



... positive words to create
positive things ...





Lama Caroline, England

About Borobudur ...

When we were looking at the Gandavyūha Sūtra, looking at the slides of the Gandavyūha panels and the last one we saw was a Wish Fulfilling Tree. So Rinpoche was saying that you are all very lucky, because that is called a positive dependent arising, very auspicious for you. A Wish Fulfilling Tree is something from Vedic mythology - so you go to the tree and say 'Oh tree.... - and make your wish, it fulfils your wishes; so obviously a long life, happiness, health, success, good environment, very good relationships, no fighting - all these are very important. It is a sign that everything will be auspicious for your relationships. Of course, as Buddhists we hope the Wish Fulfilling Tree will also grant us spiritual realisations, not just mundane things - the mundane things we need as well, we do need to be happy and healthy and have a good relationship; it is much easier to go on the spiritual path together, it is much nicer.

Also the fact that some of you are getting married together here in this very holy place, bodes very well. In Palden Drepung, (the Glorious Rice Heap) is Tibetan - it is the place where the Buddha taught the Chi-Ching - it means the glorious mass or heap of rice. The rice heap is also one name for Java from ancient times because here, three times a year they have rice harvests. So, for many reasons we are in this holy place of Palden Drepung, very auspicious - this holy place of Kalachakra; very auspicious and also of abundance and everything positive.

In ancient times - this was a holy place for people of all religions, not just Buddhists and nowadays, since UNESCO restored the Borobudur, people of all traditions and none are coming here to receive the positive energy and blessings of Borobudur. Of course, originally the people coming here were Indonesian, Indian and Chinese, you know, and local people; but in modern times, since Borobudur has been reconstructed, now there are many people from all over the world and especially many new Buddhists like for example, we Europeans and South Americans, we are all new Buddhists we are converts to Buddhism, so now many more people are coming from all over the world, to receive the blessings of Borobudur.

Now Indonesia is the most popular Muslim country in the world but Borobudur is the national monument of Indonesia, so all the indigenous Muslims come here too. We can see, many, many families, adults and children, coming here every day and also many, many people from all traditions; they are all coming and touching Borobudur. At one time we saw a lot of blind people and they were touching and feeling the Stupa, so all kinds of people are coming here to receive the blessings.

In the last hundred years, when Tibetan Buddhism became more known to the Western world, the British and German people who went to Tibet and the Himalayas and so on, they did not understand too well the Tibetan tradition, they just thought that Tibetan Buddhism was lamaism and lama worship. Actually what we are doing and all the Tibetan rituals for instance, is exactly the same as what they were doing in ancient India, not so different, not made up by the Tibetans, who just continued in many, many aspects their dress, rituals and behaviour and so on of the Indians - the vajra, the bell, the bumpa vase, everything is all from ancient India. You can see represented on Borobudur, everything around us, the conch, everything, that the Tibetans have - they did not make it up. They are mountain people, so very precisely they conserved (like the Swiss) conservatively all the teachings of the Indian Mahayanists they kept exactly for 1000 years. In India, because of history, changes in history, most of the Buddhist monuments have been destroyed. Okay, a few like Bodh Gaya have been recovered, but mostly they have all been destroyed from the Mahayana period. Rinpoche is saying, for example, in Bodh Gaya there is a small mandala but nobody takes much care of it. Previously there were many monuments like Borobudur in India, now they are all

gone in the course of history, lost in time, like tears in the rain. So that is why Borobudur is so very fascinating, because it is an Indian Mahayana / Vajrayana monument that has survived. In fact, it is the only one; which is why it is so important a holy place.

Rinpoche is kindly showing us how to use Borobudur as a Vajrayana mandala, like the highest yoga tantra way, so then he is showing exactly all the stages of the highest yoga tantra initiation - for example, on the side there are many vases, vase empowerments of Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava - exactly like what we do when the Tibetan is recited in the initiations - this is what we are doing and through the initiations on the east side of Akshobhya, the vase and so on. So Rinpoche is showing us this high level tantric initiation and he was saying if you like - maybe next year, we can do more like showing this sutra way. That is more easy and accessible - like a tourist way, with a flag! Okay 'sutra' means 'public discourse' - so we could do this for everybody. Tantra is secret, not for everyone, so the sutra is more accessible. If you look, every day there are tourist guides taking people up and explaining to people (we do not know exactly what). They have some explanations, but not really the whole things. As Professor Lokesh Chandra said: "if you want to know the whole point, you have to go back to the Tibetan tradition, the Buddhist tradition to be able to understand Borobudur".

Every morning when we receive the vows, we request to receive the empowerment, we say 'Please Guru, essence of all buddhas of the three times, please bless me to receive the initiation of the Ocean of Mandalas. Borobudur is like a multi-mandala, so we can impute any kind of mandala, any kind of tantric practice on that. So he was showing all kinds of different things, showing all the classes of tantra, from action to highest yoga tantra all kinds of mantras, all kinds of mudras, the sutra teachings, all kinds of Theravada teachings, Mahayana, Vajrayana - Rinpoche was saying also, like normal things, like astrology, medicine, astronomy (because you can use it like an observatory) that is another interesting subject. Borobudur was very well designed, I must say. You can use it for all kinds of incredible things - Rinpoche was saying this representation of Siddhartha on the Lalitavistara is shooting an arrow with a bow - it is a little like Greek mythology, He gets the great bow that only He can bend and he shoots an arrow through seven palm trees and the arrow penetrates into the earth and disappears. So it is showing things like sports, poetry, Vedic mathematics, everything basically. Also, of normal things and all the enlightenment things as well.

When Borobudur was constructed in the 8th century, there was the Sailendra dynasty - they were the local Buddhist kings here, so they invited from South India, the Tamil states for South Indian monks to come to here. Their vihara has been discovered near here and they invited the leader of these monks who was Gunadharma Thera, the elder Gunadharma - 'Guna' means qualities, so all the Dharma qualities. King Sailendra, together with this incredibly clever buddhist architect, Gunadharma, started this Borobudur monument. Then it took 80 years, more or less, to finish, so it was not so quick - also they had to do all of this by hand 80 - 100 years, so it was like 3 generations of the same royal dynasty. So there was Raja Indra (means King Indra, the name of the god - like Zeus in western mythology) so King Indra and then his son and then his grand-daughter, these 3 generations continued the construction of the Borobudur - so it took 80 years from the beginning to when it was completed and then for another 200 years it was functioning until the Merapi volcano eruption took place. After the year 1006 the area was evacuated because of a major Merapi volcanic eruption and then the vegetation grew back over the monument. It was not like Pompeii, the ash covered it, in the story. Ash is very fertile and then came the plants and the area was abandoned. So then, because of cultural changes, let's say in Indonesia, it then fell into disuse. Before it was a Hindu / Buddhist place and then afterwards, they transformed to become predominantly a Muslim kingdom, so they were not so much interested here anymore, like just forgotten. Of course the local people knew it was here, they could see it, it was not going to disappear, it was covered in trees. Then, in 1770 -1780 during the Dutch colonial period, the Dutch and British were here in Indonesia. It was actually the governor of Singapore, Sir Stamford Raffles who sent the first expedition to cut back the trees, to see exactly what was here. Then over the next 2 centuries various teams of Dutch and British academics and archaeologists were interested in it and the first reconstruction was in



the Victorian times, the 19th century as it was collapsing so they did something already.

These photos taken of the panels actually are of the famous Dutch archaeologist, Van Earp from his expedition of around 1910. The problem of Borobudur, as you might have gathered, is the rain; it was subsiding because all the drainage channels were blocked and actually the Dutch were already trying to fix the drainage channels, but they did not do it so well, in fact the situation got worse. So then in the 1960's, Professor Lokesh Chandra, a very famous Indian Buddhist scholar, made many requests to the academic community around the world and then finally to UNESCO to do something, because he recognised the importance of this monument. Finally, they accepted and did this huge restoration. They took down the whole thing, rebuilt proper support and drainage channels and then put it back up again. It was reopened in 1983, as we can see on the stone together with President Suharto.



So that is actually why we invited Professor Pandit Lokesh Chandra here and showed him so much respect, because actually it is thanks to him that we have this monument, rebuilt and open again to the public. I first met him in 7-8 years ago during a congress here in this very room - the Indonesian Institute of Archaeology (they invited Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, whom I represented as it was his birthday and he could not attend himself). So in here they had a conference like this, but not like this! More serious with lots of professors, very formal and each one would give their presentation about what they thought Borobudur was all about and Lokesh Chandra said 'That's all rubbish! Get off, next!' He was really rude to them all and they were all scared of him. So I was number 50, I think, like the Gandavyūha, yes - I was 50 or 51 or something, last! The last and only Western speaker. I showed on the screen on this side, Rinpoche's ideas; what we show to you all the time, about the Mandala about the female buddhas about the Self-Healing, why it is a Vajrayana mandala, what we talk about all the time. And then he said, 'Yes, that's right! Finally I agree! Somebody here is saying something true'. Then Gangchen Rinpoche invited him to come to Italy and to come here together, hand in hand. Istar is reminding me - He told us that what he had learnt in a lifetime, was what you can get in one moment together with Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, hand in hand. So that is

really a compliment, because he is like the greatest living Buddhist scholar. Actually when I went to that congress, I did not know this thing about UNESCO, that he initiated it, so it is all very auspicious dependent arising.

Rinpoche is saying words of auspiciousness, positive words to create positive things for the relationships of the group getting married.

We welcome our new friend Silvana here today as she just met Rinpoche today.



Silvana came a few days ago, very shyly, following what we were doing in the early morning and going back to her hotel - The Plataran. We then met her, while we were having dinner at the Plataran and she asked us about our group and more especially about our Lama and she found out that we were indeed with the lama group because when she arrived they had told her that she was very lucky because the Lama is here. Therefore, this morning she came to the Stupa with us and she received a lot of explanations from Roy and then she requested if she could please meet Lama Gangchen, so we organised for her to meet Lama Gangchen. They had breakfast together. A nice exchange took place during the talk and she tells us that she has two sons and one of her sons is engaged in environmental studies and he says, 'Mum my task is I want to save this world, I want to improve the environment, I want to make this earth a safe and well place; I want to help to do that'.

It is very beautiful that someone from the younger generations are not just thinking about themselves, their own business, their own well being, but thinking how to save the world, that is really, really fantastic.

Now we are going to have the wedding ceremony and after that we are going to have a wedding reception, which is tea, coffee and cake in Borobudur.

Lama Gangchen

So our new friend Silvana whom we have met today also has an important job, a very busy life; she has stopped the telephone for a few days, closed all forms of external connections while here in Borobudur. This is some sort of a kind of definite emergence or renunciation, looking for something different. Most of all of us, that when we come here, we come with a lot of effort, we come from far away, some people need to put money aside for a long time, people need to find specific times



within their jobs when coming from very far away to here, for example people coming from Chile or Brazil, and a lot of effort is being invested to come from very far away to arrive here. This is actually showing that we are looking truly and sincerely for a different meaning, looking truly and sincerely for something that goes beyond our normal, let's call, mundane objectives that we have in everyday life. That is why we come up to here from so far, why we put so much effort into all of this. If we look from one side, it is something quite rare; most of the times people are mainly dedicated into their own way of daily survival somehow, and for us to go beyond that and look for something deeper, which is already something by itself quite rare for the mere fact that we are here. But from the other side, if we look, it is not exactly that rare, there are many people also doing many positive things in this world and giving a different meaning, giving importance to benefitting others and so on; and if we look at all the effort we put in as we come here, every day when we go to the Mandala of Borobudur, we do a lot of recitation, we do the mudras, we do the breathing, we do the walking meditation. So as we do the walking meditation we go through this enlightenment marathon, and as we go as a marathon without competition, just going very slowly for many, many hours, we awake around 4.30am and we come here, then we go up till about 9.30 -10.30am every day and not only that; we just stop for some rest and some food and then we are back again together in the afternoon, just as we are now here. So we put a lot of effort in and generally it is said that when we do something with the correct motivation, even one's own breath can be a virtuous action. So all of this that we are doing here together, once it is done with the correct motivation - as we take refuge, as we generate the mind of bodhicitta of love and compassion, this automatically really makes incredible amounts of positive energy from the virtuous actions that we are accomplishing as we gather together here.

Even the fact of waking up early in the morning, in the western modern world sleep is very precious, it is something that we do not want to give up, not possible to give up, not possible to make any interference. Even within one's own family - 'Oh he is sleeping, do not wake him' - like it is so precious, the way how we treat sleep in the West. Here, okay we are giving up our early morning sleep to come every morning, so this is showing a lot of effort that we are putting into coming to the Stupa. All of this means is that, from one side it is true that it is quite rare to have all those wonderful things, from the other side it is not so rare, there are already many people putting effort in that direction. This means we have hope, it means we are going in a good direction, it means we can rejoice.

Previously I requested Alfredo to come to speak here, Alfredo comes from Chile, he is a man with a lot of experience and knowledge and he was for a long time a director of the World Bank; he was just recently a candidate for the Presidency in Chile. I really hope that everybody can actually use their own knowledge and experience because everyone who is here has their own profession, their own preparation, so I really hope you can use it in a way that is of benefit for the world in general - 'how can I use my knowledge, how can I do what I do in order to be of more benefit for this world?' Maybe someone can be writing books, maybe someone can be helping the people that are near to us, there are so many ways that we can do. As our Dutch friends, the Dutch sisters, put together a book about people's experiences of Borobudur, so this is something which made me very happy and is also something important for you to see, because more than talking about the history of Borobudur and the meaning and so on, I believe it is very important for you to see the experience that other western people have, coming from the same background as yourselves. This is very often much more powerful than talking about knowledge of understanding what the meaning of this and that is and so on. This is one example of a book that was made, and the picture on the cover was not made up in Photoshop or something like that, Thomas took it in 2013 and it is putting things as they are, not making up anything. So the main thing is that one should use one's own ability, one's knowledge to make using this life in a meaningful way. That is the main thing I wanted to say.



Lama Michel

Generally speaking, every day as we go to the Mandala, we take refuge, we generate a bodhicitta mind, take bodhisattva vows, we receive the blessings from the Vajrayana path and the empowerments, and we do this every day as we go along through the Stupa Mandala and so on. So here now, at this moment as we come actually, it is not that you have never received refuge or something like this as we have already done many different times. But this is like a specific moment in which a commitment is made together in order to do something more, generating a commitment of two people together for thinking about this on a longer term. And this is something that is not something new, if we recall in our normal mundane way - even there is a panel in Borobudur where it is showing Buddha when at the time of Prince Siddhartha when getting married, giving the ring to his wife, so that is even there since that

time. This is something that is very common in this way, so for us actually to have this specific blessing, is a way to take refuge together, to give a different meaning to the union of being together, to generate the mind of bodhicitta together, which means a dedication through this union may be of benefit for one's own spiritual development and for the benefit of others. So that is why we are also referring to what the young person said that he wants to save the world, which is something very positive also as it means the opening of our mind for the benefit of others before thinking of ourselves. Similar to that, as we gather here together, as we give now this marriage blessing, it is basically a way of creating a commitment of being together in order for one's own development and for the development of the other one also and for whatever way it can be of greater benefit for oneself and others by helping a child or by being together with a child.

Lama Gangchen

So now we repeat the prayer for taking 'refuge' for the blessing of the marriage, I will ask everybody to repeat together in order to give our support for the couple that are getting married together here today. So we take now the refuge vows, in front of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas here in the Mandala of Borobudur. We also generate the mind of bodhicitta, the commitment to reach enlightenment to develop ourselves spiritually for the benefit of others.

I also think that it is good that we have a marriage blessing because nowadays many people very often have not very much interest in getting married and making commitments, so that fact that you make the commitments and you wanted to get married in this way is also something very positive. The commitment we make here is not a commitment of just one lifetime of being together as a couple, but is actually the commitment of one helping the other and being near to each other especially from the spiritual point of view, from now up to enlightenment, that's not so many lifetimes up to enlightenment, but many lifetimes.

"For those that have never taken 'refuge', the vow of the commitments and the vows of refuge will be newly generated; for those that have already taken before have not kept them correctly, they are regenerated, and for those that have taken the vows in the past and have maintained them correctly, they are strengthened."







“... taking away the impurities in order for flowers to flourish in a beautiful way, as we have in our five chakras,
we have one lotus flower in each one of the chakras.

So the essence is that we purify our negativities,
we take away the impurities so we can generate
a very beautiful inner garden
as we go through the external garden of the
Borobudur Mandala.





... when you are driving ...
put the window down and
enjoy your sunshine ...



Elkana Waarsenburg, MD, The Netherlands

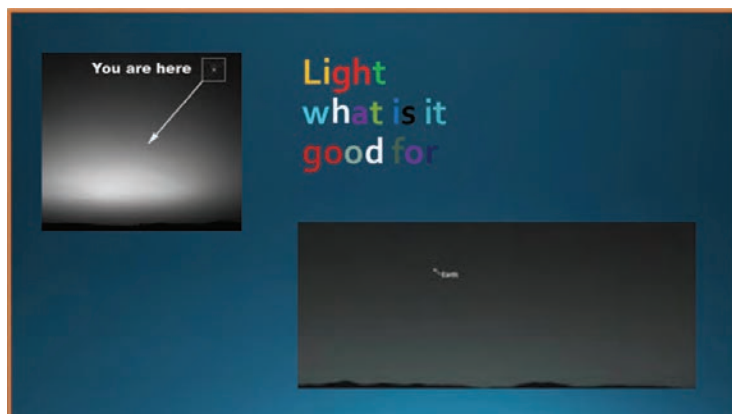
Light: what is it (good for)

Thank you very much Istar for the chair. First of all I would like to thank you Istar for organising this conference and also the beautiful booklets that you have made with the support of many others, thanks a lot. Especially I want to express my gratitude to you Lama Gangchen for everything that we are together experiencing during these days; it is incredible there is joy, there is the skillful means, there is the surprise, there is everything that you bring us from the known to the unknown from the seen to the unseen. It is an incredible journey and is bringing so much joy, thank you and also thank you so much Lama Caroline and Lama Michel over all the years.

Today I am happy to have the opportunity to share with you some thoughts about the subject of the conference, 'From Darkness into Light' but before I go on to this topic, I will just introduce myself for those who do not know me: I am working as a family physician in Holland and besides this I am also working in palliative care and end of life care; and the week before we started here in Borobudur I attended a master class in spirituality in Holland and it was especially for palliative care workers. I just want to express, in this sense, that we are extremely lucky that we have such great teachers as we have here because: those four days, it was the top of the top of spirituality master class in Holland, but actually it was quite different and also not so profound and everyone was looking for the meaning of spirituality until the very end of the four days - and it was a course from 8pm to 11pm. We drove back with three colleagues and one of them started to cry, she was feeling angry, she had so many expectations for this master class and did not find what she was looking for, so it was a disappointment for her. I feel many, many people now are looking for spirituality and I think being here, having this opportunity of meeting teachers who know so much in a deep and profound way of reaching enlightenment and overcoming our suffering is the best of the best, so thank you once more for this incredible opportunity that we have.

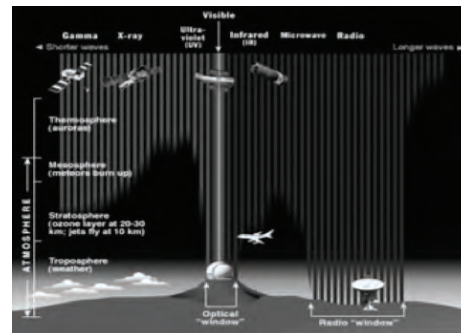
Now I would like to shine some light on the topic "From Darkness into Light" and I was thinking 'what are we going to talk about' and what struck me was the word light. What is light? So I thought I would explore some aspects of light, they will be short and I will just go through them briefly, but with some questions in it as well.

I would like to start with this nice picture of darkness into light, this is a picture taken from Mars of the Earth, so this is another perspective and we are this small light dot somewhere in the darkness. Here we are this is our Earth and this is another picture of Mars where this picture was taken. So let's look at light, what is it and what is it good for? To start with, and this is a



question I am not going to answer at all, because this is a question of life - what is the origin of light? There are many cultures - some would say, from a Catholic background that it was God that created it, or it was the Big Bang; we also say maybe it is our clear light, our clear inner light that is always there. However let's have a look at outer clear light and so I will just briefly just go through these different topics: sunlight, life and survival - some are phenomena, colours and cultures, some are

in health and inner light. Actually it is so wonderful when you put into Google, nature and colours, there are incredible pictures, nature is so beautiful - light is everywhere - either it is in the fire that 10,000 years ago kept us warm, or the light that we have even in the night, we created light now day and night and the light also has a relationship with colours, many, many different colours. If we look at the light that we have from the sun: The sun has illuminated earth from its very origin - 4 1/2 billion years ago and life would not have been possible without the sunlight. We needed the ultra violet protection ozone layer and that was created some 500 million years ago, called the Cambrian Explosion and from that moment on, life on earth was possible. Light is not always good, light can be good but it really depends on what kind of being you are, where you live and what you do. As we look at light from the physical phenomena perspective, in the past we thought light was a wave, but it was Einstein who in 1905 postulated that light could be both a particle and a wave simultaneously. At the time, people were saying that he was making this statement, but until two years ago, in 2015 for the first time they could project light as both a wave and a particle simultaneously - so light is something that is very extraordinary and complex. As I was preparing this lecture for me it was striking that this complex interdependence is there all the time in the light in itself. There are different frequencies, for example, the purple is a high frequency and red is a low frequency and if you think of what the sizes of such wave patterns is extremely small - between 400 and 700 nano-mols, that is 1,000,000th of a millimetre or as small as a tiny bacteria or a tiny dust particle and one molecule just to compare, is several hundred times larger than this tiny bacteria or this light. The speed of light is incredibly fast - 300,000 kilometres per second so in 1 second light goes almost 8 times around the Earth. If we look the qualities of light, not all light is healthy and luckily we have our ozone layer and this takes out some various forms of radiation like X-rays and many other forms and only light that we see reaching the Earth - the gamma and X-rays and ultra violet we cannot see with the visual eye and also part of those do not come to the Earth **and only this part here (on picture/diagram shown) of the visual light reaches Earth and then there are all different kinds of light here on the right**. Light is so beautiful because we start with white light but when it touches on the surface you get the beautiful diversity as we all know. How is it that all these different colours and colours that we could see on the previous slides about nature and also what we experience in nature has to do with this light, so I just took some nice small examples, to show how this light is in relation to many, many circumstances - the complex interdependence in the whole universe and also in our Earth.



Sun light has to do with absorption and reflection and for example and for example the green plants, as probably we all know, is that the green part of the light is the part that the plants do not use - in the sense that the other parts of light such as blue has the largest effect on the photosynthesis and also red and yellow light plants are using, but the green light is reflected because they do not use it for that purpose.

Why is the sky blue? From the physical point of view, the sky is blue because there are many, many molecules in the sky like oxygen and carbon dioxide, nitrogen and a lot of small dust particles and this creates disturbance in the sky due to these small particles and then it happens that the blue light is the most reflected. We also see, for example, when people are smoking in sunlight, you can see that the smoke looks blue; this has to do with all the particles that are in suspension and blocking the light in fact. Also people with blue eyes, in fact have cloudy eyes, so there are a lot of obstacles and this is why only the blue part of light reflects the most. If you have green or brown eyes, the pigment involved has to do with creating different colours. An interesting fact is why we have a red sunset: this is because as the sunset comes down, only the red light with the lowest frequency

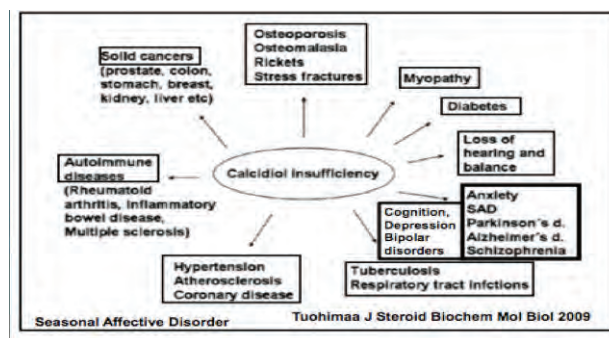


is the light that only can reach the Earth - all the other parts of the light, like the white light cannot reach Earth anymore because it is blocked by all these particles, so this why we have a red sunset. If we look at the colours and cultures, many, many cultures use colours across time and also give meaning to them - it is different for every country, culture and religion as we know. We have now many, many names for different colours, but in the past there were just a few names, like black and white and then red came, yellow and green. If you look at all the mandalas that we have, actually the primary force of light, red, green and yellow is most always there. And also when we look at the Kalachakra, there is black, white, red and yellow. So they are the primary colours and in the past for example, in ancient Greek there was no name for blue, it did not exist at that time yet, in the form of giving it a name. Also, in Tibetan, from what I understood from Lama Michel, blue and green had the same name. Blue for example, was very rare in nature - of course we could see it in the sky, but for example, lapis lazuli was only found in the area of Afghanistan and was extremely expensive. Some other nice things to know for example, Isaac Newton changed our way of looking at rainbows - they are normal of five colours, red, yellow, green, blue and violet but he did not like the number 5, so he added two more colours, but today if we look at the sky and count the colours, there are only five - so it is interesting how our culture is used to colours and transform them for their own use.

Next, we are going to look at the effects of sunlight on health. There are a lot of benefits, as we all know, like a heat light triggering a vitamin D synthesis, tanning and good mood. Light is also important for insects, for the medication, for example: less infection; but as we all know, there are also negative aspects of sunlight, like sunburn, sun energy causing skin ageing, cataracts and so on, damage to the eyes, immune suppression, actinic keratosis, skin cancer and the one I wanted to mention especially, is the melanoma. We see a huge increase in melanoma over the years and this has to do with UVA and this is part of the light that is harming the skin the most. Normally the light comes together with UVB, but when we sit behind glass, for example, only the UVA reaches the skin and not the UVB. UVB is the one that protects ourselves from the negative effects of sunlight, so it is good to know, part of the increase in melanoma has to do with sitting too much inside of our house, inside of the car, with the windows closed. So when you are driving better to put the window down and enjoy your sunshine.

Sunlight exposure is by far our most important source of vitamin D, and UVB is needed to activate the vitamin D. In medical field discussions there are questions as to what is the correct dose of vitamin D that we need for a healthy life. Too little is no good, but too much is also not good and we call it a U shaped form, so I will go through why it is important to have the right amount of sunlight for our health. **Vitamin D is most vital for our health and this picture shows this because, lack of vitamin D has to do with many, many kinds of diseases**

- of course the most known of is osteoporosis and rickets disease and stressed structures, but also it is related to myopathy, problems with muscles, diabetes, loss of hearing and balance, also anxiety, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's; but also in relation with tuberculosis, hypertension, atherosclerosis and also some forms of cancer. I think it is important to know a little bit about the effects of vitamin D in relation to sunlight. As we are here with an international group, we cannot say what is the optimal dose of vitamin D, because every country has its own guidelines and own way of looking at what is the best amount of vitamin D intake. So if we compare the Netherlands with the United States, there is a difference in what is said about deficiency. In America they say that more or less 50 nano moles/litre there is a

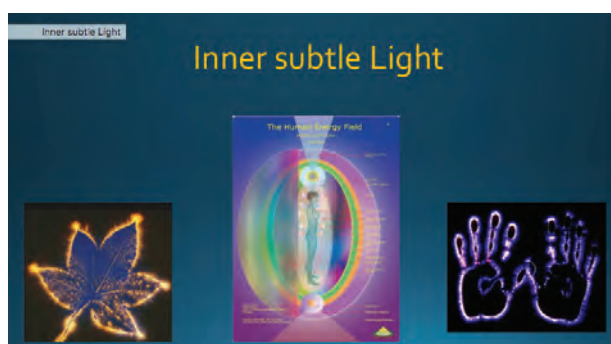


shortage, but in the Netherlands we state that only when you have a vitamin D level of 10 - 30 there is a deficiency and this is a big problem world wide, as vitamin D is really essential and we cannot yet find a good solution for what is the best dose of vitamin D. If you look at the literature most of the time we talk in nano moles/litre it is more or less 80. So it could be an idea to check when getting blood tests for vitamin D levels because we now see in north European countries that there is a great lack of vitamin D and as you can see from previous slides, a lack can influence different types of diseases. So I just put a practical 'do's' and 'don'ts' of the vitamin D for you. So the 'do's' are to sit in the sun and not only for the vitamin D because we know that sunlight is good for many, many things. We use a lot of sunscreen - this is something that is culturally based I think, but now we are slowly starting to understand that by using sunscreen we really are taking away this important UVA and UVB that we also need to generate this vitamin D. So sunscreen is needed, depending on where you are in the world, for example here we are in the tropics and sunscreen is really needed, but in European countries, its not always needed. Also check the quality of sunscreen; some are creating cancer instead of protecting you from it. People sit on the beach enjoying the sunlight, but then you don't create that much vitamin D. It looks like you need to exercise in relation to sunlight to activate this system. For the people who are living in the northern part of Europe, we now advise all the people to take extra vitamin D in wintertime. The people who come from Asian countries to European countries, they even need to supplement all the year round due to skin pigmentation they really get a lot less vitamin D. With your doctor you can check your blood levels of vitamin D.

The 'don'ts', I mentioned already not to sit behind the window for sunbathing; don't avoid the sun; don't always put sunscreen on, just do it sometimes/ some days/ some hours. Don't get sunburnt and don't put sunglasses on all the time, because sunglasses take away the beneficial light that is needed for the eyes. Don't be scared of an overdose of vitamin D because before you reach the top level, don't worry this is not a problem; we cannot reach it by just sitting in the sun. Also people say they will take some supplements and so don't have to sit in the sun - as we saw before, sunlight is essential for many, many things, not only for vitamin D.

This was more the part of the physical view of light and metaphysical view of light, but another perspective of light is the one that we are learning here from Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, with the practices here at Borobudur and also the practice of Self-Healing, we know that we create inner light. [There is this Kirlian photography, which can show that we are made of energy and the pictures you can see on the left, the leaf and the hand on the right is Kirlian photography, beautiful pictures.](#) They show that we create energy and we are energy and you can see it. Then we have the part of the aura, which some people can see, but most people do not see - we create a light and energy and if we look more closely to what we are doing here with the practice, Rinpoche is talking about creating our inner garden. I think these beautiful flowers every day, are really

inside of us. We see in the outer world, but we also have the inner world and slowly by doing these practices over the years, I can really feel something moving inside of myself and all the colours can come up. This is my personal experience and I am really curious what you experience these days here at Borobudur in relation to seeing different kinds of light for example. We also did the Kalachakra practice in which also the lights are very well put there for the elements, every morning when we go around Borobudur. So the inner light is something more hidden, not seen by our outer senses lets say but maybe through our other consciousness, or third eye, we can become more and more aware of it. I liked the way Lama Michel was explaining in the 12 links of interdependence





about karma; he stated that this consciousness - our mental continuum, is like a very fertile field where we have planted many seeds and the seeds are like our deeds our actions and all kinds of conditions make these seeds grow and sooner or later the result will be there, either good or bad. So we have this inner garden inside of ourselves and we giving it food, either in a bad way or in a good way; and with respect to the latter, this is why we are here and we are all experiencing and creating a very fertile ground of beautiful inner garden. I like this way of looking at light and from darkened into light, especially subtle light - we can really regenerate and there is this beautiful nature with all of these colours inside of ourselves.

Then there was one lady, an Italian lady, she was explaining about Borobudur and the different colours and mentioning Vairochana in the centre with white light and different colours were coming out of it. In dharma it is often mentioned that our mind is like a diamond and I was struck by this picture of this white light that comes in like Vairochana and all the different kinds of light are coming inside of our body - it is a different kind of light, maybe it is a clear light or collective consciousness of pure energy. I am not having the right words to give expression to it, but I think we have this beautiful diamond in ourselves, our pure mind and as we go along during these days and during the years of practising, we are creating bright lights. I think that Rinpoche is really showing this pure light in ourselves and that we really can find our way, through the incredible guidance of Lama Gangchen to develop this inner garden and I hope for us all that we can really take the fruits of this practice from darkness into light and we really can bring a lot of light to this world that needs so much support. So I thank you for your attention; this was just my thoughts about light to share with you.





Consciousness
is light ...



Lama Caroline, England

Clear Light

First I would like to say, very nice presentation Elkana, thank you. I just wanted to add a few things to what you were saying. You know about the fact that the sky is blue: In ancient India they used to think it was blue because it was the reflection of the blue side of Mount Meru. Now we seem to think that it is the dust particles refracting the light, making it look blue, so anyway the point is that when we see the blue we need to realise that everything is empty of inherent existence because it is not real, it is an illusion. I was saying the other day that Nagarjuna repeatedly talks about these things in the root stanzas of his famous book on emptiness. One of the chapters is about light, you might find that interesting. He is talking about light and shadow; light and shadow exist in dependence between each other. Also within Kalachakra, the Bishwamata is the same idea, she is the pattern of light and shadow in the universe. So every time we see, during the day, light changing, everything is empty of inherent existence and everything is dependent arising. This is very important in buddhism; it is not so far away. The famous buddhist saint Milarepa said 'My book is everywhere; I don't need a book because everywhere is reality'. All great buddhist masters said to just look around yourself and there is emptiness. They use this example of light and colour a lot, so that is one thing.

Then on the Kalachakra on the map we have - so first is, these colours - these are the colours of the cycle of the light of the day and the night. One explanation is that they are this colour because it is the Earth and it is from very ancient times: Vedic times, where they made this mandala and as you said, they did not have all these colours in ancient times - they were missing blue etc., so this is the colour of the earth; if you look around: white, yellow, red and black, it is easy.

But actually if we look in the Kalachakra, this is the cycle of the day and the night and the year. Normally when we read mandalas we go one way, but this one we are going the other way. So if you look at the mandala you see the night time, it is dark and then comes the dawn, then comes mid day and then comes evening, the sunset. This shows that every day the cycle of light in the outer and inner world. Then it shows the cycle of energies in the year, how the light changes through the seasons as well. I just wanted to add that to what you were saying. The Kalachakra talks about the Deities of the sun and the moon cycles, who talk about light. Also in Buddhism, in our Mahayana/Vajrayana tradition, we have many meditations with light. For example there are many meditations not so much in our tradition, but from the yogi tradition where they spend many months in the dark. The point is to understand the light manifestation of your own consciousness. Actually you do not really need to do that in the dark, but anyway that was the way to do in ancient times, to stay in a completely dark place for 3 months. Then the manifestation of your own mind appears before you and you start to see all these coloured lights.

Anyway, consciousness is light, as we know through the elements absorbing and so on, there come many manifestations of light within our own mind. People are afraid of dying because, one reason is because of the darkness, this feeling of falling into nothingness, into darkness. But actually the deep human mind is full of light and the experience of anyone who has had a near-death experience or profound meditation experience, say it is full of brilliant light. There is one point, when it goes dark but actually the deep, profound experience of consciousness is very brilliant light. Then of course the vajra, the diamond consciousness is manifesting all this; let's say it is one world view that the outer light is a production of our inner light. So that is one thing I wanted to say; there are lots of things in Buddhism to talk about light, so it is very nice that you start this subject of the conversation.

Carolina from Chile: "I would just like to share about something that just came up in my mind.

There is a book by Lama Gangchen, Self-Healing III, where he talks about our relationship with the elements, Rinpoche says there that in this century we are losing our contact with the elements, e.g. we walk with shoes, so we do not feel the Earth, we drink water like this (in bottles) not from the river, we do not feel the wind in our face, so I do not know about light and what element we can say it is, but it makes sense to me what you are saying. Me personally, in the winter my energy goes down and I think it is because there is less sunlight. So then you talk about avoiding the sun if we do not feel the wind or whatever. So I think just if we are avoiding the sun we are going to the darkness. So just something I wanted to share.

Lama Caroline: I will tell you what it says in the Buddhist teachings: Rinpoche makes many, many times this element absorption - earth into water, water into fire, fire into space, this process of the body and mind shutting down, a natural process. It is like when we go to sleep. How many of you, when you go to sleep have a flash of light when you go to sleep? I have, anyone else? Also when you wake up with a flash of light. This happens every night naturally; white vision, red vision, like the lights of your own consciousness of the subtle mind. So how many people have had like that when you go to sleep? So surely a lot of you. This is a natural human experience, it is not something weird or something like that.

In buddhism, we are only talking about actual human experience. So, first there is this brilliant white light - that is the easiest one to see, very bright, okay. I think most of us have had this kind of experience. More rare is when some people see this red experience. Now for example, our friend Pete - now he has passed away. I used to talk to him about these things, about the death experience - I like to talk about these things with my friends. Pete said, he got the combination just right how to get the red vision. He was not so well; at the end of his life he was quite sick. Quite often he said he was going into this red vision and he was telling me about it. Also maybe if we train in meditation it is perhaps more easy to see; if not, also if you get sick it is also possible to see, so he said that many times he was seeing this red vision, before he died.

The black vision is what we call going to sleep, puff: black out - that we see everyday. The clear light we do not recognise very much, it is more difficult. So what they say in the buddhist teachings - now we are in Asia in the monsoon season and as the dust in the air goes down, it becomes very clear, so they say that the light just before dawn, after the monsoon season, like in India or some tropical country. What they mean by this in buddhism is when you can just start to see the lines on your hands, like the dull greyish light at Borobudur at dawn. This is what they mean by the clear light, sorry till now I am not a great Mahasiddha and I don't have a lot of experience of the clear light (hope to get some before I die). Then can be very happy and recognise the son clear light, or daughter clear light or meeting the mother clear light - fantastic yes? But I think we all recognise the other ones, like the white vision - we have this experience, some of us have the red vision experience, through sickness or meditation, black we have all the time. So just got one to go to recognise, but we thank Rinpoche who is helping us to get that - thank you Rinpoche.

Thomas: Very short question, I thought that these flashes of light when going to sleep I understood them to be when the eyesight is diminishing and the earth element is dissolving into the water element - that it is connected with the loss of eyesight?

Lama Caroline: There are different signs of the elements, they are quite distinctive. They are kind of unmistakable because one goes with feeling and one goes with an inner experience. When I mean white vision, it is not just some small thing; it is huge white light, like flood light inside your head, it is not a small thing, they say it is like looking into the full moon. It is like a huge floodlight inside your head that is completely illuminating everything. I think you are talking about the first ones, the element absorptions. Whether it is the optic nerve or not, I don't know; I don't think so, because the white vision is after that, it is the subtle mind. When the earth element absorbs, it is like a mirage, you know when it is very hot on the road and you see the shimmering, this shimmering



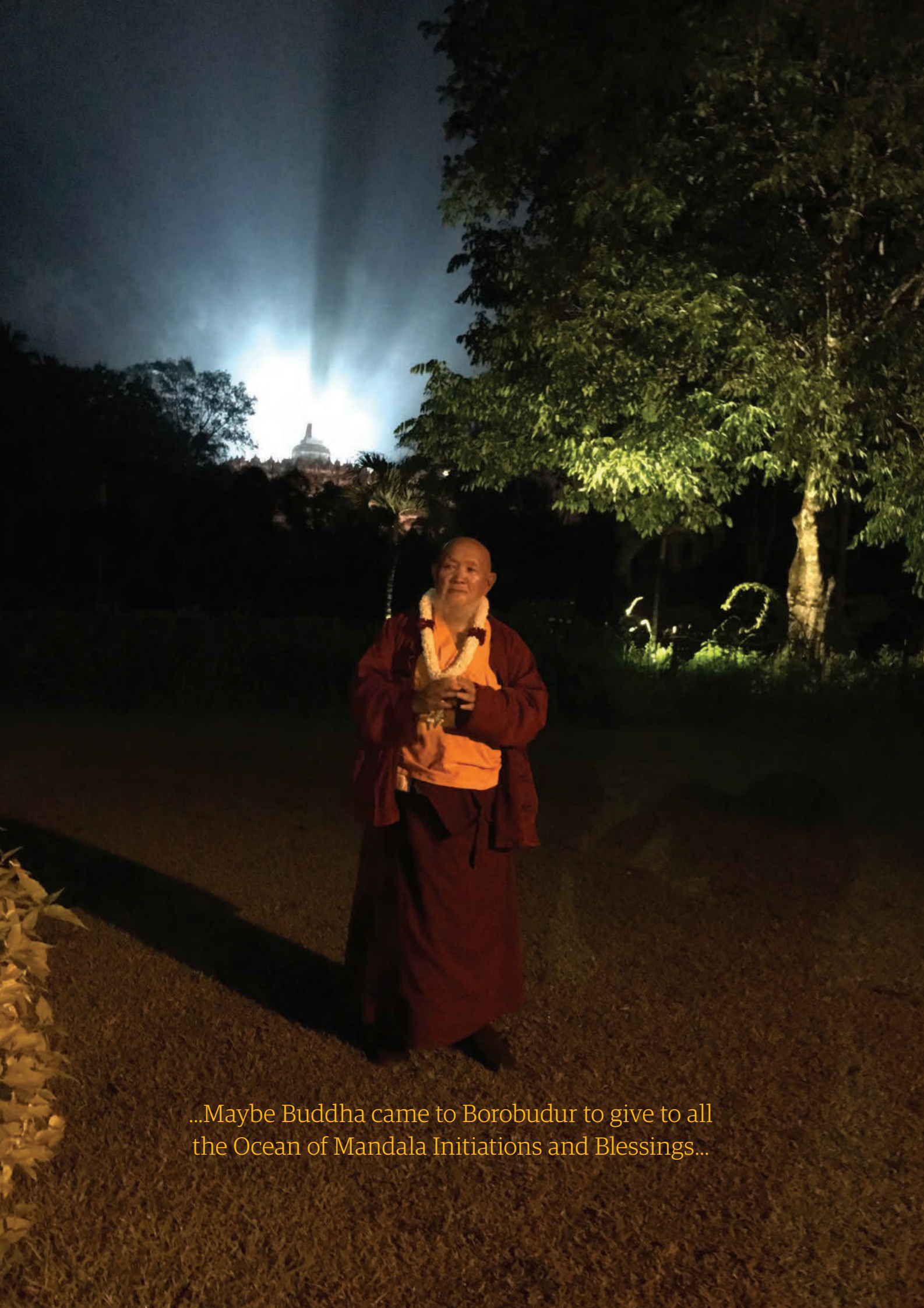
effect because the water element is coming up - also you feel very heavy, a sinking feeling, like you can't move your body. It is different. Of course there is always some biochemical explanation with your optic nerve and all that, but it is not just that, it is more than that, the inner lights. It is fascinating to talk to people who have had near death experiences; it is more than just your brain or optic nerve or something like that (in my opinion).

Thomas: Maybe I say something else - before I met buddhism I was trying to practise lucid dreaming, and there is one technique that is called - I don't know in English - you keep your consciousness while you fall asleep. So the first signs are the flashes and that happens quickly when I go to sleep sometimes. The second one is when one's ear consciousness is dissolving and then, only a few times, I had a kind of misconception of hearing - it is like a very loud noise similar to a door shutting or some very strange voice, strange sound. So then I woke up and thought about this. It was not something 'outside' and I understood later when we had the dissolving of the elements, in the dying or sleeping process, it is when the second or water element absorbs into the fire element, that that goes along with losing the power to hear things. And maybe at that moment maybe Rinpoche can tell us when the sense of the ears is going to the heart - maybe we have some misconception, maybe this could be an explanation for the small flashes, which happen in the first moment before we have all these other dissolution of the elements because the white vision comes after all the elements have absorbed, no? Rinpoche?"

Lama Gangchen

I'm sleeping ! (laughter)

Lama Caroline: You can see lots and lots of things in meditation and they are all valid but we have to keep on doing meditation again and again and then all kinds of different things come up. Rinpoche is saying that the clear light is manifesting in the heart chakra, because there is the seat of the subtle consciousness but in our self-healing practices, when we do 'lam ho shuddhe, shuddhe soha' - lam - om ah hung and ho means clear light osel the Tibetan word for clear light. Rinpoche gets us to meditate on that at the navel chakra, why? Because, we get less problems with absorbing the elements into the central channel, less problems with 'lung'. Lets say, people at our level, if we try and meditate too much at the heart chakra and really gather the winds, we can get a blockage or anxiety or anger or something. That is why Rinpoche insists, that at our level we meditate on the absorption of the energy into the central channel below the navel; it is more comfortable. That is something that Rinpoche would like to share with us. There are all kinds of these meditations and everyone has a little bit of their own experience because it depends upon whether one's energy is pure or not. That is why we do a lot of purification of the elements in self-healing. Generally our energy is not pure, so we get some kind of negative effect, but gradually we want to get the positive result of that. So yes it is possible that you could hear some bang, but gradually as we do these practices the positive side will manifest; that is exactly why we do these practices. In each situation, the positive energy, the positive emotion, the positive element energy will manifest. So gradually as we continue to practise we will have many, many different kinds of experiences of these inner visions and lights. It is also very interesting actually, our own human experience, then you can see all sorts of interesting, fascinating things about our favourites subject 'ourselves'. It is all about the human consciousness. I am sure that many of you have seen this already; I can't believe that you didn't. But you may see one time, like one flash in meditation or in going to sleep or whatever. But the thing is to be able to do it regularly; that is the yogi way, to be able to produce it, when you want to through your meditation, not just that you were very tired and then puff! I saw one light, I saw one candlelight or one mirage or one smoke or something. So that is exactly why Rinpoche is helping us to train in these things, thank you Rinpoche, giving us so much practice in the element absorptions; more than anybody else, thank you.



...Maybe Buddha came to Borobudur to give to all
the Ocean of Mandala Initiations and Blessings...



Lama Gangchen

The clear light in the heart 'Osel Nyima' the Son-like clear light in the heart chakra, may it manifest - may the Son-like clear light in the centre of our heart manifest."

Lama Tsong Khapa was saying this prayer from the Ghuyasamaja that made the essence of the clear light manifest in the heart chakra, but previous yogis, like Milarepa and so on - people have different experiences - but Milarepa and so on had the experience that the clear light was manifesting through the winds entering the navel chakra; that is also valid, our way of doing it.

When you receive a jenang, we do first body initiation - white lights and nectars going into the crown chakra, and the speech initiation - red lights and nectars going to the throat, and then mind initiation, blue or black, also blue/black, it is the same, blue and black in our tantric colour scheme. So many deities are blue or black, but then you do all together the energies absorbing into the navel chakra. So you do many times like this in the jenangs that you receive.

Alfredo Sfeir Younis: Just to share a few experiences and some knowledge. It is interesting if you read some of the books about Christ, they say that actually he went to Egypt to get initiated at the age of 6 and the school in Egypt was called the School of the Body of Light. So light has been very fundamental to express the state of consciousness of many of the spiritual leaders. But I would like to say that in my meditative experience, the experience of light almost all the time is accompanied by an experience of inner transformation. That is to say, if you are going to see different types of light, not just flashes of the mind, I am talking about true light, different colours of light, those are accompanied by your own inner transformation. In other words, it is like, one goes with the other. The more you transform your inner self with the practice of Lama Gangchen, most probably you will see more types of light and more shades of light and more attributes of the qualities of light. Light is non-neutral to its own quality; therefore if I am experiencing a form of light, in essence I am experiencing the quality of some form of inner transformation. I had this experience in my months of silence. The other thing that is important is that one can say that everything is light. In Hinduism, they talk a lot about the light of dharma - the Hindu's have many, many meanings for dharma, but one meaning of dharma is your contract on this planet: you did not parachute to this planet, you just came with some form of expression of space and time, when you enter into material consciousness. They say that actually, many of the meditations and some of the Buddhist meditations are meditations to experience the light of dharma. During my retreat in silence in Thailand the vice abbot said 'Go to the library and get some English books, we do not have too many, but you will be so many months in silence, take something to read. I spent a lot of time trying to understand the last statement of the Buddha in the sutra that says when he is in paranirvana and, I could not understand very well what he was saying, despite of my reading and my meditation. But one interpretation of what the Buddha said before he left his body was about how to reach the light of dharma. It is very interesting because there is a meditation that supposedly allows you to see the light of dharma. What is interesting is that this meditation, which I have practised to experience the light of dharma, is in the formula of 7 stages of the quality of light. So when you have the opportunity to enter into the 1st stage, there are 7 elements of the quality of that light and once you have reached the 7th, you go for another 7 and you go 7 times. Now you can go in one lifetime, in many lifetimes - it depends on your state of consciousness. As I said in the beginning, if the experience of light is not accompanied by the experience of transformation, essentially it is the mind in its neurosis, throwing light for many different reasons.

Another experience that I would like to share is that people who are sick or ill for a long time or are in a coma, I find it very difficult for them to return back to material life once they go beyond red light. Up to red light it is possible for them to come back again, to earth for some reason. I am speaking from the experience of my father who had many, many weeks of coma. He was a doctor and so the

doctors said to the family that basically they did not know how to connect the mind and the body; so it is all a matter of money, how much do you want to have him in an extensive care unit? In Chile the clinics are extremely expensive. I remember trying to guess where he was - I realised that he was in the red light zone, he was just parting. And then after days of meditation, he came back and I asked him what he was experiencing because he was totally aware of what was happening and the meditation that we were having. He told me that he was on the red light and that experience of the red light was so deep, for him, it was like being in a very deep sleep, one from which you cannot wake up - you are being absorbed by the transformation of the elements. But he himself told me that he was very aware that he was on the red light.

The other experience that I would like to share is that I am a Mayan priest and colours are very important for the Mayan priests. It is like when Lama Caroline explained the different colours for the Borobudur, they connect colours with astrology. For example, the south is yellow and the south expresses femininity, feminine energy and the south expresses fertility and so, what they say is that the south is yellow because the most fertile source of nutrition is corn. The north is red, it expresses masculine energy and they say that it is red because it is connected to the magnet of the Earth. So when we are doing Maya fire, we put yellow candles in the south and red candles in the north. The east, because that is where the sun is rising is white, is pure consciousness and the west is black because of the night. The centre of the Earth is green and the senate is blue. Yes we had a conversation with Lama and a shaman from Guatemala about this a long time ago. Well what the Mayans say is that if you are able to put on a little card these colours in this organised order, and put it in your pocket, that many things will materialise in your life. And why I am saying this is not to say that this [is just] Mayan, I am saying this as maybe we should have in our pocket - you know, with the colours - the Borobudur with the colours and expect that maybe transformation might be faster.

And finally is that every organ of the human body has a form of light and when I do healing and someone says they have a problem here or there, I can sense the colour and go into this meditative state and for example, the colour can be very dark and then you begin to do the healing and the organ begins to change colour and some of them become very light in colour, some of them become pink, light pink and this reflects that the organ is now healed. We seem to think there are techniques that enable one to bring the subtle expression of that organ into one's own body and through the vibration of my kidney, for example, and someone who has a kidney that is sick and is expressing this vibration and this colour, you bring it to your kidneys and then in meditation one can compare the colours. It is such a fascinating work you have opened up now, so maybe I stop here - but there is a lot more that one can say about light.

Dr Rudi Schneider: According to my own experience for short access to clear light. In my experiences, sometimes after we had invitations or together with Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, often I say that everything is clear light. Clear light belongs to the nature of mind, is always there and then my experience is that, if you keep your energy here for a moment, you don't breathe and you manifest your mind in that you look to other people and its much more clear. It is easy to see that, it is because it is always there but we need to - that is why Rinpoche rises to energy sometimes very much; and then we have another perception, another perception of our environment, of our friends. Maybe it is not so clear, but just you go in here and in here, one moment and don't breathe and you try to manifest your mind in inner, observe how it is - you see, this is clear light and when you die it is another clear light. In daily life, clear light is illuminating our life. Normally we have a perception, which is too ordinary and in the perception of extraordinary everything is always there. A little bit difficult to explain. I wanted to say that this clear light is always there and you become a little bit more aware if you have these initiations and, coming down from the stupa, you have another intense perception. Maybe it is like putting a special light out. I always have problems with that when it is so complicated, we go so many ways over such a long time because we are friends of Rinpoche and this means we have a very special connection with him, so we have experience of



many things - many of us doing tong.len or doing way high practices according to my opinion. So don't look so far for these things, they are always there. With a little kind of meditation and keeping your breathing for a moment, only a moment and then you try because mind is always manifesting then you see; you will see.

Elkana: We often speak about light and nectar, what is the difference and why do we say these in combination?"

Lama Caroline: Well anyway, like Duccio, he was asking about this clear light feeling, so when we get up here in the mornings here at Borobudur, we are a bit sleepy, but actually that moment just before dawn is very peaceful and very blissful, isn't it? There is a very good feeling, so the more subtle mind is, the more naturally blissful, so naturally the more deep we get into our deep mind, the more blissful it is. One explanation is it is like this, so the quality is bliss, like nectar is very delicious. Nectar is that transformation of Amrita (A = not in Sanskrit and rit = to die) so this means not dying, immortal. Rinpoche says that in Tibetan it is the same thing. It is like this deep aspect of the consciousness that goes from life to life; the most profound, deep part of the mind. So it is not like honey or something like that, it is the naturally blissful state of your subtle consciousness that goes from life to life. Someone yesterday was asking about immortality, so it is the same kind of idea - the transcendental, the deep parts of our self, the undying parts are the best bits. The most interesting, the most blissful, the most enjoyable. That is what we are trying to get back to, you know. There are lots of quotations in Buddhism, they say everything arises from the clear light; all beings want to return to the clear light and find happiness, that is what we deeply crave, to reconnect with our deep inner nature. So we talk a lot about this Amrita all the time in Buddhism, but actually its like in the inner offering, its like the transformation of the five elements, and five consciousnesses and its recognising the pure essence of those. And when we get that we achieve what we call Buddhahood in the West, the purification of the consciousnesses and the elements and we recognise the undying incandescent transcendental aspects of ourselves, okay. Very fascinating - but I just want to add one thing. Of course all these great yogis were having these experiences, yes, but just another friend, like Roberto in Albagnano, (I'm sure he won't mind us saying) he also had a car crash and he was in a coma for quite a long time, so I asked him and when they reanimated him out of the coma, he was so upset, because he was having the most blissful, incredible time, full of light, full of nectars and really angry with the doctors for bringing him out of the coma! He did not want to come back, but they forced him to come out of the coma - so maybe that is why he is so dedicated now to Rinpoche, cooking all our dinners in Albagnano; he wants to get back to the blissful state of the mind.

Question by unknown man: How does the emptiness manifest on the clear light?

Lama Caroline: One thing is, this is like a very deep philosophical point, for example, in Hinduism there is the Atman - actually Hindu and Buddhist yogis do similar kinds of meditations of course, because the human mind is the same, so they do the same kind of absorptions because that is what we have, the mind absorbing into the subtle mind. So this is the big point, like in many, many Indian spiritual traditions.

What happens when you get into the very subtle mind?

At what point are you liberated, and achieve moksha?

This is how all the different religious traditions came out in India. So for example, there are ideas like the Atman merges with the Brahman, which is one idea. Then in the Vedanta, another idea. So the Buddhist point of view is that when you get to that very subtle state of consciousness you still have that sense of 'I' in a very subtle way, so then all the training that you have done, in understanding reality, through the sutras, you then have to apply that, not just in that moment but in your whole life - till then you have to apply it and get used to the idea that everything is interdependent and

everything is interconnected, everything is ultimately empty of inherent existence you know. For example, the sky is blue, it is an illusion, it is not real, everything is empty; I am drinking my tea, that means it is not truly existent, it is empty; everything around you is showing emptiness, so we have to get into this habit - 'Oh I just walked into the room, everything is empty!', 'Switched off the light, everything is empty!' - this is Nagarjuna's way of doing, yes! So then, it is not like from zero to one hundred, it is like slowly, slowly that we develop this experience of reality being not what it seems, it is fluid, it is not the way it appears to us now, it is not fixed. By the time we get to the clear light we will have lots of experience in this emptiness meditation, then we apply it. So first, we need to apply it with a normal mind, then we need to learn to apply it in meditation, then we need to apply it in dreaming and sleeping; if we can not do it in dreaming, we are not going to be able to do it in the clear light. So you can judge very well where you got to; if you never realise that your dream is an illusion, you can forget that you are going to recognise the emptiness of the clear light.

It is a process, yes - that is why we respect yogis, great yogis - it is like a long, long process at least the whole of your life and maybe many lifetimes. That is why we really respect them because it is not so easy, they have been through that and can actually trying to stay conscious when you are going to sleep; it is not so easy. First you have to become conscious and recognise all the visions and you have to recognise they are empty. If you look into Rinpoche's practices, that is exactly what we are training in, so - just get out your CD or DVD and do it again, and do it again and continue doing it again! (Laughter)

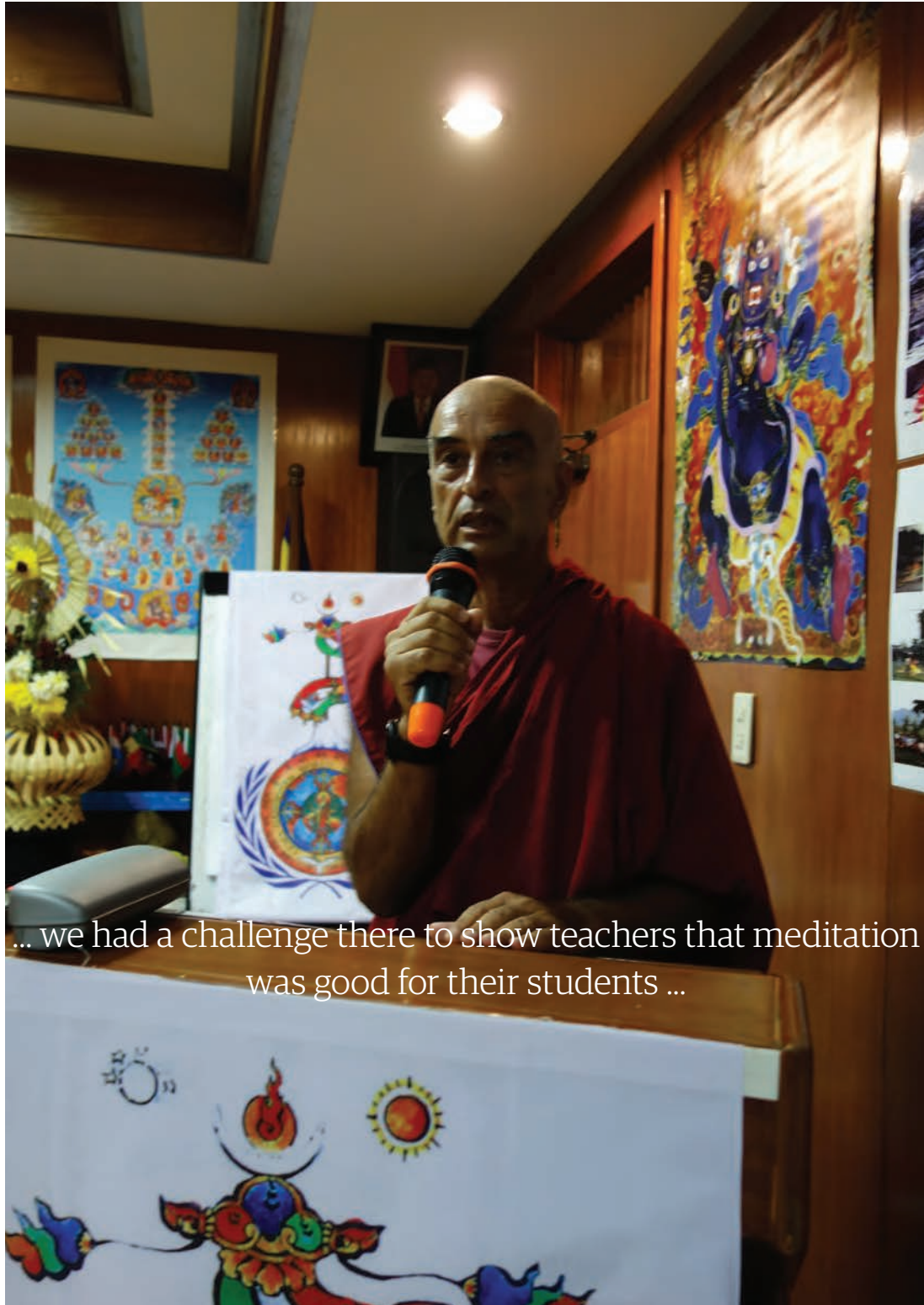
Then gradually, gradually, many things will happen as you get more deep into your mind and start to understand emptiness, to understand the blissful state of your mind. We are all doing the same thing, we are all on the same journey and we are all developing at our own pace, it is so fascinating.

Alfredo Sfeir Younis: There is a very important text in Hindu philosophy called The Yoga Sutras Of Patañjali, nobody knows whether Patañjali existed or not, some people said that Christ was a reincarnation of an Patañjali, someone said that Patañjali was created as a name but anyway there is this book, the The Yoga Sutras Of Patañjali. Part of my spiritual experience of training was with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and there is a part in the path to self-realise siddhis and the book of Patañjali has four chapters with different siddhis, but there is in chapter 3, the siddhis of power and one siddhi is inner light. Another siddhi is effulgent light, another siddhi is corona light and there is a 4th siddhi having to do with light, which has to do with how you become invisible to the eyes of someone else. What you do is you are playing with the position of the cells against sunlight. So there is a point where you put the cells in such a position that actually the person viewing just does not see you, because there is no interference with light. And the experience with those siddhis is really, really interesting. Now if you look at religious figures, I don't know if you know the Virgin of Guadalupe, you know, she had all this fire around her which is in this context (I don't want to trivialise), it means that she was a great master in effulgent light, she can spread light. If you look at the explanation of the other day about the halo, you know the corona light, you know and for many, many years I studied symbols and I would go to churches and synagogues and see how they portrayed that saint or that Christ or that Virgin Mary; and it is extremely interesting to see the different forms of coronal light. One of the forms, for example, was this cross in the back, which has to do with astrology, you know, of that person's self-realising of that astrological thing. Finally, an anecdote: I was in an orthodox monastery, close to Moscow. These are the people who do these icons and it was very interesting they showed us the best icons they have painted. Some of the icons have different forms of light and I asked the abbot, I said 'How many days does it take to paint these icons?' And the abbot said, 'Eight years!' They have to have at least 6 years of meditating on each particular deity: St Joseph or Mary or Christ, to capture essentially that subtle way of expression in the icon. Then they have 2 years of learning how to use colours, white of egg and other things to make the icon. So even these icons at that monastery are the result of a lot of meditative experience, which is what we are discussing here."



Lama Caroline: Also the solar cross is on Borobudur - the symbol of the Chakravartin, which is the symbol of the Buddha as well. If you look, there is this circle with a cross; it looks like the Christian symbol, but in Buddhism we call it the symbol of the Chakravartin, the Wheel Turning Emperor. You see it many times on the Borobudur, a very ancient Vedic symbol; the solar symbol. Since early times, the Buddha was associated with the solar cult, in fact Vairochana is the solar cult; Vairochana in Sanskrit means the one that manifests form, like the sun. In Japanese and Chinese Buddhism, they see Vairochana like the Sun Buddha. So we have all these kind of similar, universal ideas in Buddhism as well.





... we had a challenge there to show teachers that meditation was good for their students ...



Daniel Calmanowitz, Brazil

Being in Peace Program

To start I would like to ask the blessings of Rinpoche and thank him for bringing me again to Borobudur. It is not obvious to people who do, like what Rinpoche was saying before - everyone has had to make a lot of effort to be here and I am sure the same way I am grateful to Rinpoche for being here, each one of you must also be grateful I am sure of that. Really, I have this strong feeling of gratitude towards Rinpoche and Lama Michel and Lama Caroline and actually, to all of you because if I am here it is because you are here and, you are here because I am here and so on - it is really a good feeling of gratitude and of being here.

Eleven years ago Lama Gangchen Rinpoche said he wanted to open a foundation in Brazil and people told him that it was not the best thing to do in Brazil, because the Public Ministry - the Foundations in Brazil are related to the Public Ministry and the Ministry is checking what you are doing, every single thing you are doing, every single penny you are spending, you have to give account to the Public Ministry and then you have to really work perfectly. I said that this is kind of difficult and to not do it! Rinpoche said 'Yes, I like to do it'. So we did it and Rinpoche created this foundation, which is called Lama Gangchen Foundation for Peace Culture. This was in 2006-7 and we started working in 2008 and we had no idea what to do, how to start, what we were going to do and I do not know if we had really - well we had some idea of peace culture - anyway Rinpoche says you go and do or not even that, you know, you are there and you have a foundation. Okay, what do we do with that?

We had some experience working in the Dharma centre - São Paulo Dharma Centre, which was founded in 1988 - Lama Gangchen came to Brazil for the first time in April 1987, so this year it is going to be 30 years since then and our centre is 29 years old. During this period the Dharma Centre would do some projects, some actions related to the International Foundation - the Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation. So we were a kind of unofficial branch doing something not only pure like dharma in a dharma centre, but doing different actions and projects like the Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation. So finally, ten years ago we had the Brazilian Foundation.

The title of our congress at Borobudur, which is Transforming Darkness into Light, this is our inspiration, because that is what Buddha was proposing and what Lama Gangchen is showing us to transform our lives, our being and our consciousness and our way of seeing things - from darkness into light, because we have to work this light inside of us, we are not always connected to this light, although it is there. We know very well how easy it is to be disconnected from the light inside of us and thinking of that it is so important to think we have to be tuned into this light to the maximum. So the Brazilian Foundation comes to work for this peace culture to transform darkness into light with non-buddhist people. We have the Dharma Centre - with the Dharma Centre you coming to a temple, you are going to do a buddhist practice, although you do not have to be a buddhist right, this is not the point, however you come into somewhere that is Buddhist. The Foundation has the basis of Buddhist teachings, taught by Lama Gangchen, but it is meant not only for Buddhist people, it is meant for the general public. So there we had a challenge which was how to bring the message that Lama Gangchen is telling us, that all this peace culture message, the non-violent message - in a language that can be understood by anyone, without talking in a buddhist language - without saying bodhicitta, without saying emptiness and so on; these buddhist terms, which means so much and have a deep and profound meaning, we have to explain this and show this in a different way.

A few years ago we understood that our main work is to work with peace education. It does not matter if it is children, grown-ups or teenagers, but it is through non-formal education - Lama Gangchen was talking about non-formal education years ago and so it is amazing how we were collecting some of

his speeches or Peace Times news articles. Peace Times started as a newspaper and then became a magazine and all of those articles on peace culture and years later we are using them. Lama Gangchen Rinpoche always has this vision ahead of us and ahead of our time, much, much, much ahead, so he was talking about non-formal education many, many years ago, so he understood how our work is going into non-formal education, what is missing in education. So the programme is called "Being in Peace" and has a double meaning - to be in the peace and being in peace.

The main base of our work is: Inner Peace is the Most Solid Foundation for World Peace.

So this is how we represent ourselves. Wherever we go, whatever we do this is the main point. We work telling people we are going to work with inner peace to achieve world peace: to achieve peace in the family, to achieve peace in the community, to achieve peace in society as whole. When we present ourselves, when we go to schools, when we go to companies, NGOs and so on, of course we say we have a buddhist background but we do not and we are clear to say, that we are not doing a religion. We are not proselytising because immediately people get suspicious, 'Oh it is going to be something about religion!' And we are very clear, we are not talking about religion; this has nothing to do with religion, it has to do with well-being, it has to do with peace culture, with non-violent culture, then people are 'Oh, okay, we like that'. This is our tenth year of work, we have succeeded in that, so there was never any way we were going to change their religion or trying to impose something - never.

So we started!

In Brazil, to enter into university we have to go through very tough exams. If you want to go to a good university you have to have very high grades and for that you have special schools where you study for 3 - 6 months or a whole year to get prepared to sit the exam for these universities. Every 2 months, students would undergo a test because they were doing the exam at the end of the year to enter university. This test takes about 5 hours; they are very stressed because it is as if they were doing the actual exam in the future, at the end of the year. What we did was, we went to where they were, sitting there, before they started their test.



There were 8 classes starting simultaneously, so there were more than 8 people going to each one of these classes in 3 different schools in 3 completely separate areas of São Paulo which is quite big and we did like 15 minutes meditation with them - 200 teenagers, age 17 - 20 years old - 15 minutes meditation with all of them and we had the short survey, with questions like: 'How did you like it?' 'Why did you like it?' Very short questions and this

was passed to them and at the end of the test of 5 hours they would write that down, it was almost 100% result of how much they liked it. When they were repeating this, since they do 5 of these tests during the year, they were saying that it helped them to be quieter with peaceful states of mind and calmness with reduced stress to do the whole test, which lasts 5 hours. So, so little - and only once and before the test and immediately they have some result.

That is how we started - it is important to say that it is all volunteer work and 100% of the people who work at the Foundation are sangha members from the Dharma Centre. Otherwise it is not possible, because our basis is Lama Gangchen Rinpoche and the whole Buddhist teachings - Lama Michel, Rinpoche, Lama Caroline - it is this, it is the sangha working. I like something I heard the other day, 'Putting Dharma into action'.

Lama Michel gave a few lectures through the Foundation and so on, talks, events, different movements taking part and so on.



We did 2 public talks: here you can see here Lama Michel, Lama Caroline with Lama Gangchen Rinpoche - this was a public talk for about 150 people, talking about being in peace, peace culture - this was about 3 - 4 years ago. This was really good, the people were really happy.



The three ladies each represent one of our partners - 2 schools and one NGO with Lama Michel.

Then, 5 years ago we started in this public school and this school has from 1st to 8th grade students and here I would like to thank all of you, you probably remember those who were here, I do not know, it was 2 or 3 years ago - the Global Giving Fundraising Campaign and many of you contributed and I must say if this were not for the international sangha we would not have succeeded so a really big thank you so much. Our project finally raised about \$20,000. If we put the donation that Mr Jan gave us 2 years ago, if it had gone through Global Giving, we would have reached the \$20,00 so really from our heart, thanks to all of you who contributed and there are still people contributing every month.

In this school, we tried to work with the teachers and teach them meditation and the principles of meditation and peace culture and non-violence culture and so on - so they could teach their students. This school had more than a 1000 students, it is a big school. This was our main goal. We were starting to work with that and we did not know what was coming ahead. We did not know how difficult this could be. So it is quite a challenge and this is really the big challenge to show people that we live in a violent society and the society is made up of people - society is violent because people are violent. We have to explain all this because people have to understand where they are and that they need to start to change, but to show this to people is not easy. Of course people have to be open to that. If they do not want, okay, everyone is free to have the wish to change or not to change, to be violent, not to be violent and so on. This is a big challenge. So we had a challenge there to show teachers that meditation was good for their students and we succeeded partially, because we did not succeed in other ways. I will explain.

Teachers in that school were quite resistant to the idea you know? They liked us to be with them, they liked to do the sessions with them, every week for one hour. Everything we did with them, they loved; the subjects we discussed the different dynamics we did with them - they were great in doing meditation, but they did not want to bring it to their students. They did not want to! They just did not want to. Only first and second grade teachers were doing meditation with their children, the rest of the teachers did not want to do it. Why? So many different reasons, still today it is difficult to know, but they had this huge resistance to change. Excuse me, but I am going to tell a short story. I was in Albagnano at Rinpoche's house, we were having lunch and there was a couple from Germany - I do not know these people, they are not here now, they were a couple, we were having lunch together. Then everybody left the dining room and the three of us were talking. I was talking and starting to speak about the Foundation and mentioned exactly this project to them (this was 2 - 3 years ago). This lady was from Germany and we were talking about people from Brazil, different cultures - she said 'What, you are trying to teach something to teachers? They do not want, they think they know everything better; they are not going to do it' and I said, 'Wow!' She is telling me the experience I

am having now and she is from Germany. So it is not this school and these people in Brazil, the answer was coming from Germany and I am starting to get a clue of whom we are working with - teachers. I do not want to point my finger at teachers, but you know our idea was to teach teachers meditation and teachers teach their students. This was difficult. It succeeded for 1st and 2nd grade, but others did not want to do it. Okay, this was in this school. I am not going to just say here, 'Ah we are beautiful, we did incredible job' I am telling you the real difficulties we had to face and how difficult it was as well. This last year, 2016, we worked directly with the students, so it was the 8th grade - the last grade of this school, we did 22 classes with them and had incredible results with those students. What did we do with them? We had 2 years previously worked directly with children and this time we did much more with them. We were working in a circle with a concept of a talking stick, we had small discussion groups, we did comparative games and painting, we did mindfulness and social/emotional learning and we did it through three aspects of being in the world: myself, in a group and society and working with the 3 doors: body, speech and mind and how to be peaceful and relate peacefully with these 3 doors: peaceful mind, peaceful looking, peaceful speaking and so on.

To me the whole education system is cruel, because it is still an 18th/19th century system in the 21st century and it does not work anymore. Students have to stay 5 hours every day, enclosed in one small room together listening to a teacher for 12 years; it does not work. It did not work in my time, this was already a long time ago - imagine now! We all had to go through this system, unfortunately. Maybe some of you were lucky to go to a Steiner school or something different, but most of us had to undergo this system. This kills the student and makes the class so violent, because it is a daily fight between students and teachers; the teacher is an enemy and the students are enemies. So they are fighting all the time and of course students have to be - just my way of thinking - they are so loud in class and they do not want to listen to the teacher so they are completely on their own doing whatever they like, because its the only way to keep a little bit of sanity - otherwise they completely collapse in that system. What happened when we started to interact with them was that we showed them that it can be different. There can be a different way of learning and of being together, which - I think they probably never had this opportunity.

This one school is in a very low income area, with lots of violence on the streets, in society and maybe in their own homes. We had, without going into specifics, one meeting where in one of the four classes, they talked about the violence they had to suffer; they suffered every day in their own homes with their parents. We were working in a circle - the violence these children have to undergo every day is beyond imagination. So they were happy, finally they could relax - they were painting and not being told what to do, like 'Do not do this!', 'Do not do that!' Like, usually they are in class like this; meditation? You know they are teenagers, they do not like to meditate; but you know what, we managed - they were silent. They were silent for 5 minutes! Completely silent and after 5 minutes, they were calm, why? Because they were not talking to each other, they were not jibing each other. They did not concentrate on their breathing or have their eyes shut. But after 5 minutes, we had some different quality in the classroom.

Then they started trusting us. Two years ago, on the last day we worked together with the classes, I passed the talking stick and I never imagined that I would go into a classroom and be with teenagers in a classroom. This makes me so happy to be in the class with the children, nothing better. I asked them to please say something, to say the odd sentence because they were already taught to say 'Peace with everything, everything with peace', 'Peace looking', 'Peace boyfriend', 'Peace girlfriend', so they were learning this every day, ever time we were together, it was coming naturally. I would pass the Tibetan singing bowl - they would strike this bowl and say something about our meetings.

One girl said, 'I thank you (the group) for the respect you have for us - for treating us respectfully'. This is very strong you know, listening to that! And another girl, she kept the singing bowl in her hand and



started smiling did not say anything, was completely silent and she was looking to everyone, just smiling. All the colleagues, 30 of them together who were there - nobody said one word; they were just quiet, looking at her and waiting for her to say something.

They did not interrupt - because usually it would be 'Hey! Say something! What's that?, What are you doing?' You know, they interact like that - they are quite violent amongst each other. They waited, it took around 40 seconds, or maybe one minute to say something and then she struck the bowl and said a peace sentence of one thing or another, I do not remember what. However, it shows that it is possible for these children, who never had this - peacefulness - they never are calm, really calm; they were respecting each other. So this is a work that is possible. We tried to show this to the teachers but they did not want to listen - just these teachers. I am sure with other groups it will be possible, which is already starting to work.

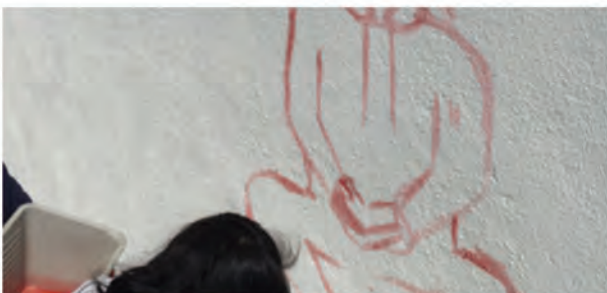
They were so happy and we did some yoga, a few yoga asanas. We talked and discussed some subjects and at the end of the year we proposed, how would it be, if this year now you work also with your students? And they said 'Yes! We would like to do that'. So this year they started working with their students with meditation. They were really touched with the work that we did with them and so now we continue.



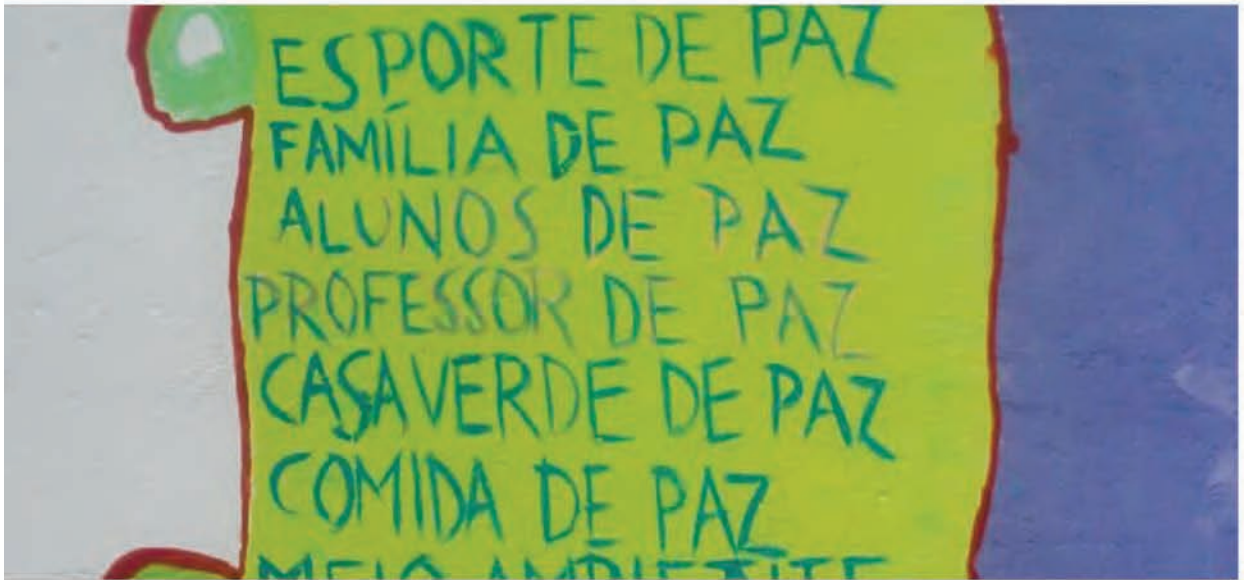


So, okay, and just to finish for this school, because we stayed in the school now for 5 years, this is the entrance. It was the entrance and you see the walls at the entrance - its a dead-end road and there you have the big blue door, this is where the students are gathering and this is where the walls, which were for 10 or 20, or 30 years like that, so we thought maybe we can change that and the 8th grade students who were leaving school could paint it, paint the whole entrance.

So we called it 'Peace Entrance' - this is what the Foundation did:



We prepared the walls, they were all white, like a Greek white wall and here it is starting, so they painted everything, you can see what they did? Before that, they were painting everything they wanted to paint on the wall. We were in the class room and they had some painting classes with a graffiti specialist - there it is written: 'Peace and Love' and 'Peace with Everything, Everything with Peace', 'Peace Sports', 'Peace Family', 'Peace Students', 'Peace Teachers' etc. I wrote 'NgalSo' in Tibetan; this is our secret, our secret stamp - nobody can read that, but we can, so that is our NgalSo entrance.



Okay, that was one school.



This is a second public school - this is just one picture to say that we work during the last year with the teachers - only a small group of teachers. They loved our work and we just were there with them to meditate. I said 'Please come, we like to meditate' - they said 'Okay, we will come and meditate with you'. So for one hour, every week we were with this group of teachers, we meditated for 15 to 20 minutes, breathing concentration meditation, that's all.

Another school where we have been working for 2 years, is a private school called 'Collegio Paulicéia'. They have between 500-600 students and they specialise in special needs students. They have mind problems, severe and not severe and so on. They are a reference in São Paulo for these kinds of children. The difference is that the director, the principal of this school, this lady is also the owner of the school, she wants the program to be introduced there. So this makes a big difference because when we started in that first school where I showed all the pictures and where we had all the difficulties with the teachers, principal, she was not much interested, she didn't care much about it, she just said 'Okay, you like to work here, you like to be with us, yes - if you do not like to be with us, that is okay also'. Thing is, she also had a big difficulty also with her teachers, so we got into a place where there was difficulty already with internal management. In this place the principal was saying 'Everyone has to meditate, everyone, all the teachers, all the students, everyone'.

We had a few meetings with the parents to explain to them what we are doing and what the Foundation is doing there. The parents liked it so much, they started a group called 'Peace Parents'.

In 2016, Lama Michel gave a very enjoyable lecture with the little ones. Before that, the nice thing to say is that this year, the year just started in Brazil - in Europe you start school in September, we start school in February, because there is the summer vacation and then start in February right after that. All the classes are starting to meditate at the same, once they get into the classroom; everyone is meditating together, all the classes. I think that is 8am and 2pm, something like that, all the classes are meditating for 5 minutes. This is actually what we were proposing to do the lady, to the owner since the morning we started and now they are doing it. That was really our dream, everyone meditating together - can you imagine that energy for the whole school where it is happening, everyone meditating for 5 or 10 minutes. This is not us doing the meditation, but the teachers doing this meditation with their children.

I forgot to mention, we have one of our workers here, Janie who is quite active and she is working a lot with Paulicéia on all the projects, she was also working with us with the children and so on. In Paulicéia there is really beautiful work going on.

So this first school, this public school, it somehow worked, and somehow it did not. But what also is interesting is that in this public school, many things changed, different things got better in the school, not in a direct way. What I want to say, we are sure our presence there, made a difference. It might not have been what we would have liked it to be, like everyone meditating for 5 minutes and so on, but we could see there was a big difference, there were some changes - in the environment amongst children, there were changes going on for the better. These changes, we understand is in the invisible, among with our presence - this presence is what makes the difference when we are there. Our group makes a difference, not directly from what we are doing but from what is behind us. This is the energy we carry, this comes from all of us and this is maybe one of our big assets.

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We worked also with advertising agencies, giving meditation; this picture is of Itaú Unibanco, one of four of the largest private banks in Brazil and one of the largest in the world and we did meditation there in special meetings they had there for one week. In one week we were in like five or six different places at Itaú giving meditation the whole day long, for different groups. People would come, do 5 minutes meditation and go. Another group would come and so on: big bank.

Also at Citibank we did for 3 months a one hour course, the course was both live with people in the room and at a distance. They have a special system to give teachings and classes at a distance with a website system and so, we did meditation through the website. You know, these people are listening to us, in different parts of Brazil, watching their computers, tuned to this teaching website and meditating. It was amazing, it was really amazing, it worked better than with the people in the room. The people in the room were from the main building - in the São Paulo Citibank building. The Citibank in Brazil had 6,000 people working all over Brazil, of course we did not have that many people doing meditation, it was about 50-100 people every time. We could interact with that. We did not only meditation but we explained many different things about peace culture, non-violence culture, how to deal with daily life in a peaceful way and so on. It was really of benefit for them, it was really amazing, we really had a good time and, it was also a new experience - you know to teach meditation through the computer, not seeing the people, not being in direct contact with them.

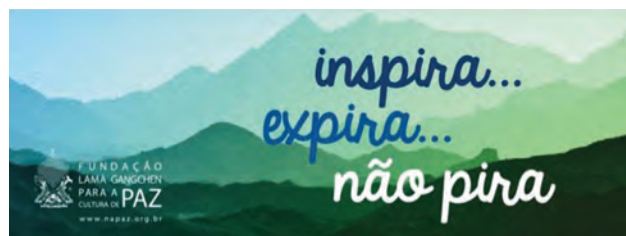
My experience with Simone, who worked together on this project (Simone was here last year also talking about the Foundation and, the experience we both had) - it was as if we were there in front of each person. We had this experience and it was really good.

We have a new partner from the LDC team. They work as an NGO Foundation. They have their premises in a very violent area of São Paulo. São Paulo has many different violent areas, not only that one, but really, really violent and they work with the children. Children in Brazil go to school in the morning or afternoon, so students who go to school in the morning, they can join this Foundation in the afternoons and vice versa. If you go to school there you can join the Foundation in the morning and there you will do all different kinds of activities which school does not give. Our schools are very, very basic. If you are not in a good private school, public schools are a disaster, sorry to say.

Just before coming to Borobudur we had a meeting where everyone, all the workers from the Foundation, 130 people, we did meditation, we talked, we did some special dynamics with them and they loved it. We are going to work [there] this year and they have more than a thousand people going there and receiving benefit, small children from age few months, to people of 70-80 years old. It is really an incredible place and I am sure our work there will continue - they are already receiving us in a very special way; really good work.

Our first partners and NGO, doing the same as this other foundation and this year we are probably going to work with them, also within a very poor and violent area, with the families within this community.

We thought of a few guiding principles and these principles are guiding our work.







FLGCP - Guiding Principles:

1. May the Culture of Violence be transformed into a Culture of Non Violence, into a Culture of Peace
1. Inner Peace is the most solid foundation for World Peace
2. Meditation – “happy brains work better”
3. Interdependence
4. Impermanence
5. Inter-subjectivity
6. Love and Altruism

What I would like to say is, we are not there to teach people, we are there to share with people. When we are with the groups, we sit in circles - we changed the paradigm of student/teacher and adopt that of us being all the same and we are sharing. When we are giving all these different ideas - and this can take a long time over many, many classes, we try to interact with them and have them come to different conclusions, ideas about what we are talking about. This is because wisdom is already there, it is a matter of making this wisdom, this group wisdom come. So with 'May the culture of violence be transformed into a culture of non-violence culture' we are starting to talk and touch on violence, how we deal everyday life and ask the question 'How is our life, is it peaceful or not peaceful, is it...' and so on. I am not going to talk about this, otherwise we won't finish today.

Second, 'Inner peace is the most solid foundation for world peace' and here we start with a big change of paradigm - actually we have to change the paradigm in each one of us, right until we become enlightened. To really understand what is inner peace, this whole sentence you know, like Rinpoche says, is one sūtra - 'Inner Peace is the most solid foundation of World Peace'. So we explore this and we work a lot on that.

Meditation: I like this sentence 'Happy brains work better' its true and there we talk about the principals of meditation, why to meditate, meditation from the point of view of science. We give a lot of background and in many places we do not come with the word meditation, because people from different religious backgrounds do not like meditation, they say meditation is religious. So we say, 'breathing and concentration exercise'. We are not telling a lie because it is a breathing and concentration exercise. So we do not give the name 'meditation' and people accept: we have to adapt to the people. We talk about interdependence - means people they are not separate, they are in a world, they are in society, they have a role in society and so on. Also interdependence, impermanence, inter-subjectivity I do not know if this gives you a clue in English, but this is a concert of the third level of interdependence, which is everything depends on the point of view of who is looking, of who is interacting. Finally, love and altruism - so these are 1-7, so 7 guiding principles.

This is one way saying, 'Breathe in, breathe out, do not freak out'.

It goes well in English okay, it works!

This is one of our paintings:

second of peace, minute of peace, hour of peace, day of peace

peace with everything, everything with peace

People love these sentences everywhere we go. We always conclude our meetings with the different peace sentences.

So we try to make people feel more close to what we are trying to share. This is the answer to relaxation 'May the culture of violence be transformed into the culture of non-violence, a culture of peace'.

Something we are also trying to tell them is to put an intention when they meditate. When they start meditating - 'Oh today I would like to have more patience', 'Today I would like to develop concentration', 'Today I would like to stop a little bit, or to be more calm' or cultivate positive feelings or whatever. We also talk about mindfulness: you have this present, future and past, finally peace with everything and everything with peace.

This year, at the end of the year, the Foundation's work is really expanding. We have one problem: we do not have enough people to work with us, because all of us are volunteers and this is something we have to change, slowly, slowly - to get some money, we have to check the different means to do that, so we can also start paying people to work, so they can dedicate more time for the Foundation. This is a whole process that is going on. If we had more people we would be working with more schools, with more NGOs in other places; this will come. What we also feel is like, we have this feeling of being like Shambhala warriors, peace warriors, peace educators. Rinpoche told us the name for us: Peace Educators. If again I think of Shambhala, that is what we are doing, trying to show and give light to where there is so much darkness.

To meditate is not easy, we know that from our own experience; each one knows how much it takes to do it in a steady way, so what to say to people in general? So this is a challenge. Also another challenge the Foundation has to face is to check the quality of what we are doing and we also like to start doing that this year, so we can come next year with numbers and say, look so many people are benefitting, like this and that. We did a little bit but still not in a very professional way. It is really an amazing opportunity to work with the Foundation for all of us, I do, we all do because if there is something that gives you real satisfaction, it is when people can benefit from what we are doing and we can really put dharma into action.

So we have to thank Lama Gangchen Rinpoche because these are really Rinpoche's teachings being put everywhere and people can benefit. So thanks a lot!"

Question from Thomas: After your presentation we spoke about food because Bernard was giving a presentation about food changing the violence or making the brain happier. Did you succeed or have any contacts or was there something in this direction?

Daniel Calmanovitz: I did not forget it, but it did not happen because there is no space for that now, no space this is something which might come in the future, but this is not possible now. Thank you.

Question (unknown): "Daniel, how many people are volunteering in the Foundation?"

Daniel Calmanovitz: I would say from between 10-15 people, but not everyone does 8 hours a day, every day.

Question (Dutch person): Thanks very much for sharing your story, it is very inspiring that you are able to transform non-formal education to formal education; I think it is very important. Of course I am already dancing on my chair for 30 minutes to respond, because I am a teacher myself. You are right, how can you expect students to learn if you cannot learn yourself as a teacher and how can students to be open if you are not open yourself; that is also my experience. I teach students from 17-24 years old, so it is a different ball game I think than teaching at a high school or primary school. My question for you



is, what do you think these children need - 5 minutes meditation or 10 minutes meditation - there is still 4 hours and 50 minutes to go, what do they really need?

Daniel Calmanovitz: Thank you giving me the opportunity to answer this question. The system is wrong, it is not only me saying this - we know that. I saw children, 7-8 years old and they do not take their children to the playground. This school which I showed you, they have a huge open air area, huge. Teachers do not go with them to the playground - there is a nice playground there. Can you imagine a teacher who is a woman in her 40's who has got her children and so on and she points to her students, to her children and says "They are terrible!" - and shouting at them all the time. The system is wrong and you are right. If the teachers do not want to learn new things, how can teach something? When I was trying to think why it was like that, they were taught like that, as I was - you know, we were in the system and, its like thats what they know, as a way of doing and they are afraid of changing because they are afraid to lose power. They think that to be a teacher, is to have power and one of the main points is the culture of punishment. The culture is a culture of punishment and not a culture where - you may have heard about Restorative Justice right? ["No"]. Well okay, its a different way of doing, of considering and dealing with cases where you should go to court and have a judge and attorney and so on. So it means you are in a horizontal way of doing and not in this way; vertical. In England there is a lady who is working with restorative justice and working with non-violent communication (this comes from Marsha Rosenberg) in schools in Britain and it is working perfectly - so any problem you have between teachers and students there is no punishment, there is a talk, there is a circle - "Why did you do that? What happened? What did you feel? What are your needs?". So this is huge and when we started showing a little bit about non-punishment, they closed completely."

Same questioner, responding:: Well it is my personal experience that as a teacher, you can be in complete power, so called power if you are passionate about what you teach and if you are willing to engage in a personal connection. That's also the first two points that students evaluate their teachers on. If you get evaluation, the first two points are being passionate and a personal relationship. After that you can talk about chemistry.

Daniel Calmanovitz: "Exactly - I think we could talk more about this but it could be a long talk!"

Question (unknown): Hello, I would like to ask you about what topics the people in schools meditate on?

Daniel Calmanovitz: No, our meditation is not on topics; it is just breathing concentration meditation. You breathe and you concentrate on your breath - that is all. We get them to count 1, 2, 3, when they breathe in and 3, 2, 1 when they breathe out. Only this, simple as that. Of course it relaxes, but it is concentration - to be concentrated and not follow your thoughts while you are breathing - it can be difficult. This lady who works with Restorative Justice in schools in England is called Belinda Hopkins - its a really good job she is doing. There is another lady called Kate Brains, working in circles with people in general. Okay, thanks a lot.







Claudio Pineda, Brazil

Chawang NgalSo Reiki

Centro de Dharma da Paz Shi De Choe Tsog Volunteers Group of Chag Wang Ngal So Reiki



São Paulo – Brasil

2007 to 2010

Chag Wang Ngalso Reiki at Dharma Center

1st Step: 2004

5 Volunteers:

Ellen, Maria Helena, Regina, Crislaine, Simone

2nd Step: 2006

13 Volunteers:

Karin, Franklin, Ana Cristina, Daniel, Edney, Blanche, Caterine,
Dóris, Annalu, Ana Bravo, Heloisa, Clarice, Claudio
Coordinator: Karin

3rd Step: 2007

18 Volunteers: Franklin, Ana Cristina, Blanche, Dóris, Annalu, Ana
Bravo, Plínio, Suzane, Vania, Leonardo, Clarice, Ieda, Claudio,
Ana Isaac, Adeline, Mônica, Karla

Coordinator: Claudio

Lama Ganchen supporting
colletive section of NCWR Dec,01 2007



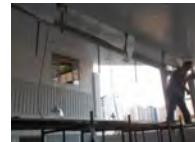
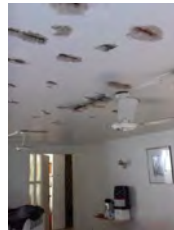
Lama Gangchen first visit
at site 4th Dec 2007



Jan 2008
Retrofit start



Ceiling, Painting, furniture,
reception



Volunteers : Together we can



Lama Michel first visit April 2008



First ceremony
April 2008



Activities

- Attendance de NCWR
- Reiki – Mikao Usui
 - 7 iniciations Reiki I
 - 2 iniciations Reiki II
- Yoga (Prof Roldano Giuntoli)
- Shiatsu/ Acupressure
- Yoga Speeches, Astrology
- Room Sublocation
- Integration activities with Volunteer team
 - 2 Systemic constellation (Ong Jardim Angela e Clinica NgaiSo)
 - Arteterapy -10 encontros
 - T.E.O.R- 12 encontros
- Raising funds events



July Party
05.07.08



Spring Party 27.09.08



Budha's Relics 27.11.08



Budha's Relics 27.11.08



Lama Ganchen supporting
collective section



Volunteers at Atibaia retreat nov 2008

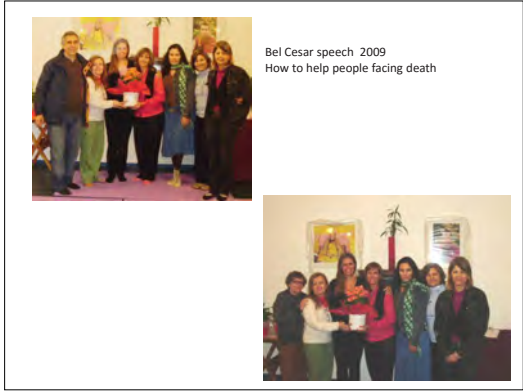
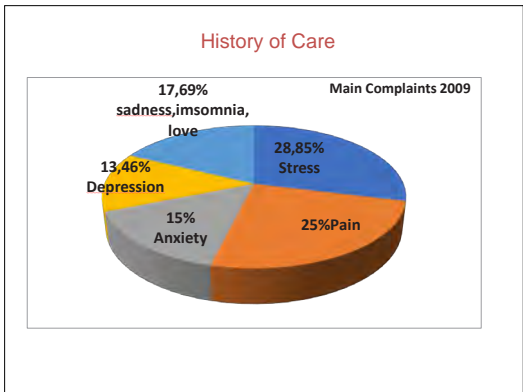
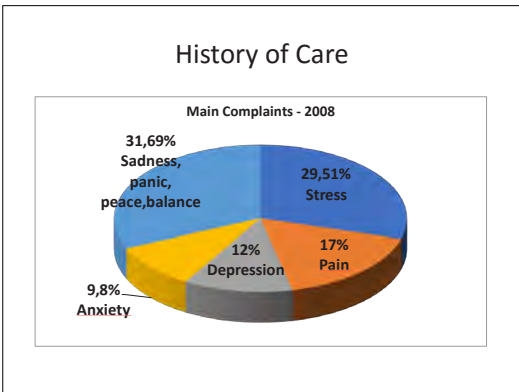
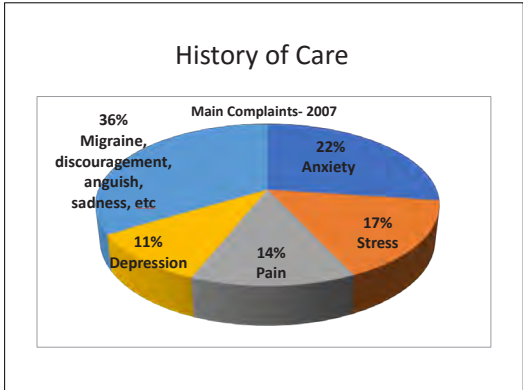


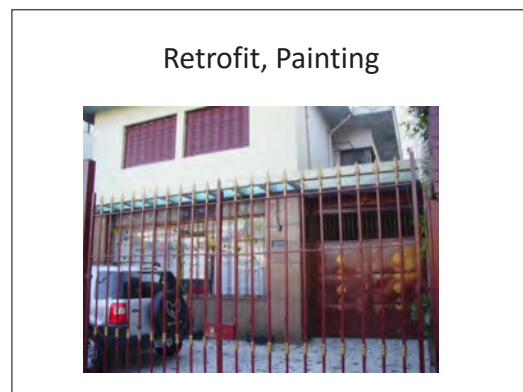
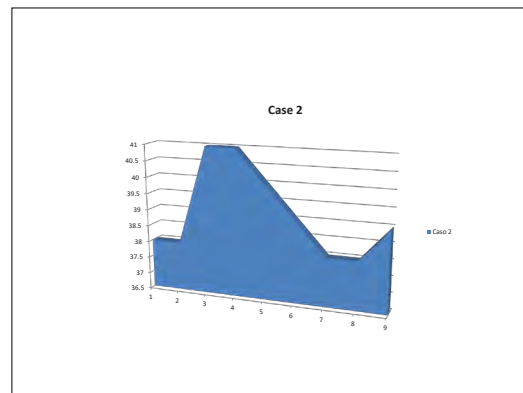
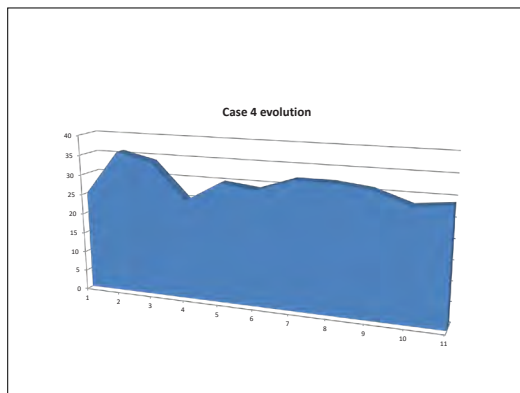
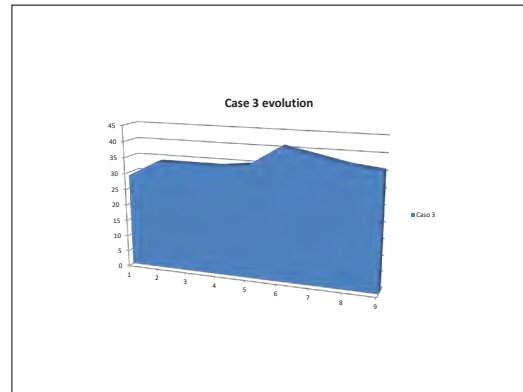
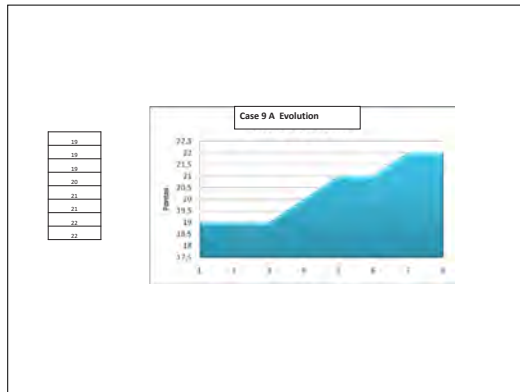
Lama Michel speech April 2009



Astrology speech May 2009
Carlos Holanda – Ana Cristina Abbade



[illegible]



Sherab Giatsu Center

Since April, 2010:

Volunteers:

Ana Cris

Claudio

Maisa

Total: 62 Reiki attendance at Tuesday

Sangha Joy at June Party



Tipical Food, clothes



Sherab Giatsu Center Donations

June Party, 2010: **R\$ 800,00** (support facade paintings)

July : Astrological Speech, with Reiki ambulatory

Astrological Constellation: 40 meetings (240 people)

R\$ 1.050,00

Total: 62 Reiki attendance at Tuesday

Total Revenue: R\$ 500,00 (**50% S G C** + 50% Group)

Reiki Flyer (1.000)

Circular Dance



Back to Dharma Center

Since Abril 2010:

Volunteers:

Clarice, Margareth, Karla, Annalu, Maisa, Vinicios, Samuel, e Cecilia

Total: 262 Reiki attendance at Tuesday and thursday

Total Revenue: R\$ 2.500,00 (50% DH + 50% Group)

Dharma Circuit : 02 days

Astrological Speech

3 Reiki Iniciation Mikao Usui - Clarice Saroni Reiki Master

Tashi Delek !

Obrigado !







... We are free to choose what we do
and what we do not do at every moment ...



Lama Michel, Brazil

Meaningful Life ...

the concept of change and freedom within change

Some generations ago people used to dream, they used to believe in the value of democracy of this or that, of here or there, people had some kind of wish like a utopia to live to. By living through this utopia people would put and say okay, when this will happen things will go elsewhere, so it is something to strive for. And we are in a moment of history where there is no more utopias. It is my feeling that it is like people living basically, okay each one [the question could be]: 'What is your purpose?' 'Get more money to consume more; period'. And there is really no end, its like if all the, how to say, ideals, the strong ideals are not present anymore. So one of the things I was feeling very strongly this time in Brazil was the need for us to dream. If there is no utopia, if there is no dream, we have no direction. And there we are, we get lost in our little daily things and we just remain within that; if we do not have a dream in life, if we do not have a higher purpose, we get lost in survival. And this is what happens very often.

What happens very often is that we live somehow in a sort of survival that is a comfortable survival and we get lost somehow within that, with no higher purpose very often - most of the times. This is quite dangerous in a way, so I was thinking that it is really, really important for all of us to go back, to go to look for a higher purpose, to have a higher dream; even buddhism is based on having a utopia which is called enlightenment. Most probably most of us will not reach enlightenment in this lifetime, even though I hope for the other way round. But because when we truly wish for enlightenment then we may get to the Path of Seeing - its a really good step. Maybe we change ourselves, make ourselves better; we do something because we believe in something higher? When we have no any higher belief, when we do not believe in anything that transcends our lives, and ourselves then lives become flat. What I have been seeing is the lack of truly believing in something - even politically. Okay not all countries are the same, but in Brazil it is very strong - many people there have completely lost trust in all the parties, not all but most people have lost trust in the politicians, lost trust in the parties, lost trust in the system; but they think there is not an alternative. Some people are coming out with wanting the military government back; really this means there is no alternative. This means really no dreaming, not any objective. And this is something that reflects from different aspects of our lives and I think that a lot of this is coming from this conditioned basic pleasurable survival in which we have found ourselves. If we look, everything that is sold to us on television, or on whatever advertisement, all the information that we have most of the time around us and so on; it is all based on our own selfish pleasure and for our own personal benefit. Basically, it is a nice pleasurable survival. We do not see things based on a higher purpose. Even when we bring the dharma to people nowadays - how to get to the people with the dharma? Dharma will help your life to be more pleasurable and nice. If we go and we start talking about meditation and think that we need to meditate because by that you can become a buddha and can help others to be better; who cares about that? If you say that we can make your heart better and you will have a better blood pressure and you will make this and that and your work will be better because you will become more balanced and you will get promotion and this and that - you will say 'Oh yes, I need to meditate!' Luckily, not everyone is like this, but in a wider range I think that is what happens. Even when you talk about bringing the dharma, very often, in commerce, how is the dharma being sold? It will make your life more comfortable, it is not about making the life truly meaningful, and it is not about serving with our life for a higher purpose.

So one thing that I very much miss around is having a higher purpose in life; it is something which is fundamental - it can be keeping the dharma alive; it can be that of taking care of the environment;

it can be that of giving a better education for children; it can be that of reaching enlightenment. There are so many things that we can have for higher purposes. I think it is fundamental in our life to have a purpose that transcends our own life; and I miss this. If we look even some decades ago, the propaganda would have been connected to purposes, to ideals. Now we do not see that anymore. Even the propaganda - it is connected to making your life comfortable and nice. This is just to say that is something that is quite well, how to say, everywhere. My personal point of view is, 'Okay, what shall we do? What can I do'. The only true thing that we can do for anyone is to interact. So I wanted to share with you something that I did and I had this idea - okay, let's try to make others reflect about the more meaningful things in life.

Billboard Positive Publicity

So I was talking with a friend - he was here a few days ago, now already gone, his name is Cougar. A guy from Brazil with short hair, always dressed in a white t-shirt. He works in publicity - he was working in the second biggest publicity company in Brazil. So he was working there and so on and basically I had an idea with him and I said, 'What if we used the means of publicity to bring a nice message to people?' I always dreamed of this and going in the city, instead of having this big outdoors selling things, which I think is quite violent basically. Publicity is always taking something from someone, it is like it is grabbing something from us; always taking away, never giving. Very rarely you will have a publicity that gives something to you. I remember one from IBM, I received something, it was a beautiful publicity and it asked 'When was the last time that you did something for the first time?' I remember that publicity, but normally publicities are not giving that much - the intention behind them is to take. I always thought, what if we take this means of publicity and we put some nice, beautiful messages inside, but with one specific aspect, which is that there should (from my point of view) be no signature; no one should know from whom the message comes. If I put my name on it, automatically I am already saying, 'I am giving this to you, so come and look at my webpage'. With the idea, to come to me, make me famous, give something back to me! I want to invert the system and just give to people; the impact is much higher. Also because when we read something and it is from someone, if we like that someone, we read it nicely. If we do not like that someone, we already have a preconception. So I wanted things to be completely clean, people of whom I had no idea where or from who it was or how it was, so I talked with this friend and finally we did it. So we had this in Brazil a few weeks ago, the Brazilians from São Paulo all saw it. We had in 157 places around the city, large billboards, black and white, nothing and there were 11 phrases. So I would just like to read them to you, then after we will talk about what I wanted to talk about. The original idea of the phrases could not happen now, maybe in the future, was every week to change the phrase, to allow people to slowly change themselves. But this was not possible, so we put all the phrases at one time. Very simple phrases, but the aim was to challenge people to reflect upon them. The phrase is: 'What is happiness?' Just for them to reflect upon, what is happiness? I do not know if many of us truly do it, since a young age at school, we are somehow given the meaning of what is happiness, but we do not very often think about it. The next phrase will be: 'Is what I do, coherent with what I want?' I want to be healthy - is my lifestyle coherent with what I want? For me happiness means 'peace of mind', does the lifestyle I have reflect the coherence I want to achieve this 'peace of mind'? Then we have the next phrase: 'To love is to wish for happiness', 'To be loved is good; to love is much better'. These are all phrases that were put on these big billboards around the city. I have the pictures of them for those who would like to see them (in Portuguese). When we look at these messages, very simple things, printed on paper in the middle of the road, people passing by, it makes a different impact. 'To die is not a choice; how can we live with this?', 'Today is the future of yesterday and the past of tomorrow', 'Nothing starts, nothing ends; all transforms', 'To accept is to put energy into the solution and not to be trapped into the problem', 'All that we see is a reflection of who we are', 'High objective, low expectation, constant effort'. So we had these phrases around the city and it was a way to try to plant some seeds. We have no feedback because nobody knew it was from us, we never said anything and we asked the members of the sangha not to say anything



either. That was not the plan, but it was just sharing something. So I hope that we can do more of this, it is like planting seeds around. Something that I believe very much is that whenever we do something, our motivation makes a big difference. If I do something with the intention to give and if especially if I do it in a way that people would not expect and if the action is coherent with the motivation, then the result I believe is higher. For example in this case, the intention is to give to people, but if I start to put something there because it was my own process, 'Oh what if, you know?', its a possibility, 2 weeks of things all around the city, lets put the name of the dharma centre there! I already want something back! Lets do something and then as we do that, then we start wanting and then it already changes the whole thing, this is my feeling. So to do something really with a simple objective in this way.

Thomas: This reminds me of Saint Nicholas because he became famous by doing so. He was secretly giving always what people were needing, very beautiful.

Lama Michel

I believe it is very important to share and to give in this way. So this is just one small experiment we had. We only could do it because this friend had a friend who owned these billboard spaces and gave them for free and so we could put our messages around, because it would actually cost a lot of money to do this for 2 weeks.

Suffering

Anyhow, what I wanted to share with you basically was the concept of change and freedom within change. How much freedom do we fully have? What is our freewill? How much freewill do we actually have in life? I reflected a lot about that and my own conclusion is that we almost have none. But 'almost' is very powerful, okay. Its is that we do not have it all, we do not have that much, but interestingly enough, very often we live our lives as if we could have control over everything. We plan things - if things do not happen in the way that we planned, we get upset. We make a commitment with people and if they do not react the way we expect, we get upset. Without making commitments, we get upset. We go to places and if the places are not how we expect, we get upset. We try somehow to control things in life and it is funny (funny is not the right word) but somehow it is strange to see that most of our suffering is not from what happens, most of our suffering we suffer simply because things are not as we expect them to be. Very rarely do we suffer for what things are. Most of the times we simply suffer because things are not as we think they should be; there is a big difference between the two. Just try to observe and ask, 'When was the last time I was suffering simply for how things are?' This is normally when we feel cold, when we feel hot, when we are hungry, when something is happening at that moment, 'I really do not like it, it really upsets me; I am living the moment!' But we do not suffer so much like this, we try to avoid suffering in so many ways - we have air conditioning when it is hot and we make





a way so we always avoid hunger, this and that and we try to avoid conflict and so on. But if we make the simple question to our self: 'Do I suffer more in the present, or do I suffer more in the past and the future?' Where do we suffer more? In the past and in the future. So we have the tendency to pre-suffer and re-suffer than actually to suffer. The present moment is quickly gone! It is like if we 5 to someone, the words that a person will have said to us, took maybe 10 seconds, 20 seconds, 5 minutes if it takes a long time. Then after we stay there with a bad taste in our mouth for hours and for days, and for years, 'Why you said this, how did you dare to do that' and go on and on. And we are not suffering for what is happening, we are suffering because it happened in a way that we think it should not have happened. Then we start to worry about the future and 'Oh what if this happens like that' then there we are again, suffering about all of that. So from one side we have these expectations that we can have control in life, that we can control people, situations and things. Why is this attitude? By the simple fact of creating such expectations. The moment that I make an expectation that things should be in a certain way, am I expecting to control things, am I expecting things to have been that way? Actually yes. Then lets just look a bit in a more clear way and see how much truly can we control? Sometimes we hear people saying 'Ah if I was in your place, I would do differently'. I do not know what term you use in English, in Brazil we say mostly, 'If I was in your shoes'. I would say, 'Okay, if I was in your shoes, with your foot'. It is easy to be in your shoe with my foot. Which means, if I was you, with your mentality, with the same education you received, with the same karma you have, with the same experiences you had, the same traumas you accumulated, the same body you have, the same knowledge and everything else - how different would I do? Not much. So who are we to judge others truly? If we were exactly the same condition as the other person, how would we act?

Once I arrived to Italy from Brazil and there was this - funny - not funny, but I was laughing, (really I was disgusted about the situation). At that time at Malpensa airport in Milan, there were very lethal trolleys for the luggage; they were very difficult to get for whatever reason. What happened was that I arrived and luckily my luggage had wheels and I could manage to take it (because there were not enough trolleys) and then there was a group of people, all very well dressed and ladies beautifully attired, very polite people and so on, nice civilised people. They were there waiting for their trolley and were nervous because their luggage was there, they were full of luggage and no trolley around. Suddenly there was one guy bringing the trolleys, maybe 5 trolleys for 15 people. Then he starts looking at these people, grabbing at the trolleys, from one side to the other, they were almost beating each other and verbally abusing each other, really fighting loudly being aggressive to each other - because of a trolley (or lack of one). Imagine if they were hungry and needed food! So how can we judge others if we are not in the same conditions in which they are?

This brings me to another thing. In Buddhism we talk a lot about the importance of the mind, with which I truly agree. But I have one conviction; the mind is a very powerful tool, but the mind interacts. We interact our mind through what we see, where we go, who we meet, what type of situations we experience. I saw some time ago a documentary that made me reflect a lot about it - it was called The Truth about Lies, about a professor from Israel living in America. He made people his research about why people lie and why people try to cheat others, to gain advantage in cheating and lying and so on. The most interesting thing, I am not going to go through the whole thing - I think it is a good documentary to see. By the end of this documentary there is a room full of people and he is asking them in which country people lie more and try to cheat others more. Then he started naming many countries: Norway, Finland, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico and you go, 'Would you say it is the same or different'. Finally it is that, people lie and cheat each other in the same way, it does not matter where they come from - if they are put in the same conditions. Only people with very, very strong moral grounds do not fall into the same attitude. But most of us, once we get put into the same conditions, we react in the same way. So the point is that we are influenced by society; we are influenced by those that are around us; we are influenced by what other people do; we are influenced by the places we go, by what we see and so on. So from one side it is important for us to choose to receive the best and correct influences; this is one thing that

is very important. Otherwise, we just tend to blame the person, 'Oh, you are cheating, you are lying' you are like this; you are like that. Most probably if we were in the same conditions - I do not know how different we would make out?

How free are we?

This is one point; so how many influences do we have in our lives? In other words, how free are we? Making a metaphor that I do not like very much, but it explains the idea - are we free to buy what we want? I would say yes, as long as we have the money and what we want is for sale. If I do not have the money or if what I want is not for sale - 'I'd like to buy Borobudur', 'I like very much, one buddha from the east side, it is complete and nice; I'd like to take it to my home, can I buy it?' Even with a lot of money, the answer is, no, it is not for sale. I do not think I can buy it (in an illegal way, maybe) but this is not buying the thing, it's a stealing way and giving money. Buying in an illegal way is not buying, it is paying for a way to steal it. So I cannot buy a statue from the Borobudur - an old one. If I buy, they have to make a new one, that is different, I cannot get an original statue even if I have the money. It is not enough to have the money, I need to be able to also to buy something that is available for sale. If what I want is for sale and I do not have the money, I cannot buy it also. Having the money means having created the causes; being for sale is having the conditions to gain the result; we need these two things together. We are free to buy whatever we want, but we are not free from our own economical status. And we are not free from the conditions around us. In other words we are not free from the causes that we bring with us and we are not free from the conditions in which we are. So for example, are we free from the education we received? Whenever we are in front of a situation where we need to make a choice or a judgement right now, any moment? Are we free from the education we received; are we free from the traumas that we had? We can get free, but we are not now. Are we free from the experiences that we had? Are we free from the mentality, from the culture in which we grew up? We are not; we are influenced by these - right? So in the same way, are we free from our body? Because the body influences the mind a lot - also not. So if we see our choices and our actions are going to be educationally received, by the experiences that we had, by the traumas we experienced, by the culture in which we grew up, by the information we received - by all of this put together and, much more. So where does our freedom lie?

Astrological aspects

Oh! Another point that I forgot to say: we are very much influenced by astrological aspects also; we are very influenced by the body. We may think not in a way, but it is incredible the amount of influence there is between the body and the mind, one to each other; it is incredibly strong. A few days ago, in the very early morning when we were going up to the Stupa, Rinpoche said, 'If you are not free from the mental defilements you will never have perfect health'. It is very, very clear in Tibetan medicine, the relationship between mind and body is at the very basis. If our mind is not peaceful, our body will not be peaceful and healthy and vice-versa. So what happens is that, we are extremely influenced in our way of thinking, in our emotional state also by our body. I think we all know this - when we eat too much, or when we do not eat enough. Depending on the place where we are, are we influenced by the environment? When we come here to Borobudur does our mental state change somehow or is it the same? I think it changes. This means we are influenced by our environment. If we look in history, where did all the great meditations go to meditate for enlightenment? To the big cities? They went to nature. In Buddhism and in other traditions also, Saint Francis went to meditate in the caves nearby Gubbio. There are many meditative people that went to meditate and practice their spiritual path in the deserts, in the mountains in Tibet, in the far forests of India or Thailand or wherever. So the environment does influence us. When we are in a pure environment, after some time, one of the interesting things that can happen is that, the quantity of thoughts gets less; we have less mental activity when we are in a more pure environment. The more we go to a place that has a lot of pollution - visual and informational pollution - too much useless information we receive, we have electromagnetic



pollution and we have what I call emotional pollution. Are we influenced if we are near someone who is angry? (Yes). Imagine I live in a building; my neighbour is angry on one side, and also my neighbour is angry on the other side, my neighbour upstairs is unsatisfied and my neighbour below lives with fear. Am I somehow influenced by all this or not? Yes we are, we are not superman, we are influenced by everything around us, and so we are also influenced by our environment. A short time ago I was talking with an engineer about the projects in Albagnano and he was saying that we need to be careful with the new LED lights, because there was a study done by a university in which they proved that modern LED lights, the very white light ones (5,500 °K) influence in a negative way our metabolism (not so much the warm light LEDs (3,200 °K)). So they have very strong side effects in the long run. So like the big cities that have changed all the public lighting to LED, now they need to change again, because it was proven that it was bad for health. This is just to say, maybe there is a place where there is a light that influences our body and from there influences our mind and emotional state? The most crazy thing about this is when we are suddenly feeling upset or feeling sad or nervous, what is the tendency, because I am feeling a bit nervous and something is influencing me and we point the finger at someone? We have these monthly cycles and women have these more clearly, they have their hormonal cycles every month, this helps us to understand this better also. I have observed countless times someone getting nervous, fighting with someone else and then after saying that they were sorry, but they were in their pre-menstrual period time. What I want to say is that it is not a matter of man and woman; we all are influenced by our bodies. A few years ago there was a time when I felt very sad - I do not know exactly why and it lasted for a few months. So I went to Rinpoche and said, 'Rinpoche-la, I'm sad'.



I never complained to Rinpoche but he was saying, 'Okay tell me what is the problem and we will fix it!' And I was saying that actually if I started making a list of things that I wanted to be different, I could make a long list, but if I looked at each one of them separately and imagined them differently, then when I looked back at my own inner state, I felt that it was not going to solve my sadness, my suffering. I could point a finger at thousands of things and did not think that anyone of these was the actual cause of it. So you know, when we say it was the blessings of the guru, it was just at the moment that I made the question to Rinpoche, was when I started to get the answer by myself. This was, by waiting or letting it fade away or I being able to give a good name to it and find out where it is coming from so I can deal with it. Well it faded away and finally I found out where it was coming from and I was able to deal with it; but it was the beginning of the end when I talked to



Rinpoche about it. So this is also what we mean by receiving the blessings. Sometimes we have influences and we are aware of it and we wake up one day and are a little bit upset. Or we go somewhere and we do not feel comfortable, or we are feeling very agitated or very excited, or whatever - a lot of attachment, this and that. We look for something or someone to point our finger towards and as we do this we have feelings of attraction (happiness) or aversion (sadness) - there we enter this constant game of attraction and aversion. Very often, if we really look, the reason of us being overexcited or sad or upset or whatever, is because of being influenced - astrologically, environmentally, places visited and people we have met, the things that have happened and they do not manifest right away. There can be a lag as they take time to manifest sometimes. Then when we are not feeling well we try to point a finger to something or someone. This connects me to another concept - I had no intention to talk about this but it is a very important thing. When we see something in any place or any situation, normally we are not aware of the complex interdependence in which we live. If we would simply be aware of how many causes and conditions are necessary for that feeling to ripen, we would stop blaming others. We could say, 'Oh you are one of the thousand causes of my feelings today' - one of so many. One of the causes is because in my childhood I had this experience and now when you said this, you made me remember my experience, so if I did not have the experience I would not be feeling like that. So you are just one small part in the middle of so many things that happen at the same time. This helps us to relate differently. But what happened to us normally is we see something and we grab at it as if it existed inherently out of its own nature, just as for what it is, for what we see it. So if there is something that I see as a cause of suffering, how do I experience that cause of suffering? As if it exists interdependently or as if it exists as a cause of suffering, independent of anything else? - independently. If I experience a situation that brings me joy, how do I see it as something that is interdependent or as something that gives me joy independently of anything else? How do I relate? Independently. So if you here are the cause of my suffering, independent of anything else, what do I want to do? To kill you; I want to destroy you; it does not matter where you go, just go far away from me. If you are the cause of my happiness and you are causing me happiness independently of anything else, what do I want? I want to marry you because you made me happy! This is why, in a very, very simplified way, the grasping at inherent existence creates something, because we grasp at objects as being the cause of happiness, or being the cause of suffering as if they would be by themselves the cause of a happiness and suffering and we just go to look for them, we just go after them because we are not aware of the complex nature of interdependencies in which we all live.

We are influenced by so many things

So my point is, within all of that, where is our freedom? We are influenced by so many things.



I remember one time, I went to an astrologer in Brazil, his name was Ezeferino and it was an astrologer that my parents used to go to - a very good astrologer. He gave me some explanations of some things, he said 'Be careful, it is a spirit you have and have this type of influence' - I was thinking that can't be me, that is impossible - this is not me, what you are saying! Then a few months later, I looked back and I said 'You were really right!' When it happens one is just blaming all the people and the things around, we forget there are some other types of influences. Why do we say that the full moon day is a good day to practise dharma? It is because emotions get stronger; emotions get stronger on the full moon day - actually in eclipses also. So if our emotions are stronger, it is better to practice dharma instead of overreacting to people and fighting, out of desire or this or that. Even crimes out of passion are committed more during the full moon days than in other days. So what is happening and what I want to say is that when we say 'Why do we need to practise dharma on this day? - and so on. Why do we have some days as dakini day? Then we have some special days in the calendar - these are the days related to the lunar calendar. We are influenced by the Moon, so they have a specific type of energy. For example, the 29th of the lunar calendar, just the day before this complete circle of the Moon ends is a good day to do Protector puja, because it has an energy of conflict. So we use the conflict to go against the interferences. It is a good day to meditate against our selfishness; if we need to make a meditation to cut our ego, to cut our selfishness, cut the grasping at self, inherent self and so on, one of the best moments is this because we go against, we use these energies. What I want to say is that we are influenced by the planets, we are influenced by the environment, we are influenced by the people we meet, we are influenced by what we read.

Useful or useless Information

Another thing that I really believe is very important, we must be careful what information we put in our mind - there is just one very simple example which I always give, for me it is so clear, so I prefer always to give the same example. Subliminal information - if we take in a movie, every second of a movie is made out of 24 frames, television is around 30 frames. If we write a phrase to one friend, then we leave some 5 to 7 frames without and then we write a phrase again and repeat it like every 5 or 7 frames, we cannot see it, the eyes cannot see the gap in the image, but the message is passed. Coca-Cola used to do this in the beginning of publicity, then it was prohibited; Stanley Kubrick did it in the cinema. So there were different people who were using this, but the point I want to make is that there were many experiments taking an image - you look at a movie, 5 minutes, 10 minutes and suddenly I ask you a question that is not connected at all with the movie and you give a spontaneous answer and you do not know where it is coming from because it was hidden there and you do not know.

My point is very simple: If a message that is written in a subliminal way, which means that it is so quick that we are not even able to see with our eyes, we are unaware that it is there - if something that is so quick influences our mind, what about something that is written there at all times? What we see all the time, what about listening and so on? Does it influence our mind? Slowly. So we need to choose what information we want to bring to our mind. Another important thing connected to this, for example, is we talk a lot about enlightenment these days - one of the things that are very important for enlightenment is to have good concentration. I am sorry to say that nobody - okay, based on the teachings we will not get enlightened if we do not meditate - if we do not enter into Samadhi. If we look in the Bodhisattvacharyavatara, in this and many other texts, how to develop good concentration. First step is to take away useless information. Many years ago I did a long solitary retreat of a month and a half in Nepal; I was not seeing anyone and for the first period of retreat, I was there doing my mantra. The last things that happened in the days before the retreat and so on would sometimes come to my mind. Then as I would have no other information as I was reading the Lamrim in-between the sessions, during the sessions and I was not meeting anyone, not talking to anyone. Then, what happened was that memories started to come back of the most stupid things that happened, like 10 years before, that I could not ever imagine that I would remember. Then we can see that every experience that we have

takes a space in our mind. So to develop good concentration, one of the things that is important is that we must take away useless information, take away useless objects of distraction. Objects of distraction are objects of a lot of attraction and objects of a lot of aversion. So, this is one example of the importance, because if we want to give space in our mind to meditate on love or wisdom or to meditate on the generation stage or completion stage practices or whatever, if we want to give space for that in the mind, we should not occupy our mind with other things. Every time we see something or listen to something, every information that we take up, it takes a space in our mind - if we like it, if we do not like it, if we want it, if we do not want it. Here there is something interesting: There is some information that makes more space, that takes space, but makes more space. There is other information that just blocks the mind. This Rinpoche taught me when I entered the monastery in the very beginning. He said to me, 'Now here you need to memorise many things, so whatever useful things you put in your mind, it will make more space to use learn more things; useless things you put in your mind, it will block it from learning other things'. I was reflecting upon the meaning of this: Basically any information that we get, is an information that will bring us to another information that will open our mind to understand something else - it is giving more space, because it is widening our horizons. When I learn something, you know as they say, the more I know, the more I know that I do not know - this means that I am learning things that are opening my mind for a wider horizon. However when I put information in my mind that takes me nowhere, it blocks the mind. For example, 'What is my neighbour doing?' - and so what? 'My friend from the dharma, what is he doing in the room?' - I do not want even to know! Because I do not want to use my space with useless information - nothing against my neighbour, but really, really, really, what he is doing, what he is not doing, what are his choices in life or not, what colour is his underwear? I do not care!! Simply because it is taking space in my mind and, I do not want it - its too precious to fill it up with information we do not need. This is why one of the reasons why gossiping is harmful. Not only gossiping but you know like we have in the commitments from the Lojong, the mind training - they are the vows and one vow is not to criticise others and the vow just after is to mind one's own business. Do not occupy your mind with other people's lives and things. One of the reasons for this is it occupies a space in our mind and therefore it blocks the mind; we are influenced by so many things.

Making Choices

What is one of the ways we can have freedom? By choosing the influences we want to receive. Where we go, who we meet, what we look at, what we listen to; we have some freedom with that, not 100%, but we do have some freedom. We take the phone, okay, do I open that or do not open? Can we choose? When we wake up in the morning, can we choose to make a mantra or I look at the phone? You can choose, right? That is where it makes a difference; it is by the choices that we make. So going directly to the point, what is the freedom that we have? I believe sincerely that the freedom that we have is the freedom to say 'I want', 'I do not want'; 'I do', 'I do not do'; 'I say, I do not say'. To be in front of the situation and say, 'Am I going to manifest this talk or not?'; 'I go or I do not go'. All of us had the opportunity to say 'I will go to Borobudur' or 'I will not go to Borobudur' right? We made a choice. Like this, every day, every moment we have many, many, thousands of choices. The choice is basically the present moment that we live; in the very present moment - that is where our freedom lies. We are not free from our past and we are not free from the conditions of the present, which are a other people around us and so on in our body. But we are free to choose what we say, which thought to follow or not to follow at that moment. We are free to choose what we do and what we do not do at every moment. It is in these very small actions in our daily life that we can direct our life. Remember that astrologer I mentioned earlier, he told me that in life we are like a goat, trapped with a long rope on a fence; we have only 180° freedom to move. It depends how long your rope is. I was thinking about that and concluded that it was not true. Our freedom of choice is not 180° in life - it is maybe like 1/2°! It is because at this very present moment is that very small action window; there is where our freedom lies! If we think about 1/2° we change to 1/2° and if we put it on the long run - straight, what is the difference it makes up to sometime? A



very big difference - the distance that it creates. $1/2^\circ$ after a long run, makes a big difference and if we make $1/2^\circ + 1/2^\circ + 1/2^\circ$, slowly we can make a big difference; that is where changes are coming from. Change can only happen in very, very, very small actions. Then the sum of all these actions gradually will make a bigger change; something that we can perceive more clearly. It is only very small actions that we are making.

Repeating the practice

There is also another thing: In Buddhism one of the very basic aspects that we find is that we say, 'Let's do the practice'. We do not talk about a miracle that will change our lives rather we talk about the practice. A sadhana is something to be repeated, countless numbers of times. At one time, one of my teachers told me, 'You know, I do the Yamantaka long sadhana, since I received the initiation from Trijang Rinpoche in Tibet. And I received the empowerment of Yamantaka when I was 17', when he told me this he was about 72. He said, 'I never for one day in my life stopped doing the practice; I did not miss the practice, not even for one day in my life, even the day that I was escaping from Tibet, walking in water, I was so tired, I was sleeping in the middle of the water of a river'. He was escaping from Tibet, walking through the mountains and even in those conditions, he did not forget to do his practice. He said 'I always do my Yamantaka sadhana, every day of my life since I took the commitment, but I only started to understand what I was doing in my 50's'. So more than 30 years after doing the sadhana, every day he started to understand what he was doing. But he had a wonderful result afterwards. You could see in him as a person and nothing else. The way in which he died, everything was very auspicious; even when cremated his bones became like many pills that looked like pearls in the beginning and after they lost this light, but rather they looked like hundreds of pearls, I have some of them. So what I want to say is, even if we go to look in the Buddhist practice, what we are saying about the practice, what we are saying about is 'Come and repeat, again and again, again and again, again and again' and it is by repeating that gradually we make the transformation. There is not such thing as 'Okay come here I give you the blessing and boom, everything is fine'. It is by every small action that gradually we make the difference. I was thinking about this some time ago and it gave me so much joy. Buddha said that the path to enlightenment took him 3 aeons to reach from the point of renunciation. It took him 3 aeons and then I was thinking about it and I thought 'Oh that's good!' I felt very happy, very much reassured about it. If the only way to enlightenment would be in 3 years, I would feel not able you know, too much! It is like if you have a very high cliff, you can either jump right off, or you can go round a long path - but you know that you can walk through it. I prefer to know that I am on the long path, that I feel I am able to walk every step of it and I am walking in the correct direction - better than seeing a short cut that I am incapable of. I have this hope that one day I will be able to do the shortcut, but for the moment let's walk on the path. Maybe one day I can jump to the shortcut, but not at the moment. The fact that things take time; that is how things are in nature; that is how things are in life - nothing is happening from one day to the next, things are happening in a very gradual way. Once we accept that, we enter into this way that things are, then we start seeing the power and the importance of every little action that we do every day.

Change happens gradually

So what I want to say is that change happens in a very gradual way with every very, very small action that we do. That is what actually is truly making things truly to happen and to change. So connecting to what we said before, in the very beginning in which we were talking about living in times where we do not believe much in dreams and conflicts and difficult times and so on. Do we want a change in our society? I would say 'yes'. But let's ask another question to be able to answer this better. The situations that we see that exists nowadays, that we do not like - were these situations created in one year, in two years or two or three decades? Decades minimum. Before I was talking about Brazil, if you look at the situation they have in Brazil nowadays; for example, the violence that exists in society and so on, a good part of this was created hundreds of years ago. Brazil has been a violent society since 500 years ago with the slaves; it was one of the last

countries in the world to abolish slavery. Brazil and Australia abolished slavery more or less at the same time, but in Australia, when they abolished slavery, they gave a piece of land to every family that were slaves, so they could cultivate their land and have their dignity and their survival. What happened in Brazil, they cut the face of the slaves, so that they could be constantly recognised as former slaves. At the same time they gave them a job where what they would be paid was much less, than what they needed to pay the same person giving them the job to have a place to stay and enough food to eat. So they continued to be slaves and actually it was cheaper for the people giving the jobs than before - because as slaves the owners needed to take care of everything; now they do not need to take care of anything, just a small salary or wage and very, very basic and the employee keeps going back because the employer is the one giving them the food. The problem is that this lasted for a long time. And now we experienced the results of that up to now, so my question is, if a problem comes from a long route, from a deep root, can the solution be immediate? No. It is like if we talk from a physical point of view, if there is a chronic disease, how do we cure a chronic disease - with one-time medicine? Or with change of behaviour and diet and medicine for a long time. It takes time. So if we want to see changes in society, we need to remember that the solutions take time and it is very important to remember that in order to be able to put energy into the solutions, we must have a goal that is higher than ourselves. Which means cannot be attached to see the result in our lifetime - as most probably we will not. There are many milestones in our daily lives that we see, many benefits that we can see, but it is understanding that we do not need to have to hurry to complete or run the race. We need to be going in the correct direction. The same thing is with our lives and the path to enlightenment. It is like when we listen to dharma teachings like this, these days while we are here in Borobudur where we make a sadhana, where we go the Stupa, when we listen to a teaching, when we read a dharma book - we are supposed to do it with 6 awarenesses. The Tibetans call them the *duche.drug.tempa*. The 6 awarenesses are very clear, I like them very much; they help a lot to have the correct attitude.

The 6 Awarenesses

The 1st awareness is to see ourselves as the patient. Why am I here? Because I am sick. What is my sickness? Selfishness, ignorance, anger, jealousy and so on. I am unbalanced, I am not well, I am sick. I am not doing this for someone else, or because I need to teach someone, or because I need to gain something else, or because I like to be cool. I am doing this because I am sick. Seeing oneself as the patient.

The 2nd awareness is seeing the guru as the doctor.

The 3rd awareness is seeing the dharma as the medicine. So the teachings I receive, the teachings that I read, the practice that I do, all that is connected with the dharma is the medicine, which means it is there to help me and cure my own diseases, for my own benefit. To see myself as the patient, to see the dharma as the medicine.

The 4th awareness is to recognise that the process of healing only happens by taking the medicine. It is not enough - and like Shantideva said in the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, - just by listening to the teachings and not putting them into practice, this is like receiving the doctor's prescription and not taking the medicine. If we take the prescription of the doctor, we see it as beautiful and put it in a frame, we put it there and you know 'I went to this doctor and he was so good and he gave me this medicine and I love this doctor so much, I took a picture of the doctor and put it there, we looked at the doctor and we say doctor help me to get cured, I love you, so much and trust you with my life, but I do not take the medicine, the taste is too bitter and I do not like it so much'. If the picture could talk, it might say 'Sorry I cannot do anything from here, you do not take the medicine I told you to take'. So to see oneself as the patient, see the dharma as the medicine, see the process of healing as that of taking the medicine, which is putting into practice, the teachings.

To put the teachings into practice, does not mean only to do the sadhana, recite the mantras, do the pilgrimage; all of this is wonderful and all these are methods that are tools that we have, but to



put the teachings into practice means to develop more love, to respect others, to react in a peaceful way if front of a situation that normally we would react with anger.

To be more generous, to stop projecting our happiness in what cannot sustain it.

To open our heart, to connect to the interdependence of how things happen, to be coherent with reality. That is what we are talking about when putting things into practice. The medicine is very often bitter, the taste of the medicine is not so good. If we take continually the metaphor of the medicine - in Tibetan medicine, when we go to the doctor, the doctor is supposed to cure us with treats. The first tool that a doctor should use, is to teach a patient to change his daily behaviour, his lifestyle. The first tool of healing is the changing of lifestyle, which includes diet. The second tool of healing is giving medicine and the third tool of healing is acupuncture, moxa, massage, whatever type of therapy, up to surgery. So the therapist is the last resort. First thing is to change the lifestyle, which includes emotional, physical and environmental lifestyle, the diet and so on. Second take medicine and third, do therapies. When we are sick nowadays, what do we want? The therapy is what we want. We want someone to do something for us and then I get cured - but it is not like that actually. So the only process of healing comes by taking the medicine.

So to recapitulate: We see ourselves as the patient; the guru as the doctor; the dharma as the medicine and we see the process of healing as that of taking the medicine.

Then we have the 5th awareness, which is when we recognise our own potential of healing and that we are able to get cured; we can get cured.

And the last is the 6th awareness that the process of healing is gradual and long, not just in one day.

So I am the patient; the guru, the one teaching me, he is the doctor, he is the one supposed to make the diagnosis and give me the medicine, he is not the one supposed to cure me. When we talk about physical problems, no doctor can cure us, we are the only ones that can cure ourselves by following the treatments and changing the behaviour and doing what we are supposed to do. Even when we take the medicine, it is our body's reaction that is curing us, no one else. So the only one that can cure us is ourselves; truly. The doctors can interact with us in a way that can get us cured, but we are the ones curing ourselves ultimately.

Dharma medicine

So similar to that, I am the patient and the guru is the one showing me the path, giving me the medicine that is the dharma, so he is like the doctor. The dharma is the medicine and the process of healing starts by taking the medicine and changing the behaviour, which means putting the dharma into practice.

The 5th part is to believe in one's own potential of healing that I can get cured, that I have the potential. If I do not believe in my own potential to get cured, would I have put effort into taking the medicine? Not really.

And the last, but not least the 6th, the process of healing is long, so no hurry. There was a book published in Italy called 'How to reach enlightenment in a week' and the cover of the book, where there was an image of the Buddha and you could put your own picture to have your face in the place of Buddha. I never read the book, so I cannot judge its content, I just read the title. Is that what we want? For me actually not, because truly we do not want to be enlightened, we just want to be happy, most of us. But what I want to say is that, the process is long and if we have this awareness, every time we go there and we take a little bit - we know we are in our process of healing, but the medicine is bitter.

Changing our lifestyle

How difficult is it to change our lifestyle? It is not easy, right? Last year when we were here, there was our friend Doctor Paola Mutti and she was saying very clearly, as a cancer researcher, she



made a very clear statement in which she said 'The cause of cancer is the modern, western lifestyle'. What is the difficulty of finding the cause, to find a cure for cancer? It means changing the lifestyle that we have. Nobody truly wants that, in a general way, it's too expensive somehow. The point is that, do we need to see the need to change our lifestyle or not. There is a text by Trijang Rinpoche in which he says, 'We need to become friends with suffering, we need to accept suffering' and he goes on to say 'How easy is it to change our behaviour?'

It is difficult to change our lifestyle; yes. Does it take effort? Is it painful to change our lifestyle? It is, it takes effort, it is not pleasurable, it is painful to change our lifestyle. But to remain in the lifestyle in which we are, which is easy in a way - how painful are the results? So as it says in Tibetan - 'If you stand up you hit your head; if you sit down you hit your bum' - no way out of suffering. If you stay in the lifestyle where you are you will suffer all the

consequences of it; if you get out of the lifestyle where you are, you will suffer to get out of it. The question is, which suffering do you prefer? There is no free lunch; there is 'No easy way out, off you go' you know; it takes effort.

Can you change your perception?

Okay 'change the perception' - how difficult is that, truly? What I want to say is that it takes effort to do anything that we do, it takes strong effort and there is one very good thing here that I want to share - I really believe in it.

What makes us put effort into change? Difficulties.

It is a fact that we are lazy by nature (at least myself) but when I look around, we are lazy by nature. Which means we only put in effort when it is too costly to remain where we are. Then we really put an effort to change. So it is when we are forced outside of a comfort zone, then we truly start to make an effort to change; this happens both on a personal and social level of society. If we look in our history, when were the moments that greater changes in positive ways were made? When people went through very difficult moments and they needed to do something to change. Regarding our own personal lives: Shantideva says in the Bodhisattva Charyavatara, 'Without suffering there is no renunciation' - there is no definite emergence. If you are happy in your personal samsara will you ever want to get out of it? No. The difficulties that we have (and each one of us have our own) are one of the best incentives for our dharma practice. When we look more clearly and we open ourselves to look at our difficulties we will find out quite clearly that the main cause of our suffering is not the situation that we are living, it is not a person that we are relating to, but it is our own attitude. It is true, we are influenced by so many things, as we discussed earlier, but at the same time the largest of all influences that we have is our own mind. It depends on how we deal with our own conflicts, with our own inner attitude; that is what is



going to make the main difference. So finally, what is our choice about practising the dharma? So to practise the dharma, we need to join the two things together - changing our behaviour in our daily activities and using the tools that we have in order to be able to do that. This means to practice Self-Healing; do the meditation. It is something that makes the difference. The tools are there because they work. Sure it takes some time to understand it well and get the meaning of it and so on. Every sadhana, like the practice of Self-Healing, from my point of view, every part of it has 3 aspects, which are: How to recite and what mudras to do, what is the meaning of what we say and how to say and so on. We have the melody, we have the mudra, we have the meaning of the words, the pronunciation and so on - this is the first, more gross level. Then we have what visualisation to do, another lever. And the deeper level is what state of consciousness to generate. What is the inner state of mind that we should generate for every part of the practice? It differs - When we generate the lotus, when do the seed syllable, when we do the symbol, when have the part of the buddhas, when we have Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava - every part of the practice from taking refuge in the very beginning, what is the visualisation, what we say, what we visualise, what inner state of mind we generate. But by doing our practice, that is the tool that we have to gradually make change, because the conclusion I want to come to is that it is true that we are very strongly influenced by conditions around us; no doubt. Because of that we should try to make the best interdependence that we can. But, the main influence of all is our own mind; there is no doubt about that. If our mind is stable, if our mind is following the correct direction instead, our conditions will influence us in a totally different way.

Story time

This reminds me of one story which I heard some months ago, when I was in Nepal last time and I told it in Italy, but many of you here have not heard it and I really enjoyed it. A friend of mine, a monk told me.

When most of the Tibetans came to India in 1959, all the monks for more than 10 years stayed in a place called Buxa, in the north of India. This one monk was there and at one point, he left the monastery there and he went on a retreat in the mountains. He ended up choosing a place to do the retreat that was on the border between India and Pakistan. There he was, making his retreat in a cave somewhere; then some day, when he came out to collect wood and while walking in the forest he was caught by the Indian secret service. They thought he was a Pakistani spy. So they took him in for questioning - I do not think they were very caring about this. He had very long hair because he was doing a retreat for many years - he had already been quite a long time in retreat and normally they do not cut their hair when they go into retreat, hence his was long. He was sure not the cleanest guy around, a little strange type of person and he did not speak a word of English, Hindi or any language they spoke; he spoke a straight dialect from Kham, not even central Tibet.

So there he was, they started questioning him and finally they put him in jail. So the monks at some point, went out to look for him, bring him food - they would come every few months and they could not find him, so they thought he had been killed by some wild animal - of which there were many. So, they did all the pujas for the 49 days that he had passed away, he had disciples and so on. There they were praying for him and, so he had died basically, for them. Six years later he arrived back in the monastery and once there, he told the story that in the beginning when they caught him, he had no idea what had happened, but then they put him in a place, which was a jail and he said it was the best thing that could have happened to him because they were giving him food 3 times a day; he had shelter from the cold and heat and rain and no one was bothering him much, in the beginning they were saying things he could not understand and being a bit rough with him. He said, 'After they stopped bothering me, I could do my retreat'. After 4 years, they opened the doors and said, 'Now you can go!' Then he said 'No, my retreat is not finished'. But still he could not communicate with them, so what happened is that they opened the doors and pushed him out and he ran back again into the jail because he wanted to finish his retreat. Then finally, they were desperate and they just took a small room somewhere there, in a corner in the jail

and he could go whenever he wanted - they just put him there and he stayed for another 2 years. So when he finished his retreat, he went back.

Anyway, he had a goal, he was doing his retreat; it did not matter where he was. If this was happening to anyone of us (including myself) it would be chaos, depression - who knows what? In the moment that a person, for example who has a higher goal, it does not matter what happens, it is not taking me away from my goal.

A question arose as to what was the worst thing that happened to him while he was in jail? 'The worst thing that happened was that I almost lost compassion for the guard who was beating me'. He had a higher goal, a higher objective, whatever happened it did not matter much; if the economy goes up, if the economy goes down, if the government is like this, if that is like that, if I am sick, if I am healthy, if the person likes me, if the person does not, if he or she is looking to me or not, if things are going that way or not that way - this is all secondary when one has a much more important objective in life - to reach enlightenment; which in this case was a very clear example: he had that objective, was doing his practice, making his retreat; it did not matter what happened, there he was and he was happy and all was well.

High objective - low expectation and constant effort

So this is just to say that it is true that conditions are extremely important around one and because of this, we need to make the best conditions we can, that is why we come up to Borobudur. A holy place influences us, that is why we come here. The presence of our guru influences us, that is also why we come here. The presence of all other friends from the sangha influences us practising together; we are influenced by others that is why we come here all together. Yes, we need to create better conditions and remember to think, things happen gradually.

So we need to start with them as soon as we can, because no one will get enlightened from one day to the other. We can get realisations, gradually, step by step, day by day, sadhana by sadhana, mantra by mantra, meditation by meditation, pilgrimage by pilgrimage, thought after thought, blessing after blessing; gradually we get there, it takes time. If it takes many lifetimes, so what? At least I will be walking in a good direction and that is the main thing. So we should not hurry to get at the result; we should have a higher objective and be steady on our path. This higher objective, with a low expectation and constant effort - that is from where we get the results, gradually as we go. So the external influences are important, but the most, the greatest influence in our own life is our own mind - the very greatest influence of all.

Once I went to one of my teachers - before coming to Borobudur, many years ago. I was in India and I said to my teacher 'Can you please check in the Tibetan calendar if it is astrologically a good day for me to travel?' He said 'No'. So some time after I also asked 'Gen-la can you please check if it is a good day to travel?' He said 'No' again. So I asked him why? I kept asking and he kept saying no. He asked me, 'Have you already bought the ticket?' I said I had. Then he said 'If I look and it comes out that it is not a good day to travel, the influence that your mind has on you is much stronger than any astrological influence. If you had not bought the ticket, I would look for you. Are you willing to change the ticket if I check and it is not a good day?' I said, 'No'.

So, what I want to say is that sure we have many influences, but the influence that our mind has in our life and on our self is the strongest of all and, that is where our true freedom lies, in our action, in our thoughts. In very small thoughts - I follow that thought or I do not follow that thought; I express this emotion or I do not express it. I look for someone to blame, or I do not look for someone to blame. I wake up in the morning and I think, I need to meditate, or I do not want to meditate; what do I do? I meditate! That is where the difference starts to come from. These are the choices - 'I wake up in the morning, I need to do my practice, I need to meditate, I do not want to; what do I do?' I meditate! That is where the difference slowly starts coming.

What Trijang Rinpoche was saying in the Lojong text, 'Once we get acquainted with suffering and



do not see suffering as something so negative, but that we need to use suffering for something good'. He was giving examples of making long retreats of meditating every day, of doing things to change our behaviour; it is not pleasurable but brings good results. If we are afraid of the suffering of the solution, we will never make the solution. Very often we do not apply the solution because we think that the solution is more difficult than the actual problem. 'I know that this is harmful to me but to stop eating that is more difficult than keeping the problem I have' - then they never make the change.

Opportunity for growth

Atisha said in a very beautiful book that I advise you to read - it is a long, thick book, called the Book of Khadam, with the conversations between Atisha and Drontompa. There is also this text called the Jewelled Garland of the Bodhisattva, that we read many times in different places and there are 23 chapters in this book that are the commentary of this text.

There is a part where Atisha says to Drontompa, 'Oh my son, do not be afraid of suffering' and Drontompa was saying, 'But if I am not afraid of suffering, then I will suffer more because I would not do anything to avoid suffering if I were not afraid of suffering - if I were not afraid of suffering I would not avoid suffering and would end up suffering more'.

Atisha said 'No because you suffer much more from the fear of suffering than the suffering itself. By not being afraid of suffering you end up just experiencing the present for what it is and not suffering for what may happen, who knows when and so on'. Together with that, we need to do something, we know it is the right thing, we know it is good, is it difficult? Yes. Is it painful? Yes, but who cares, life is pain. Better to do something that is good in this moment.

I am sorry if it looks a little negative, however it is not negative at all; I am just being objective. If we stand up we hit our head; if we go down we hit our bottom. No way, like in a finger-snap to being in a total state of bliss and pleasure, you know. Look at any one, look at our master Lama Gangchen Rinpoche; has he put effort in his life to be where he is, or has he become what he is out of nothing? So it takes time; Rinpoche put a lot of effort into his life, it is not something that comes like this out of nothing. How many retreats he did, if we think his own education in the monastery of Tashi Lhunpo - when he was 12, he escaped from the monastery after being beaten up because of studies and this and that. So many things he went through, so many difficult moments that Rinpoche went through in his life. And the way in which he dealt with every moment, what he learned from it. So in the same way in our lives, we all have difficult moments and now we are here in this little space - like if we are watching a movie and suddenly it stops for publicity. Like from our lives, our chaotic lives, Borobudur publicity caught our thought, okay we stop for 10 days; we go to paradise for 10 days and after we come back to our daily life. Sure we all have problems; we all have difficulties. There is not one of us who does not have them. So what happens is the important thing is that as we go to the difficulties that is the best opportunity we have to grow. That is the best opportunity we have to get out of the comfort zone and to make the change within ourselves. So we do not need to be afraid of difficulties or to escape from difficulties; there is no need to go and look for them - they come. There were great practitioners who, when they were in a situation that was comfortable they would go and look for more extreme situations, in order to deal with their defilements deeper. So do not worry about that. I just think that as we move along with the things in our lives, the many situations that we face, we do not need to be afraid of the difficult moments; we need to remember, because we are the practitioners of dharma. We are following the path of the bodhisattva. This path is described in the Wheel of Sharp Weapons as the path of the peacock. The peacock eats poisonous snakes and the more of them he eats the more beautiful his feathers become. So he transforms the poison. The same way in our path, especially in the Vajrayana we should transform the difficult circumstances into the path to enlightenment - there is the opportunity to train in patience, faith, develop love, have more stability; all of this is where we need to put our effort and, that is beautiful. That is where it really becomes handy and useful in all the practices that we have and so on. There is the other side to this, how can we be



sure that we can have a strong practice to help us in the difficult moment - by practising during the good moments. It is by doing our practices when we are well and healthy and happy and this gives us the strength to deal (with our practice) with the difficult moments as they appear with our practice.

Change is constant transformation

So, concluding; change happens all the time. At every moment of our life, we can induce the direction of change in accordance with the choices that we make. Change does not mean the end, it means just constant transformation. So I just think that the moment we recognise our true freedom, which is in our mind and in our actions, that is very powerful, much more powerful than most of us could actually ever expect. If we understand our freedom, then we stop victimising our selves - which we do so very often; sorry to say. If we do not victimise anymore, we stop going against the world and against others and doing our part in the whole of it. I think that is what makes the big difference, you know. We are so fortunate to be here together because we can have an experience of receiving the blessings of the fact that it is positive; it becomes possible to have this internal well being that does not come from gaining objects of pleasure, this or that. We have these moments in which simply we are well and we are happy and it makes sense. So this is what we can gain with our practice, with the meditation, with changing our behaviour, being in contact with the holy beings. This is something very important. The holy beings can do a lot for us - they can interact with us, they can be part of good conditions for us to our part and this is something also very important.

Living the present moment

Just one thought that was left behind: Everyone of us lives a part of our lives as a cycle - life is made of cycles. As we come here to Borobudur this year, we have the first day, the beginning, then the middle and the end. At the end it was the possibility for a Bardo, then next year the Bardo will finish with another year coming to Borobudur hopefully. Everything that starts is in a constant process, there are always these phases. Sometimes things will end in this life with death but in some way things transform, they change. So it is not that we are going away from Borobudur in the next 2 or 3 days and then we lose contact with Borobudur itself - no, simply were are not here physically, which gives us the possibility to come here again. What I want to say is that, in our life each one of us is in a different phase of our life; when we are young is one phase, when we get to adulthood is another phase, then there is retirement, another phase; there are different parts of life and each part in life has a specific quality. It is very important for us to use the moment we are living in the past and, not to live in the present thinking about the future, instead of experiencing the present: We are, 'Oh I should not have done like this' or in the future how will I do when it will be like that; so we are not truly experiencing the present, instead we are thinking about another



moment of the future. The present moment where we are, what we have is the most precious thing we have, it is the most important of all the things that we have. Even with our guru, so precious to have Rinpoche guiding us every day through the Stupa and being here with us every moment and having some nice moments, like yesterday going to Mendut or just sharing the rain together, being together and being able to be together in the best way that we can to receive as much as we can. As with everything, it starts within a moment and ends. The problem is not that something ends, rather the problem is that we did not leave it well, we did not experience it well. That is what is not good normally. So our life is made up of phases; there are phases of everything and the same thing is for our society. I do not think we need to worry too much; okay what is happening here and there and this and that. I do not know, I have never studied much history, but has there ever been in our societies a period longer than a hundred years without a war? I guess not. How do we know how to predict the future? By looking at the past. Change happens, but there are moments - the important thing, that in the middle of all of this we need to ask ourselves: 'What am I doing? In which direction am I using my life? In which directions am I putting my actions, my choices?' That is the most important thing that we need to do, okay. Once again, we have the most precious opportunity of being here together with Rinpoche; I believe it is really one of the most special things that we could experience and I deeply rejoice in it and I am very happy that we are all together. I was thinking yesterday, if we look and ask each one to tell their own life story, 5 to 10 minutes, no need to go into too much detail - what we would see, is that every one of us is so special in many different ways. I know the lives of many people because of the relationship I have with them. But when I start looking, it is so interesting to find what lies behind each one of us, you know? There is something really special about us being here together and one of the things that for me is very beautiful, is that we are all here together really beyond any differences that we have; it is something that normally in society that really does not happen much. We are together independently of our cultures, our ages, our social status, so many things. Political ideas or whatever, you know. This is very, very, very rare; it is a condition where each one of us can be accepted for what we are. It is very difficult to find places and conditions where we can be accepted for what we are, where we can just be together with each other, it does not matter what we do in life; we are respected in exactly the same way. Just this by itself is already extremely precious and is an experience that not many people can have. So I rejoice deeply in this opportunity that we have been having these days and I am very grateful to everyone of you that makes it possible - sure Rinpoche first of all, but everyone of you together make it possible. I would like to conclude making one prayer, because I just received the news, as we were here that the mother of Silvana, my secretary in Brazil, just passed away. So we will do some dedications here together. OM MANI PEDME HUM HRIH...

Spiritual Family

One of the most beautiful things that I have in my life and I think it is the same for many of us is the possibility of being part of the spiritual family. I think the fact that we are together under Rinpoche's guidance but with a deeper connection between us; it is something very special and also within spirituality, this is something quite rare. It is more common to be part of an institution than to be part of a family, in this sense. One of the places where I always saw Rinpoche putting a lot of effort is to keep this idea of being part of a family always and sharing things together and of being together, where we talk about being part of the spiritual family of the same lineage; this is something very powerful for many of us and something very, very special. So I am very grateful to everyone and now we have a coffee break and please also can we continue after and also at the Stupa, to dedicate for the mother of Silvana. Basically, when we dedicate for someone who passed away, we are generating positive thoughts and emotions, connecting to that person because the person who is in the Bardo connecting to positive thoughts and emotions, is influenced by them and that helps to direct the mind to a better state, so here we are in a very holy place, her mother had a good connection with the dharma also, so this makes the connection with us more direct.



... I could also call my talk from ego to we go ...



Edzard Geertsema, The Netherlands

From isolation to connection

I was really touched and encouraged by the lessons Lama Michel just gave to us and he told us that we need difficulties within our lives to grow and I would like you to tell you about the difficulties I encountered and how they gave me the opportunity to grow indeed, at least that is what I feel, maybe some other people have different opinions about that. The theme is 'From Darkness into Light', but for me I translate it into 'From Isolation to Connection' and I started telling you that I have a sister and my sister has an amazing quality; she could connect. She did that with almost everybody she met with complete strangers, no matter what status they were, she just made contact. On the streets, in restaurants - walking up to complete strangers and asking if she could have some of their potato fries? She did this when she was 4, 8, 12, 20; she just kept on doing that her whole life. She also could not take care of herself, she had psychosis and did a lot of shouting in the house, indeed she was mentally handicapped - that is the name we gave. She also got a lot of attention from my parents that I did not get, so I did not like her.

About 15 years ago I had a perfect samsara life; I was a popular guy with many friends, played football and was a singer in a band and I just had a new, caring, good looking girlfriend and it all seemed perfect, until I found that I could not connect with her. I could not develop an intimate relationship with her and that was because of fear. Very soon I fell into severe depression with this and together with a compulsive disorder, very violent movies started to develop in my head and a sort of demon was taking me over. Also I had a very negative mantra, like what should I do with the rest of my life? What does it matter, I will die anyway - all very negative, it was dark, it was pure isolation and it was a horrid time and, no one understood - neither did I. How could such a perfect life vanish in just 3 months, from top to bottom, everything was gone.

So what did I do? I sought the help of psychologists, psychiatrists quite fast and took medication (I forgot to tell you that I was soon to get my PhD in organic chemistry). I stopped with everything, could only lie in my bed, maybe talk one hour per day with someone else. I used all the energy to get treatment and I went to a psychiatric clinic and there I was - you know you have to do things in a clinic and they give you therapy. I was making a dollhouse for an orphanage in Romania instead of making sophisticated molecules in a laboratory; my ego did not like that.

How could such perfect life transform into such darkness. They always tried to analyse my faults, I also wrote down my dreams, I opened up towards my girlfriend, towards my parents and what I discovered is that I had an ego. I did not even know I had an ego and I also discovered that this ego was huge and then I got scared, a lot of fear inside myself, pain, anger and that I lived my life, although it is very hard to imagine, still I cannot believe it with so many friends and all the things I did. It was samsara life and it was isolation; I lived in isolation with all those people around me. You know, my supervisor back then, of my PhD, 5 months ago he received a Nobel Peace Prize in chemistry for the research I made a contribution towards.

Still, on hindsight I wonder who was the most mentally limited, my sister or myself? So there I was with my pain, with my fear and desires (and I did not know how to bring my desires into practice) and also my big ego.

I take a leap in time now and come to once when Rinpoche was in the Netherlands and he said something that I did not understand at first, he said 'I like ego friends'. I was so happy that he said that because it meant that we could be very big friends. Now I started to understand; we also sang a song, 'Ego friendly, ego friendly, ego cut'. Because I think first we need to know our ego; we have to

know that it exists - at least let me talk for myself. I have first had to discover my ego exists and then I had to understand how it works and what it gives me, especially what it does not give me and that is long-lasting happiness - it vanished within 3 months and, it looked so perfect. So what is the ego, well I am not going to sit on a chair of our dear master, but for me, ego, in a word means isolation. This is what I felt and think it is a part of us that denies interdependence, denies that the happiness of ourselves can only come about when other people around us are happy, when nature is happy, when the animals are happy. I think that the ego may think that we can be happy at the expense of the happiness of others. It does not work, that is what I found out. But why then ego friendly? Well we first need to know how the ego works and what it does not bring to us; that is what Rinpoche's remark means to me. I spent 8 years to get to know my ego and I did not know Rinpoche at that time, but what I did (and that is the ego), is I started to use the ego to chase the pleasures of samsara again, to start to use the knowledge - I was not depressed anymore, my compulsive disorder had disappeared - all very nice, but I started to chase the samsara life again. In the end it did not work. So after 8 years I fell into not another very sharp crisis, only a few weeks, but it was more acute than the first crisis.

Then I got into touch with Rinpoche and the sangha. I learned that you have to cut your ego and that it was the next step: ego cut. But if we cut our ego we have to replace it with something else because then there is space. So what is going to replace it? If your ego is darkness and isolation, the 'me, myself and I' then I think we should look for something that is connecting, that is happiness and that is 'we'. So I thought to call it the 'wego' and the wego is just a play on words, but it is nothing else than what I am trying to introduce - a new discipline of philosophical concepts? No. It is just what our teachers tell us. The 'wego' is the part of us that connects, that realises that in contrast to the ego, is that our happiness, is depending on the happiness of the people around us - the animals and nature around us. It is the part of us that fully acknowledges interdependence; hence it is the part of us that connects. Since the 'wego' can connect, we can connect all our 'wegos' with each other and create one big 'wego' together and we go to enlightenment! So I could also call my talk from ego to we go. Also I want to say that with all the things I did, nothing is wrong; it is the motivation with which we do it; it is what Rinpoche and Lama Michel also said.

So what does it mean for the daily life now for me? In 2009 and 2010 the whole journey started from ego-cut and bringing the dharma into daily practice; but how does it look, how does it work in daily life? Six years ago my sister passed away, during a heart attack while in an epileptic seizure and during the last years before her death I started to see her as a teacher, a teacher in connecting - because that is what she taught me. Also because she was there in my life and she contributed to the crisis and made the crisis possible so I could grow; so I thank her for that, she is a teacher of mine, so my dear sister, I want to thank you for that, I want to dedicate this moment to you as I bring this story to the Borobudur and sangha and that means a lot to me - this is a healing experience for me.

At the same time, I have not cut my ego yet completely and that means there is another part in me and that part does not miss her at all; I do not miss her psychosis, I do not miss her shouting and I do not miss all the attention that did not go to me. So that is the truth, I cannot make it better than this. On the one hand I feel more and more connected with her than ever, since she passed away - yes this is possible, still there is enormous challenge to feel, to strengthen the connection. You may wonder how do I live with that? Well I now live together in a house with my wife and my son of three and a half, and I guess for all the others who are in a relationship or have children, they activate my ego quite regularly. So they are now very good teachers in my daily life and I use everything that I experience in the relationship with them to grow - at least I hope, and that is also giving me the possibility to feel more connected with my sister, because I experience the same histories - just with different people. Family life is great, I love them, it is fantastic and I can connect with them. At the same time that it is joyful and fantastical, it is also hard work and when I am on my bicycle ride from work to home (45 minutes) through nature, I look forward to the evening having dinner together, cosy, nice, warm, telling each other the stories of the day - everything harmonious and I look forward

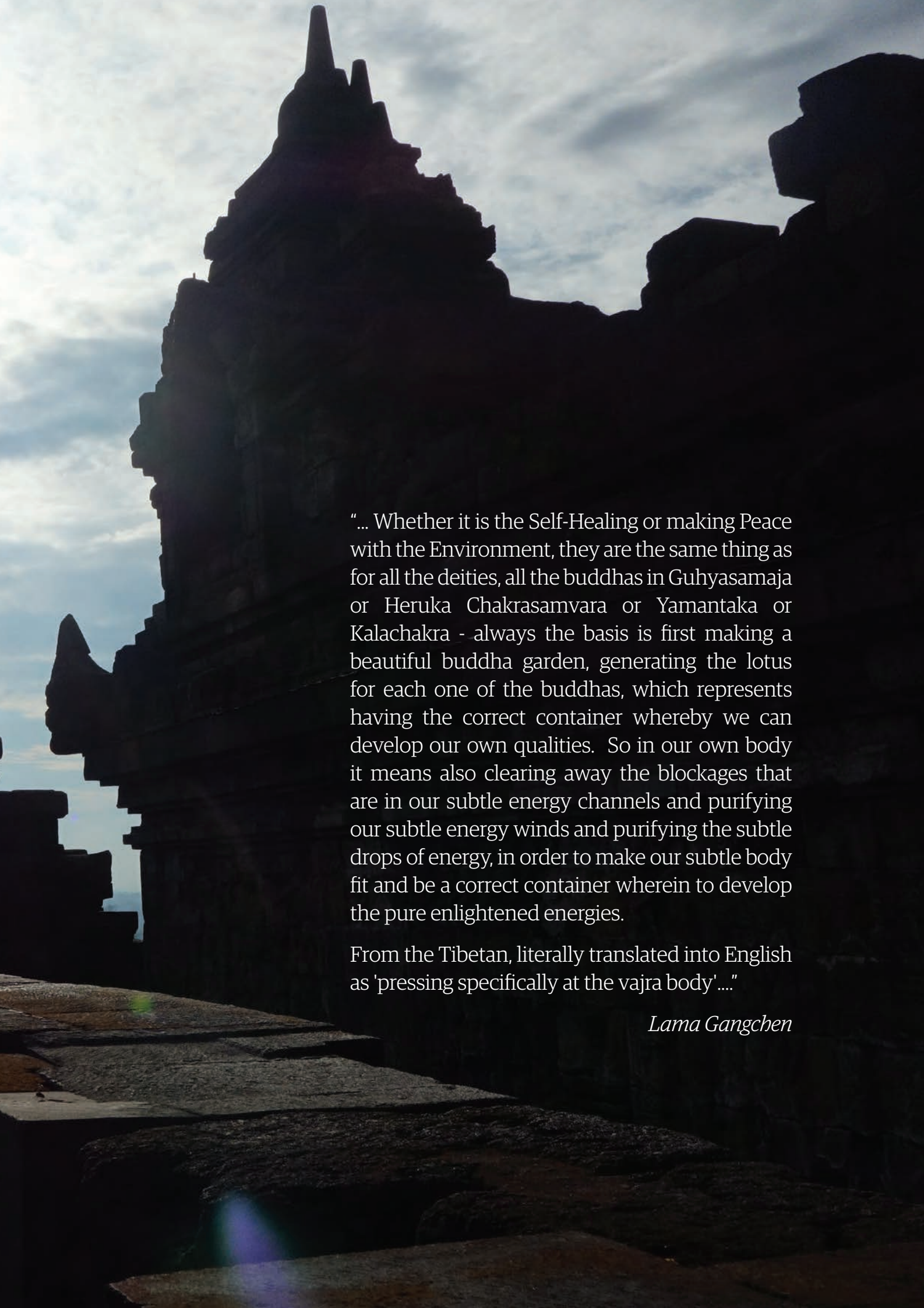


to that. While on my bicycle I say to myself, 'Yes, I know the causes of happiness, I know the causes of suffering; what a wonderful world'. Within 5 minutes of getting home, I am angry or at least I feel anger, I feel fear, I feel impatience - you know, I can always feel impatience if my son do not want to brush his teeth.

Can you imagine what the deep psychosis of my sister did to me? So there is still a lot of work to do - yes, at this moment I would like to thank our dear teachers, without them this would not have been possible and life for me is now what I said, its joy, its faith, its happiness that lasts and it is thanks to our teachers, the lessons and also to you as sangha, that you listen so we can share our stories; and it is hard work - its a reality and that is good. I would like to than you for all of your help and please let me know how I can help you; I feel connected with you, I feel connected with the teachers and it is my wish to stay connected for ever. Thank you.





The background of the entire page is a photograph showing the dark silhouette of a jagged mountain peak or a series of rocky formations against a bright, cloudy sky. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting suggests a bright day, possibly near sunrise or sunset, given the high contrast between the dark rocks and the bright sky.

"... Whether it is the Self-Healing or making Peace with the Environment, they are the same thing as for all the deities, all the buddhas in Guhyasamaja or Heruka Chakrasamvara or Yamantaka or Kalachakra - always the basis is first making a beautiful buddha garden, generating the lotus for each one of the buddhas, which represents having the correct container whereby we can develop our own qualities. So in our own body it means also clearing away the blockages that are in our subtle energy channels and purifying our subtle energy winds and purifying the subtle drops of energy, in order to make our subtle body fit and be a correct container wherein to develop the pure enlightened energies.

From the Tibetan, literally translated into English as 'pressing specifically at the vajra body' ..."

Lama Gangchen

Visit to Borobudur by the Dutch Minister for Culture, Education and Science





Marcel Beers: This is a project with great honour - really, I am deeply honoured that I am allowed to do this and also that we are succeeding in what we are doing. Today, for example, I was in the main office in Jogjakarta - that is the head office for the Prambanan temple and Borobudur temple together. I received the news that I should be received by the Indonesian Minister for Culture and education, sometime during the month of March. As you know, our Dutch Minister for Culture, Education and Science, Ms Jet Bussemaker, came here this morning and she informed the Prime Minister of Holland personally about the visit and our meeting about the Bionanotechnology system we are proposing to protect the Borobudur and other surrounding monuments, so next month I will also visit the Prime Minister of Holland - and you know, the relationship between Holland and Borobudur is more than 200 years old, so Holland really cares about Borobudur and that is the reason the Minister came to visit. She wanted to see with her own eyes, if she can actually feel the problems of Borobudur. I must say, that was a wonderful morning, when Rinpoche received the Minister; Lama Caroline, who made an absolutely spiritual, memorable, midday tour of Borobudur and gave a talk as to why Borobudur is here and why it is so important. If you ask my opinion, it is the most important one! With every meeting, we move up the ladder a little bit. We created a foundation for the specific purpose of raising funds to help restore and preserve world heritage sites and monuments. I hope that everybody, in their own countries will try to organise funding, so we can all help and participate in really preserving Borobudur.

There are 59 countries involved with Borobudur, so we hope to get them all involved. So I hope everyone will take this seriously and with a little bit of luck, when everything goes right with the blessings of Rinpoche, then next year we can actually preserve Borobudur. The main problem now is the scratching that they do and that has to stop because that makes for more pores, more water permeation, more algae growing, and more faces will break off and the panels are of course irreplaceable. That is why we really need to move on and hurry. I want to express my most profound gratitude to Lama Gangchen Rinpoche for his support and his funding over the years. Also a special word to the Dutch delegation and all our Dutch friends, I want to thank you very much for standing by me, supporting me, not only with prayers but also financially, so thank you very much. I am going full power with the blessings of Lama Gangchen Rinpoche onto the next day, like every day, on the project, clean, protecting, preserving Borobudur and since today, also Prambanan. I want to thank you very much.

Isthar: Thank you Marcel and I just want to add that of course this work is very much involving another person, the president of the foundation set up to raise the funds in order to be able to put this project into action and, that is Dr Roy Watkins from England. Moreover, Mr Jan de Ruiter who helped realise the first stage of this venture by sponsoring the trip here to Borobudur for Marcel and his wife Shirley. Thank you everybody very much. Last but not least also a big thank you Mr Jan for sponsoring our lunch with the Dutch minister.

Mr Jan: Actually, since I started my company, I said, 'Well I do not need a company, I have money enough to live in a beautiful house, go to the beach and do nothing'. But I decided to invest my money in a positive way and for me that was partly 'Help in Action'. So since the beginning of my company I said at a certain presentation, that I will always offer to help the Help in Action Association of the Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation. Then I started showing (also to my customers) how it is to share your values and your good ideas, so I put on my website a banner, 'Every euro you give to me for Help in Action, I will double' and all my customers, all over Europe really appreciated what I am doing, so we grew every year a lot; I mean this is the side-effect of your positive action and positive way of working and working with poor countries, where the money comes back in a certain way, in projects. Then I was director of Lama Gangchen Rinpoche's centre in Italy so I was all the time, every 2 weeks driving back and forth from Holland to Italy, because Rinpoche always said, 'Ah you have to come back immediately, immediately!' I got crazy from it a little bit and I said, 'Rinpoche, if you do not mind, I want to stop being director of the Centre and I want to become your sponsor. I invited Rinpoche to Holland because we needed to purify the place; there were some obstacles and things not working well, so please, for Rinpoche to come with Lama Michel. Well Rinpoche came and he said: 'Well we are going to change the name of the company', yes Rinpoche, to what? 'Mani Bhadra'. Okay, and what is the meaning of Mani Bhadra I asked: 'Sponsor of the Buddha'. So you know, I will not forget that moment, actually I was full of tears - that all my investments came true, because I almost lost my company, because I gave everything away to the Centre, buying this and buying that and the bank said 'We stop your company because you are not making money, you are losing money!' Then, after so many years there came a turning point and since that time we have grown really a lot as a company. Then I said, 'Okay, I want to share all the work with people from the mandala, people from Lama Gangchen'. So I did and the final result is that we found a new place - I found this place and looked at it and said, 'I need to call Rinpoche, I think this is the place' and Rinpoche said, 'Yes, yes, that's good!' I came in the next day and in four days I had the keys and upstairs there was a 200sq metre space and I said we are going to make a beautiful Centre for Rinpoche; that was our first Centre in Holland...that's it. My long term vision is to sponsor Lama Gangchen's work from life to life.



Marcel: May I end with a quote by John F Kennedy, in slightly changing some of the wording: 'Don't ask what Borobudur can do for you, but ask what you can do for Borobudur'.



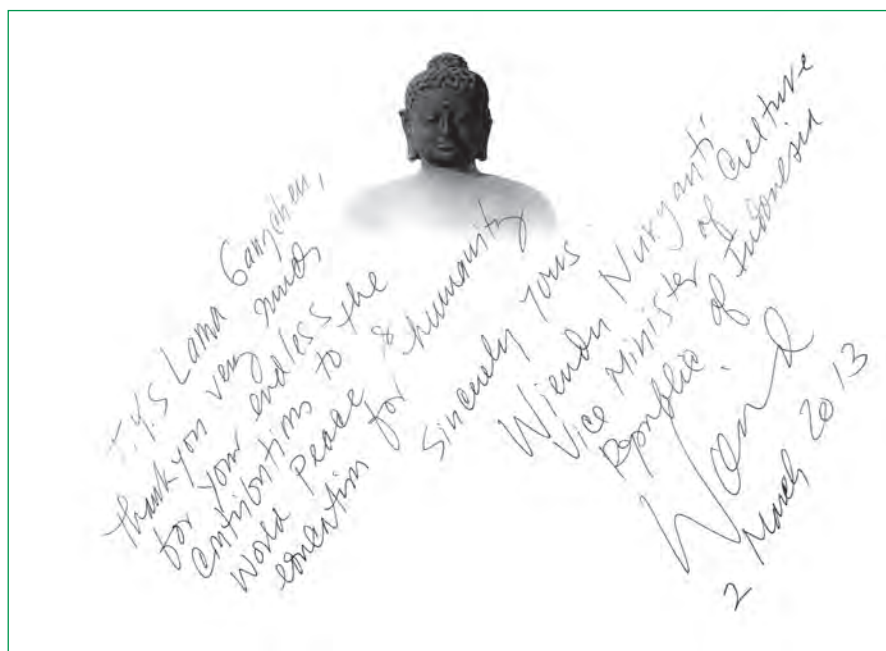
Conservation Projects at the Borobudur Compounds

The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia has been implementing a number of significant conservation actions for the preservation of the Borobudur Temple Compounds.

To support these efforts, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has provided generous financial contributions through UNESCO for implementing research and conservation techniques for the preservation of the Borobudur Temple since 2011.

Conserving the Borobudur Temple is a complex task: the monument has to withstand over a thousand years of intensive rainfall during wet seasons, is exposed to great fluctuations in temperature throughout the year, and was recently completely covered in volcanic ash following the 2010 and 2014 Mount Merapi eruptions.

Through careful analysis, and using advanced conservation techniques, the Borobudur Conservation Office has worked together with UNESCO and international experts to implement a number a conservation measures to help ensure the preservation of the stone reliefs for hundreds of years to come.



Borobudur Restoration and Preservation Proposal

By Roy Watkins

President - Borobudur World Heritage Foundation

Introduction

The Borobudur World Heritage Site is under the care of the Indonesian Government and UNESCO, with the support of numerable United Nations Member States. This 8th century Buddhist temple complex and is one of the wonders of the ancient world; it is therefore at the forefront of our mission as a top priority for assistance in its preservation and restoration. It is located in the 'ring of fire', a zone where there are continual volcanic eruptions on the island of Java, near Mount Merapi the most active volcano in Indonesia.

Recalling October 26 2010, when Java was rocked by a severe volcanic eruption, and Borobudur was covered with a thick layer of corrosive acidic ash. The Taman Wisata Candi conservation department (known locally as the Konservasi) and local people, under the supervision of the Indonesian government, thoroughly cleaned Borobudur; however, there was significant damage from acidic volcanic ash. Moreover, in 2014, Mt Kelud erupted causing further damage. Scientists are of course extremely concerned and are constantly trying to find a solution to protect Borobudur.

The main problem that Borobudur is actually facing, is that green and black algae, mosses and lichens are contaminating the surface and thus causing much long term and irreversible damage, eroding the structure of the temple in addition to the corrosion from acidic volcanic ash.

Over the years, workers cleaning the monument have been using steel brushes to scratch away surface moulds, algae and lichens. Unfortunately scratching the lava stone to remove algae and moss causes further damage.

Background

The Lama Gangchen World Peace Foundation, a United Nations affiliated Non governmental Organisation (NGO) in special consultation with ECOSOC, have been journeying to this temple for well over 28 years on a annual basis, both as pilgrims and ambassadors for the preservation of this precious World Heritage Site. It has been a heartfelt wish of its founder Lama Gangchen and its members, for many years, to find solutions for the preservation of this temple. Following the successful results obtained with the Bionanotechnology products applied with by our team of experts, on their own replicas of the Borobudur Lalitavistara panels and statues in Italy, they have requested our foundation to explore the possibility of applying the same technique to the Borobudur World Heritage Site.

Subsequently, the Bionanotechnology team has journeyed numerous times to Borobudur since 2014, holding several initial meetings with Konservasi, demonstrating the effectiveness of the system.

In June 2016, Marcel Beers, our technical advisor, worked with Konservasi scientists to test Bionanotechnology products on small stupas, which were in the grounds of the department. These products were also tested and confirmed to be 100% biological. Mr Habbibi, head scientist of the Konservasi together with his team of experts was very pleased with the results, commenting that this was the best product that he had tested in over 10 years of research in the field. After three months, the stupas that were treated with the Bionanotechnology, had remained clear of any damaging moss and algae, looking like new.



Also, in October 2016, excellent results were achieved on a particularly green and mouldy statue at the Manohara Center of Borobudur Study complex, a Government Resort; it has remained clean for over five months, despite unusually high levels of rainfall.

It is now clear to Mr Habbibi and his team that the Bionanotechnology products are the best solution to go forward in the protection and preservation of Borobudur. He suggested that we move to take the next step of seeking government approval by requesting a meeting with government representatives in Jakarta to get the necessary permits.

Our foundation in the Netherlands has been set up to help preserve and protect world heritage sites such as Borobudur for both present and future generations, namely:

The Stichting Behoud Werelderfgoed SBW, a non profit organisation dedicated to the preservation and protection of the world's architectural heritage sites and monuments.

Our proposal at the Borobudur Temple Complex is to work with the relevant local and national government bodies to assist the Konservasi to apply Bionanotechnology materials to clean and protect the Borobudur Temple Complex from water, dirt, algae and moulds, lichens and mosses, UV radiation, acid rain and corrosion from volcanic ash. Moreover, it is our concern to facilitate long term employment for local people engaged in the on going maintenance of Borobudur temple complex.

Borobudur, February 2017

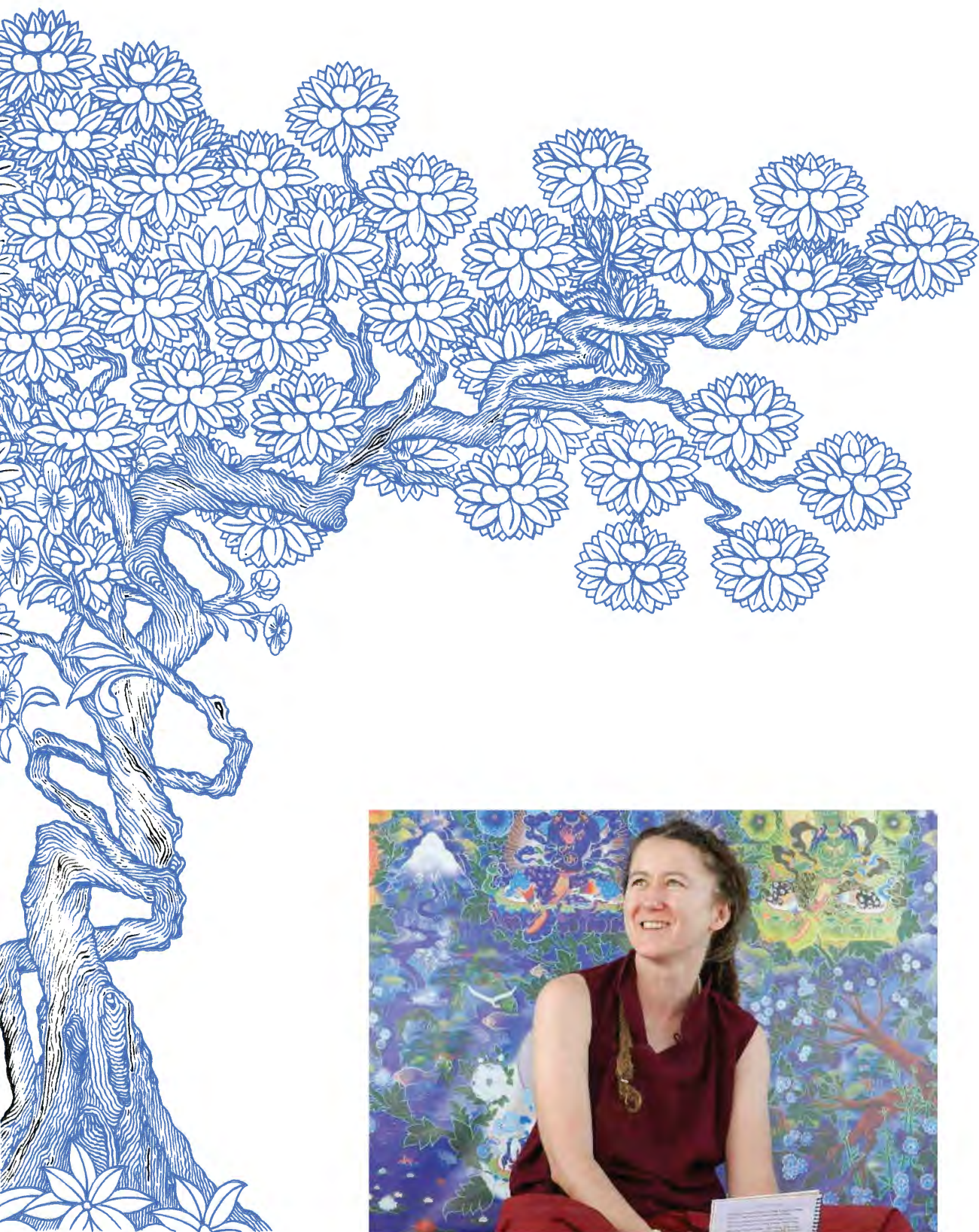


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Lama Caroline, England

Gandavyuha explanation - part two

Hello everybody now we will continue with the second episode of the Borobudur story. We already have talked about the Sudhana pilgrimage and now we continue with the story.

So in case there are people who were not here previously, we are now talking about the Gandavyuha series of bass reliefs, which is actually galleries 3, 4 and 5. Every morning, when we go up around Borobudur, we do 'Pam le Pema' down where the guardians are. Then 'Pam le Pema Nongpo Hung' is where Lalitavistara is, so where we generate the Buddha, that level there is the start of the Gandavyuha, anyway it is the one above the Lalitavistara - the life of the Buddha. We already have the book for that, which we published a couple of years ago. It all the stories start from the east side. So from the east door, on the third level, then it goes round 450 bass reliefs, carved stone pictures on the right side. It tells the pilgrimage of the bodhisattva Sudhana (Sanskrit: Excellent Generosity). He is born a bodhisattva, but more or less it is the idea of an Everyman, because he is showing first we see Buddha, how the bodhisattva descends from heaven and shows the various deeds, up to achieving enlightenment. So that is fantastic, the Buddha achieved enlightenment and the rest of the stories are showing that it is possible for someone else to achieve enlightenment, not just Siddhartha. So we started to tell this story the other day, now we do not have time to tell the whole story, we will tell a little bit more, then we will continue next year.

The Buddha is teaching in Jetavana Grove; this is one of the first viharas that the buddhist sangha had, because in ancient India they had the monsoon and when it is raining there are many insects and things and the monks did not want to move around because they were killing many insects underfoot, so they decided to stay in one place and meditate. This is the origin of the rains retreats. So then the Buddha asked one of his sponsors, called Anathapindika to buy him a place; so he bought one beautiful place the Jetavana Grove (I think it means the bamboo grove) a beautiful place and they built the first vihara there. This is not what is illustrated in this panel. The story starts with the Buddha teaching in the Jetavana Grove.



Panel II/1

Here is Buddha teaching in the Jetavana Grove surrounded by a retinue of bodhisattvas, gods (male and female) and humans; the four classes of sangha are listening to him. You can see here with these old photos of the bass reliefs, photographed around 1890 - you can see much better than now. You see here on the bottom left are nuns and right, monks, up are the male and female gods, showing bodhisattvas and then Yakshas and all kinds of semi-divine beings; everyone is there

listening to the Buddha's teachings. This is where the story starts. So, then what happens is that the bodhisattvas of the ten directions come from all the pure lands and make offerings to the Buddha - they come from the east from Abhirati the pure land of Akshobhya and then the come from the south, the pure land of Ratnasambhava, Shrimat and from the west, Dewachen (Sukhavati) the pure land of Amitabha and then they come from the north, from the pure land of Amoghasiddhi, Prakuta. These are the buddhas of the ten directions coming to see what Buddha Shakyamuni is doing, pay respects and listen to the teaching and so on; there are 10 of these panels - all the divine beings of the universe coming to the Buddha's teachings. This is how this story starts and the first part of this

sutra is explaining all these incredible scenes going on, but the Arhats can not see all this, they just see the Buddha with a lot of people sat around in a forest because their minds are obscured, they do not have bodhicitta or higher realisations. They just see themselves and all the people around. Always down, at the bottom are the humans, then above are the gods and bodhisattvas and many divine beings. So the first 20 panels are explaining that it is much better to practise Mahayana. When we do the bodhisattva vows and tantric vows in the morning, we say at the end, 'May I liberate those not yet liberated' - that means the beings in samsara, like us and the animals, people like that. Then it says, 'May I liberate even the Arhats that are in the bliss of nirvana' because they are not completely free, their minds are still obscured. We say that prayer, with Rinpoche, every day here on Borobudur. So the first part of the sutra is explaining this. If we are going to practise the dharma better, we should start with the Mahayana motivation with bodhicitta, then a much higher, better result is achieved.

Panel II/2



The Buddha's disciples in Javanese are unable to see the miracles performed by the Buddha in his meditation because they have not yet entered the Mahayana Path.

call this Manjushri, the Youthful Manjushri, he is dressed up like a young Indian prince with all these ornaments - Rinpoche always says it is showing the bodhisattva path - this Indian prince dress that both Manjushri and Samantabhadra wear. Manjushri there is I think, talking to some nuns, can not be to sure, either monks or nuns. On Borobudur there is a lot of female representation, a lot of nuns; this makes it a unique monument, showing clearly that in ancient India there is the women's sangha as well, not just the male sangha.

Panel II/3

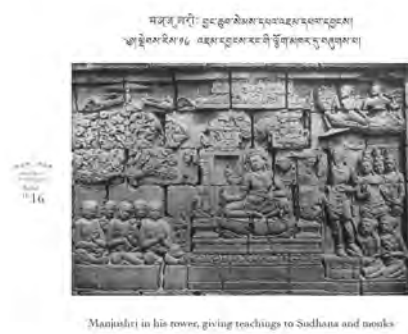


The Buddha enters the meditation of the Lion's Yawn.

young here, 18 or 19. So then the Buddha says, 'Oh son of the good family', because he is literally that, 'If you want to learn the path to enlightenment I recommend that you go and visit my disciple, Manjushri, who is in the south. Sudhana says 'Fantastic, I am going to and visit Manjushri.

Panel II/16

Then Sudhana goes down to the very south of India and my theory as to why they have this sutra on Borobudur is because here is the very south of the Indian world at that time. So everything to



Manjushri in his tower, giving teachings to Sudhana and monks

do with the south they like, every reference to the south and just like Mongolia likes every reference to the north, like Palden Lhamo, Kalachakra and all this, they are very keen on all that. Here in the south of the world, everything in the buddhist texts about the south they were all very interested in. Most of this story takes part in the south of India, like the bottom of India and round here. So let's say Manjushri is in Indonesia, around here. Sudhana goes off down south to visit Manjushri and Manjushri says, 'Yes of course, no problem, I will be your guru and I recommend that if you wish to succeed in enlightenment, you need to go and visit this monk, Meghashri'. So then he sends him to 52 different gurus. Easy one shows Sudhana part of the path to enlightenment. So this pilgrimage of Sudhana is very nice as, over years, he is wandering around the Indian subcontinent and meeting all kinds of monks and nuns and bodhisattvas and male and female lay people, who are also bodhisattvas. Each one of these teach him something important on the path to enlightenment.



Sudhana visits the bhikku, Meghashri (Glorious Cloud)

then he has to go down and try and meet him up there. So every time he goes up a mountain, the monk is on the other mountain. This sutra is very long and beautiful and what is being explained is to do with 'self and other' and that everything is relative - like this mountain is only relative to that mountain - that is what Lama Michel talks about a lot - emptiness teaching; so that is the first teaching, that everything is relative and depends upon one's point of view - the first teaching he has to understand. He says thank you to his guru and Meghashri says 'Now to continue your path further, you have to go and visit the next guru, Segaramega (Segara = ocean and, mega = cloud).

Panel II/17

Always, in these panels there is someone with a parasol over a man, who is Sudhana. Here, he goes to visit the first guru that Manjushri recommends and he is called Meghashri which means 'Glorious Cloud'. Meghashri is a monk and is living in a cave on top of a mountain. So Sudhana climbs up this mountain to meet Meghashri. When Sudhana gets near, he sees Meghashri on another mountain, so he goes over to the other mountain to meet him. When he gets there, he sees that Meghashri is back on the mountain that he was previously on, so



Sudhana visits the bhikku, Segaramega (Ocean Cloud)

Panel II/18

Segaramega is a guru who likes to live on the beach. This guru is sitting at the seaside in his beach hut and his meditation is looking at the ocean. Just like we enjoy looking at the ocean, nice, mind expanding - he sits there for 12 years looking at the ocean and his meditation is 'How deep is the ocean?' So in ancient India, they did not know exactly how deep the ocean was and it was unknown, limitless. He was sat there thinking about emptiness through, for example, how deep is the ocean?

So he sits there for 12 years meditating on the depth of the ocean and then one day, out of the sea emerges a huge lotus and on top appears a huge buddha. This buddha stretches out his hand and

touches the monk Segarama on the head and then he has the realisation of interdependence and one level of emptiness.

So that was the story of the second guru. Each time, Sudhana learns how to achieve each realisation with each guru and once he has got that the guru sends him off to the next one. So, not at all like us, we just go around - 'I want to know everything' without actually practicing anything. Sudhana had to actually realise the teaching before he went off to the next guru; this is the ancient style. There are 52 or 53 steps he has to go through on the path to enlightenment.



Sudhana visits the Blessed Supratishtha.

Panel II/19

So this next guru is Supratishtha (Well Established). This guru, the 3rd - a monk guru and Segarama has sent him to this next guru. So Sudhana arrives at another beach place and this monk is walking over the water - like walking across the sky, which is obviously quite impressive to Sudhana. He explains to Sudhana that whether he is sitting, standing, going or coming, everything is this meditation on emptiness. He has achieved one of the mundane siddhis, a high realisation; levitation is one

of the 8 mundane siddhis that one could achieve in ancient times when the elements were more pure. Here in the picture he has had enough walking in the sky and he is sitting down, under a wish-fulfilling tree.



Sudhana visits Megha.

Panel II/20

Then Supratishtha sends Sudhana to visit Meghah, the grammarian, in the city of Vajrapura (the place of the vajra) and Meghah is sitting at a crossroads in the middle of a large crowd. He is a Sanskrit grammar teacher and he is teaching the nature of reality through grammar. In our practices everyday, we do the blessings of the speech (om ah ah, e e, ou ou, ri, ri, etc.). In buddhism, we have the very strong idea that things arise due to naming, due to imputation and Meghah is teaching this complex

Sanskrit grammar, but actually showing how everything is because of our conceptualisation, due to our naming. That is his teaching to everyone who is gathered around. This Sanskrit grammarian about 18 years old and in this way the sutra shows that gurus can be any age and according to their karma, some of them are very young children, some are very old - there can be rich people, poor people, young, old, men, women - people from all different social classes can be spiritual teachers. Of course it says that in our dharma teachings but for us it can be a bit difficult to accept as we might have fixed preconceptions of what a spiritual teacher should be. One very nice thing about the Gandavyūha teaching is that it shows that everybody somehow is going to teach you something positive if you are open to it.

So very briefly, Meghah the grammarian teaches Sudhana about naming and imputation - as we, in tantra understand that everything comes out of Vam or Bam or whatever; everything is a manifestation of emptiness. So this wish-fulfilling tree - its like an ancient type of brain scan; it got all kinds of jewels and special birds and this is the tree if you say to it, 'Oh tree, can I have a Rolls Royce?' It says, 'Sure how many do you want?' - this is in Indian mythology, so really the real wish-



fulfilling tree is the dharma practice. Then: Meghah says to Sudhana 'If you like to develop further, I recommend that you go and visit Mukataka, who is a banker'. He is like a mayor and banker rolled into one. This is him (on the slide), so lets have a look at his story.



Panel II/21

Sudhana must have had an incredibly long life, because each time it took years and years to get to see each guru and, as it says, 'Now Sudhana travelled for 12 years to reach Vanavasin', which means the forest grove. Finally he gets there and he meets this guru and says, 'Oh Mukataka, how can I develop the bodhisattva path?' Sudhana says, 'Please teach me to pacify my attachment, desire and hatred; please teach me how aspirant bodhisattvas should learn, how they should perform the practices of the bodhisattva

and so on'. So when Mukataka meditates (in the palace) from all the pores on his body emanate millions of buddhas and from each pore of his body you can see the Buddha in the pure land. You can see all the 12 deeds up to enlightenment in every pore in his body. This is like it says in the Lama Choepa, when we say that our guru has this quality - in every pore of his skin, they say that 21,600 pores there are all the arhats and so on. In this case, in his pores are manifesting millions of buddhas and all their actions up to enlightenment. Then he says, 'I can see all the buddhas of the 10 directions, in all their pure lands; all these pure lands I can go, here and there and for me everything is like in a dream, I understand everything and it is all like a projection of my mind'. In this pictograph he has his house or palace with 10 levels and each floor is showing a level of the bodhisattva path. He has a 10 level house and every floor is showing incredible things - beautiful things on each level. Another thing that he is showing us, for example, we normally think that no way can a mayor be enlightened; it is impossible. This is what he represents, this mayor/politician/banker and one might think that no way is he enlightened, but he is in actuality, a bodhisattva; one never knows, does one?



Panel II/22

So after Sudhana has got the point of all this and had this really amazing experience, together with the politician/guru, then he says to him, 'Go to Milasparana, in the south, to the place called Increasing Assembly, right on the southern tip of India. There you will find a monk called Segaravaja (The Banner of the Sea). Ask him to teach you how to progress further on the path of the bodhisattva'. Obviously this was a very major story as they carved 450 panels on the side of here, it was like

a big thing; whether it was archetypal or true, I don't know but it was extremely important to the people who built Borobudur on many different levels. What this monk Segaravaja is showing him is that buddhas are infinite in number and exist in different worlds in the universe. I heard many times people ask, over the years - they would say, 'Rinpoche do you believe in UFOs?' I do not know about unidentified flying objects, but in Mahayana Buddhism, we definitely believe in millions of worlds and buddhas and enlightened beings in many of them. So more or less, like in modern cosmology the universe is infinite and there are many forms of intelligent life; we are not the unique ones in the whole universe. This guru, Ocean Banner, he teaches Sudhana that enlightened beings are infinite and can exist in many, many different worlds throughout the universe.

In buddhism, 3000, means a billion, i.e. a thousand, thousand, thousand, which is a thousand million, which is a billion. This monk, Ocean Banner is nice, what he is doing. In India they have the cast system, the Hindu Brahminical cast system, where basically they say, this is the cosmic person, here are Brahmins (priestly people) at the top, then there are Kshatriyas or Rajanyas (rulers, administrators and warriors), then they have the Vaishyas (artisans, merchants, tradesmen and farmers), and Shudras (labouring classes), then there are the Untouchables, the Dalits; this was a fixed conceptualisation of society - Brahmins are up and Untouchables are down because in Indian culture the feet are very dirty, they are impure. So what this guru shows, is very nice, he shows everything the other way round, that all this is all rubbish, this caste system. So from the monk's feet he manifests Brahmins, so all the Brahmins are coming out of his feet, all the religious specialists of Vedic Hinduism. Then from out of his knees come the warriors (Kshatriyas); the Vaishyas, the business people and farmers and the Dalits (Untouchables) are on the top, i.e. it all does not really matter; the caste system is all rubbish. In Hinduism, this is a very big issue because it is the idea that you are born like that, it is your karma and just by experiencing that, you can purify that karma and then progress. The Buddha said that is not true, because it gives a kind of fatalistic view of reality. You are born, lets say, as a shopkeeper and that is what you are going to do and there is no way to change anything, because you created that karma in another life, or you have whatever suffering or sickness. That is not what we think in Buddhism. We have the possibility of changing things. So this guru is teaching this; social status is just made up, basically. Each one of these is a big story. Then he emanates many buddhas and bodhisattvas who are showing the 6 Perfections and the 10 Perfections, the way to enlightenment. Then Sudhana stayed at this monk's feet, it says, for a day and a night; 2 days and nights; 7 days and a night; a fortnight; a month and then 6 months and 6 days. Then after 6 months and 6 days the monk guru, Ocean Banner comes out of his meditation and the vision disappears. He teaches Sudhana the meditation called the Equanimity of the Universal Eye - seeing many things across the universe. Then Ocean Banner says 'Okay, my son of a good family, if you want to progress further I recommend you go south again and go to a place called Samudra Vetala and go to a park called Universal Manifestation. There you will find one young lady called Asha; go and see her and find out some very interesting things'. So off Samudra goes.



Panel II/23

So this is the female bodhisattva Asha. There are 52 gurus and 25 of them are female. She is an Upashika, a buddhist female layperson and is called Asha which is Hope in Sanskrit. The pictograph shows Sudhana nicely requesting the young lady Asha to teach him the path. So he goes to this Universal Manifestation Park and in this jewelled park there is a beautiful jewelled fence and inside is this beautiful palace and in the centre is the lady Hope, Asha, surrounded by a retinue of 500 teenage girls. She

is seated on a golden throne and has a golden radiance. She is full of all kinds of beautiful jewellery, what every young lady would like and she is more radiant than her jewellery, just like Sidhartha was with his jewellery on the Lalitavistara. Everyone who comes to see her in the park, who have problems, delusions, suffering, sickness - just by meeting her their problems go down and are pacified. Their minds are free from their problems; the thorn of delusion is removed from their vision and the mountains of their obstacles crumble. Then, as a result the sprouts of their good qualities can grow up. All the people who come to see her in the park recite an ocean of mantras and as a result they start to develop spiritual realisations, they commit themselves to the vows of liberation and begin purification practices in order to attain virtue and higher wisdom and become physically unattached and unobstructed and be able to travel anywhere, like Asha.



Each of these gurus in our actual book explains how they got to be where they are. Asha is asked how she got to be so fabulous? She explains, 'Well in my past life. In another life I was practicing together with a buddha called 'Buddha Light' and I was his attendant and I received many teachings from him. Before that I had already renounced society and already left to become a disciple of another buddha called 'Undefined' and I also received many teachings from that buddha. So in previous lives she received teachings from two other buddhas: In many other lives she was making offering to and receiving teachings from different buddhas and also serving them - being their attendant. She said that she could remember many past lives when she was practicing the dharma; all these buddhas that I met in the past, I can remember who they were, where we were and what kind of teachings I received and so on. As a result, I achieved the capacities that I have now. She said that bodhisattvas do not aim for enlightenment just for the sake of one being or for 100 beings or 1000 beings or even a million or a billion beings; for us to save as many beings as are atoms in a billion universes is not enough; bodhisattvas want to stay here and help beings until every being in the whole universe has been freed. As a result of serving all these countless buddhas, I achieved this realisation called Sorrow-less Wellbeing. So Sudhana stays with her for some time until he also achieves this state of Sorrow-less Wellbeing.



Panel II/24

She says, 'Okay, go to the Nalajur district which means the Not Lazy District of Samudra Vetala (Ocean of Vampires) and find the rishi with a very long name. In English his name is He Who Utters a Fearsome Sound. So Sudhana says to her "Thank you very much for your kindness, O guru, I will go and find this rishi to continue my spiritual path.'" Actually all this that I am reading now is not in the Tibetan because somebody forgot to translate it. I checked in every edition of this sutra

available; there is just one page saying 'Oh and Sudhana went to see 52 gurus', that is all it says, so the translators decided not to bother translating this. But what we do have is the original Sanskrit, which has been translated into Chinese in the second century and English in the 20th century. I often think what exactly do they mean? To know exactly, because it has been translated into Chinese and then English - that means we have to go back to the Sanskrit, which is a big job, hence the pile on my table. So I need to check up some of these words and try and imagine what exactly it could mean. This is a Mahayana sutra, what we know is not so different, but when it passes through the Chinese prism, Chinese Buddhism, maybe they explain it a little bit differently. So I was also thinking these things. I have the Sanskrit version and this is why it takes such a long time to do this; in terms of our teachings, we have to look at each word and sense the meaning; it takes a long time. I have a big dictionary of Sanskrit/Tibetan that Professor Pandit Lokesh Chandra lent me so we can check all these things slowly, slowly. I am not lazy; it just takes a really long time to do this; it is complicated. It was not translated into Tibetan, so Rinpoche who has been asking us to make this, is really something nice. Anyway, work in progress, hope to be finished soon. He teaches him Sorrow-less Well Being. This is this rishi, the rishi who utters a fearful sound. This is a bit like with Naropa and Tilopa. You know that Tilopa is always asking Naropa to do amazing, crazy things to test him; this is a bit similar. Till now it has been okay, like having cakes with beautiful women and seeing monks levitating; now it is a bit more intense. This guru is a rishi, with dreadlocks and you can see he is in a mountain grove. Again he is in the south, like here and he comes to this mountain where this rishi is with dreadlocks, wearing clothes of rags made out of tree parts, like the bark. He is sitting on an antelope skin like a yogi and Sudhana asks, 'Please teach me the path to enlightenment'. So this yogi, who is sat there surrounded by 10,000 disciples and basically what he does is he says 'Okay if you want to achieve enlightenment - see this big mountain that we are sat on, jump off it'. Then Sudhana was not sure

about that, slight doubt as it was a big mountain - the rishi said 'Well, do you want the teaching or not?' So Sudhana jumps off and then the yogi with his miracle powers catches him and places him back on the mountain and says, 'Okay, now I will give you the teaching'. (Please, do not try this at home!). Then he teaches him the vimoksha, which is the freedom from duality; every realisation is called a vimoksha which means liberation from dualistic appearance. There are many, many levels of this freedom from dualistic appearance. Then, as a result he can see himself together with many, many buddhas giving many, many teachings - he has this incredible vision of many, many buddhas. Then the rishi [snaps his fingers] and it all disappears. Sudhana said 'That was all very exciting, thank you'. Then the yogi says to Sudhana 'Okay my son of good lineage, now if you want to reach the next level of vimoksha, freedom from dualistic appearance, you have to go to Ishana (Land of the Sun) and there you will find a Brahmin who is called The Brahmin Who Overcomes Heat and go and ask him to teach you the next part of the path. So then Sudhana with immense gratitude pays respect to the yogi, who utters a fearful sound, he prostrated to his kind guru, again and again and then went off to the next place, the Land of the Sun, in the south.

This next guru has done something called the 5 fires; now this is something definitely not recommended to Buddhists - it like one of these Hindu ascetic practices, where what they do and, they still do it in India today, is they sit on a fire with four fires around and one on top of the head in the midday sun and they have to meditate on an iceberg or something, otherwise they die; really! Buddha Sidhartha tried all this when he was on the path and then after 6 years he gave up asceticism. They sit there and put fire all around and put a big hat full of fire on the head and they sit there meditating in the midday sun and if you can support that it means - like Rinpoche says, if you are hot, to put a block of ice on your head. Well this is an intense version of this meditation; you either do it or die. As Buddhists, we do not do these things because Sidhartha spent 6 years in a forest with the yogis on this path; he tried all these things like standing on one leg, he went around barking like an animal - he did all these really weird Hindu practices that all these gurus were advocating, so he said he would try. He tried everything they said, but in the end said 'This is not working; do not bother!' He said he tried pranayama until his head was exploding - you can read this in the Theravada sutras if you want. He said to forget it 'Where's the yoghurt?!' Then he went to Sujata, who gave him a long life puja, he said, 'Thank you, I will not practice this asceticism, I have got a better idea, I will do it my way'. So this guru is showing he is a Hindu ascetic; it is not shown on this pictograph. One thing on Borobudur they never show violent scenes; anything with violence, is not shown even if it is in the story. So this story is deleted from the bass reliefs. So then Sudhana says, 'Okay, had enough of all that, thank you' and the guru sends him to the next guru, who is another female teacher.

Panel II/25



Sudhana visits the princess, Maitreyana

This guru is called Princess Maitreyana. So now Sudhana goes to this place called The Lion Roar City to find this 'princess kindness/empathy'. As he arrives in the city he sees this beautiful palace and on its roof which is adorned with jewels and the whole thing looks gorgeous, is this princess surrounded by 500 girls. First Sudhana goes to see the king and gets permission to go and visit his daughter - the king ascends to this. Then as he goes to the palace he sees hundreds of thousands of people going in

(there are big numbers attending Mahayana sutras). Sudhana asks what is happening here? They say that Princess Maitreyana is giving a teaching and everybody is welcome to attend. He enters this palace, which is really beautiful; the floor is made of crystal, the pillars are made of lapis lazuli, the walls are studied with diamonds and in the centre of this is Princess Maitreyana - very beautiful with long hair and beautiful looking golden skin. He says to her, 'Please, Oh Noble one, I want to



become enlightened but I have not understood the practices of a bodhisattva, so please teach me'. So she says 'Yes, of course, please take a look around my palace; what do think of my taste in interior decor?' She is an interior decorator and princess. So Sudhana starts to look around this beautiful jewelled palace and every jewel and every mirror, everywhere he looks he sees reflections because it is all made of crystals and there is a buddha looking at him. So everywhere he looks there are millions and millions of buddhas all performing enlightened deeds in all the gorgeous decorations of the princess's palace. All the buddhas are appearing as reflections - so this is a very important image in Buddhism - we use this image a lot of a reflection in a mirror to show the nature of things, to show the interdependence and so on; things are not as they seem. Everywhere he looks he sees these buddhas reflecting in the glittering palace walls. Then he says 'That is really amazing, how did this happen?' She says 'Oh well, I achieved this vimoksha, this freedom from dualistic appearance because I met as many buddhas as there are grains of sand in 36 Ganges rivers', which is a lot. This is the Mahayana which purports the idea that it takes a really long time to achieve enlightenment; 3 Countless Great Aeons. In 3 Countless Great Aeons she had the time to meet and receive teachings from as many buddhas as there are grains of sand in 36 Ganges rivers. Her palace is basically full of shiny mirrors and everywhere you look, you see not you own face, but that of a buddha, all different in every mirror. Her teaching is about the meaning of the face, so she says 'Okay, you need to see the face of the buddha land, the faces of the buddhas there, the face of the dharma, the face of the past, the face of the present, the face of the future and so on. It is a Mahayana sutra, 300 of these; the face of vows, the face of purification. As Rinpoche says, 'When you get some new jewellery of something, you have to think about it as some kind of spiritual practice. If you buy yourself a watch for Christmas or just because you are worth it and you think that this is the Perfection of Generosity or Ethics, the bodhisattva path' and she is saying, 'Okay, when you look in the mirror, look at the computer screen, look at shiny things, looking at the reflection in water; there remember emptiness, remember the Buddha every time you look at a reflection. Each teacher is teaching us something very useful and practical. Like for example, one was teaching us about language - the grammarian - its useful because we have language all the time, so every time there is a word or reading something we can think about emptiness. Every time we see jewellery we can think about emptiness, every time we see a reflection we can think about emptiness, every time we do adventure sports, think about emptiness. There are many, many things happening in each of these stories but each one is something we have to relate to in our life. We do not have the same experiences, but for sure there is something we can catch and is useful relating to us. When we meet a politician we can think about bodhisattvas. When we meet a banker and all these kinds of people, okay. So anyway, he gets the point looking at the princess's fabulous interior decoration, he understands some more about emptiness and he achieves another level of freedom from dualistic appearance. Okay, she says 'Fantastic, in order to improve yourself further, why do you not go to the Land of the Three Eyes? There you will meet a monk called Sudashala (Excellent Understanding)'. Sudhana thanks her very much and says he will do that and, off he goes.



Sudhana visits the bhiksu (monk), Sudashala

Panel II/26

Here is Sudhana sat there with his parasol as usual (in the pictograph) but now he is making some offerings to the monk, a butter-lamp and the monk, Excellent Understanding, this is Sudhana going around on an elephant. Here in the Land of the Three Eyes, is the bikshu, monk, Sudhashala, Excellent Understanding. Sudhana gets to this place and everywhere he goes he is looking for this monk. He goes in the town, in the city, in the village, in the market place, in the temples, in the hermitages.

He goes up mountains, down mountains, goes in caves, goes in the forest, goes on the beach and





everywhere he goes, he asks 'Has anyone seen guru Sudhashala?' And everybody says, 'No sorry'.

Finally he comes to a forest grove - you can see on the pictograph relief. He sees a very young and handsome looking monk, he is walking in the forest, not too fast and not too slowly. He is dressed like a deva and surrounded by a retinue of all kinds of beings. In front of Sudhashala are the protectors of the 4 directions, the ones who cause the world to turn. As he walks - like on the Lalitavistara when the baby Buddha takes the first steps and lotuses come up to meet his feet (can see on Borobudur on the panels). This monk has the same powers; everywhere he walks lotuses appear under his feet. As he is walking with lotuses growing underneath his feet and then 5 Deities manifesting like rainbows as an offering to him, while all the nature spirits are throwing down flowers on top of him.

Then all the Deities of the Earth show him where all the crystals and all the precious jewels are and all the spirits of the space (can see, they are making offerings in the sky) then Sudhana approaches the monk, Excellent Understanding and says 'Oh noble one, please I need to become a buddha, please teach me how to practice the path of the bodhisattva'. So Sudhashala says, 'Ok, I am young, I have just recently become a monk but in a previous life I was in the company of many buddhas, as many buddhas as there are grains of sand in 38 Ganges rivers' (previously, it was mentioned 36 Ganges rivers). Each one is one level more.

So now he was with as many buddhas as grains of sand of 38 Ganges rivers. Anyway, he says 'I practiced with them for many, many lifetimes and from all of them I received all the teachings and I purified my vows and put everything into practice. So by purifying my own vows and meditating on the sphere of vows...' anyway, this practice is keeping his vows, that is why he looks so radiant. So there is an explanation of different kinds of vows, like for example, our main vow is ahimsa, non-violence and then based on that there are many other possibilities; we have lay people's vows, there are the bodhisattva vows, the tantric vows, monks and nuns they have more pratimoksha vows; there are many. Even though he has been a monk for about 5 minutes, he is so incredible and so radiant, because for many, many lifetimes he has perfected in keeping his vows. He says that his vimoksha - his freedom from duality is called the Lamp of Knowledge, which is Never Extinguished. The moral of the story is 'keep your vows', if you want to progress on the bodhisattva path; like Lama Tsong Khapa says, 'You need ethics'. Then, guru Excellent Understanding says, 'Okay, please go to the land called The Circle of Mendicants and in the city called Sumuko, (Excellent Face) you will find a boy called Indra Ishvara (Lord of the Senses)'. So he needs to go and ask him how to progress to the next level of enlightenment.

That is the end of this exciting episode of the Borobudur story, okay.



... enlightenment is not a place we can go to,
it is not a blessing that we can receive,
we cannot get it from anyone; it is a gradual process of
developing our qualities and eliminating our defilements.



Lama Michel

The Path to Enlightenment

I was thinking about what to share with you and there is one concept that I think is very important for me and I wanted to share; I think it is auspicious also as we are here at the end of this retreat in Borobudur and, this is the concept of the path to enlightenment. When we talk about the path to enlightenment there is a very interesting thing that, when we go to look at the teachings it is extremely clear and precise - all the steps we need to do on the path to enlightenment. It is not something that is put there that is some sort of mystical general thing, 'Oh enlightenment? Who knows what it is and how to get there?'

No, there are very precise maps, with very precise explanations and descriptions and techniques on how to reach each of the steps on the maps; it is very clear, not something that is put in a general way. This is what Rinpoche was talking about during the days, on Borobudur when he spoke about the 5 paths and the 10 bhumis.

When we speak about these 5 paths and 10 bhumis, actually it means stages, like milestones that we can have on our path to enlightenment. Pabongkha Rinpoche says it is extremely important for us to have an overview of the path, to understand what is the whole path, to have an idea at least. This is very important. There is one text that we were able to do the translation of and we printed it when Trijang Rinpoche came to Albagnano, which is called The Heart Spoon - the Lamrim like the heart spoon to take the essence of the path. This was a text that Pabongkha Rinpoche wrote while he was doing a retreat on the Lamrim, based on his own insights and experience. This text of Pabongkha Rinpoche states very clearly how important it is for us to have a general overview of the path; this is very, very important for us to understand.

Sometimes we may talk a lot about enlightenment but we may have no idea about what it actually means. We say, 'Oh I want enlightenment!' The other day we were talking to one of the guys working on the Borobudur, we have known him for many years. We asked him how he was - he was fine and said 'I went to Mecca, just got back from pilgrimage, it was so cold there, 10 °C'. We asked him how it was there and he said, 'It was good for my enlightenment'. It was quite interesting to see, in the Muslim context, he was using the word enlightenment, basically because he grew up in Borobudur I suppose? He is the guy that many, many years ago was a cleaner around the stupa, then slowly, slowly he got a higher status and now he is director of some department here. Anyhow the point I was going to make here is that we can use enlightenment in many different ways, but what do we actually mean by it? It is important; I see myself as having a very limited mind, so I need to understand things and understand the meaning. So when we talk about enlightenment and I say: 'I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha until enlightenment. Through the practice of generosity and other perfections, may I obtain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings'. Actually to understand truly this takes 20 to 30 years at least. Just understand truly what we mean by Buddha, Dharma, Sangha - I take refuge, what does it mean to take refuge until enlightenment; what is enlightenment? What do we mean, 'I wish to reach enlightenment', what do we actually mean by that? The very interesting thing is as it says, 'through the practice of generosity and the other perfections', it means there is a technique, a process of training and practice to do in order to reach enlightenment. So the first thing I'd like to share is to understand a little bit about what do we mean by enlightenment? Secondly, what are the milestones of the path to enlightenment? So we can have some general understanding about it - it does not mean that we can understand right away, the whole thing; it is something that normally we study for many years. The path and the bhumis and the different philosophical schools, we study these things together and it takes quite a long time,

so it is a whole subject somehow. However, it is very nice to know that something very precise is there; there are very precise instructions on it. What does it mean to have precise instructions? It means that it is something that we really need to do because no one else can do it for us. If there are instructions, it means there are instructions for us to do and not something just like, how to say? Okay, 'I ask the blessings of all the buddhas and the buddhas give me their blessings and I reach enlightenment', that would be so beautiful. But no, I believe if only a buddha was looking to us and saying 'Oh so nice, you ask me for blessings and I give you my blessings, but now it depends on you as to whether you walk the path or not'.

There is this text that is the discussion between wisdom and ignorance by Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen and there is a point in which wisdom says to ignorance 'Oh ignorance go away'. Then ignorance looks back laughing at wisdom and says 'Oh you tell me to go away, you think it is that easy? I have been here for such a long time and you just tell me to go away? If there is one wish that all the buddhas have it is for me to go away and that is not enough - even they cannot throw me out. We are the only ones to be able to eliminate our ignorance; no one else can do it for us. So there is a path and there are instructions, there is a process of training that we can go through - to get where? To understand every part of the teachings is concerned with 3 points - which we also need to understand to get the meaning of enlightenment: shi.lam.drebu.sung. Shi = the basis, lam = the path and drebu = the result.

The basis is where I am and what are the resources that I have, which basically is body and mind and the environment - reality. That is what we are. The result is what can we get with what we have and the path is what we need to do in order to get what we can get. So it is very, very important that the result be coherent with the basis. We cannot expect to reach a result that is not coherent or consistent with the basis of the resources that we have right now. I can wish as much as I want to get pregnant in this life but I do not think it will ever happen. It is like, if I really want it so much, I need to die and then be reborn as a woman and hopefully then I will get pregnant; but in this life it will not happen, so it is useless to put an objective that is inconsistent with the basis of what we have. So this is just to make a stupid example and to say that when we set an objective, this objective must be consistent with the basis; that is very important. In Buddhist teachings this is very clear, all the aspects of enlightenment are perfectly consistent with what we are right now. So when we take our body, when we take our mind and when we see the way that it can be developed, that is what is represented by the Buddha.

In order to understand well the result, we start with the basis, which is our body and our mind and then we go to the result. The result is the state of Buddha, the state of enlightenment; so what is enlightenment, what do we mean by enlightenment? It is very difficult to put in very few words and there are basically two ways that we can go concerning the explanation. One way is for disciples of higher intellectual capacity and one way for disciples of lower intellectual capacity. This is since the time of Buddha and later in Nalanda very common, this explanation to disciples of higher intellectual capacity means they only believe in what they understand. So one needs to go through very precise explanation until they understand and once they do, they believe. The disciples of lower intellectual capacity can okay, believe it without understanding because if they need to understand first, they will never get it. Okay, that is us, at least myself. So we are not going to enter into the higher capacity because to have an understanding of what enlightenment is at this higher level, we can only truly understand what is enlightenment once we understand emptiness. Without understanding the true nature of reality, without understanding clearly emptiness, the lack of inherent existence, the true or correct nature of reality, we cannot have a clear understanding of what is a buddha or enlightenment. And we are not going to open that door right now, okay.

So, what is enlightenment? We must look at it from the position of lower capacity disciples such as ourselves. Enlightenment is a state in which we are completely free from ignorance and, being free from ignorance we do not live in a dualistic way within seeing the difference between absolute



reality and relative reality and there is not anymore the distinction between looking at something and seeing it existing completely separated from us - there is the perfect understanding of the complex interdependence that is within everything. So there is a perfect harmony between all phenomena and because of being in perfect harmony with everything, there is no more anger or jealousy or pride or miserliness, or fear or suffering of any type.

So to reach enlightenment from my understanding, it is not like something magical happening or becoming disconnected from what we are. That is why we say all of the buddhas are of the same nature because there is not a buddha that has more wisdom than another, they are all of the same nature, but each one of them keeps their own individuality. The day that we all reach enlightenment, there will be me and you and we will say 'Hello', it is not that we meld into one thing. So imagine ourselves with no anger, no jealousy, no fear, with pure wisdom. To understand enlightenment better we need to go to the explanation of the 5 wisdoms of the 5 Dhyani buddhas, which is very, very few words, having certainty in every action, no more doubts, being able to see everything, all the similarities in all phenomena and put everything together. It is being able to see the difference between each and every one of them and their particular aspects; being able to have awareness of everything that appears to us at every moment and having our mind free from our defilements. So being in the state of buddhahood, means not only being in the state of total freedom from suffering, but also it means having developed one's own wisdom at such a point that we are able to understand each and everyone that we have around us. So based on that we can guide everyone to the path to enlightenment in accordance to their own needs and capacities. That is the main reason to reach enlightenment actually, otherwise it is enough to get out of samsara for us. A buddha has this capacity because of having developed wisdom to such a point and out of compassion is able to understand the need and the capacity of each one of us. So in the moment that we truly open our heart to others and we have the wish to help others - as Lama Caroline was saying before from the Gandavyuha, the bodhicitta is not about helping one or two or thousands or millions of beings; it is about helping each and everyone of the beings until there is not one left. There is a strong urge to help everyone and, the only true way to help others is to eliminate our own ignorance. So enlightenment first of all is me in a different state. It is not something that is disconnected from me. Do not worry, once we reach enlightenment the 'me' that we know right now will not be there anymore; we will be different for sure, but it is always ourselves. It is like when we were a child - do we think the same now as we did then? Or are we different? We are different, but was it me or someone else that had that experience? It was myself. Similarly, when a sentient being enters into the path to enlightenment and afterwards reaches enlightenment, it was always him; but different, okay. So this is one important aspect for us to understand, because sometimes some people have the idea that reaching enlightenment, that is something like my own identity will be lost and I will become something completely disconnected from what I am; and this is not true, at least from my understanding. Another thing is that enlightenment is not a place we can go to, it is not a blessing that we can receive, we cannot get it from anyone; it is a gradual process of developing our qualities and eliminating our defilements.

The best true way to understand enlightenment from my point of view, is the understanding of relative and absolute truth; it is when we see that the only reason why there is a distinction between these two truths, is for us that are in ignorance to understand them; a buddha does not make a distinction between them anymore. But I am not opening that door right now, okay; it is just a pointer of where to go.

The steps

So, what are the steps that we have on this path, what do we need to develop and what is the process we need to go through? The very first thing that we need to do is to wish for it. It is interesting because very often people ask, 'Oh how can we live without desire?' - because one of the main three defilements is desire. 'Okay we need to abandon desire, but how can I live without desire - for example, can I freeze without wanting anything?' Actually desire is extremely important, it just

depends on what kind of desire; on the basis of enlightenment is the desire that I want enlightenment; bodhicitta is 'I want to help others'; love is a form of desire - 'I wish your happiness; I want you to be free from suffering' that is compassion, also a form of desire also. This urge for something is also very important. So desire is present, the question is where do we direct it, what do we want? That is the main question.

Making it our priority

The first step on the path to enlightenment is, when do we enter the path to enlightenment? It is when we want to reach enlightenment, when it becomes our own priority - yes I need to do my job, I like to go for vacation, I like to do this and that and many other things, okay, but what I truly want most of all is to get out of samsara; is to reach enlightenment for the benefit of other sentient beings. That is my true, main wish and the rest does not matter because it is secondary to my main, true objective. When that becomes our main objective, then we enter into the path to enlightenment, the actual path. Before that we can be part of the preparation of the path, we are going around, we go to travel agencies, we check about the destination we like to go, we try to prepare the money to buy the ticket, we try to imagine how it would be to check if we can get a vacation from our job because we have not really bought the ticket yet. We really enter the path when we develop what we call definite emergence or renunciation, which is the total determination to be free from samsara, when we reach bodhicitta, the total determination to reach enlightenment. The first time I read and reflected about this I got a little depressed because I was thinking that if the first step on the path is as Lama TsongKhapa said 'When, by meditating in such a way, which is by meditating on the preciousness of this life, on the law of karma, cause and effect and so on, when you do not for one moment seek the pleasures of samsara, for even one instant and day and night you are directed for liberation, then you have developed renunciation'. I was looking at that and I thought that it was impossible - I am not able - sure at some points in time there are moments when we are a little bit more emotional and then we can say that we want enlightenment, which is fine but to have this constant thought is quite difficult. Then I was talking to Rinpoche and this happened when I was around 18 and he said, 'First of all remember it is gradual'. Then I talked to some other masters - I had a talk with the Dalai Lama about this and then I was talking with my master of philosophy in the monastery and to make a long story short, what happened was that first of all it is a process that comes step by step; it is not like from one day to the other we must reach the whole enlightenment. However what really helped me (and it is a point that I want to bring here now) is one phrase from the 6th Dalai Lama in which he said in a poem to a woman, 'If I desired enlightenment as much as I desire a woman, I would have already been enlightened'. And he also said, 'If I desired enlightenment as much as I desire you, I would already have been enlightened' and he was right! Because when we fall in love with something or someone, how often do we think about that? Once I asked a friend who answered me, 'One time that never ends'. So can we get the meaning when we say that this talk is always in our mind, as Lama TsongKhapa said 'At day and night we want something, when we really fall in love with something, when we want it so much - somehow that thought is always there, always present with us'. So the first step on the path for me we could say is to fall in love with enlightenment. It is not conceptual; it comes from the deepest part of ourselves, it is something from inside we say, 'I must become a buddha myself; I must eliminate my ignorance, my hatred and aversion and develop pure wisdom and be in harmony with everyone, because I must help others. I am not able any more to just continue in the same situation in which I am in right now - from life to life, sometimes a little bit better and sometimes a little bit worse'. Some time ago in Albagnano an image came to my mind, which is the image of a seesaw, this thing on which children play because what we do in our life very often is that we are on a seesaw and when this seesaw goes down we are complaining that it is down and we want to go up and then when the seesaw is up, we are happy that it is up, but we are worried that it is going to go down. After some time it is down again and we are suffering and we want it to go up! And so it is in our life, up and down, down and up. But what we do not understand is that when the seesaw is up, the fact that it is up is also the nature of the seesaw going down. The only thing that we can do is to get off of the seesaw. But we do not want to because we like it when its up. Its



like when someone is in a jail and someone says, 'Here is the pass to get out of the jail, come on, lets get out, here is the tunnel, here is the way - its not so easy, but we can get out!' 'Oh but I will miss the pizza for good behaviour at the week end and there are some guards that are nice to me and, I also like the view from my cell'. If we see the prison as a pleasurable place, we will never escape from it, right? If we do not see the objective of getting out, we will never get out! So the first step on the path to enlightenment - the very first thing, the door entrance is to fall in love with enlightenment. It is to develop this deep, deep wish, 'I must get out of samsara' this is liberation; I must help every sentient being and for that I need to develop my qualities. Once we do that then we enter into the actual path; then we actually need to start working, we start a hard journey - it is not that simple, easy or quick, but there is a journey to follow. Here we enter when we truly develop this love for enlightenment, when we fall in love deeply with enlightenment that is when we enter what is called the Path of Accumulation. And one interesting thing, is that the Path of Accumulation is called in this way because in order for us to develop this inner state of falling in love with enlightenment we need merits; it does not come like a finger snap, it is not intellectual. So that is why we need to do a lot of practices of Accumulation Of Merits, purify a lot of our negativities, we need to go through a whole process before that - understanding the preciousness of this life and so on as we have in the Lamrim. That is when we enter the Path of Accumulation. From that point onwards we need to go from the Path of Accumulation to the Path of Preparation. From the Path of Preparation we go to the Path of Seeing and, from the Path of Seeing we go to the Path of Meditation. Then, from the Path of Meditation we end up at the Path of No More Learning, which is the final step.

So, lets try to make it a little bit more understandable in what we mean by these different steps; they are just names, it could mean anything. The division of these milestones is based on the realisation of the true nature of reality. So as Je TsongKhapa said in the Three Aspects of the Path, 'There is no liberation without the understanding of the nature of reality'. So what we need to do is develop the realisation of the emptiness or the true nature of reality, step by step and that is what is the division of the path. Together with that we need to deal with anger, jealousy, envy and all this but the main focus actually is on realising the true nature of reality. So the first thing that we need to do is to start to get the right understanding and once we have this correct understanding we have the determination then we need to gradually to familiarise our minds with the concept. Because from the Path of Preparation to the Path of Seeing is a process of taking something that is just a concept and transforming it into a deep experience - that's the thing. Enlightenment is not a fact of understanding it is a fact of realisation. So we need to take the understanding of the nature of reality to the experience of the nature of reality. Then we can get familiarised to such a level with that experience that it is always present in the deepest levels.

The Path of Preparation is basically when we are able to meditate correctly on emptiness, not that we have realised anything yet, but we are able to sit down, single pointed shamatha and rest our mind in the true nature of reality and the lack of inherent existence. And then gradually, as we go to that, as the experience of the meditation becomes



deeper and deeper, there is a moment in which there is a direct experience, when it becomes non-conceptual. When it is a non-conceptual realisation experience, it is called the Path of Seeing. Once we have the Path of Seeing, then it is a matter of meditating again and again in order to familiarise on such a deeper level - that is the Path of Meditation - all the bhumis are there, until we are familiarised to such a level with the true nature of reality that all the moments we are just experiencing things as they are. I am just trying to make it really simple, because I chose a subject that can be quite long to explain.

The point that I want to make is that there are steps to follow and they work and it is very beautiful because when we go to see them, we see that they are real; its possible - it is not as though it is impossible for us to do. And we have all the tools to make it. But there is one point that I believe, for me, is one of the most important things about all of this. First we must wish to reach enlightenment and, truly speaking the true reason why we have not reached enlightenment is because we do not want it, truly. Very often we end up using spiritually methods for mundane reasons, which is okay, but it is not really what they were there for and one might say there is a need for an exam or find a new job, or whatever - there are so many objectives that we have, like I am sick, so lets do some mantras and this practice because I will feel better, or because I want to have whatever objective that I have that is only of this life - we have so many of them, which is okay, there is no problem with using a spiritual method for a mundane objective, but still it is truly not what it is meant for; not truly the wish to reach enlightenment.

So, going back to that first point, understanding 'What do I want'? Make this question to ourselves. One thing that I believe is one of the very crucial parts in all of this, is to allow oneself to accept, and to reach enlightenment, with the thought, 'I can do it, actually'. If in the moment that we really, truly look at ourselves and say, 'I can make it! It will take long, but I can make it'. One of the points that I think very often we miss, is having faith in ourselves because we can have faith in the guru, faith in the buddhas, in the dharma, the sangha - we can say 'Oh all the buddhas, please help me!' Wonderful! But I need to have faith in myself also; I need to have faith in the belief that I can make it. So to allow ourselves to believe in our self; that is important. It is like, in other words, to allow oneself to be happy, 'Yes, I can be happy, it is possible; I can reach enlightenment, this is something I can do, I can progress on the path, I can do that' so to have a good self-esteem, to allow oneself that - that is very important at the beginning. So with this, it is matter just of choice of priority; what are the priorities in my life? I have my job, sure I need to continue with it; I need to take care of the body, my health, the relationships I have - that's fine, but these cannot be the final goal. These are just something 'in between', these are just like the means to reach something higher. Yesterday, we were talking about how important it is in society to have a higher objective. To lead with a higher objective and we miss it a lot. Most of us, sorry to say it and put in this way but, very often we live life just for survival. One of my teachers, using the example of the cow, used to say 'What is the difference between us and a cow if we only live for survival?' I asked him if he could explain better and he said, 'Yes, look at a cow', we were in a monastery and there were a lot of cows around 'When it is too hot, what does a cow do? Does it remain in the sun, or go to the shade? - it goes into the shade, so the cow avoids suffering. When the cow is eating the grass - in one place the grass is very fresh and another place it is very dry, where is the cow going to eat - the fresh one. So the cow looks for pleasure.

If we spend our life only avoiding suffering and looking for pleasure, what difference is there between our life and a cow? We do more elaborate things, okay, but basically if we are drinking, whatever wine or being in a five star hotel or doing this or that, whatever or eating the nice fresh grass. Basically we are doing the same and, at one moment that experience will finish and there we are. So the point that needs to be made is, what am I doing with my life? Sure we are not here just for survival; otherwise we would not be here together. At the very least in life we need to make it meaningful, otherwise we would not be here together. So what I believe is, that it is important for us as we move along with our lives, because now we are in paradise, but we are going back home and we would like to take paradise back home, but not necessarily does that happen - for a short time maybe, but after a little



while, slowly, slowly the daily things start to squeeze in and then, okay we are looking at the calendar for 2018 Borobudur. But we, at least, have Albagnano in between, but what happens is that what we want is to have something more meaningful in our lives; to give our life meaning. What does it mean to make our life meaningful? It is to use our life, which means our daily experiences as a tool, as a means for something different. What is this something 'different'? It is to develop our qualities, it is to help others and truly, truly it is to reach enlightenment - but we do not need to keep it so far away. Personally, one of the things that helps me the most to believe that I can reach enlightenment, is the fact that the only reason that all the buddhas have taught everything they have taught and all the gurus of our lineage, up to our own root guru, Gangchen Rinpoche, is because they believe that we can do it. Maybe we do not, but they do; they are wiser than us. Why would anyone teach something to someone if he does not believe they can put it into practice? Why would Rinpoche come here, every day, going with us around the Stupa? It is not for fun; even we have fun, but it is not for fun. It is because he believes that we can do it! Rinpoche some time ago was saying, 'In the beginning, when I came to the West, my idea was to teach very, very few things but after some time, when I saw the true dedication of you Westerners, then I saw it was a suitable vessel, where I could keep the lineage alive'. So this is something for me very precious and here we are, our gurus believe in us and all the buddhas that have come to us down the centuries and gave all the teachings, why? They all believed that we sentient beings with our own ignorance and jealousy and envy and this and that, that we can do it, because they know it because they went through it; they were able to overcome it and they came from the same basis as we are now. So for me personally, if they believe in me, why shouldn't I believe in myself? When they have much more wisdom than I do, so I do not want to take too long. For me the most important thing that we need to believe in ourselves and need to understand that we have in our hands something that is extremely, extremely precious. You know this morning when we were on the Stupa, Rinpoche was talking about the Borobudur in Brazil. Then he said one phrase that touched me - 'Oh, we build this there in order to keep our lineage alive'. This world is strange, so many things can happen; here we are now very nicely, going round Borobudur - who knows in 50 years what will happen? What change of government, what type of things, you know? We never know how things can be. We are allowed to travel, we can come and go, we have no idea how things might go actually.

Self-Healing: the key

The true meaning of Borobudur for me is Self-Healing; its like the key. Rinpoche has been giving this to us, for us to keep it alive, not only for today, but for the future generations. I believe it is one of the greatest signs of trust. It is like when we talk to someone and we need to explain something to someone - how deep would we go in explanation if we did not feel that the person could make any use of it? Just the formalities, nothing more than that. You would not give much. But if I believed that the person I am talking to can keep it and really make good use of it, then I am going to give all I have. That is what Rinpoche has been doing with us - giving his knowledge, giving his experience in the most precious way. When I was in Tibet some time ago, I went to see my teacher there, Kache Losang Phuntsog Rinpoche, the abbot of Tashi Lhunpo, who is nowadays one of the most renowned and respected masters in the whole of Tibet. He goes to the other monasteries and is sitting there on the highest thrones and most respected; they needed someone to teach Vajrayana tantra in a place where there were monks from all different traditions, from Nyingma, Sakya, Khargyu, Gelug and so on. The only one that was accepted was he, from all traditions - a very respected master, now 84 - we dedicated for his long life also. Rinpoche told me, 'You show him the practice of Self-Healing'. I was a little bit reluctant somehow - 'Rinpoche, he is very conservative - he is very, very conservative and he is like in a very traditional way, in every aspect; very truthful and a real practitioner, beautiful way, amazing in many aspects and a very traditional way of doing everything'. So Rinpoche said, 'No problem, just go to him and explain everything'. So I went to him and said, 'Rinpoche asked me to explain to you this practice that he is teaching - it won't take very long, it is quite easy to explain' - you know, it is quite easy to explain Self-Healing to someone that knows all about tantra, it must go really fast. So he said, 'Okay, just come before lunch, I will finish one teaching that I have - and then

half and hour, twenty minutes, we will do it'. Okay, so I went there at the time he told me and then I started explaining the Self-Healing to him, just going through the whole practice - how we do, the visualisations, about the mudras and he liked it so much, that I stayed there for around 3 hours! He missed his lunch, he called his other disciples who lived with him to come and listen as it was so amazing and he was extremely touched by it, his words were 'If you want to practice, that is what you need to do! You know we have so many sadhanas, so long, we do not understand anything and here you have everything' and then he said in a little bit of a sad voice, 'I think Tibetans would not follow it, not understand it; they are hard minded, they want to stay the same way as before. Are there any Tibetans doing this practice?' I said, 'Yes there is the monastery of nyimo kyatche which are doing Self-Healing every day' it is a small monastery near Lhasa, very beautiful monastery, strong monks, beautiful people - there's around 30 monks there, they do Self-Healing every day. They are not able to sing along like we do, they feel very awkward doing it that way [they use their traditional tunes]. Anyhow, the point is that he was going through the practice of Self-Healing, every aspect and saying, 'That is what you need to do if you want to truly practice; everything is in there'. Then I showed to another teacher at Tashi Lhunpo who is one of the younger teachers, most respected at Tashi Lhunpo in tantra things, he has incredible knowledge of tantra things and, he was amazed by Self-Healing in the same way. Even at parts when we go to Bishwa Shanti and he said, 'Wow, everything is in there, Lama Gangchen is so amazing with Self-Healing because if you are a beginner he can see there is something simple for him and if practicing in an intermediate way, the practice meets him there and if practicing in an advanced way, the practice meets him there also; everything is in there, so at the same time showing the secrets to those that can see the secrets and not showing to those that cannot see them; that is extremely special'. Then Khen Rinpoche asked me 'But how did Lama Gangchen make it?' He really insisted as to how that happened! Then one time I was talking to Rinpoche and Rinpoche told me, 'Self-Healing is really great, isn't it?', 'Yes, Rinpoche, it's really very, very special' and he said, 'I don't know how I made it! If you ask, I really do not know how I could do it, you know'. Because Rinpoche did not make it as most of us would try to do it, which is conceptually. He is coming from a direct experience, direct realisation, from visions. When I explained this to Khen Rinpoche, he said, 'Oh, that is the only way how it can be!' He was completely touched by it. I gave him the text, left it there and he wanted me to show him the mudras more times, he wanted to see them and understand, he was completely touched by it.

Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk came here, he was one of the most profound masters of the Gelugpa tradition in his time, he already passed away. He was showing us to do Self-Healing and explaining it and so on. Geshe Tendar, he was the most respected Geshe, from the point of view of tantra in the whole south of India, with all the great masters there and so on. One time Rinpoche asked him to explain something about Self-Healing, he was showing him Self-Healing and then - (this was around 1993/1994 I think) one day when Rinpoche was going to the gompa - he was staying there, he was older than Rinpoche. He was a very direct person, not like polite style, he was very hard Kampa style - old Wild West style. And then when he saw Rinpoche going to the gompa, he grabbed Rinpoche by the shirt collar and said 'Oh Kusho!' - it is like a very level to level way of speaking. When you talk to a lama and he is not your lama, maybe younger than you and so on, in the monasteries when we are young we are called Kusho. It's like a nice way, but somehow at the same level, respectful also but it's not like you are my guru, not on that level, 'Oh Kusho, now I understood what you did!' - referring to Self-Healing, 'Now I understood what you did, you gave the root of your heart'. Many people would not understand it but you don't need any answer to them, I will answer them for you! Then he gave some small explanations about Self-Healing at that time also. I went to see Geshe Tendar's reincarnation some years ago in India, it was a very beautiful meeting, such a very special boy also, I was very much touched by him. You know, he was very small and I was talking to him. I had gone there to make an interview - I was very tired, had been going from the very early morning and it was the end of the day and now I was going there to see this little boy, what can he actually say? You know? So, I was a little bit like that. I arrived there with no expectations whatsoever, maybe low expectations. Then I arrived there and started talking and I asked him, 'What do you think about



people that live in other parts of the world that are following the same practices, they are disciples of the same masters of those that are here, do you see them as being part of the same spiritual family or not?' Somehow I tried to give a question, already giving the answer somehow, because I was tired. He said 'Yes' it sounded like a very convinced yes, then I asked him how? He said 'Actually, not only those that are following the same teaching are from the same family; all of us human beings are from the same family; all the beings living on this planet are all from the same family'. I asked why, and could he explain more? He said in a very simple and pure way, it was nothing that he had learnt somewhere, it was really from him and he said, 'Because our mother is the one that if she does not exist, we can not exist and if planet Earth does not exist, we cannot exist, we are both sons and daughters of the same mother, that is way we are all from the same family and should respect and see each other in this way'. A small boy, completely spontaneous. So geshe Tendar was a very special person. All these great masters, whenever they saw Self-Healing they were extremely touched and saw the benefits of it. So I am very, how to say, honoured to have received this from Rinpoche; I think we all should be. The first day I talked about this here - it is not every day that a new lineage starts. Rinpoche was saying that he was giving the sutra and then after you do the commentary. Actually it is exactly like this; when we have a near lineage, which is a transmission out of experience, out of realisation of something that is suitable for our own mind it is something very, very precious and we can be here, receiving it directly from Rinpoche.

Just to give an example, I was studying in Tibet the tantra of Ghuyasamaja, the generation stage and completion stage all together put there, 1200 pages of lists, very complex. Some days, my teacher he would go after some pages, 'Phew! Its difficult!' I was a bit relaxed, because if it was difficult for him, sure it would be difficult for me, no? Because I was not understanding a lot from this. But there were many things that I did understand and were very clear for me because of what Rinpoche taught. So Rinpoche the other day, he said for us on the Stupa, 'You know, I take you around like as if you are playing a game, like a child, 'La, la, la la la' like going around and looks like they are playing and going, this and that and okay, make some fun and joke'. Then he is giving the deepest teachings and the greatest thing is that not in a known conceptual way, he is like transmitting to us in a way that it enters. Then at the moment that we receive an explanation, everything is already there; it is just a matter of naming it. This is my experience. So I think we are so fortunate because not only is there enlightenment, but we can reach enlightenment - each and every one of us. Maybe not in this life time, I hope yes, but maybe not, maybe not in the next - it does not matter how many lives it takes as long as we are on the correct path, that is what I think. The fact that it is possible and I truly believe it. It is a gradual process in which we slowly, slowly go one step after the other and we can get there. But it depends how much time and how much effort and how much space we dedicate for it and how much we are there busy with little stupid things of our daily life. Sorry to put it in this way, but time is what it is, it depends how much we feel, how much we put inside, our lives go like a finger snap, the question is what do I put inside? I want to be busy with my life - he looked at me, he didn't look at me, she looked at me, she did not look at me, what he said, what she said, what is this, what is that, what here, what this, that - I do not care!! Okay, we need to know a lot of it, but that is just secondary; more important is, what is my behaviour, what is my attitude, how much control I have of my mind, how much I open my heart to others, how well I am able to do my practice - that is the important thing. Remember it is a practice, which means it is a training. So not only is there enlightenment, not only do we have a pure nature that allows us to reach enlightenment, not only is there a path but we have a guide that guides us correctly and we have, at the same time, a tool that is being given to us, which is the most precious thing. So what we







have learned this year and, for many years of Self-Healing is that it is such a precious tool that we need to use in the best way that we can. Another important thing that shows us how fortunate we are in all of this; I have seen many masters and I myself have had many different masters - Rinpoche is my main guru, but I have had different masters and I have seen many of them passing away. Something quite sad which I saw was that quite often it happens that an important master passes away and there is no one there to give continuity; it happens. So many different masters you know - if we take for instance one who was Rinpoche's guru - I had the opportunity to receive teachings and empowerments from him, he was my guru also, the abbot of Tashi Lhunpo in India, Khen Rinpoche Khachen Lobsang Zopa Rinpoche who was one of the most amazing persons I have ever met in my life. You know he did not have a shadow; his shadow was like that of glass, this is one of the signs of having realised the illusory body, which means being a buddha basically; he was the most amazing person I ever met, so kind, so loving, so much wisdom, so much knowledge in all senses, really, really, really, a very special person. He passed away at a particular moment and Rinpoche received many, many teachings from him and is giving and taking on, but specifically with where he was and what he was doing, no one really gave an continuity, there was no one there to really take up the torch. And one thing that Rinpoche has been doing, he has been empowering us in many different ways, there is Lama Caroline, myself, and many of us in a way to say, okay, here I am to make for a way to give continuity. One of the things that I can assure you is that we can have continuity is this deep connection that we have, this feeling of love and trust, which is like a family feeling, that if for me one of the most precious things I have ever experienced and I think that I have. This is something that I think is very, very important. It does not matter what happens, here we are together following our path; all the rest is secondary. We need to remember this and keep it close. So basically I want to rejoice for the fact that we have a path, we have someone guiding us correctly on this path, we have our own efforts on the path - you know if we come up to here, we pay our expenses, we take our time out of the job, we come here with all that, as Rinpoche said 'We get up in the morning, we go early to the Stupa' if we look from an external perspective it is quite funny; all these Western people from all these different countries, saying words that most of us do not understand, going around there, it is quite strange in a way, right? If we look at it from a different perspective, it seems really weird somehow! (It is like we are the attraction, going round the Stupa!). Yes that is true - a person came from Brazil for the first time because we were friends, but he had never done Self-Healing in his life, he had never sat down to do a practice really, never really followed teachings - just came because he had a connection of friendship and somehow he came here. The first day he was here I saw him looking at the Stupa in the moment of Self-Healing, not so comfortable and then he started to relax, I noticed and then the next day he was there just as if it was the most normal and most beautiful thing and he was completely connected afterwards.

Hope

So what I want to say is that if we look from an external perspective, in one way it is quite strange, but what happens is that we feel it makes sense. It is not a matter of saying it is like this or that, we feel from inside that we feel well, that it is good for us, that actually it does make sense and we feel the benefit directly in ourselves and that is why we do it. What I want to say is that we put our effort; it is not part of our culture, but we are doing it and this means that we really believe in it and see the benefit - that is why Rinpoche says, 'Because of this there is hope; we wake up in the morning every day at 5am and this means there is hope, which means that we believe in it, we see the benefit, we feel the taste. That is why we make it - there is hope, the path exists, we have the best guide, we have the best method and we are here, willing to follow. There is therefore, no other possibility than to continue. One important thing to remember is that it is a process of training, so what we are gaining here, we need to continue; we need to do Self-Healing. If we do not come and put our bums on the cushions and meditate and sit down and do our practice and calm down our minds and concentrate and do the visualisation and train to recite the mantras; because if we do not do it or recite, no one else can do it. We have the most rare and most difficult of opportunities to gain.

I want to say simply that we are so fortunate so we need to make good use of this fortune that we have. I am not saying that we are not doing and making good use, I believe that most of us are but we need to remember that and also remember that it is a process of training and training is repetition; making the practice every day. We did the practice, more or less the same thing every day when we go to the Stupa - the same practice, but done differently. For instance, the practice that we did on the first day and today were different. I am sure that if we stayed here for longer and longer it would become more and more different in a way. The path is like a spiral, if you look from above it always looks the same, like you are going around the same place. If you look from the side, you see that gradually you go up, so that is part of the training of repetition, doing again and again, putting effort in it.

So, I am very grateful to all of you that we are here together, that we put so much effort, so much dedication, sitting for so many hours together and, the only thing that I ask you is that the path is there, we have the correct guide and we did a long life puja here and truly we all wish for Rinpoche's long life, but I believe that the vast practice of long life for the guru is putting into practice his teachings. A different example, there was a young lama/tulku and he was recognised by some masters and so on, he was a real tulku, but his parents did not want him to go to the monastery. The parents said that they did not want him to go there because he was too young and one day he will decide if he wants to go. What happened was that every time he was in the monastery he was very happy and when he was not allowed to stay in the monastery his started to get sick and he would have fever. They took him to all the doctors and they would do all they could but he did not get cured. Whenever they would take him to the monastery he was well right away, then he would go back again and get sick. After a certain point he parents would have no other choice and they said, 'Okay, we need to accept it'. And the reason of the explanation for this - a great being, a buddha, a bodhisattva that manifests in a gross body and, the reason he does this is to help others. If there is no benefit, take away this body and get another one, it is not that difficult. The more that life is useful and beneficial, the longer that life will be, which means that the more we make a good use of Rinpoche's teachings, the more we follow them correctly, the more we practice, the more we are able to practice so we need further explanation and further guidance the more Rinpoche can have a long life. This is my own personal view. So I request everyone that we do our practice in the best way as a way of request for a long life for Rinpoche and the other thing to add is that it is extremely important for us always to keep purely the feeling and taste that we have for the Dharma and the feeling that we have for the Sangha. It is not for nothing that the Buddha said one of the worst types of action that we could make, was to make divisions within the Sangha - it is as bad as killing one's own parents. (I am not saying that this is happening at all). What I am saying is that we need to cultivate friendship, respect, unity - we are so different from each other if we look around, but we have something so strong that unites us; this is what we need to keep strong and hold to it and cultivate it in the best way that we can - respecting and loving each other.

I would just like to finish by saying that sometimes we are sad when we leave, when we separate from a place, from a person and so on, but what makes us connected and near to each other is not that fact that physically we are near, it is our minds and hearts are going in the same direction. We can be living with the same person, sleeping in the same bed and being very far away from each other; it is possible. We can work with the same person every day and be very far away from them, conversely we can be very far away physically and very near to them. So what makes us to be connected to Borobudur, to be connected to our guru, to be near to each other and to be together shows that our minds and hearts are going in the same direction, which is our practice of the dharma in the best way that we can, sincerely, in every thought, in every action, in every choice, in the best way as we can; this is the most important thing. So I would like to just ask everyone to remember and to say once again how grateful we are to Rinpoche in order be able to guide us in such and excellent manner. I have met many gurus from many places and every one of them has a special quality, (and normally I don't mention these things in this way) but Rinpoche really has qualities that I have never met in other masters. Many lamas I have met and we are so extremely fortunate; it is not normal for



lamas to relate to us in such a humble way and so being together is almost impossible. Normally we would go for teachings and for five minutes have a possibility to have a very formal meeting for a few minutes and then one hand in the hand and a final shake and goodbye. All the different masters with whom I received wonderful teachings, but I would never ever think about asking something personal. If I would ask, they would look and say, 'What?' Rinpoche is here taking care of us in every way, in every manner and this is something that is extremely rare and extremely precious. We need to deeply rejoice just to see the value, the preciousness of what we have with us, okay."



... the only reason that all the buddhas
have taught everything they have taught and all the gurus
of our lineage, up to our own root guru, Gangchen Rinpoche,
is because they believe that we can do it.
Maybe we do not, but they do; they are wiser than us.

Why would anyone teach something to someone if he or she
does not believe they can put it into practice?
Why would Rinpoche come here, every day, going with us around the
Stupa? It is not for fun; even we have fun, but it is not for fun.
It is because he believes that we can do it!



... Enlightenment is a state in which we are completely free
from ignorance ...



Lama Gangchen

Conclusion

It is important to say thank you to the hotel here, because they let us do anything, whatever we think in our mind we are allowed to do, we do not need to ask much, it is just like if it was our own house, we can do whatever we want in whatever timing in whatever form and no one is ever complaining and everyone is extremely kind and we have seen now all the local people, how kind they are and gentle and that includes the police and everyone and this is something that you have your own experience about it. Also from the blessings of Borobudur also people were so peaceful. We need to be very grateful to them all, remember their kindness, because it not so usual to have these conditions in this way. So while we were here during these days together we did many things, but still there were many things that we wanted to do but could not do, some other teachings that were planned to be given and explanations; for example we printed one Mandala of Borobudur with the Kalachakra inside and wishing that Lama Caroline could give explanations of Borobudur related to Kalachakra, but we were not even able to explain the Mandala related to the 5 Dhyani buddhas so much, so hardly Kalachakra so this is auspicious, so that next time we can do it. Then also the fact that we had the Rabne Chenmo and during that the mediation that we were doing is exactly the same thing that we do as we go every morning to the Stupa, like inviting Akshobhya with Mamaki and receiving the blessings and regenerating back on the holy place and so on, so it is really what we do when we do the practice of Self-Healing; it is nothing new truly, what we are doing is making it more easy and accessible to everyone. As we go on singing the different melodies every morning and doing the practice, adapting to different ways, but truly we are not doing anything new. We are just following very old teachings and very old tradition but adapting it to the way that is more suitable to our needs and mentality at this time.

Previously people were coming here and making prayers and so on were just people from the East, like from one particular country. Here we are people from all over the world, all together and this is very special. You all have your own learning, your own knowledge, profession and so on and, you Westerners from modern societies have the need to understand and be the type of disciples that we call those that follow through understanding. Previously Lama Michel was explaining the two types of followers; the higher intellectual capacities that feel the need to understand in order to follow and the lower intellectual capacity that follows with faith without initially understanding and, later coming to that understanding. So, most of you become the first type, who understand in order to follow - higher capacity in this way. There are so many wonderful conditions that we have, all being here together and this is something that is very beautiful, very precious and it is important for us to rejoice about it.

So what we have learned in a simple way, is how to circumambulate Borobudur. Circumambulation (Kora in Tibetan) is something very important in the Buddhist tradition in different countries, especially in the Tibetan tradition but not only; however, there is a lot of value and importance given to the act of circumambulation. We need to know how to do it also. So the meaning of what we have learned is how to do circumambulation here in Borobudur. If we go into more details, then we can look, for example, the first part of the circumambulation, the bigger one where we start, there are so many precious things there inside; from the practice of Vajrasattva to the meditation on the death process, then there is the white vision, the red vision, the black vision, the clear light, all the important things of tantra, of generation stage and completion stage - everything is there, being transmitted in a very personal and direct way; heart to heart. So everything is inside of that, so much has been given there, maybe not in a way like teachings explaining one, one by one but doing together, transmitting together in a way that you receive it.

Then, if you go to the rest of the practice, everything is in there, we do walking meditation, there is

the part of developing mindfulness, the path of being aware of having the mindfulness like, which side of the Stupa, what is the colour, what is the symbol, what is the mantra, what is the mudra, of being present in what we are doing and so on. Then there are so many other aspects of the path that we are practising as we go on every day. So in essence, if we go into more details, we have done so much, we have learned so many things. If we go in a more rough way, we have learned as a minimum how to make circumambulation.

Lama Michel

So Rinpoche was just asking me to tell one thing, that before I was explaining about Self-Healing and saying how we showed it to different important masters and so on. One of the very important masters to have been shown the Self-Healing was Kyabje Choktrul Trijang Rinpoche, the reincarnation of Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang: Rinpoche's root guru.

We were in the United States in his heart place, in his centre, we were doing Self-Healing and Rinpoche was doing practices, I was just explaining what was what, as things were going on and at the end of the practice, he said to Rinpoche, 'Just as the previous Trijang Rinpoche gave the title to Pabonkha Rinpoche, because Pabonkha Rinpoche was giving the teachings of Sutra in such an accessible way, of Lamrim, that his teachings were called the Lamrim of the Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand'. This name, 'Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand' was given by Trijang Rinpoche - to say that it was so accessible in the way that he was giving it - Lamrim namdro lachang, which means Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand. Then Trijang Rinpoche said:

"In the same way I would like to say to you that what you have done with Self-Healing is that Self-Healing is the Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand of Tantra. So in the same way that Pabonkha Rinpoche made Lamrim so accessible to every one, you are making tantra so accessible to everyone'."

Lama Gangchen

The very fact that Trijang Rinpoche could, in such a short period, really get the meaning of Self-Healing and I say that for me, this is a real sign that he is a true realised reincarnation of Trijang Rinpoche. If he were just a normal common person, enjoying life in whatever way, with his wife and children, then he would not be able really to grab the meaning of Self-Healing just by looking at it once. This is one more sign of really being the true reincarnation of my root guru, Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang. Also the fact that many other great masters have rejoiced about Self-Healing like Geshe Jampa Tekchog - he was the abbot of Sera Je monastery. He was a good friend of mine, one of my teachers and one of the most important masters in India in his last years, he has since passed away. He already endorsed Self-Healing and was a very great supporter of Self-Healing also.

So we have here the names of many of our lineage gurus, this is so that we receive their blessing by saying their names, so in this way I think it is auspicious to conclude here, with the names of our gurus and, remembering this. Originally I had made the plan to make an initiation, but actually we are giving an initiation every day; we go to the Stupa every day and have an initiation, we have transmission, we have commentary, we have oral instructions. This is the way of our tradition and this is the way how it should continue to be, so I think it is auspicious to conclude in this way and there is not need to go further with more but we will keep the traditional, formal initiation for another time.

It is important that we dedicate the merits that we have generated here during this period for peace in the world, for the environment and for everyone of us and all the sentient beings to be free from one's own suffering, especially as we dedicate this new year of the rooster, may it be successful, may it be auspicious so that may everyone be free from sicknesses of mind and body, may all be healthy with mind in a state of joy and stability and satisfaction.

Also we dedicate for everyone to have a healthy state and to be free from one's own sicknesses, especial the people that are here that have their own sicknesses, people that we know that have



different types of sicknesses; some people have sicknesses with strong names such as cancer and so I wish that through the power of the blessings of Borobudur and our merits we hope that this cancer will be cancelled. So we cancel all our suffering and sicknesses and so on; this is something that I have experienced, I have seen different types of cancer being cancelled - this is not only for cancer but other sicknesses also - I have seen this at different times, it is something that is truly possible. So not only to carry out the blessings from Borobudur, not only to cancel cancer but also to cancel all forms of sicknesses and diseases.

I am happy that each one of you can have your own experiences of the benefit of the power of the practice in the dharma. When I first came to the West (a long story of which this is a short explanation) I made a commitment that I would show to the world the power of our lineage and the power of the dharma; the power of wisdom, the power of love, the power of realisation, the power of compassion. I was able to do it, you all have experienced it in different ways, so this is the fulfilment of one of my objectives from the first time I came to the West. So you have your own experience and this is the most important thing.

We have different friends who have been writing books about their own experiences and with the dharma and with Borobudur and so on and, this is something that is very, very important because this is a way of sharing with other people and also it is a way sharing with others and of making this knowledge to remain for a long time also. There was one friend, Mandana from Iran: once I was explaining to her all the benefits about Buddha's life and so on and then she said, 'Oh Rinpoche, Buddha is far away, tell me about yourself; if you tell me a story about your life, this I will believe more that stories about the Buddha, these are too far away for me'. In the same way, your own experience becomes very valuable for other people as an example. So it is important for everyone to write down their experiences, to put them together to make them later accessible to others as a way of example; something very precious. If you are able to do that, maybe publish it and share with others, then it is what we say, it will never fade away as long as space is present.

These texts that we have written based on experiences, they were written in an Asian Eastern system and it is a different way of writing and saying things. You are Westerners, you have your own culture, your own way of saying things, you should respect your own way of thinking, so sure it will be different to that from the experiences of texts that were written in Asia in these past centuries, but because you are from a different culture it is normal that it will be different, there is nothing wrong with that - but you should write your own experiences and share them. Also, because of the way of writing in the past, things were not written directly they put together with a lot of poetry and different sorts of words and metaphors, for instance, you do not say born from a lotus, you say born from water and then there are different ways of writing - the one born from mud but is not stained from mud, which is the lotus and like this. There also if you look into Tibetan poetry there are 50 names for the Moon and so on. So what happens is that in the past there was a specific reason to write in this poetic way. Nowadays it is better to have a direct understanding, because it is more important to go for the actual meaning, because if we are too poetic nowadays we will lose the meaning. That is why I am showing things directly, without all this ornamentation of wordiness.

When I have not done all of this like a crazy person, I was doing whatever came into my mind. I have done all of it requesting all the permissions from my gurus, requesting my permission from my yidams and protectors. Once I received the permission from my guru and my yidams, then I wrote the books, shared the teachings and explained them.

I am not going to say much more, I am going to give and we will receive the name mantra of the guru and I will give you a short blessing empowerment. I said I was not going to give empowerments and now here we are, I am giving one!

Everyone, thank you very much, Tashi Delek!









PHOTO REPORTAGE







