



# *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*

## Mahayana Thought Transformation

### Hosted by Shantideva Center

April & May, 2024 with Ven. Yönten

*"Theg-pa chen-po'i blo-sbyong mtshon-cha 'khor-lo"* by Dharmarakshita,  
translated by Alexander Berzin and Sharpa Tulku, with Jonathan Landaw and Khamlung Tulku,  
based on an oral explanation by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, 1973.  
The version in this course is the poetic rendering. Used with permission.

Freely offered here:

[https://studybuddhism.com/en/tibetan-buddhism/original-texts/sutra-texts/wheel-of-sharp-weapons/wheel-of-sharp-weapons-poetic-rendering\\_](https://studybuddhism.com/en/tibetan-buddhism/original-texts/sutra-texts/wheel-of-sharp-weapons/wheel-of-sharp-weapons-poetic-rendering_)

The name of this work is *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons Effectively Striking the Heart of the Foe*.

I pay heartfelt homage to you, Yamantaka;  
your wrath is opposed to the Great Lord of Death.



**An example of how NOT to think:**

If I want to stop uncontrolled birth, aging, sickness and death I need to be passive about my current conditions and just accept everything difficult that happens.

Maybe I should even seek out MORE suffering!

**An example of how to think:**

If I want to stop uncontrolled birth, aging, sickness and death I need to stop the causes and to purify previously created causes.

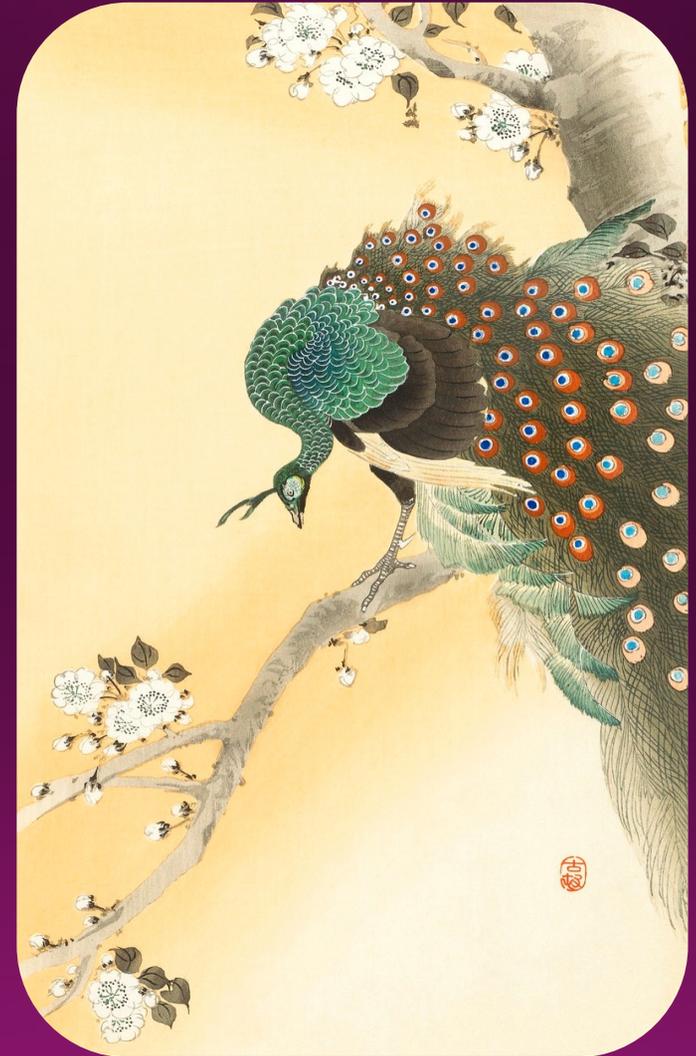
Review from last week

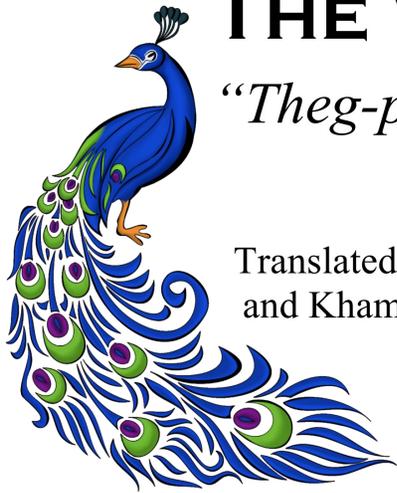


Review from last week

# Peacocks and Poison

Transforming  
what could  
weaken  
into  
what can  
beautify.





## THE WHEEL OF SHARP WEAPONS

*“Theg-pa chen-po'i blo-sbyong mtshon-cha 'khor-lo”*

by Dharmarakshita

Translated by Alexander Berzin and Sharpa Tulku, together with Jonathan Landaw and Khamlung Tulku, based on an oral explanation by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey

(1) In jungles of poisonous plants strut the peacocks, though medicine gardens of beauty lie near. The masses of peacocks don't find gardens pleasant, but thrive on the essence of poisonous plants.

(2) In similar fashion, [2] the brave bodhisattvas remain in the jungle of worldly concern. No matter how joyful this world's pleasure gardens, these brave ones are never attracted to pleasures, but thrive in the jungle of suffering and pain.



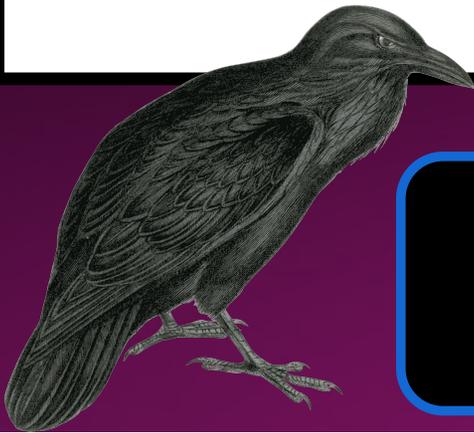
[2] Bodhisattvas, or brave ones, the spiritual offspring of the Buddhas, are those beings who have the enlightening attitude (bodhichitta) to work toward the attainment of Buddhahood, that is enlightenment, for the sake of all beings.

Review from last week

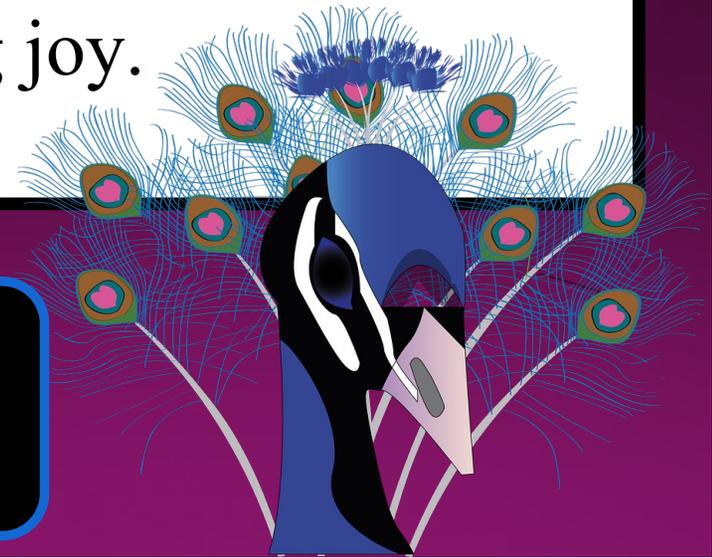


Cowards as Crows

(3) We spend our whole lives in the search for enjoyment, yet tremble with fear at the mere thought of pain; thus since we are cowards, we are miserable still. But the brave bodhisattvas accept suffering gladly and gain from their courage a true lasting joy.



Crows vs. Peacocks



## Verse 4

Now,  
desire is the jungle of poisonous plants here.  
only brave ones, like peacocks,  
can thrive on such fare.  
If cowardly beings, like crows,  
were to try it, because they are greedy,  
they might lose their lives.



Notes on  
the word  
"Now"  
in verse 4  
from Geshe  
Ngawang  
Dargye



There are three levels of training the mind according to the three scopes of motivation outlined in the lam-rim teaching of the graded course to enlightenment.

1. With an initial scope motivation, we work to attain a better future rebirth.
2. With an intermediate scope, we work to attain liberation (nirvana) from the vicious circle of rebirth (samsara) for ourselves alone.
3. With an advance scope, as a follower of the Mahayana path with bodhichitta motivation, we work to attain the full enlightenment of Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.

The word now in the text indicates the importance of practicing the teachings with an advanced scope of motivation, having previously trained our mind along the lam-rim graded course.

## Verse 4

Now,  
desire is the jungle of poisonous plants here.  
only brave ones, like peacocks,  
can thrive on such fare.  
If cowardly beings, like crows,  
were to try it, because they are greedy,  
they might lose their lives.



Notes  
on  
“brave  
ones”  
In verse

4

from  
Geshe  
Ngawang  
Dargye



With an advanced scope motivation, there are two ways in which we can follow the Mahayana path.

1. By following the Perfection Vehicle (Paramitayana), it may take many lifetimes before we reach our goal of enlightenment.
2. By following the Tantra Vehicle (Vajrayana),  however, we may attain enlightenment within one human lifetime. The word here in the text indicates the immediacy of practicing the tantra path with an especially strong bodhichitta motivation.

Notes on  
“lose their  
lives”  
in verse 4  
from Geshe  
Ngawang Dargye

(4) Now, desire is the jungle of  
poisonous plants here.  
only brave ones, like peacocks,  
can thrive on such fare.  
If cowardly beings, like crows, were to  
try it, because they are greedy,  
they might lose their lives.



The tantra system teaches many methods for the speedy attainment of enlightenment. Included among them is the use as a path the normally poisonous delusions. In order to use delusions, such as lustful desire, as a path, however, we must first be devoid of the self-cherishing attitude, that is the greedy attachment to our own self-interest.



In addition, we must have a sound understanding of voidness – the fact that all things, including ourselves, lack a truly independent manner of existence. To use delusions as a path without these two prerequisites is extremely dangerous and, far from achieving our intended goal, we may completely destroy our chance for attaining enlightenment.



# Main Themes in Wheel of Sharp Weapons

## Crows are analogous to cowardly beings

What makes us cowardly is the two enemies:

- self-grasping
  - Antidote: Wisdom realizing emptiness
- self-cherishing
  - Antidote: Bodhichitta

Samsaric pleasures are “poison” to crows/cowards because they use them with attachment which leads them to suffer in the future.



## Crows are analogous to cowardly beings

Who are motivated by self-grasping and self-cherishing

- **Self-grasping** ignorance, here, is the form that is the root of samsara (and directs self-cherishing)
- Which is an innate self-grasping that views the “I” in one’s own mental continuum and holds it to exist inherently



## Crows are analogous to cowardly beings

Who are motivated by self-grasping and self-cherishing

- **Self-cherishing**, here, refers to the destructive way of “caring” for the self.
  - Looks after ones’ own welfare with indifference to others
    - Takes no responsibility for alleviating their suffering
  - Looks after ones’ own welfare even at the expense of others
    - Fragile and volatile with self obsession



## Verse 5

How can someone  
who cherishes  
self more than others take lust and such  
dangerous poisons for food?

If he tried like a crow  
to use other delusions,  
he would probably forfeit  
his chance for release.



(5) How can someone who cherishes self more than others take lust and such dangerous poisons for food? If he tried like a crow to use other delusions, he would probably forfeit his chance for release.



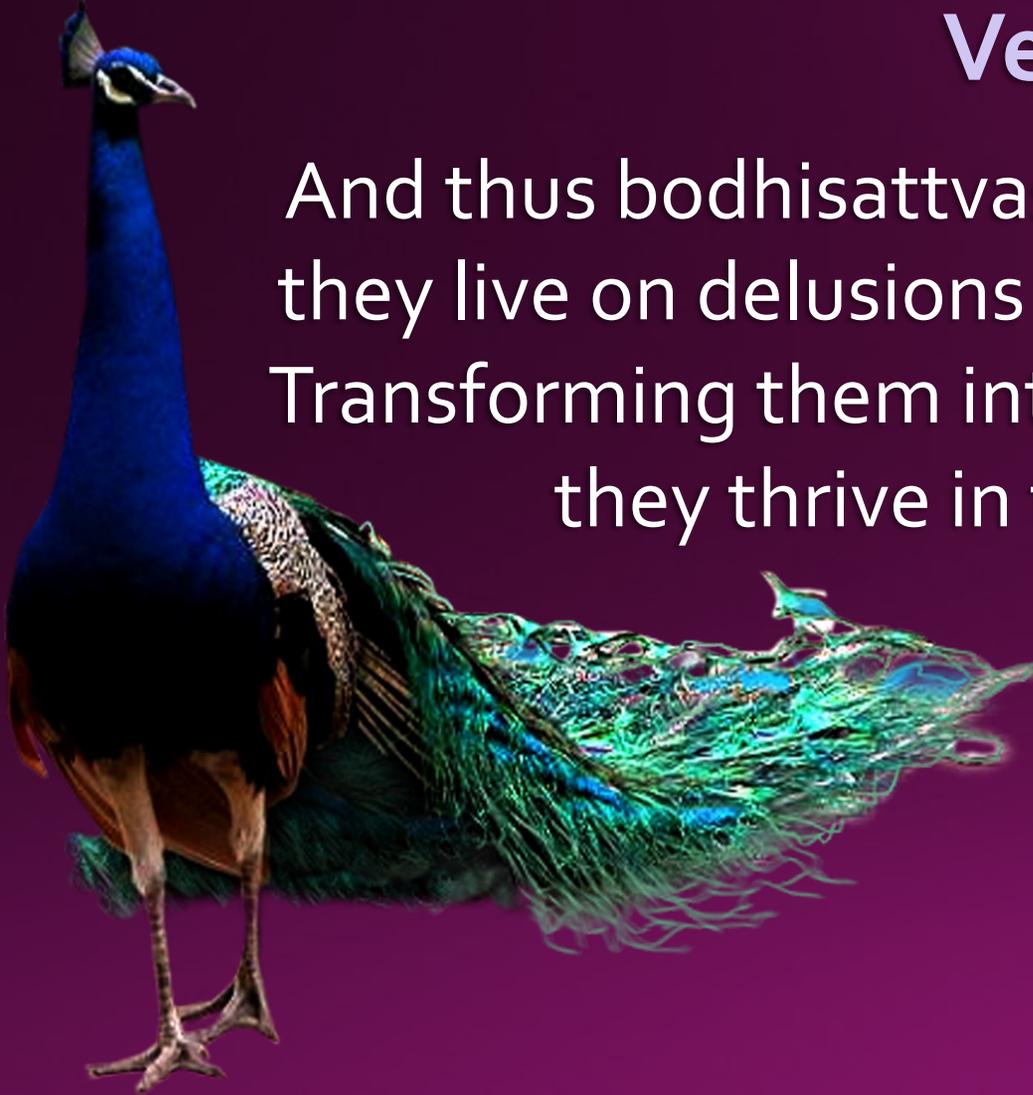
Notes on  
verse 5

Any of the delusions may be used in the tantra system as an actual path to enlightenment. In the Perfection Vehicle, the delusions may only be used as a method for directly benefiting others when the circumstances demand it. They may not, however, be practiced as an actual path.

## Verse 6

And thus bodhisattvas are likened to peacocks:  
they live on delusions – those poisonous plants.  
Transforming them into the essence of practice,  
they thrive in the jungle of everyday life.

Whatever is presented,  
they always accept,  
while destroying the  
poison of clinging desire.





Therefore practice  
*equalizing and exchanging...*

ལྷོ་རྩོད་ *Lo-Jong: Thought Transformation / Mind Training* *Emphasizes*

གནོད་ལེན་ *Tong-Len: Giving and Taking Practice* *which develops*

བྱང་ཆུབ་གྱི་སེམས་ *Jang-Chub-Kyi-Sem / Bodhichitta*

*Cultivating Conventional Bodhichitta technique*

Key Components in *Lo-Jong* teachings:

1. Equalize Self and Others
2. Identify the Disadvantages of Self-Cherishing
3. Identify the Advantages of Cherishing Others
4. Decide to Actually Exchange Self for Others
5. *Tong-Len* in Practice

ལོ་ཤོར་ *Lo-Jong: Thought Transformation / Mind Training Emphasizes*

གཏོང་ལེན་ *Tong-Len: Giving and Taking Practice which develops*

བྱང་ལྷན་གྱི་སེམས་ *Jang-Chub-Kyi-Sem / Bodhichitta*

## Cultivating Conventional Bodhichitta technique

### Key Components in Lo-Jong teachings:

#### 1. Equalize Self and Others

- Look at one's percentage of emphasis of cherishing self over others as opposed to how many more others there are than self...
  - The motivation of self and others is equal/same: we all want happiness and don't want suffering...try to develop an affinity with others...
2. Identify the Disadvantages of Self-Cherishing
  3. Identify the Advantages of Cherishing Others
  4. Decide to Actually Exchange Self for Others
  5. *Tong-Len* in Practice

ལོ་ཤང་ *Lo-Jong: Thought Transformation / Mind Training Emphasizes*

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## Cultivating Conventional Bodhichitta technique

### Key Components in Lo-Jong teachings:

1. Equalize Self and Others

2. Identify the Disadvantages of Self-Cherishing

- use logic & experience -

○ For Oneself (In the Present and Historically):

○ How does it feel to give to and receive it from others?

○ For Others (In the Present and Historically):

○ How do others seem to feel and respond when it is directed it at them?

3. Identify the Advantages of Cherishing Others

4. Decide to Actually Exchange Self for Others

5. *Tong-Len* in Practice

ལོ་ཤོར་གྱི་སྒོམ་ལུགས་ *Lo-Jong: Thought Transformation / Mind Training Emphasizes*

གཏོང་ལེན་ *Tong-Len: Giving and Taking Practice which develops*

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## Cultivating Conventional Bodhichitta technique

### Key Components in Lo-Jong teachings:

1. Equalize Self and Others
2. Identify the Disadvantages of Self-Cherishing
3. Identify the Advantages of Cherishing Others - use logic & experience -
  - For Oneself (In the Present and Historically):
    - How does it feel to give to and receive it from others
  - For Others (In the Present and Historically):
    - How do others seem to feel and respond when it is directed it at them?
4. Decide to Actually Exchange Self for Others
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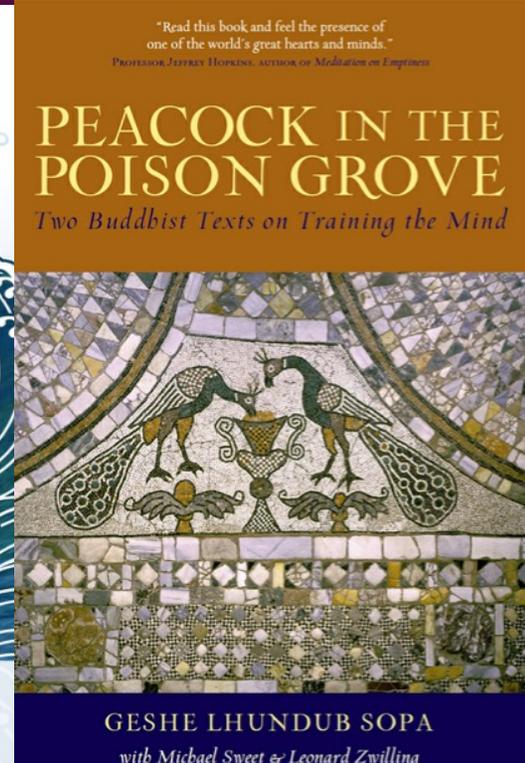
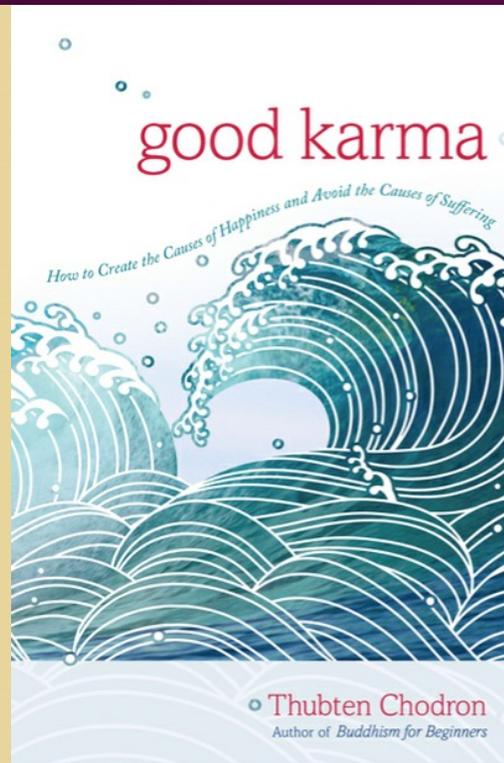
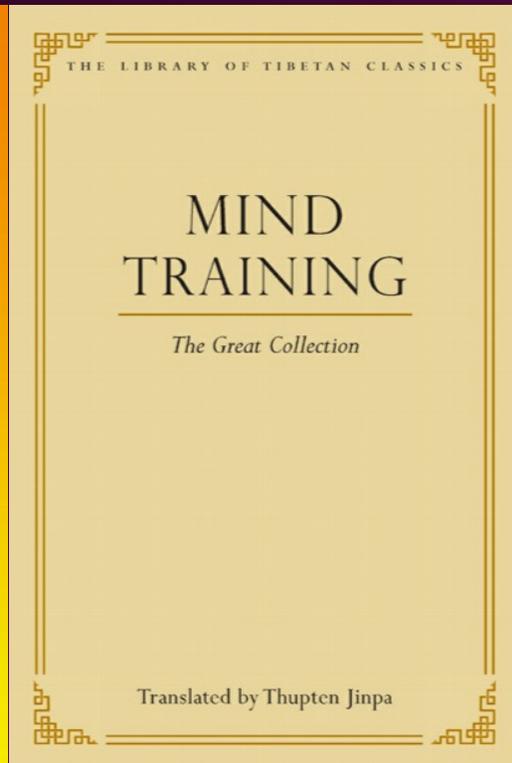
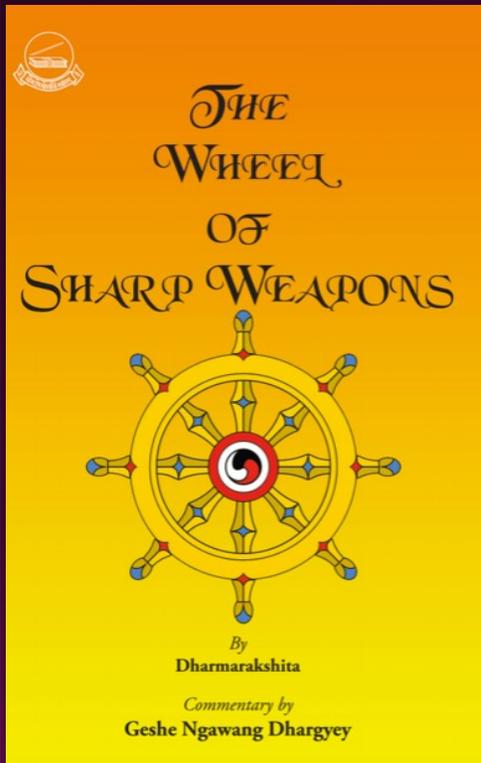
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## Cultivating Conventional Bodhichitta technique

### Key Components in Lo-Jong teachings:

1. Equalize Self and Others
2. Identify the Disadvantages of Self-Cherishing
3. Identify the Advantages of Cherishing Others
4. **Decide to Actually Exchange Self for Others**
  - Be with the sense of choosing this practice for the benefit of yourself, others and progress on the path.
  - Let your choice resonate and sink in.
5. *Tong-Len* in Practice

# Recommended Reading



*The Wheel of Sharp Weapons  
Commentary*  
by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey

*Mind Training: The Great  
Collection*  
Translated by Thubten Jinpa

*Good Karma*  
by Thubten Chodron

*Peacock in the Poison Grove*  
by Lhundrup Sopa