

Self-Healing 1 & 2

Summer Course - Reading and Reflections - part 5

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[Reciting: lama khyen, lama khyen, lobsang thubten trinley yarpel khyen]

Hello everybody. Good afternoon. So we're continuing with Lama Gangchen's Self-Healing 1 teaching. Within that we're talking about the Lojong mind training teachings.

What we were just doing now [referring to the recitation] is what Rinpoche actually said to do. Lama Gangchen Rinpoche said when Lama Yeshe passed away that his disciples should sing lama khyen lama khyen lama thubten yeshe khyen to connect with him. So we're doing the same for Rinpoche, except Rinpoche's got a longer name. It's nice. Also Rinpoche always said that sometimes we do very long, complicated things: requests, lots of beautiful prayers written by the high lamas of our tradition like Rinpoche's Swift Return, but we - we're sort of like the beggar type - so even if we do just something very simple but sincerely it's ok, it'll work. So, if you can't remember anything else remember this one. If it's too complicated to make many long prayers of request, it's ok. The point is to connect heart to heart. So we can do this. Also any time we're feeling sad or we need some spiritual company, this is nice, we can sing this and connect with Rinpoche in our heart.

In Self-Healing 1, Lama Gangchen's first teaching in Brazil, actually in Campos de Jordao, in 1989 - the point was: who's our friend and who's our enemy. Ok this is not somebody else, just to be clear, it's our own inner emotions, for me and for everybody else. We need to identify within ourselves: what am I doing that's harming me, what am I doing that's helping me. In terms of my body, speech and mind. Then Rinpoche was

suggesting that if we look at the Lojong mind training teachings we might actually understand who is our friend and who is our enemy. Obviously what Rinpoche means by that is actually what we call our self-grasping and our self-cherishing, our 2 main enemies.

Self-grasping is like this feeling of me, this feeling that everybody in the world, well most people in the world have, of been what we call the ghost in the machine, like I exist, I'm separate. We all have this feeling don't we? I am separate from the rest of the world. I. Me. Because there's I and then there's you. It's a separation. From I and me then comes mine, me and my needs, my things. And then we get self-cherishing, *chesin*, me and my needs: *I need this, I need that, my needs are more important than anybody else for me because they're my needs, so I will put my needs first.* These from the Buddhist point of view, these are our inner enemies. It means we need to think about other people, we need to think in a more collective way, we need to understand how everybody's connected, how things work. We need to have a more ecological, a more global vision of reality. This is important, not only for us personally but as a society and also for the planet. So this is absolutely the right thing to do, it's free, it doesn't cost anything except some effort. So what's not to like about changing our point of view like this.

Rinpoche suggests we practice something called the 7-point mind training. So this is very nice advice from somebody called Geshe Chekawa, a Tibetan Geshe from the 11th century. I believe that the last bit we looked at was training in the 3 difficulties. In the 7-point mind training there's these vows and precepts of mind training. I think the last one we did was training in the 3 difficulties.

The next slogan, let's say the next precept or slogan of mind training is: ***practice the 3 main causes***. What are the 3 main causes? They are not only for Lojong mind training but actually for our spiritual development in general. The first one is we should wish to practice dharma rather than wish to lie on the sofa and watch netflix, or wish to go shopping or wish to do anything else. [Laughing]. Obviously we have to wish to actually do it - like anything in life. If we have absolutely zero interest there's no possibility to do it. So most people actually wish to practice dharma because they're unhappy and they're stressed and suffering. Then they come to Buddhist centres because they're very stressed, very anxious, very tired, and they heard meditation is good for them. In fact that's a correct thing to hear. If we do meditate it's much better, we feel more at ease, NgälSo, we feel more energy, we feel many more positive things. It's true, what people have heard. So most people wish to practice dharma because they're not feeling so well mentally and physically. That's a perfectly ok reason to wish to practice dharma. Then as we go on in the path, we maybe develop a bigger wish for why we should practice the dharma. Like for example, we'd like to be a better person, we'd like to help the planet, we'd like to give something back to society. That's a very valid motivation. All positive motivations are ok. Even: *I'm tired, if I meditate maybe I'll have more energy* - that's ok. *I'm sick, maybe if I meditate I'll feel better*, also that's ok. First is the wish to practice which obviously all of you have otherwise you wouldn't be here.

Second main cause. What is it? To rely on a spiritual guide who teaches the dharma. So, if we want to learn to play the guitar, I know there's YouTube but if we really want to play

the guitar we need a teacher. If we want to speak Spanish, we need a teacher. So obviously if we want to get enlightened we need a teacher. For example if we want to play the guitar, there are some people who can teach us up to a certain level and some who are like maestro. Of course there are different kinds of guitar teachers. Also with dharma, with Buddhism, we have different levels of teacher but anyway we need one. Why? Because it's too difficult to do everything by ourselves. If we go on the internet, these days we can buy a ton of books, we can watch Youtube but still we need somebody, at least to start, to give us the right direction, to help us. It's like when you learn to ride a bicycle or something, mostly you have your mum or dad helping you and you have the bicycle with the little wheels, stabilising wheels, then they help you a bit and then at a certain point we can take off the stabilisers and we can go. Definitely we need somebody to help us, otherwise we [makes gesture of falling off a bike] - that's usually what happens. [Laughing]. Then we conclude it's too difficult, nothing's happening or it's boring - why? Because we don't know how to do. It's super important that we have somebody help us in our spiritual practice. So of course many of us till now had Lama Gangchen Rinpoche to help us, so kindly for many, many years. So of course he's a great tantric master, enlightened being, so even in his present rainbow body he can guide us. How he can guide us, apart from blessing our mind is actually he left us clear instructions about what to do. It's not like: *ugh I don't know what to do...* because it's all written down or recorded. That's why we're passing through everything again because Rinpoche knew one day this would happen so we made a big effort for the past 30 years to write down all Rinpoche's thoughts, how to practise, what to do, how to progress. All we need to do is pass through them again and then try to put them into practice. No need to feel lost or anything like this, Rinpoche left everything clearly for us to do. Then of course we have, fortunately, teachers to help us. In the Lama Choepa there's some verses that explain the qualities of teachers. So actually if you were practising personal liberation or the Mahayana we need a spiritual friend. Our teacher doesn't have to be a Buddha, an enlightened being, but anyway they need to have some qualities, know how to practise, know how to do - it's not like in the Vajrayana. It's more easy, more comfortable the relationship. Rinpoche himself always used to say it was enough if people saw him as a spiritual friend. Like really friend. That's ok you know. That's sufficient for the relationship. Of course that was him, if a great being like him said like that then of course for Lama Michel and me that's totally fine. No need to think anything else but just have a friendly relationship, a positive feeling and we're all on the NgalSo bus together, on the NgalSo rocket to enlightenment together, we're all going together. Nobody will be left behind, we like each other so much, we're all travelling together as a big crowd so don't worry. We'll do everything together, we'll grow together as friends, spiritual friends. Of course not just me and Lama Michel, fortunately we have many people who can help, who can guide us. We have the fortunate position that we have many Tibetan teachers, we have great ones sometimes visiting our centre and also we have some friend lamas and geshe and we also have many friends, not only here in Albagnano but in our centres around the world who can help to guide meditations and the practices. So everything's ok. No need to worry. All we need to do is relax and regularly try and practise and try and understand something and have a good feeling. Don't worry, everything is going to be ok.

The third main cause is have the necessary condition to practise the dharma. So we definitely have all the necessary conditions, more than all the necessary conditions. We have tons of necessary conditions, even unnecessary conditions to practise the dharma. We have everything, more than everything. I mean Rinpoche did everything for all of our centres and followers around the world so everything would be ok. He took the Buddha relics around the world, to all our different centres and groups didn't he. Not just in Italy - everywhere, to Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Holland, Germany, France, everywhere. Spain. We prepared tons and tons of necessary materials, we have all the conditions - every condition we have. There's a list of conditions we need but we have them. The only thing is we should try not to waste our opportunities because we don't know how long we have this good chance, as we saw everything can finish - no? So without developing *lhung* or anxiety we try and make the best of the super nice conditions we have. Even now the dharma is streamed free to everybody's living room. No excuse really. Even if you have only one smartphone the whole dharma is there free for you. So we can't say: *I haven't got any money or I can't get to the dharma centre*, everything is so easy these days but the only real obstacle is within our own mind. Like we think: *I should spend all my time watching Netflix* or something else along those lines. [Laughing]. We have to take the precious opportunity we have. So for example, of course in everyday life if we think something's useful - let's say a laptop or a cooker or something, a car, we all make an effort to get it because we understand this will make my life better. So we will work or acquire the money in some way and we'll get it because we understand that having a car or a cooker, or laptop, will improve my life. What we don't realise so deeply is how much the dharma will improve our life. In fact it will improve our life much more than material stuff. We really didn't quite get the point that this is, let's say, as least as important. You know how much energy people invest in their normal life. Most people don't really invest the same amount of energy in their dharma practise. It means we need to understand that we haven't really caught the point of how important the dharma is actually for our own wellbeing. This is Rinpoche's point in Self-Healing 1. We think for example having loads of things will make us happy. He gave the example of children, give loads of things to the children and they'll be happy but clearly they're not. It doesn't work. We tried in so many ways to be happy but it didn't work. Why? Because we didn't understand what is the cause of happiness and what is the cause of suffering in our life - did we? So we need to think about this. Actually you can also reflect on your own life - how much benefit has the dharma brought you? Honestly, I think most of us who practise even for only a little while, we can see we're happier, that our quality of life is so much better than it would have been without. Honestly if we just followed the normal way we would have been much more unhappy and frustrated and miserable than we are now. Anyway if we understand the benefits of the dharma then naturally we'll put an effort, we'll be: *oh yes I have to do a retreat, oh yes I'll have to do this*, we'll want to do it because we'll understand that we're getting a return for our investment. Most of us have some kind of fortunate condition, like materially and things. We have enough. So to develop the inner conditions is more important. To practise the dharma. Rinpoche always said we need to put our mind in the right direction. Just move a little bit the position of our mind. Not too difficult actually. Just see things in a slightly different way. Then everything's more easy, more light. Anyway all these precepts/slogans of the mind training is reinforcing the same point in many, many different ways.

So let's go on to the next one. It's all saying the same thing but like a crystal looking at different sides of a crystal - no? Maybe one side, one facet, we like more than another. Please, nobody should ever think: *I don't have the condition to practise the dharma* because absolutely that's not true. Everybody has the condition these days but we need to develop the wish to do it. The wish is because: I will be healthier, I will be happier, I will be able to give something back to society, my life will be a million times better. That's why we should do it. If I don't do it I'll just be bored and miserable, I'll probably become an alcoholic because I'm so bored with my life or I'll just make a mess. Because that's what people do because they're fed up with life - no? Just making a mess, getting old, getting more bitter. You see people like this as they get older. So we don't want to be like this, we want to evolve as we get older. Have like a golden old age, if we get to old age, and we will if we put the dharma into practise. So that's a nice thought because usually the prospect of old age doesn't appeal to us much but if we practise the dharma as we get older and older things get better. Our inner condition of the mind is improving. So how nice! It's quite opposite from the normal way of thinking.

Next one. ***Become acquainted with the three non-degenerations.*** Non-degeneration means we need to continue on the same or improve. Like in the ancient times they always put a little bit like don't do this, don't do that, because that was maybe people's mentality at that time about a 1000 years ago. But Rinpoche always used to say Ngal So. Ok, there's the negative side, but we don't like to hear: *no, don't do this, don't do that.* It's true - no? I don't like it, people telling me don't do this. What we like is yes. So we could also say like instead of the 3 non-degenerations we could say grow 3 positive things. That's Rinpoche's style. He always used to say the negative way and the positive way. So if you don't like the 3 non-degenerations let's grow 3 things. Three positive things in our life. So the first thing we need to grow is we need to grow our faith in the dharma. Now, how can we grow our faith in the dharma? Faith it's not like in other kinds - well I don't know exactly - but other religions have their own ideas about faith don't they. When we talk about faith, we talk about wishing faith, admiring faith and faith based on experience. We have 3 types of faith. So it's a little different. The historical Buddha he always said that you don't need to believe anything just because he said it, he or we or anybody. You need to check everything based on your own experience. He always gave this example that if you went to buy gold, for example... nowadays the gold in Europe it's called 18 carat, it's not very pure actually, but if you go in an Indian jewellers, if you go in Nepal or Kathmandu or India, it's pure gold, 24 carat gold. What they have to do to be sure is they have to scratch it on something to test it's quality. To see the grade of purity. It's true, they do like this. If you want to buy a 24 carat gold bracelet for yourself or as a present for somebody you want to make sure it's really pure, because it's expensive. You definitely don't want the cheap one, the 9 carat or the 18 carat, you want the good one if you're going to spend all that money. When we buy gold or platinum we understand that that's exactly what we have to do. Or a jewel, we get the thing out, the little lens, and we check the quality. So the Buddha said we have to do like this as well, when people tell us stuff we have to examine it, if it's true or not. Then if we see really it's true then we can accept, not just: *oh yeah, yeah, yeah, you say so I believe you.* We don't need any of that in Buddhism. We should analyse and check based on our own experience in our own life if it works or not. If it doesn't we're very welcome not to follow it. If we find some benefit - why not? So, we

have 3 kinds of faith in Buddhism, one is like wishing faith. Wishing faith is like, for example, when we see people who are really bodhisattvas, like Rinpoche, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, these kind of people, we wish to emulate them. Why not? It's not impossible, they're human. It's not like they're aliens or something. The only difference is they made an effort to grow as a person. We can think: *it's true these people really exist in this world there are these kind of great beings, many.* So we can think: *I wish to be like that.*

Actually there's 3 kinds of faith, I've forgotten the second one at the moment, but the third type is faith based on experience. That's the best one. For example, many times people say: *I don't understand what you're doing*, because we're doing Tibetan buddhism and people say all kinds of things. If you look on the internet, which is not recommended generally. [Laughing], but sometimes you hear people saying all kinds of stupid things, negative things, gossip, you know all this kind of stuff. So if our mind is not strong, maybe the mind can shake a little bit. But if you have faith based on your own experience, for example me - I honestly don't care what anybody says about Rinpoche, our tradition, our protectors. Go ahead, I couldn't care less, that's your opinion. Very sincerely that's how I feel. Why? Because I saw for many, many years how are our gurus, how are our protectors, how is our tradition. I really saw the qualities and the benefit. So, really I don't care what anybody else says because I know. So that's faith based on experience. It's like that: I know because I see, so whatever anybody else wants to say that's their point of view I don't care. Obviously I care, welcome to share, welcome to share what you like. But anyway this is better, this kind of faith, because it means experience actually. So that's the right one. Fortunately because we have a living tradition, we have many, many opportunities to see that our practise is true. We saw many, many things happen, many positive things, so each one, every time something positive happens we need to keep it inside. Not just forget all about it. Like me, for example, many times I saw positive things happen I wrote it down. Why? Because otherwise in 2/3 years I'll have forgot. All the time we see many positive things happening around here, I make a note because then also I like to go back sometimes because it's inspiration for me. So I'd recommend that you do that when you have a positive dream or positive experience or something nice happens - write it down. It's good you know. When sometimes the mind's not always feeling so bright, so you can look back and feel a lot of inspiration.

So we need to grow our faith. What's the second thing we need to grow to develop? We need to grow, develop, our practise of the dharma. For example, if we start doing a sport or a language or something, at first we get tired quickly don't we. It's like we don't have so much capacity, we don't have so much concentration and we're not used to it. If we're doing like football, archery or learning Spanish or something - we can only take so much and then of course tired - no? Same with our dharma practise. Like Self-Healing 1, the people who were there were saying it was so difficult to say 10 mantras. After 10 mantras, 20 mantras: *I can't take it anymore, need a coffee, running out the room...* [Laughing]. Must have a coffee, must have a cigarette, let me out of here, too much.. You can see around here how much people have changed, how much people have evolved. Gradually it becomes easier doesn't it. It becomes more comfortable to practise. Rinpoche, skilfully, he kind of got us practising without us noticing. So we'll try and continue like that. Little and often is better. Obviously in our life many things happen but at least try to continue

something regularly. Not just, for example, come here do a course and then completely forget about it for the next year, obviously this is not helping so much. We try a little bit regularly. Like ding, ding, ding, like drops. Then gradually our practice will grow. In Spain we have our retreat centre called Tsering Jong, and Rinpoche has planted a peace forest, a long life forest, he planted 108 trees. So there we have to water (fortunately we have a water source from the mountains) with tubes, then we have little hole in each tube. So then the waters coming like - ding, ding, ding into the roots of the tree. So our practice needs to be like this, drop, drop, drop - like this not just loads of water and then 2 weeks no water otherwise the tree will die won't it. It's the same with our practice, if we do like loads of practice and then don't do any at all then it's like my plants here in Albagnano - if we don't take care all the time it's not growing. We'd all like to grow something so we can see clearly with the plants how we need to do, a little bit often. It's the same growing our peace garden, our Buddha garden inside, we need to take care, little bit and often. Then we can grow up some personal quality. But also like gardening, we should enjoy doing it actually. We keep the plants because it's nice, relaxing and we feel better. So also with our dharma practice, it's not like some oblige [commitment], another stress in our life, no, it's because it's nice.

Ok. What's the third thing we need to grow? We need to grow up our understanding of the meaning of dharma. So of course when we start we don't understand much, we don't know what is Buddha, we don't know what is dharma, we don't know what is sangha, we don't know anything actually - not much. Gradually we learn by listening to teachings, either in person, or in a book, or youtube, we have so many means these days, and thinking again and again. Why? Because it's interesting. First we need to hear, then we need to think about what it means, and also we need to ask do I agree or not agree. Because like I said you're not obliged to agree but hopefully you agree. Then we need to do *gom*, we need to cultivate and integrate that into our daily life. So gradually... Rome wasn't built in a day. Of course it takes some time to understand all this or maybe not. Rinpoche said who's our friend, who's our enemy and if we understood that maybe it's enough. However, maybe we need more explanation to get to the point. Just in case we do, we're explaining more and those of you who are bodhisattvas of sharp intelligence you'll get the point immediately. Like for example, historical Buddha Shakyamuni had many, many disciples. One of them was called Kasharpa, Maha Kasharpa, he achieved liberation - let me show how he did it. Pass me one flower. So here's one vase with a flower, so one day Buddha Shakyamuni did like this [holding the flower facing the audience], then just like this Maha Kasharpa got the point. Everything changes, everything grows, everything's connected and he achieved liberation. Unfortunately it doesn't have quite the same effect on me. [Laughing]. I wish it did, but he was a bodhisattva of super sharp intelligence and obviously I'm not. I just think: *oh beautiful, lovely*. I don't immediately see interdependence and the nature of reality because I'm a bit dense. But anyway, people are different. Fortunately there's something for everybody in Buddhism. In the Zen tradition they like a lot these stories of how the lama, the guru, shows just one thing, and then the disciple understands immediately everything and achieves liberation which is fantastic. We rejoice. Like I say so far it didn't happen to me. Maybe for you it could be - everybody's different. We're not all the same. Anyway, we need to gradually increase our understanding of the dharma. Of course this is why we frequent the dharma centre, we

listen to teachings and so on, each time we feel a little better don't we. It gives us something positive. Some positive news, like Rinpoche said some peace gossip. So we do it because we like actually.

The next slogan of mind training, there are 22 of these slogans, this advice. The next one is ***possess the three inseparables***. So what should we be inseparable from? It means our body, our speech, our mind - they should be inseparable from positivity. It means whatever we do, we try and do in a positive way. So what does positive and negative mean in Buddhism? Positive means something that gives something good to oneself and others. Negative means what harms oneself and others and the environment. Positive means what helps oneself, others and the environment. So for example anything we do that's helping others is positive. Meditating is positive. We do a lot of these guru pujas, imagining oneself as Tara or Chenrezig or whoever - this is positive. It's seeing our body in a positive way. For example singing songs, positive songs, nice songs, is positive. Like Rinpoche said before he passed away: *you should sing more, sing positive songs, sing NgalSo songs*. Why? Because we're using our speech in a positive way isn't it. Singing positive songs or just saying nice things - not gossiping, not saying nasty things. There's always a way to do things positively isn't there. Gradually we'll get to enjoy doing it. At the beginning maybe we enjoy more gossiping [Laughing] and saying negative things because we have like that kind of habit. But gradually we'll enjoy more doing positive things because we understand the feeling is much better. It's much nicer and then everyday we feel well, we get energy, we have a nice feeling, we enjoy to be with everybody else whereas the opposite is not true is it. Saying negative things we end up just feeling tired and mind going down. Actually these things we can see very easily that it's true. If we use our body, speech and mind in a positive way we feel much better, everybody has a good time - what's not to like! So anyway that's the advice. Try and always connect our body, speech and mind with positivity. How nice.

Next advice is: ***train without bias towards the object***. So what does that mean? The objects of our practice is basically other people. So we're doing mind training, so what we're doing is trying to see everybody in a positive way, we're trying to put oneself in a position to be the one who helps others. If somebody gives us a hard time and we can't run away, obviously the first idea is run away [Laughing], if we cannot run away for some reason and we're stuck with this horrible person then we try and use this bad situation and see them as our bodhisattva maker - our personal trainer. And try and develop a stronger mind. So we shouldn't have bias towards other people. Obviously best we like our mother, our relatives, our family, number one, our partner, our guru. And then we like, second best we like our friends then maybe we like some of our colleagues and then there's everybody else. So the advice of mind training is whoever you meet you have to try and have a positive feeling. So Lama Yeshe, why I refer to Lama Yeshe is because when I was very young I used to live in Manjushri Institute and people say his approach was very much similar to Rinpoche. I always found his ideas so nice. I know a lot of them because when I was young I read all the books and heard them all so it was going in easily. So he used to say for example when he met anybody it was like a mushroom popping up. So actually at that time in Manjushri we used to grow mushrooms in the basement. We had a room for growing mushrooms. It's true. It was quite damp in the basement so it was perfect to grow

mushrooms for our kitchen. So we had many, many shelves and we got mushrooms kits, which are like buckets, and just put them there and they just pop up, like loads of them, like tons of mushrooms just appear. It's actually quite easy growing mushrooms. We could do here actually. We have plenty of damp places in Albagnano that nobody wants to live in so we could grow mushrooms there and then eat them in our kitchen. Anyway he used to say that everybody he met for the first time was like a mushroom popping up. Why? Because like mushrooms are all the same, like these white ones that come in the kit. So towards everybody coming just automatically a nice feeling when you meet them. Ok you don't know their personality yet, their story, but just naturally a nice feeling. I always thought that was a nice advice. So overtime you see somebody new like a new mushroom popping up in your life. Why? Because we don't have equanimity. We have a lot of prejudice that we've learnt, like even it's unconscious, so we have prejudice towards people's nationality, their social status or their job or how they dress, or how they speak - loads of prejudice. So this we have to like, little bit, suspend the judgement. In fact we should totally suspend the judgement. Everybody we meet, rich or poor, or from east or west, north or south, or whatever, we should just see them in an open, nice way. They're just a person. Not immediately start to: *you're like this, you're like that* - otherwise no chance to become a bodhisattva, sorry. No chance to develop great bliss if every time we meet somebody we have some prejudice. This is a very important practise for us to cultivate. This tendency is definitely there in everybody's mind so we need to work on that and have a more open feeling. You're human, I'm human, it's enough. You want to be happy, I want to be happy. We're the same. Whatever characteristic you have it doesn't matter. Basically we're all the same, we're all human. We need to be like this. Remember, you can't say may all beings be happy except the ones I don't like or agree with. If you want to become a bodhisattva it's not possible. So this is really a huge obstacle to our spiritual development, so we need to look at our own attitudes. So that's one thing we need to develop equanimity towards. Also, it says in the explanation of the Lojong we need to develop equanimity towards the elements, the weather actually. So, why is that? Because all the time we get disturbed by the weather. For example, some people get disturbed because it's too hot, some people get disturbed when it's too cold. Or conversely, many people when it's summer they don't want to practise the dharma. Like let me give you an example, I went many times to Brazil with Rinpoche, also by myself. I've got many friends there. And then ok it's coming to December, January, the summer, it's super nice and everyone wants to go to the beach. Usually they only want us to go when it's winter, because like: *oh no, absolutely not, I don't want to hear the dharma because I want to go to the beach*. I'm looking at you all now my friends, hopefully now after many years together it's not just like this. Actually dharma's for every time, summer time, winter time, spring time, autumn time. But at the beginning when we used to go around with Rinpoche I remember that we used to go from like winter to winter. We used to go all around the world and it was always winter, wherever we went. Really we had a continual winter because we were going to South America and it was winter, then we would come here and it was winter, then we'd go to Asia and it was winter... Why? Because people when it's nice weather they like to enjoy and when it's cold then they're a little bit boring and fed-up and they want to hear the dharma. So this is an obstacle actually to dharma practise if you think: *oh now I want to go to the beach, I want to go on holiday, I want to go sun bathing, only when it's dark and cold and it's raining do I want to hear about the dharma*. So that

means most of the time there's no chance to practise the dharma. Then life is going by you know. Anyway hopefully it's not like that anymore. I mean actually our idea, Rinpoche's idea was dharma holidays. For example here in Albagnano, also in Almeria in Spain, we need to develop this idea of dharma plus holiday. So for example here, that's why we're having more excursions, summer camp... some more activities so people can have the holiday and practise the dharma. So, no more excuses not to come to Albagnano because you need an holiday because we're integrating holiday into our programme. So middle way. We took one step forward so please you also - 50/50. Basically the advice is: *whatever is the weather we should practice the dharma*. Conversely here also, sometimes, it's like the opposite. We're in the Alps so it's completely freezing and snowing and rainy. Then all the people don't like to come to the gomba. Also when it's freezing and cold and snowing we have to put the shoes with the ice claw and come down to the gomba. It means every time, regardless, wind, rain, sun or whatever the weather we should practise the dharma. Why? Because we need it all the time. Also it doesn't say this here but according to Tibetan medicine and Tibetan astrology each season is coming out a different emotion. So like for example the summer, it's nice - no? But actually there's a cycle of 3 humours: wind, bile and phlegm, that rise and then grow. It's like a biorhythm over the year. Each time of the year a different emotion comes out. So for example in the winter it's cold so the phlegm energy's increasing. It's related to ignorance. So it means actually if we don't take care of our diet and emotions, our behaviour, it means at the end of winter come out like cold/flu kind of sicknesses. And also actually more ignorance. In the summer it's hot. So that means we need to do the opposite, like cool down the body and the mind. If not it's coming out like bile, bile emotions. It means also like, for example if you stay all the time in a very hot place then you become more nervous, more aggressive. You always have the sun on your head - what do you call it? The Mediterranean temperament! [Laughing]. For example in Andalucia, we spend all the time in the sun and you see people [mimicking *aghhhhh*]. Need to cool down. So each place need to take care. So, we should practise the dharma, that means we should take care of our mind and also our health. Our diet, our behaviour, everything! Why? Because it's better for us. If we're more healthy, we're more happy. So in our NgalSo tradition we have a very complete explanation for everything fortunately. So we know actually how to take care of the diet each season, of the behaviour, of the emotions and how to practise the dharma. We have a very nice book called: Rainbow of healing nectars (available in English, Italian, Spanish. You can order it from our shop) which explains all about how to take care of the diet and emotions in every season. I would thoroughly recommend that, it's very useful. As Rinpoche says in Self-Healing 1 we say: *yes, yes, I know but...* This is also me! Because we know all this but we need to follow it - that's the point. If not we get uncomfortable, we get unhappy, we get some problems which we don't want. Some people, I gave my Brazilian friends as an example because really in Brazil there's some incredible beautiful places, some of the most beautiful beaches in the world - but sometimes it's too beautiful. They say: *oh no I can't practice the dharma I'm having a good time*. Sorry. When are you going to practise the dharma? So whether you're on a beautiful beach in Bahir or wherever you are - the most beautiful place you can imagine, or whether you're in a really horrible place, you should practise the dharma. Don't depend on the outer conditions. Because otherwise it's like you're becoming like a deva. A deva has some good karma, so they have the reflection of a beautiful environment but then if you just stay in that beautiful experience you're

burning up, you're spending, the balance of your karma bank. Then when it's all used up you go into an overdraft and then all of a sudden it's like: *oh I can't stay anymore on the beach or wherever, in this beautiful place, now my life just changed and it got horrible.* Why? Because we ran out of positive energy. We should practise the dharma all the time. If we do live in a place that's difficult or dangerous, if we can we should move but if for some reason we're stuck in that situation we have to think: *well I did this to myself* [Laughing], *I'm responsible for my own experience.* Like for example, nobody forced me to live in this mega city, full of pollution, I choose that myself actually if I'm honest because I could move somewhere else but for whatever reason now my life is like this and like that. Anyway if we have some condition that's not so nice, we have to think: *oh ok I'm exhausting my past karma by experiencing this.* Any experience good or bad we try to use to practise the dharma. So we have the beautiful city centre of Kunpen and we have the beautiful mountainside centre of Albagnano - each is beautiful in its own way. When we're in the city, of course there are many things that are more difficult there, more polluted, more this, more stress, more that - but anyway we chose that. When we can we come here to the dharma centre. So whatever we have to experience, good or bad, we should practise the dharma. Definitely our friends who live in Milan, you shouldn't think I'll practise the dharma when I go to Albagnano because maybe we don't go so much. Maybe we only go occasionally to Albagnano, let's say 95% of our life is in Milan. Or - I don't know - in Santiago, wherever, Barcelona, Madrid, it's in the city so we need to practise dharma in the city. So whatever we encounter, good or bad, we need to use it for our spiritual practise.

The advice is every time you see somebody suffering, which is like basically everybody at the moment, you should practise taking that means [breathing in] give it to me, breathe in. And breathe out your happiness and positivity and try and make people happy, try and give them positive feeling even if you yourself are in a bad mood, have a headache, anyway your main thing is to make other people feel better. So this is a practise we can do everywhere. In every situation. Because everybody is a little uncomfortable or have something wrong so [breathes in] please tell me your problems, let me help you and then send your happiness and positive feelings to others. This is a mind training practitioner, but no need to have a t-shirt saying: *I'm a Buddhist, I'm a dharma practitioner.* Just we do like very normally, just try and give a good feeling to the people around you while you're at work in the city. That's the best way - no? No need to advertise, like me [pointing to the front of her Borobudur t-shirt] I'm a Buddhist. I advertise it with all my t-shirts. [Laughing]. Just be normal. Try and make the world a better place. This we can do at school, at work, family - everywhere. Doesn't matter whether it's raining or the sun is shining we should try and do it all the time. Not just when I feel like it. We shouldn't put a label: *I can only practice when it's like this,* otherwise we might never practise.

So now MariaCristina is going to sing om mani padme hum and we're going to receive the blessing of Guru-Buddha Chenrezig about all the things we've been thinking about. Rinpoche said it's all very well hearing all this but each time we need to link with the blessing so we think... ok there is a picture of Rinpoche, but really there is Rinpoche, like his rainbow body, so like Rinpoche is in front either just like Rinpoche or Chenrezig. We're going to sing om mani padme hum mantras and think the blessing of Guru-Buddha

Chenrezig, Rinpoche in the form of Chenrezig, enters our heart so the seeds of compassion are moistened and they grow like seedlings, develop. So we become a better person, a kinder person, a more open person and all this stuff becomes more natural, more easy. So we're watering our inner quality, bodhisattva quality, with the mantra om mani padme hum.

[Recitation: om mani padme hum]

Ok. So Rinpoche always said we need to change our small selfish heart into the big open heart of compassion. Ok, so no need to worry how to do this, just sing om mani padme hum and feel that energy touching our heart and it's opening. Easy - no? We don't need to worry about how it will happen, just do it. When you feel the heart closing: om mani padme hum. That's why the Tibetans are going around like all the time om mani padme hum because need actually. When you see all the time: om mani padme hum, it's because we need compassion all the time for everybody. Compassion in action.

Next slogan of the mind training: ***it's important to train deeply and encompass all.*** Like Rinpoche says, we always say: *yes, yes, I know, yes, yes, I know about Lam Rim and things like that, I know this, I know Self-Healing...* Really we don't know. Rinpoche said before he passed away, it's recorded, it's on YouTube, he said: *we need to practise more deeply.* So this is what we need to do until we get the actual experience. Like one time, one friend she went up to Rinpoche and she said: *Rinpoche I think Lam Rim is boring.* [Laughing]. Rinpoche said: *what do you mean? Do you think I'm boring?* [Laughing] He was like what do you mean because he like embodies all those qualities and he couldn't understand why anyone would think Lam Rim was boring. [Laughing] Because that's the sort of things we say isn't it: *oh Lam Rim boring, this boring, I don't want to do...* I always think about that and it always makes me laugh. *Do you think I'm boring?* No! If we want to be like Rinpoche then we need to practise Lam Rim. Turn the mind away from the normal life, develop empathy, love, bodhichitta, and understand the nature of reality - what's not to like. We liked Rinpoche very much so if we want to be more like him we need to practise Lam Rim and Lojong and all these things. We need to put it into practise.

Actually this advice means that we need to see everything as an illusion. So whatever happens, good or bad, we need to see it as a kind of illusion. So for example you win the lottery and you win 15 million euros [mimicking winning the lottery] then you think this is a dream. Then the next day you get this notice that you're very sick and you're going to die, this is a dream too. Whatever happens in our life, and actually many things happen, so whatever happens - good, bad or neutral we can think this is a dream, this is an illusion. Because then actually what happens is we're less obsessed by it. A little bit more space. Example somebody sends on your phone, and it's not a joke, *congratulations you won the lottery* and you actually bought the ticket and it's true. Then normally we become so incredibly attached and excited, actually the illusion would get worse. If the doctor says there's no hope, you're going to die, then the mind would go completely down - no? If we think this is an illusion, this is like a dream, we're not so... it's like there's more space... Things happen in life, we didn't read the contract and now things happen all the time. Anyway Lojong is about how we react to the things that happen in our life. Good or bad.

Anyway its going to happen so we need to have a balanced mind. Of course we would like it to be nice all the time but there's no guarantee. Like most of us we pay an insurance don't we? Life Insurance. Health Insurance. Even we insure our boiler and our cooker. We insure everything these days. Why? Because we're afraid of something going wrong. Travel Insurance. There's so many kinds of insurance isn't there. Covid Insurance - that's the latest one for the plane, Covid insurance. If we practice Lojong it's a guaranteed insurance that whatever happens in our life, our life will be ok. Normally if we buy an insurance, it's just like a waste of money, just pay and if you actually need it, it doesn't work. Usually they will not give you any money, they will not help you - you just feel frustrated. This is a guaranteed insurance policy that if we do this, our lives will be better - guaranteed or your money back. [Laughing]. Buddha said don't believe me - try and see. It's true. You shouldn't believe somebody just because they're saying something, believe it on the fact that your life is getting better by putting it into practise. If you do this and you think: *you know what my life is getting worse* then please spend the time eating popcorn and drinking coca cola, watching Netflix and you know... whatever you were doing previously. If it's not true. But actually it's true.

Next slogan, next advice of the mind training: ***always meditate on special cases***. So first this is easy because we know many special cases. [Laughing]. Half our friends or maybe ourselves are special cases. [Laughing]. It's true - no? Lama Gangchen Rinpoche was a great healer so therefore many people he had around him are or were special cases in all kinds of extraordinary ways. So this for us is super easy, we just think about the people we know. The example is if there is somebody with a much better situation than you, you should rejoice, if there is somebody much worse off than you - I don't know: materially or physically or emotionally - we should develop compassion for them. For example many people they say: *I can develop compassion for the poor, not for the rich*. Sorry - why not? Rich people also have problems - no? It's true - no? All sentient beings means everybody: rich, poor, good, bad... everybody. So those people who have like great something - great wealth, great poverty, great happiness, great suffering, great sickness, great something, you can consider them as an example. And see how we can develop compassion, empathy and love towards them. If somebody is like super angry, super nervous, like Atisha's cook... Atisha had this cook, he was completely annoying, everyone else said: *I think you should get rid of this cook, life would be much better without them*, but Atisha said no I want to keep him because he's my bodhisattva maker, he helps me to develop my personal qualities. So for example if we have one friend that's always negative, jealous, angry, criticising others, well ok that's our special case to develop compassion. Actually the other day, Francesco said so many beautiful and interesting things, really so fascinating what he said. I must ask him again to share some more. What Francesco said, I mean everything was completely true, but he said for example: it's true that the sangha is the sangha of the arya sanghas, those who've understood reality. Me personally I feel so much better having our sangha around, because together we can. By ourselves we can't basically. Maybe some people can by themselves, they know how to do. But mostly so much better together. I appreciate very much all our NgalSo sangha, from the people just starting up to... ok sure we have some aryas in our sangha fortunately. In our spiritual community of our Ganden Nyingyu tradition fortunately we do have really some beings who understood reality, some, few, fortunately but all the rest... Anyway I appreciate all of you. Together we can.

Each one of us we have one piece of Rinpoche's light, put together we have a lot of light. I just think better together honestly. So meditate on the special cases within our sangha. Me and some of my friends, we're many years with Rinpoche, we always used to say: *you know everybody else is crazy why am I here? I can't understand why I'm here.* [Laughing] Obviously, of course, we have to do some healing too. Of course. This is the first point of the Lam Rim isn't it: *we are sick in body and mind.* The dharma is the medicine. The Buddha is the healer. Sangha are the nurses, social assistants. So that used to be our job: *everybody else I totally understand why they're here, but me I can't understand why I'm here. It must be a mistake.* [Laughing] But gradually we need to accept, me too I'm sick. I need the medicine too. Maybe we are special cases ourselves. We have a lot to think about, to reflect upon, who's my friend and who's my enemy [pointing at herself].

Next slogan or advice of the mind training: ***do not rely on other conditions.*** That means no need to wait for a better condition before starting to practise the dharma. What that means is we should definitely not think: oh if I had more money, if I had retired, if I had more time, if I had a more peaceful situation I would practise the dharma. Because if we defer it most probably it won't happen the ideal condition. I saw many of my friends say: when I get old and retire I will practise the dharma. Then several of my friends who said that died before they retired. So that's not a good idea. It happened to several good friends of mine. Already unfortunately they died before they had time really to do the retreat, this and that, that they intended to do. So therefore it's much wiser to start to practise the dharma now. Even if we don't have much time and we don't have much money and we have many responsibilities, we should start to practise the dharma now. Whatever condition we have is good enough. So that's the advice - don't put it off. Because really we don't know what will happen tomorrow. We have all the conditions now. Also we need realise actually, we need to understand. Me personally, I think Rinpoche left everything for us, more than everything, here for us followers of our NgalSo tradition. So everything somehow is so easy. What we want it's already prepared. Every book, every sadhana, everything! Look around us, here and in our other dharma centres around the world. We know all these great lamas, and so kind show us, all we need to do is do it. Anyway we have all the conditions, we don't need a better condition, we could say perfect condition actually.

Next slogan of the mind training: ***apply the main practice at this time.*** At this time we have this great opportunity to practise dharma with all the conditions. We have what's called a precious human life. Which doesn't depend on been human, it depends if we have the wish to evolve as a person. Many people they're just bothered about how much money they can get, how much status, their family, making a nice house, decorating their house - this kind of stuff. That's not really the best kind of human life, even if your house goes in Domo Magazine, even if your house goes in the interior design magazine and your family is in Hello Magazine, it's not enough. The meaning of life is to grow as a person, to develop the human quality. That's a precious human life. It means at this time, when we have this good opportunity, we should try and practice Mahayana buddhism or at least like Rinpoche says: *everyday one less negative thing and everyday one more positive thing.* Then we have a meaningful life. Then if possible don't harm people, if possible try to help them. But minimum, don't harm people. Ahimsa. That's the basic point of buddhism, don't

harm anybody, other people, animals and the environment. If possible help. At this time while I have this good condition I will practise the dharma, I will try and grow as a person, I will give back more than take, I will give. That's what I'm going to do, this is the principal thing I have to do, so like for example now that Rinpoche passed away, it's not like: *oh I don't know what to do*. Yes we do know what to do. We have to put Rinpoche's practices into practise more deeply and we have to give more than we take. When somebody's unhappy we should help them. It doesn't matter if we're in a dharma centre or wherever we are in the world, whatever we're doing - this is the main thing. Actually not just now, generally for the rest of our life this is what we should do. It's not complicated. We know what to do - it's clear. We should be very comfortable that we know exactly how to continue, in a very easy way, no doubt. Rinpoche left 100% clear what we should do. Do Self-Healing. Self-Healing means Lam Rim, Lojong and all the different kinds of sadhanas and meditations he left for us. Become a better person.

Next slogan: ***do not misinterpret***. That doesn't mean... for example, I've been many times to Brazil, we have one very beautiful centre in Buzios, beautiful place, we have the Buddha Dharma centre. When I first went to Buzios, I kept on seeing these signs saying *posada*. I thought: *oh now I'm in posada*. [Laughing]. Posada means like guesthouse, like bed and breakfast. Everywhere you see this word *posada*. Hundreds of signs so I thought we must be in *posada*. Because I didn't understand. I was misinterpreting. [Laughing] So I always used to laugh at myself when I understood what it meant afterwards. So, it doesn't mean this kind of misinterpretation. We can misinterpret hundreds of things, we can misinterpret people's intentions for example. Here in this case it means we should not misinterpret how to practise the bodhisattva path. So again remember this ancient teaching is written in the sense of don't do this, but in Rinpoche's way we put in the positive. So, we need to correctly interpret how to practise right patience, the right aspiration, the right experiences, the right compassion, the right benefit and the right rejoicing. So what does this mean? What's right patience? Right patience, for example, is the patience necessary to develop compassion, to understand reality, to do something positive, help or heal somebody, or a situation in some way. Some situations take time to change don't they. So we need patience, right positive patience. Many people have wrong patience, like patience for stupid things. I don't know, for example, some people have really strange hobbies don't they. They spend hours and hours and years and years of their life very patiently developing some completely useless skill and ability. That's a wrong patience isn't it. Most people when they have difficulties get mad don't they, they get angry, they get nervous. This is wrong patience. It means no patience for difficulties. This happens to me, for example if I'm in pain I get angry. So that's wrong patience. I need patience with difficulties. So when I'm in pain it means I shouldn't get angry. We need to change our attitude. Here's an example it says in the texts. For example some people, let's say a thief, they need to learn how to do and they need train how to do - it's not automatic - so they patiently develop the skills of thievery. So this is wrong patience. We should only have patience towards positive things. Like learning how to understand reality. How to take care of others. Taking the difficulties of others upon oneself. That would need a lot of patience. So we should be patient with our external enemies, that's true patience: patience with people who harm us, situations that harm us. We should not be patient with our internal enemies, our own pride and jealousy and anger. So this is what Rinpoche was saying in

Self-Healing 1 isn't it: *who's my friend, who's my enemy*. So normally we think outer people who harm us are our real enemy. We embrace our anger and jealousy as our true friend: *oh this is good for me, my selfishness, I need to be selfish then I can get ahead in life, how will I get ahead if I'm not selfish*. But, the Lojong is saying exactly the opposite. Our outer enemy we need to be patient with, inner enemy we need to reject. So we need to do the reversal of how we've been thinking until now.

What's a wrong wish and what's a right wish? Ok, so we see many people in the world who have like, let's say, a very nice lifestyles but they got it through a wrong means. Like for example a Russian arms dealer or a drug baron. Some people they have the wrong aspiration don't they, they think: *oh I'd like that lifestyle - no?* Like for example many children in the favelas in Brazil, they think: *ok, that's the only way I can have a nice life*, and they have that aspiration, they don't understand because nobody explains to them what's the cause for happiness and what's the cause for unhappiness. Actually, we have a very nice programme in Brazil through the Lama Gangchen Foundation, teaching peace education to many children. Rinpoche thought this should be everywhere actually, but so far our friends managed to do in Brazil around the San Paulo area. Many schools of under privileged children, it's a great thing. So we should have right wishes, which means: *I wish to become a better person or I wish to do something positive for humanity, for the planet...*

What's wrong experience and what's right experience? Of course many people are more familiar with normal experience and pleasure, so we wish for that. But we don't realise that if we practise the dharma we're also getting very special pleasure and happiness. Because we don't know what it is, we have to experiment and try it. Normal stuff we know don't we? We're habituated like this. What we don't have the habit for yet is the dharma way. We can say this is an interesting hobby - to try and do something different and see if it's true or not and if it's true, do more. Actually on the spiritual path there's all kinds of incredible positive experiences we can have. Until now we never tried! They're not inaccessible. We just need to create the condition and the cause and it will happen.

Ok then there's wrong compassion and right compassion. So what's wrong compassion? Wrong compassion is, for example, feeling really sorry about Rinpoche getting sick and dying. That's actually called wrong compassion in the Lojong teaching. Feeling very, very sad that Rinpoche got ill and passed away. Right compassion is for the sickness and suffering of ordinary people. Why is that? Somebody like Rinpoche, and many other holy beings, high beings, they have human bodies so naturally sickness and some problems will come. It's natural. As Rinpoche said: *nobody dies with a healthy body*. That's a condition of dying, you need to be unhealthy. But their experience is so different, actually from the Lojong point of view we don't need to have this kind of compassion and pity towards them - it's different because they are a kind of superior being and mind. That's why for example we didn't do the bardo prayer for Rinpoche, because there's no need. After death he goes and helps the other people in the bardo. What we're doing now is for us to create the right condition for him to come back and help us. Naturally, of course, because we all loved Rinpoche we had this great feeling of compassion towards him but not so much towards anyone else. I heard Rinpoche say many times that is was ok to be nice to him, bringing him medicine and food and whatever he needed and putting on his shoes and

everything, but he said you know actually you should do just the same towards everybody else. We were all like: *yeah, yeah, yeah..* but of course never do it. Ok. So what we should do is think I'll try and have 5 or 10% of the compassion I had towards Rinpoche, towards everybody else. Make an experiment. So when I see someone who's tired I try and help them, see what they need, do they need something to eat... this is what we did for Rinpoche - no? What do they need? Can they get up? Can they get down? Do they need food? Do they need water? Do they need medicine? Do they need money? What do they need - I will do it. We might think it's bit difficult to do exactly because I don't feel the same towards everybody else as I felt towards Rinpoche. But some percent we think ok 5% I'll try. [Laughing] Then go around thinking I'll be one 20th of the nice I was to Rinpoche towards everybody else. Or one 10th. But that would already be an improvement to be honest, wouldn't it? At least sometimes we'd be nicer to people so we can try like this. Then when 5% is not enough, we can increase to 10% and so on, we can try like this. Because there's 2 fields of merit, one is our gurus and our parents and mother and our father and the rest is all other sentient beings. So everybody else is also our field for accumulating merit. Anyway we shouldn't do it thinking we're accumulating merit, we should do it because it's the right thing to do. We need right compassion. We know we've all got compassion because we've experienced it towards Rinpoche even if we never experienced it towards anybody else. Actually now we need to do it towards everybody.

What's wrong benefit and what's right benefit? Many times we want to help people and we try and help but it gets worse. This is the story of our lives isn't it. [Laughing] We want to help people but really we don't know how because things are complex aren't they. So many times, what do they say: fool's job jump in where angels fear to tread. So we're always jumping in aren't we. For sure there's going to be a casino [mess]. We're thinking we're helping and usually we make more casino [mess]. This is usually called: me trying to help people. Why? Because we don't understand cause and effect. For example somebody says: *I'm sick, I'm suffering, I have a problem...* but we deeply don't understand why they're sick or suffering or have a problem. So we just do what we know, so we don't really help. In fact many times we make it worse, isn't it? Actually what we need to do is develop ourselves through the dharma, through various kinds of positive education so we know what are the causes of sickness and suffering so we can help people in the correct way. Then we can actually benefit properly. om muni muni mama muni shakyamuniye soha. Muni means like skill or ability, this is the way Rinpoche explained it, we need to develop different levels of skill. There's 4 munis. We need the skill to help people become free, we need skill to help people develop empathy, to develop bodhichitta, we need skill to help people understand the nature of reality, we need skill to guide others on the tantric path and also ourselves of course. Let's sing om muni muni, we're doing Self-Healing 1, and let's think about that, how we need to develop. We need to benefit people in the right way so we need to develop all kinds of different skill and ability. All the ones we need to develop are encapsulated in the mantra om muni muni mama muni shakyamuniye soha. So from Rinpoche or whoever is your guru and Buddha Shakyamuni we sing om muni muni mama muni shakyamuniye soha and this energy fills our heart and - ding, ding, ding - we're watering our inner buddha garden. The inner abilities are developing.

[Reciting: om muni muni mama muni shakyamuniye soha]

Next we have to understand what's wrong rejoicing and what's right rejoicing. So wrong rejoicing, for example these days on the tv or on internet we watch many different kinds of series and box sets and many of them are based on an anti-hero, for example a bank robber or something, some kind of criminal type of person. Actually we watch it and we rejoice in their activities don't we, like when they rob the bank.. It's true - no? Many films are like this. We quite enjoy watching them we get some kind of vicarious pleasure out of watching them rob and steal and shoot and do all these things. So this is what we call wrong rejoicing in Buddhism because it means we are empathising with and rejoicing in something that's actually negative. Or for example, like in Spain, I don't actually know anybody like this by the way, but apparently half a million people work in the bull fighting industry. In each town we have like these rings where they stab the bulls and kill them. People who enjoy that, who think that's a really good thing, it's actually wrong rejoicing. They say: oh it's Spanish culture and stuff like that. So that's what we would call a wrong rejoicing. This is not a criticism of Spain, I like very much Spain. But in each society we have different kinds of wrong rejoicing, that's just one example that comes to my mind. Or for example we rejoice when one country wins a war or on the tv, the west drops a bomb on somebody. We say: oh good they deserved it and stuff like that. So all this we would call wrong rejoicing from the Buddhist point of view. Somehow this is creating a negative impression in our mind so we should try and avoid doing that. So Rinpoche actually said: *rejoicing is the best investment*. Obviously he meant positive rejoicing, not negative. He always said for example when we see somebody with more qualities than us we need to rejoice. Especially not only their normal success, like how beautiful they are or their partner or their car or their money, that's not - of course we should also rejoice for those things because it's better psychologically - because if we're jealous we don't get the other person's stuff so it's a completely useless emotion. It's just a waste of time. You been jealous that somebody else has a more beautiful car or partner than you does not get you their car or their partner does it? All we get is we feel bad. Useless. No benefit whatsoever to feeling jealous. Especially we should rejoice in other peoples positive actions, their qualities, accumulation of merit and wisdom and so on. So when you see somebody super positive like Rinpoche or Mother Teresa or Nelson Mandela, there's many positive people, we should rejoice shouldn't we. So we need to do right rejoicing.

Next advice, next slogan of the mind training: **do not be erratic**. So that means we shouldn't like start, stop, start, stop, start stop our practice. Or for example do a retreat and its: *yes, yes I'm a real yogi, I'm a yogini, I'm doing 4 sessions a day for 12 hours a day, I'm like a super practitioner* but then after a week we're completely fed-up and we don't do any more meditation for a year. That happens sometimes. It's better to do like 10 minutes a day everyday than do loads and not do anything in between. Somebody told me and I'm sure Rinpoche said this, I didn't hear myself directly, but somebody told me Rinpoche said that we want all the good things but we don't have any patience to create the causes for them. So we practise for a bit and then we get bored and we give up. How do you expect to get all the results if you don't make the effort? Continuous effort. So this we should consider. We all want to be bodhisattva, we'd all like to be daka, dakini, mahasiddha, yogi, yogini, but if we don't practise continuously then no chance to be one

of those. So do not be erratic. Or let's put it in Rinpoche speak: let's practise steadily and positively, continuously. Gradually and smoothly.

The next slogan is: ***train with certainty***. This means we should practise without hesitation or doubt. However, to practise without hesitation or doubt, first we need to have faith based on experience. We need to actually have an experience of the things, otherwise why should we have faith in something if we don't have experience. Like for example, nowadays to go to university it's very expensive. Fortunately when I was young it was completely free, in fact they used to pay you to go in England. I was very happy and spent my student grant on a saxophone. [Laughing]. Not like nowadays when it's really expensive. It's really hard nowadays to go to university, not just in England but all over the world - you need to pay. So why would you do all that unless you were sure at the end you would get a degree and that degree would be of some benefit - you wouldn't would you. Why? No need, you'd do something else. You'd have to be convinced that your efforts would be of some benefit. First we have to be convinced that our practise, if we do it, will bring results. How we can be sure, is we can look at people like Rinpoche, Trijang Rinpoche, Pabongkha Rinpoche, Tomo Geshe Rinpoche, Gonsar Rinpoche, these kind of people we know, and many others, and we can see what they practise and that they got much better results than me. They're more stable, more compassionate, more wise and also we can think: *in my limited experience so far when I put the dharma into practise everything worked out ok and better*. So I can conclude if I keep going everything will improve. Logically. From my small practise I got some small results and I saw from their big practise they got big results, logically if I continue everything will get better for me too. They say we shouldn't have doubt, In the Lorig, understanding the mind, teachings it says doubt is like a 2 pointed needle. Actually there are some 2 pointed needles, I don't know what they exactly sew with those but I've seen needles with 2 points. But they say you can't sew with a 2 pointed needle. Why? Because if you stuck it through something the thread would get stuck. So with this mind: yes/no/yes/no/yes/no it means you can't penetrate any subject. So first before we can actually practise we need to overcome our doubts. That's exactly why, for example, we listen to teachings and we think about it so things become clear in our mind. Then based on that we can meditate on it more deeply. Now at least this is the approach of our Gelugpa school. We try and make everything very clear and then we enter into the 3 retreats, more deeply afterwards. And then while we're starting we do like a weekend or a month or something - we don't just jump into the big retreat to start with. Why? Because we don't know what to do. Then it would be a waste of time actually if we don't understand how to apply exactly the instruction, at least that's our approach. There's many other teachers with wonderful approaches but our Gelugpa tradition based on the view and orientation of Lama Tsongkhapa we do like this. We use our thought process, we try and understand things clearly, a thought is not considered a bad thing. Analysis and intellect is a tool that we use to make things clear. Then afterwards we can do like this *vipasana*, we can concentrate on something and develop a fixed positive mind, whether it's empathy or the nature of reality or whatever. But first we should know what to do and what not to do. Who's my friend and who's my enemy. Like Self-Healing 1. Then it's better. We all want to grow, we're all investing our time, our effort, our money, our life, in this so we want to make sure the investment of our energy is going in the right way, that we're not wasting our time. This is why we have a lot of

teachings to explain, so we don't have any doubt. Also just look at the life of Rinpoche and these people then it's very clear, we can see clearly all this is true. Or we can look at the example of the great masters of the past, but actually we have living examples, like Rinpoche until just very few weeks ago and many other great beings. Of course we're not saying Buddhists have the monopoly on spirituality also within other spiritual traditions there's many other great beings. Because people are all different with different cultures and mentalities, so if for example you're a christian then you can look at the great beings of your tradition like Mother Teresa, Saint Teresa of Avila, there's many you know, Hildegard Von Bingen, many, many holy beings. Look at them. Ok. Anyway, so whatever path we're following we need to be certain how to do it. Then we can train with certainty. Actually this is not in this part of the explanation but ok: there are many paths up the mountain, but what we need to do is follow one, because life is short. So it's true everything is incredibly interesting, Kabbalah, Sufi, Hindu, Muslim, Zen, everything's fantastically interesting and valid spiritual paths, but finally you choose the one that's good for you. It doesn't have to be ours necessarily. But then you follow that because this thing of doing a bit of one and bit of the other it's like going up one path and going down.. you're never going to get up the mountain like that. So for example if Zen is your thing you follow fully and totally on the Zen path. If you're a Sufi do fully and totally that one. If you're Mahamudra, follow it to the end, commit yourself. Why? Life is short. We haven't got time to follow every path up the mountain to enlightenment, to liberation, to heaven. So develop certainty in one authentic spiritual path and follow it. So that's really good advice. It also means actually that we should respect all spiritual traditions. All the spiritual traditions have produced great masters, great holy beings who are obviously of great benefit. But you choose yours, whatever it is and follow it and train with certainty.

Remember all this is because Rinpoche said if we look at the Lojong we might actually understand who's our friend and who's our enemy and we might become a better person and more happy. That's why we're doing all this. So for example maybe not all of these advice touch our mind but maybe one or two do. That's enough. It keeps going and going until something touches. So next slogan of mind training: ***be released by the 2, be freed by the 2, investigation and analysis***. So this is completely opposite of how most people live. Mostly we're on a kind of autopilot in our life. We just kind of go on and we're not really watching so much what we think or what we do. Where we put our feet. We just kind of go on a little bit unconsciously. Many times we say something which is not actually the best thing. Like me, I fall over, trip over, if I don't watch where I put my feet. Or the mind goes in the negative. It's kind of like our mind's on autopilot. It just goes. First we need to become aware of what's happening and a lot of Buddhist training is actually about this. If you look what it actually is, it's about becoming aware of your body, your speech and your mind. A lot of people when they get in connection with Buddhism they... for example people are very much fascinated by the idea of been a monk or a nun. So the monks and the nuns follow something called *pratimoksha*, individual liberation, and a lot of it is about watching and checking how you're behaving in order to put your mind towards the positive. But, what people don't understand is you don't need to be a monk or a nun to do it. So people think: *I'm not a monk or a nun, I can't practise the pratimoksha...* but lay people, householders, flat holders or whatever, renters, people who are not monks and nuns, we can also check our behaviour in order to grow. Now this thing called the

pratimoksha, individual liberation, is based on avoiding the 10 negative actions and developing the 10 positive actions. So it means always having a positive mind, positive speech and positive actions of your body. So lay people equally can do this. It's just in a monastic community, they have a great many rules and regulations. Actually it came out because of the experience of the people around the Buddha historically. It was all based on things that happened in that community, and it's a bit like here in Albagnano, something happens and they make a new rule. Really that's how rules come about in spiritual communities. It's not like they start off with loads of rules. In fact like here at the beginning there was no rules whatsoever, complete free, and then gradually as we go on more and more rules have to be introduced because people did things. Like for example, in something called the *Vinaya Sutra*, which lists all this in detail, let me give you one example. This is a true story. In the time of the Buddha they had one stupa and the monks used to make circumambulation around this stupa and then there was one monk who let's say had not the best character, and what he used to do is when the monks used to go around the back of this big stupa he used to mug the monks and steal their robes and their begging bowls. Then the monks would go off in their underpants and he would resell the begging bowl and the robes to the new entry into the sangha. It's a true story. He was doing business like this. They were doing circumambulation in the dark, in the evening, so he would put a hood or something and he would knock them out and steal their begging bowl and their robes. Finally the Buddha said sorry this is not acceptable. He made a rule that you shouldn't behave like this. You shouldn't take the robes and the begging bowl of the sangha, it was something negative. Before they didn't have this rule so this guy thought ok. Really, people always think if there's no rule, it's ok. All the rules of the Buddhist community came out based on what actually happened between them. So anyway you can see it's a little bit like here. Similar idea. So what we need to do is be aware of the actions of our body, speech and mind. This is not like some kind of punishment or something like this. It's just to make sure we're more on the positive, than on the negative. Why? Because we chose this freely, nobody forced us to do it. Nobody dragged us into a Buddhist centre screaming did they, and then chained us up and said you have to improve yourself, you have to watch your mind. No. We're all doing it completely freely as adults. It's our own free choice. So based on our own free choice as adults we try and do like this, watch our body, speech and mind. So we have like a list of the things of the speech to avoid, like for example don't gossip. One time here in Albagnano they came with these green cards in the gomba and we all had to sign them. The green cards said I solemnly wear - it's a bit like Harry Potter - I will not gossip about anybody and we had to sign it and Rinpoche was like: *yes, yes, this is very good, very positive*. I've still got mine somewhere, I've got it in my office in Spain, it's on my shelf. It was Rinpoche's idea and Mr Jan printed the cards. Actually there's 10 of these things, we didn't get the other 9 we only got the gossiping one. I solemnly swear to not harm anybody and so on. Anyway we need to watch our actions of body, speech and mind. This is actually what they call mindfulness isn't it. Now they have the mindfulness industry. It's good because when we're more aware of what we're doing, we're more free, the mind is freed up to do many more other positive things. So when we do this kind of watching ourselves, first it's easier to watch the physical actions. Even there sometimes we have such strong habits we need to change. Also we need to watch the speech, what we're saying. Like for example, try and make an effort to say only positive things. So when we're just about to say something

negative, just about to gossip about somebody, we have to do like this [makes gesture of swallowing her words] swallow... We should do like this, when it's on the tip of our tongue and I really want to tell you and it's something interesting and we'll all enjoy but [makes gesture of swallowing her words] say something positive. Even more difficult than that is to watch our thought, watch our mind. So for example, we need first to start just recognising what's going on. So for example when we get angry instead of like [pulling a bad face], like normal, we need to think: *oh I've got angry*. Even just recognising that you got angry is making one space. Recognising we're jealous, recognising we're nervous, recognising we're stressed. So many kinds of Buddhist meditation is just recognising what's happening in the mind. It's like been an observer. So for example we think: *anger is arising in my mind, this will pass*. Whatever is arising. A painful sensation is arising, happiness is arising... You watch like this and a lot of Buddhist meditations are based on this idea. Just observing and been aware. It's not a bad thing to do actually. Then also we realise that our emotions arise and then they go away. Because normally our emotions appear and then we just get like totally lost in that emotion. Like obsessed. I don't know, like madly in love with somebody.

If we decide somebody's horrible they're the worse person in the world, they're a monster, they're horrible. We never think: *oh this is going to pass* do we? Like tomorrow I'm going to feel differently. So first we need to be aware what's happening, make some space, think ok good or bad this will pass. Then the waves are getting less in the mind. The wave is there but we know it's just a wave. So that's one nice thing we could do, we should do. Like for example, practically when an emotion comes up, before we say anything that we'll regret, breathe, breathe deeply. At least breathe a little bit first. Normally, let's say somebody is horrible to us we just react immediately don't we. Lose it completely. Specially with our partner, family, at work, with the people who are close to us. With the people who are not so close to us we have to behave, we have to pretend to be a better person. But with the ones who are close to us then it all comes out doesn't it. We need to watch what's happening with our mind. That's why our partner is our mirror. Why? Because they're in the privileged position that we let out all our emotions on them. It's true - no? Everybody else we're nice to, but with a partner everything comes out. So that's why our partner is our mirror and having a partner on the spiritual path is not a bad thing, if you have the right one obviously. It's nice because with your partner you can grow a lot. Also not so easy because many times you see: I'm completely stupid. I'm a fool, I lost it again, I let out my emotions. Your partner is quite happy to tell you so. [Laughing]. Whereas nobody else will tell you: *you're an idiot, you're a fool, you are jealous or angry...* but your partner will tell you straight away. So it's good to have a partner who's on the same path together.

I think maybe we'll continue to talk about this tomorrow, how to train with investigation and analysis. There's a lot to say about that. But no problem, we have time.

Anyway to conclude let's imagine that Rinpoche, in the form of his rainbow body, comes to the crown of our head, blessing everyone of us wherever we are in the world. And then dissolves through our central channel and stays in our heart. His holy mind is blessing our subtle mind, it's like plant food for our inner Buddha garden. It's like a big injection of

positivity. All these qualities that we've been talking about... because we have all the seeds of positivity within our own mind but we need to ripen them. So Rinpoche absorbs into our heart and then we'll sing Rinpoche's mantra together to stabilise all these positive qualities within our mental continuum.

lama khyen lama khyen trinchen tsawe lama khyen
lama khyen lama khyen kyabne kundu lama khyen

om ah guru vajradhara sumati muni shasane karma uhta
vardanaye shri badhra var samaniya 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

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

Thank you all very much. See you tomorrow, we'll continue with Self-Healing 1 and the mind training. Thank you.