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NGALSO  
Path to Enlightenment

## Self-Healing 1 & 2 Summer Course Reading and Reflections part 9 Lama Caroline

*This text is a lightly edited transcription of a teaching given by Lama Caroline in the Albagnano Healing Meditation Centre, Italy on 22 July, 2020.*

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namo gurubhye  
namo buddhaya  
namo dharmaya  
namo sanghaya (x3)  
namo tri ratnaya

lo chog zang pö päl gyur tra shi pa  
thub chen tän pe thrin le yar ngö da  
phel je dro lor tsham pe dze pa chän  
päl dän la me zhab la söl wa deb

om ah guru vajradhara sumati muni shasane karma utta  
vardanaye shri bhadra var samanaye sarwa siddhi hung hung

pha khyö kyi ku dang dag gi lü  
pha khyö kyi sung dang dag gi ngag  
pha khyö kyi thug dang dag gi yi  
dön yerme chig tu jingyi lob

ma khyö kyi ku dang dag gi lü  
ma khyö kyi sung dang dag gi ngag  
ma khyö kyi thug dang dag gi yi  
dön yerme chig tu jin gyi lob

**om muni muni mahamuni shakymuniye soha**

**om maitreya maitreya maha maitreya arya maitreya soha**

**om karuna karuna maha karuna arya karunaye soha**

**lama khyen lama khyen drinchen tsawe lama khyen**

**lama khyen lama khyen kyabne kundu lama khyen**

Good afternoon everybody, or good morning if you're in South America. We're going to continue looking at *Self-Healing I*, the first book of Lama Gangchen Rinpoche that was based on a workshop he gave in San Paolo in Brazil in the late 1980s. Yesterday we were talking about **om muni muni** and then we were looking at some questions and answers. We're going to continue with these question and answers. Rinpoche liked questions and answers rather than just talking and talking. Then he could respond to what people are actually interested in. I like questions too. Let's have a look where we got to.

Somebody says to Rinpoche: **I read in a book written by H.H. the Dalai Lama that the perception of emptiness can solve all problems. What is the method to achieve emptiness. Is it chanting of the om muni muni mantra alone.**

Actually there are many beautiful books on emptiness. An especially nice one is by the Dalai Lama called *How to see yourself as you really are*, which I've read and it's very nice. There are many others by many great high lamas. We definitely need to find out more about that. Rinpoche says: "To develop the perception of emptiness it's important to have the right view of reality. Mantras are relative methods but they also bring benefits to the mind. Mantras are not the emptiness achievement, they are relative methods. However, the mantric vibration can help the mind to the absolute healing energy of emptiness, the true nature of all outer and inner phenomena". So mantras help, doing puja helps, all kinds of things help to put the mind in the right position. To understand emptiness we need to hear about it, think about it and meditate on it. We also need to develop a lot of *punya*, a lot of positive energy. They say in Mahayana Buddhism that to fly to awakening, to buddha-hood, we need two wings. Like in *Self-Healing* when we go like this [showing the garuda mudra]. This is like the Mahayana bird flying to awakening. A bird with one wing can't fly, it goes around in a circle or it can't take off. For a bird or a plane to take off they need two wings together. We need the two wings of what we call method and wisdom. Wisdom is understanding about the nature of reality, but method is all about as Rinpoche says: changing our small selfish heart into the big open heart of compassion. It's about putting other people first, developing empathy, being nice to people, opening our heart. Then based on that perspective we improve. If we do this side - opening our heart and taking care of others, we develop *punya*, positive energy. If we do it together with an understanding of how things work we accumulate lots and lots of positive energy, if not we accumulate some kind of energy. If we have the selfish, ordinary, ego mind, our bird is like the one in that film *Chicken run*, we're flapping a lot but we can only go a little bit, we just get over the fence. If we try and care for others and do positive actions with the

right understanding of the nature of reality, how things actually function, then we're like a condor. One of those big condors in the Andes that can fly for miles very easily or we can be like concord or something - it's very easy. There's a big difference. This one [flapping her arms furiously] that maybe we can just get over the fence or we can soar for miles in the sky. Obviously the second one is better so we should aim for this one: unify method and wisdom. In a very simple way we have to unify peace and love. We need to be kind, we need to open our hearts, we need to care for others - but we need to understand that everything is interdependent, we need to understand how things function. If we keep on doing that for long enough we will take off like in Self-Healing [flapping her arms]. One time a friend came to Rinpoche - this is true - and he said: "Rinpoche I want to know how to levitate". There are some Indian groups that teach levitation. Is it transcendental meditation where they do that hopping meditation? We also have this in Tibetan Trulkor. They have some method where they hold their breath, pull up their perineum and jump up a little bit which is the 'famous' levitation. They do this kind of hopping thing. We don't do it because we would hurt ourselves, we would hurt our knee or our back... Anyway some groups have that kind of meditation. One friend came to Rinpoche saying he wanted to levitate and Rinpoche said: "Yes of course, no problem, just do Self-Healing [flapping her arms] and eventually you will take off into the space of buddha-hood. Just keep doing this with Self-Healing". So Rinpoche taught him like this. [Laughing]. All the things we do have some symbolic meaning, but it's all to remind us of the spiritual path.

Then another question. Somebody asked: **Is it possible to solve black magic without making other black magic.** This is a Brazilian person. So Brazil in some ways is very much like here, in other ways it's very different because they have a different culture. In Brazil they have a lot of magic, the magical tradition is still alive and actually it's quite common. People make spells on each other and they're quite good at it. This is why they're asking this kind of question. When you drive around San Paolo there are many telegraph poles with adverts saying: I will do a spell and bring you love, guaranteed or your money back. All these signs on the telegraph poles offer love, success, money and all this kind of thing. It's part of the culture there. So that's why this person is asking this. It's not the sort of question people in Europe would ask so much. Anyway Rinpoche says: "Yes it's possible. If you understand emptiness no black magic can attack you, it's not possible". What does Rinpoche mean by this? It is possible that these kinds of magicians have some kind of energy, some kind of power. A lot of it is based on fear, on frightening people. People's own minds are projecting, completely overwhelming them many times. In the Gelugpa tradition, we don't actually do methods of attack. We do methods of self-defence. Energetic self-defence. One thing we do for example is recite the *Perfection of wisdom sutra*. You know the one I mean, you all know the heart sutra. "At one time I have heard the Buddha was sat on mass vultures mountain together with a great assembly of monks and a great assembly of bodhisattvas. At that time the Bodhisattva Avolokiteshvara was looking at how to meditate on the emptiness of inherent existence and also of the 5 aggregates. One of the Buddha's arhat disciples asks Avolokiteshvara how to meditate on emptiness and through the power of the Buddha, Avolokiteshvara gives the answer. He says Shariputra: whatever son or daughter of the lineage wishes to engage in the profound perfection of wisdom should look perfectly and correctly like this. Perfectly looking correctly at the emptiness of the 5 aggregates. You have to look at the person and also the

5 aggregates”. In Indian Buddhism there is this idea that our body and mind is made up of the 5 aggregates, 5 heaps. That means form, our physicalness, then there’s feelings, discrimination, knowing what’s one thing and what’s another thing, compositional factors, which is basically all the other stuff passing through our minds like our personality, our sense of self, our sense of self in time - many, many factors of our personality. The last one is our consciousness, our mind, the gross, subtle and very subtle mind. Avolokiteshvara said: “Oh Shariputra in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no compositional factors, no consciousness, no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind, no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no tactile object, no phenomena”. And so on. He’s listing all the things in our experience upon which we base our sense of self. We all have this sense of me or I, and the Buddhist point of view is that it’s built up based on the perception of our body and our mind. The argument is if it truly exists we should be able to point to it. For example, relatively speaking, in front of me there is a fan because it’s hot. If the fan truly exists I should be able to point to it, relatively without getting too philosophical - I can point to it. If my self truly exists then I should be able to identify and point to it within my body and mind. It looks like it’s totally there. I’m absolutely convinced that every single second of my existence, from birth until now, it’s been there so surely I should be able to identify it clearly and point to it. It’s like a check list. So you go through all the parts. Like, for example: Am I my hand? Am I my arm? If you want to do the body one. Am I my ears? Am I my nose? Am I my ear? You can point to everything and say: “No that’s not me”.

For example, if we lost a finger, it doesn’t really effect our sense of self, does it? [Someone in the audience says they have lost a finger]. Actually there’s one friend here who lost a finger. Do you feel less yourself because you lost your finger? [He answers: no]. You just feel I lost part of my finger. How did you lose the finger? [Can’t hear the answer]. That sounds painful, were you doing some woodwork or something? [Can’t hear the answer]. This is a perfect example. I don’t know if you can hear on the streaming. He was doing some carpentry, some woodwork, and was making a table and was using an electric saw and it caught on his finger and his finger was gone. Now he’s like Frodo in *Lord of the rings*, he has part of a finger missing. So we’ve just confirmed that he doesn’t feel any less himself because he has part of his finger missing. This is actually how we feel, isn’t it. If we lose a hand or a foot or a leg or an eye or something, our teeth, maybe we feel uncomfortable but the feeling of I is still there. Some people donate their kidney to someone else, don’t they? They’ve got one less kidney. Okay some things are difficult to donate, for example the heart because we need it. Generally most things we can see clearly: that’s my body, that’s my organ - that’s not me. We feel ‘I am the owner’ of those things, don’t we? In the West we say like the ghost in the machine. There’s somebody inside behind our eyes, sort of driving our body. That’s how we feel somehow. So the first thing is I’m not my body. We look through: Am I my hand? There are many ways to look, for example you can buy a book on anatomy or look on the internet. Then you can see there’s skin, the muscle, the bone - all the different things inside your body. We can say none of those is me but obviously put together in the right way that’s the body upon which my consciousness is depending at the moment, but that’s not me. Why? Because when I was a kid I had a different body, a very different one. Also when I get older I’ll have a different one again. Every 7 years they say the cells in our body renew themselves. Even

though we have a photo album, our body is the continuum of the person from 7 or 14 years ago but none of the cells are the same. It's incredible. We are not our body, even though we are very much attached to it. We strongly identify with our body but if we actually look philosophically we are not our body. If we got a microscope or something like that, nowadays we have all this technology - if we got an MRI scanner we can look inside and see that our body is made-up of many things, so we stop identifying with it. For example, my hand, there's skin, blood, muscles, nerves, and if we look with an electron microscope we will see a lot of sub-atomic particles moving around and a lot of space. The more we look the more tenuous things become. This is one of the paradoxes of reality. This morning I was doing a spoken Tibetan class with Amchi Tsetan-la, because I want to speak with my Tibetan friends. So, the other day I was speaking about how they use the banana tree as an example of emptiness. Some trees are really hard inside, you peel off the bark and it's really hard, like those from Brazil, those big ones from the Amazon. Other trees, like a banana tree are the opposite. The more you peel away the outside and look inside the more it becomes like liquid and not so much is there. In fact, today we were looking at the names of things, so the name of banana tree in Tibetan means born empty so they're saying like this. This is why Tibetan culture has some very nice things. They have a lot of Buddhist concepts built into it. They've been Buddhists for so long that their culture and language is imbued with Buddhist thought so it's very nice. It's not a banana tree it's an empty born tree, emptiness tree. It's nice. This is an example showing the more we search for things that are apparently very solid and investigate, there's less there than we thought. Things don't truly exist from their own side.

They give this example of the body, physical things, then our feelings. Happy feelings, neutral feeling - we're always feeling something. Every moment of our experience has an emotional colour. Obviously we prefer the pleasant ones and we don't like the unpleasant feelings but anyway they are arising continuously colouring our experience. A lot of our emotional problems come because when a happy feeling arises we grasp it and we want it to continue. If there's an unhappy or unpleasant feeling or sensation we also get obsessed by it and we can't see that it will disappear. A lot of our emotional suffering comes from this because we have ignorance, we don't understand things correctly, our mind is continuously experiencing things based on what we call contaminated feelings of pleasure, pain and neutral. All the time! Every time we have a pleasant experience we want it, we want it... Every time we have an unpleasant experience we don't want it, we reject it, we have aversion. That's why in *lojong* it says our mind is like waves. Why? Because of this. This is the engine, the wave machine, of our mind. We want to know how to switch off the wave machine of our mind. How we switch off the wave machine is to see things properly. Just to see things as they actually are. Some people think Buddhists are going out of reality, but actually what we're trying to do is see reality correctly. Rinpoche always said what we do is inner science. We're trying to see things correctly. If we want to be out of touch with reality there's no need to meditate - we already are. Very easy. If we want to be in touch with reality then we have to meditate. Body is like that. Feelings are like that.

All the time we're discriminating things. Discriminating means, for example, I say this is a glass of water, there's a cup, this is a computer: I can discriminate between these things. One of the reasons I can discriminate between things is because I've been told what



everything is when I was a kid. My mother said to me this is a cup, a glass, and showed me what to do with it. When I was about 25 somebody bought me a computer and said this is a computer and you have to press that thing and it starts. When we made Self-Healing with Rinpoche, Rinpoche decided he wanted to spread his teachings, it was quite some time ago, 30 years ago, so we were before computers. Somebody turned up with the first laptop, kindly one of Rinpoche's sponsors, I think in my case Rosanna bought my first laptop. They just gave it to us but we had no idea what to do with it. There wasn't any instructions or anything, not like nowadays. Somebody said to me this is a computer and in my case I had to learn how to use it myself, there were no instructions in those days. Then relatively it exists and functions and it's super useful - I can write books on it, make sadhanas, transcribe teachings, I can do streaming with it, so it's very useful. Our discriminations are not fixed. This is a big subject, how the mind is creating reality.

Then compositional factors is a big bag of all the other factors of our mind, for example - I can't remember them all now - our sense of ourselves passing through time, the feeling of ageing, that's one of them. It's like all the different aspects that build up our personality and of course they're not fixed either. Because over life we change, don't we? Maybe when I was 20 I didn't know how to play a piano and maybe when I'm 50 I learn. Over the course of my life I'm changing, aren't I? The aspects of my personality also, I can improve my personality. It's not like I'm guaranteed to get worse just because I'm getting older. This is why we spend our summer holidays in AHMC and other meditation centres, isn't it? We like the idea that as we grow older our personality improves, which it can because it's not fixed, it's not permanent, it doesn't exist from its own side.

Then consciousness which is like a stream, like a river. Actually we only ever experience now, don't we? But in our minds we're very much obsessed with what passed before and what will happen in the future. But, in fact, all we ever actually experience is the present moment, isn't it? In Buddhism they talk a lot about this. For example, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche about a month before he passed away said to one friend - to Elkana, our Dutch friend - he said to her: "This is just the present moment, your life is like a river so it's just one moment, you need to think about how it will continue in the future". Our consciousness goes on and on and even at the end of this life it is not the end. At that point, at the moment of death the consciousness, the gross consciousness, absorbs and the subtle mind leaves the body. Then gradually based on our karma, let's say what's inside our own mind manifests a future world, a future reality for ourselves. Our consciousness just goes on and on and on, like a river. It's a continuum, it's not the same - it's always in change, all the time. Anyway we've got these different parts.

According to Indian Buddhist thought we have five parts. Okay we might say I've got lots more parts than that, but the Indian way of thinking was that one. It's one way to understand ourselves. We can also look in a modern way if we want, it doesn't matter. We can add brain chemicals, we can add all the other parts of the body we know, whatever we like. The point is that all these are just parts of ourselves - they're not us. We think that *I am the owner of all this stuff*, don't we? We always feel like that. So we should conclude that I'm not my parts. Then it goes on: maybe I'm the assembly of my parts. You might think if you put all your parts together, your body and mind, in the right order that's you.

Yes - we have a functioning body and mind that relatively exists that's true, that's a dependently arising phenomena but still we always have the sense of I or me on top. The point of Buddhist philosophy is this I or me is actually something extra, we don't need this permanent sense of self. Of course we need to have a relative sense of self, but we have an extra one that's unnecessary. This big I, this big me, this ego, this selfishness - there's something on top extra. Nowadays, in the field of neuroscience, many scientists have actually concluded the same thing as Buddha did 2500 years ago. The sense of self is actually a sort of creation of our brain. It's not really true. But, for whatever reason, our brain has organised its perceptual apparatus like that, which would be okay but as it happens this feeling of I am I and you are you is creating a lot of problems because if I'm I then I want my territory, I want things for me. There's always this feeling of separation, my needs are first, if there's a piece of cake I want the biggest and so on. The mind's doing like that isn't it. When we're a small child we're allowed to freely express that, until we're about three then our teachers and parents start saying to us "that's not acceptable, you have to pretend not to be like that, you have to share". You can see with little children. [To someone in the audience] You're a teacher, aren't you? Is it true that little children behave like that? They get very upset if they can't have something because they can't understand why it shouldn't be theirs. We've got this false sense of I, on top. Which causes endless amounts of problems because this is the wave maker of the mind and it causes desire and hatred, pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Why? Because we see reality in the wrong way. Then we get pleasant and unpleasant feelings, then come desire and hatred, and then come all kinds of other emotions and as we say in Italian we make a big *casino* [mess].

Basically this big casino is what we call our personal samsara We know what it is because we live in it, we live in our personal samsara making casino for ourselves. We are very happy when somebody praises us, depressed when we're poor and things don't go our way, depressed and sad if we don't get the relationship we want, very happy if we get lots of friends on facebook or instagram, very unhappy if we don't get any likes on instagram and this kind of stuff. It's like the waves of the mind, isn't it? This is like normal life, isn't it? We get either too excited or too depressed - the mind's not stable. In order for the mind to become stable, to become happy all the time, we need to understand why our mind is producing reality in that way. Therefore we need to understand that everything doesn't exist the way it appears, that our mind is involved in the creation of our reality, that our experience is subjective. We can change the way that we see things. We can choose to see the world in a better way. When we talk about emptiness we're talking about all this kind of stuff, it's actually something very positive investigating the nature of reality. When we talk about empty we're talking of the emptiness of something that's not true, we're talking about the emptiness of this hallucinated I that our brain has created for itself. If you don't believe me, there's lots of books on neuroscience about it. In fact I'm going to get one and read it myself. It's a very interesting subject. I saw a little bit about this, I've read some articles but I want to read more deeply. It's interesting that yet again modern science is converging with the ancient thought of Buddhism. So what we're getting rid of is an hallucination, we're not losing anything useful by meditating on emptiness. All we're losing is an hallucination. Normally, if somebody hallucinates we say they're crazy, they're mad and they're weird, so that's what Buddha says about us - we're crazy, we're weird and we're mad because all the time we're hallucinating that we have a fixed permanent self and

that all things are permanent, that they have a permanent essence. We are like crazy people because we relate to ourselves and other people and things in completely the wrong way. I mean it's like Milarepa said: everything around me shows the nature of reality, I don't need a book because everything is showing it to me. For us, we're the opposite. Even though it's staring in our faces we cannot accept. For example, we get up in the morning and look at ourselves and there has appeared one more wrinkle, or our teeth have gone yellow or one more white hair or something like this - we changed in some way. Immediately we are very upset, depressed, we need to go to the plastic surgeon, need to go on a diet, need to buy some cream - all this kind of stuff. Why? Because we never accept how reality is. We were born and so naturally we're going to get older, hopefully. I mean that would be the best scenario, wouldn't it? Ageing would be good actually. The least good scenario would be to die young, wouldn't it? Buddhism has incredible therapeutic benefits for our life. For example: what can I do about it, why should I worry? We need to accept, because people totally don't accept reality - you and me and we - but we'd be a lot happier if we did even in simple things. Things change and people age. Also because we don't know how things exist we suffer, that's the nature of things, so no need to worry but within that we try and do our best, we try and grow. Even on a very simple level Buddhist thought has great benefit psychologically for our quality of life.

We can recite the *Heart Sutra* or we can recite: **tayatha om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi soha**. The *Heart Sutra*, is explaining how to meditate on emptiness. It's like a summary of the points of how to meditate on emptiness, on the nature of reality. Empty does not mean nothing, it just means empty of an hallucination. We're not losing anything useful or meaningful or even anything that's truly there - we're just losing a fantasy. If somebody's mentally ill and they lose their fantasy they become healthy don't they. So that would be the same for us, if we lost our fantasy of a separate independent self that would mean we become a healthy person and a healthy person in Buddhism is called an *Arya* person. One who sees reality correctly. There are many levels of getting healthy. You can be like an *Arhat*, somebody who's going towards nirvana, or somebody going towards great nirvana, you can be on the bodhisattva path, the Mahayana path and the levels of the ten *bhumis*, the five paths, and finally we can become a totally healthy person: a buddha, an awakened one. So a lot to think about. They say that the easiest way to understand this is to think about impermanence and change. For example, outside our gompa is the buddha garden, we can see the trees and the flags that Rinpoche put there, all the flags of the world, fun with flags, making peace with the world, and we can see there's some wind so all the flags of the world are moving around. That means everything is not fixed, everything is changing. It's very good to be in nature because automatically we can see the sun rises and sets and the stars and the moon rise and set, the seasons come and go, everything's moving and growing. It's much easier for the mind to open towards reality when we're actually in nature. Even though, of course, everything shows the nature of reality but somehow being in nature it's much easier. Even though the sky is not emptiness, somehow it gives the mind a relaxed more open feeling. We can watch the clouds going by, everything is changing, we can sit there and think: oh those clouds are there because it's rain and then the sun makes the water evaporate and then it gathers into clouds, which are pushed by the wind, and so on. Everything's in a dynamic cycle. We're part of that, we're not separate. Our problem is we feel we're separate, we're nothing to do



with anything else. Therefore we think it doesn't matter what we do. But that's obviously the thought of a mentally ill person, isn't it? Because we're all on this planet together, aren't we? Our body is made of stardust, we eat plants and things and breathe air and drink water, we're part of the dynamic system of this planet. For me to think: I am separate, nothing to do with anything else, is the thought of a mentally ill person. Obviously those thoughts are making me unhappy because they're a distortion of reality. For example Rinpoche says here: "We can use mantras or we can think about emptiness..."

Many times Rinpoche took us into nature, for example we went to Mongolia, Tibet, we went in the Amazon. Definitely in natural places the elements are very pure, very blissful, and it's just much easier for the mind to open. It's very important on so many different levels to take care of mother earth. Mother earth and mother water, mother wind, mother fire - the five mother elements. Because if we have a healthy planet and healthy environment, it's just so much easier for our minds to open and grow. The historical Buddha, Buddha Siddhartha, he didn't go and meditate in a car park, did he? They didn't have car parks in those days but you know what I mean - in a market. He went to meditate in a forest, didn't he? Why? Because it was easier.

Rinpoche says that: "If we understand emptiness no black magic attack is possible". Another reason is because for black magic to work we have to believe that it works. We have to have this thought that somebody is harming me with magic, then is coming the fear, the stress, the anxiety, the paranoia, all these kind of factors. If we know that things only exist through cause and condition and through naming, then we can say the word magic for example doesn't truly exist from its own side. Maybe you might think that's a little bit difficult, and in fact yes it is slightly difficult, if somebody casts a spell on you to meditate on emptiness to overcome it, but it is possible. Relatively most people would do a puja. The lojong advice is to develop love and compassion towards the person who's harming you so they stop and start being nice to you instead. This is good advice. Other advice would be to run off, disappear, so they don't know where you are. [Laughing] If you're a more advanced practitioner you can definitely stop black magic and also people's negative thoughts, emotions and bad vibrations by understanding emptiness. Don't worry, we'll get there. What we can do at our level is think: Okay I have a problem, this is not truly existing, this will pass, it's like a dream - rather than becoming obsessed with it. Because otherwise we just become totally obsessed with whatever is our problem and we become overwhelmed by it. At least we can think: Okay this is not going to last forever, this will pass, I'm blowing this out of proportion, as we say in the West, I'm over exaggerating how big a problem I have. We can start to think thoughts like that. Rinpoche always used to say when we have a big problem, we need to say - I have a small difficulty. Then we need to make the little difficulty disappear. Rinpoche said that many times. Even if we do have a big problem we need to say: I have a small difficulty. For example, I'm locked down in a pandemic with no money and I'm sick, this is a little difficulty not a big problem. This sort of thing we have to think and then gradually it will change and everything will disappear. Rinpoche said that many times. Also the song, *Ego friendly ego cut* - he liked very much, so now Maria Cristina is going to sing the song for us. A musical interlude. In our NgalSo teachings we have some talking and we also have musical interludes, singing mantras, some meditation and things like that because then we also

relax, we get some good energy. Talking all the time is too much. Please Maria Cristina and singers: *Ego friendly, ego cut*, one of the last favourite compositions of our guru Lama Gangchen Rinpoche.

**[Song: *Ego-friendly, ego cut*]**

Then somebody says to Rinpoche: **I would like to know what emptiness is.** Rinpoche says: “Very well I will give you an example. What's your name?”. That friend says: “My name's Adriana”. Then Rinpoche said: “On the relative level you are Adriana, you think you are beautiful, you feel hungry, you sleep, you work, you feel lonely and many other things, but if you investigate where is the Adriana that you believe so strongly to exist independently of all other phenomena you can, for example, mentally at least divide your body into many pieces. Which of these pieces is actually Adriana?”. This is like: Am I my hand, am I my ear, my nose, my eye, my tongue - all this - no I'm not any of those. “It will not be possible for you to find what is actually Adriana. You just find the parts of your body”. Then Rinpoche says: “However in the body and mind dependent relationship there is somebody called Adriana”. Okay relatively speaking we exist, of course we're not denying that people exist at all, we're just looking at how things exist. I'm trying to stop acting in a crazy way and so to become more mentally healthy, more balanced, that's all we're trying to do. Then Rinpoche said: “There's a lot to be said about this theme, it is a very deep subject”. He said: “The Chinese communists - he means in the 1960s - said that Buddha or Mahakala do not exist. When the Chinese people invaded Tibet they cut the statues into pieces and they asked the Tibetan people is this piece Chenrezig, Avalokiteshvara, so then the Tibetans would answer: no this is the hand of Chenrezig, this is the face of Chenrezig, this is the head of Chenrezig and so on”. In Tibet when they make statues, of course they have some metal statues, but in Tibet actually a lot of the statues are made out of clay. I'm not sure if they cook them, but anyway they make them out of clay, the big ones. Inside they put relics and things and maybe some small metal statues and then they paint them usually in quite bright colours and then they bless them with a *rabne chenmo puja* and put them on the altars and say this represents Chenrezig, Mahakala, Tara or whoever. In the West we don't have so many of these statues because they're made of clay so they're not transportable, most of the statues that we have are made of either wood or metal because they're easier to transport, the materials are stronger. So in the 1960s, in the cultural revolution, they were cutting up statues - actually Tibetan and Chinese people of that time, it was the cultural revolution not just in Tibet but throughout the whole of China - so all Chinese people suffered from this not just Tibetan people. In the Tibetan part the ones who were doing it they would ask where is Chenrezig and the Buddhist people would say this is the hand, this is the face and inside of the statue are many relics and mantras. So then these people who didn't like this idea of gods - let's say - would remove the relics and ask: what is this? The Tibetans would answer these are mantras written on paper and then the Tibetan and Chinese people who were doing that would ask them: but where is Chenrezig? Then the people, the Chinese people of that time, would say to the Tibetans of that time that the lamas had only brought problems to their minds. At that time when the Chinese people had invaded Tibet, the lamas did not have the option to respond to this accusation. However the answer is very simple. Rinpoche gives this example, because actually this is what he lived through like many people in Tibet and China in the

1950s and 60s. The cultural revolution was in the 60s. Actually in our sangha we have many Chinese friends, so of course our Chinese friends nowadays are not those of that time. This was 60 years ago or something, of course it wasn't their parents and probably wasn't even their grandparents who were doing this. It was the same in Europe, wasn't it? 75 years ago or something. We had world war 2 and our great-grandparents tried to kill each other. The Germans, the Italians, the English, the French, the Dutch, everybody, all nations of Europe went to war with each other. That was some time ago, now we have Europe and things have moved on, we have the EU. We decided it was much better to all be friends with each other. In fact it is much nicer, isn't it? We like much better all being part of one Europe and being friends. So of course this is not a criticism of our Chinese friends, this is just something that happened in the past. If you look in history all kinds of things happened in every country, also if we look at European history everything happened, incredible things, we all did horrible things to everybody else. All our ancestors behaved really badly so it's not a criticism, it's just an example. Rinpoche himself lived through this period, so of course he has the right to comment on such things. So then Rinpoche gives one example, he said: "Mao Tse Tung - who was the leader of China at that time, a very famous man - if we cut him into pieces, where will he be? We will not find him but when we mention his name he exists. The same happens with the buddha statue, the difference is that a buddha statue can bless us". So we could also say Mao Tse Tung or Donald Trump or Boris Johnson or Putin or - what's the name of the president of Italy - Giuseppe Conte. We could give the name of any politician actually. What's the Brazilian one called? Bolsonaro. We have a big list of politicians, so you can give the name of any politician - past or present - Bolsonaro or Donald Trump or Boris Johnson, Conte, Angela Merkel, any politician, they're famous people. If we cut them into pieces, not literally because we're Buddhists so we don't do stuff like that, but if we analyse where are they, we would not find them. But, when we mention their name like Mao Tse Tong or Putin or Trump or Bolsonaro or Conte or Merkel or whoever - they exist. Exactly the same thing happens with a buddha statue or any other single phenomena actually. Because that's how things exist. The difference is that a buddha statue can bless us, it's a container of pure and positive energy and a person may or may not be. I mean they may be if they've developed their minds and of course we hope all our political leaders are enlightened but we're not sure, are we? Probably they're not. Most probably not, unless they're buddhas or bodhisattvas but that's another interesting question isn't it.

I think Shantideva, and many other Buddhist masters prayed never to become a politician or work in administration. They said this in their prayers, they prayed for many things, but that was one of their prayers. Anyway Rinpoche gives that example. We like everybody in all our sangha around the world and we like very much our Chinese friends. It's very nice that Buddhism is developing in China and we hope that will continue. China's actually the biggest Buddhist country in the world, did you know that? Most Buddhists in the world live in China, we actually outside in the West are a very small minority compared to the number of Chinese Buddhists. Obviously Tibet is part of China too. Also of course remember our NgalSo position is we do not get involved in politics. Why? Because we want to be friends with everybody, if we take a side that means we can't be friend with the other side. So we like people from all sides, the left side, right side, every side, because

religion - spirituality - actually transcends politics. Everybody is welcome regardless of their viewpoint.

Rinpoche then says: “We always say I exist I exist” and even if we don't say it, it's what we think, isn't it? Actually in the Vatican, I've been there with Rinpoche, there's a big throne in the middle, I don't know if that's supposed to be God's throne, I'm not sure, or Jesus's throne, but on the wall around the top it says *cogito ergo sum*. It was actually from the western philosopher Descartes which means “I think therefore I am”. Actually as Buddhist we would have to disagree with that statement in a certain way, but of course we also appreciate all other spiritual traditions and respect their positive efforts. We always say I exist I exist, or we just think I. Even an ant or a spider or a millipede or any other form of life has this sensation of I. How do we know that an ant or a millipede or something, or a cat, has a sense of I? With higher animals it's easier to see isn't it, some of them can recognise their reflections. I think pigs can do it, pigs and monkeys and dolphins. But even an ant or something has a sense of self, and they don't wish to suffer. Henceforth, is why as Buddhist we feel that all animals should be treated well because they suffer, they experience pain like we do. Maybe they don't conceptualise it in the same way, but they don't want to experience pain and discomfort and they want to experience pleasure according to how they can. Therefore we should minimum try not to harm them, and if possible try and help them. Whether we're a bird, a fish, a worm, or a human being - we feel I. On the other hand we don't exist in an independent way. Let's say if somebody came with a big hand and took us out from our ecosystem, our planet earth, and deposited us in outer space what would happen is immediately we would die. It's not possible to live in an independent way, it's not physically possible. We need to breathe the air, we need water, we need food, we need so many different causes and conditions to live. We, and everybody else. We absolutely do not exist in an independent way, but because we're a little crazy - or a lot crazy - we think we're either somewhat separate or completely separate. We act as crazy people. In fact, Rinpoche says, we are the result of many conditions. Of course as things change we also change. One day when the conditions, the various conditions, to sustain our life are not there we will pass away into the next life.

Rinpoche says emptiness means empty of inherent existence. Inherent existence or natural existence or true existence was a big thing in Indian philosophy. In Indian philosophy they used to say everything had a *tattva*, a true nature. Tea has the true nature of teanness. Human beings have an *atman*, a soul, a nature. Everything has its own nature. This is one of the things that Siddhartha, who was obviously brought up in Indian culture, disagreed with philosophically - this concept. Actually in Buddhism came out this idea of *anatman*, no-self. *atman* actually means the feeling of I, of self. Whether it's exactly like an *anima* I'm not quite sure. Maybe it is somehow. The *anima* is the immortal part of yourself that continues after you die. But, with a difference that in the Christian and Jewish conception the *anima* doesn't seem to change very much after death, whereas from the Buddhist point of view that's impossible - everything changes. Of course all traditions have their own way of looking, that's why we have different spiritual traditions but they're all extremely interesting. Buddha's big thing was things don't have a true essence. For example tea, I like drinking tea, but tea is not truly a source of pleasure even though I'm always drinking it thinking it is. Every time I'm drinking I think this is really nice, I feel better. But if a cup

of tea was really - I mean nice tea obviously, sorry not the one you get in Italy but the nice english breakfast tea - a true source of pleasure then the more I had the better it would be. It's true, no? Then I could just drink tea all day long and I'd be completely happy, completely blissful, but in fact if I drink too many I start to feel bad. It's true. It'll give me a headache, I'll get heart palpitation or something. Everything we need to do is in the middle way - not too much, not too little. And not just cups of tea, every sort of pleasure is like that. Every sort of pain is like that. Everything is like that. Nothing has a true nature in the way we think it does. Very interesting, no? Everything's like a banana tree, like a *kyetong* in Tibetan. I only discovered that word today, I'm quite excited that the name for banana tree in Tibetan is *kyetong*. It's like Buddhist philosophy. Like we say *shunyata*, actually it comes something like bamboo or there's some trees in Andalusia, Spain, that kind of swell up and actually I suppose inside they keep the water because it's a very dry climate. So inside there's some kind of space. Actually our word swelling, you don't have the same in Italian, we Northern Europeans have Indo-European language, from Indian, so our word swollen comes from this word *shunya*. It means there's a space inside. Also, this is interesting - we have time so no problem, we have lots and lots of time, we're on holiday together.

In the West when we had latin numbers, like 21 was XXI and so on, that's okay but then it got really complicated, when you get to 1973 it gets complicated. Adding and subtracting was really difficult in ancient roman times. One of the biggest innovations in European history was actually the introduction of the zero, actually from the Arabic tradition. Where did they get the zero from? From India. The Arabic numerals are from India and the zero actually originally was called *shunya*, zero. Mr Jan who before was the director of Albagnano and is a big supporter of the NgalSo tradition since many years, some years ago he always saying everything was zero point. Everything was zero point generator, zero point this, zero point that. Somehow he's right. Because *shunya* is like zero point, there's a space inside, isn't there? In tantra, for example, we say **tam** is the seed syllable of Tara. The **ta** with a tige - a zero, a circle - the **m** sound from **tam** is a zero. It means everything is unfindable, we can't find it, if we look inside there's space. That's why we put zero on top of everything in tantra. When we put the name of something, the *bija*, the seed letter, always has a zero on top because it means if you look you cannot find what you're looking for. This *shunya*, in ancient Indian philosophy, they're using to understand reality, to get out of samsara and develop nirvana. They're also using it for mathematics. I was saying the other day, in the time of the Buddha - 2,500 years ago - humanity had a lot of punya, a lot of positive energy. It wasn't just Buddha, we had Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tse, we had all these incredible people, Aristotle, we had the birth of democracy, we also had the birth of mathematics. They had very great mathematicians in India. Anyway with the *shunya* of India, with a zero, we can do mathematics. Without a zero we cannot, we can only count - it's difficult. In fact in Europe mathematics didn't really take off in the roman period even though the romans were very good at many things, they weren't very good at mathematics. Trade and business and calculus and algebra and all kinds of interesting things that started the development of modern science actually started with the development of mathematics and the zero, the *shunya*. The *shunya* passed through Arabic culture pronunciation and ended up as a zero. Originally it was the *shunya* of Buddhism and Hinduism. All very interesting isn't it.



Even my computer, which I like so much, actually developed because they have a binary system. That's how they do programming. I remember when I first saw computer programming it was made up of ones and zeros. Now it doesn't look like that anymore, but it's a binary system with zeros. So zero comes from the Arabs, comes from the Greeks, comes from India, comes from Buddha, comes from emptiness - from shunyata. Shunyata made my computer, my macintosh, and many other things in our modern world, all our scientific developments, also printing. In the West we think that printing was developed by Gutenberg, I don't know if he was German or Dutch, anyway sometime in the middle ages - 14th or 15th century - they developed block printing in Europe and for us this is the beginning of printing. Actually the beginning of printing was in the 6th century in China. Why? Because they wanted to reproduce copies of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*, the *Prajnaparamita*, which understood the nature of reality. Gutenberg made the printing presses because they wanted to print bibles. They thought everybody should have a bible, not a bible that they have to spend 10 years writing with a feather and cost a hundred thousand euros, not those kind of bibles - they wanted readily reproducible bibles for everybody. Also the Chinese Buddhists in the 6th century thought everybody in the whole world, at least in the middle kingdom in China, needed a copy of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* so therefore they developed printing. This zero is super important, so they wanted to tell everybody about it. All very interesting, isn't it? We've never had a problem between science and philosophy, because for us from science is actually coming out the world view that we have. So a lot more to say about that very interesting subject, but later.

Are there any questions?

Maybe we'll sing for five minutes the mantra of the perfection of wisdom: **tayatha om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi soha**. If any friends are watching on the streaming you can send questions to Maria Cristina who's going to get her phone out and switch it on. At the same time, because she can multitask, she's going to sing while she's getting her phone out.

[Recitation: **tayatha om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi soha**]

When we say this mantra the **om** is optional. We can say **tayatha** or **tayatha om**. Mantras mean something. **gate** is from the root *gam*, to go, it's Sanskrit so actually what we're saying is: gone, completely gone, totally and completely gone so be it is. If we say this in the West it sounds a bit funny, because for us gone means to go out of reality. It's like the idea that the Buddha or the person who has understood reality have left samsara. We say the *tathagata* is the one who's gone, thus gone, or *sugata*, the one who's gone to bliss. I.e. has left here, left samsara. That's why the first symbol of Buddhism was the footprints - that's all that was left, two footprints. Ciao - gone. All we could see was a line of footprints showing the way out, showing the path. So it's: gone, gone, totally gone, completely and perfectly gone, so be it - gone to the nature of reality. It's crossed over. We have a lot of examples, crossed over to the other shore, left samsara. That doesn't mean they have left this world, it means they no longer experience personal samsara. A tathagata has left their personal samsara, it doesn't mean they've left here, it means that they

experience nirvana and awakening. For example somebody who lives in Milano or Malaga or Madrid or Santiago or Sao Paulo or wherever, anywhere in the world, the normal state we call samsara, personal samsara, is not Milan, Malaga, San Paolo, Santiago, wherever... If not it would be easy. We could just get in our car or on our bicycle and leave but in fact that's not true, because wherever we go we take our mind with us. Wherever we go on this planet we will experience personal samsara until we change our minds. When we have *gone, gone, completely gone, totally gone*, that means everywhere we go will be like a heaven, everywhere will be really nice, we will be in nirvana and we'll have an enlightened experience. It's not the place, it's our mind. It's how we see things. For example, many holy beings actually live in cities these days. Why? Because they want to be near people. Many saints, many monks, many nuns, many great people they're not all sat in caves up mountains or in forest these days. Anyway they don't experience reality like normal people. For them everything is beautiful. Why? Because they don't project samsara. Anyway a lot to talk about.

Now we're going to move on to another subject in Lama Gangchen's *Self-Healing 1*. We're going to talk about Maitreya, the Future Love Buddha. Maitreya, probably we will speak about today and tomorrow. Why? Because it's a big subject, an important subject. These days we were talking about the four buddhas of this fortunate aeon, actually we talked about the thousand buddhas of this fortunate aeon. The *badjralakpa*, the time that we live in now, and then there were three buddhas before with unpronounceable Sanskrit names - I think the third one was called Kashyapa Buddha. I can't remember now the name of number one and number two, number three was called Kashyapa Buddha and our present buddha, number four, is called Shakyamuni Buddha, sage of the Sakyas. The buddha that will come afterwards is called Buddha Maitreya, he's called the Future Love Buddha. Lama Gangchen - not just this lifetime but since many lifetimes - had a big connection with Buddha Maitreya. So let's see what he says in his book *Self-Healing 1* about Maitreya. Rinpoche printed many big posters of Buddha Maitreya when we were in the Kunpen in Milan and this was written on the back. This is what I'm going to read now. It says: "For a long time Lama Gangchen Rinpoche has reflected upon how to best fulfil the needs of this world, of his friends and disciples. How to help them transform their busy materialistic lives into a life filled with love, peace and spiritual energy. Understanding that modern society has greatly developed science and technology at the cost of human feelings of love and compassion Lama Gangchen has always been praying for the replenishment of this loss". Rinpoche used to talk a lot about this in the 90s. He used to say that he felt he was like somebody from the 8th century and that because he'd come into modern society - he was born in Tibet, in a countryside village - and now he was going all around the world to all these mega cities so he said he felt like he was an 8th century person who jumped to the 20th/21st century. He said that he always felt that we had something missing, which he called the missing part: missing human feelings, missing love, missing compassion and also actually missing connection with nature. That's another thing he used to say. He said all these things we needed to recover and this is why for many people Dharma is very beneficial, because it's a way for us to get in touch with the five elements, to feel more peace, to feel more love and compassion towards our family, our friends, the people around us. He said through the Dharma, which is actually an ancient culture, we can recover our human nature which we and our ancestors have

damaged, in our technological ascent. Now we're: I'm so busy, I don't have time, no time, I'm busy reading my smartphone so I don't have time for anything, or posting pictures of myself on instagram so I have no time, I'm so busy, no time to look at the flowers, no time to be in nature, no time to have a quality of life. In fact even when people go in the restaurant, they're looking at the phone. As you know famously in Buddhism it says: when you're eating you should eat, when you're chopping wood you should chop it. It'd be dangerous chopping wood and looking at your smartphone, wouldn't it? Many people try and eat and look at their smartphones. You have a nicer quality of life if you just eat and be with your friends. Rinpoche is saying like this, we need something extra - so what extra things do we need?

Rinpoche continues, well actually this is talking about Rinpoche. It says: "Rinpoche had many beautiful and revealing dreams. One particular dream showed him that if he built many Maitreya Buddha statues much benefit would result and many auspicious signs would manifest". Maitreya is the Sanskrit word for love, unconditional love, and is the name of the future buddha, the fifth buddha. Then: "However, we do not need to wait for the future. Building Maitreya Buddha statues is an extremely effective method for calling the energy of love into being, right now. Statues built in the traditional way - like out of metal for example - become a vessel for Buddha Maitreya's energy and can bestow blessings and enable us to establish a connection with the future love buddha here and now. Wishing to bring such benefit to this world Lama Gangchen commissioned - it says three ten foot high Maitreya Buddha statues but I think actually he did nine - three ten foot high Maitreya Buddha statues in memory of the three most important big Maitreya statues, the Jampa Chenmo statues in Tibet, which had been destroyed". One of them had been built by Trophu Lotsawa Jampa Pel - which actually was Rinpoche in another life, in the 12th century - and the other two big Maitreya Buddha statues in Tibet. Anyway Rinpoche says there were three very big Maitreya Buddha statues around his area of Tibet. One was at Gangchen Choepel Ling - Albagnano is Gangchen Choepel Ling 2 - we have mark one in Tibet, still going, alive and well, and now we have mark two in Italy. Who knows maybe in the future we'll have more, but so far we have two. This is the main seat of the NgalSo tradition in the West and then of course we have historically Gangchen Monastery of Tibet. So, Maitreya is the future love buddha. Do we have a picture? We used to have a beautiful picture of Maitreya here in the gompa, maybe it's rolled up somewhere. We have a very big beautiful tangkha that Didier bought and offered to Rinpoche.

Anyway Rinpoche since he was young had a very big connection with Maitreya. When he was young he did his geshe degree in the Buxa refugee camp in India. They have this exam for the monks when they finish their study programme which is called geshe degree and Rinpoche was the first or one of the first people to do it in that time. They didn't have a place it was just tents, an encampment. It was right at the beginning when the Tibetans went to India. Rinpoche did his geshe degree in a tent, he got second or third level position. Studying wasn't Rinpoche's thing as you might have noticed. Rinpoche was all about experience. He offered a very beautiful tangkha of Buddha Maitreya to the monastery, because the monks traditionally give gifts to say thank you to the monastery for their education which is free. They don't need to pay anything for living there, eating, sleeping, studying, their clothes, medicine, everything's free. However, when they

graduate they are expected to show their thanks by making offerings to the monastery, which is fair enough isn't it. If somebody said okay you can live in my house for 20 years for free, everything's free, electricity, gas, internet, food, water - no need to pay anything. After 20 years you might think: Oh I should give something back! When you get into a better position. So they do like this. We have some photos of this tangkha, we have many of these pictures around, please can somebody find a picture and post it on our WhatsApp groups. The other day people posted pictures of the World Peace Buddha from Kunpen, the one sitting under the bodhi tree - very nice. Also I was talking about the other tangkha that Duccio made of Rinpoche, Buddha and Jesus, that's here in our restaurant so also that was shared. It's nice to share these tangkhas with everybody.

Maitreya looks like Shakyamuni, but the difference is above Maitreya's head he has Buddha Shakyamuni and a little stupa. He's sat in what we could say is the western position, anyway he's sat in a chair. Why? Because it's easy to get up. Most of the buddhas are sitting cross-legged, aren't they? Theoretically if you're healthy it should be easy to get up from a cross-legged position. In fact nowadays they say this is one sign from which you can work out how long you'll live for. If you sit cross-legged and you can stand straight up, that means you're okay, you're healthy. If you can't, better start saying some long life mantras [laughing]. It's one indication of how long you'll live for. It's true, that's what they say. It's not Buddhist, this is what scientists say. You can make that analysis at home. If you can still stand up and sit down in the cross-legged position and from the cross-legged - no hands - you are very healthy. If you can't, if you need a hand or a cushion or a stick or something that means you need to work on your health, your lifestyle. Or if not sit around and say more [laughing] mantras. So Buddha Maitreya is in the sitting position. The idea is that he's ready to stand up, ready to come to this earth to help us. In the *Lalitavishtara Sutra*, which is a very famous Indian sutra which illustrates the life of the Buddha. We actually made a book of this based on the illustrations of the reliefs - they're actually called alto reliefs not bass reliefs - or the panels on the side of Borobudur. Why? Because Rinpoche thought that would be a really nice thing to do and in fact it was a really nice thing to do. We made a very beautiful book. He asked Eleanor to condense the sutra into an easy, accessible form - not exactly like a Buddhist comic because it's more detailed than that, but shorter than the sutra so it's more easy to understand. Now we have a very nice book, a blue book, at least we have it in English but we need to translate it in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. Anybody interested please contact the relevant Peace Publication of your country. The point of the lalitavishtara is that the Buddha before he's born as Siddhartha is already a 10th ground bodhisattva. He's already a very high spiritual being. However, in order to show us what to do, how to evolve, he comes down to earth takes rebirth and shows what we have to do to become an awakened person, a buddha. Some of the first early scenes of the sutra the Buddha, actually the bodhisattva, the tenth ground bodhisattva, is in Tushita Heaven and he says: "Okay now I need to go down to earth". Why? "Because many years ago in the time of Buddha Kashyapa I prayed that I would become a buddha and turn the wheel of the Dharma in degenerate times. Now it's a degenerate time, now I need to go down to earth and do it". He's what we call the regent of the Tushita Heaven, a god realm. We Buddhist say inside there is one little section, Buddhist section, which is a kind of Buddhist heaven, a Buddhist pure land - so he's in that bit. It's like in a nice neighbourhood of the god realm. So he is the regent, he has a crown

and things. He takes off his crown and gives it to Maitreya, Bodhisattva Maitreya, and said: “Here you are this is my crown, you keep this, take care of Tushita and wait here, sit here, and in the future when it's your turn please come down to earth and turn the wheel of Dharma again - when my teachings have been forgotten”. Maitreya says: “Yes of course Siddhartha I will do so”. So it came about like this, Maitreya at the moment is the regent of Buddha Shakyamuni. He's in the waiting room, sitting there waiting to come down any moment to earth. Right now we are still in Buddha Shakyamuni's time and we would like that to continue because Buddha Shakyamuni is the only one for a very long time who will teach tantra. Actually, even though we like Maitreya very much, we want Shakyamuni's teachings to continue for a bit longer, let's say another 2500 years would be very good. However, in order to do so we have to make the causes and conditions by putting them into practise. If we don't practise, the Buddha's teachings will just be something in a book, in a museum, on the internet - not a real lived experience. At that point the living tradition is finished. Then we will go into a period of spiritual darkness and then finally society will improve and Maitreya will come. We don't want that, we want things to continue well and actually what we would like is Maitreya's love energy to arrive now, in our time.

Rinpoche, in the 90s, had this Big Love Maitreya project. Rinpoche's Italian friends, mainly, put the money together, especially Luisa Haller who kindly offered the most money. In India and Nepal they still have the ancient tradition of making statues in the traditional way. They first carve them in wax, that means they had to carve a huge three metre high Buddha Maitreya out of beeswax and then cover it in clay to make a mould, then they heat it up and all the wax disappears. It's called the lost wax technique. Then they pour in the bronze, they turn it upside down and fill it with bronze, then they break the clay away and the statue comes out - incredible. They still have incredible techniques of statue making. Then they are polished, to take off the rough edges, and then you have beautiful hollow bronze buddha statues. I think maybe they were made in India these big ones, because they have very good workshops there. Anyway they made these really enormous Maitreya Buddha statues, three and a half metres high, really big ones. Then we went to India with Rinpoche, put them on trucks - the Tibetan and Indian people put them on trucks - and then shipped them to different monasteries in India, Nepal and Tibet. It was a very nice experience, we went with Rinpoche in a bus. For example, in Seramey in India, I remember that one. The big statue came on a big truck. It's not like when something arrives here in the West - they offer flowers and incense so it's very nice, beautiful. Then they put the statue on its side. We saw here in Albagnano many times statue filling. Now we know that we have these batteries of mantras called *zung* and many of our friends participated in this - rolling up all the mantras - and in different parts of the statues you put different mantras like feet mantras, heart mantras throat mantras, crown mantras, lineage mantras. All kinds of mantras and all kinds of *korlo*, all kinds of chakras, the statues are filled up with all these mantras and incense and buddha relics and all kinds of things. I remember that when they were doing this in Sera they put Buddha Maitreya on the side and it was big enough that somebody could go inside. You could actually crawl inside the buddha, so they were not filling it up from the bottom but from the side. They did like this, very nice. Then they did rabne chenmo prayers and blessed it and they placed three on thrones in the assembly halls of different monasteries. Rinpoche said he was doing this in order to bring the energy of universal compassion into the world. Also he said



at that time it was so the 11th Panchen Lama could manifest. Because his guru, the 10th Panchen Lama, had passed away in the late 80s or early 90s. So to create the cause for the Panchen Lama to be reborn, in a way that he could teach and things. One of the causes was making all these huge Maitreya Buddha statues that they put in the assembly halls of Sera and Ganden and Drepung in India, Tashi Lhumpo in Tibet and Gangchen and Trophu monasteries, also in Sera Monastery and maybe Tashi Lhumpo and also the Himalayan Healing Centre in Kathmandu. I think that's the list, correct me if I'm wrong. All those statues are still there.

It says here that Rinpoche in his past life built a big Maitreya statue, actually much bigger than these. In that time, in the 12th century, they built really big ones, they have some really big statues in Tibet, they have this tradition - maybe 10 metre high. When they say big, they mean like really big. You can see pictures on the internet of these huge buddhas. In the temples these statues are so big that they have to build like a house around them and it has many floors, kind of like a palazzo, and in the courtyard of the palazzo the buddha is there, a huge one, and they have many stairs and walkways so you can go up the different levels and see the buddha's face, a huge face up at the top. They do like this in the monasteries. Very nice. I remember at that time, when Rinpoche was doing this, we were also doing the NgalSo Guhyasamaja practice. I remember because while the monks were crawling into the statue and filling it up with mantras, I was sat there and I was writing with Rinpoche what became NgalSo Guhyasamaja. I was writing it down. Each one of our practices, our NgalSo practices, has a very special story, a very special *tendrel* how it came out. It's was not just: Oh we're going to sit down and translate all the Tibetan Buddhist practices. Each one came out in a very special way, which maybe I'll share bit by bit. Each one came out by positive causes and conditions in a beautiful way. There were always many auspicious signs related to them. Why? Because it's true, it's really like - let's say - a mahasiddha baking bread. Each one was baked, by Rinpoche. The ingredients we have already like the dough and the water and everything, in Buddhism we have already but Rinpoche baked it and we made it in a special way, a new way appropriate for modern times. Same but different. Which of course Rinpoche was allowed to do. Why? Because he was actually the creator of many of these lineages and practices in the first place. For example, Bill Gates what did he do? He made windows, Microsoft. He can make windows XP, windows 8, windows 10, he can make as many updates as he wants because he was the one who started it. He knows how to do it. Similarly our Rinpoche, Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, was actually one of the very early lineage gurus of the Heruka Tantra and Vajrayogini and Guhyasamaja and all kinds of incredible practices. Therefore he was completely at liberty to make a new version, an updated version, seeing as he was the one who made it in the first place in the 8th or 9th or 10th century. Twelve hundred or eleven hundred or one thousand years ago. He could make a version mark two or three or four, as he felt like. We were very privileged that we were able to be with him and witness the process of creation. Like with computer software, sometimes you need to make an update so this is what the NgalSo Tantric Self-Healing practice is. Not that there's anything wrong with the previous version, it's wonderful, but for our modern minds we think differently. We don't think the same as people in the middle ages. We need a way suitable for our mind, that we can do. Some way of enlightenment, a way to heal, grow and relax suitable

for us. Rinpoche kindly made NgalSo Tantric Self-Healing, so we're extremely lucky and *Self-Healing 1* was the start of it and then he continued for many years.

I think that's enough talking for this evening. Too much talking and maybe we lose the thread. It's good to say something, then do a little bit of practice. Let's do **om muni muni** and the four limitless and then we'll do some mantras for the pandemic. Healing mantras of Parnashawari and other things, a) because many of our friends in the world are locked down and b) we're also afraid here in Europe it might come back. Even though right now, there's not so much of it around, but anyway we should continue to say the mantras and do the practice and create a positive tendrel for it not to come back - that would be the best. We all need to do this practice actually. First we'll do **om muni muni**, then we need to do the four limitless. Later we will do seven limitless, when we get on to *Self-Healing 2* we will start doing the seven limitless. At the moment we're kind of following in the vein, in the theme, of how Rinpoche taught at the beginning.

[Recitation: **om muni muni mahamuni shakymuniye soha**]

1. **semchän thamche dewa dang dewe gyu dang dänpar gyur chig**
2. **semchän thamche dugngäl dang dugngäl gyi gyu dang drälwar gyur chig**
3. **semchän thamche dugngäl mepe dewa dang min drälwar gyur chig**
4. **semchän thamche nyering chagdang nyi dang drälwe tangnyom la näpar gyur chig**

May all beings have happiness and his causes

May all beings be free from suffering and its causes

May all beings never be separated from the great happiness that is beyond all misery

May all beings dwell in equanimity unaffected by attraction to dear ones and aversion to others

Please everybody think that around you are all sentient beings, some you like and some you don't like. All sentient means all sentient beings. Especially the people you don't like, you need to meditate on them. All means all. If we have this feeling of aversion to even one or two people actually we cannot become a bodhisattva, we cannot become a buddha. If we want to become a bodhisattva, if we want to become a buddha - we need to work on our feelings of aversion and irritation towards certain people that we know. Anyway so we're going to sing **om muni muni** and think like this.

[Recitation: **om muni muni mahamuni shakymuniye soha**]

Now we're going to do the mantra of Guru Buddha Parnashawari and imagine the healing energy, the wisdom fire of Parnashawari passing through ourselves and all beings and purifying the environment.

[Recitation: **om pishatsi parnashawari sarwa dzawari prashamanaye soha**]

[Black Manjushri recitation: **om prasö / chusö / durtasö / durmisö / nying gola chö / ka**

**la dzah kam sham tram bhe phe soha / om prasö / chusö / durtasö / durmisö / nying  
gola chö / ka la dzah kam sham tram eh yam ram lam bam bhe phe soha / om eh a ra  
pa tsa na dhih hung / om a ra pa tsa na dhih hung]**

Here's another one to try at home with your juice, your water or whatever [blows bubbles in her drink through the straw when saying the mantras] and then you can drink it. Rinpoche used to do this and then share it all out, but nowadays it's not possible. You have to get your own drink, blow bubbles in it and drink it yourself. So many meditations like that for Black Manjushri. Now let's dedicate.

**dümin chiwe tshänma thongwa na  
de yi möla jamphel nagpo ku  
sälwar thong ne chidag pa chom te  
chime rigdzin nyurdu thobpar shog**

**om bishwa shanti hung**

By the power of the truth peace and bliss forever.

**nyinmo deleg tshän deleg  
nyime gung yang deleg shing  
nyintshän tagtu deleg pe  
könchog sum gyi jin gyi lob  
könchog sum gyi ngödrub tsöl  
könchog sum gyi tashi shog**

At dawn or at dusk, at night or midday  
May the three jewels grant us their blessings  
May they help us to achieve all realisations  
and sprinkle the path of our lives with various signs of auspiciousness.

Thank you very much. See you all tomorrow. Thank you for listening, we will continue tomorrow talking about Maitreya Buddha and the future love project.