

Wishing to Engage in the Path of Liberation

Buddhist Foundation Course 6/8

Teaching by Geshe Tenzin Zopa @ Losang Dragpa Buddhist Society on 28th May 2008

Teaching Outline:

1. Identifying the mind intent on liberation
2. The method for developing the mind intent on liberation
 1. The four noble truths
 2. Reflecting on the eight types of suffering
 3. Reflecting on the six types of suffering
 4. Reflecting on the three main root suffering
 5. The three high training
 6. The four aspects of each of four noble truths

Note: bold and italic sentences are extract from Lam Rim Chen Mo text

In order to actualize Dharma practice as antidote for samsara and to actualize liberation, it has to be introduced by proper motivation which is to inspire to eradicate suffering and causes of suffering, and to actualize liberation which is total cessation on entire aspect of suffering of samsara, therefore one at least must set the motivation that the purpose of this very session is to establish the imprint by actualizing the virtue act of listening to Dharma and contemplate on the meaning, and actualize the realization on the stages of the path by habituating the meaning on contemplation. Since this practice the ultimate goal is to actualize full enlightenment, we are not just dedicate this practice for liberation of lower vehicle, but to actualize the state of full enlightenment, so then think 'May the creation of this good karma or virtue be the complete cause to actualize full enlightenment within myself, which is just to benefit numberless beings up to full enlightenment.'

Today subject is within the gradual path to enlightenment – Lam Rim, ***Engaging Into the Path of Liberation***. First of all, it is necessary for us to have a clear understanding within the different liberation which refers to the total state of cessation from samsaric suffering, and actualizing the state of nirvana of solitary practitioner and hearer practitioner. There are 3 categories of liberation:

1. liberation of hearer practitioner
2. liberation of solitary practitioner
3. liberation of Mahayana practitioner

but in the gradual path to enlightenment, in Lam Rim, when we refer to liberation, it is directly refer to the liberation of solitary and hearer practitioner.

The subject cover base on *Foundation of All Good Qualities* by this phrase:

**Seeking samsaric pleasures is the door to all suffering
They are uncertain and cannot be relied upon
Recognizing these short comings
Please bless me to generate the strong wish for the bliss of liberation**

**Led by this pure thought,
Mindfulness, alertness and great caution arise,
The root of the teachings is keeping the pratimoksha vows;
Please bless me to accomplish this essential practice.**

These two stanzas will cover today subject.

In Lam Rim Chen Mo, it is explained in two parts:

1. Identifying the mind intent on liberation
2. The method for developing the mind intent on liberation

1) To identify the mind intend on liberation, so what does it means by liberation?

Liberation means freedom from bondage, and what binds you to cyclic existence is karma and the afflictions. Under their power - under the power of karma and affliction, the aggregates are reborn in a threefold manner, which is in term of different kind of beings. They are reborn in six different rebirth such as god, demi-god, human, animal, hungry ghost, and hell beings. All these beings within samsara by the force of karma and delusion, in term of different type of birth, they are born in four different ways. Some are born from womb, egg, heat and moisture, and also spontaneous birth, there are four different type of birth which beings take rebirth in this cyclic existence.

Since this is the nature of bondage, freedom from rebirth impelled by karma and the afflictions is liberation, and the desire to obtain that freedom is the mind intent on liberation. So engaging into the path of liberation, or engage in the inspiration on liberation, this mean to be free from being born into the six realms by these four different ways of rebirth, which is by the force of karma and delusion. So to inspire to be free from this bondage is called oneself inspired to engage into the path of liberation. So the meaning of liberation is freedom from bondage from all these aspects. So this is clear ya? If you happened to be asked on what is the meaning on liberation? The meaning is freedom from bondage of rebirth within six realm beings by the four different aspects of birth which is by the force of karma and affliction, affliction is also delusion.

2) The method for developing the mind intent on liberation.

The desire to relieve the suffering of thirst is based on seeing that you do not want to be tormented by thirst. Likewise, the desire to attain liberation – which relieves the suffering of the aggregates appropriated by karma and the afflictions – is based upon seeing that the appropriated aggregates are flawed insofar as they have suffering as their nature. Unless you develop a determination to reject cyclic existence through meditating on its faults, you will not seek relief from the suffering of the appropriated aggregates.

Unless one does see the fault of samsara or cyclic existence, otherwise one will never seek the inner relieve from the suffering of samsara. This mean that innately one will never seek liberation. Do you get what I mean? So whatever practice we do, if our mental attitude is not seeing the fault of temporary happiness or the nature of pervasive suffering or the nature of cyclic existence, then our practice will not become the cause of liberation because that practice is not inspire to seek liberation. The reason is we are not inspire to reject the cyclic existence by understanding its fault. If that is so, whatever practice we do, it does not become Dharma. As long as the practice introduce for the welfare of this very life, it will not become the cause of liberation. If that doesn't become the cause of liberation, then it is the cause of samsara. This is a clear clarification. So in order to gain the mind of seeking liberation, in order to gain the mind of seeking freedom from the bondage of rebirth in six realms, we have to reject the cyclic existence through meditating on its fault. If we truly want to practice Dharma, we have to put effort on rejecting cyclic existence through our meditation – seeing the fault of samsara. In order to do that, we have to find out what is the true face or true nature of suffering itself, and what is the true nature of its cause, so then we have to refer to the first truth which is one of the essential teaching of Buddha turning the wheel of dharma in the first circle where he taught the common path of Small Scope and Middle Scope, which are the Four Noble Truths. Therefore we have to recognize the suffering.

Once you recognize suffering, you see yourself as submerged in an ocean of suffering, and realize that, if you want to be liberated from suffering, you must counteract it. Moreover, you recognize that you cannot stop suffering unless you counteract its cause. By investigating the cause of suffering, you come to understand its true origin. By revealing the teaching on the Truth of Suffering, and in order to understand the origin of suffering, then Buddha taught the second truth – the Truth of Origin. ***Consequently, the Buddha spoke next about the truth of the origin.***

Next you develop an understanding of the truth of the origin, an understanding that contaminated karma produces the suffering of cyclic existence. Contaminated karma is the one which is the original suffering produce the endless suffering of cyclic existence. It is not only that, the affliction which is the root cause to produce karma, the negative karma, that also produce

by the very root cause which is the self grasping. Self cherishing mind is the root affliction which produce delusion such as Six Root Delusion and Twenty Secondary afflictive emotions, then it produced negative karma, then that bring about the suffering of cyclic existence.

When you see that you can eliminate the conception of self, the self cherishing mind, ***you will vow to realize its cessation***. The moment one understand or realize there is possibility to eradicate the very root cause of suffering of samsara which is the self cherishing mind, then one start to gain the confidence and conviction within one's practice of seeing there is a cessation which is the total freedom from suffering and its cause. Base on this third sequence, then the Buddha taught the Truth of Cessation.

By realizing the possibility of eradicating the root of suffering which is the self cherishing mind, then it is convinced that there is cessation. Once the practitioner is convinced there is state of cessation, on the forth level, one will be convinced that there is a path, a root that one can establish to actualize the cessation, then the Buddha taught the forth level of truth which is the Truth of Path.

This being the case, the four truths are taught repeatedly throughout not only in Hinayana aspect of teaching, but even in Mahayana aspect of teaching. Therefore the Four Noble Truths are the common practice in both Hinayana and Mahayana. In certain comment, the Four Noble Truths is only regarded as Hinayana teaching and not Mahayana teaching. But in fact in reality, without the practice of Four Noble Truths, there is no foundation for the Mahayana practice. So in order to actualize the practice of Mahayana teaching such as practicing Six Perfection, one must always cultivate the practice on Four Noble Truths.

Since the Sugata has included in the four truths the vital points concerning the process of cyclic existence and its cessation, this teaching is crucial for achieving freedom. This teaching is crucial for achieving freedom not just for self liberation, but even for full enlightenment. ***Since this synoptic outline of practice is important, it must be taught to students in just this order. Why? Unless you reflect on the truth of suffering to the point of actually becoming revolted by cyclic existence, your desire to attain liberation will be mere words, and whatever you do will lead to origins of further suffering. Unless you reflect on the origin of suffering until you have a good understanding of the root of cyclic existence, which is karma and the afflictions, you will be like an archer who does not see the target – you will miss the essential points of the path. You will mistake what is not a path to freedom from cyclic existence for the path and exhaust yourself without result. Finally, if you fail to understand the need to eliminate suffering and its origin, you will also fail to recognize the liberation that provides relief from suffering and its origin; hence your interest in liberation will be a mere conceit..*** merely word.

Why is it in Lam Rim it mentioned about this sequence that lay out on first the suffering, secondly the cause of suffering, then the cessation and path instead of following the causal and resultant sequence which is to first teach on cause of suffering, then the result of suffering; then the path to cessation, and result of cessation? The sequence of teaching on result first cause after, is merely for the purpose of practitioner to practice, the lay out of practice within the student. That is the main purpose, that is why it is taught in this sequence. In certain scripture you will see the outline, first is the cause of suffering, then after that only teach the suffering, which is the result of the cause of suffering. Then the path, and then cessation. This is just to clarify on why the Buddha has taught in two different sequences.

As a practitioner if without reflecting, meditating, proper understanding and proper realization on understanding in suffering of samsara and its cause, then even the wish to obtain liberation will become merely word. Therefore here emphasize that in order for us to gain liberation, we have to gain the sincere whole hearted inspiration to gain liberation. In order to gain sincere inspiration, we must engage into the serious practice of understanding and reflecting the faults of samsara which is suffering, reflecting the suffering and learn about the suffering of samsara, then meditate on the different type of suffering of samsara. By understanding that, in order to overcome, without eradicating the cause of suffering, then there is no total cessation, so we have to investigate what are the root causes to bring about these different sufferings in samsara, then we will be able to convinced through understanding its root cause is karma, and this karma is produce by different afflictive emotion, and this afflictive emotion also has the very root which is the self cherishing mind. By putting effort to eliminating the self cherishing mind, then we gradually there is possibility for liberation, then our inspiration for liberation doesn't become merely word or conceit, it will become actual.

In order to do that, then reflect on different type of suffering in samsara. There are:

- 1. Reflecting on the eight types of suffering**
- 2. Reflecting on the six types of suffering**
- 3. Reflecting on the three main root suffering**

The eight different types of suffering in samsara is:

- 1. Suffering of birth**
- 2. Suffering of old age**
- 3. Suffering of illness**
- 4. Suffering of death**
- 5. Suffering of encountering what is unpleasant**
- 6. Suffering of separation from what is pleasant**
- 7. Suffering of not getting what you want**
- 8. Suffering of the five appropriated aggregates**

We have to meditate on these in order to gain liberation, we have to gain inspiration in liberation while we practice Dharma, then Dharma become pure Dharma, and Dharma become cause of liberation. In order to do that, we must reflect on the suffering first in order for us to capture the root and causes of suffering. We can first meditate on the suffering of birth.

It is definitely that the **suffering of birth** in three lower realm, especially in hell & preta realm are unbearable suffering. The suffering of birth in human realm has unbelievable suffering until one's all past clear memory, by the suffering of pain at the time of birth, completely wipe out. Since the birth is force by negative which is karma and affliction, unfortunately unable to wipe out all the negative imprint even though the subtle continuum of karma remain there but the obvious karmic reflection on virtue is very necessary for this very life to actualize the continue practice of Dharma. But due to the total force of negative environment, force of negative origin, force of negative instant birth, it is completely wipe out, that much suffering and fear.

If it is natural birth, when the baby comes out, the feeling is almost like being squeezed in between two great Mount Meru. Your fragile body is squeezed in between two great Mount Meru, and the Mount Meru is not smooth, it is very rough, then the smell, it is one of the most filthy and disgusting smell, it is very impure smell. The feeling during birth is totally impure. It is origin from attachment and ignorance which produced the substance, then bring about the creation on baby, that bring about the water bag, the water bag and water, it is so filthy that it is unbelievable, you can insert all the unbelievable words here, I don't have much word, so I just put unbelievable.

The moment the baby come out, even how smooth cloth that we use to lay out on the fresh body, the instant feeling is like our fresh body is put on a very sharp needle, poke by thousand zillion of needles, each needle is poking into each hole of our pore, that kind of feeling. Some time we even say that when baby cry it is natural, in fact it is so much pain and suffering, that's why baby cry, some more when baby born in hospital, the doctor beat from the back, it is unbelievable suffering. We don't remember now but it happened at that time is such kind of pain.

Then when baby open eye, the brightness is very painful. When baby hear the sound, the ear senses is very painful. The first taste even though is milk, it taste rough, it is like durian skin you cut into small pieces with thorn, then you put together and ask baby to swallow, such kind of feeling. Then the mental faculty, the mind has so much fear, every single aspect feel insecure, it is like you are thrown into total no where. Although baby start to see thing and see mother, but the feeling is like you are thrown into total no where, this is just a very minor description, it can be much more worse than this.

As long as one takes birth in six realms, if even in human rebirth you experience this much, the rest of the rebirth is worse. Even in god realm, if you happen to be born in formless god realm, you do not need to go through the process of womb birth, even though it is spontaneous birth, you still need to encounter similar experience of birth, it is like coming into a new place, the fear, the agitation, the mind which is unable to cope in new rebirth which is influenced by negative karma and affliction that is thrown into cyclic existence, such kind of suffering, it is the same to demi-god, and desire realm god is worse, if born in animal realm is even worse, hungry ghost is worse of the worse, hell realm is worse of the worse of the worse.

Even though in human birth we do caesarian, we think it is better but still go through the same type of experience, it is un-natural, as long as it is not natural, if that does not bring greater pain, it won't give lesser pain to the baby. The caesarian if not giving greater pain, it won't give lesser pain than the natural birth. So this are very simple example, but it is worse than that.

So now you reflect, countless and beginningless life time we have been born like that again and again, in this life we at least remain up to 60 to 70 years, in many of the early life, we are born then die, born and die, it is just the matter on few months or few days or few moments, there is even such a birth that just survive for few moments, then experience such kind of suffering. Even when we think of birth, it is so scary, unbelievable, so disgusting, so why do I encounter birth endlessly? Why do I have to come back? Why do I be born in this cyclic existence unnecessary? Then you research on the cause and its origin, it is by the force of karma and affliction, then the root is self cherishing mind. Now you meditate on the antidote to detach the self and try to eliminate the self grasping and self cherishing mind, then eliminate delusion, and purifying past karma, and guard your three doors to not committing new karma, then it comes about the foot stop to the end of birth. Once it comes to the end of birth, then end aging, illness, suffering of death, then that is liberation, so it is like that.

Like those holy beings manifest to be born in this cyclic existence, we so call they emanate or manifest, unless like those exceptional cases, they do not experience suffering on birth, and the mother do not experience suffering, otherwise both the mother and child, there is no other way than experience all these sufferings.

Also meditate on the **suffering of old age**. When we think of old age, it is terrifying. The degeneration on aggregates, on elements, the degeneration on eye sense, ear sense, smell sense, taste sense, when we reflect on it, it is very terrifying. When we don't reflect, of course we don't remember. When we don't remember all those suffering, that means we are not serious about practicing. When we all the time remember all these non-sense suffering, that mean we are in practice. It is like when we are not cultivating the suffering of samsara, that mean we are not practice. That's why I find that through my own personal experience, I find to gain renunciation in monastery is difficult, I think to gain

renunciation in Malaysia is easier, because our mind is so stubborn, so we have to feel it, we have to experience it, there is not much opportunity for us to feel, unless we really concentrate and meditate, then of course there is more opportunity for us to have more time to think, but encountering unbelievable corporate life, deal with corporate world, and worldly life.. oh... my goodness... it is really wonderful thing to courage for renunciation. If I tell you the fact, when I was in monastery, I hardly think of I will go to cave and meditate. But when I am in Malaysia, I feel like... wah...! I must go to cave, and that would be the greatest purpose of life, that is like gaining some feel of renunciation, that is really marvelous, great and wonderful. Anyway, it is like that.

When you see your skin getting more rough, more wrinkle, lesser feel on touch, getting more ugly, more hair, more dry, how much moisturizer you put also getting dryer and dryer, when you look at it, it is very discouraging for this skin. Also if one day you don't take food, you start to decay your body, one day pass already decaying, you can see the process on decaying. The sickness is getting more and more problem occurring in your body, your eye sight is getting more and more blur, lost sight, unless is like a white hair from young, then is good, otherwise even one white hair, oh my goodness.. it is such a nightmare, when you start to count, you start to have more. The white hair, when you start to count one, you plug one, you will start to have three the next day or even more, but all these are just sign of old age, there are more. Such as your limbs, when you sit down, it is like you are falling from high mountain without any effort just fall, when you want to raise up, it is almost like lifting up the most heaviest thing in the world, so difficult! Then your bone, everything become very fragile. And your mind getting more stubborn, either being more stubborn or being more childish, it is either one of the two. These are all the signs, then you reflect again, you should think about all the old age sign within you, you should meditate on it, you should think about it, again you should feel all these sufferings, then again reflect to the origin on the suffering, and try to apply antidote and then eradicate, and try to purify.

Suffering of illness... unbelievable illness, nowadays cancer is more common than ice cream. Every where talk about cancer, we think cancer researcher and scientist is getting more advance, in fact it is very bad sign, this mean the cancer sickness is getting more and more tough, then more and more smart scientist and researcher have to come about to actualize the different type of medicine, but it is not a good sign. This mean there are more and more new discovery on new sicknesses, we are almost like chasing after new sicknesses, unbelievable sicknesses. Even you can compare about 20 years ago and now, which is within very short time, there are so many new discovery of sicknesses.

It is not only that, we encounter the environmental harm which bring about different sicknesses, then the chronic karmic sicknesses within us – the delusion, there are so much, so painful. Just think about the chronic sickness of jealousy, so painful, when you see somebody has some gain, you cannot sleep, you

cannot eat food, then you give up your breakfast, because of jealousy, it happened, very disturbing mind. When you get angry, how unhappy, how painful, when you arise attachment, so scary, so disturbing, such and such, small and minor numberless afflictions arises throughout the day, even within dream, sleep, it disturb dream and sleep. Even during sleep, it disturb by those afflictive sub-conscious mind, all these are sicknesses, illness, it is not necessary physical illness. So innately the whole body what we have, the aggregates, is because of total impure in the nature of suffering which is in the nature of sickness, so you reflect like that. Then again, apply the antidote to cause, eradicate to the root, then practice the path to actualize liberation.

The **suffering of death** is even worse, when we reflect on the dissolution on four different elements, dissolution on different senses, and the reflection on the illusion on eighty conceptual thought, it is so scary. Then there is different appearance on affliction like those mara with very scary face and scary body, even though there is no such thing but because of your afflictive emotion, you see such thing. That's why like in Tibet or Himalaya, they perform lama dance with scary mask, they even dance with skeleton cloth, or draw blood on it with hollow eyes, and with different aspect of masks. Normally at the time of death we see those appearances, so in order for us not to fear during the actual time, just to gain some preparation in a better way, just to understand as illusion, just a performance on drama, drama of your afflictive emotion, especially in monastery they perform these dances, all the lay people and sangha come and watch, it is regarded it has great meaning by watching the dance, the purpose is for that. Such kind of appearance appear like very scary try to eat you and cut your limbs.

The dissolution on earth, it is like the entire mountains in the whole world is collapsed on your body. It is like during earthquake how the building collapse, you look at the victim in China during earthquake, how the thing collapse and smash on their body? It is worse than that because the whole mountain collapse on the body. And you see there are so many of your body, and every single spot that you stand is in the aspect of earthquake cracking, and when you look at the hollow, there is no where, such kind of appearances.

When the water element dissolve, you are completely drawn in the greatest, biggest, most scary, like a whirlpool in the central of big ocean, no where to get help and you are in the center of that, the entire aspect of water flood is coming toward you, splashing to you.

When the fire element dissolve, there is not even one single spot with no fire, and you still see your fragile body. And you are so scared of fire and you are completely burn in there. Then when you look, there are so many of you possess the same fear and burn by fire, such kind of appearance. These are just very simple minor description, it is more scary than that, it is inexpressible suffering, for this we can express, we can say, but there is no word to express.

When wind element dissolve, you are completely wrapped out by tornado. In fact it is worse than that, this is nothing, the wind is like needle poking to you, and your body become pieces, some wind are cold, hot, all sort of experiences, such and such suffering.

So if we are not prepare by having some understanding on Dharma, at least by understanding this illusion will come, if we don't plan strong imprint, when it really come, we grab as real, then our mind instead of focusing on bodhicitta, compassion, loving kindness, guru or deity, we will be completely dominate by fear. This fear if it is with great hatred on unbearable incident, because of that then directly go to hell, it become throwing karma. This is the time your sub-conscious mind create the mental karma, mental throwing karma, throw to where? Throw to hell. If it is slightly lighter, then throw to preta, more lighter then throw to animal, this is very very scary. So when you reflect on these, these are solely due to the origin of suffering which is afflictive emotion, delusion, in particular the Six Root Delusion which introduce by the self-grasping mind. Then to eliminate that is by cultivating selflessness, we should think like that.

Then the ***suffering of encounter what is unpleasant***, what we encounter even in our one day life mostly is unpleasant. If you want to lie on bed, when lying down too much, then here ache and there ache. If you want soft bed, then it become too soft bed and give back pain, hard bed also too hard, then also give back pain, most of the time encounter unpleasant, even though you so call it as comfort. Even watch TV, after 1 minute, you start to get bore, unpleasant, you thought that is entertainment, but it ends up unpleasant. We eat food, we thought is pleasant, it end up either is food poison which bring worse or indigestion, all sort of things. Going out with friend thought is pleasant, but end up with fighting, or gossiping which is constantly create negative karma, disagreement. When you are alone, you say very lonely so want to get somebody as companion, the moment you engage, unpleasant start. After that, still having single life is more comfortable, then you divorce or give up. When you come to single life, again unpleasant, insecure, and you need somebody again. Thinking that making friend will get more help and benefit, but end up with more disappointment and unpleasant.

You thought to have more children so in old age they will help, whole life you serve them, but it ends up they dump you, so whole life you become slave for your kids. Before conceive, you were so worry that whether will conceive or not, after conceive there were so much pressure for nine months. During delivery, so much pain, how much screamed?! When you delivered baby, you should have recorded in video and audio, then you should consider whether you should have second baby or not, and show to people who are so desperate for baby. But all are again for self purpose, because if you have baby, they will take care of you when you get old, all the good thing for you, but when you check carefully, the intention itself from the very beginning is wrong. After that... my goodness... up to age of one and two, you even didn't care that much for yourself, your eyes and

your mind is totally 100% focus, even though you put your children with maid and you go to office, but your mind is all the time there with your kids. After that earn money, why you need to earn money? It is to feed them and to educate them. After they graduate, then you worry for them to get the right partner, then after that, after they get the right partner, then worry for getting grandchildren, then your age is already 60 or 70 something, after that worry about the great grand children, before achieving all the benefit on what you want, your life is end. You see, whole life wasted, it happen like that.

Everything we thought is pleasant but everything turn unpleasant, but of course one or two, or from 100%, let say 10% is really marvelous. By understanding Dharma, we take that as object of practicing in Six Perfection, again wonderful practice, if we know how to practice, the toughest children is the best object for us to train in the practice of Six Perfection, Six Perfection is wonderful. If it makes you no choice to engage into practice of the Six Perfection, it is wonderful practice. Even though in reality is like that, but by understanding on Dharma, one can able to transform, what I mean is, if we don't understand Dharma, if we reflect properly, in fact it is all unpleasant, first of all, to be born in samsara itself is unpleasant, so reflect on that. Again, the root cause is delusion.

The ***suffering of separation from what is pleasant***, this is what we experience everyday. Good friend we hope that they will remain all the time with us – separate. Good cloth, good food, good business, all the good thing, all the pleasant thing, what we hope and we feel what we have gained, it never last. Again the root cause is defilement, the delusion.

The ***suffering of not getting what we want***, whatever we want, we never get. If we check carefully, whatever we want, we never obtain 100%. Up to today when you look carefully, in the past whatever you want in fact, you never obtain 100% even for one single thing, never obtain one single thing for 100%. Again, it is due to delusion.

The ***suffering of the five appropriated aggregates***. These five appropriated aggregates is contaminated. Contaminated in what? Contaminated by the karma and delusion, so the base itself is appropriated aggregates. Because of that, all the earlier seven different types of suffering are the result of obtaining the true nature of suffering which is obtaining the appropriate aggregates, it brings about all the earlier seven sufferings. Then you meditate on it.

One day you can meditate on birth, one day meditate on the suffering of age, and suffering of illness, one step by one step, then try to encourage yourself to be free from samsara and inspire innately to obtain liberation. Whenever we practice and whatever dharma practice that we engage, we try to reflect the truth nature of suffering, then when we perform the practice, it become the true Dharma practice.

Then reflecting on the six types of suffering:

1. ***The fault of uncertainty***
2. ***The fault of insatiability (dissatisfaction)***
3. ***The fault of casting off bodies repeatedly***
4. ***The fault of repeated rebirth***
5. ***The fault of repeatedly descending from high to low***
6. ***The fault of having no companions***

These are quite similar to the eight different sufferings but it has different effect and advantage if you meditate specially on the six types of suffering.

The ***fault of uncertainty***, in life we all know very clearly, friend become enemy, enemy become friend, stranger become enemy, stranger become friend, even your relative, brother, sister, who used to be the closed one become enemy. Earlier part of your life, those friend in later part of life become enemy, earlier part of your life those enemy later part of your life become your friend. Even in the circle of life, this life parents, next life become your child. The father in other life time maybe become your wife, or husband, or children, or your pet, dog, so it is very uncertain when you reflect on this life, the environment and the being surround you, the uncertainty on what relation that you have. Then when we talk about different life, definitely there is different example on uncertainty. So when you reflect on this, why is it like that? The root is because of taking rebirth in samsara, within cyclic existence, because of that, have to experience this constantly. So in order to eradicate this, I must purify delusion. The root again is self grasping, then eliminate the self grasping.

The ***fault of insatiability***, this meaning is dissatisfied. One should think of the fault of dissatisfaction. Even think of the status in life in the aspect of relationship, or wealth, in every aspect, you are totally in the aspect of dissatisfaction, because of that, so much creation on negative karma, negative act. We talk about possession, when we have hundred dollar, naturally urge for two hundred dollar. When we have one hundred thousand, spontaneous urge for two hundred thousand. If got one million, naturally urge for two million, three million etc. When we have one small house, we urge for bigger house. The thing is that there is not even a single peaceful aspect of yourself in your life, that is the lack of contentment which is in total aspect of dissatisfaction, insatiability.

Why we rushing every day to day? Our mind has no peace, no calm. Even when we sleep, there is no calm because of so much plan, so much information, which are all introduced by dissatisfaction mind. When we reflect on that, it is very painful life and unhappy life, so we search for happiness, but every single day we follow the instruction on dissatisfaction, instruction on delusion which bring about dissatisfaction, we become more and more desirable in every aspect, so that bring about frustration, agitation, even worse is it bring the act of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, this is so bad. All these acts bring about because of dissatisfaction. Then one should meditate on how much fault, how much

disadvantage that my stage of life possess this kind of faults, then the root cause is again solely self grasping mind, then try to eradicate. Meditate on what? What is the antidote? Selflessness.

The ***fault of casting off bodies repeatedly***, it is changing body. Most of the time we change our body into the most negative rebirth such as more in hell, then in preta, then in animal. If we born in hell realm, very unpleasant and unbelievable suffering which bring about the constant and every single moment of creation on negative karma to continue to remain there to suffer. To be born in hungry ghost is the similar way, first of all the rebirth is very ugly, very suffering, then create constant karma to again take rebirth there. When born in animal realm, born in those beings which kill so many other lives, fortunately this life is born as precious human rebirth, but it is like a day star, it is like a star in a day, so you see, continuously we born like that, especially repeatedly born in hell for eons and eons, then eons and eons repeatedly in hungry ghost, in animal, so to be born as precious human rebirth, it is like a day star. We happened to born before, but it is so rare, mostly we were born in unfavorable rebirth again and again.

The ***fault of repeated rebirth***. Repeated birth is in samsara repeatedly, repeated body is the similar body, like in hell, again born in hell, again born in hell. These two has the similar explanation.

The ***fault of repeatedly descending from high to low***, we born sometime as Indra, or god of thirty three realm, sometime we born as slave, sometime born as king, sometime born as doctor, sometime born as scholar or whatever, up and down, up and down, sometime born in lower realm, sometime born in higher realm. Even if happen to born in higher realm such as like god, there is no much different, sometime even happier to be born as goat. So if born as god, they have so much suffering.

Suppose if born as demi-god, they have suffering of killing each other, all the time fighting with hatred. Every time you see the god and demi-god, through their karma, they see their limbs are chopped, their body chopped into hundred of pieces around. Head here and there, and four limbs in four directions. The head is dead but the other pieces of limbs has mind possessed, again become gods, again go to battle to fight and kill, again become pieces, you see your own body, your own self suffering in other places, that kind of suffering.

God and demi-god, their fighting is everyday, every moment, there is a saying, but I don't know is true or not, they said that the demi-god realm plant a fruit tree, but the root is planted in demi-god realm, so they pour water, but the fruit ripen in god realm and god enjoy the fruit. Demi-god take care the root, and the fruit enjoy by god realm. There is a drawing like that. They fight because of cannot settle the problem on fruit. Demi-god said the fruit belong to them because the tree is planted by them, but god said that whether you plant or not, they don't care, the thing is that the fruit is ripen in their realm, so it is belong to them, so

they fight among each other just because of that. And they fight for thousand of lives, every day, every moment, and kill. From demi-god realm they use bow shoot, they don't use gun, then from god realm they throw the bow down, and kill with sword and cut them into pieces. Then the head here and limbs there, some of the part of the body die but some part of the body regain live, and again born there, then again go to battle to fight, then again being killed and chopped, these limbs which again possess consciousness become god and see that their own self is killing by other, such kind of pain and hatred all the time there until the day when they exhaust the total merit to be born in god realm, then they go to hell. About the tree, how true is it? Some of the lama when they give teaching, they use this example, but about the body, it is a fact, they experience this kind of suffering.

Question: what is the different between demi-god or god?

Geshe la: There is some kind of border there, normally we say demi-god is neither human being nor god, but they look like the same. When you look at picture, I didn't see in actual, they look quite same. Also it is said is asura.

Even one born there, then next day go to hell, from high to low rebirth.

The **fault of having no companions**, all the time losing companion, even having companion cannot sustain. Companions in different aspect, in spiritual path, you meet the spiritual companion such as spiritual Guru, then due to not enough merit, you lose Guru. Lose Guru mean sometime give up faith, give up Dharma, give up Guru, give up Buddha.

Just today I encountered one boy, his sister give up Dharma, Buddha and Guru. She was very devoted Buddhist practitioner, but about two years ago, she give up everything. The reason is because she used to have the mind to see spirits and gods, and she thought that she is quite good, quite divine, but then when she was praying for few wishes, it didn't actualize, then she thinks that even she has such divine eyes, why is her prayer not actualize? So she thinks it is non-sense, and she gives up everything. It is very dangerous. Even for us, if our faith is not established like vajra, unshakable faith by understanding the actual meaning on Dharma, there is so dangerous that anytime can give up, even small incident can give up. Then sometime delusion come, delusion is the one which obstruct, then give up the faith, it happened. So the boy asked me what to do and how to help? I told him that to see spirit is not surprising thing, for her at least she see god, maybe her spirit is quite high. But just to see spirits this mean her spirit is very low, she thinks she is divine, but actually is not. Human being see human, Buddha see within Buddha, spirit see within spirit. And spirit's mind is lower, spirit's mind is lower aura, that's why some people say I see this and I see that, they think they have clairvoyant, in fact their spirit is low. In fact when some people get sick, their energy very low, then they start to see ghost or spirit, that mean their energy and aura and spirit is very low, that's why they start to see all

these things. That's why Buddha already taught from the very beginning that Buddha dharma is not miracle, it is not magic, it is not for all these things, including clairvoyant, practice of Buddha dharma is not for that, practice of Buddha dharma is solely for liberation, so then people misunderstand, by practicing Buddha dharma, hoping to have some third eyes, and see spirit and see beyond the world, beyond some distant, even vulture's eyes can see 500miles, vulture is animal, so we cannot expect to have such an eye to see, then rather born as vulture? So our purpose is for liberation, it is not for that. But if we don't have such kind of thinking, we think that Buddha has no power, so things are not working. There is no such kind of thing, that is the lack of understanding the innate meaning of dharma. You might encounter such kind of people. So I use in this way that she encounter obstacle and demon - delusion, because at least she can see some good thing as well as she is serious practitioner of Dharma, I am sure whatever thought come into her it is just obstacle, so you must understand this obstacle, and come back to practice harder, then you will see better thing, so I encourage like that.

Even to give up Guru, if you give up Guru, the consequence, the karma, the lost is in you – the disciple, the practitioner, it is unbelievable. You are rejecting the proposal of liberation by somebody who had gone beyond. That mean you reject for how many life times of not meeting Guru? It is the same thing to Dharma, criticize Dharma, so the companion here it is not necessary has to be normal friend, the companion on Guru disciple, normal worldly companion, whatever aspect of companion. So these are the six types of suffering.

In short, you can reflect on the three types of sufferings.

1. ***Suffering of suffering***
2. ***Suffering of change***
3. ***Pervasive suffering***

So ***suffering of suffering*** is whatever pain we encounter, the actual pain, all are suffering of suffering.

Suffering of change is whatever temporary sensual pleasure that we are experiencing in samsara, all are suffering of change, all are in the nature of suffering.

Pervasive suffering is the existence of samsara aggregates itself is the nature of suffering. This mean innately suffering, including we say the environment, the tree, plants, water, rock, house, even these are use as suffering because is samsaric existence.

Suffering is a feeling isn't it? Then how can rock has feeling? It is not about rock having feeling, but the thing is rock can cause suffering to living beings, because it is samsaric phenomena, that's why it is label as suffering. So every existence

in samsara is suffering, so samsaric rock is suffering? Yes, but it doesn't mean rock has feeling. Why? Because it brings suffering into being.

For example, yesterday I saw a rock, very very beautiful crystal rock, I gain some attachment, that straight away create negative karma which will bring suffering for sure later. Tomorrow when I go there, somebody smash the rock, so much pain in my heart, so that rock cause me the suffering. It is the same thing to this house, this house also suffering, if you are not careful, even statue can be suffering, Tara statue, if we don't respect with detachment, it can be suffering. If somebody stolen the statue, we all will cry isn't it? Well... I don't know will cry or not, but will scream at least and blame here and there, that is suffering. Because only through our positive mind and divine attitude, we see it as actual Buddha, but in conventional truth, it is still bronze, copper, gold, and if somebody steal this, it will bring suffering, so this is pervasive suffering, as long as we interact with samsaric existence, then all are suffering.

After reflecting on all the sufferings, the solution is to eradicate the defilement, delusion, the afflictive emotion, I have discussed earlier such as 20 afflictive emotion and 6 root afflictive emotion, you can also say 3 root poisons – ignorance, hatred and attachment, and the root of all these is the self cherishing mind, so this has to be eliminated. And in order to gain full force to eliminate that, we need to train and practice in three high training which is the common path of middle scope.

The three high trainings bring to completion all the tasks of yogis and yoginis as follows. The training in ethical discipline makes a distracted mind undistracted. The training in concentration – or mental training – balances an unbalanced mind. The training in wisdom liberates and unliberated mind.

So training in ethical discipline will make the mind undistracted from distracted mind, training in concentration will train the mind from unbalanced to balance, training in wisdom will liberate the mind from unliberated. Unliberate from the self grasping, the conceptual thought, the unliberated mind of conceptual thought. The conceptual thought is grasping thought, grasping mind. Wisdom is selflessness, so by applying the selflessness wisdom, we will be able to eradicate the self grasping mind.

As for moral ethic, we have discuss in last discussion on the individual liberation vow, even include the refuge vow, one-day vow, as well as different sangha vow, five lay vow, bodhisattva vow, tantric vow, all those are included in ethical discipline. But here in particular is refer to the Middle Scope teaching, then we have to refer to pratimoksha vow which is individual liberation vow. Here particularly in the teaching to the middle capable being, or the common teaching to the middle capable being, we have to refer to the individual liberation vow. But this high training in general refer to all aspect of vow. The ethical discipline

training in the ten virtue acts, and different stages on the individual liberation vow, then bodhisattva vow and tantric vow, so we have to train that in order to gain liberation. Even to gain higher rebirth we have to train in moral ethic, at least refuge, or at least one day vow, one day precepts. Without moral ethic, it is incomplete cause to obtain higher rebirth as human being even if one pray so hard or practice so hard, but without support of moral discipline, one is incomplete to even obtain higher rebirth as human being or god. In order to actualize that, at least we have to practice moral ethic, and that moral ethic, if all the rest of moral ethic is not possible, at least we have to put effort to do one day vow, one day precepts, that will establish the cause or karma to bring about higher rebirth as human being or god. Then if possible, take the five lay vow, have refuge vow as root, then the five lay vow, if possible on top of that, then ordination vow, then the very best is the fully ordained vow which conjoin the practice of bodhisattva and tantric vow, that is the superior practice. Then there is no doubt that one will not practice the two other causes to actualize higher rebirth such as engaging into the practice of the act of Six Perfection, and engaging into the act of kindness. As teaching base on small and middle capable being, you can say the act of kindness is benefiting other or you can say is the act of compassion. On top of that, then single pointed wish and pray to obtain higher rebirth. Then there is moral ethic, one day vow, or Mahayana precepts, or refuge vow, with these three, one will definitely obtain higher rebirth like human and god.

In the base of Mahayana higher capable being teaching, one engage into any of these vows, and engage into the act of Six Perfection, then make single pointed prayer or wishes to obtain higher rebirth, then that will actualize the higher rebirth such as human or god.

Question: What is pratimoksha vow?

Geshe la: Pratimoksha vow refer to the individual liberation vow. You can regard as synonymous label, it is the vow which is introduce base on vinaya sutra, which Buddha taught mainly focus on the disciple of small and middle capable beings such as Hinayana practitioner.

Concentration is so important, without it, one will be unable to actualize the performance of the sharpness and antidote toward negation. In order to actualize that, in order to practice efficient on the eradication on defilement, one needs to gain single pointed concentration, which is shamatha. If you want to use selflessness or emptiness as antidote to eradicating the self grasping mind or the self cherishing mind, without the help on mental stability – the shamatha, you cannot perform in the greatest force, it almost become like teasing, like being pull here and there, with single pointed concentration, with shamatha, then bring about selflessness as antidote to eradicate the self grasping or self cherishing mind, then it is like a razor light, pointing to the point then eradicate in the most efficient and effective way. Especially in this very life while obtaining this precious human rebirth, the time is very short, and our opportunity to obtain this very life is

very uncertain, because of that, the eradication of defilement and negativity, we should perform it in the most effective and forceful way, and in order to actualize that, shamatha is so necessary, so important.

So about the subject on shamatha, we already covered during Kyabje Choden Rinpoche time which is within Foundation Course subject. After the final class when the transcript come out, Kyabje Choden Rinpoche's teaching on shamatha should come out together, then you should put right here, right after this class should insert the shamatha teaching, that was two days classes, for us, we must learned. Also the exam will come from there also, so you have to go through it.

There are a few points that Rinpoche clearly stated that we have to keep in our mind, from day to day life, throughout the whole teaching we will know a few important technique that we captured, then there are a few points, 5-6 lines points you take it, then try your best at least once a day or one minute try to meditate on shamatha. If there is any opportunity, then go for retreat maybe about 6 months, sole retreat on shamatha, it is said that in fact you can obtained shamatha realization.

As for the wisdom, during this semester in fact it is sole Lam Rim, I am just using the sequence on *Foundation of All Good Qualities*, but it will cover the whole Lam Rim, whole stage of the path, in between there are certain subject like how to listen to teaching, such and such, it will not cover this time, so you can look into book, it is ok.

Within this very subject, there are also subject on Twelve-Links which I will do in next semester, I put aside this time, I will do in next semester. The teaching on Twelve-Links which in fact is the subject on Middle Scope, the common path of Middle Scope, but for this moment whatever we have discussed is enough.

As far as concern for wisdom which is selflessness and emptiness, Kyabje Choden Rinpoche has taught base on Heart Sutra, most probably I will not go into details or touch on the subject within Lam Rim because Kyabje Choden Rinpoche already covered, and this also will come in the exam. For this you have to insert before the ***Introduction on Tantra*** which is the last subject on this semester.

Now there is only one more thing, the last comment, base on this teaching, it is also very effective to reflect on the four aspects of each of the Four Noble Truth. The first one is for the Truth of Suffering, it is qualified by four qualities:

1. Impermanent
2. Suffering
3. Empty
4. Selfless

When we think of the Truth of Suffering, we should also meditate on impermanent, the impermanent nature of existence, suffering nature of existence, the empty of independent, and selflessness of true self.

For the Truth of Origin, the truth of the causes of suffering, there is again four qualifications:

1. Cause
2. Origin
3. Arising
4. Condition

Cause is cause, origin is the suffering where origin from, arising is to actualizing the result. If there is cause, and if there is origin, but if there is no actualize the result, then it doesn't fulfill the purpose to actualize, which mean to bring about the result. It has origin, it has cause, and it is definitely bring about the result which is suffering, then it is condition to actualize suffering.

Then there is Truth of Cessation,

1. Cessation
2. Pacification
3. Excellence
4. Freedom

which are the qualities of nirvana.

The fourth one is the Truth of Path, which is

1. Path
2. Correctness
3. Achievement
4. Deliverance

Correctness which is the right path, achievement is to actualize the cessation, deliverance which deliver by practicing the path, deliver the stage of cessation.

So these four qualities of the Four Noble Truths is also very effective to meditate, to bring about the deep mode in understanding the Four Noble Truth.

For the coming exam, after the last semester, there will be 2 weeks break, so there won't be classes, so you must... for the benefit of accumulating so much merit, and for the great understanding in Dharma, and also to actualize liberation, also to bring lots of good aura within you, good fortune within you, and your family, and within the environment in Malaysia, it is marvelous thing to study Lam Rim. So you can refer to the Great Lam Rim book, the Lam Rim Chen Mo, you can start to study and read because it will takes a lot of time, I think this time I might cover the whole three volumes, so you can start to study this, but if you don't have this book, then you can study Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand,

which is also ok, also similar content, all are middle length Lam Rim. Or at least the commentary on Foundation of All Good Qualities, or Lam Rim Chen Mo maybe you can get from internet, I have no idea. You can refer to the topic from Guru Devotion, during this semester if everyone of us, I am sure many of you already master in Lam Rim, but those who are new to Lam Rim study, it will be great benefit, this is the root, the foundation, the body practice and resultant practice. Without Lam Rim, everything is impossible, with Lam Rim everything is possible, so you can start to explore and study.

Again I would like to courage everybody to attend the exam, it is not to examine somebody, it is for yourself to see how much you know, and how intense you are in the study of Buddha dharma. And I am sure in previous time, not even one person fail in exam, everybody pass, mostly high distinction, so it is very couraging. I am sure there must be so many people rejoice in what we have done, therefore we also create other people to accumulate merit, maybe the center will remind you few times so you allocate the time.

From this time onward, I will allocate exam time only once, but for the first exam because we were just starting point, also we didn't really make a habit yet, so I still permit to do one more exam for the first semester for those who hasn't take exam, I have allocated 13th July. So it will be the same as objective exam, so if any of you haven't take the exam, you are welcome to take the exam. Those who has taken the exam cannot come, only for those who hasn't taken, after that for the second semester, you should continue to take. I hope that it will be like last time large number of people because I see a lot of benefit, they at least read the transcript, how much you say... still will get something from there, better than nothing at all. Because it is like somehow you have to read at least one page, so it is benefit. Even if happen not to scroll mark, it is totally never mind, it is just to make ourselves more live by putting more imprint in Dharma, that's it. We are not examining each other, you just check yourself, so maybe can announce few times. Those of your friends who forget, you have to remind. Anyway, this time you study the great Lam Rim, you can start to explore. If you don't have book at home, you can come to Center everyday open, so you can read book from library, it will be great benefit.

It is good to do some discussion, so from final semester, I am going to disappear purposely, so you can do discussion. I am going to give a few questions for discussion on different subject, then you can come to the Center because there will be no program. Even two people also can, three, four people also can, if many people, then you divide into few groups. You can label as Nagarjuna group, Lama Atisha group, Lama Tzong Khapa group, or whatever group that you want to label, so from next time onward you remain in that label. Then you can slowly create quiz, do debate, and explore the understanding. There will be a lot of fun. It will be very good. So actually there are a few of them are doing discussion already, so those of you who are interested, you can check with Spiritual Program Coordinator, she will send you the days. And during

discussion, better I don't come, I am not coming, you discuss and you explore whatever it is, then in the end, whatever that you cannot conclude, then we will see how it goes, otherwise you should explore in the book, what the book said, and explore different teaching, explore it, and make it broader on different comment by different scholar.

Even for emptiness, different scholar comment in different ways, but you have to merge in one meaning, so how to merge it? So next time it become very bright. So during that period, this might come into exam, that might come into exam. So if this question come, how to answer it? What to answer? All those are beneficial. So it is good to have discussion. Discussion is not in my hand, discussion is up to the Spiritual Program Coordinator and you, all of you decide the time, as long as it is not on my class day, the rest of the day you can do whole day or whole night discussion, I also don't mind, it is all up to you. It is part of our study program, discussion is needed. We should appoint a discussion leader, you can change once a while if you like, or sometime you can invite discussion leader. Maybe somebody not available all the time but maybe invite for this particular discussion leader, who might knows he maybe very good in Guru Devotion, then you invite him for the discussion leader, maybe this person could be very good in precious human rebirth, like Nagarjuna is very good in emptiness but some other field maybe I don't know, there are scholar good in different different field, so you invite and give your comment freely, happily, laugh and scream, have fun because during teaching time, it is very difficult for me because of my English make you so hard time, but then you have to keep quiet, listen there. Normally in monastery, our teacher say that you will not learn much from class, the actual learning is from discussion, but class is very necessary, because without that you go to discussion, it doesn't help much. Whether you understand or not, must go to class, then discuss, then WAAHHHH!!!! The understanding is like.... you even don't know how come Manjushri enter into your brain?! So it is like that. It is good to have discussion.

After the last semester, every week if you like, it is up to you, Spiritual Program Coordinator will decide, maybe you can just organize the discussion on all subjects of this semester, then complete before the exam. So that mean if you want to do any homework for the preparation for the exam, when you come for discussion, it helped. Sometime at home alone maybe boring, so you see, this is free, you decide whatever you like.

This time the exam will be multiple choice, but the questions may increase. Last time it was only 10 questions, so people get shocked, people plan like for one moment tick all and finish and go back, because normally the question can have 50 or 60 or 100 or 200 or 300! And I will put one essay, every time is good to have one essay, so now you see, you already start to think, this is very good. The previous essay exam, in fact it is very difficult to give mark, it is a general essay, I purposely make this question for me to understand people's mind, how does people think about Buddha, how is the strength of your faith, actually it is for

me because I don't know, so I want to know, because of that so I put that. At the same time because it is first time, so you can write whatever you like in fact because it is general subject, but from next time onward, it will be more specific, and also easier to give mark. The earlier one maybe you will find a bit unfair also because this comment I like so I give more mark, or this comment I don't really like even though is very good comment but it is not the matter on how long you write, it is the matter on how you express, and how you put into it, so some are very short writing but the point on what I want to know is there, some are very long writing but up and down, but is like almost explaining the entire Buddha's teaching, from Four Noble Truth, karma, everything they put, this person I think have go through Lam Rim five to six times, I can see some has putting a lot of effort in learning Dharma, sometime they don't know how to put together but their understanding on different field is very broad, so I give them courage then I give them more mark, such kind of thing, so in different aspect. As long as you can sit for exam, old or young, never mind. As long as you study Lam Rim, anybody can come for exam, this is not like school or counting in age, this is for knowledge, so it doesn't matter.

Question: Through chanting.. chanting on mantra...can one develops shamatha?

Geshe la: By focusing on that, can. Mantra or... even feeling, you can use all the different senses, to focus on eye consciousness, use eyes consciousness like a bridge but the actual concentration has to come from mind, otherwise it cannot bring shamatha. It become just like a ritual focus, it doesn't help. You capture the image, then contemplate with mind, that's how you should do. Same thing to the sound, you listen to the sound, capture the sound and contemplate in mind. Feeling or touch, is like a bridge, you feel, then you send the message to the mind, the mind then focus on that without any distraction. So it is the same thing, when chant mantra "Om... om.. om..." you chant mantra but your eyes start to see something and ear start to hear something, then it is distraction, as long as you train to focus on one single object single pointedly, these are all to train shamatha.

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