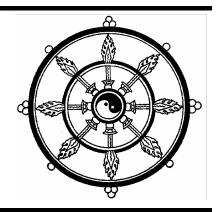
## Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering







As usual we will begin with some breathing meditation. Sit in a comfortable posture and try to fully rest the mind inward by removing all thoughts of external objects. Without losing your mental attention, just focus your mind on the breath as you inhale and exhale.

To make progress in meditation takes a lot of practice on a regular and consistent basis. In the beginning you can do this breathing meditation properly for, perhaps, a few minutes. But by repeating this meditation practice on a regular basis you can do it for longer periods and gain more benefit.

We will now continue our discussions on the text called The Wheel of Sharp Weapons.

## Verse 11

Depressed and forlorn when we feel mental anguish This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning full circle upon us

From wrongs we have done till now we have deeply disturbed the minds of others

Hereafter lets take on their suffering ourselves.

This is advice for dealing with any problems or difficulties within our minds. Sometimes we can easily identify the adverse conditions or specific causes of suffering in the mind. There are also times when we cannot recognise or pinpoint the cause of our problems. There are times in everyone's life when we all undergo such suffering, sorrow and pain. So what should we think about when undergoing these problems?

We always wonder why we are suffering in life, and we are unsure and uncertain about the reasons behind it. So this verse gives us a particular instruction - when in these circumstances try to understand that this suffering and pain is being felt in the mind as a result of your past actions causing harm to the minds of others. You can think of your past actions as causing harm to the mind of your spiritual teacher, your parents and even your friends. As a result of harmful actions done in the past, you are experiencing the same suffering which you have caused others.

Understanding this meaning requires a belief in the existence of past lives and the law of karma, the law of cause and effect which predetermines our destinies. The advantage of this view is that when we are going through suffering in our lives, we can at least find a cause or an object to blame as the cause of our suffering. Seeing the cause itself gives us some sort of relief.

But there is another interpretation of this verse which will make full sense to us, one we can fully relate to our daily experience. Even without the concept of karma and past lives, if we just look into the experiences of our daily life we can see that we are responsible, to some extent, for creating the causes of our problems. Our behaviour towards our family and friends is a contributing factor to our suffering. For example, you may have hurt their feelings and created some conflict in the relationship. As a result you may feel bad and experience some mental unease.

Now looking at the alternative scenario - if we haven't caused any upset in the minds of family and friends we can see harmony in these relationships. There is no reason to worry about mental problems with these people. So it is obvious that in our relationships with others, especially those who are close to us, that if there is a true feeling of love towards the other and an enjoyment of each other's company, then whatever you do together, whether you eat together or share a joke together, then whatever harmony exists is there because we don't harm others. We can find maximum happiness in this world when there is such harmony, even if we do live in this world of suffering.

Here we are talking about the role of our minds in, and our mental attitude towards, our relationships with others; and how that role can determine whether we enjoy a sound relationship or have problems in the relationship. It is important to realise that there are definite benefits in trying always to keep our mental attitude gentle and loving towards others in order to prevent committing any harmful actions towards them.

Instead of worrying about problems, we should utilise our discrimination to try and recognise the cause of our problems. Just worrying about the problem, feeling frustrated and depressed makes us suffer, so there is no benefit in worrying. We should investigate the cause of our problems. Whenever we are going through some problems in life, we should try to discover the immediate cause of the problem. For example, the immediate cause could be that we are feeling angry towards some object. The remedy or antidote then needs to be found. To overcome anger we need to cultivate loving kindness. Try to learn the meditation and put it into practise. In this way the immediate cause of problems can be removed.

Likewise, the immediate causes of competitiveness,

jealousy and so on can be removed by applying the remedies. If we observe the mental continuum, we'll see that a great number of our problems are due to mental unhappiness and this is due to a certain way of thinking, or certain thought processes. These problems can be fixed or removed by training the mind in a different way of thinking because, in most cases, it is our way of thinking which decides whether our mind is happy or unhappy.

The Great Bodhisattva Tongma said that, in brief, the Bodhisattva practice is applying mindfulness and alertness. Then we can know each instant of our mind throughout all our actions. We can find solutions to the problems we face and eliminate them by utilising our minds and developing its knowledge and qualities.

We'll stop here, however if any of you have a question to ask please feel welcome.

**Question:** Geshela, is the cause of a severe mental illness like schizophrenia or psychosis the same cause as you are talking about here - the harm you've caused to other people's minds in the past?

Answer: There are many causes we can trace back to our past life karma as well as our immediate conditions. The immediate cause of szichoprenia and other insanity can be related to substances like drugs which can have the effect of hallucinations in the mind. Also, an imbalance in the elements which constitute our body can also be a cause of hallucinations. For others it is the result of having lost a close friend. Especially if we cannot come to terms with that separation, and go through long periods of worry, dwelling on the separation, this can sometimes affect the flow of our psychic wind energy. This can bring some mental disorder.

There are some disorders which have a physical cause. Some people can imagine things or have hallucinations in the mind when they have a high fever. They see things, but as soon as the fever goes down, they are normal again.

When Geshe Doga was staying at Kopan monastery in Kathmandu, one of his friends was not well. Some people recommended acupuncture and a close monk friend had a special drug which he said may be effective as a medicine. But he didn't know exactly what it was. Geshe Doga's friend took that medicine and later said that he felt like he was floating in the sky and that there were flowers and a rainbow. His body felt very light and the experience was totally blissful. Later he began to have more hallucinations. He told Geshela that he knew what he was seeing was a total illusion, but that he saw someone put his head into his room and look at him, that he heard voices and things like that. Geshela says that he doesn't know much about these things, but it seems that, for some people, the hallucinations will stay in the mind longer when taking these kind of drugs over long periods of time. This may explain why some people have mental disorders.

Geshe Doga also remembers the case of one Tibetan

business man living in south India. He was very sick, his behaviour was completely mad. People took him to hospital and he wasn't cured. So they asked some monks, including Geshe Doga, to perform a puja. Geshe Doga remembers that the puja went for a long time and that they were all very concerned. Not long after they found out that the man had jumped off a restaurant somewhere in Mysore. There was no serious injury, and the man was saved. Later on they checked him out and found that he had been smoking an intoxicating substance, which was the cause of his madness. The drug overpowers the normal functioning of the mind; so in this way people become or look insane.

That is all for tonight. Now we will chant some Buddha mantras and again sit in a comfortable posture. Try to calm the mind inward by placing the focus of the mind on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks Edited by Cynthia Kareena Edit checked against the tapes by Richard Garward Edited Version

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