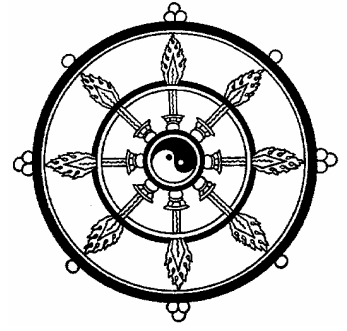


# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འོ་སྤྱོད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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We'll do some breathing meditation first. Relax your body by choosing the most comfortable sitting posture.

We need to realise the importance of resting the mind and allowing it be at peace. Without resting the mind we will never feel truly rested, because physical rest alone is not enough to make us feel peaceful.

What prevents the mind from being at rest are the various thoughts it generates. Meditation is the practice of training our mind to break its negative mental habits and build positive ones.

Even if we try to find a moment's rest and peace - for instance, by physically putting aside our work and taking a break - our mind will still be preoccupied with its usual round of uncontrolled thoughts, unless we make an effort to train it. The mind generates endless thoughts, which lead nowhere but serve only to keep the mind busy, causing it to become restless and preventing us from finding peace. Even if we are in a peaceful setting, we will not find true peace.

So before we engage in meditation, we must remind ourselves of the purpose of meditation which, as said before, is to break the mind's negative habits and introduce positive ones. The aim is to create a stable mind, which will enable us to think more clearly and enjoy more inner peace and stability.

Before beginning the meditation, we have to try to settle the mind inward by removing all outgoing thoughts. Next, we should gradually direct the mind to the incoming breath and outgoing breath, and try to focus it there with single-pointed concentration, making every effort to prevent it being distracted. [Pause for meditation.] Thank you.

It is good to do meditation practice whenever you find the time because, through meditation practice, we can develop the inner skills and knowledge that enable us to find a more lasting form of peace and happiness. We cannot always rely on outer help to provide us with lasting peace and happiness.

The benefit of engaging in meditation practice is that we can see how to create the inner causes of peace, stability and happiness. Having a happy and stable mind is important. If we do not have this, not only is it difficult for us to enjoy life, but also, anything we achieve will not bring us lasting peace and happiness.

For example, we can see how an uncontrolled mind can bring unnecessary problems to our lives. As soon as we give way to certain thoughts, we lose our peace and happiness and find ourselves to be on emotionally unstable ground.

However, when we examine the cause that has taken away the peace and happiness we had been enjoying a moment ago, we will see that we cannot blame outer factors. In fact, most times when we find ourselves to be unhappy as a result of suddenly losing our peace and happiness, the cause can be related to some unruly thought.

To overcome the problem of being ruled by an uncontrolled

mind, we need to do the meditation practice that we are doing now, in everyday life. Because, through regular meditation practice, we will be able to generate a controlled, subdued state of mind that will give us a more lasting form of peace and happiness.

We'll now return to our discussion of *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. The first two lines of verse 96 read:

As all that is wrong can be traced to one source-  
Our concern for ourselves whom we cherish the most-  
We must meditate now on the kindness of others.

In this line, we learn about the essence of this thought transformation teaching. It says here we should direct all blame to one source - the self-cherishing mind within us.

Of course, in day-to-day life when we face problems, we never regard them as being the result of this self-cherishing mind. Rather, we always try to blame other people. Whenever something goes wrong in our lives, we always try to find someone else to blame, while taking all the credit for any achievements. With this way of thinking, we are never prepared to take any loss for ourselves, but only want to claim all the gains and victories.

We couldn't care less about others - so much so, we are always ready to expose their faults. Further, if we see some good qualities in them, we try to ignore them and not acknowledge them at all. This way of thinking is generated by the self-cherishing mind deep within us.

It says here "As all that is wrong can be traced to one source". Here, we need to have fully understood everything discussed to date in this text - in other words, we need to have some conviction that the self-cherishing mind is the source of all our problems. Therefore, from now onwards, if anything goes wrong in our lives or relationships, we should complain to ourselves about our own self-cherishing mind rather than complain about others.

If we really want to put this teaching into practice, we need to look into the mind and make big changes to the way we think. If we still hold thoughts such as "That person's always causing me problems", or "Why doesn't that person help me?", or "Why does that person abuse me?", we need to change our way of thinking. Instead of these thoughts, we need to think about the kind of attitude we should have towards others. That is, we should be constantly thinking about how to show them love and kindness, and how to benefit them and understand their needs, so that we can fulfil those needs.

This practice is essential because we all live in a society with other people, which offers us many benefits. It is hard to imagine how we could survive on our own, outside of a society. When you think about the advantages of living with other people, you will realise the need to overcome the self-cherishing mind.

We need to meditate on the kindness of others instead of being concerned only with our own welfare and our own

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reputation, even trying to hide our faults at every opportunity and trying to promote our good qualities. From the viewpoint of others around you, such behaviour is not acceptable.

This thought transformation teaching tells us that we have to hide our good qualities, but expose our faults. The point being made here is that we have to try and see the shortcomings of holding onto this self-cherishing mind, for instance, the way it destroys one's relationship with others.

If we don't think about such teachings, we will never be able to see that we are responsible for any disharmony in our relationships. Rather, we will always try to blame others - because they don't talk to us nicely, or because they don't smile at us - and feel hatred for them. However, the teachings say that the fault should all go to the self-cherishing mind. This is why it is so important to see the faults of the self-cherishing mind.

We must meditate on the kindness of others because normally we don't regard all other sentient beings as having been kind to us. However, by engaging in meditation practice, we can realise the truth of this. As a result of realising the kindness of other beings, we will generate deep respect and a sense of gratitude towards them. This will help us overcome any hatred we have for others. Instead, we will begin to cherish them, in the same way we would cherish a special intimate friend, and we will gradually develop a loving relationship towards all beings.

Normally, we don't take the time to stop and think about the fact that everything we enjoy in our life depends on others; we take for granted all the help we receive from others. However, if we meditate on the kindness of other beings, we can see that they have been kind to us, both from the point of view of the success of our spiritual practice and the success of our worldly life.

From the spiritual point of view, the fact that we have been born as human beings, a superior form of life, was due to certain causes. The teachings say that the substantial cause of finding a human life is our practice of moral ethics in the past. Performing and perfecting this practice depends on the presence of other beings. Without other beings, we cannot practise morality.

Not only do we enjoy a human life, but we also enjoy good living conditions and resources. This is said to be the result of the practice of giving charity. Again, we are only able to do this because of other beings. Further, any good physical quality or beauty that we possess is said to be the result of practising patience. This practice also depends upon other beings.

If we consider the causes of every goodness we have found in this human life, creating these causes has only been made possible by the presence of other sentient beings. Likewise, every mundane happiness we cherish, such as making money to become rich, only comes about because of other beings. Without other beings, we are not even able to make money.

Even the pleasure we find in wearing beautiful clothes, or enjoying beautiful meals, or enjoying the companionship of other beings - all these pleasures obviously depend upon other beings. On the contrary, if we had no one to talk to, we would find it extremely difficult to cope with the feelings of profound loneliness.

By engaging in this meditation practice, we are trying to transform our mind from a self-centred mind into one that cherishes other beings and holds them in high regard. It is

important for us to maintain this positive way of thinking, feeling a sense of gratitude, friendship and closeness towards other beings at all times. This largely depends on one's mind - always remembering their kindness, no matter what happens.

Even if you face a situation in which you receive harm from others, you will still be able to maintain a state of mind that remembers their kindness, not losing the sight of the fact that they have been very kind to you in the past. In such a situation, you should think that whatever harm you are receiving from others is partly caused by delusions in their mind, by the self-cherishing mind within them. If we train our mind, then whatever circumstance we face or whatever treatment we receive from others, our attitude to them and to all other beings will always be the same.

Even if right now you have someone who regards you as special and who has given you a great deal of support, your whole attitude to them can change as soon as that same person does something bad to you. You will completely forget about the help they have given you. Instead, you may even come to regard them as your very worst enemy, somebody who has destroyed your life. This is all because of you have forgotten their kindness.

Therefore, this meditation on the kindness of other beings is very effective in fostering better relationships, whether it is between children and parents, or between oneself and other beings generally. Whatever the relationship, when we improve it, we can mutually benefit one another and help solve each other's problems.

If one has attained an advanced level of spiritual practice and has developed strong patience or tolerance, then it is said that the more harm others cause you, the more kindness you will show towards others.

Advanced practitioners of patience feel a great sense of kindness for other beings, even the enemies who harm them. Because of their spiritual experience, they recognise that receiving harm from others is an opportunity to generate greater force in their practice, and through this, make more progress in their practice.

Those who truly generate love and compassion towards other beings know that as a result of generating love and compassion for other beings, they can cultivate spiritual realisations and sustain in their mind an experience of peace and happiness. As a result, they sincerely appreciate the kindness of other beings and because of this their whole being is filled with peace and joy.

In this way, they are able to accumulate enormous merit, which in turn will enable them to accumulate wisdom. Then, they will be in a position to quickly reach the state of enlightenment. Such practitioners feel sincere kindness and gratitude towards all other beings because of what they have enabled them to achieve in their practice. They understand that they could not have achieved this without others.

We will do the Buddha's mantras as usual. Again, try to sit in the meditation posture, and bring the mind inward by removing all distracting thoughts. Then, as we chant, we should focus the mind on the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*