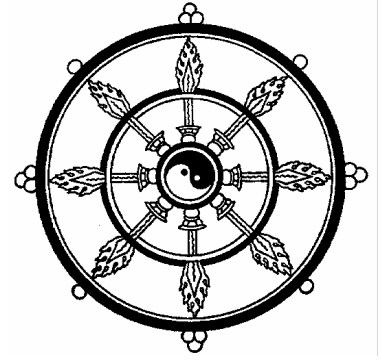


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

ཨྱ ལྷོ་སྤྱད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



15 March 2000

As usual, first we will do some breathing meditation. Sit in the most convenient posture and relax. Remove all distracting thoughts of external objects then try to rest the mind inward. After this, begin the breathing meditation focussing the mind single-pointedly on the inhaling and exhaling of the breath.

Geshe-la has just told the story of a remark made by one of the very early teachers at Kopan Monastery in Kathmandu. He was an old Lama. One day Geshe-la attended his teaching, and he began by saying that him (the old Lama) giving teaching would be like making evil sound in heaven. Geshe-la said maybe his teaching is also like that!

We are up to Verse 82 of *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*:

We always are jealous of those of great status;
We feel holy gurus are threats to avoid.
Overwhelmed by attachment and ruled by our
passions,
We spend all our time lusting after young loves.
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.

This verse is about how sometimes we feel very bad and restless when we observe the success, progress or good qualities of others. We mentally suffer because we cannot bear their success or good qualities. Such a problem is caused by our jealousy. We can see that others also suffer from jealousy. When we observe their unhappiness, we can see how unnecessary and pointless it is to feel jealous towards others. In order to overcome this problem, it is said that we have to engage in meditation. Specifically, we should focus on the negative aspects of jealousy. Also think, is there any good in having jealousy towards others? Conversely, think about the positive mental attitudes we should be cultivating and adopting instead of jealousy.

We may also have jealousy even if we are engaged in a spiritual practice or training, giving teaching to others, meditating, or simply studying a meditation practice. We can feel jealous when we see other friends engaged in the same spiritual activities making progress. For instance, if through their practice they reach a higher status like becoming a noble person or noble being, which in Tibetan is called "kyepo (person) dampa" (noble, sublime, superior)". There are different ways of interpreting the meaning of 'noble or superior'. In this

context, 'superior being' means one who has freed himself or herself from the control or rule of the self-grasping view. Another interpretation according to "Treasury of Knowledge" by Vasubhandu, is that a superior or noble being refers to someone who is always engaged in virtuous practice. It is possible, even as a spiritual follower, to feel jealous towards other spiritual practitioners. We can also see disputes or disharmony between various religious groups or schools and how the teachers of the one religious school may criticise the religious system or teaching of others.

We have to understand, exactly what is this jealous mind? What kind of influences does it have on us, on our views and our mental attitude? The view of the jealous mind is always that *you* are the only one who deserves the best. With that view, you are naturally negative or bitter towards others when they achieve positive qualities. You do not want any others to have such qualities. Your view is that they do not deserve them. If we have jealousy in our mind, then it can influence our actions. For instance, if the person we are jealous of holds a very high position, we may try to do something to bring them down, like criticising them. Jealousy can engage us in a kind of a dispute with other beings. The outcome is not only that you cause some harm to others, but also harm to yourself.

If we take our own experience of jealousy then we will know that it is something we do not want. Using our own knowledge, it is easy for us to see how pointless it is to feel jealous towards other beings. Contemplate more on this. Then, instead of feeling jealous towards others and their qualities, you should train your mind to rejoice in and admire them. For instance, if someone has very pleasant speech, pleasant to your ear, then you should be able to feel admiration for them. Likewise, if you see others with beautiful qualities or beauty, you should be able to admire them. It is obviously more beneficial, if you not losing anything, to try to admire others or whatever good qualities they have. It is better to focus on what you can do to create the same qualities in yourself, not by competing but by seeing that the good qualities are something about which you can feel positive or joyful, and are something you wish for yourself.

If we also consider the conditions that brings happiness in our life, then there are mental conditions, which bring mental happiness, and physical conditions which bring physical happiness. Of these two, considering the good physical conditions that are present in our life then there

is no reason that we should not be fully satisfied with them. However, if you consider the conditions which bring mental happiness, in that regard, we do not have enough. What, then, are the conditions that bring mental happiness? They are conditions we create within ourselves to overcome all the negative thoughts and states of mind which deprive us of inner peace and happiness. In short, when we talk of these inner conditions, it is about our daily way of thinking. If you are always under the influence of negative states of mind, like jealousy, then you cannot find peace and happiness within yourself. Without this, how can we then enjoy all the good material conditions we have? Negative states of mind can be so hurtful and painful – they can be like an arrow stuck into our heart. But if we analyse our feelings, we can recognise that the pain is caused by nothing but our own way of thinking, our own state of mind.

Going back to the words in the last half of the verse, the text again reminds us that all negative states of mind, including jealousy, stems from the self-cherishing mind. It is important to gain this understanding. When you recognise the self-cherishing mind as the source of all your negative states of mind and all your problems, then you can recognise or identify that as your main enemy. In this way, we have to try to engage in the meditation practice. As the great Bodhisattva Shantideva said, we should try to see meditation practice as engaging in a war or dialogue with the self-cherishing mind. Then meditate to the point where you are able to identify the self-cherishing mind, that you are able to say that the blame goes to it, and that all the loss you suffer, and caused others to suffer, is all due to the fault of your self-cherishing mind. You are trying to see how, until now, you could not improve your life situation because you have not been able to recognise the self-cherishing mind as the main cause of your downfall. Shantideva said that having recognised the self-cherishing mind as your number one enemy, tell it “now I am going to finish you off, and you can’t run away from me”. Mindfulness is the key to not forgetting it, ensuring it cannot escape and that you are always ready to destroy it.

If we make such progress in our meditation and spiritual practice, then we are developing more inner knowledge and are becoming a more independent person. We are able to guide ourselves, and are more able to bring benefit to ourselves and others. Likewise, we are then able to cultivate more positive or virtuous states of mind. Through this, we can also bring very positive changes in our outer deeds and be an inspiration and example for others to follow our virtuous actions.

In this verse, there is also mention of the fault of having strong desire and attachment:

Overwhelmed by attachment and ruled by our
passions,
We spend all our time lust after young loves.

We do not need to explain this in detail because we probably all know very well what this means! Desire is our main source of dissatisfaction, especially if our desire

is very intense. It can control us, can drive our mind almost insane. The result is that you’ll remain unhappy, even if you have ‘everything’ in your life - wealth, a good partner, family and so on. With desire you are always attached towards getting something else. It is important to check our desire and attachment, especially when we have made some good progress in our life and everything is fine with us, for example, when we are going well making money. Desire can so easily delude our mind. It always make you think that what you already have is not good enough. For example even some old married people wish to have younger partners. But generally speaking, it is not easy for an older person to actually to find a compatible young partner, despite the desire for one. Even if you find someone who is younger, generally it’s the case that they are attracted to your wealth. It’s not you, or your looks, they are attracted to. There is a difference in the way of thinking of the younger and the older partner. The younger person’s mind can be sharper. So if the old person is obsessed with them, then they can easily manipulated, exploited and controlled by their young partners.

This is just an example of how when we desire something, we are hoping to fulfil our desire, to have more happiness, more peace, more security in our life. But, instead of actually fulfilling that desire, the result can be completely opposite. Geshe la said please don’t misunderstand him because he is not saying that as an older person you shouldn’t look for a younger partner. Again, just as with jealousy, try to link and relate the root cause of desire to the self-cherishing mind.

With this, we finish the teaching, and as usual we chant the Buddha’s mantra seven times. Make sure that we are in a very relaxed sitting posture, again settling our mind fully inward by removing all the distracting thoughts and then focusing it on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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