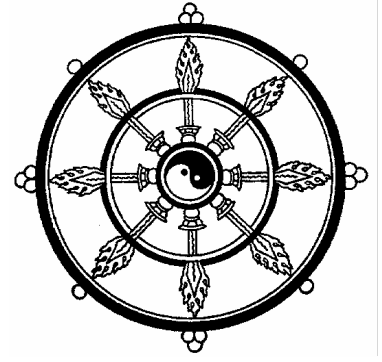


# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འདྲེན་སྐྱོད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



8 March 2000

We will do some breathing meditation first. Choose a suitable sitting posture, and make sure you are fully relaxed. Then, to rest the mind inwardly, you should stop any thoughts from arising - about the past, present or future, or about any other object. You need to remove all such thoughts and rest the mind fully within.

We can then engage in the breathing meditation, in which we focus the mind single-pointedly on our inhalation and exhalation. We should make every effort to prevent distractions, making sure that we maintain single-pointed concentration and allow the mind to become one with the incoming and outgoing breath.

We will continue our discussion on the text about thought transformation called *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. Verse 81 reads:

We do not pay attention to what others tell us;  
We are a trial to be with; we strain others' nerves.  
Our feelings are hurt at the slightest remark,  
And we hold grudges strongly - we never forgive.

This verse is talking about our problem of getting along with other people - how difficult it is for us to appreciate and accept others' ways. The verse implies that we tend to view others' actions with discomfort, as if we were sitting on a sharp stone. No matter what other people do, to our mind their actions are annoying and disturbing, giving rise to feelings of hatred and anger towards them. We have very little tolerance or patience.

Further, we get angry easily, even over a minor unpleasant remark made by them. Such a small cause can be enough for us to become completely enraged. We not only show anger at the time of such minor unpleasant actions, but we also hold that anger in our mind for a long time and don't forget about it. This causes ongoing problems in our relationships with others.

This verse helps us improve our relationships with others by showing us where we go wrong. It is difficult for us to live our lives without the friendship of others. If we enjoy friendly relationships with others - whether in marriage or any other type of relationship - there can be mutual benefit. Each person can provide mutual support and can share their life's experiences with the other. That is why in wedding ceremonies, the couple being married take a vow that they will stay together through both the happy and unhappy times.

If we have healthy relationships with others, our life can be even happier and more stable. So, it is important to

see how we can prevent problems in our relationships. We need to educate ourselves about the best way of befriending others. If we choose someone to be our friend, we have to ask ourselves first whether that person is the right one. It is impossible to expect that their views and interests will completely accord with yours. So, you have to consider to what extent you are prepared to agree with that person.

We have to be very skilful in sustaining our relationships by trying to see only the positive aspects of the other person. It is more beneficial to always try to regard your friend from a positive viewpoint. When we do that, there is a double benefit - by familiarising yourself with your friend's positive qualities, you will also acquire those positive qualities yourself, and you will always have a positive mental attitude towards that person. Your mind will have less room to hold any negative attitude, such as anger, towards your friend.

We also need to consider the way we behave in our interactions with a friend. If we want to sustain a good friendship, gain our friend's trust, and be treated well by them, we need to think about the way we act towards them - our mannerisms, the way we talk, and our physical gestures or expressions. If our physical actions are always positive and pleasant, and mentally we always try to feel loving kindness, understanding and care, naturally it will be easier for us to sustain healthy relationships with our friends. This verse emphasises that our development of tolerance is the key to ensuring stable relationships.

Conversely, if we lack tolerance, we can be easily annoyed and upset. With little tolerance, we become vulnerable to what our friends say to us. If a friend praises you, you will feel happy, and he or she will appear to you as a friendly, caring person. But as soon as the same friend says something unpleasant or abusive, we immediately lose our temper and throw a tantrum or display anger.

If you think about the cause of this anger, it was really only one or two harsh words that your friend said to you. Because of that, you completely lost your temper and completely reversed your attitude towards your friend. If you are not careful, you can end up holding that resentment in your mind for a long time.

There is also the problem of not remembering the many good things the friend has done for you. Even if he or she has helped you enormously on many occasions, your mind will not recall it. Instead, your mind holds onto the

---

bad or unpleasant things that the friend may have done, even if they are insignificant compared to your friend's good deeds. Worse, we can even accuse a friend of a bad action they have not done. We can make ourselves believe they have done the action, and even try to lie to them.

If we tend to think about the negative qualities a friend might have, the outcome will be an unstable relationship. Instead of the relationship providing us with more security, happiness and joy - which we had anticipated at the outset - it becomes a source of unhappiness and problems.

The most important thing is not to criticise or react to the behaviour of our friends, but to always maintain a positive attitude towards them. We need to be aware of how our mind perceives others. If we always view them in a negative way, their behaviour will appear negative to us. A master once said that all our problems are caused by our mental delusions - these are what we should blame, rather blaming other people.

The other half of the verse that we read earlier says:

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head  
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.  
Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher  
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

These lines show us that the self-cherishing mind within us is the root cause of our lacking tolerance and so forth. This thought transformation teaching is trying to help us understand that the source of all our problems - the mental delusions - lies within us. The great Indian master, Chandrakirti, said that if we investigated the true cause of our problems, we would conclude that there is no reason for us to show any hatred towards other sentient beings, because all the harm we experience results from our mental delusions. Therefore, if you have to hate something, you should hate your own mental delusions, and you should try to challenge and eliminate them.

We will finish tonight's teaching here. As usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Again, sit in a meditation posture, make yourself comfortable and relaxed, and try to remove all distracting thoughts in your mind, so that when we begin the chanting, you can fully focus your mind on the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from the tapes by Gabrielle Thompson*

*Edited by Mary-Lou Considine*

*Edited checked by Sandup Tsering*

*Edited Version*

**© Tara Institute**

---