

Lately I have been talking about the four truths and tonight I will be talking again about the Truth of Origin of Suffering.

What are four features of the Truth of Suffering? They are impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless.

### **Truth of Origin of Suffering**

What is an instance of origin of suffering? Desire.

What is virtue and also truth of origin of suffering? Contaminated/ non-liberating virtue.

There is a wide overlap between virtue and origin of suffering. Jamgon Lama Tsongkhapa says all virtues that do not stem from understanding of selflessness of person and phenomena or are not motivated by bodhicitta or done in relation to the power of field of merit, are all mechanisms that perpetuate samsara/the cycle of suffering. They are therefore truth of origin of suffering and are the very cause of mundane existence. I asked everyone for an example of this, because it is quite crucial information.

What is both origin of suffering and truth of suffering? The answer is not necessarily delusion. There are examples of delusion without suffering. There are delusions within Arya Bodhisattvas on the third path, Path of Seeing, which are not origin of suffering. When you see truth directly following the Mahayana path you become an Arya bodhisattva. On the Path of Seeing and above you have delusion which is neither origin of suffering nor suffering. Aryas have neither suffering nor truth of suffering, because, as Maitreya says, they have completely overcome birth, aging, death and sickness and so do not suffer. Aryas do not have our kind of body, but have a mental body.

I'd like to give a brief introduction to Buddhism. The concern of all beings with or without Buddhism is to seek happiness and freedom from suffering. The two can't be achieved by just praying to Buddhas. One must identify understand the process of suffering and then make personal effort in bringing an end to it in addition to relying on Buddhas and other sources for strength and assistance.

Firstly one who seeks abiding peace and freedom from suffering, needs to recognize ones life is fraught with suffering and that one's aggregates are a magnet that attracts suffering. This is the first thing to remember. Our very physical-psychological aggregates are instances of suffering which we have always wanted to be free from. The wise thing is to identify their causes. When all suffering, gross and subtle, is put together they are called "truth of suffering". The totality of it arises from their respective causes which are primarily in our mind in the form of distorted awareness. Suffering and its origins are things we want to be free from. The antidote is called truth of path or True Path.

To understand Buddhism we need to understand and develop conviction about past and future lives. On the basis of that we need to understand the processes of our minds and how then mental events become causes of effects which give rise to experiences. That is a brief overview about truth of suffering.

### ***Origin of suffering examples are karma and delusions/disturbing emotions.***

All karma/action that is not steeped in understanding of emptiness, bodhicitta or relying on special powerful fields of merit like Buddha and ones guru, are instances of the origin of suffering.

As for delusion as origin of suffering there are all kinds, primarily there are three poisons; *desire, hatred and ignorance*. According to another category there are six root delusions; *desire, hatred, arrogance, ignorance, deluded doubt, and deluded view*.

When we talk about the ten delusions the first five are those just described, and the next five are views. The first wrong view is the *view of transitory collection*. It is a distorted ungrounded perspective that one develops thinking that one as a person has a self sufficient substantially established entity. One looks at one's aggregates and thinks I am self sufficient and substantially established. The highest school understanding of it is different from the sutra school which I have just given you.

Next is *extreme view*. It considers that the view about one as self sufficient substantially existent is correct and holds tightly to that view.

Next is *distorted perverse view*. There are many types of distorted views. One is that there is no karma or law of causation, or that the three jewels are not real and the four truths are also not real.

The fourth wrong view is *dawa chogzen – considering one's view as superior to others*. It sees the first three wrong views and thinks to oneself that they are right.

## 11.7. 2011 Tenets Geshe Jampa Tenzin

The last wrong view is *considering some moral behavior and conduct as supreme*. E.g. in Ancient India and even today some believe standing on one leg is supreme behaviour or jumping to death on a triton will lead to liberation, or a dip in a holy river will wash away your sins, or burning candles on the body will remove sins. To consider these as right ethics and conduct is deluded views which some have.

These are instances of ten delusions which are a part of origin of suffering.

Last week I gave you five sections pertaining to delusions as truth of origin of suffering; identifying delusions, cause of delusion, how they arise etc. Now we have dealt with the first one.

Secondly:

How do these delusions arise? The answer is given in relation to 2 considerations:

- 1) Where ignorance and view of transitory collection are synonymous.
- 2) Where they are considered separate

How do delusions arise from each of these?

According to those who consider ignorance and view of transitory collection as separate they offer this analogy:- you mistake a coiled striped rope for a snake, due to twilight. Two things are responsible for that; the twilight and misperception in mind that there is a snake.

These two factors are used as examples. Twilight is likened to ignorance; everything is vague, hazy, and nebulous. That there is a snake is like the view of transitory collection. If ignorance is like twilight what is it? It is a secondary mental factor which is confused about the true ontological status of a person, who the person really is. What is an instance of jigta? Belief that one as a person has self sufficient substantially existent entity. Those who see ignorance and transitory collection see both as ignorance.

According to the explanations of jig.ta (the view of transitory/transient collection) and marig.pa (ignorance) in either case you develop a distorted awareness about one's person. Due to jig.ta you instinctively develop an awareness of self and others. (ed note: considered to be a negative trait, an us and them attitude)

According to those who consider the two as different all delusions arise from ignorance including the view of transient collection. According to the second view that sees the two as the same, all delusions arise from the view of transient collection.

Once the view of transient collection is developed in relation to ones person and aggregates etc, you develop two compartments; self and others, with inevitable attachment to self and aversion to others. When you develop attachment to self and hatred/aversion to others this leads to deluded doubt leaning towards total disbelief in the teaching of the Buddha about the four noble truths. In them he talks of truth of suffering and origin of suffering. Truth of Suffering is ones own body and mind because they are what the transitory collection looked at and then formed an idea of selfhood. With such an idea in our minds when Buddha said truth of suffering is something we need to overcome as we do the origin of suffering, we develop resistance to Buddha's message which is deluded doubt. Because of excessive attachment to self one wants to believe that one has some truth and Buddha's message is wrong. This leads one to develop a wrong view about ones own status. This is how delusions arise.

I talked of supreme view, wrong view, view of supreme ethics and conduct etc. Adhering to such views about things as well as the view itself one develops different perspectives about things leading to wrong behaviour and misconduct.

***What causes delusions to arise? Six causes produce them.***

- 1) The base from which you develop delusions is predispositions for them in ones mind
- 2) Observed object (of delusion). They are phenomena or things which appear and are perceived as abhorrent or appealing.
- 3) Seeming instruction/literature - that arouse in you attachment to something or somebody and hatred towards others. Clever writing which leads one to develop these. Conversation that people engage in which lead to development of desire and hatred.

## 11.7. 2011 Tenets Geshe Jampa Tenzin

- 4) Hustle and Bustle. Places like pubs and gambling casinos – night clubs are instances given by His Holiness, not that I know what they are. Places where unwholesome company can lead to disturbing thoughts or emotions.
- 5) Entrenched familiarity. Not applying antidote to desire, jealousy etc. Giving free reign to desire etc, and so becoming a victim to it.
- 6) Mental engagement/ mental dwelling. If you are attached to an object or person, you cogitate on how and why they are so beautiful and therefore so desirable. Conversely with hatred you focus on the abhorrent qualities. So delusion becomes highly accentuated.

It is good to identify factors creating delusion. It is to remove oneself from these causes that one goes into retreat. The first, bakcha/predispositions of delusions, is hard to handle because we have been so deeply conditioned by delusions throughout beginningless time. Even in retreat, in isolation, it is hard, whereas for the remaining five there is a very good chance we can keep them at bay.

I have pointed out what these six are so that we can become aware of the causes of disturbing thoughts arising in our minds.

Please translate this knowledge into practice as much as possible.

### ***Fourth Section – drawbacks of delusions/ nyon.mongs***

We could spend a great deal of time talking about this. Even if the entire sentient beings in three realms were to turn into enemies for you, the most they could do is destroy your property and kill you. Their united effort will have no power in harming you in many subsequent lifetimes, it can only affect this one life, whereas delusions that are our real foes, are very deadly. Even an instant of delusion can have far reaching implications for our prospects of happiness in future lifetimes. It can lead one to an incredible length of suffering. If even an instance of delusions can have that much power what if we give free reign to disturbing emotions, allowing them to run rampant in our mind?

Disturbing emotions have done nothing but cause harm without rest. Conventional human enemies do not harm us incessantly.

Disturbing emotions are the worst foes in that if you placate them they become worse and worse, they gain strength, whereas appeasing conventional human enemies, doing favours for them here and there, causes them to become softer and softer and you develop nurturing relationship with them. Not so with delusions.

Disturbing emotions cause a lot of problems even in this lifetime. If you give free reign to them it can affect our physical wellbeing and even our given lifespan. Not only that, once ruled by them you tend to not get on well with other people and it leads to social isolation. Delusions are a heightened expression of self centredness. Once possessed by them one becomes blind to one's real situation, forgetting those who have been so kind to one and one may even take one's mother or father's life, the life of a sibling or even one's own life. These are negative actions resulting from disturbing emotions.

This is a brief explanation of delusions, which form the second half of truth of origin of suffering.

Abhidharmakosha texts and others are very detailed about delusions. Whilst there is a huge body of Buddhist literature about these disturbing emotions, at the very least we should identify the three poisons, desire, hatred and ignorance and especially try to understand how ignorance is at the root of everything.

Tonight I talked about delusions, the six causes, how to identify them and particularly how to see how they lead to delusions. Think especially about the three poisons of mind and ignorance about one as a person; identify it and how to free the mind of that. For that we need to study Buddhist literature which teaches selflessness of person and to that end gather merit, purify ones mind of obstructions and make entreaty to gurus and Buddhas.

Overcoming ignorance is the key to overcoming all other delusions. If you overcome ignorance the whole web of delusion collapses on itself. The great Aryadeva says, "Just as our body sense base is dependent on our body, so are all delusions dependent on ignorance".

We have six consciousnesses. Five are sense consciousnesses; eye, ear, nose etc are dependent on body faculty. So do all disturbing thoughts depend on ignorance. Therefore if you crush ignorance, you will have conquered all delusions.

## 11.7.2011 Tenets Geshe Jampa Tenzin

Another way of destroying all delusions in a single stroke is to see dependent arising. Whoever sees dependent arising will put an end to disturbing thoughts.

Tonight I talked about the origin of suffering and the majority of time was on delusions in relation to truth of origin of suffering, next week it will be karma.

Abhidharmakosha talks about three causes of delusion. The author, Vasubandu, says the first is not overcoming seeds of delusions; the second he says is, proximity with the object that triggers the delusion. The third cause according to Vasubandu is mental dwelling/application/engagement. It means various thoughts crisscrossing the mind exaggerating the beauty or loathsomeness of the object. With these three the cause of delusions are complete and delusions will ensue.

An anecdote to explain the proximity with the object and the hustle and bustle:

In the Phenpo area north of Lhasa were two brothers, one given to drinking the other one not. The one who did drink went to Reting monastery, the other went to the capital city Lhasa. The first brother while in the monastery contacted many masters who he had great conversations with. From this he somehow came to give up drinking. The good guy came into contact with the townsfolk and pubs, the hustle and bustle and alcohol etc, and developing a taste for beer he became a drinker. The two men met some time later and found they were complete opposites of the way they were before, all due to the company they kept. This is why hustle and bustle is given as one of six causes that trigger delusions.

Next week again I will ask for the six causes again.