way to be of benefit to people? What is the best way to share the dharma with everyone?' In answer to these questions there are different ways: doing three prostrations; making three times requests; making mandala offerings, and so on, plus giving teachings. All this is fine but there is another way, which in modern times means sharing



in a congress/conference type of environment; I also accept this way, because this is your culture, this is the mentality, and it is all right. The important thing is to share the dharma. Some people ask me: 'Can I do my practice while I am sleeping in bed?' 'Yes', I answer, 'if you are allowed to do bad things in bed, why can't you do good things in bed?' The point is, we should practise the dharma in the best way, wherever we are, whatever we do. We should practise the dharma in any place, at any moment and in any form. There is no such thing as 'Here you can practise the dharma, and here you cannot practice the dharma!' It is very important for us to repeat our practice again and again. For example, there was a person who came here from Malaysia. He had read the Self-Healing practice many times and he came to ask some questions about it with his little book on Self-Healing, a very used and old copy printed many years ago. He didn't ask himself 'do I want a new copy?' He liked the old copy because of the many memories and feelings that went with it as he had read it so many times. There was a feeling that accompanied that copy and this is very important, this is good. We should not lose this type of feeling, we should generate and create this feeling; we can do this by reading, repeating, by maintaining contact in this way. Later, this person from Malaysia who had such great feeling towards the practice, merely took the sadhana and put it in his trouser pocket, which is also all right. The buddhas are in the ten directions, which means that they are also under our seat, you know. There are no boundaries for the practice of dharma and the main point is that we should, and we can, practise wherever we are, whatever we do. In other words, we should practise our own path to enlightenment in whatever form it may appear. This is very important: we shouldn't create boundaries, we should go beyond boundaries and be able to practice in all different types of conditions and situations.

I was going to give a speech today on the female buddhas and their relationship with Borobudur, but, as I said before, I am not going to give any speech. I am not going to read it, nor am I going to ask anyone to read it out loud, because I want you to read it. This is a request that I make to all of you, that you read it, because there is no doubt that you all have the paper available to you and that you can read it anywhere you like. The doubt lies in whether you will read it or not. If you want to read it on the toilet, that is also all right, no problem! The important thing is that you read it. So, please, do so.

We like to listen to nice sounds that we enjoy, therefore we need to use the sound we are listening to in a way that is positive; we need to use the sound as medicine, we need to use the sound as a friend, we need to use the sound as healing power and as spiritual company.

Actually, sound possesses female energy; sound is female by its nature. Female energy, the female aspect, is something that is part of life, we cannot live without it, existence is not possible with just the male aspect so the female aspect is essential. Someone might say, 'Oh I don't like the female...' but actually we cannot live without the female part; that is not possible for any of us. Thus we have the example that sound is female, just as the elements are female energy. Our own existence depends on the union of male and female, we even need the female aspect when reaching enlightenment as we need a female part to depend on the Mother of the Perfection of Wisdom in order to reach enlightenment.

Whatever name we might give it, when we look at the Six Perfections the last and most important of all is the Perfection of Wisdom, which manifests in a female form. If we look at the Ten Perfections it is the same. And if we look at Method and Wisdom there is always the presence of wisdom, wisdom being female. So the female aspect is present in our life, in our path, and in everything we do, therefore it is not possible to become detached, separated or independent from it. Going back to sound, it is really important, once again, for us to use sound in a positive way, which is why Buddha, by understanding sound, actually uses it in a particular way so as to help us become free from our cycle of samsara existence. He truly shows us the sound that actually becomes medicine; shows us sound and helps us use sound in a way that is an antidote to our suffering. If we see things from a different and opposite direction, sound can also be a very destructive force, it can create sickness and enemies, sound can even create wars, fear and so on.

Over the next few days we will hear Lama Caroline and Lama Michel talking about the female energy of Borobudur, as well as Claudia and other friends. We therefore have many positive and constructive things to listen to. I am not going to talk more about this; the important thing is that you have a commitment with me: you are going to read the speech a minimum of three times, possibly ten, and a maximum of one hundred, thank you. If you do not keep the commitment, what is the point?

I am here now looking at all of you, and you are here looking at me, we are all in the midst of very warm feelings, also a lot of heat. We are suffering from the heat and so we are staying inside here all day. What is the point of all this? Do you know? The point is that we stay here the whole day and then at the end of the day we should go away saying: Yes, it was very hot, there was not much space, it was uncomfortable, but 'I got something'. That is the point we need to reach, where we can say: I received the benefit, I understood something that is beneficial for my life.

By the Power of the Truth, by all Human Beings' attention, by all Holy Beings' blessings, Violence Sound be transformed into Non-Violent Sound, Peaceful Sound, Beautiful Sound, Spiritual Sound, now and Forever, by Inner Scientist Shakyamuni Buddha's Blessings.

By the Power of the Truth, Violent Touching be transformed into Non Violent Touching, Peaceful Touching, now and forever, by Inner Scientist Shakyamuni Buddha's Blessings.

By the Power of the Truth, by all Human Beings' Attention, by all Holy Beings' blessings, Violent Looking be transformed into Non-Violent Looking, Beautiful Way of Looking, Peaceful Way of Looking, now and forever.

By the Power of the Truth, Violent Speaking be transformed into Non-Violent Speaking, Beautiful Way of Speaking, Peaceful Way of Speaking, now and forever; by Inner Scientist Shakyamuni Buddha's Blessings."

When we talk about using our five senses positively we can even use the sense of smell in a positive way. Normally we have a negative way of reacting to smells, usually bad smells, 'this or that smells bad.... these boots....' which is why we need to buy all kinds of small bottles with nice smells inside, you know. This is actually something that belongs to the new modern culture. There is a lot of suffering and violence associated with the sense of smell, with how things smell, even with how we relate ourselves to smells. It is important for us to have a positive relationship with the sense of smell so as to not experience it in such a difficult way, so as not to see it as a cause of suffering, and so on. This is important, but the same things also relates to other senses, such as taste, touch and so on, otherwise everything ends up as our enemy. We need to make things our friends instead, we need to make things positive, and this depends on the way we use our senses in relation to everything around us. It is so important for us to actually use our senses in a peaceful manner, to use our senses peacefully. In the way we look at each other, the way we listen, the way we talk, and so on, in all of this it is important for us to use our senses peacefully so we can then really learn something, and really make a difference. What truly makes a difference is when we are able to use our senses positively and peacefully. We might see this in our past actions and think 'It's true, I already did that, had so many negative experiences by using my senses in a violent way, enough! I don't need to continue to follow that way!' For example, take jealousy for instance, jealousy is something that is very harmful to all of us. But once we have seen it, once we see that by being jealous we have destroyed friendships, created arguments due to our jealousy and caused so much suffering, both for ourselves and for other people, once we have seen others fighting to the point where friendships are broken and families divided, we say to ourselves: 'I am not going to follow jealousy any more, I am not going to give it importance, I am not going to give it space as it is harming my body, my mind, my liver. Why do I need it? I don't need to follow jealousy anymore, because reacting to jealousy is extremely harmful.' Once we see that jealousy really harms us we will then be able to say: 'Okay, that's enough; stop! I am not going to follow this type of mind any more.'



In the same way, we should have a similar approach towards all our five senses; towards everything that we normally use violently. We shouldn't act in a harmful way any more. Why? Because we have already seen - and we don't need a teacher or a doctor to show us - we have already seen that we need to follow and respect our own experiences. When we have a positive experience we should follow it; but if we have a negative experience we should abandon it. We don't need anyone to tell us that we don't need to follow a certain religion, that we don't need to follow a specific system, or whatever, in these situations we know that we need to respect our own path. So once we see that something is really harmful to us why would we need to continue to follow it? There is no point in something that is a negative experience, we just need to let it go, we don't need to be attached to negative things, to the things that harm us. We need to let them go; we need to stop following them. Going back to what I was saying about using our five senses in a violent way, it is something extremely harmful. We have seen it, we know it, so we don't need to follow anything that is harmful to us. All of you here possess so much knowledge, for example you all know what to eat - this is good for this, don't eat that it's bad for you, and so on. You know so much more than I do when it comes to such things. And yet, I know things that you don't know. I know that if you use your senses positively you don't need anything else. For example, you like it when we talk about enlightenment and so on. What do we need to become enlightened? We need to use our five senses positively. Reaching enlightenment is not about reaching a state that is disconnected from where we are right now. Even when we reach enlightenment we have the five senses within the state of enlightenment and these are the continuity of the five senses that we have right now. Reaching enlightenment does not mean becoming totally independent and totally disconnected from what we are right now. Reaching enlightenment means actually developing what we are right now, actually making what we are right now better and better, it means using everything in a different way. Then we can reach speech enlightenment, for example, sight enlightenment, touch enlightenment, and so on. Therefore we can have the enlightened state of our five senses. This is actually possible by transforming them, by using them in a peaceful and positive way.

People come to me and say, 'Rinpoche, I really want to reach enlightenment, please show me the actual path to enlightenment, please teach me about emptiness' and so on. This is what I am doing right now. I am telling you to use your five senses in a peaceful way. When we say the word 'emptiness' the definition of emptiness is basically the simple non-existence of the object of negation. In this case our object of negation is violence. This is what we need to eliminate, this is the kind of emptiness that we need to generate, otherwise if we talk a lot about emptiness but we continue to use our five senses in a violent way, what is the point? First of all, and most important, is for us to actually use our five senses in a positive way. If you are really able to transform the way you use your five senses from a violent way, as it is now, to a non-violent peaceful way, then you don't even need mantras, you don't even need prayers, you don't even need visualisation, you don't need anything else because that is all that you need - to use your five senses in a correct and peaceful way. That is our objective. Otherwise if you have all of these things - mantras, prayers, visualisations but you do not change how you use your senses you are missing the point. When we use our senses correctly they will actually act as an antidote, a tool for eliminating the ignorance of grasping at inherent existence, and in this way we can actually realise the state of emptiness. This is truly very important. If we do not use our five senses positively and we continue to use them violently, whatever else we might do it will not be fulfilling. Therefore it is really very important for us to constantly use our five senses in a positive way.

There were many great masters, mahasiddhas, rishis, and so on who, by the state of the realisation of their own minds and by the way they used their senses, were able to transform everything in a positive way for themselves. It didn't matter what happened, where they went, in what situation they found themselves, things simply just worked out well. This was because of their own inner state, their own constant correct use of their senses, constructively and peacefully. On the other hand, if you don't use your senses in a peaceful way then anything you do, wherever you go, it will not be a satisfying experience, on the contrary the experience will not be good enough, will not be fulfilling.



This is why this is so important. I am not saying that I am a great yogi or a great mahasiddha, I am just, as you know, a simple Tibetan lama among all Tibetan lamas. I am a very small lama but nevertheless I have some experience, and this is what I am sharing with you. First of all comes the importance of knowing how to use our senses correctly. Once we see there is something that is not beneficial for us all we need to do is abandon that something, without any excuses, without any attachment to our violent behaviour, and so on. This is how we can actually make a difference.

So every time we engage in violent action, violent speech, violent thought, violent attitude of jealousy or anything similar, all this negative behaviour, all these negative actions, they are all born from the ignorance of grasping at inherent existence of self and phenomena. The moment we are able to oppose any of these attitudes, the moment we are able to apply an antidote to any one of them, then we are then indirectly going against ignorance. But we are not directly applying an antidote against ignorance, we are actually applying an antidote against one of the fruits and results of ignorance.

I am going to stop here now because I don't want to say too much. I said earlier on that I was not going to give a speech but if I talk too much now there was no point in saying I was not going to give a speech. I also see the importance of actually giving time to the many things that we have to do. One of the reasons why I chose not to read my speech, and to make you read it instead, was to make space for other people, for the other things that we still have to do. Without counting today I am still here with you for two more days, so we need to use this time to the best of our abilities; we really need to do this. We have many things to do, many things to say, many things to listen to, many things to look at, and that is why I really want us to use our time in the best way possible.

For example, today I still want to show you and share with you some of the work that is being done in Brazil. In Brazil I have founded an organisation, a foundation, and very good work is being done there. I want you to see this work, see how it is like having something new to understand, it is like seeing completely new things that have been happening. This is very good for us because it gives us a new understanding of things, and this is why I want to share with you the work being done in Brazil, so we can look at it together and we can rejoice in it, learn from it, and so on. You know how often I say 'Peace Day'. Saying 'Peace Day' is very easy, and yet to make a 'Peace Day' is not that easy. Saying it is very easy, but how do we put it into practice? Also very easy! One day! We can say this is easy because we are speaking of one day only. Based on this, in Brazil they have put a lot of effort into making this Peace Day, and also into delivering the concept of Peace Culture to different schools and many other places. I would like to share this with you for about ten minutes. Also, nowadays, you listen to the media a lot, use computers and tablets and all kinds of things, which is why we need to use all this in a positive way. I accept that you like all these things, so I try to help you to use them in a positive way, which is why, following my request, Duccio and Tiziana, Gabriella, Carmen, Barbara, Peter, Rinpoche, Lama Caroline, Lama Michel and so on, so many people, have put so much effort into making this possible for all of us, to guide us to the practice instead of just reading a book. Thanks to them we can watch our events on television and, as we watch, we can listen and follow it together. I have new DVDs that have recently been made and today I would like to show you one of them so we can also do the practice together. We have many things to do.

There is another thing I also need to say, although it would take too long if I start talking about this now, but I also want to remember the kindness of Professor Lokesh Chandra. This is very important. The Professor was actually supposed to come here to Borobudur, but then he said that he was not able to come but instead he would come to my birthday in Italy in July to pay his respects. At that time I think we will have the opportunity to talk more about things, but meanwhile we are most grateful to Professor Lokesh Chandra. We are here in Borobudur thanks to him, it is through his kindness that Borobudur was rebuilt and taken care of by UNESCO, as he was the person who initiated the project. It was originally his idea, and he initiated everything. There are many things that we need to be grateful to him for. In addition to Professor Lokesh Chandra there are many other people and things that we need to remember, such as the kindness of our gurus, of our lineage, and we can always request their blessings.





T.Y.S. Lama Gangchen - World Healer

With committed devotion to
The Great kind Wisdom Mother - (absolute) Buddha level Mother
and our kind loving and compassionate mother (relative)
Human Being level mother

I would like to talk about female buddhas on the Borobudur mandala in Central Java.

We call Borobudur many different names: Borobudur Candi (temple); in Sanskrit it is called bhumisambhara or danyakosh and in Tibetan we call it palden drepung chorten. It is one of the most important holy places of Buddhism and on it as its easy to see there are 504 three dimensional sculpted male buddhas in niches in the four directions and in the centre.

On the east side there are 108 Akshobha buddhas
On the south side there are 108 Ratnasambhava buddhas
On the west side there are 108 Amitabha buddhas
On the north side there are 108 Amogasiddhi Buddhas
In the centre there are 64 Vairochana buddhas

Next to them as smaller bas-reliefs are 504 two dimensional depictions of female buddhas. These represent:

On the east side 108 feminine buddhas - the Great Water Mother blue Mamaki
On the south side 108 feminine buddhas - the Great Earth Mother yellow Lochana
On the west side 108 feminine buddhas - the Great Fire Mother red Pandaravarsini
On the north side 108 feminine buddhas - the Great Wind Mother green SamayaTara
In the centre 64 feminine buddhas - the Great Space Mother white Dharmadhatvishvari

504 male buddhas and 504 female buddhas make 1008 buddhas in evidence on Borobudur.

On the Borobudur stupa Mandala there are actually thousands more male and female buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, solitary realisers, offering gods and goddesses, dakas, dakinis, dharma protectors, monks, nuns, lay men and women and male and female nagas, yakshas and other semi-divine beings. Similarly, in the Guru Puja (Lama Choepa) Merit Field of all four traditional Tibetan schools of buddhism, there are feminine representations with spiritual realisations at all levels.

For example, how many male and female offering deities are there? There are the offering goddesses argham, padhyam, pupe, dhupe, aloke ghende, newide and shapta. Then, there are dakas

and dakinis of the high sky going level, of the middle earth going level and of the subterranean level. Then there is the protector level. Then, inside the cemeteries there are many female images. So like this, Borobudur is full of feminine buddhas and we are most fortunate to be able to receive explanations and elaborate on this very important feature of the Borobudur. I hope to hear more if anyone has read about or knows of any research done about the feminine buddhas, or five dhyani buddhas on the Borobudur, please let us know.

In the Tibetan buddhist tradition there are many feminine practitioners such as nuns, anilas, jetsumas, but there are no gelongmas, or fully ordained nuns.

Lama Caroline has compiled a most comprehensive list of female arhats of the Theravada path.

The lady Magadhabhadra - a past incarnation of our dharma Protector - was a buddhist from a kingdom near Bodhgaya. She was however married off by her family to a hindu king in South India.

Once, she asked her husband if she may please invite the Buddha. The husband agreed, and so she prepared a great feast for the occasion. She then went onto the roof of the palace with a bundle of incense and sang:

*Malu Semchen Kungyi Gongyur Chig
Dude Punche Mize Jomde La
Ngonam Malu Yangdak Kyen Gyur Pe
Chomden Korche Nedir Sheg Su Sol*

"Protector of all beings without exception, endless subduer of demonic beings and energies, deity, perfect knower of all things; Bhagavan and attendants, please come here".

In response, first there arrived 500 arhats flying through the sky, some riding the wind, some on fire, some on dragons and then finally the Buddha himself came walking across space with the devas brahma and vishnu as his attendants. Ever since then, buddhists of all traditions have used the words of this powerful lady to invite the buddhas and bodhisattvas.



King Ashoka sent his daughter Sanghamitra with her brother to Sri Lanka together with several other nuns to start the nun-lineage of Bhikkhunis (a fully ordained female Buddhist monastic) at the request of King Tissa to ordain queen Anulā and other women of Tissa's court at Anuradhapura who desired to be ordained as nuns after Mahindra converted them to Buddhism. The King sent his daughter with a sapling of the original Bodhi tree. The sapling was planted in Anuradhapura and has survived to this day. Every year on the full moon day of December Theravada Buddhists in Sri Lanka celebrate the Sanghamitra Day.

A sapling of that Bodhi tree was brought back to India by Upasita Dhammapala to be planted in Bodhgaya in the place where the original Bodhi Tree - under which the Buddha has reached enlightenment - had burnt down.

Moreover, King Ashoka sent his other daughter Charmatti to Patan (present day in Nepal) to be wed to the King's son. She brought with her four stupas with the Buddha's relics which were placed in the four directions of Patan. In the Chabahil kingdom (present day in Nepal) a mandir (temple) was built for her daily prayer practices.

In Sri Lanka, the Kelaniya temple was established in memory of the third and the last visit to Sri Lanka by Gauthama Buddha, eight years after he attained enlightenment. The original temple and the stupa were built in 5th Century BC, but none of these earlier structures have survived today. The



temple was rebuilt by King Vijayabahu III, (1232 - 1236) and King Parakrama Bahu II (1236- 1270). In 1510 AD, the temple was destroyed by the Portuguese, who had conquered the Maritime provinces of the country. In the 16th century the Theravadan Devi (high born lady) called Kelaniya Devi tried to protect the temple against the Portuguese and gave her life in doing so.

When we visited this temple for the first time in the 1990s the connection was very manifest and we all felt a very strong connection during the entire pilgrimage.

Shakyamuni Buddha gave many 'yanas' teachings, many philosophies. Theravada yanas, astrology, medicine, architecture, arts, astronomy, Mahayana, Vajrayana and so forth.

Theravada - according to Theravada tradition, Borobudur has many sections, and principally 3 main sections: the base, the terraces and the top, with the 72 stupas representing the desire, form and formless realms.

Thus the Buddha taught people according to their capacity, teaching the theravada or pratimoksha way - which was open for everyone to receive, to generally seek liberation for oneself. So on Borobudur you see the jatakas, avadanas and karmavibhanga - for everyone.

Mahayana - this in Borobudur is represented by the 5 main terraces and 10 levels.

When the Buddha taught the mahayana teachings to the eight bodhisattvas and others, these teachings were undisclosed. So the sutras that are illustrated on the bas-reliefs on Borobudur, the lalitavistara and gandhavyuha that show women meditators, yoginis, gurus and bodhisattvas and buddhas, were undisclosed teachings. In other words, all teachings were confidential and private, as they were not to be shared with students of different levels. The mahayana approach is 'I would like personally to develop more, for the benefit of myself, my family and all beings.

However, we also still need to investigate more deeply and more closely the kangyur texts to understand more.

Vajrayana - Then the vajrayana or mantrayana or tantra teachings were completely secret.

So it all depended on the disciples' minds, on their capacities and world views. On Borobudur, the mantrayana is represented by the mandala structure of the monument with the 5 fathers and 5 mother buddhas sitting in a yoga tantra posture. The highest yoga tantras were highly secret at that time so on Borobudur they are represented in a wholly secret symbolic way with the buddhas inside the 72 stupas joining their two ring fingers together, according to my own view.

Buddha gave vajrayana teachings the miracle manifestation way, and it is believed that Borobudur was then built on that very ground as a main Kalachakra mandala. According to great yogis visions, Buddha Shakyamuni came here and visualised the entire wisdom mandala giving king Choegyal Dawa Sangpo Kalachakra teachings on that land. Based on these yogis visions, it is believed that Borobudur was built from that clear light.

In my own view, I believe all chorten, stupa mandalas to be the result of earlier visions and manifestations of an esoteric chorten before that actual building was erected.

In South India for example, we have another Danakosh - Palden Drepung, now known as Amarnath in Gundur. It was the site of Buddha's miracle teachings and the actual stupa was built after that on that very same site where the teachings were heard. I saw some of its original pieces in the museum in Amarnath, and some remnants can also be found in the fields. A small mound surrounded and overgrown with trees and bushes is supposed to be the original stupa.

So this is indeed also conceivably true about Borobudur.

We can see and understand Borobudur to be a multi-mandala - kylkhor, an ocean of mandalas and so in this way we can say that: on the east side reside millions of Akshobhya family mandalas of the kriya, charya, yoga and highest yoga tantra levels; on the south side millions of Ratnasambhava family mandalas and so on.

One interpretation, for example, is that principally the 32, 24 and 16 stupas on top of Borobudur represent the father, mother and union tantras represented by Guhyasamaja, Chakrasambhava and Yamantaka tantras respectively, and so forth. Then on and beyond all this we can say that **the** hundreds of stupas all over Borobudur represent the 5 levels and 772 deities of the kalachakra or wheel of time tantra. One view is that the mandala is principally based on the Kalachakra teachings. The important thing is to use the mandala and practise with meditation, concentration, recitation with the blessings of the lineage - this is the interdependent true nature, making clear light vision possible as a result of hard work.

In Tibetan tantra we very much use the 5 elements and the 5 female buddhas, who are the counterparts to the 5 male buddhas, the 5 wisdom consciousnesses.

The guhyasamaja tantra has 10 female deities in the mandala. Guhyasamaja does not have any cemeteries. Also, in the 13 or sometimes we say the 17 deity Yamantaka mandala, there are many female deities in the mandala. There are the five principal yamantakas in union with Vajravetali and four of the great element mothers. The four kapalas or skullcups are the four limitless female energies, and the four door protectors are in union. Then there are many offering deities and cemetery deities.

The five deities of Chakrasamvara of Mahasiddha Ghantapa - here Heruka is embracing Vajravahari, and around are YA RA LA VA where the great element mothers reside. Then there are the heroines of the 24 places embracing the heros.

Also the chakrasamvara body mandala of Mahasiddha Luipa is similar, with 8 female protector deities in the solitary form.

Then, the hevajra mandala, the kalachakra mandala there are so many female enlightened beings in so many mandalas. All the highest yoga tantras have yab- yum enjoyment initiations so all highest yoga tantras have female images of enlightenment.

Originally, the Buddha gave the lineage of the tantra to kings and queens, like Indrabhuti, Chandra Bhadra (Dawa Zangpo) and so on. Later on, centuries later, it went inside the monasteries, and then the tantras, especially the mother tantras became hidden, secret.

In the 8th century, the Tibetan king Songsten Gampo, asked the Indian panditas not to bring the mother tantras into Tibet. Actually, inside the monasteries they were also practising the mother tantras but not in a formal way. Also the choed khandroma, Machig Labdron and her ego-cutting practice exists in Tibet.

Mahasiddha Laksminkara who was a very great tantric master of the Sahaja tradition received teachings directly from Yamantaka for example. She gave direct transmissions to Lalitavajra and Indrabhuti, and she introduced the Chinnamastra or Headless Vajrayogini practice. Her story and many more details will soon be published in the Many Sided Jewel Book we are working on presently.

In Tibet

There were many great female practitioners who achieved high realisations and enlightenment, for example: the "Fortunate Girl", the disciple of Atisha who attained the rainbow body. Her body (which became very small as the elements absorbed) is kept at Nachu monastery in Tibet even to this day. The monastery is near Lhasa airport and we have visited several times also with Geshe Yeshe Wanchuk, and saw the mummified girl.



Also, in recent history there have been Tibetan buddhist women with realisations. For example there was ShongSep Jetsunma, she was always making mos, divinations, people thought she had clairvoyance. She used to correspond with H.H. Trijang Rinpoche and was truly a prodigious yogini.

Then, there was Khandro Lama, the sangyum of Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche - we met and sat together at His Holiness' kalachakra initiation in Bodhgaya; she was a kind thin old lady - we also met together in Kalingpong, India, and together visited many holy Buddhist places in India.

There is Sakya Jetsuma who lives in Canada. I met her in Varanasi during the LamDe teachings given by H.H. Sakya Trinzin.

Modern Times

Now, on one side it is the kaliyuga, the age of degeneration with many different kinds of problems; however, on the other side we can also say that we live in a lucky era. Nowadays, society is more socially balanced and everyone has access to a better education. We are indeed lucky as in this day and age all western women and men who like to do so, can know the theravada, mahayana and vajrayana paths; they can learn about medicine, yoga and astrology and they can practise the complete path to enlightenment. In Tibet, they put a lot of effort into preserving all the Buddha's teachings most precious and well, so they still exist today, and we may now benefit from them everywhere. We are indeed fortunate. In these modern times we are living in a lucky good time so there is no need to complain about anything - whatever we want to do we can, we are free.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness Panchen Lama, all the different lineage lamas are giving initiations, transmissions and teachings to vast gatherings, such as the great Kalachakra initiation and so forth. I took the Kalachakra initiation with both HH the Dalai Lama and HH the Panchen Lama in Tibet.

Moreover, there are many inter-religious gatherings worldwide. For example, I wrote a proposal for the creation of a permanent spiritual forum at the United Nations in 1995, which has been promoted worldwide with organisations and governments alike and was presented officially to the Secretary General of the United Nations in a leather bound book together with a sand mandala with the symbols of some of the main religious and spiritual traditions in the world in 1998.



First Interfaith Gathering with United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan - 1997

In 1995 I was invited to participate in the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the United Nations both in Perugia where I took part in the Perugia to Assisi Walk and offered prayers and then in New York,

taking part in the interfaith celebrations in honour of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations organised by the Temple of Understanding and the Cathedral of St John the Divine, before going on to the join the celebrations in Westminster Abbey in London, and meeting with Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Many auspicious and interdependently positive signs manifested during those days. For example: we were missing our connecting flight to New York in Frankfurt, and the airport staff rushed us through to our gate without our luggage going through the security check. We arrived at the gate to a: 'doors shut plane'! Miraculously the doors reopened to let us on board! In New York several rainbows appeared over our heads above the United Nations and as we visited the Dag Hammarskjold building. All precursors to the wonderful results we have obtained for our Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation becoming affiliated to the United Nations in 1997 and ten years later, being granted the special ECOSOC status, all owing to the infinite kindness of all our friends and our own dedication. Always with good feelings!

Following these historical events, I was invited twice a year to ring the United Nations Peace Bell in New York (subsequently also in Vienna) on the solstice days, and to guide the meditation for world peace at the United Nations. In 1997, during our meditating outside the permanently locked Dag Hammarskjold Meditation room (built and inaugurated by Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold in 1952) at the United Nations, under the beautiful Chagall stained Glass Peace Window, one UN security man appeared keys in hand: he unlocked the room for us to gather inside. We thus were allowed to enter to conduct our meditation and the following year the meditation hall was reopened permanently after years of being shut. In the centre of the room is a very simple rectangular stone slab, of which Dag Hammarskjold said: The stone in the middle of the room reminds us also of the firm and permanent in a world of movement and change.... The block of iron ore is part of the wealth we have inherited on this earth of ours. How are we to use it?". A part of our precious Mother Earth.

In Borobudur and surrounding areas, many temples of different religious/spiritual traditions have been discovered too.

In our NgalSo centres, we equally respect both men and women, they have high positions and are teachers, such as Lama Caroline - Dorje Kanyen Lhamo, spiritual guides, directors, editors, translators, managers, fund raisers chant leaders, they guide the meditation practices, they are librarians, accountants, secretaries, cleaners, drivers, sponsors, all kinds of things. I have many female disciples with professional careers like doctors, lawyers, environmentalists, diplomats, bankers, architects, engineers, and so on. All our teachings and practices are equally open to men and women. We are creating the causes for liberation in a nice way and doing very well. I remember for example one time I took a group of 20 women into Sera Monastery in South India, to demonstrate Self-Healing to hundreds of monks in their assembly hall. Actually if you check up in most dharma centres in the west the majority of the people there are women.

Like all the enlightened women I mentioned, there were many others and I am sure that in the present and future there will also be many great female practitioners, teachers, yoginis and spiritual leaders, so we are lucky and fortunate.

Our Mother Earth

Last but not least, please: it is so important to take care of the environment - our mother earth. We have also been working actively for the preservation of the amazon rain forest together with our Andes Himalaya Healing Arts Association in Brazil. I myself have been three times, Lama Michel Rinpoche has been once and Lama Caroline has been five times and we continue to work. Our Peace Media director Sunny Kuo also went to report on the situation in Amazonia.

I have also been to the Andes in Argentina. We do work a lot for the environment in Chile as well.



We have been planting thousands of trees in Tibet in support of UNEP's One billion trees for life, and carried out water projects in support of UNEP's water campaign, among the many humanitarian projects we realise to help the communities towards self-sustainability. Moreover, our "Help in Action" takes care of the adoptions at a distance of over 2000 children, monks, nuns and old people.

Our efforts to uphold the humanitarian aims of the United Nations and its agencies with our Lama



Gangchen World Peace Foundation also include our co-sponsoring the making of a bronze elephant, which was officially gifted to the United Nations on the 5th of November 1998 by the Republic of Kenya, Namibia and the Kingdom of Nepal, as a tribute to the environment and a commitment to the preservation of the natural world: forever expressing the hope that all animals and human beings may exist in harmony and peace with nature.

Moreover, in commemoration for this special occasion, the United Nations Society of Writers

published the book "To create a peaceful media environment" compilation of Lama Gangchen Peace Times editorials as a special dedication.

In conclusion I want to say that we need to take care both of mother earth - the container, and of the five elements - the contents.

I hope that in this way everyone can have a long life to reach enlightenment.

Thank you very much.





The 5 Dhyani Buddhas and the 5 Great Mothers as represented in the inner offering as the transformation of the 5 elements and the 5 essential wisdoms.

Lama Michel (Brazil)

It took me quite some time to understand that what we see in the different texts and sadhanas and representations are all actually representing, showing something that we already have, but showing a way how to transform it. We have a tendency, quite often, to try to go and look for something from 'outside'. When we talk about the state of buddhahood, where I talk about the great qualities of a buddha—I may talk about the great path of the bodhisattva or the great blessings... or whatever, you know...very often we have this tendency to go look for something greater than us, outside of us. What is really incredible, and I think it makes a big difference from other traditions and philosophies and so on, that I have seen until now, within the teachings of Buddha, from my own understanding, everything that we can see, everything that is shown to us, every quality of Buddha that is shown to us is actually a quality of ours or an aspect of our self, developed to its maximum potential. It is not like it is totally disconnected from our own reality right now.

It took quite some time to understand this. Very often we talk about the qualities of Buddha, we talk about great qualities and so on and we have all these images of the deities of the Tara, the Five Dhyani Buddhas, the Five Great Mothers and all such different types of deities such as Vajrayogini, Heruka and Kalachakra and so forth. There is very often the tendency to see it as something that is separated from us. So what happens is that we have this tendency to look at the qualities and images of the buddhas and see it as something that is coming from the outside. And, as we were talking yesterday that we have actually two main aspects in our mind, we could say we have one which can be called 'constructed' and one which is a 'spontaneous'. So in the 'constructed' form there are all the aspects of our mind that come from our culture, that we build up as we grow up in this life. The 'spontaneous' are aspects of our mind that we bring from life to life and we are being that way independently of where we are and with whom we are. What happens is that often we have a constructed view that is based on the understanding that I am no one, there is something that is the holy part outside of me and that one thing has nothing to do with the other. I do not know if this is clear? What happens is that even when we start our buddhist education, when we entered inside buddhism we come with that same way of thinking, the same mental structure—this same mental structure of seeing that 'I am here; Buddha is there' and, one has nothing to do with the other. What we tend to do, is request Buddha to 'Please give something to me'. If we are separate you need to give something to me and I need to offer something to you or I need to give something to you in order for you to give something to me. But that is not the way that Buddha taught.

It is for me personally very important that we are able to see how our own mind is functioning, how we are seeing things. So it is very important for us to see how actually we are relating to the sacred, to what is sacred. Normally, there is this tendency, within our own cultural basis and so on, to relate to the sacred as something that is totally detached and not connected to our own reality. I just want everyone to observe your own self and see if you can observe how you relate to yourself. If it is something that is like a reflection of myself in the future, because that is what Buddha is actually representing—you know, when we have an image of Buddha, when we go around Borobudur, what are the Five Dhyani Buddhas representing? Our own qualities developed to maximum potential. It is not representing some sort of god realm, to request blessings from someone coming from outside—surely buddhas exist and we should request their blessings. But what they really represent for us, or at least for me, is our own inner potential and there is not one quality of a buddha that we cannot find in ourselves right now—not developed, for sure. Okay? So this is something that helps a lot to better

understand many aspects of the teachings when we actually have this mental framework, when we look from this perspective.

For example, we have been talking these last days of the female energy in relation to Borobudur. Then there is one part that is interesting because from our western cultural perspective it would seem the other way around—the fact that for example, in Buddhism, compassion is male and wisdom is female. Am I wrong or would it be correct to say that in our culture it would be the opposite? In our culture normally we would say that compassion gives the image of the mother and wisdom we would give the image of the father? Why should I think that? Basically we have a different understanding of what is compassion and what is wisdom. So here comes the other aspect, understanding what do we actually mean by wisdom; understanding what we actually mean by compassion?

For some reason we have this understanding often that compassion is somehow weakness; a person that has a lot of compassion is a person that somehow does not have that strength to realise things because if you have a lot of compassion, this makes you somehow weak. This is a wrong way of seeing things, but its present in our cultural view. Instead, compassion—it is a way of action, it is doing, it is realising. For example, if the water bottle is about to fall from the table and I do not want that to happen, compassion, which means not to want someone to suffer and if I do not want the bottle to fall—the point is not just to say “Oh, I do not want the bottle to fall, then I stay sad about it”, what I need to do is to start running and try to stop it from falling. So compassion has this attitude: like the description of compassion is just like if we have only one son or daughter and the son or daughter is in the middle of a fire, burning—what do we do, just watch and cry? Or jump into the middle of the fire to take him/her out? That is the actual compassion: doing something to help others to get out of suffering, you see.

“While, when we talk about ‘wisdom’, the wisdom is not the facts and logics and understanding from a theoretical point of view. Wisdom is actually much more subtle, much deeper. Wisdom is the understanding from a non-conceptual way. There is also the conceptual understanding and so and so on, but when we talk about wisdom it actually goes deeper, we are not talking about the level of understanding that is - how to say - conceptual knowledge or something like that. We are actually talking about perceiving something at a much more subtle level. This is where, from my point of view, comes the fact that we say that wisdom is female. It is the subtleness of understanding in a non-conceptual way of perceiving things, of realising things. Then, if we actually look from this perspective, we can have a better understanding when we log that wisdom as female, because if we look from that way, then we really see.

For example: normally we have, let us say, man and woman who both have the same type of capacity and potential to reach enlightenment, because what reaches enlightenment is the subtle mind, not our gross mind or something like that. But still, as man and as woman we are influenced by our body basically and by the way how we are made and so on and so on. So normally, even in our western culture we say that women have a sixth sense, which means this more subtle type of perception and its not something that we call conceptual, its not something that is intellectual, its not something that someone can teach you in school—its something that you can develop more and more and you can use it in many different ways. However, here once again, if you are able to see your own level of wisdom, then you can understand that you can develop it and use it for your own favour. Otherwise, what can happen also is that you can actually end up using your own wisdom, not really for your benefit. We can end up using our own wisdom in a way that can actually even be harmful to ourselves. For example, this so-called sixth sense, this ability to look at things and understand somehow what is happening, without following a logical path. I think many of you have already experienced it, right? Sometimes we can call it intuition, but sometimes it is not even intuition, really actually a knowing. But then, if you ask how come? Give me the logical reasoning and so on—it takes some time to find it out. Maybe you can even find it out, but it takes time, so you are going through a different pathway, okay? Sadly, very often this wonderful quality is used, instead of for getting out of samsara, it is often



used to go and look for our own objects of desire and so on—that is why it generates jealousy and so on. But every aspect, if we talk about aspects of a buddha, of wisdom—we do have also this aspect in our self in an undeveloped manner. So, because of that, it is important for us to try and understand this, so for example, this female aspect of wisdom, this ability, this sensibility to see things and to understand what is happening. This is very good, but we need to use it in the positive way, not in a negative way. What does it mean to use it in a positive way? Need to use it with compassion, with love, not use it guided by our own attachment, desire, jealousy and envy and so on, otherwise it just becomes something that will generate more and more suffering for ourselves.

“Similar to that actually, when we talk about wisdom, we have normally in relation the Five Dhyani Buddhas and the Five Great Mothers and so on, we have what are called the five wisdoms, which are the wisdoms of the Five Dhyani Buddhas and the wisdom of the Five Great Mothers. When we talk about the five wisdoms, we ask, ‘What are the Five Wisdoms?’ which are being represented by the Five Great Mothers also and the Five Dhyani Buddhas—but what actually do they mean? Normally we always go to the fact, okay ‘The five wisdoms are—we have the Dharmadhatu Wisdom, there is the All-Accomplishing Wisdom, there is the Wisdom of Equanimity, the Wisdom of Discrimination, the Mirror-Like Wisdom and for me personally, it took quite some time for me to start to understand the meaning of these five wisdoms. When we say, okay, the Mirror-Like Wisdom and, then so what, what does it actually mean? Mirror-Like Wisdom and so on... so for me it was very beneficial when I read one text on Guhyasamaja, actually two texts where there is a passage that explains these five wisdoms. One text by Kedrub Rinpoche, disciple of Lama Tsong Khapa and the other one by Lama Tsong Khapa himself—the commentary on the generation and completion stage of Guhyasamaja. And there is a passage explaining the five wisdoms, making it very clear and actually, he is explaining it showing what we call the ‘basis’ of the five wisdoms. We have the five wisdoms in the state of a buddha and then we have the five wisdoms in the state we are right now, at least as I am. So in order for us to understand the state of a buddha, we should first understand our own state now. Let us just see these five wisdoms.

“First of all, we can start with the wisdom that is normally connected to Amogasiddhi, which is the so called ‘All-Realising’ wisdom. The All-Realising Wisdom basically is actually our own ability of knowing what to do. It is the aspect of our mind that says, ‘I want to do this’, ‘I do not want to do that’, ‘I want to go here’, ‘I want to say’, ‘I am going to speak’, ‘I am going to walk’, ‘I am going to do this and that’. And actually, we always have the present, but the point is that not having our own All-Realising Wisdom well developed, we have doubt, we have fear—‘Oh, maybe I do this?’ or ‘What is going to happen and what happens if I do that?’, ‘And if this goes like this and if that goes like that’ so we have this uncertainty—this is a sign of our own underdeveloped All-Realising Wisdom (not developed enough) so...that is why, when we talk about the All-Realising Wisdom of Buddha, it is showing that one of the qualities of the Buddha is the certainty of every action. This is one of the qualities that we need to develop in this sense. At this moment we know what we want to do, very often we are always ‘acting’, acting in the sense of doing something, thinking, speaking, walking, acting physically and so on, making decisions, so we always have this mind which knows what to do, but very often this mind is not sure—‘Yes I know what to do but I am not really sure about what I am doing’ and this is showing one of the forms of ignorance that we have, which is most of all the ignorance of the law of cause and effect—very often we do things and have no clue what the result going to be. In the same way that we experience results and have no idea what were the causes for that result to happen, so in this way it is one of the qualities that we need to develop gradually, that is the wisdom of Araya Tara, the wisdom of Amogasiddhi, which is the wisdom of knowing what to do so slowly, gradually, developing trust—like Rinpoche yesterday was talking about the great yogis and the great mahasiddhas and so on that out of their great love and compassion, and out of the fact that they use their senses always positively, whatever they do, it always goes fine—when you have the correct attitude, it does not matter, even if things go wrong, finally they go well. This is because there is this certainty. For example, if we learn to develop a certainty in what we do, which is also a way of faith,

developing faith in our actions because there is coherency—I do a positive action and the results are going to be positive, even if they momentarily appear in a different way to what I expected. Because one of the things that creates a lot of doubt for us I believe, is the fact that somehow we become quite arrogant in the way that we believe that how we see reality is how reality should be. And this is for me one of the greatest forms of arrogance we can have, because who am I to say how things should be? Really, but still I say that ‘Tomorrow, this should happen, that should happen’, ‘Things should not have been like this, things should have been like that’. Whenever I say this, who am I to say how things should have been, what should have happened or not and so on. Somehow we have our own image of the future of how things should go and then we become worried if things do not go in that right direction and so we are always uncertain, what am I doing, where it will go, where it will not go—actually we do not have so much trust of interdependence itself of our own life because we want things to go in a direction that actually is not really possible. Which means, whenever we make a project, whenever we put an objective, in other words, whenever we create an expectation—did it ever happen that things simply went perfectly as we expected? For me not, I do not know for you? So, in the moment that we think that because we have already had this experience, that is enough, we do not need to continue to project and say ‘Oh, things should be in this way; should be in that way’ because finally we know by our experience that it will not go exactly as we wanted. But the point is that we create our own image of how things should be and we get attached to it, so what happens is that when the future becomes present someone is wrong because things are not in the way they should have been, why? Because I expected it to be and then when the present path which is not good becomes past, then we are sad about what happened because of this and that and so on.

I believe personally that, in order for us to develop this certainty, this faith we need to somehow develop humility in relation to interdependence and faith in interdependence. I know that whatever I do there is coherence in my actions and results and if I follow a correct path in my actions, in one way or another things are going to follow the right path. So I have nothing to fear. Sometimes people come and they say to me ‘Oh, I do not know what to do if I do this or if I do that and what if I make a decision and the decision was not the right one?’—there is never a right decision in the sense that it has no problems, no implications. ‘What if I make a decision and after things do not go well?’—ah if that is your problem, do not worry because whatever decision you may make at a certain point, something will not go well. We know it from our own experience, so the point is that if we expect to go in a specific way then we really have a lot to worry about! But in the moment that we simply accept there is a flow of life, which is the interdependence of causes and conditions that we constantly create, we make our choices according to our own intuition, our wisdom, our knowledge, our faith, our experience, our motivation and then we need simply to try and follow it in the best way we can.

“So, to have trust in interdependence, I really believe it makes for us to relax quite a lot, because to be attached to our own view of reality is quite tiring. In the moment that we have trust in interdependence, this helps us to have less doubt and gradually to develop more and more this All-Realising Wisdom.

“The next wisdom is the so-called Wisdom of Equanimity or Equalising Wisdom, which in Tibetan is called nyam nyeshe. The nyam nyeshe or Equalising Wisdom we have the Equalising Wisdom of the basis, which is our ability to understand and see the similarities between things. So, I can go and I can say okay, these two objects are different, one is a coconut, one is an apple but both of them are fruits; I can see that they are both fruits, I can see that. We are all different, but we are all human beings, so we are similar as human beings. This ability to see these similarities is the Equalising Wisdom, which is actually a very important aspect of our mind. Let us just try to imagine what would happen if we would not be able to see the similarities between things—we cannot create connections, everything is totally detached, one from each other; so it becomes very difficult. But at this point, our own ability to see similarities is also limited. As we develop it, we do not create anymore differences between one person and another; we all suffer, we all want to be happy, we are all interdependent. So if we really follow in this way, we will see there is no more reason to have attraction to one and aversion



to another and so on, because we are able to see that we are all part of the same path, we are all following the same path together, we are all in the same conditions. Then if we go deeper, we can even perceive that actually, all phenomena are of the same nature—lack of inherent existence. And like this we can go on and on and actually enter in a much deeper level of understanding. But, you know, it is this lack of development of the Wisdom of Equanimity or the Equalising Wisdom that creates so much division between people—‘This is my country’ or ‘This is your country’ or ‘I am like this’ or ‘You are like that’—the inability to accept each other. So the more we develop the Equalising Wisdom the more we can accept each other, the more we are able to put things together. So if we think about that ability that we do have right now, of actually perceiving the similarities between things and then we develop it to its maximum potential, then we can understand another aspect of the mind of a buddha, which is directly connected our own state right now.

“Then we have the third one which I am going to jump to Akshobhya and we have what is called the *sor toper yeshe* [?] which is the Wisdom of Discrimination or the Discerning Wisdom that is the other side that needs to go together with Equalising Wisdom, which is actually our ability since this moment to understand the differences between phenomena. While Equalising Wisdom is the ability to perceive what the similarities are, the Wisdom of Discrimination is the ability to see what the differences are. So instead of saying okay, yes both of you are human beings but this is one person, this is another person, you have these qualities and you have these other qualities; there is this difference, that difference—the ability to see the difference between each and everything. That is why we say a buddha at the same time that he sees two persons, there is no difference between them because the way how he loves them and so on is the same, but still he is able to see each and every one as an individual in his/her own particular manner.

So, for us, as we have right now this ability of discerning—this is this, this is that, but still that is not so well developed, we are still not able to really see the differences. For example, we are not able to see impermanence, we are not able to understand the constant transformation, so if I look at the fruits that are in front of me now and the fruits that were here five minutes ago, for me looks like the same—





not able to discern what's the difference between them. Anyway, for me, many things looks like all the same, but actually they are not. So it is the ability to really understand deeply the differences between each and everyone. It is like even if we look at television one way is we put all the little dots, pixels together, another way is looking at each pixel and understanding and seeing each one of the pixels as an entity in itself. So it is the ability to see the whole picture without losing the details of each one as a whole picture itself. Every phenomena is a universe by itself we could say, almost. So it is the ability to see every aspect of everything.

“Then we have what is called the Mirror-Like Wisdom. This wisdom is the ability of our mind to perceive more than one phenomena at the same time. For example, if we take a mirror, it can reflect so many things together—it can reflect the sky, the mountains, the stupa, the people, the trees, the birds, all of these at once—the sun, so many things as once. Similar to that, our mind is able to perceive so many things as the same time but now our own Mirror-Like Wisdom is a bit dirty, so we cannot see so many things at the same time. If we focus on one thing we do not have the other things clear, they become unclear around us. Instead, the more we develop this so-called Mirror-Like Wisdom is the ability of perceiving and understanding everything that is happening around us with clarity. It is said by some scientists, they make studies and they say that our brain receives in every second two billion bits of information to our five senses, basically. So we receive around two billion pieces of information a second and we are aware of two thousand of these two billions normally. So all these other 1.9 billion or whatever pieces of information we actually receive, but do not elaborate because we are not able to see—like we do not have enough inner space to see all of what is happening. So the Mirror-Like Wisdom, the ability to develop the Mirror-Like Wisdom is the ability to have each time more and more awareness of what is happening around us.

For example, if we stop now and we really concentrate well, can we observe our own breath? Can we listen to our own breath, maybe when that sound stops? Can we? Previously, could we be listening to our own breath? Was it happening or not, were we breathing or not? If we really stop and concentrate can we feel our heart beating; actually at this moment is our heart beating—I hope so. But we cannot feel it, even though the information is coming to us, we are receiving the information of the feeling of touch from our heart beating and so on, but we are not aware of it. So now that we, in order to perceive something, must close the other perception and concentrate on one.

Instead, when we talk about developing the Mirror-Like Wisdom it means, developing more and more our ability of perceiving phenomena at the same time; having this clarity of mind. And this is also very important aspect, that is why when we say buddhas can perceive all phenomena simultaneously, it also means this ability of actually having this awareness of all the information that arrives at once. If we just think, what would happen to us if we simply had awareness of everything that is happening around us, that our senses can perceive? It is mind-blowing actually it is so much! But still there are people for example, that have much better awareness than most of us of what is happening. I always remember, there was a doctor, I really liked him very much (he already passed away) in Nepal. He had this very simple clinic and when a person would come in the clinic... you know I remember once there was a friend and this friend went to take another person to accompany him to go to the doctor, this doctor he had his clinic in a place that when he saw a patient he did not have a closed (private) room, it was the waiting room where he would see the patients, all one. Then he came to the person and said, ‘Oh you, what do you come for?’ and he said: ‘Oh, no nothing, I am just the company’, to which the doctor replied: ‘No, you have this problem, that problem, that problem’. He said: ‘How do you know, you have not even touched me you have not even examined me?’. The doctor said: ‘Ah, when you came in I saw you walking in this way... you see, the colour of your face.... when you talk I can see the colour of your tongue’ and so on.

If we know how to observe, we can read so much. Actually the messages that are written around are much, much, much more than we are able to read. There is much more behind what is said than what





we are actually able to perceive and understand. This is because of not entering into the aspect of telepathy and the more subtle way of perception and so on—with them we can go even further.

So, imagine the simple fact of being able to be aware of every piece of information that arrives to us? That is what we may call by being the All Knowing One. Based on that it is really the effect of us understanding a little bit better. Just if we look at these four wisdoms, we can start to have a better understanding of what is a buddha, okay? A buddha has the All-Realising Wisdom fully developed, which means perfect certainty of every action. All-Equalising Wisdom, which means the ability to see the similarities between each and every phenomena, so no distinctions, no division. It is the Wisdom of Discrimination that has the ability to see the differences between each and every phenomena and respect the differences between each and every one. The Mirror-Like Wisdom, the ability to perceive and have awareness, direct awareness of every piece of information that arrives at any moment.

“And then there is the fifth wisdom, the so called Dharmadhatu Wisdom. This is our own mind, it is not an aspect of the mind, it is the mind itself. At this moment, our own Dharmadhatu Wisdom—it is called Dharmadhatu Wisdom but it is not so much part of wisdom in the sense that it is polluted by ignorance, by anger, by attachment, by jealousy, by pride, by miserliness and so on. Instead, the Dharmadhatu Wisdom of a buddha is the mind free from all sorts of defilements and, when we talk about freedom from defilements we have three different levels, which are the constructed or *kundak*, the spontaneous level. And then we have the imprints of ignorance, the imprints of anger and so on, which also need to be eliminated. In Tibetan we call *pagcha*. So, actually when we talk about the Dharmadhatu Wisdom, it is the mind itself in a pure state. Our Dharmadhatu Wisdom right now is our own mind. As we develop it, as we eliminate the defilements, slowly, slowly it becomes more the actual Dharmadhatu Wisdom of a buddha. But let us say the substance of a buddha, when one day we become a buddha, what is the substance a buddha will be, what we have now but in a different way, developed differently. The same continuum, it is not something totally separate from what we are. So, it is actually for example when we look to the Five Wisdoms—the Five Wisdoms are showing us how to better understand what we mean by enlightenment, what is a buddha? We can actually see that a buddha is connected to our own reality—it is not something that is disconnected from us. We are talking about qualities that we can develop, that we already have right now but we simply need to develop better.

Similar to this, every other aspect that we can see inside Buddha’s teachings, when we talk about the qualities of Buddha and so on, there is not one single quality - for what I have seen until now - that is not connected to a state of ourselves at this moment. It is something that we can develop. That is because it is by understanding that, that we can actually get the point, which is actually the most important, which is ‘I can reach buddhahood’.

Do we have the Five Wisdoms? Yes. Do we still need to develop them a little bit more? Yes. But we have them, right? So the bases are there; the substance is there. It is like one thing to have a beautiful banquet and having all the vegetables and such, doing all the cutting and preparing and do all the stuff, but it is there. We do not need to go to look somewhere else because the first key for success is to use the resources that we have, is to depend on the resources that we have and not depend on resources that we do not have. And this, within Buddha’s teachings is something that is very clear, we always depend on resources that we do have.

For example, the Five Wisdoms are resources that we do have. The body, the mind that we transform in Vajrayana buddhism is shown very often in the tantra, it is always the resources that we do have—how to develop better these resources that actually we do already have. The important thing, just to conclude, is the fact that when we say that our life is so precious, sometimes I think that we do not really understand what we mean. Sometimes it looks like, ‘Oh yes, life is precious’, we have in our own culture in the west a concept that life by its own nature is precious. I do not see it that way really. I believe personally, when we talk about the concept of reincarnation, we die and are reborn

so many times, what is the point: you die and so what? You get reborn. So when we talk about the preciousness of this life it is not the fact that life is precious—yes life is precious, no doubt about it, all of us we protect life to the best of our abilities; life must be respected and so on. But when we talk about the preciousness of life, it means that we have within ourselves already, everything that we may need in order to fulfill the objective that we have had since beginning-less time, which is to eliminate suffering and to be happy. We have everything we need, we have all the resources, what Buddha showed us and what our guru is showing us, is how to do it. But the resources depend on us. If we are able to really understand that, it makes a big difference in the way we deal with and practise dharma.

We should be careful not to practice the dharma with this mode of thinking that, 'Ah its something that I must get from outside'—I am nothing, I am just you know as...' sometimes I use this term that we are nothing more than infantile, cowardly, miserable beings. We are infantile, because we are selfish, we are cowards because we are afraid of suffering and that makes us suffer even more and, we are miserable because that is the result of being infantile and being cowards. But sometimes we may just put ourselves down and say 'I am nothing you know, and the guru is everything and the Buddha is everything and please take care of me!' And the Buddha would look to us and say, 'I am sorry, I cannot', 'But what have I done wrong that you cannot take care of me?' That is a question that we may put because that is how we were educated, very often. The Buddha would say that you have not done anything wrong, that I cannot take care of you. 'It is simply that I can show you what you can do, but then it depends on you doing it or not, I cannot do it for you, I am sorry, I would love to, but I cannot'.

The important thing that I want just to conclude, point out, is that we do have all the resources necessary to reach enlightenment as a minimum, to have a much, much, much better life, even though we have a very good life, within the same external conditions that we have right now. We actually do have the resources internally, we do have all the resources necessary, it depends on how we use them. If we just take the amount of energy that we put for nonsense things and simply start putting this energy in things that make sense. If we simply do one thing, which is to follow what we know is right and abandon what we know is wrong, what a difference that would make—enormous.

Based on that it is really the fact that: please remember that we can do it, it is just a matter of using the resources that we have in one direction or another. Sometimes we may listen to the stories of great practitioners and yogis who reached enlightenment in one lifetime and some people say, 'Oh that is too difficult, that is impossible' and so on. Sure, if we pass our whole life inside "FaceBook" or television, looking at news and worrying about the problems of other people, gossiping all the time or whatever, sure three aeons is not enough to reach enlightenment like that. But, if we take all our energy, 24 hours, and we direct our mind correctly and so on, then it is possible. It is a matter of where we put our own energy. But here comes one difficulty, which is the fact that we are conditioned because when we repeat the same actions so many times, after it becomes very difficult to change that habit.

For example, one of the things Lama Gangchen Rinpoche has been saying for such a long time and with so much emphasis and still looks like it is being said for someone else—for example gossiping. Today when we were in the museum, that the guy explained the things in the museum. He said 'Right speech, not gossiping, the Buddha have a big ear and a small mouth because he is always ready to listen but he is talking very little'. That is what he said you know. Not gossip. You know it right? Just do it! Because of one reason I say it. Whatever we do, all of us we are free to do anything we want, but we are not free from the consequences of our actions. So when I say a word, it is not mine anymore, it is gone and it is going to bring so many results after that. So, one thing for me that makes a really big difference is that before talking, to really think what I have to say, what is the benefit of saying it? What is the result that it is going to bring, why am I saying this—that makes a big difference, okay. So this is just one example of 'If I know that something is good, I follow it, if I know that it is not good I stop it'. Is it easy to follow this way? Right! But is it easy to continue doing things that we know



that are not good for us? In one way it is easy, but the result is very difficult. It is better to put some little effort in the beginning and have a better result later. Just remember that whenever we see the images of buddhas, they are showing us that we can make it; they are showing us that actually we have within ourselves the potential to reach enlightenment. So I think this is all..

“Ok, I will conclude with a very short story, that I like very much. Many of you have heard about it, but for me it makes a big difference very often.

“It is the story of this man, he is walking on a path, but let us refer it to ourselves, let us say we are walking on a road okay and then as we are walking on this road, it is dark, it is a little path and it is quite dark but at the point where we are, suddenly there is some light. There is a man there looking for something very desperately and we ask him what happened? He said that he lost the key to his home, he cannot go back to his home, lost the keys. We ask if we can help and he says yes, please help; and we start going around looking for the key and so on and we cannot find it anywhere! Someone asks him where he lost the key, he said down there by the road. Why on earth are we looking for it here? ‘Oh’ he says, ‘the ground I lost it on is too dark, here at least it is not so dark it is easier to search for it’. We can put as much effort as we want but when we put it in the wrong place, it will not get the right result. Because of that, when we know that something is right, let us just do it! When we know that something is wrong, let us just let it be. Okay?

Thank you very much!







Lama Caroline, England

Women in Buddhism

How many famous and enlightened buddhist women can you name? Lets try and experiment now and see. I think that most of us would be hard pressed to name more than a handful of famous buddhist women. I am sad to say that until recently I also was not even aware of the names or stories of the great realised women around the buddha and could name only a handful of actual buddhist women who had been gurus, mahasiddhas, and great teachers and lineage holders. Working on this text has been a great discovery for me. Although I have always known these women existed and I always felt I had only been told one half of buddhist history , I did not realise how many real accounts of female practitioners there were, and how great these women are. I am very happy to know the names and stories of several hundred of these dharma ladies and this book is a small selection as there are far too many stories of wonderful enlightened women and their deeds to put into this small book.

I didn't know for example that the chief female disciples of the Buddha were the arhats Ksema and Utpâlavarnâ. Ksemâ was considered to have been equally wise as Sariputra, who was considered the wisest of the Buddha's disciples. And Utpâlavarnâ had the same psychic powers as Maudgallyana the other heart disciple of the Buddha. Isn't that fantastic! I hope we will see more images of them around in the future, perhaps to the sides of Sariputra and Maudgallyana on our temple walls. But even by saying their names, and remembering them this has the same power of invocation, as when we recite the names of the Ngalso lineage gurus.

Let me share with you the story of Utpalavarna. While giving birth to a daughter, Utpalavarna was shocked to discover that her husband was having an affair with her mother! Utpalavarna ran away from home, leaving her newborn child behind. Sometime later she became the wife of a wealthy man in Varanasi, only to discover one day that the second wife he brought home was her own daughter! Disappointed with life, Utpalavarna became a courtesan in Rajagriha. After a chance encounter with Maudgalyayana, she became a disciple of the Buddha and engaged in Buddhist practice under the care and guidance of Mahaprajapati Gotami, the Buddha's aunt and foster mother and the first buddhist nun. Utpalavarna attained arhatship.

Utpalavarna developed psychic powers equal to Maudgalyayana and there is one famous story about her siddhis. Buddha Sakyamuni went to visit his mother Maya, in the deva realm, called the Trayastrimsa or Heaven of the Thirty Three. Having taught Maya and the other devas the Abhidhamma, the Buddha returned to Jambudvipa (our world) by walking down a staircase with Brahma to his right and Indra to his left. At the bottom, the Buddha was greeted by the nun Utpalavarna. Utpalavarna, had attained many miracle powers and tried to impress the Buddha by transforming herself into a Chakravartin, a universal emperor. In this majestic form Utpalavarna stood in a chariot surrounded by millions of troops and wanted to pay homage to the Buddha. The Arhat Udayin, who was also there, recognised Utpalavarna by the sweet odour that her body emitted, then the Tathagata Buddha told her off for making unnecessary magical emanations in front of him. She turned back into her normal form as a fully ordained nun and said sorry. My teacher T.Y.S. Lama Gangchen Rinpoche has this thanka in his room - it was one of the only two thankas he brought with him when he moved to the west. I have always looked at this image but until now I never realised what it was about So this is just one an example of a female arhat hiding in plain sight from us for many years- maybe now we will begin to see many more...

Anyway like her story there are so many amazing women who helped to develop buddhism, like for example Asoka's daughters. One was a nun called Theri Sanghamitta who brought the buddha relics to Sri Lanka in her hair. Another daughter of Asoka, Charmatti brought the buddha relics Nepal - she put them in the four directions around Patan in four stupas and the relics are still there.

Thank goodness for the members of the ancient Theravada tradition who democratically recorded the stories of the enlightened nuns and laywomen of Buddha's time in great detail. There are some complaints these days about the decline of the nun's order - some people think the fact that nuns had more vows than monks was a kind of discrimination but as far as I can see having studied buddhist ethics during my Masters Degree course, the reason why the nuns had more vows was for their protection, against sexual violence, and to stop them being exploited as domestic labourers by laymen and monks. For example the vow for nuns not to go alone into the forest is because The Arhat Utpalavarna was raped and murdered in the forest by a group of Brahmins other accounts say it was Devadhatta. So it wasn't a case of sexist discrimination, but more a case of practical necessity that this and all the other monastic vows came about, based on what actually happened to people in the sangha. For many years an organisation called Sakyadhita the Daughters of the Buddha have been campaigning for the reinstatement of full ordination for nuns in the Tibetan tradition and since 2007, Tenzin Pelmo a nun who received full ordination in China has been supporting the Tibetan nuns, although the reinstatement has not yet come about.

When we look at a Tibetan religious painting, a *thangka* around is a rainbow border and the center is called the 'mirror' - i.e. in the image you are supposed to see your higher self. Of course I love all the Gurus, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis and Protectors. Tara, Saraswati and of course Vajrayogini are fully realised buddhas, but in some way they are harder to grasp, as they are the ideal, like the Madonna. They are not human or faulty in anyway, and human role models are important. There are plenty of *thankas* and stories of monks, and the majority of the Mahasiddhas were men and these images and human stories about their progression on the path and their mistakes, gives us all regardless of gender a lot of hope and inspiration, that we too can transcend our human condition, but there are definitely more role models for men. Machig Labdron's, story is a human story, and describes her journey, she did not immediately go from zero to hero or heroine, this is an example of a practitioner that normal people can relate to. Tara or the Five Great Element Mothers are buddha-friends you offer a cup of tea to, but Machig Labdron is a buddha-friend you feel you could drink a cup of tea with.

One reason why the bas-reliefs on Candi Borobudur are so unusual and special- is because the stupa has the best surviving example of the Gandhavyuha bas-reliefs which relates Sudana's encounters with 53 gurus on the path to enlightenment. Of this 53 gurus 20 are women, housewives, mothers and daughters, nuns, prostitutes, goddesses, a teacher of healing, divination, jewelry making and writing. The buddha's mother Maya and wife Gopa are there and who represent the 9th and 10th bhumis, enlightenment. This is something really special as the Gandhavyuha is the mahayana sutra that talks about the largest number of enlightened women. Professor Lokesh Chandra pointed out to me that in Domo Monastery, a Kadampa monastery established in the 11th century there was a frieze representing the Gandhavyuha with captions naming all the gurus (now it is badly damaged but we can presume this is the case).

However by the time the *kangyur* or the canonical text collection was closed, around the 14th century then the Gandhavyuha was inserted only in an abridged form. For whatever reason, this sutra was not fully translated into Tibetan - all the chapters that relate to Sudhana's pilgrimage were not translated - so in the Tibetan version only the chapters where Sudhana relates to Manjushri, Maitreya and Samantebhadra remain- giving the sutra a very different feel from the original. I think Borobudur is great as it's a kind of snapshot of Buddhism half way through its journey from the times of the historical buddha (approximately the 5th cent. BC) to our modern times so we can see that in the beginning of buddhism, and up to the 8th century when Borobudur was constructed women had a very high position of enlightened equality, at least as represented by the Gandhavyuha sutra.

In the vajrayana period in India there were many female siddhas and yoginis but there was little interest in representing them or recording their stories. However, I have recovered the names of at least 40 of them. And if anyone looks closely at a *thangka* representing the 84 mahasiddhas they can



see that Mahasiddhas lilapa, virupa, dombhipa, savaripa, saraha, tantipa, naropa, ajokipa kankana, tengipa, kukuripa, babhahi , indrabhuti , ghandhapa, tilopa, darikapa have female consorts painted next to them or in the case of Naropa his consort Nigyuma is clearly referred to in the texts. We presume that the consorts were also enlightened in their own right, so 84 plus 16 makes 100 mahasiddhas i think.....

I think that most Buddhist women would just like equal of opportunity in the dharma, and to feel more represented and contributions made by women to be acknowledged. Most Buddhist women thrive to contribute to the flourishing of Buddhism.....

The nuns especially in Asia should be given more dignity and a better opportunity to hear and study the dharma, and also more economic support.

When Trijang Choktrul Rimpoche, the head of our Ganden Nyengyu lineage and the reincarnation of Lama Gangchen's root guru visited Europe in 2012 he said:

“Until now women have not been treated very well or with respect in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Really I don't know why this is , but this needs to change.”

I hope that in a small way this congress here at Borobudur will be part of that positive process of change.



Hymn to The Perfection of Wisdom

Sariputra: Perfection of wisdom, O Lord, is accomplishment of cognition of all-knowing. Perfection of wisdom is realized as all-knowledge.

The Lord: So it is, Sariputra, as you say. Sariputra: Veneration towards perfection of wisdom polishes away obscurities, revealing light, O Lord. I pay homage to perfection of wisdom!

She is worthy of homage. She is unstained, and thus entire worlds along with complete systems cannot stain her. Regardless whether viewed from, in or as absolute unification, beings come to reveal her as spontaneous source of light, having dispelled any limitations, and things of any triple worlds. Holding her in supreme reverence leads beings away from blinding darkness caused by defilements and wrong views. As this is her nature, we find shelter. Most excellent is her impartial abiding. Within us she is revealed as cause to seek the safety of wings of enlightenment. Realization of her brings light to the blind. Our being is permeated by her light so all fear and distress may be forsaken within her revelation. Veneration of her acquires the five eyes, and shows this path to all beings. She herself is an organ of vision.

Her knowledge disperses the gloom and darkness of delusion. She does nothing about all dharmas. She becomes the path and guide any who have strayed on to an obscure road. She is identical with all-knowledge. She never produces any dharma because she cast off any residues relating to both kinds of coverings, these produced by defilements and these produced by any thing whatsoever. She does not stop any dharma, herself unstopped and unproduced...is this perfection of wisdom. She is mother of the Bodhisattvas, on account of emptiness of own mark. As the donor of the jewel of all Buddha-dharmas she brings about the ten powers (of a Buddha).

She cannot be crushed. She protects the unprotected with the help of the four grounds of self-confidence. She is the antidote to birth-and-death. She reveals this clear knowingness of the true nature of any own-being of all dharmas, for she does not stray away from it. The perfection of wisdom of Buddhas, the Lords, sets in motion this wheel of Dharma.



Prajnaparamita, Java - Indonesia

List of Female Buddhas

Famous Nuns in the First Sangha of Buddha

Mahâ-Pajâpatî Gotami the buddhas aunt, foster mother and the first buddhist nun

Buddha's chief nun disciples were **Ksemâ** who had the same wisdom as Sariputra and Utpâlavarnâ, who had great psychic powers like Maudgallyana...she was raped in the forest after she became an arhat.

The great teacher **Patacara**, who lost her family in tragic circumstances

The nun **Dhammadinna** who answered philosophy questions from her ex husband
the nuns **Sukka** and **Vajira**

The nun **Sakula** who had divine eye of clairvoyance

The nun **Upali** who had great morality and knowledge of vinaya

the nun Sakula who had the power of the 'divine eye', or clairvoyance like the Arhat Anuraddha.

Also **the housewife Visâkhâ** who was famous for her generosity equal to that of the merchant Anâthapindada

- 108 Female Arhats from Therigatha
- 1. **the nun whose name has been forgotten** - Like a pot of pickled greens boiled dry.
- 2. **Bhikkuni Mutta**, What bliss – free at last from my shameless husband! Free at last from three crooked things! Collapsing to the ground from weakness –the Dhamma appears!
- **Punna** Bursting the mass of darkness.
- **Tissa** (there are several arhat nuns with this name)

Dhira (there are several arhat nuns with this name)

Mitta

Bhadra

Upasama

Mutta

Dharmadhina

- 1. bhikkhuni Alavika
- 2. bhikkhuni Soma
- 3. bhikkhuni Kisagotami
- 4. bhikkhuni Vijaya
- 5. bhikkhuni Uppalavanna
- 6. bhikkhuni Cala
- 7. bhikkhuni Upacala
- 8. bhikkhuni Sisupacala
- 9. bhikkhuni Sela
- 10. bhikkhuni Vajira

Uttama – Seven days of continuous meditation. On the eighth: Victory!

Dantika and the Elephant – Taming the mind: "Why I'd gone to the woods in the first place."

Ubbiri – Groups of Three Verses A mother conquers her grief over her daughter's death.

Bhadda Kapilani – Bhadda recalls her ex-husband (Ven. Maha Kassapa), and sings of how they now are both "cooled of passions."



- Vimala** – The Former Courtesan A former prostitute joins the ranks of the arahants.
- Nanda** – Nanda's Vision Contemplating the foul nature of the body, Nanda uproots all passions.
- Mittakali** – No time for heedlessness!
- Sona** – With Many Children/Mother of Ten . Sona conquers aging: "I spit on old age!"
- Bhadda Kundalakesa** – The Former Jain Ascetic Bhadda looks back and gives thanks to whomever it was who long ago gave her a robe when she set out in the homeless life.
- Patacara** – Preserver of the Vinaya "And taking a pin, I pulled out the wick..."
- Patacara's Thirty Students** Patacara's instructions lead all her students to arahantship.
- Canda** – The Beggar . A former beggar becomes an arahant.
- Pañcasata Patacara** – The Soothing of Grief/Patacara's 500 Students A mother conquers her grief over her son's death: "As he came, so he has gone – so what is there to lament?"
- Vasitthi the Madwoman** – A mother conquers her grief over her son's death.
- The Verses of Final Knowledge of **Bhikkhuni Sujata** – When, by chance, she passed by a monastery, her life changed forever.
- Anopama, the Millionaire's Daughter** – A wealthy heiress hears the Dhamma and becomes a non-returner.
- Maha Pajapati (Gotami) Theri** – A Mother's Blessing After attaining arhantship, Pajapati Gotami sings the praises of her stepson – none other than the Buddha himself.
- Gutta** – The Buddha urges a childless mother in her pursuit of the Deathless.
- Kisagotami Theri** – The Woman with the Dead Child Kisagotami, now an arahant, looks back upon a long, hard life of sorrow: "Your tears have flowed for many thousands of lives."
- Punnika** convinces a brahman to abandon his purifying water-rituals – after all, if bathing were sacred, then frogs, turtles, and fish would all be pure!
- Ambapali** – A former courtesan – now an arahant – reveals how aging has eroded every trace of her youthful beauty. An exquisite portrait of the effects of aging.
- Rohini** – Before her ordination, Rohini answers her father's accusation that monks are lazy. In fact, she observes, "They do the best work."
- Subha** – The Goldsmith's Daughter Subha resists her family's efforts to lure her back the world of sensuality and riches, and soon discovers a treasure worth more than any amount of gold or silver.
- Subha**, an arahant nun living alone in the forest, is hounded by a man who lusts after her. Her "special gift" to him instantly gives him a change of heart.

LayWomen Arhats At Buddha's Time

- Cortesan Ambali** the Arhat (and sponsor of Buddha Shakyamuni)
- the laywomen Uttara** famous for her meditative ability
- Mayadevi**, the Buddha's mother
- Yasodhara** ... Siddhartha's wife who had great mastery of higher knowledges
- Asokas Daughter Theri Sanghamitta** who brought the buddha relics to Srilanka and other Asian countries

Famous Indian Vajrayana Female Masters

- Princess Manohara
- Laskminkara and 2 Female Diciples Mehala and Kankhala
- Sukasiddhi
- Nigyuma (Naropa is her consort)

The ArrowSmith Lady (Saraha is her consort)
Princess Mandarva (Padmasambhava was her consort)
Manibhadra the housewife siddha
Kelaniya Viharadevi

Famous Tibetan Female Masters

Machig Labdron
Gelongma Pelmo
Yeshe Tsogyal

21 Female Gurus of Sudana from The Gandhavyuha Sutra

(Original Sanskrit Version - omitted in Tibetan Version)

The Upasika Asha, the wife of king Suprabha who has renounced the world and lives in a jeweled palace in a forest at Samudravetali ('Keeper of the Ocean Door /the tide'). She has attained sorrowless wellbeing and uses the 84,000 afflictions to appear like worldly beings to meet and guide them, life after life, this being the karmic result of her having generated bodhicitta and paid homage to all the Buddhas of the past.

Princess Maitrayani, at the palace of King Singahaketu in Simhavijumbhita city, where she is teaching dharma to a crowd



13. The **Upasika Prabhuta**, she lives in a palace in Samudrapratishthana, dresses in white without jewelry and has a magical bowl that can satisfy the hunger and thirst of all living beings.



19. The laywoman **Achala** (Immovable) at Sthira. She lives with her parents, and when her golden aura touches him he enters 500 types of Samadhi. However she has no sexual desire towards anyone.

The nun **Sinhavijumbhita** (Lion Stretch) in the city of Kalingavana (Struggle) in the land of Shronaparanta (the Brave) teaching disciples in a park.

The courtesan **Vasumitra** (Friend of the World) in the land of Durga (Danger). Despite her bad reputation, anyone who looked at her became free from desire and attained joy.

the Earth Goddess Sthavara (Stable) at Bodhgaya who had attained liberation aeons before serving the Buddhas. She touches the ground which shakes and countless jewels pour forth.

The Night Goddess **Vasanti** at Kapilavastu (the Yellow City), where Gautama was conceived and lived as a youth. Vasanti is the star of the spring and was able to bring light to dark and stormy nights to protect travelers from fear. Sudhana realizes the stage of joy, the first Mahayana bhumi.

The Night Goddess **Samantagambhirashrivimalaprabha** at Bodhgaya and Sudhana realizes the stainless stage, the second bodhisattva bhumi.

The Night Goddess **Pramuditayanajagadvirocana (Joyful Eyes Illuminating the World)** to the right of Bodhgaya and Sudhana realizes the third bodhisattva bhumi, the radiant.

The Night Goddess **Samantasattvatranojahshri** at Bodhgaya and Sudhana realizes the fourth bodhisattva bhumi, the luminous.

The Night Goddess **Prashantarutasagaravati** (Possessed of an Ocean of Tranquil Sound) not far from Bodhgaya and Sudhana realizes the fifth bodhisattva bhumi, Difficult to Overcome.

The Night Goddess **Sarvanagararakshasambhavatejahshri** in the Buddha's assembly at Bodhgaya and Sudhana realizes the sixth bodhisattva bhumi, the Approaching.

The Night Goddess **Sarvavrikshapraphullanasukhassamvasa** in the Buddha's Assembly at Bodhgaya and Sudhana realizes the seventh bodhisattva bhumi, Gone Afar.

The Night Goddess **Sarvajagadrakshapranidhanaviryaprabha** (Light of energy of the Vow to Protect All Beings) at Bodhgaya and Sudhana realizes the eighth bodhisattva bhumi, the Immovable.

The Night Goddess **Sutejomandalaratishri** (Glory of the Sphere of Good Power) in Lumbini grove and Sudhana realizes the ninth bodhisattva bhumi, Highly Intelligent.

The girl **Gopa** (the wife of the Buddha for many past lives) at Kapilavastu and Sudhana realizes the tenth bodhisattva bhumi, the Cloud of Dharma

The Lady **Maya** (Illusion) in this world. She appears sitting on a jeweled lotus and manifesting countless emanations according with the needs of sentient beings. Everything is empty of inherent existence, and appears as a magic show of wisdom and compassion. Sudhana realizes the method of magical attainment of enlightenment by producing knowledge from compassion.

The Deva **Surendrabha**, the daughter of Smrtimati (Mindful) in the Heaven of the 33, and Sudhana realizes unflinching mindfulness of all truths through mastery of knowledge and compassion.

The Buddhist laywoman **Bhadrottama** (the Best of the Good) who was an oracle, healer, jeweler and writer. Sudhana realises how to help people by conventional and mystical arts and sciences.



50. The teenage girl **Shrimati** (together with her boyfriend **Shirsambhava**) in the city of Sumanamukha and with them Sudhana realises illusoriness, living in the world with complete knowledge and compassion.



Female Disciples of Padmasambhava (*All friends of Lama Gangchen in his previous lives*)

Mandarva and Yeshé Tsogyel མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཆེན་མོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་ (mKha' 'gro chen mo Ye shes mTsho rGyal)

Mönmo Tashi Khyi'dren མོན་མོ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་མཁི་དྲེན་ (mon mo bKra shis khyi 'dren)

Kala Drüpchenma ཀལ་གྲུབ་ཆེན་མ་ (ka la grub chen ma – Kalasiddhi)

Shakya Lhamo ཤཀ་ལྷ་མོ་ (sha kya lha mo – Shakyadevi)

Mélong Za Rinchen Tso མེ་ལོང་གཟའ་རིན་ཆེན་མཚོ་ (me long gZa' rin chen mTsho – Mistress of the Jewel-mirror Lake)

Tshan-ma Za Dorje Tso ཚན་མ་གཟའ་རྡོ་རྗེ་མཚོ་ (Tshan ma gZa' rDo rJe mTsho – Mistress of the Hot Vajra Lake)

Tshom-bu Za Pema Tso ཚོམ་བུ་གཟའ་པདྨ་མཚོ་ (tshom bu gZa padma mTsho – Mistress of the Mandala-clustered Lotus Lake)

Tshé-nam Za Sang-gyé Tso ཚེ་གན་མ་གཟའ་རྡོ་རྗེ་མཚོ་ (tshe gNam gZa' rDo rJe mTsho – Life-sky Mistress of the Indestructible Lake)

Shel-kar Za Dorje Tso ཤེལ་ཀར་གཟའ་རྡོ་རྗེ་མཚོ་ (shel dKar gZa' rDor rJe mTsho – Crystal Mistress of the Thunderbolt Lake), also called Shel-kar Tshé-drön (shel dKar tshe sGron)

Rü thog Za Thönrubma རུ་ཐོག་གཟའ་ཐོན་རུབ་མ་ (ru thog gZa' thon rub ma – Mistress of the Thunderbolt Clan)

Shubu Za Sherpa-ma ཤུ་བུ་གཟའ་ཤར་པ་མ་ (shu bu gZa' shar pa ma)

'ö-ché Za Kar-Gyelmo འོད་ཆེས་གཟའ་སྐར་རྒྱལ་མོ་ ('od ches gZa' sKar rGyal mo – Mistress of Primordial Starlight)

Yamdruk Za Chökyi Drölma ཡམ་བྲོག་གཟའ་ཚོས་གྲོ་བོལ་མ་ (yam 'brog gZa' chos kyi grol ma – Liberated Mistress of the Turquoise Lake)

'Dzem-ma Za Lhamo འཇེམ་མ་གཟའ་ལྷ་མོ་ ('dzem ma gZa' lha mo – The Divine Blushing Mistress)

'Bar Za Lha-yang འབར་གཟའ་ལྷ་དབྱངས་ ('bar gZa' lha dByangs – Mistress of Blazing Melody)

Cha-rog Za Changchubma ཇཱ་རོག་གཟའ་ཇཱ་ཅུབ་མ་ (bya rog gZa' byang chub ma – Compassionate Mistress of Ravens)

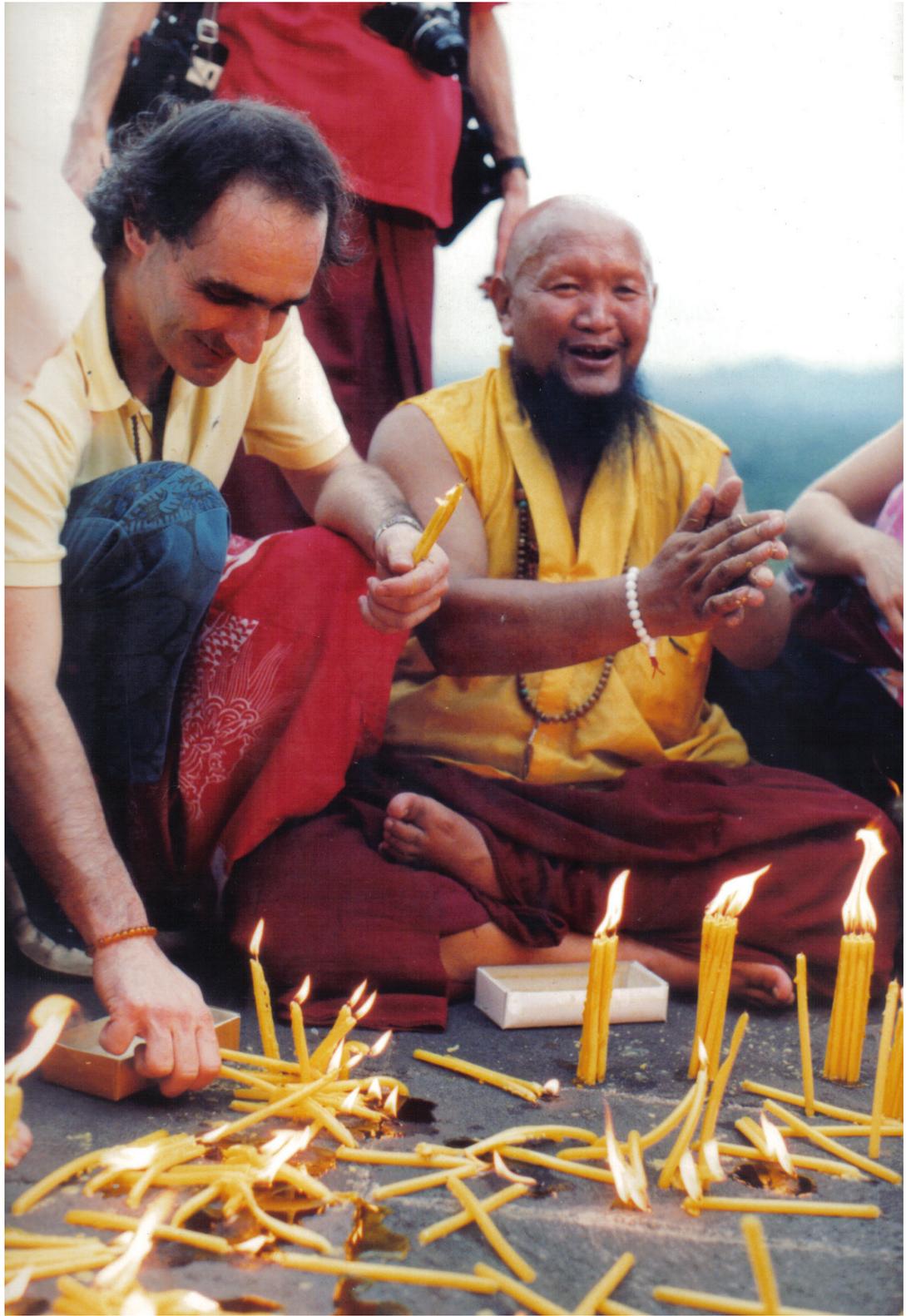
Aro Za Druk-tsal Shedrakma ཨ་རོ་གཟའ་འབྲུག་རྩལ་ཤེལ་རྒྱལ་མ་ (A ro gZa' 'brug rTsal shel brag ma – 'A-tasting' Dragon radiance Mistress of the Crystal Crag)

Drom Za Pema-sel འབྲོམ་གཟའ་པདྨ་གསལ་ ('brom gZa' pad ma gSal – Lotus Light Mistress of the Drom Clan)

Rong Za Siddhi རོང་གཟའ་སིདྱི་ (rong gZa' si ddhi – Mistress of Siddhis)

Trum Za Shel ma རྩུམ་གཟའ་ཤེལ་མ་ (khnums gZa' shel ma – Mistress of Crystal Constellations)

Khu Za Peltsun ཀུ་གཟའ་པེལ་སུན་ ('khu gZa' dPal bTsun – Mistress of Glorious Wrath)





Dr Franco Ceccarelli, Italy

My pilgrimages to Borobudur over 25 years

“Good evening, I am Franco Ceccarelli, and it is a great pleasure to meet you all. I already know many of you because, like Isthara said, it has already been twenty-five years since we first came together with Lama Gangchen; we are most honoured to be with him. I am not an expert, like Lama Michel and Lama Caroline, on Borobudur, but I was very impressed the first time we came here with Lama Gangchen. In fact, the first time we stayed in Yogyakarta, immediately after, Rinpoche wanted to come to Borobudur right away. The Manohara didn't exist then; there was just the stupa here. At that time, very few people knew about Borobudur - I had experience travelling with Rinpoche in Tibet, Nepal, India, and south India, and no one was speaking about Borobudur then. And yet, Rinpoche, at a certain moment, decided to come here. It was a very big surprise for us because when we arrived here, we felt a very strong energy and yet we did not know where we were; we were very ignorant about such things, at least I speak for myself. In any case, what we felt here, was very strong.

Actually, the practice of Self-Healing was not born here, it was born in Velletri, where we began a dharma retreat. It was there, in Velletri, where one day Rinpoche said that he was going to make a new practice - I remember this, everybody was in a room, and he started to say something that we did not recognise. It became a long process. I still have many books on Self-Healing - I keep all of them in my house, as the version changes so often. We wrote so many books on Self-Healing, and I think the project is still unfinished, because then the practice continued with Yamantaka, Guhyusamaja, Kalachakra; all together a complete package. At the time, even other lamas did not fully trust, in fact, they thought that we were just singing; they didn't really believe Lama Gangchen. Lama Gangchen has always come at the wrong time, so to speak; he was actually then trying to renew the teaching, and the traditional lamas did not understand this. It was never a problem for me, because in reality, I trusted only Lama Gangchen; Lama Gangchen is the only person that I trust because before knowing him I had asked the Universe to give me the opportunity to meet a master and get to know him closely.

I came back to Borobudur many times after that. I came back with my family, I came back with friends; I am talking here about ten or fifteen different trips. I don't remember exactly how many times I came to Borobudur. The beautiful thing is not only Borobudur, it is also what Rinpoche receives in Borobudur, and spreads all over the world. Today, Borobudur is also, in my eyes, Albagnano. Albagnano, for me, is also here. Of course, the energy of Borobudur is here, and yet, the project's goal was always to spread the teaching of Borobudur throughout Europe and other parts of the world. We tried many times to make something unique; I always said that our job was to remain a longer length of time in one place, and, for me, Lumbini was then the right place. But, we never had the chance to land in Lumbini, although we tried many times. As a result, the most important place that we have nowadays is Albagnano. In Albagnano we will realize, together with the energies of Lama Gangchen, Lama Michel and Lama Caroline, and all the masters that go there.

What I wanted to say about Lama Gangchen, is that I have met many lamas, and a lama like Lama Gangchen is very difficult to meet. A person like him is a special person; he doesn't have a second mind, he doesn't have a political mind, he is really only interested in helping people.

This is something special that I love about him. Today we are all involved in this particular job or project. Lama Gangchen is becoming older - time affects everybody - and so we are trying to bring all this energy to Albagnano. The future of Borobudur will be in Italy. Perhaps Lama Michel will come here for years to come, although surely the future of Borobudur will be in Italy, also Brazil, where they are building another Borobudur. In my opinion, Borobudur belongs to Lama Gangchen, as he was the one who rediscovered it. We have had so many conferences here. People who have



talked about and are taking care of Borobudur, even people involved with the United Nations or other organisations, talk about Borobudur in terms of art, in terms of preserving the monuments. Before Lama Gangchen, nobody talked about the real spiritual energy of Borobudur - at least I am not aware of any. And now here we are, about 250 people. In the early years, we were 4, 5, 6, 10 or 16, and we enjoyed coming here with Lama Gangchen tremendously, as well as travelling with him. Lama Gangchen is not only my master, he is also a very good friend who has helped my family; he has always remained close to me, and I try to give my energy, more even than Borobudur. I would like to speak to you about the energy of Lama Gangchen and why I work for him. Here he is; welcome Lama Gangchen! (Audience clapping).

I would like to say that for me, Borobudur, Boudha, is always Lama Gangchen, in fact, everything is Lama Gangchen. In my opinion, there is no difference between the two aspects of lama Gangchen: he is actually an example of a man as well as a lama; a lama, yes, but also a man. I never saw Lama Gangchen complaining about his enemy, never heard him talking badly about an enemy. When I saw this - I was a bit aggressive when I was younger - I recognised this quality in him, plus his quality of living what he teaches. For me this is an example; his generosity, his open mind, all that he gives us, he is even generous to us in his teaching. Self-Healing is a long practice if we do it following the ancient way, in which case, we might not even have time to practice.

At the time of Velletri, Lama Gangchen was thinking of making the practice so that everyone could do it daily. Now, you yourselves, can see that the Self-Healing practice is being offered in the long version as well as the short and very short versions - this last one is the one I do, as I am not a very good example of meditation. But I have helped Lama Gangchen, and I have given a part of my life to him. He taught me to use material things in a meaningful way. Before meeting him I was asking myself, 'Why do I have to go to work? I was born in a wealthy family, I worked for money for ten years, I have everything I want, people invite me to go swimming in beautiful beaches in the north of Brazil and in other countries ...' When I met Lama Gangchen, he taught me that my position could be useful to help other people. I did not know who to help; with him (Audience: outrageous laughter), even helping others is not so easy, not so easy because you need to understand to be able to help. Sometimes you think about helping someone but wonder if it is really useful. Lama Gangchen showed me the way and I trust, I always trust, because his world was always a world of words of truth. I never followed 'blind faith' with Lama Gangchen, I served him for many years, we have had the opportunity to remain together, to eat together, sleep together, in other words, we have



a very strong connection. When I understood what I was doing, I became very enthusiastic, and I really put a part of my life - I can't say all my life because it wouldn't be true - at his service; I try to help him do what he wants to do. Such has been our life together. Once, when we were in Tibet, he was explaining who I was to some people, and said, 'The Gindala has his problems, as I have my problems, still, we are together; we have been together for twenty-five years.'

I am really honored to say this. I don't want to take too much time from you, but I want to remind you that the project to be is Albagnano, because Lama Gangchen needs to travel a little bit less, and we need to go there to see him; for this, we need to create the conditions.

I also wanted to tell you that I once had the wish of knowing a lama closely, so I asked the Universe, and, soon after, I met Rinpoche in Milan. The mother of my partner in business invited me to stay there, and I met Rinpoche. Shortly after we met, we went to Tibet and stayed there together. In 1987, we met His Holiness Panchen Lama, and returned to Italy.

Then we went to Beijing; next we flew out of Beijing and went to South India, where we stopped to begin the first project as we were not able to do anything for the Tibetans in Tibet, which is why we began to do something for the Tibetans living outside Tibet. That was a very precious time. I wanted to also say that after getting to know Lama Gangchen, I came to know Lama Michel, who was then a very young lama. They are both very special persons. I completely trust Lama Michel, why? Because Lama Gangchen chose him. That is all for now. I would like to remind you that the Borobudur project of the Temple of Heaven on Earth in Albagnano is the real project that we want to follow and work on. We are working very hard on this project, and we need everyone's collaboration. Please remember a phrase of Lama Gangchen: "The Best is Yet to Come!".

Lama Gangchen:

Tashi Delek. I would like to thank Gindala for his words, more than his words, I would like to thank his sharing his experiences of the past years with us, as well as all that has been done, reminding us also of present projects, talking once again about his commitment to present and future projects, which goes beyond words, as his true commitment goes beyond words.

This makes me very happy, and I would like to thank Gindala.

Gindala has dedicated himself not only with words, as we said before, but also by putting into practice his helping others. Not only him, many of you are helping; everyone in different parts of the world is doing their own job helping with their activities in dharma centres and organisations, doing so many things. Actually, each person is making his or her own effort, according to their own capacity. It is really important for us to look, check, and ask ourselves, 'within my own abilities, economical, physical, knowledge, and so forth, what can I do to help?' this is something that is very important. Franco was talking about Albagnano; yes, Albagnano is in fact very important to me. I am very happy that he was talking about Albagnano, as it is a project that is very much in my mind. I am very happy that Gindala was talking about this because here, in Borobudur, is where the Dharma has been for a very long time, and yet now the moment has come for the Dharma to be spread in the West, especially at this moment in Italy. We have all the conditions.

This year Buddhism was finally recognised by the Italian government as an official religion, which means that there are many different positive conditions for this project. Our gompa in Albagnano, the Borobudur Temple of Heaven on Earth, should also become a building for religious activity recognised by the government, with the same rights as a church. We are working towards this, and there is the possibility that the doors are opening in order to have this type of recognition. In other words, there are many different types of positive conditions. The main reason being the creation of conditions so as to be able to have a place where we can all practice the Dharma together in a

comfortable way. In the West, you like to be comfortable, therefore, I respect your culture, that you like to be comfortable, and, based on that, you will be able to practice the Dharma comfortably. This is also important, which is why the first level of the Temple is already made with the help of many friends - Gindala especially put a lot of effort there, as well as many other friends. And so, we finished the first part of the gompa there and now, based on what we have done and what is still to do, we find that there is much more to do than what has already been done. In fact, we have a lot to do.

We would like to expand what Franco was saying, that we need everyone's help in order to conclude our project. What is the objective of the project? To have a place where we can all gather together to practice, with all the necessary conditions that we need for sleeping, eating, and practicing. All that we need, so that we can have a place of our own where we can really practice well; that is the main objective. I have a little booklet which was put together in order to talk about this project. If anyone is really interested in helping, I can give you a copy. In any case, the point is that we are working hard in order to make this possible. I am very happy that Gindala talked about this because on one hand it is my wish, and on another it is my concern to make this project happen in a short time. I want to conclude the project in Albagnano in a short time, I don't want it to take too long for different reasons; for this, we really need everyone's effort to come together so as to make it possible. Therefore, I am truly happy that Franco has reminded me (of the Albagnano project), and has talked about it.

When I say that we need everyone's help for the Borobudur of Albagnano, it actually goes beyond the fact of whether we need everyone's help or not. Yes, we need everyone's help, but even more than that, we need to pray and request blessings so that everything may be successful without interferences and, most important, request and invite all the holy beings residing here to go there, to go and reside also there. Just to make a building – a very beautiful building - is not enough; we need to make it powerful. If the energy is not there, it is not really working, in which case the goal would not actually be fulfilled. If we should ever come here, we should make our prayer request that every holy being go back, wherever we go, back to our own home; in other words, we invite the holy beings to come back with us and bless us. In the same way, regarding the Borobudur of Albagnano, my goal is to build it, prepare it with as much energy as Borobudur, if not more so than Borobudur. This is the goal that we need to accomplish. We need to make a holy place, not just a beautiful building.

This is most important, for us to pray and direct our mind and request in that direction. The same prayers and requests are also being said for the Borobudur temple that is actually being built in Brazil.



Claudia Sobrevila, Venezuela/USA

What is impossible becomes possible Experience in Borobudur

I scheduled my first trip to Borobudur in 2007. I have had the good fortune to travel with Lama Gangchen several times to Tibet, China, Mongolia, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, USA, Spain, Switzerland, Nepal, Sri Lanka and of course Italy. I don't know why it took me so long to go to Borobudur with him. Maybe it is because he does the trips to Borobudur in February and it usually coincided with my son's birthday which I don't like to miss. In 2007, the trip to Borobudur started on March 5. I bought my ticket and was scheduled to arrive in Bangkok on March 1st. Interestingly, on February 19, 2007, I had a dream where I was in a pilgrimage with Lama Gangchen. In the dream, he was sitting high up in a throne. It looked like a pyramid and he was in the upper part of the pyramid. He started making some prayers. I was among the public. While he was reciting these prayers, I saw how Lama Gangchen's body turned into a rainbow. When I woke up, I had this clear understanding that Lama Gangchen had attained the highest realization of clear light. After going to Borobudur and learning about the deep connection of Lama Gangchen to Borobudur, I feel that the dream was preparing me for the experience of Borobudur.

On March 5, we all arrived at Bangkok airport to catch the flight with Thai Airways directly to Jakarta. The group was not very large. There were around 18 pilgrims joining Lama Gangchen's Pilgrimage to Borobudur Holy Place. At the airport, everybody was excited about traveling to Borobudur with our great master, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche. And Cosy-la, Lama Gangchen's secretary was busy get everyone a boarding pass. However, she came back with 17 boarding pass. Mine was not issued. The reason was that my Venezuelan passport, out of at least 13 or 14 nationalities, required a visa prior to boarding the plane and landing in Jakarta. All the other pilgrims could get the visa upon arrival in Jakarta. I was so disappointed and sad, but Lama Gangchen approached me and he said with a big smile in his face, you do everything possible to come. His loving presence and words gave me confidence and hope. After I waved goodbye to them, I took a taxi and went straight to the Indonesian consulate. They told me that it would take three days to get a visa, because the next day was a holiday. I begged them to do it in one day but they refused. I did not know what to do next, but it occurred to me that I should call other airlines to ask them what the visa requirements and exceptions were to travel to Indonesia. Garuda Airlines told me that if I have a corporate credit card they might let me board. I have no idea what this was but I decided to arm myself with all the possible tools to fly out as soon as possible and get admitted.

I also called the Jakarta office of my employer and asked if they could write a letter to custom officials asking for their help in allowing me to enter the country to join the Peace Pilgrimage to Borobudur organized by the Lama Gangchen International Peace Foundation and attended by many people from around the world. One kind person did not see any harm in writing such letter and I received the letter by fax at the hotel. I printed it and went late that night to Bangkok airport to catch a flight to Jakarta with Garuda Airlines. At the check-in counter, I gave them my passport and after a while they said that I cannot go. I explained that one employee had told me that there were some exceptions as for example, if I possessed a corporate card. I showed them my card and also handed them the letter explaining the reasons of the trip. After examining these documents they looked at me as if I was crazy and told me that there was nothing official in what I was presenting to them and that they would allow me to go if I signed a waiver saying that I would pay \$3000 dollars in fines if the Indonesia government deported me. I said, that I was willing to take my chances.

Was I foolish? Why did I care so much to reach Borobudur? Between the dream that I had and all the reports from friends of the effects that experiencing Borobudur with Lama Gangchen has on



your karma and path to enlightenment, I really wanted to go. I boarded the plane and felt somewhat relieved that I was on my way to Jakarta. I was about to take a nap as the trip is about 3 hours long, when the pilot announced through the speaker that there was a very bad storm ahead of us and that the airport control could not change the plane's route and that they had ordered the pilot to come back to Bangkok. We had already been flying for 1 and a half hour! I got scared. I thought that there were too many obstacles that kept arising so that I do not reach Borobudur. I had racing thoughts saying to me that I was not good enough to deserve to travel to Borobudur. Sadness invaded me but again I remembered the dream and remembered the face of Lama Gangchen at the airport saying you come. I really wanted to reach Borobudur and be with him. I prayed. The plane turned around and landed in Bangkok. We had to wait about 5 hours until they allowed us to board the plane again. This time we reached our destination.

While going through customs in Jakarta, an official stopped me and sent me to a special room. There was a desk with two chairs and another official asked me to hand him my passport. He examined it and said to me that he could not let me enter the country. I told him that I was in an important trip and that they were expecting me in Borobudur for a Peace Pilgrimage and I handed him the letter and the credit card. He looked at them and said that he could not help me. I begged him to please allow me in for only two days that he could stay with my passport until I returned to his office. He asked me if he could call someone from my employer in Jakarta. I gave him a number and he rang it. The person on the other line was friendly and said that they knew about the letter and that they had done it to help me out so that I could join the Peace Pilgrimage. Everything was very honest and open. At the end, the man agreed to let me in, but asked that when I leave the country I go through a similar process of going through a special desk like his. I promised I would do that. I was so happy that I said to him: "You are a kind man for taking a chance in your job to help me out. I wish to give you a gift to reciprocate your generosity. Maybe this small contribution can help you take care of your family. I handed him a \$50 dollar bill."

Now, I was in..... My joy was immense and all my worries were gone. I took another plane and a taxi and in four more hours I finally reached the Borobudur Temple in Yogyakarta. I finally reached Lama Gangchen who at that moment was at the Mendut village paying homage to the main Temple where statues of Buddha Sakyamuni, Bodhisattva Avalokiteswara and Maitreya lay untouched for

1000 years. It is also the place where one can receive the blessings from a statue of Atisha. Lama Gangchen was very happy to see me. He said as he embraced me: "there were many obstacles for you, but the most important thing is that you overcame them all. When one is so set to reach enlightenment, strong obstacles will come, but it is very important not to be disturbed by them and not allow them to move you away from your focus. You did very well. It is this kind of determination and stable mind that can help you reach enlightenment. Congratulations. Now you are here with me."

My experience of Borobudur was very strong. I was in an elevated spiritual state for the two short days that I spent there. Walking all the levels of the Borobudur stupa with an enlightened master like Lama Gangchen clears away many impurities. I noticed that Lama Gangchen operates in many other subtle dimensions that I cannot dream of really understanding. He observes the inner and outer environments in a masterful way and the pace or sequence of the prayers, rituals or silence seem to be synchronized to an invisible clock that knows everything. It is hard to describe how he manages the pilgrims, the locals, the symbols, the statues, the rain, the clouds, the whole environment and let's not forget the elephants that he nourishes on a daily basis. Through his movements, intentions, prayers, and loving heart, he allows each of us to have a glimpse of the purest states of our minds. It is such a gift!

When I came back home from Indonesia, I had another dream on March 14. In this dream, I was with Lama Gangchen and I saw a picture of a Tibetan woman and he told me that it was Khandro. "I am her reincarnation. She is from my lineage". The next day, on March 15, I had another dream. In this second dream, Lama Gangchen was sitting in a throne and I approached him to tell him that the day before I had a dream where he told me that Khandro was his lineage. Then, he responded that it was true and he added: "I want to give you a bracelet with 21 beads that I received from her. This is for you".

After this extraordinary experience, I wrote everything in a journal, but I never read again until I was asked in 2014 to tell my story of Borobudur. I vaguely remember some of the events, but I had forgotten about the dreams. I always write things when I travel with Lama Gangchen, so before I wrote the story I looked for the particular journal from 2007. I could not find it for months. It was very frustrating. Only 15 days before coming to Borobudur in 2014, I found the journal, which allowed me to share this story today.

The dreams told me first that Lama Gangchen is sitting on the Borobudur stupa having attained clear light and second that his realizations come from Khandro, which means in Tibetan, Khan (space or emptiness), dro (going there). He gave me a mala with 21 beads, which is a symbol of the gifts that I receive when I come to Borobudur, which is also the gift that anyone that comes to Borobudur as a pilgrim receives. I thank my guru, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, for all his love all these years since I have known him. He is so compassionate and he is helping so many people in this world to live better lives and come closer if not, to enlightenment. He also gave me permission to share this story today as well as the dreams.



Our Gelugpa tradition

Lama Michel (Brazil)

Even many forms of meditation are not pleasant. It is not nice to meditate on suffering, to reflect on the causes of suffering, and on suffering itself although it is very important. Most important, first of all, is that whatever teaching we look at of Buddha, we must understand that it must be coherent. That is why we say that there are no dogmas; there is nothing that we should 'believe', that we should 'follow' just because the Buddha says so. There are many things that I, for example, am not yet ready to understand. This does not mean that the teachings are wrong simply because I cannot understand them. It means that maybe I am not ready to understand, so whenever I come upon a part of a teaching that I simply do not understand, I tend to put it on the 'waiting list', so to speak. Sooner or later, I should be able to understand it, find out if it is right or wrong. This is one important aspect. There is a part that we may call logic and understanding, although the most important is coherence itself within what we do and say, and between the teaching itself, in other words, the philosophy as a whole in itself.

The teachings should not have contradictions within themselves. This is one of the very important points, whenever we say that there is a way of analysing a philosophical text, we also say that there are five main points that a text must have in order to be valid. One of the points is it should not contain contradictions within itself. And if we look to all Buddha's teachings, one of the very important points is that they should not contain contradictions, they should be coherent. Most important is that the teaching itself should be coherent within itself, that it should be coherent within our 'experience of reality'. That is why, from a Buddhist perspective, there is no fear whatsoever of science, as long as science is scientific. As long as science is scientific, there is nothing to fear, and if one day something is proved to us by logic, experience, that is what we should follow. It does not matter from whom it comes, it does not matter who is explaining. I think this is one of the most beautiful systems of beliefs. In India, even in Tibet I think, at the time when Buddhism arrived there - it is not like this anymore - previously, there were many different philosophical schools, religions, monasteries, temples, and so on.

Let us say that we are a group. We follow our guru, we follow one philosophical view, although not everyone participating might really understand the philosophy behind it in depth, in any case, let us say that someone comes, here, to Indonesia, for example, a teacher comes from the nearby temple, and says, 'I would like to have a debate with you. I would like to discuss your views, I think the way you see karma is not correct, the way you see reality is not right, and I think that your views on the spiritual path are incorrect', in other words, a debate regarding our main issues.

We, as a group, would then have no choice but to say, 'Fine, we will have a debate', which is an open discussion on truth, and coherence based on logic and experience. If, after a public debate, it turns out that, let us say, I, who am representing our group, lose the debate, then myself, as well as all who are following me, need to convert to the other tradition. We would need to convert to the other religion and philosophy. Why? Because our main path is coherent with logic and experience. What we follow is not the fact that 'I am part of this tradition', 'I am part of that tradition', 'I am part of this religion', 'I am part of that religion'. This would be an infantile way of being, subject to attachment to our own, whatever name or label we give it.

For example, when we look at Lama Tsong Khapa's work, and really go deep into his texts and teachings, from my own personal perspective, I can say that Lama Tsong Khapa never wanted to create a new tradition, that is, the so-called Gelugpa tradition. He founded a monastery, which was called Ganden, and researched the teachings that were present in Tibet in those days in depth; consequently, he made remarks that showed that the way those teachings were explained in different



contexts was not correct. All he wanted to do was to have an open debate and make things clear. There was once a monk from another tradition, a Jonangpa, who was discussing with my teacher in Tibet, the abbot of Tashilhunpo, Katchen Losang Puntsog Rinpoche, they were both travelling together, and so they began to debate at a philosophical level, making reference to the texts of Buddha, to the texts of Nagarjuna, and so on. They each respected and followed, most of all followed the coherence of logic, although at the end, suddenly, the monk, who was very intelligent and very learned, said to my teacher, 'Gen-la, let us admit it, whatever you may say to me, whatever you may show me, at the end of the day, I am Jonangpa, and you are Gelugpa, which means that I am going to follow my tradition, and you are going to follow yours, so, what's the point in us debating?' That is exactly what happened at the time of Lama Tsong Khapa! He actually did show a correct view, but no one wanted to follow it because they were attached to the way they were taught. Which means that there was more attachment to the form than to the substance. In Tibetan, there is a word: shengo – I never found the proper translation, we have our great translator here Samla Thoncha, if you think about it, it is really difficult to find the correct translation, although it could be said that it is something similar to this type of attachment. Something similar to the attachment people have, for example, to their football clubs. 'I am from this club!' someone might say with a very strong attachment of this particular kind. This type of attachment shows in our religion, our fanaticism, patriotism, and so forth; we can look at in many different ways, perhaps not necessarily when it comes to fanaticism, as I don't need to be fanatical about my team although it is my team. I don't need to be fanatical about my country, although it is still my country. There is an attachment there which is in fact a way of manifesting selfishness within the actual attachment. What can happen is that very often, out of this attachment to our tradition, we can get blocked, our eyes are blinded, darkened, we are therefore not able to see clearly what others are showing us, and we are not able to listen clearly to what others are telling us. This happens within religions, within scientific contexts, in fact, it happens very often. It is actually happening in our daily life. Very often someone comes and says something to us, and because we have a pre-concept about something, we don't really listen correctly; even if we were to listen and understand that something else was correct, we would still be attached to our way of seeing things.

Actually, it is very important to understand this aspect, that what we follow, what we personally believe in, is what we really believe to be dharma that is coherent. Very often it happens that because of attachment towards one tradition or another, towards a name or a 'belonging' - it could be an attachment to a way of belonging - we tend not to listen to what others have to say. Due to my personal research and studies, Lama Tsong Khapa was in my view, very open; he actually researched the actual meaning of emptiness and the correct way of explaining Buddha's teachings in depth, and when he went to talk to others about his findings, they very often said, 'No, my tradition says this, so I am not going to follow what you are telling me, even though your view is coherent and mine is not'. Naturally, what came out in the end was that he created a new tradition.

If we look well, what happened after Lama Tsong Khapa, was that great masters were seen as being sectarian because they did not say, 'I will not let go of Gelugpa', although actually, if we really look well, many of them like Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen, were not at all sectarian. What he did was simply say, 'I am not letting go of the coherent view, I am not going to let go of the view that is correct, the view that is coherent with reality, with experience, with logic, and so on'. Independently, you can give your tradition or belief any name - Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen himself said: 'It does not matter what you call your tradition', he actually named many - this is also said in two texts, the Chakchen Tsawa, the root of the Mahamudra, and the Dagsen Shapten, the discussion between wisdom and ignorance. He actually says, 'It does not matter what name you give your philosophical view, what name you give your meditation, if it is coherent with reality, wonderful!' This is very important for us, we should be careful when we follow our path, we should follow a path that is coherent with our own experience of reality, our own logic, and, we should be open to change in this matter because we don't always have the most correct view. It can happen that we have a





different type of view. Very often, what happens is that on one hand we have people who look like they are being very stubborn because they follow what they really think is true – by this I mean, people who, from the very beginning, say, 'No, I don't want to listen, I don't know, that's not correct', people very attached to their own view. Very often, these are the best kind of people, because when you prove to them that things are the other way around, so to speak, they really follow the new way. Then you have people who tend to follow due to their hard type of faith although they don't truly understand, these people are very often the most difficult when it comes to changing. In any case, what I wanted to say is that from my own personal understanding, the one very important aspect of Buddha's teachings is that they are coherent with reality, they are coherent with logic and direct experience. That is the most important aspect that we should follow.

I was just remembering, some days ago watching Rinpoche on a video of the 17th Karmapa, he said something very interesting, 'Nowadays, there is emphasis on this idea of non-sectarianism, that we should be all of one tradition, that there should not be any differences, and so on'. He also said, 'I am happy observing'; nowadays we have created one non-sectarian group that is against the ways of another non-sectarian group, to which people say, 'I am non-sectarian, you are sectarian, so I am against you because I am no longer sectarian, and you are sectarian.' This means that once again the same accusations are being created, that is, 'You are Gelugpa, you should be non-sectarian; I am right because I am non-sectarian.' What is the difference? Once again we come back to the same type of attachment, to this sense of belonging, because very often what we follow is not the correct path, the correct view, in other words, the truth. Instead, we follow a very strong sense of belonging - who taught me, where I grew up, who is my teacher, etc... - and so we have a very strong attachment to those kind of things. Instead, we should - as Atisha says in the Jewelled Garland of the Bodhisattva - respect every tradition and follow the one that is most suitable with dedication, faith and effort. Basically, there are various traditions, why? Not because there are many truths, more so because there is the need for many different approaches for us on our path. We are all different, there are many people with different mentalities, with different ways of being, and so on, which is why we need different approaches, the result being different traditions. Whatever we follow, what is most important, is to follow a coherent view, something that really is coherent with reality. That is what is most important for all of us.

Very often we end up listening to something, looking at something with a very strong pre-concept. I once heard a story, a friend went for an interview - to see a man from Brazil, who was a world free-fight champion, involved in the most violent type of fighting. Here was this very big man, whose job was to beat others up, which made him not so nice, and so the friend went to be interviewed, all the while thinking, 'It is going to be a boring day, what am I going to do with this guy?' What would our pre-conception be if we were to meet this type of person? The friend went to the interview, and was amazed to find that the man was such a nice, intelligent, even charismatic person. A little boy went with the friend, who, by the end of the day, didn't want to leave the interviewer, hugging him, and crying because he didn't want to leave. I went to see him afterwards and this man, the free-fight champion, was extremely nice, even talked about peace to kids, speaking very nicely, offering good incentives, a really nice person. Would we ever expect something like that from such a person? No. So often, when we go to see someone, or when someone comes to talk to us, we judge the person by the way the person is dressed, his or her background, his or her language, what country he or she comes from, etc... We actually find ourselves ready to label him or her. Then we look, listen, with a filter, never really listening in an open way. It is very important for us to try to slowly remove such filters, at least to the best of our abilities, so that we can see, listen, to others openly, and experience situations openly. We are too often influenced by our own pre-conceptualization of things; by the names or labels we give things. An important practice would be to gradually try to remove these filters, clean them during our experiences with people - when we see someone, when we listen to someone, and so forth. This is very important, because otherwise, we are behaving in a very narrow minded way. What I really wanted to talk about – this was just an introduction, I will not go into



it right now , perhaps another time - what I wanted to talk about, and share with you, was that in Buddhist texts on philosophy, we talk about two different forms of defilements, in Tibetan 'kundak' and 'henkye'. As I said previously, it happens that sometimes we read philosophical texts, we read the teachings, we retain them within their own context, and yet it becomes difficult for us to integrate them into our own reality and experience. I was trying to reflect upon both 'kundak' and 'henkye' - constructed views and spontaneous views - within our direct experience. What do I mean by this? By constructed we mean all our views that depend on our cultural basis, on our experience of this life; these are the constructed views. That is what we were talking about right now. When we look at someone, when we listen to someone, and so forth, we come with our background - our constructed view, by which we judge situations, people, names, etc... This is something that we carry from this present life, something that we have built up within us in this present life based on what we have learned, what we have listened to, and so forth.

Then, we have another aspect, that which is called spontaneous view, which are those aspects of ourselves which are independent of cultural basis, independent of the country where we were born, where we grew up, the influence that we received from our environment, and the people and situations in which we live. The spontaneous aspect consists of our points of view and emotions that we bring with us from life to life. Our objective is to deal with that particular part - the spontaneous view - because basically, the constructed view goes when we die. The spontaneous view, on the other hand, continues after our death. The point is the following: our constructed view in turn influences our spontaneous view, because of that, we need to try to have a constructed view that is coherent, that is positive, that helps us, that stimulates us to develop our spontaneous view in a positive way so that it develops our spontaneous qualities and helps us eliminate our spontaneously born defilements.

I repeat, again, the constructed view is something that goes when we die. I may be reborn in the midst of a forest, or on Mars, I don't know where, perhaps even in another galaxy – I really like what a great scientist once said, I don't remember his name, he is disabled, Steven Hawkins, that's him, he said something once which was very nice: 'I think it is too arrogant from our side to think or to say that life exists only on this planet'. It does not matter where we may be reborn. We might be born in the next house, in the midst of a forest, in Africa, in Brazil, in Europe, wherever. The fact is, wherever we are reborn, our constructed view is going to be built up again. From that point of view, it is not that important, we don't need to be attached to our constructed view. The real goal is to cultivate a positive, spontaneous view, which is, to cultivate love, compassion, generosity, wisdom, joy, satisfaction, and so on, within our spontaneous level, eliminating in turn the spontaneously born defilements, such as anger, jealousy, pride, miserliness, etc... In order to do this, we need to generate a constructed view that helps us do that, otherwise, what could happen is our constructed view could actually make our spontaneously born defilements increasingly stronger.

When we study philosophy, we have for example 'tenzin kundak' and 'tenzin henkye'. Tenzin kundak means grasping at inherent existence, constructed as well as spontaneous. When we explain the constructed view, we basically follow the different philosophical schools, and yet, these all belong to a certain time in India, now we are living in a different time, which is why we need to look at our own culture, our own time, and see which constructed views are harming us at present. I am not going to go into detail on this right now although this is very important. To conclude: I will make two sketches to illustrate the difference between two constructed views, which in turn represent a huge difference. This to remind us that we cannot live without a constructed view within this body of ours. Due to the fact that we have a gross mind, we can safely say that we cannot live without a constructed view. Therefore, best not to generate the type of mind that thinks: 'I must abandon every constructed view, to the point where I just have my essence.' That is not going to work. We must have a constructed view, as we are not able to perceive the world without one. It is important to have a coherent view, a view that helps us develop our qualities, our spontaneous qualities, as well as eliminate our spontaneous defilements. That is the most important. Imagine two sketches - one is a line, the other a circle. Our Western way of seeing life, our constructed view of how we see life, is linear, by which we see life as

a line. A line that begins at point A - birth - and ends at point B - death - perhaps there can even be a point C - hell or heaven - still, it is linear, there is no going back. We are born at point A, we die at point B, which is most important, and yet there might even be a point C, although this point does not really matter that much. We really see this life as this line. Without judging if this is right or wrong, what happens with this constructed view? Seeing life in this way, we can safely say that at the end, what really matters in life, is what we do. If we then look at all the cultures that have a constructed view - a linear view of life - we can ask ourselves what are the examples of success. Power, money, pleasure, achieving projects, people who have achieved much, and so forth. Then we have another view, which is the circular view, in which point A and point B are joined together, which is basically the view that sees birth, death, and after death, birth again.

Let us imagine the following: There are two doors, one door there, another here. Let us say then say that we come out of the door through which we enter, come here, come out of this door, through which we will never go through again. We can then ask ourselves, what matters most at this point? What we do while passing from one door to the other, could be called linear view. The cyclic view sees that I enter through that door, I come in here, and, when I exit through this door, I am automatically entering the other door again; then I am coming in, and going around and around and around and around, to the point that we have to imagine the room as circular. Because after death comes rebirth [according to Buddhism]. After rebirth what happens is death. After death, what happens again is rebirth. The point is, what matters when I constantly go around this room, is not what I do when I'm in the room, but what I become - how I walk into the room, what I become, what I am, instead of what I do. In the constructed cyclic view of life, what matters most are our principles. What matters is what we become instead of what we do. We can see this in various cultures. Those cultures that have a cyclic view have a completely different way of dealing with life and events.

This is an example of constructed view and how it influences us. We need to choose, and we need to build up. Just because we were born in a specific culture does not mean that we have no choice when it comes to changing our constructed view; it is actually quite simple to do that, we just need some non-attachment and the understanding that it is simply a constructed view, so relax! That is what we do in Buddhism, that is what we are doing here, there are many constructed aspects which we learn; what we are doing here is building up a constructed view of ourselves, of the world in which we live in, of everything in reality coherent with logic and our own experience, and, most of all, a view that helps us develop our spontaneous qualities and eliminate our spontaneous defilements. That is our goal. I think it is quite clear. Do you understand?

Always remember the line and the circle, and try to understand which way you are following in your own life, which way are you following. When we hear people say: 'My life is a failure because I haven't done this, I haven't done that, don't worry, you are going to be reborn another ten thousand times, you are going to be able to, for example, marry, in the case that you are not married in this life. You can marry another twenty thousand times, if you like.

If you didn't have children in this life, if you had a particular problem, if, for example, you had children and you didn't even want to have children, whatever, it is okay. If in this life you are a woman and you actually wanted to be a man, or, if in this life you are a man, and you wanted to be a woman, don't worry, you are going to have ten thousand million chances to become one. Or, if in this life you became a doctor, and you wanted to be an engineer, or whatever, don't worry, you are going to have so many possibilities to be one. That is not so important.

Most important is, when I come out of this door, what have I become? How will I enter it again next time? This is all related to the constructed aspect. We should use our constructed view to help us take care of the 'spontaneous aspect' of ourselves. Whenever we see someone, for example, whenever we listen to someone, whenever we go somewhere, we should be careful and remove all the different filters that we have, and add the filters that we really want to add. Because there are some good



filters that we need to add, which are, the filters of compassion, the filters of wisdom, the 'safe' filters. There are many positive filters we can add, and there are filters that we should take away; this will make life simpler and easier. Remember that we see reality, that we are experiencing life through our constructed field, which is easy to change if we want to, as there is no need to be attached to it. The real difficult part is changing the spontaneously born part of ourselves; once we change that, all is not yet finished, as we still have its imprints, with which we will still need to work with, once again, but this is another chapter.







Self Regulation

Bel Cesar (Brazil)

Self regulation is the dynamic basis for being in balance with yourself, the environment and with others around you.

Once Lama Gangchen Rinpoche said: "A tense mind is like having tense hands: You are unable to touch anything. So we need to decide not to cultivate a stupid mind and program ourselves very precisely. It's all a matter of not following negative emotions, accepting peace and following it. When we are at peace, everything starts to come automatically in a positive way."

So with self regulation we are able to release our tension, open our hands and minds, and are then be able to move our mind like doing mantras.

On the last day of our visit to Tibet in 2011, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche explained to us that the meaning of life is to touch our essence. He said: "Find happiness, independent of what we are doing, of where we are or with whom we are with. This is a happiness which arises from the joy of following a spiritual path".

So touch the essence means to feel the subtle happiness that following a spiritual path can bring. In other words, although we have everyday suffering, we will taste the flavour of happiness when we feel the result of our improvement.

One time we were really concerned when Rinpoche had to pass a medication on a wound on his foot, which we knew would hurt a lot. But he said to us " The pain is not a problem; what is importante is the result ".

So with this view, it doesn't matter the suffering but rather if we are doing something to improve our inner world as we face it.

But sometimes we are so tired of suffering that we cannot feel any subtle happiness at all. As soon as we recognize that in dealing with the suffering in a positive way, we can make some positive changes, then we can feel this subtle happiness again.

In 1994 when my daughter Fernanda and I went to Lama Michels' enthronement ceremony in Sera, we had an intense moment of suffering when we had to say goodbye and come back to Brazil.

Lama Michel was 13 years old and Fernanda 9. She was about to separate not only from her brother, but also from her father who was to stay with Lama Michel at Sera.

She started to cry in despair. I got despaired at seeing her suffering and asked directly to Rinpoche; how can we stop suffering ? He just answered, " enjoying and growing up ".

So I said to Fernanda with enthusiasm. Now we are going to London. She calmed down and accepted to leave.

So Rinpoche inspires us to connect with the joy of life. When Rinpoche tells us to connect our mind to the positive, I understand that this means not just to be with positive ideas but also with this feeling of being happy.

Usually we are so attuned to suffering that we don't recognize the possibility of feeling this subtle happiness. When we feel able to deal with the suffering we are able to feel this subtle happiness.

Each culture has a way of understanding and creating its' own reality, but the ontologic necessities remain the same: fundamental values which guide and organize the people.

Justice, Solidarity, Gratefulness, Authenticity, Freedom, Generosity, Empathy.

These values don't need to be "taught", but need to be developed.

In the cities where violence is so great, we are yearning for "humanity". The more we are connected to our values the more we can deal with the suffering. Our values clarify our priorities and our choices.

Faced with the perspective of dying, we are faced with the most subtle, human vulnerability: a need to give ourselves over to the inexorable. The inner values cultivated throughout our lives will be the base which supports us.

Although we have a precarious position as human beings, we have the quality of being able to transcend. We transcend when we start to amplify the view we have about our own suffering. If our view of life is the same as our suffering, then we are really in trouble.

Humans have a capacity to be within themselves at the same time as being elsewhere. Empathy, the capacity of movement within time, communion, art, spirituality and philosophy give rise to a sense of being alive.

Many time in his teachings, Lama Gangchen speaks to us about the importance of a greater proximity between people. He uses the example of the relationship between a doctor and his patient.

When the patient feels close to her doctor, she follows instructions with attention - a sign of confidence and acceptance of a cure. In the same way, the closeness between parents and children, couples, friends and institutions, awakens respect, love and an openness to exchange ideas and to grow together.

When we feel close to someone or a situation, we are finally able to relax. The artificiality of relationships provokes an attitude of "being on guard", which is the opposite of being "relaxed", something which comes when we live a closeness without concern.

Rinpoche clarifies when saying: "We can feel close without being intimate". This proximity we can recognize in the sculptures on all the panels at Borobudur, as well as a gentleness and wellbeing.

There is no fear amongst them.

The less we avoid ourselves the less we avoid other people. We will open our hearts better to others if we respect our own limits.

Our challenge in getting close to others is in discovering the capacity of letting go: to trust instead of defending ourselves.





For us to open ourselves to others we need to have healthy boundaries. This means knowing when it is time to close or to open our contact with the outer world. But if we don't open the doors to ourselves then we will be closed to others. The key to doing this is to cultivate a natural mind: empathetic and kind. When our energy is balanced naturally, we invite people to come closer to us. We can resonate positive or negative energies according to our mental state.

Resonance is the vibration propagation of any wave. For example, when the strings of a guitar are tuned, while fingering the fifth fret of the sixth string, one realizes that the fifth string begins to vibrate simultaneously with the sixth string, even when stopping the emission of sound the sixth string continues to vibrate. The energy of the string makes the other vibrate.

The children who grew up in harsh environments learned to resonate the emotional behaviors when they were still very small. That's why, they learned to be hypervigilant, straining to sense the small cues. Like Daniel Goleman explain in his book FOCUS (Harper Collins Publishers, NY, 2013, page 94): "Some people are social sensitive, keenly attuned to the most minimal emotional signals, with an almost uncanny knack for reading cues so subtle that other people miss them. A slight dilatation of your iris, lift of your eyebrow, or shift of your body is all they need to know how you feel. This can mean trouble if they can't handle such data well. But these same talents can make us socially astute, sensing when not to broach a touchy topic, when someone needs to be alone, or when people need words of comfort. A trained eye for the subtle cue offers advantage in many life arenas."

In my work of psychotherapy I encourage my patients to "recognize your emotions in your own body, and also recognize how your body resonates the emotions of others". The better we resonate with our inner world, the better we resonate with others. To increase our capacity to resonate, we need to be aware of its' power.

Another important issue for selfregulation is to have a good flow between the two main areas of the brain: the cortex and the limbic system.

We can say that the neocortex (located at the top of the head) is related to voluntary impulses, reflexive attention and the rational mind. While the limbic system (below the cortex, in the center of the brain) is associated with emotional, involuntary, instinctive functions.

The issue is that the neural impulses from the limbic system to the neocortex (bottom-up) are much faster than the neocortex to the limbic (top-down). In other words, we need a good balance between these two areas so as to monitor our emotions and so that we may be 'touched' by them.

For those who seek spiritual growth in a Buddhist way, it is relevant to increase the capacity to feel empathy and compassion. However, it is noteworthy that there are three different forms of empathy.



This is actually explained by Daniel Goleman in his book FOCUS (HarperCollins Publishers, NY, 2013, page 99) :

"Supersensitive healing of emotional signals, represents the zenith of cognitive empathy, one of the three main varieties of the ability to focus on what other people experience. This variety of empathy lets us take other people's perspective, comprehend their mental state, and at the same time manage our own emotions while we take stock of theirs. These can be top-down mental operations. In contrast, with emotional empathy we join the other person in feeling, along with him or her; our bodies resonate in whatever key of joy or sorrow that person may be going through. Such attunement tends to occur through autonomic, spontaneous, and bottom-up brain circuits. While cognitive or emotional empathy means we recognize what another person thinks and resonate with their feeling, it does not necessarily lead to sympathy or concern for others' welfare. The third variety, empathic concern, goes further: leading us to care about them, mobilizing us to help if need be. The compassionate attitude builds on bottom-up primal systems for caring and attachment deep down in the brain, though these mix with more reflexive, top-down circuits that evaluate how much we value their well-being."

When we are close to spiritually evolved people, we are touched by their subtle energetic field. Naturally we feel happy and relaxed. However this effect is not a one-way road; it will be smaller or bigger according to the gross level of internal intoxication in which we find ourselves in that moment and to our karmic connection to the person and place we are in contact with.

The greater the capacity of self awareness, the greater is the empathy.

We experience when we are regulated: through states such as openness, curiosity, grounding, receptivity, fluidity, mindful, relaxation, presence, emotionally stable, confident in one's ability to choose and look for resources.

I apply in my psychotherapeutic work a technique known Somatic Experiencing elaborated by Peter A. Levine. Somatic Experiencing.

It is a form of therapy aimed at relieving and resolving the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental and physical trauma-related health problems by focusing on the client's perceived body sensations (or somatic experiences). The theory postulates that the symptoms of trauma are the effect of a dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system; that is because this system has an inherent capacity to self-regulate. Somatic Experiencing attempts to promote awareness and release of physical tension that proponents believe remains in the body in the aftermath of trauma. Those interested in learning more about his work, I would advise to start reading his first book: *Waking the Tiger*.

Peter Levine united in his work *The Polyvagal Theory* proposed and developed by Stephen Porges. This theory explains the functioning of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) in a clear and practical way.

So now, I would like to share this with you.

Initially we need to understand a bit of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS is the neuro-endocrine-immune structure that enables survival. Traditionally it has been described as having two branches, parasympathetic (rest/rebuild) and sympathetic (fight/flight). The sympathetic nervous system uses the neurotransmitter noradrenaline to increase the heart rate, dilate the pupils and breathing tubes, and divert blood away from the digestive system. The effects prepare the body for action, in what is called the 'fight-or-flight' response. The parasympathetic nervous system, on the other hand, uses the neurotransmitter acetylcholine to constrict the pupils and breathing tubes, slow the heart rate, and increase digestive function.

The Polyvagal Theory, named from the anatomical basis of Porges' discoveries, changes the picture. Now the ANS has three branches, not two, and they are sequential, not reciprocal. "Social Nervous System" is the proposed term for this third branch of the ANS.



What we need to understand is that the parasympathetic is controlled by a cranial neural called the Vagus Nerve that relays information between the brain and the sense organs. The Polyvagal theory outlines the structure and function of the two distinct branches of the vagus, both of which originate in the medulla: the ventral vagal complex and the dorsal vago complex. More specifically, each branch is associated with a different adaptive behavioral strategy, both of which are inhibitory in nature via the parasympatetic nervous system (PNS).

The dorsal branch of the vagus (DVC) originates in the dorsal motor nucleus and is considered the phylogenetically older branch. It is associated with primal survival strategies of primitive vertebrates, reptiles, and amphibians. Under great stress, these animals freeze when threatened, conserving their meDomolic resources.

The DVC provides primary control of subdiaphragmatic visceral organs, such as the digestive tract. Under normal conditions it maintains regulation of these digestive processes.

The ventral branch of the vagus originates in the nucleus ambiguus and is myelinated to provide more control and speed in responding. This branch is also known as the “smart vagus” because it is associated with the regulation of sympathetic “fight or flight” behaviors in the service of social affiliative behaviors. These behaviors include social communication and self-soothing and calming.

The neuroanatomical and neurophysiological link between the vagal regulation of the heart and the neural regulation of the striated muscles of the face and head, called sternocleidomastoid.

The sternocleidomastoid passes obliquely across the side of the neck. The function of this muscle is to rotate the head to the opposite side or obliquely rotate the head. It also flexes the neck.

Once we understand these basic concepts, let's see what all this has got to do with our ability for autoregulation.

We wake up very early this morning to go to the stupa.

Once we are well motivated, we feel good to move and go.

Our sympathetic nervous system is activated, but not too much, because the ventral vagus is controlling well our excitement. This happens because the sternocleidomastoid muscle tone is good: we can turn our neck without difficulty in all directions. This makes it possible for us to have a panoramic attention.

Like a 'zooming mind': we can expand and contract our focus, our mind is open, available and curious. With this muscle flexible, we can have social engagement since we can make different facial expressions.

Our smile is contagious because it is real and complete.

Our voice is melodious and pleasant.

Our attitude of listening is receptive, so we have an empathetic and receptive mind.

Self regulated, we have an inner sense of I CAN.

We keep walking towards the stupa, seeking to maintain our focus on the motivation with which we recite mantras, but something unpleasant happens: someone pushes you to go, you do not like the voice of someone who is singing near you or the incense of the person in front begins to annoy you. It may seem like nothing, but these subtle discomforts take our concentration and make us more rigid!

Once that the ventral vagus can no longer control the sympathetic system as well, we become activated and the internal sensation turns into CAN I?

Now, let's imagine a tense situation, such as what occurred today with our friend Padado when we were visiting the elephants: he noticed that he was stepping on a live scorpion!

At this moment, his sternocleidomastoid muscle will stiffen, because he needs to maintain a focus on his feet. With this muscle tight, his face will frown, and his expression will be of fear or anger. His voice tone becomes unison, straight and direct. He is not available to listen to many opinions on what to do, because his attention is now directed to attack or flee. In this condition there is lack of empathy.

There are many times that we are communicating in this tense state, but it is impossible to have good communication if we cannot be empathetic!

This unregulated state of body-mind can range from a simple bad mood, irritation to a state of high anxiety and panic. Without the panoramic attention, our mind becomes fixed. We have obsessive thoughts that stick in our mind like glue.

The "Scorpion" can be a real and imaginary trigger. But it triggers a series of internal constraints with which we learn to deal with through our emotions. If the ventral vagus complex can no longer regulate us, we will activate the dorsal vagus system which will act like a burnt electric fuse.

Normally, the Dorsal Vagus serves a very positive function. It helps the body to gently pendulate between arousal and relaxation. However, when the Sympathetic is too aroused, the Dorsal Vagus nerve can shut down the entire system and we freeze. This is most common in trauma and shame, which is developmental trauma.

The sternocleidomastoid muscle will lose its tone. Without strength our facial expression is absent, we have difficulty to speak and move our body. We have a glazed look. Our look becomes vacant, likewise our mind: blurred, slow and unfocused. We are in a dissociated state in which we have no chance to have social engagement. This condition also occurs when one uses alcohol, marijuana and tranquilizers. The



mind creates dissociated fantasy situations and begins to interpret reality as its' imagination. According to the intensity of this state, the better or worse will be our ability to face reality.

But now, under the rule of the dorsal vagus system is our internal feeling of I CAN NOT.

In the human species, the freeze response can assume many faces. When we are ashamed or in a state of profound grief.

The problem is that our culture, tends to judge this state of instinctive surrender, in the face of overwhelming threat, as weakness or cowardice.

As Peter Levine explains: "The key to healing traumatic symptoms in humans is in our physiology. When faced with what is perceived as an inescapable or overwhelming threat, humans and animals both use the immobility response. The important thing to understand about this function is that it is involuntary. This simply means that the physiological mechanism governing this response resides in the primitive, instinctual parts of our brains and nervous systems, and is not under our conscious control."

We'll stay in this frozen state until we find a secure environment or a person who is regulated and trustworthy; capable of allowing us to feel safe and to let our body complete its' own time to come back to being active. Each individual has a natural length of time for the body to return to balance. We have to respect it!

What was frozen we will now need to 'unload' in this process called the freeze discharge. This discharge is characterized by shaking or trembling, tingling, sleeping, yawning and weeping as well as vasodilation. This discharge helps the client to better integrate the broken sensory fragments of the event, and establishes what Dr. Levine calls "Creative Self-Regulation". This is in contrast to most "talk" therapies, where the therapist tries to rally the client to accept what has happened, possibly through the retrieval of a lost episodic memory of the event.

If we do not let this discharge process to happen, we will be stuck ON (freeze of the sympathetic system) or OFF (freeze of the dorsal parasympathetic system).

The symptoms of un-discharged traumatic stress left "ON" are: anxiety, panic, hyperactivity, exaggerated startle, inability to relax, restlessness, hyper-vigilance, digestive problems, emotional flooding, chronic pain, sleeplessness, hostility/rage.

The symptoms of un-discharged traumatic stress on "OFF" are: depression, flat affection, lethargy, deadness, exhaustion, chronic fatigue, disorientation, disconnection, dissociation, complex syndromes, pain, low blood pressure and poor digestion.

But, when the nervous system is balance, we are able to transit different emotional states, we feel embodied, available for connection, fluid, resilient, relaxed yet alert, able to be present, appropriately reactive and emotionally stable. In this state we feel that we have choices and options.

Each person can have their own method of self regulation. The important thing is to keep committed to our physical, mental and environmental health. Self regulated, we are able to appreciate ourselves more and because it is possible to have a deeper sense of compassion, empathy, and intimacy, our relationships with others improve.

There are moments in life when the only hope of coming out of a catatonic situation relies on internal resources and accomplishing an inner change.

When the mind directs itself, it connects itself.

Change and moving ahead is possible. As Lama Gangchen Rinpoche says: "Don't feel pressured by the future, just follow positivity."