

Lama Michel

Self-Healing

It is such a great pleasure to be here in Borobudur, I was thinking at one point today; so many years! First time I was here was in 1993 and since then coming every year. Coming all these years and in a way it looks like we are doing the same thing all the time. Every time we go to the Stupa we do the practice; it looks like the same. But truly it is never the same because every time we go it goes deeper, we have a different understanding, a different experience, because we also are different. Every time we go, day after day, year after year we are different ourselves also, so we can experience things in a different way.

So today most of all I would like to share with you two thoughts. One is a line from Buddha, which is very simple but at the same time very profound. The good thing is that because it is simple it is easy for us to remember and, because it is profound we can apply it in many different aspects of our lives. So repeat after me: Dani, Dagi, Goen, Yan, Ying, Dani, Dagi, Dra, Yang Yin, Dani, Dagi, Goen, Yan, Ying, Dani, Dagi, Dra, Yan, Ying. Dani, Dagi, Goen, Yan, Ying, Dani, Dagi, Dra, Yan, Ying. 'I am my own protector, I am my own enemy'. This was said by Buddha himself and, in a way we may look to it and say, 'Okay that's simple', when we think that 'Sure I am the one that can take care of myself, I am the one that can harm myself' but there is one important thing that we all need to do whenever we approach any teaching is to examine which situation I am in right now. We need somehow to apply this teaching outside of the conceptual realm and into our own experience at a practical level. That is very important - it is one thing to understand that I am my own protector, I am my own enemy, I am the one eliminating my suffering, I am the one making my self to suffer and I understand this because of karma, whatever and, we can make quite an explanation out of it.

But the first step, lets look. In our own lives, are we aware that we are our own protector or are we looking for protection somewhere else? Are we aware that we are our own enemy or do we look for enemies outside? That is the first question that we need to make. So what does it mean when I say, 'I am my own enemy?' It means that whenever I am in a situation of sorrow, of suffering, unhappiness - who is creating it? Causes and conditions, but its not based on the conditions, its not based on the circumstances rather its based on how I experience these circumstances. I understood this for myself, many years ago, the first time I went to Albagnano (before reaching Albagnano). It was an evening and I was with Francesco and Gabriella in the car and it was raining a lot and I just got this insight, which was 'problems exist and will always exist'; it was a strong insight at that moment. It gave me a deep relaxation, because what does that mean? It means that if problems exist and will always exist, I cannot base my own happiness onto the creation of a perfect world because that's impossible. Until that moment, that is what I had been doing, I had been trying to create a perfect world which means, the day that this person will behave in this way, that person will not behave in that way. That my job will happen like this, that my health will go like that. We have many circumstances that we put and we say, 'When this will be like this and that will be like that, then everything will be fine'. We try to create a sort of perfect reality and the truth is what? That it does not matter how much we move along, it does not matter what things we are able to do because finally there is always something that is not as we wish or expect.

So my conclusion was, if my happiness needs to depend on the conditions of other people - what other people say, what other people think, what other people do, if the situation is in a way or another and so on; then I am lost, I have no hope, I have no freedom, no possibility to be really happy and satisfied. What level of control do we have on what other people do and how other people behave? From zero to ten, zero I would say. We can interact with people, but we cannot control anyone. So if my happiness depends on others and I have zero control over that, then I have zero control over my happiness and then I am doomed. Also it is because that if we look at the world around us

it is not as though we are in the best place; there are always conflicts going on and this and that, wherever we are. I always like to think that when we put a lot of people together, to have harmony within a group means having harmony between the mental defilements of each one. When one gets pacified the other is jealous; when the jealousy of one is finished then the anger of the other comes out; its always like this you know. There is constantly something there. So the conclusion was, because I cannot depend on others the only thing I can do is to depend on myself. I am my own protector, I am my own enemy.

So where can I do something? In the way I relate myself to situations, in the way I relate myself to problems and to everything else, you know - that's where I have freedom. Our freedom does not lie on other people allowing us to do something or not. Our freedom does not lie on having the right conditions or not. Our freedom lies in having our ability to choose in how I relate to the world. Right now, for each one of us, we should make ourselves a question, 'Am I my own enemy?' If yes - normally where do I project my enemy? Whenever I suffer, which are the causes for my suffering, who is my enemy, what am I trying to change, what am I trying to destroy? And at the same time, where am I looking for protection? Am I looking for protection within my own stability and peace of mind and satisfaction - like I get sad because something happens and I did not like it? Where do I look for refuge and protection into trying to make the situation as I think it should be, or saying that I need to develop more stability? So normally, how do I act? I am not my own enemy and I am not my own protector and, we act as if we had no freedom. We act as if we were a simple result of the world around us, which means, why am I sad? Because this and that happened. Why am I happy, because this and that happened. And because of that, we try to change things constantly. We could go on and on giving the explanation of why this happens, okay? It is something that is a bit too complex to go into right now, but when we analyse that reality appears to us as if it was inherently existent and we grab at it in this way and if we start to analyse how our perception of reality functions, then we can understand better how and why we project outside. Just to make one small example: If we take one sound and I play the sound of the bell. Then we ask when we listen to the sound, is it pleasant? For most of us 'yes' right? Someone may not like it, but for most of us it is a pleasant sound. So, if I stop the sound do we want to listen to it again at some point? So if we ask, did you have a good sensation when you listened to the sound? Where did the sensation come from, it comes from the bell. So if I want to listen again, where do I find it? In the bell - however with this experience of listening to the sound of the bell, is it made out of only the bell or are there other components? There is the bell, there is the vibration, there is my own ear sense consciousness, there is my own emotion at the present moment and the value that I attribute to the sound that I am listening to. So actually, the experience that we have, is never made of only one thing; the object of the senses is an important thing but it is not alone, there are many other components together - but we do not take those components into consideration, we just look at the object and we think it is coming only from that, so we try to avoid it if it was a bad sensation or we try to get more of it if it was a pleasurable sensation. So the question again, where do I project my own enemies? Its not a stupid question because normally we are not aware of that. We just live life, going on and complaining and sometimes rejoicing, mostly complaining but life just goes on. We do not stop to ask, where do I project my own enemies? When we stop to analyse, we will see that most of the times, the greatest of the enemies that we project is the fact that things are not as we think they should be. This is the first enemy that we project, the first enemy that we focus on because thats what we expect - that we will be happy when things will be just as we think they should. And whenever something is not that way we think it should be, we get upset. So again, cause of suffering outside. On the other side, when we look for our own happiness, if we look most of the times, we look for happiness into two things. I am sorry to say, but maybe I am over simplifying, but if we look and forget the days that you are in Borobudur enjoy with blessings and so on. Most of the time, generalising, we project our happiness into three things maybe, which are: Gaining the objects of desire, not separating oneself from the object of attachment and avoiding the object of aversion. Sometimes we can condense the whole of life into these three things. If we try to take all the actions that we do, being sincere



to ourself and try to put them into these three categories - okay trying to get the object of desire, not wanting to separate oneself from the object of attachment and avoiding the object of aversion. ###How many experiences and actions are outside of these three? Not so many. We have this spontaneous wish to be happy, we have this strong spontaneous need to look for happiness and to avoid our own suffering. This is not an issue; rather the issue is to do something that works. So lets take these three examples and the first question: Is it possible to gain all the objects of desire? Yes or no? (No). And what is the nature of desire? The more I have, the more I want and the more I want the less I have. Because of the nature of desire, even if we get everything we want, then we want more so its never possible to have everything that we want. If we project our happiness in to being able to have everything we want, that is already stupid because it is not possible.

“Second point: Is it possible to avoid being separated from the objects of attachment? Is there anything that we really like, and we are attached to and, that we can do in a way that we will never need to be separated from it? No. I am sorry to put it in these words, but many of us in this society have this very naive view that when we die, we are going to meet our dear ones that are waiting for us just as when we left them - looking in the same way, waiting for us there. This is because we are not able to separate from the objects of attachment; people. Sorry if I put it so direct. Even lets say there is a possibility that we will re-meet that person, but after 50 years in another life, in another place, do you think it will be the same person? Not at all; many things have changed. The point is that we create illusions that it is possible for us not to be separated from the objects of attachments. If we truly observe, is this something that is possible or not? Actually not. By nature itself, sooner or later we need to separate ourselves from the objects of attachment. So we cannot base our happiness onto trying to avoid separating ourselves from objects of attachment.

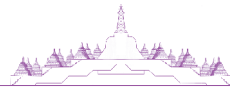
The third point: Is it possible to completely avoid entering into contact with any object of aversion? Can anyone do that? No. So finally, you know, what is the point of spending so much energy into looking for the objects of desire, trying not to be separated from the objects of attraction and avoiding the objects of aversion when its not possible to do any of this truly; what is the answer on the other side? Okay, do we have desires? Yes, we all have desires; the importance is to try to have desires that generate positive interdependence - this is something that is actually very important. But at the moment I have a desire, it means I have an objective, it means I have put my energy into something but I do not create the expectation of when and how I will get it; I just move forwards to it.

The most important thing for me is the fact of the second point; this attachment. When we know the things change, when we know that things are impermanent, we learn to enjoy them much more. Instead of having the fear that we need to separate, we enjoy the present moment when it is there. The fact of not projecting our happiness, not trying to hold that reality with regard to the things that we want and like, means also enjoying the present moment, living it in the best way. Otherwise it happens that today which is the 7th, then someone can be already thinking, ‘Oh in 5 days I need to go, what will I do?’ Then what? Then at that point, it is already finishing and, ‘I’d like so much to be here and, I want this and I want that’. Then what happens is you are here [in your mind] the day before you are leaving and instead of enjoying the Stupa, you are already thinking about home and the job and ‘I don’t want to go, and because of this I have this problem...’. What’s the point? You are here, enjoy being here! Its like some people don’t have so many days and my logic says, ‘I only have two days’. It is exactly because I have only two days that I need to focus in my best way and get the best out of these two days! Because the time is very short. So I will be present from the beginning to the end, I will do all I can for that. Instead, very often we are complaining that we do not have enough time and it would be better if it could be longer and, when we arrive, we are already complaining that it is not long enough, so we are not able to relax and enjoy and we are about to leave the second day already - we say, ‘Okay today is already the last day; I cannot enjoy anymore, so what is the point of being here?’ You know, so finally we come to the ‘why’ of the difficulty in accepting impermanence, to accept the natural process of transformation and change of things. And we want things to be as we wish them to be. So when we relax we say, ‘Okay, things

are impermanent, let's enjoy while we are here' and we learn to see the good qualities, we learn to experience the best of every moment.

"Together with that comes another aspect which is very important that I like to call 'humility', but is normally called wisdom. I call it humility because I think it is an extreme arrogance to expect things to be as we want them to be. Who am I to say how things should be? Why should the things be the way I want, simply because I am 'me'. I am just a very small part in such a complex interdependence, so it's like whenever someone comes and says, 'This cannot be like this! I am sorry, if it is, because it cannot!'. If you tell me, 'Oh I would like that it should be different'. Okay, let's try to interact and create an interdependence for it to be different, that's fine. Or when someone comes and says, 'Oh you cannot do this, this person cannot do this'. If the person is 'doing', it is because the person 'can'. It is better not to do something in order to change, rather to interact positively with it. Very often we have these very strong ideas about how things should be and, this is a form of arrogance towards interdependence; so this humility is in the way of accepting and knowing it is like the flow. Imagine that you need to sail, take a sailing boat and then suddenly you know you need to go from point A to point B and you take the map and make a straight line, the shortest way to get there. Then you calculate how many miles you need to go and how much time it should take and then you just go. Suddenly, you find you did not take into consideration that the wind is not as you expected, that the currents are not as you expected, that the boat is not as you expected and that you did not have the skills that you expected, that your crew is not as you expected, the weather was not as you expected and then what happens is that you are complaining that things are not as they should be. You have tried to sail in a direction without taking into account the direction of the wind and currents, because you just want to follow your way. Instead, if you had the humility to feel the current, to respect the wind, to understand that today I have no wind - so it's a day to rest so I can get my energy. In that way, next day I have the right energy when the wind comes to go in the right direction. When we know how to respect interdependence, it is like understanding and feeling the currents and the wind and knowing the boat well, respecting the crew, with its qualities and limitations and by that maybe sometimes the path looks longer, but we get much faster to where we want to go. Or, it is what allows us to go to where we want because the wind is going in another direction. So in life it is like this; it is very important for us truly to be able somehow to go with the current and the wind. We cannot surf in the opposite direction of the wave. If we go in the right direction, we can take all that strength to take us there and, the same thing happens in life, because the more we try to put a rigid fix onto how things should be, the more they will go in the direction they should not be going. ###

"So on the other side, the more we have our objectives (I'm not saying that we should not have objectives) but know what our goal is, but we must respect the winds and we must respect the currents, the boat and our own abilities and the crew that we have; we must respect all of that; otherwise we do not get to where we want to go. When we learn to relax in reality and to say, 'I will do my part, but I am just one part in a complex interdependence', and then you know, a great part of our suffering is gone. If we look at most of the situations, do we suffer more because of the way how things are, or do we suffer more because things are not as we think they should be? I think we suffer more with the latter. It is like there is another understanding here that is very subtle and, for me it makes a big difference. We do not suffer because we do not have the objects of desire. We do not suffer because we need to be separated from the objects of attraction. We do not suffer because we need to enter into contact with the objects of aversion. If we ask ourselves, 'Do we suffer when we encounter the objects of aversion?' Yes. 'Are we happy when we gain the objects of desire?' Yes. 'Do we suffer when we need to separate from the objects of attachment?' Yes, but that is an illusion. We do not suffer because we do not get the object of desire; we suffer because we desire what we cannot have. There is clearly a difference? It is like, 'I want to be an astronaut in this life' (I don't, but let's say I do). Do I have the means to become an astronaut in this life? - I think not anymore. If I want something that is impossible, I am just making more suffering for myself. Most of the times if we look, we suffer because we want something but we do not respect



the conditions of interdependence; that is why we suffer - nothing wrong about putting a direction and wanting something; the problem is that we put our wishes, our desires within a framework of time and space. We do not take into consideration that there are so many variables in between. So the reason why we suffer is not the reason that we cannot have what we want; we think we are suffering because we cannot have what we want - we are a victim of the world, 'I am a victim of the world because I cannot have what I want, so it's someone else's fault; I am not my own protector; I am not my own enemy - the enemy is somewhere else. Because the enemy is somewhere else, I look for the protector somewhere else. Instead, when I understand when I suffer because I wish, I desire what I cannot have; I desire something that the conditions and the causes are not there for it [the object of my desire] to be there - that is why I suffer. So who is my enemy? Myself, and where should I look for protection? Myself. We do not suffer because we need to separate ourselves from the objects of attachment. Rather we suffer we are attached to the objects that we inevitably need to separate from. Again, this looks like just a game of words; but it is not, it is a completely different perspective of reality, of life. If I understand clearly within myself, I don't suffer because I cannot have what I want; I suffer because I want what I cannot have. I do not suffer because I need to be separated from what - my objects of attachment. I suffer because I have attachment towards the things that I need to be separated from.

So in the first case, where do I look for a solution? Outside, because the enemy is outside, so I look for protection outside. When I understand that I suffer because I have attachment towards reality that is impermanent and inevitably we need to separate from these situations; where do I need to look for a solution? Inside; I am my own protector.

The third, we do not suffer because we enter into contact with objects of aversion.

It's difficult to enter inside this idea, okay? So we will repeat again that: WE DO NOT SUFFER BECAUSE WE ENTER INTO CONTACT WITH OBJECTS OF AVERSION. WE SUFFER BECAUSE WE HAVE AVERSION TO THE OBJECTS THAT WE ENTER INTO CONTACT WITH. I will say again so that we understand better - it looks like a tricky thing, but it is not. In the first version, when I say, 'I suffer because I need you; I do not like the blue thermos, so whenever I see the blue thermos I get nervous, because I do not like it. It is stupid it did bad things to me, I do not like its shape, it is not well done. For example this thermos, it's my thermos, I know it quite well, it has a big problem, it is too well done. So if you put hot water inside after 12 hours you want to drink and you think it's cold, but it's boiling as it was in the early morning. I have scalded myself a few times with it already, so now I know. So what happens is I could be angry with the thermos, okay? 'This thermos, I don't like it; I have an aversion to the thermos'. So whenever I see the thermos, I get upset. So what happens is that I have aversion to the thermos, so whenever I see the thermos, meet the thermos, talk and deal with the thermos - what happens? I get aversion and I suffer. And where do I project my suffering, why am I suffering? Because I have aversion, or I am suffering because I see the thermos and I have to deal with the thermos? How do we think normally? Whose to blame? My aversion or the thermos? The thermos of course, that's how we do normally, so where is the enemy, inside or outside? Outside. So we suffer because we enter into contact with the object of aversion, which means in this perspective the object of aversion is causing the suffering by itself, independently of the observer. If we look from the other perspective, we do not suffer because we enter into contact with the object of aversion. Instead we suffer because we have aversion of the situation, the people, the object that inevitably we enter into contact with. So why do I get angry, why do I suffer when I meet the thermos, it is because I have aversion towards it; not because the thermos is there. Clearly there is a difference.

I will repeat again okay, I will make another example to try to explain it better. This is an example I normally use when explaining the impermanence of the past, how the past is impermanent (but that is another subject, okay).

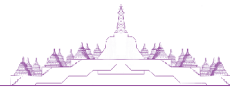
Lets say I am walking along the road in a big city like São Paulo and then suddenly someone comes and pushes me very strongly and I fall down and break my arm with an exposed fracture and I am full of pain. I don't know why someone pushed me, I am there and then there is the ambulance to take me to the hospital and so on. What kind of feeling do I have towards the person who pushed me? Attraction, aversion or indifference? Aversion most probably and maybe the feeling of revenge, if I later catch the person, I will call my lawyer okay. Then, there is a certain point there at the hospital, the police arrive with the footage of a security camera that shows the event. I see the video, it shows me what happened and I think 'Oh finally, I can catch that person! I need to do something, I needed to see who it was', and we are angry and its an object of aversion and aggression. Then, when seeing further into the footage, I can see that it was what was behind us, that we could not see and it was an armed robbery and someone shot in our direction. The guy that was passing by, he saw what was happening and pushed me to protect me and he saved my life; thanks to him I was alive, otherwise I would have been shot and the police were saying 'Look how lucky you are because actually, this guy really saved your life'. Is my arm still painful, yes. But do we still have the same anger as before? What do we feel now towards that person? Attraction, aversion or indifference? Gratitude, attraction. So the arm is still painful, the situation is the same there, the person that comes in front of me is the same person, but what makes it an object of aversion is how I feel, how I see reality, not the person by himself. So we do not suffer due to entering into contact with the object of aversion; rather we suffer because we have aversion. Is that clear? This makes a big difference in life; if we just understand these three points, it really makes a big, big, difference: First thing is, we do not suffer because we cannot have what we want; we suffer because we want what we cannot have. Normally we connect our suffering to the fact that we do not have what we want. In this case actually we are suffering because we want what we can not have. This does not mean that it is not possible to have that, this does not mean that to have that is something bad. It just means that at that moment, the causes and conditions are not there to have it. Because of that, because we cannot accept the lack of causes and conditions we end up suffering. We do not suffer because we need to separate from the objects of attraction. We suffer because we have attachment towards them and we do not accept impermanence. We do not suffer because we need to enter into contact with the object of aversion; we suffer because we have aversion to the objects that we enter into contact with. Okay, I think its clear right now. So from this perspective we can see again: I am my own protector; I am my own enemy.

Finally, I am creating my own suffering but at the same time, I am my own protector. This means the solution lies within myself. When we look at the Four Noble Truths, its the same thing. First, for example - we look at the truth of suffering. Normally we project suffering as something that is connected to external causes; the first two Noble Truths, suffering and the causes of suffering; the enemy is outside and because of that the Truth of Cessation and the Path - where do we look for the solution? Outside. So our normal way of saying is 'I am not my own protector; I am not my own enemy', the world is my enemy and this protector is who knows who, is somewhere, outside. The protector is money, the protector is power, the protector is pleasure, the protector is recognition, the protector is whatever things we project normally outside; that is normally where we project the solution for ourselves. The Buddha stated it so clearly, you know."

Question/comment from the audience

"It is just that when you project something inside, how are you supposed to deal with something or whatever with the way one projects? With all the baggage that we carry and the likely people that we are, we should be able to have some certain attitudes towards life and then many times we can not, so that creates frustration, so how do you know if its illusion or if it is real - what you are expecting to get inside?"

This is happening because we relate to everything and also to ourselves based on what we call mental images. We have the idealised idea of what we are and how we should react. Very often



we do things in this way, but at other moments there are other variables that we did not take into consideration; they are things that we conceptually we know about, but emotionally we have not really dealt with yet. When situations come in a certain way, we cannot be the way we expect ourselves to be. So when we talk about respecting the flow of the ocean (I made an example in the beginning saying that we need to respect the currents and wind, but also we need to respect our boat, we need to respect our crew and we need to respect ourselves and our limits - if we are tired and so on) regarding our own selves we relate to ourselves based on an idealised image that we have of ourselves; which most of the times does not fit. So when the fact that it does not fit comes out strongly, normally we become upset with ourselves. Instead of thinking, 'Oh once again I am expecting of myself something that is incoherent with whom I am', its because I still need to deal with those things and I still need to learn something from that. Instead of that we blame ourselves and say, 'I should not be doing like this because I am not supposed to be like this'. It is the same thing that we do with external things; exactly the same attitude. So on the same way we relax in the external world, we also relax regarding the external reality of who we are. We make the best of what we have and we direct ourselves; we should always have a direction. At the same time we should embrace ourselves with our difficulties and our faults and everything else. This is important because, finally we suffer much more because we cannot accept our own reactions compared to the reaction itself. Normally the reaction, after some time is finished, but then we have the feeling of, 'Why did I behave like this; I should not be like this and I should have overcome this and yet I did not!!', then its even harder. So this is because we are attached to an image of ourselves that is incoherent with reality.

One of the points here that is very important and we say that, 'I am my own protector and I am my own enemy' the main part that we should work on is understanding which are the enemies and protectors outside that I project? Are they real or are they illusory? This is important because until we do not see that each and every external enemy and protector is illusional - (I'm talking about money, pleasure and things that happen that are completely independent of us) are an illusion, we will not be able to understand that I am my own protector and, that I am my own enemy.

So what to do? Here it comes to a point that is very practical. We understand things but we must do something about them. It is not enough just to say, 'Oh yes, I understood, yes, yes, I see that I am my own protector and I am my own enemy', and after some time, there we are and when we order something in the restaurant and the food did not turn out the way we expected - there we are, nervous, you know? Many years ago, we were here in Borobudur, I think it was 1995 or 1996 or 997, some time like that and Rinpoche asked me to give some teaching about something. I was talking about the hotel's pancakes - that year people were ordering a lot of pancakes and it was very interesting because sometimes people would order this pancake and it would come so nice! Then another person sees this and orders a pancake too and it would come terrible! People would get really upset about it. The reason for it, from what I understood, was that sometimes the cook was in the kitchen and sometimes the cook was not there, then some other guy would do the pancakes. Finally the people would get upset and, you look at these Indonesian people - they are so kind. In all these years coming here I never saw anyone manifesting aggression. Getting angry I do not know, but manifesting physical and/or verbal violence and aggression, never. Sometimes I get ashamed because we start complaining and we become verbally aggressive over so many little stupid things and, there they are smiling. They smile at us, looking at how infantile and stupid we are and hardly believing it? This is how I feel at least! There we are people getting completely nervous and they are still smiling. So, what was happening at the time - lets say you order your pancake and it is not presented the way you expect; reaction? Attraction, aversion or indifference? Aversion! What possibilities are there? Eat the pancake you do not like or keep ordering until you get the right one, because you never know when it will be? Or accept it? Or say, 'Okay, no pancake today!' Or keep ordering; but do not complain. Whenever we do complaining in this way, it means that we expect reality to be different to the causes and conditions that are there.

"It is like, one time a friend of mine who was in Brazil - he is a guy working for television and he was with his whole family on a private 'plane going to do a television program somewhere in Brazil and the 'plane crashed, it was quite bad but it was not fatal, they all survived. Some of them broke ribs, but finally it was okay and when I went to see him, he made me the following question, 'You know, (he was a famous person) so many people write me messages and most of them are telling me that I need to thank God, God did not want me to die and its thanks to God I am here alive and so on' and then he said to me, 'In my mind it does not fit so well, you know, because if it was God that saved me, why did he allow the 'plane to crash?' He asked me, 'What is the explanation you would give from the Buddhist perspective?' I had never thought about this kind of thing before so I was thinking and then something came into my mind very clearly because it all happened in a most strange way, the 'plane was touching down, there happened to be a field and no forest - if it had happened 2 minutes earlier or 2 minutes later they would have died, so it was exactly at the precise moment where something was possible and when they were going down the field at a certain point there was a bump, so it made the 'plane to go up again and down and, exactly when it went up there were many cows in front, so they went over the cows and they went down again, otherwise they would have hit the cows. There were many many small things that altogether made it possible for them to be alive. So after all these details I was thinking and I said to him, 'Look, the reason why all of this happened and you are alive and here now, is exactly the same reason why we are here talking today. It is the same reason why, when you take your car to go to work and everything goes fine and you return in the evening. Causes and conditions were created. The only difference being when the cause and conditions go as we expect, everything is normal. When something happens that goes outside of our expectations of what should happen, something is either wrong or a miracle. But there is no such thing as wrong or miracles; there is just interdependence, just cause and effects and the relationship within everything. We call a miracle wonderful things that happen that we do not know how to explain, that goes beyond our perceptive perimeters, that is all. When something bad happens we curse and so on because we do not know how to explain because it is all outside of our own expectations or remit.

So it is just this point which for me is fundamental, really to have this humility in front of interdependence and flow of reality because I have no true control; the only space where we can have real control is how we relate to reality. So I am my own protector and I am my own enemy also. Now, how can we do something about it? My sister just said, 'We have expectations of ourselves, we know things, but when we are in-front of the difficult situations, do we react based on what we know, or do we react based on our traumas and our habits and our defilements and so on?' Our habits. How can we change our minds? If I am my own protector, I need to develop my own qualities; if I am my own enemy, I need to eliminate my own defilements. How do I do that? One thing that is connected to the practice that we do here in Borobudur is to imagine a place where there is a lot of darkness, a very dark room. How can I eliminate the darkness? By bringing in light, right? Can I have the absence of darkness, without having light, is this possible? No, so whenever I take out darkness, I always get light. So, have you ever tried to eliminate a bad thought in your mind? Some thought comes and we do not like that thought; when a mind is coming and we really think it is not good and its coming back again and again and we want to eliminate it? What happens when we really try to put it away? Does it go away or does it stick even more? My sensation is that its sort of a sticky plasma, when you try to put it away, its like elastic; it goes away and then it comes back and it gets even more sticky! The more you put your hands, the stickier they become, you know? Normally, when we have a bad habit, when we have a negative thought, lets follow Self-Healing, fear, jealousy, envy, miserliness, arrogance, anger, aversion, unlimited attachment, desire, ignorance - whenever we have any negative thought appearing to our mind and we blame ourselves and say, 'This is negative, I must eliminate it!', we focus on the negative part and we try to put it away. However what we do many times is we try to take away darkness without bringing in light. Is this clear? It is not possible to take the darkness away, if we do not bring in light. We need to identify the darkness and we need to identify the light, so we can bring the light into the darkness.



To connect only to the light, not seeing our own darkness is not enough - this happens sometimes, what? People connect a lot to very good qualities and connect to a very loving and kind feeling and generate a very positive idealised image of oneself, but not able to see one's own defilements. Its like being in a pharmacy, but if you do not know why you are sick and if you do not take the correct medicine, it does not work. You can have the most powerful light but if you do not direct it to the shadow, it will not eliminate the darkness. So we must know where the darkness is and that is why we need to recognise our defilements; we need to recognise our anger, our fears, our attachments, our ignorance and so on. The solution is not by taking it away, rather the solution is recognising it and applying the antidote; we cannot eliminate darkness without bringing in light. So what we do every morning at the Mandala, we connect ourselves with the antidote, with the light. As we say in tantra, bringing the result into the path, we connect with Buddha Amoghasiddhi. How we did this morning, we started with Buddha Amithaba on the west side - satisfaction, concentration. Remember that without satisfaction we will never be able to develop concentration, this is one of the main keys. For example, in the Bodhisattva Acharyavatara in the eighth chapter it is about concentration. A whole part of the chapter on concentration and meditation is how to avoid desire and satisfaction because if we are constantly inside this satisfaction, our mind is not calm, so we cannot concentrate. So what we concentrate with Amithaba is satisfaction, concentration, pure speech and what we do is connect ourselves with their faults. We recognise ourselves within that, because if we do not apply satisfaction we will never be able to eliminate dissatisfaction. If we take the satisfaction and we try to throw it away it will not go. Instead if we cultivate satisfaction, dissatisfaction will go away. Is this clear? Then we go to the north side, we connect with Buddha Amoghasiddhi; first we generate the lotus, then we put the seed syllable and the buddha and then meditate on that buddha. So what is Amoghasiddhi? I am oversimplifying but Amoghasiddhi is, no fear, certainty in every action, power of realisation - which means a certainty in what we do and happiness for the virtuous qualities and positive actions and happiness of others. If we have a lot of envy and jealousy then its not a question of taking them away, rather we need to rejoice. The more we cultivate the joy for the happiness of others, the less we will be envious. The more we cultivate the certainty in our actions, the less fear we will have. We cannot eliminate the defilements without applying the antidotes. This is something that is really important because I have the feeling sometimes (I hope I am wrong) that we have this idea that if we blame ourselves enough, if we make ourselves guilty enough, then we will be absolved, everything will be fine. Do you understand what I mean? 'Oh I have a lot of anger, I have a lot of this so I recognised all my anger, I recognised all my jealousy, all my envy and I see how bad I am' and we think this is enough; but its not! Okay so its good that you recognised the darkness, now lets get the light. So you recognised your anger that is why you need to put energy together to develop respect, love, gratitude, wisdom - you have seen that you are jealous good, that's why you need to put effort in rejoicing. That is why in Self-Healing we talk about the defilements but we do not focus into taking them out (this part is also there) but it is mainly to recognise that we have to stop identifying ourselves with defilements, however mainly we focus on the qualities and we develop an identity within the qualities and develop them within ourselves. That is the most important part. As we go around, after Amoghasiddhi we go to the east Akshobhya so we develop love, compassion, stability, patience, joy. Then we go to the south side, Ratnasambhava which is developing generosity, humility and then we go to Vairochana in the centre, which is developing wisdom.

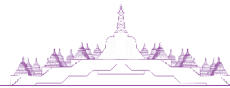
One of the important parts of being our own protector is that we must recognise where the shadow is; that is very important. We must see our defilements because there also the other danger lies - we only connect with the qualities and then, whenever we get angry it is not our fault, 'I am a pure person, I have nothing to be angry about; I am just angry because someone did something wrong' - its like 'I have no attachment; I just like this very much!' So sincerity with ourselves is a good thing and we should see the shadow, but focus into developing the light. This, in the practice of Self-Healing is symbolised by the fact of first creating the right conditions to develop your qualities, which are purification of the elements first. Then afterwards, developing the lotus, which means

creating the correct conditions for us to develop ourselves. It is not enough to have the potential, we must also create the right conditions. Then, afterwards we have the seed syllable, which symbolises the potential that we all have and need to make it grow. So we all have love, compassion, wisdom and so on, but we need to connect to it in order to make it grow within ourselves.

“Just one thing I would like to add, in this context its more like a curiosity than connected directly to what we are talking about. Some people ask sometimes ‘Why do we need to do the lotus, then the seed syllable, then the symbol, then the buddha? Can we not just go to the buddha that already has a lotus? Its all to long to do all that!’ How many bodies do we have? We have three bodies; we have a gross body, a subtle body and a very subtle body. (‘Ah, there is a cat!’, ‘Yes he also has three bodies!’). How many bodies does a buddha have? Three bodies, a gross body, a subtle body and a very subtle body. So when we are reborn we as a buddha we develop these three levels, so this seed syllable represents the very subtle body and mind. The symbol represents the subtle body and mind and the buddha represents the gross body and mind. This is something that you will not find easily written anywhere, but it is accepted like that. The seed syllable represents (everywhere in tantra) the very subtle body and mind, while the symbol represents the subtle energy body and the subtle mind. While the body of the buddha, complete with one face and two arms or whatever, represents the gross body and mind. The seed syllable is Dharmakaya, the symbol is the Sambhogakaya and the complete buddha is the Nirmanakaya - if we want to use complicated words. Otherwise its the very subtle, the subtle and gross, so we are developing from the essence and then develop the subtle form and then the gross, so everything is present there.

One of the most incredible things of Self-Healing for me is that it is a practice that we can do as beginners. We can do Self-Healing just like understanding the meaning of each Dhyani Buddha very roughly and not putting away the negativities and connecting ourselves with the qualities - there is already benefit from that. Or we can know the meaning a bit more but Self-Healing is a practice that can accompany us as the best tool for enlightenment, from the very beginning until the end. This is not something that I am inventing myself. At one time I was showing Self-Healing practice to one of my teachers in Tibet (he passed away, just some months ago) Kachen Losang Phuntsok Rinpoche, the abbot of Tashilhunpo in Tibet; one of the most respected and greatest masters of our time, in Tibet. When I showed him Self-Healing he was so happy. He said, ‘Oh, if we need to practice, that is what we need to do, because otherwise we need to recite so much and we do not understand what we are doing and everything is in there!’ He was amazed how we can adapt to different levels. So when we go from the seed syllable to the buddha, we can just imagine this is an archetype representing our qualities being developed, because it is gradual. Or we can understand the relationship between the very subtle, subtle and gross body. Also the syllable and the symbol and the buddha represent the transformation of that into the Dharmakaya, the bardo into the Sambhogakaya and rebirth into the Nirmanakaya. There are many different levels in which it is possible to practice, this is something that is really good.

So now to conclude: If I am my own enemy and I am my own protector, how can I do that? Because I understand many things but finally, on a practical level, what can I do? From my personal understand the only thing that we can do is to interact with ourself and the world in a positive way. And to connect with what Rohir was saying yesterday, talking about the plasticity of the brain and epigenetics and so on, something was said that I like and I would like to change something in the phrasing. Also you said, ‘We can change our brain; that is wrong, we cannot change our brains, rather our brains are constantly changing. We can choose the direction in which we want them to change. The idea that we can change it is a static and if we want we can change it, but when I continue with my bad life-style I am also changing it. I am also making it more rigid in one way or another and in that way, I am also changing it constantly and everything else. So what happens is that every word we say, every word, every choice we make, every thought we have has a total influence in our lives. That is where we can make the changes, gradually. It is possible you know, to develop great love and stability and spontaneous joy and great bliss united with emptiness and from one day to



the next; instantly. Sometimes it takes lives and lives but it takes what? Small moments, it takes words, it takes small actions and it takes thoughts; that is where things happen. One very beautiful thing is that everyone of us has a flexible mind and body but we need to train it. How do we train into something, what is the concept of training? I do something that is not spontaneous in order for it to become spontaneous. I need to play the piano, I do not know how to play, so in the beginning it is not spontaneous, I need to redo and redo a lot and then one day it becomes spontaneous; that means training. As Shantideva said in the Bodhisatvacharyavatara, 'There is nothing that is not easy once you get used to it' so we need to train. How do we train ourselves? By inducing ourselves into what does not come spontaneously, so that gradually it becomes spontaneous because, when it becomes so you know that you have completed the training. In other words we have reactions that we have already completed the training, but it was not a very good training, okay. Based on our education, based on the experiences we had in life we have developed different states of mind and habits that come spontaneously to us and these are harming ourselves. There are other habits that did not come spontaneously. Its not coming spontaneously to us, to react without anger when someone treats us with trash. Its not coming spontaneously to us to be grateful all the time, or patient or to treat people with equanimity and so on, its not coming spontaneously to us to perceive impermanence in phenomena. Technically we know, but practically we are completely thinking that everything is permanent, sorry to say. If we ask to anyone here if the reality in which we live is permanent or impermanent, what do we say? Impermanent right, but truly, how does it appear to us? When we go tomorrow morning to the Stupa what stupa do we expect to see, the same one as today or something a bit different? Same one. Reality appears to us as if it is permanent and we believe in it and grasp at it as such. Then when we come after many years, we see that the bass reliefs are not as before and we get so upset and, 'Oh, you know when I came here 20 years ago the images were so much more clear, now they are not anymore!' - wind, sun, touching, scrubbing, all the things together. That is why, when I go to the Stupa (only something personal here) I try to avoid touching any part were there are images of the faces or anything. I like to touch the big, big stones, but not the other parts. Because how can each part of the Stupa be degenerated? One of the things is touching. Every micro-interdependence makes the whole thing together, 'Ah, there are so many people touching, so what's the difference?' (I do my part, that's all.)

So its just a fact of understanding that things are not permanent, but it does not fit into our minds. So how do we develop this? By inducing artificially ourselves to feel impermanence. When we are able to generate the mind that perceives impermanence, it does not come spontaneously but we generate it, through analysis, through experience, through meditation or whatever and then gradually we can make it happen. We can generate love, patience, tolerance, respect, gratitude, wisdom in an artificial way. Artificial does not mean fake; artificial means it does not come spontaneously. We have this wrong understanding sometimes in the West that we must be spontaneous, 'At least I am spontaneous!' Better not! If to be spontaneous means to manifest every thought that comes to my mind and say everything that I want to say, independently as to whether its positive or negative; that's not a good thing, you know. Finally I make actions and actions create habits. So we induce ourselves to make positive actions, positive feelings and by inducing these states of mind actually we get used to it. But I am sorry to say one thing, there is no free lunch. Which means there is no result without effort. Its like the story from Milarepa. Milarepa at the end of his life, when he was together with Rechungpa, one of his disciples - he was saying 'goodbye' to his disciple because this disciple was going to leave for a long trip. Rechungpa was leaving and he said to his disciple (they knew that they would not meet anymore in that life) 'Oh my son, you go safe on your journey, go safe on your path because I have given you everything you need for your path', and he did not mean the travel he was going to make, he meant the path to enlightenment'. So Rechungpa gave his profound thanks and left following tradition, not to show his back to the master until he lost sight of the master. At a certain point, not far, Milarepa called him back and said, 'Oh my son, come back here!' I forgot to give you the most important of all teachings and, I think that Rechungpa must have thought that is was lucky he remembered now! This was not in the biography, but then Rechungpa

arrives and when he is in front of Milarepa, Milarepa turned his back on him, raises his robe and show him his bum. (And he said it was very ugly, like the bum of a monkey.) Why, because Milarepa was sitting without a cushion, because he was so poor he could not afford a cushion, sitting for years and years meditating on the cold, hard stone. He had marks on his body from that. So he turned back again, after showing the marks on his body and he looked in the eyes of his disciple Rechungpa and said, 'Remember, without effort there is no result'. This means, you know, I can be the best friend of all the buddhas, but if I don't do my practice, they come and do it for me you know. Being Buddhist is not enough, being a friend of the lama is not enough, having all the buddhas praying for us is not enough; all of this is good, but its not enough. If we do not really take into our daily lives, not only here - here we are on vacation, vacation from our normal samsara. When we go back to our daily problems and everything, that is when we really need to apply, that is when we need to take refuge and sit down and meditate and do our meditation and do our sadhana, do our practice, apply patience, apply compassion and love and all of that. There is not such a thing when we die, to think, I will have a good rebirth because I am a friend of the lama's, I'm a friend of the buddhas. We have our own karma and we have our own mind and we act by ourselves and if we die with a negative state of mind all the buddhas can try to help us, but I'm sorry, I do not think it is possible. They can help us, but they cannot do something for us if we do not do our part. That is why there is the example that all the buddhas have the hook of compassion but we must have the ring of faith, so they can catch us. So it is very important from our side and, how do we develop all of this? By making effort, by dedicating and the main effort that we need to apply is in our meditation, in our practice. But also into inducing ourselves into attitudes that are positive but that do not come spontaneously. We need to cultivate it. Remember, that every time I get angry, I am just familiarising myself more with anger. Every time I complain, I am just familiarising myself more with complaint and dissatisfaction. It is not something small that happens when I complain one more time, it is not something small. What am I doing when I complain? I am familiarising myself with 'complaining' doing the 'complaining sadhana', you know. Meditation and recitation; familiarising myself with that thought. So just being aware of our own actions and by being so aware and connecting ourselves with the light, knowing that there is darkness, but if we connect ourselves with the light, then gradually we can apply the light and the change can come. You know, we are really fortunate that we can see the darkness up to a certain point and we know where to look for the light; we have the possibility for that.

But I just really would like a heartfelt request like - we need to practice. Do we get lazy, yes. I am a very lazy person, I have always have trouble with my own laziness. Some time ago I was talking about laziness, then I got into a definition of laziness - I'm trying to remember it: Laziness is when we think that we need to do something that we do not want. That is what it means to be lazy. I think that I need to do something, but I do not want to do it, that is why I do not do it. Normally, wherever there is laziness there is just this incoherence between what I know and what I want: That is it. So either we follow what we know or what we want to know, otherwise it is not going to happen. The main point, just to conclude is that as Rohir also said yesterday, 'After the party, come the dirty dishes' - in the sense that we have a wonderful moment, but then we go back with our daily life and there are many things going on and so on; but that is the real place for practice. Here we come to recharge the battery, but we need to use the battery in daily life. It is not possible to meditate on one direction and lead our life-style in the opposite direction; its possible, but it does not work because it does not bring results. The main issue is that we must meditate in our lives and for this I request everyone one thing: Please when you go from here, Borobudur; if you want to meditate, to do Self-Healing to do your spiritual practice, make formal time and space in your life for it. If you do not take your daily agenda and you put aside the time for meditation - 'Oh in the morning I can not meditate because I need to work'. You shower and change clothes, you eat breakfast and need to to go to work; so wake up 15 minutes earlier. How much time do we need to wake up before going to work? Some people half and hour, some people one hour, depending on how many things we need to do; we just need to put inside there whatever time we want to do our mediation. We must



create a physical space also, so have a small room in the house where we do the meditation, a corner in the house where we can do our practice, have a seat that is dedicated only for that. Because if we create the physical space and we create the space in time also, then we have less excuses - we can still have excuses, but then we have less excuses. So think well, during these days about whether I like to meditate? Do I want to do practice, like Self-Healing. Do I see any benefit from it, if yes take your timetable, take your schedule and put it inside in a way that is practical, not something that you know you are not going to be able to do. That is a very good way of taking care of commitments that we do not want to take, taken in a way that is not possible to keep, you know? Sometime we know we must take a commitment, so what do we do - we are lazy about it, we take the commitment and put circles and fences around and we know that somehow we are not going to be able to keep it, then say, 'Oh, sorry I was not able to keep it, because...of this and that'. We need to protect our commitments, that is why we need to create the conditions for them.

'I am my own protector, I am my own enemy.' Even with my physical health, I am my own protector, I am my own enemy. Why do I get sick is because of my own life-style, because of what I do, not because of anything else. It is like a car coming out of the factory; it depends how you drive and where you drive and what you do. Our body is quite perfect, it is an incredible mechanism. I do not know much about our body and medicines and such, but at least when I look I always get amazed at how it works. I remember some doctor saying once, 'You know, of all the functions of our bodies, most of the functions are on part of the system that we cannot choose, that are autonomous; we have a very, very, small functioning that are non-autonomous parts of our bodies and with this very small non-autonomous part we are able to destroy the rest of the balance', because the whole of the rest works perfectly. I also need to do my part, so I am my own protector, I am my own enemy - it is not in general; it is in every word I say; its in every choice I make; in every action I do; in every thought I have. Every time I eat something; I am my own protector, I am my own enemy. I wake up and I am lazy, I do not want to meditate - I am my own protector, I am my own enemy, which one do I want to follow?

So we need to remember this and by this also we relax and stop playing in the world and we can go to this. So just to say, we must make commitments with ourselves and we are in this moment here where we have very positive energy together with our guru that is so precious. It is really, really, really very special to be here; it is something that goes beyond what most of us are able to understand and think; that is what I believe at least. It is difficult for me to understand, so I think for most of us it is similar, that's all.

Its really, really special; last year one of my masters passed away and he was an amazing master! But if I put all the masters together and there are many, Rinpoche is someone that goes much beyond all of them. Anyway, there was one that was really special, that had many qualities similar to Rinpoche, he was really also beyond. He was the abbot of Tashilhunpo in India; all of them are buddhas, but it was from my own perception. So when we look for the qualities in the guru, what are the greatest qualities and kindness that we should observe in the guru? His ability to come down to our level and adapt to our needs. If we have all the buddhas coming here with their subtle bodies of light and they come here for us; we do not see them, so what? Or if they come here talking to us about high philosophy and talking about things that are very pure and very credible - we cannot even grab it! It is interesting, because if we see something in the master and the guru that is extraordinary and looks very strange and wow, he is able to fly or whatever, wow! But the greatest of all qualities is the ability to adapt to our needs; that is the manifestation of wisdom and compassion. This is something that Rinpoche shows perfectly. I have travelled with Rinpoche in so many places, he is like a chameleon, changing colour and shape according to the environment; like adapting to the people according to where he is, in the culture, in the place and always doing the best, putting himself in service for everyone else.

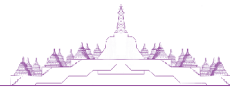
I just like to mention one more thing. If Rinpoche asks us something, are we able to do it normally?

Like if Rinpoche comes or a guru comes and says 'Oh please, give me the tea!', are we willing to take the tea? Or anything, are we happy to serve our guru? So basically, we should also be happy to serve his purpose, right? What is his main purpose? Serving others. So when we serve others, we are serving our guru because that is what he wants to do. Also when we help anyone, if we do it in the correct way, we are serving the guru - that is part of our practice also.

I would just like to conclude with one word of gratitude. There is one thing that is extremely important. One time I was reading a commentary on the Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion by a western scholar, Alexander Berzin. He wrote in this commentary if I remember, 'One of the main issues that we have in the Western world is that people connect to their gurus as if they were just professors; they do not connect deeply from the heart'. I was looking and thinking, that is exactly our opposite problem! We connect completely, maybe too much from the heart and not seeing Rinpoche as someone teaching us - sometimes you know? With this we can go to the other extreme. To have this feeling of family; family in the sense of sharing together, helping each other, respecting each other regardless of our background. If we check these days that we are here together, walking to the Stupa and so on - we are people from different countries, from different cultures, from different backgrounds - they are people we most probably would never meet if not under these conditions, you know. Here we are in harmony, doing something important for all of us together. This is a very special union and harmony and this is what gives also the possibility for us to have continuity with the Dharma in the Western world also - this kind of unity. When we take refuge, we do not always take refuge in the Guru, Buddha and Dharma, we also take refuge in the Sangha; this means to have the unity, to have people practicing together, to have also people who truly follow the Dharma together on the same path; it is extremely important for all of us. So I am very grateful to everyone really, because also, every time we do something in the correct way, also we make Rinpoche happy, so we become happy with that also. We need to remember that this is extremely precious. One of the main tantric vows is do not criticise your vajra brothers and sisters. Which means, do not create conflict within the Sangha, because the harmony is too precious for the spiritual development of each one of us. Where does conflict start? In the words we say. We are from different cultures, we are from different backgrounds, it is normal that we have different ways of thinking and doing and so on, but we must always remember we experience these days here, to connect always with what is uniting us and not with the little differences. Every time we see someone in an attitude or a way that we do not share, we need to just ask ourselves, 'How can I interact positively to try to help?' Simple as that. And again we go back to the same thing we said in the beginning - instead of saying, 'He should not be like this'. Who am I to say how the others should or should not behave? How can I make it better, how can I make it better?'

So all of this is important and I just want to say that this feeling is something that is very important. I take the opportunity to say just one thing on that. Our friend from China, Shirley, she is one of main persons that are helping the Centre in Albagnano, financially and so on. You may ask, that one of the persons that has only come recently to the Centre, that is almost never there, but helping so much, why? She says that because she sees in you, the practice of dharma; what inspires her is to help the Centre - sure is the Guru, but most of all it is to see the Western practitioners, to see that you really follow with faith and have this harmony of a family, all of this together that we create; this is something that is very important. Just to say that this is something that goes beyond where we expect the power of all of us. We take refuge in the Guru, take refuge in the Buddha, take refuge in the Dharma and take refuge in the Sangha and maybe take refuge in the Arhats and Bodhisattvas as well maybe, you





know - to take refuge in the Sangha does not mean to see each member of the Sangha as a buddha, rather it means that we need the spiritual community to be in harmony and union, in order for our own spiritual development; and we take refuge in it, we need to value it; it is fundamentally important that we have these realisations; this union. I do not know, but what I am going to say is maybe clear, maybe not, but we are not friends and vajra brothers and sisters; this is much beyond that. You know, I can have friendship with my mother and my father, but they are not my friends, they are my mother and my father. I do not know if its clear, what I mean? A friend is someone that when things go well, I go with him and when they do not, I can separate and finish, you know? Family is not like that and the connection that we have, when we call it the vajra connection, the vajra family; it is much more strong than blood connection because it goes from life to life. Its just like being a little bit strong, but we are not friends; we can have a lot of friendship, but we are not friends, we are vajra brothers and sisters. This goes much deeper and we need always to respect that; its like in family - we may not agree with the way a brother or sister behaves, but we always protect, we are always kind and we always take care (supposedly). The same thing is here, so this is something that we have, so we need to protect and take care.

I think this is all, otherwise I will not stop and I think it was enough for today; the essence is please put into practice what we have and what we can do. Do not expect one day to do great practices; we need to start now. At whatever level we can and that will truly make the real difference.

Repeat after me, 'May the mind become the Dharma; may the Dharma become the Path; may the Path be free from interferences'. This is the essence of most of the prayers. May the mind become the Dharma, may our mundane mind that sees the enemy and protector outside become the Dharma; may my mind become with renunciation, with love and compassion, coherent with the Dharma. May I really be my own protector, may I really recognise my own enemies; may my mind become the Dharma; may I change the priorities of my life in this way. Once I change that, it is not enough to be spiritual, we need to enter into the path to enlightenment, so may the Dharma become the Path and may the Path be free from interferences so we can move along to enlightenment.

One time I was going to meet a very important lama and there was not so much time and Rinpoche told me 'When you go there, you ask him to pray for this'. Then this Thai Rinpoche taught me this prayer. For me it is one of the most touching ones. So whenever we need to make a request, long-life is good; good heath is good and necessary; money is good, not necessary, in some cases yes but not so much; many things are wonderful, but if our minds do not become the Dharma - then what? We are just then living to survive and one day we die. And then we are reborn and we do the same stuff again. This is really the most important thing.

I will just change the subject, because for one thing I would like to share some information with you. I have made one video on Self-Healing and, it should be put online in the next few days and it was just a way to help everyone to finally be able to do the practice, in a more condensed way. So we will put this on YouTube in order for everyone of us to be able to do the practice in this way and share with others.

The other thing is that it was put in the program that I would talk about astrology; but I do not know anything about astrology. I have studied Tibetan astrology, yes but I have studied what the astrologers have studied in the first year. The first 4 or 5 years, Tibetan astrologers study how to calculate the (??) that is what I studied. So if you want to know how to make the calendar and how to calculate in, for instance, which month we are. This year, do we have 13 months, do we have a leap month or not? How do we know what Tibetan day it is, how to calculate the position of the moon and the lunar phases - this I learned. But nowadays we have everything ready-made, so there is not so much use for it anymore. But, just one thing about astrology; it is not about understanding astrology, its about the concept of astrology.

The difference between astronomy and astrology - Rinpoche put a lot of emphasis on astrology. So

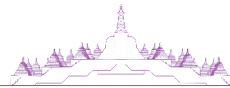
what is this difference? Astronomy is the science in which human beings have been looking up into the sky and predicting the movements of the stars. For a long time humans have been looking up with naked eyes or telescopes trying to understand what is happening outside there, with the stars and planets or whatever; that's all, maybe I am over simplifying it, but that is what it is.

Astrology is the science where human beings have been looking up, trying to understand what is happening up, but while they are looking up they look down and they see what is happening down; then making the relation between both. That is the principle. If we look and we start complaining and okay, every time planets are in this position and this and that and what is happening here to this and this and that person. We put together all the data of reasearch from thousands of years we get to what is known as astrology. So, does it work? Yes, but what works the most always is our interdependence. We can have the best astrologer and if we do not do our part, it does not work. What is astrology really beneficial for? Not to predict the future, but to help us to understand what are the currents and the winds, so we can choose how to sail. Which means we have many influences, every day in our lives and for periods also. So if we understand better we are the types of influences that we have from the positive and negative aspects. For example, if we look in the Tibetan calendar whenever it is a bad day to do positive actions - there are days that are not good to do these things, so if you try to do good, spiritual things that day you get a lot of interference. Conversely if you want to do very negative things, they go very well and in these days, they are the good days to overcome difficulties when you need to go against an interference; these are the days that have the energy of conflict. So when you need to engage in conflict, do so against your ego. So for example, if you need to start a retreat on meditation to eliminate your own selfishness or ego, you start that in the calendar when there is the energy of conflict. You do not tackle these with softness, you need hardness and take a strong lead, with energy and, 'I am going against this!' So its just the type of energy that we have, the influences that are there and we need to know how to use it in the best way. The crazy thing we do not know about astrology is that its like going for a sail without knowing the currents and the winds. That is what happens; we have so many influences constantly.

I gather the person was a bit sceptical about astrology? In this case you could ask, 'Is there any relation between body and mind?' They are directly connected, right? Is there a relationship between the Moon and the water cycles? Of course. Do we have liquid in our bodies? So if something changes in our body, is this also going to influence our mind? So does the Moon influence the mind? Sure, this is not mystical stuff; its quite obvious actually, when we look, and if we look it is the same thing with all the different planets; each one has a different type of influence, a different energy. So what is important is to learn what type of energy each influence has and then, to learn how to deal with that energy; what we need to do from our side in order to create a positive interdependence. If the wind comes from one direction, we know the movement I need to do in order to use that wind in my favour and not try to block it because its a 'bad' wind - there is no such thing as bad wind, but yes, there is not knowing how to deal with it.

So in this way I think it is very important for us to study astrology, to understand it, not to predict the future but to observe our own lives and understand the influences we have so that we can walk in life with more certainty and with less interference. Very often, the interferences we have in life are not because someone else is harming us, rather it is because we do not respect the currents and the winds, we do not respect the conditions around us. If everyone had this awareness it would be perfect; it works in the same way for everyone; everyone is influenced by this but they might not be aware of it. You do of course need to take care of priorities in life, food, a place to sleep, but these things do not mean you are not influenced by it; its just that you do not feel so influenced because there are other issues that are more gross, but necessary also.

For all of us, it is important. I am not going to explain anything about astrology; I just make a request: Not to study astrology in order to have a fun way to try to understand what will happen to someone,



you know. Really however, to understand what the influences are that I have, at this moment, in my life and how to deal with it; to understand the best way to act and what is the practice that I need to do and the energy I need to generate - this moment is better to be quiet and that moment is better to speak, you know. We need to understand the energy better; this is basically all that I wanted to say about this.

So my cough is coming back, so its a good time to stop and once again I say thank you very much to everyone.

Just one last thing [laughter]: Very often people think - when we talk about the lineage, when Rinpoche says, 'Oh the long-life of my lineage and my teachings are more important than my own long-life', well Rinpoche has said this many times and many times people say, 'Oh this depends on the lamas, so please keep the lineage well' and so on. We have our responsibility and we do the best we can to keep it, but truly keeping a lineage alive or not depends on each and every one of us. The better we do our practice (not only the benefit that we receive for ourselves) we are keeping the lineage alive and we are giving the possibility for other people to do it afterwards also. We could go into many details of all this, but just to say that now we are in a very, very special moment with Rinpoche present here, so we need to use it in the best way that we can every moment, but we need to build up our strength, which is our own practice, our own mental stability, our own unity - because this is what will allow us to make sure that in two or three or five generations we will still have people coming to the retreat here in Borobudur. All this will depend on our practice; most important. If we do well, then we give continuity. What gives the strength for continuity is not the verbal technical conceptual explanation of teachings; this is also useful no doubt, but it is not the main thing. The main thing is to have people that have realised the practice and when there are these people, this gives the possibility for other people to be influenced and touched and by that and, the practice to also give continuity.

So please everyone, practice well, not only for yourself, but also for the lineage, also for the next generation of people who are coming also.













