

## **CAUSES & CONDITIONS THAT CREATE SUFFERING**

Discussion for class, 29 January 2015

### **Reading:**

#### **PERPETUALLY RE-CREATING SUFFERING**

Chogyam Trunpa, Rinpoche: *The Path of Individual Liberation*, from the *PROFOUND TREASURY OF THE OCEAN OF DHARMA*, Shambhala Pubs., 2013, Ch. 55, pp.406-407.

The origin of suffering, *kunjung*, is based on the belief in eternity. That belief in eternity marks the difference between theism and nontheism. Out of the belief in eternity comes the hope of maintaining oneself, of continuing to be, and the search for longevity of the self, or ego. Along with that comes the fear of death. We look for all sorts of alternatives, for some way to occupy ourselves. We keep groping around in order to survive. That groping process is connected with the development of the *kleshas*. We begin to look outward from ourselves to others, out into the world, and grasp at the world as a way of maintaining ourselves. We use the world as a crutch. That process leads to suffering as a result, because the various ways we try to maintain ourselves do not actually help to maintain us --- in fact, they hinder us --- so our scheme begins to break down. The more it breaks down, the more we have to rebuild; and as that rebuilding takes place, the suffering returns, so again and again we go back to rebuilding. It is a vicious cycle. The process of *samsara* goes on and on. We have to understand its workings, for once we know how *samsara* operates, we will know how to work with it. We will know what to overcome and what to cultivate.

The path or journey becomes important because it breaks down fixation --- holding on to oneself and holding on to others --- which could be said to be the origin of suffering. There are two types of *kunjung*: the *kunjung* of *kleshas* and the *kunjung* of *karma*. The *kleshas* are one's state of being, one's state of mind. *Kleshas* such as passion, aggression, arrogance, and ignorance are all internal situations; they are purely mental events. The *kunjung* of *karma* is acting upon others as a result of such *kleshas*. Both types of *kunjung* could be considered karmic; however, the second type of *kunjung* is much more karmic because it involves making decisions, dealing with others, and actually doing something with the phenomenal world. The *kunjung* of *kleshas* could be said to be an embryonic expression of the *kunjung* of *karma*. As an example, if something pops into your mind as you are meditating and you recognize it immediately, it does not have the same karmic weight as if you had acted upon it. Once you see through it, it is just a game rather than a serious plan that you have, whereas if you write it down in your little notebook so you can remember to call your friend and tell her about it, you have already planted a karmic seed. Simply perceiving it through your mind and seeing the futility of it, realizing it is just a game, is the

saving grace. That seems to be the point of the practice of meditation. (*kunjung= the basis of all arising*)

## **Discussion: Karma and kleshas**

**Karma** is composed of patterns that lead to suffering. Karma is simple cause and effect.

**Kleshas** are what inform those patterns of karma. We have examined these in previous classes as afflicted emotional states. They are somewhat sequential:

1. Desire or lust, simple wanting, horniness. This factor is constantly operative in our lives, endemic to being in a body.
2. Denial or obstruction of desire leads to anger, frustration, resentment.
3. Defending oneself from that creates pride, arrogance, shielding.
4. Ignorance, putting on blinders to shut out unpleasantness, denial or pain --- inuring, toughening or insulating oneself against that; boycotting those experiences, carelessness and negligence.
5. Doubt: no trust of alternatives, closing off to advice; doubting teacher(s), teachings, buddhadharma (usually by saying while these may be profound, it doesn't apply to me)
6. View/opinionatedness: we harden to protect ourselves, find comfort in the certainty that supports our condition, projected into any and everything. We seek companions to reinforce that.

Ultimate origin of suffering: ignorance: refusal to relate with reality, which includes the truth of suffering.

**Karma:** all karma, good and bad, still bound by cause and effect. Even with positive merit we can be entrapped, entangled with self-other solidity, reification. However, it can be understood that until we are completely liberated that we are bound by the effects of our actions. These actions can be understood by seeing the ten nonvirtuous actions:

Three are of body:

1. Stealing, taking what is not offered
2. Taking life
3. Sexual misconduct.

Four are of speech:

4. Lying – often to promote one's state of security
5. Slander or intrigue --- divisive speech, trying to break down the world you see as a threat or promote oneself in contrast to others' faults
6. Harmful/harsh/hurtful speech --- negative words, often used as a weapon. Sometimes out of spite, often to give one power over society, ideas, feelings, etc.
7. Gossip/idle talk/triviality --- mindless chatter engaging what is of no real concern, "filling up space"

Three of mind:

8. Envy, coming from poverty-mind; one-upmanship and competitiveness, can be raw ambition
9. Ill-will/Schadenfreude – taking delight in others' misfortunes, wishing harm towards others, dismissiveness, orneriness and related states

10. Wrong view --- disbelieving in cause & effect or thinking they don't apply to oneself; world seen as inherently and unredeemably wretched; no sense of sacredness; exploitative

The ten virtuous actions are the opposite of the above, i.e., 1. respecting life, 2. generosity, 3. wholesome and honest intimacy for body; 4. truthful speech, 5. straightforwardness or frankness, 6. kind or supportive words, 7. simplicity for speech; 8. openness and trust in oneself, 9. gentleness and goodwill, 10. commitment to dharma and willingness to apply teachings to oneself.

**Karma and consequence.** This entails a much larger discussion and we could read volumes on it. These are some to consider:

1. Volitional, effects from one's choices

2. Types of experiencing effects

- a. immediate
- b. delayed, to the next or another life
- c. experienced now, coming from previous life

3. White karma

1. emulating Three Jewels (Buddha, dharma, sangha)
2. emulating and rejoicing in someone else's virtue
3. practicing dharma

4. Change of karma by forceful action

---by strong, sudden effort. We have gaps constantly occurring in our flow of experience where there are second thoughts, openness. We can go backward or forward in those moments. We can change the flow of thinking and acting in the gaps. The gap makes room to give birth to a new life, renewal.

5. Shared karma:

----national, historical (epoch/generation/family/social/economic)

----individual, owing to circumstance (bad sewage, plumbing, environmental).

In all these we feed into and contribute

### **Unplugging samsara**

Unplug, disconnect, interrupt the flow of karma

1. cut through ignorance
2. loosen and free up passion, cut attachment, stickiness
3. See aggression and let it go

These unplug the circuitry. This is what meditation and bringing practice onto the path is about. This is the noble path.

When the three poisons are cut or unplugged, nothing happens in samsara. Until we free ourselves of samsara, we are subject to cause and effect.