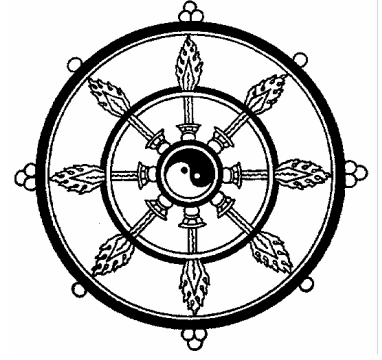


# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འདྲེན་སྐྱོད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



2 August 2000

First we'll do some breathing meditation. Just make sure you are comfortable in the sitting posture and relax your body. Then try to overcome all the distracting thoughts, which means bringing the mind completely inward. Not even a part of the mind should be distracted by external objects. When our mind is fully brought inward we will be able to focus the mind on the meditation very well. Having done this, without losing part of the mind to external objects, direct the mind on the breath, onto the in-breath and out-breath. For the next few minutes try to maintain the mind fully on the breath.

We are still on Verse 94 of *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons* text, the last two lines which read:

Thus whichever delusion afflicts other beings  
Take it to smother delusions of self.

This concerns the meditation of 'giving and taking'. When we engage in this meditation and focus on 'taking', this means we have to imagine taking upon ourselves all the sufferings of other beings, together with the causes of their sufferings - the causes of their desire, attachment or any negative karmic actions they have accumulated. We then imagine piling this upon our own self-cherishing mind. The previous lines of the text, which we have already discussed in earlier teachings, outlined what we should think when we do this 'giving and taking' meditation. In the line before the two lines just quoted, it says:

The sufferings of others arise from five poisons;

The point of engaging in this meditation is therefore to cultivate a very strong and very deep sense of love and compassion towards other beings. This line explains why we should try to generate and cultivate our compassion for other beings - because they are subject to and tormented by suffering. When we see other beings who are very obviously tormented by suffering most people naturally feel sympathy and compassion for them because their suffering is so apparent. What this line is saying is that the obvious suffering we can see in other beings on its own is not enough reason to generate compassion within us. We should also try to generate compassion towards others by seeing even the causes, the sources of the suffering they experience.

There are five poisonous delusions - desire, hatred, ignorance, pride and jealousy. Before we study these various types of delusions, we have to know what 'mental delusions' mean. Generally, a 'mental delusion' is a mental factor which confuses and causes our inner continuums to be very negative and unpeaceful. For

instance, one moment we are at peace and good mood but next moment we are restless and unhappy is the syndrome of delusion within us. We have to try to understand how each of the types of mental delusions - like desire, attachment and hatred - serve as a cause of suffering. We have to know and recognise this very clearly, and we have to gain some conviction that these mental states are all causes of sufferings, whether experienced immediately or afterward. In fact, whoever generates any type of these delusions, in a sense becomes very pitiful. It's obvious, for example, if we examine base delusions like hatred, pride and jealousy, that they are almost immediate sources of suffering or torture for our mind.

We have to look at our own experience of any of these delusions - like even hatred, pride and jealousy - and see how when we experience this we are not happy; we are very disturbed, and not in a good mood at all. Likewise, when others experience the same delusions, we have to recognise their situation is unpleasant. When someone shows jealousy towards us, or performs some unpleasant action towards us, it will be easier for us to take into account their true situation. When we see their suffering, it will not be in our nature to show hatred towards them. Likewise, even with desire and attachment, we have to understand that even though in the immediate timeframe it will not bring suffering or torment to our mind - it may in fact even be a pleasant experience - in the long-run it becomes a more serious source of suffering than other forms of mental delusions like hatred and pride and so forth. So, whoever possesses ignorance and desirous attachments, their real situation is the nature of suffering, even though in the immediate timeframe they may be not immediately experience suffering. It is said that a kind of compassion we can generate towards others by observing their immediate problem, while at the same time knowing that they also possess the source of future sufferings, is a very profound type of compassion.

We'll just briefly mention the antidotes to the five types of mental delusions. The antidote to each delusion has to be something which opposes each specific delusion. First we have to recognise how each of these delusions arise and what are the conditions which cause them to arise. We also have to know how each of the delusions view their objects. If we consider jealousy and desirous attachment, for example, then these two delusions arise when we observe some pleasant, attractive, or appealing objects. With jealousy we feel it's unbearable when we

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see some other person's qualities like their inner knowledge, education or the skills, or their outer qualities like their wealth or physical looks. Just the sight of these things or qualities is disturbing to us. Jealousy can torment us and make us suffer.

The antidote to jealousy is a meditation to cultivate the attitude of admiring others for having such qualities, of rejoicing in their qualities. This is something so obvious - that if we feel good about somebody's success, or qualities, rather than feeling jealous towards them, in a way their qualities bring more happiness to ourselves. The most effective way to overcoming jealousy is just to try changing our mental attitudes - we call it training our mind or correcting our way of thinking - to think that other people possessing such qualities is something wonderful, something they have wanted and achieved. They are also no different from ourselves. That is how we would feel we had achieved what we wanted. Try to see that just as you want happiness, so do all others want to try to avoid suffering. Try to rejoice in whatever good qualities others possess, just as you would feel happy and rejoice if something wonderful or great happened for you. Rejoicing in their qualities can prevent feelings of jealousy towards them.

In order to apply the antidote to overcome desirous attachment, again we also need to understand the conditions which pave the way for desire to arise in our mind. Desire and attachment arise in us when we see an object which is very pleasing and beautiful to our mind. In comparison with jealousy, with desire and attachment we crave or want to possess the object. This desire becomes very strong, and we have to suffer in order to get the object. It takes us a long time to see the shortcomings of desirous attachment. It's the very worst source of delusion and suffering in our life. We experience desire as something very pleasant. We see whatever object we desire as something which secures happiness for us - not only immediately, but also in some secure, permanent way. It's hard for many of us to see how we could find happiness and experience pleasure without desire and attachment. However, if we think very deeply and consider the effects of desire very thoroughly, we can recognise that it is the major source of continuous suffering in our life. We also have to know the antidote to counteract desire. We have to engage in a meditation to train the mind to see the unpleasant and unattractive aspects of the same object. This is called 'meditating on the unpleasant or the ugliness side of the objects' to counteract the desire.

Likewise, the main antidote to counteracting hatred is meditating on cultivating love and compassion for other beings. To counteract ignorance, meditate on emptiness - the ultimate nature of things. To overcome pride, focus on the various divisions of phenomena, putting all the objects of knowledge into their different types of constituents and so forth. To overcome the pride, we have to focus in our mind on various things we do not understand. When we find many things we do not understand, this can diminish pride.

With regard to doing this 'giving and taking' meditation,

we need to know which type of sentient beings are suitable or not the object of our meditation. It is said that for meditating on giving we can include all beings, even fully enlightened beings like Buddhas and all the highly realised Bodhisattvas and even one's own spiritual gurus. We can 'give' whatever is considered as an offering to the higher being, like the Buddhas and one's gurus. For example we can 'give' them our own body, material possessions, or virtuous minds. However it is said that when focusing on the meditation of 'taking', fully enlightened beings like the Buddha should not be included because obviously Buddha is free from sufferings. Likewise, a Bodhisattva or a being on a very high level of spiritual path should not be included. It is said that for spiritual practice reasons, your own spiritual gurus should also not be included. Spiritually, it is inauspicious to imagine or even think of one's own spiritual guru as possessing any type of sufferings.

That's the teaching for tonight. Now we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. As usual, again try to sit in the meditation posture with a relaxed body and remove all distractions from the mind. Just settle the mind inward and then, as we begin the chanting, our mind should be directed or focused on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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