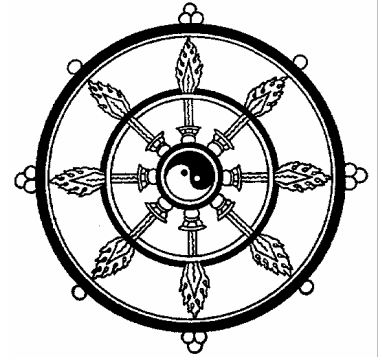


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འོ་སྤྱོད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



23 August 2000

We will do some breathing meditation first. First, make yourself comfortable in the sitting posture, and try to fully relax your body. Then, we should try to rest the mind by overcoming all outgoing thoughts, and bringing it fully inward. We should then engage in the breathing meditation by focusing the mind on the inhaling and the exhaling, without losing our focus to external distractions...

We will now continue this teaching on the thought transformation text, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. We are up to Verse 96, part of which we did last week. The last two lines say:

Accepting the suffering that they never
wished for,
We must dedicate fully our virtues to all.

The preceding lines referred to how all other beings have been kind to one, as a result of which we think of engaging in the meditation of giving-and-taking.

The giving-and-taking meditation, which we have discussed in the past, involves us imagining that we take upon our own inner continuum all the suffering and causes of suffering of all other beings. Then, we imagine giving them all our virtues and positive qualities, as a cause of bringing them everlasting peace and happiness.

Because we should perform the meditation of giving and taking out of a genuine sense of love and compassion for other beings, we need to understand the necessity of benefiting other beings and of helping them solve their problems. In order to generate genuine love and compassion for others, we have to be sure in our mind about the benefits of showing love to other beings and working for their sake.

As we discussed in the last teaching, showing love to others is important even from our own perspective, because everything we wish to achieve in our life depends on others. We have to understand that the truth of the interdependence – how the wellbeing of ourselves and all other beings depends on each other.

Even if we think about our worldly life, the things we need to survive every day, we realise that we depend on other beings. Without other beings, we cannot even find food to eat. Further, if we wish to become famous, or achieve a good reputation, again this wish cannot be fulfilled without other beings. There is nothing we can achieve ourselves alone.

This is how we establish in our minds the many ways

through which we receive help from other beings. Once we realise the many benefits we receive from others, we have to then think of how to repay their kindness.

If we take into account the wider society in which we live, the peace and happiness of our community basically depends on everyone showing true love and compassion to each other. Even for the few close relationships we have with those around us – as a parent, child, friend, teacher or student – the benefits of those relationship will depend on how much love and compassion we show towards each other.

Once we cultivate love and compassion for other beings from the depth of our heart, we will naturally begin to think about benefiting them. This means trying to help them achieve what they want – fulfilling their desires and eliminating anything they find undesirable. When we realise the kindness of all other beings, we will feel a sense of gratitude, and embark on the practice of benefiting them.

To put this teaching into practice, first of all we have to consider those in our immediate environment with whom we have formed a close relationship. Practising this teaching means developing love and compassion for those close to us, and thinking about how we can solve or minimise their problems, and bring them more joy and happiness.

In this meditation, when we think of taking on the suffering of others, we mean taking on anything that directly causes them to feel unhappiness or pain right now. There are also the 'causes' of suffering, which are referred to as indirect suffering, in the sense that they will bring other beings unhappiness in the future. No being wishes to experience suffering at any time, so that is why we try to take both their present suffering and the causes of their future suffering upon oneself.

When we talk about giving happiness, on the other hand, we mean giving anything that is a direct cause for others to experience a sense of joy, whereas when we say 'cause of happiness', we means their indirect or future happiness.

What is the meaning of repaying the kindness of others? As we said before, it is to remove the causes of their suffering and to place them in a state of happiness. The more love and more compassion we generate in our mind for other people, the more we will devote our life to benefiting them, or at least trying to be fair with them in the sense that we always try to always repay their

kindness of those we acknowledge as having benefited us. If we do this, we will come to be regarded as a good-natured person, somebody who other beings will admire.

When we cultivate love and compassion towards other beings, from our own side we cultivate a genuine thought of caring for them. We feel a sense of responsibility for them, wishing to give them happiness and eliminate their suffering. With the feeling of love and compassion, there should be also a sense of responsibility.

For instance, if you live with someone you regard as your partner, you need to think whether the reason you consider them to be such a close friend is because of genuine love and compassion. Usually, there is also some element of desire or attachment behind your attraction to that person. Even so, along with this desire, you should try to feel some true love and compassion. With true love and compassion, we feel a sense of responsibility for helping other beings find happiness and reduce their unhappiness.

At the same time, since our continuum has been so polluted by the three types of poisonous mind, our attitude towards other beings cannot be perfect.

Although we may still have delusions such as desire, hatred and ignorance in our mind, we should also consider putting the spiritual teachings into practice. This means that we have to try to replace these delusions with a positive state of mind, such as an attitude of love and compassion. The love and compassion we show others should be unconditional – no matter whether they respond with love and compassion or not. With true love and compassion, we will not be affected by their response, even if they do something harmful to us. We simply try to maintain our love and compassion.

You may face a difficult situation in which you receive harm from someone towards whom you have always shown love, and whom you have always tried to help. In response, however, you receive abuse and even some harm. Under such circumstances, it is not easy to practise tolerance, and maintain one's love and compassion. But if we train our mind, if we try to transform our thinking, we can still show love and compassion.

In fact, we can show even more love and compassion for them because, as Lama Tsong Khapa says, the person who returns harm in response to love is even inferior to an enemy. What Lama Tsong Khapa is trying to emphasise is the depth of ignorance within the minds of people who do not appreciate the benefits that other beings bring to them. If you have ever cared for a pet, such as a dog or cat, you know that even they will naturally respond to love with affection.

So we need to understand that the only reason a person causes us harm in response to love is because of the ignorance in their mind. Try to practise compassion and tolerance towards such people.

If our relationship with other beings is based on true love and compassion, it will always be mutually beneficial and long-lasting. The true love and compassion that we

bring to a relationship will always sustain it, whether we are still living with that person or not. Some of us may know of people who have lived together, and have later broken up and lived apart and, after the breakup, find themselves to be of more mutual help and benefit than before. In a way, their relationship has actually improved.

This example shows us how, sometimes, two people can live together in a relationship and not love and care much about each other. Rather, they see each other as an object to fulfill their own desire, lust and self-interest.

However, later on, when the relationship finishes and the desire and attachment is gone, what remains from the former relationship – the small element of true love and compassion that they shared in the past – will still be there. As a result, they will genuinely begin to help each other.

Therefore, we should try to bring as much true love and compassion to our relationships as possible, not just desire or attachment. Whoever we share a relationship with, if we show love and compassion, we will always be there to help each other. As a result, our relationships will become very meaningful, not an immediate source of problems.

We will finish tonight's teaching here. Could we now chant the Buddha's mantra seven times, as usual, and could we again sit in the meditation posture, bringing the mind fully inward. Then, as we begin the chanting, try to place the mind on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYA SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Gabrielle Thomson

Edited by Mary-Lou Considine

Edit checked by Sandup Tsering

Edited Version

© **Tara Institute**
