

### **Three Objects, Three Poisons, and Three Seeds of Virtue**

Relating to passion, aggression, and ignorance in the main practice of tonglen is very intense, but the main practice is somewhat lighter

...

Whatever aggression our enemy has provided for us - let that aggression be ours and let the enemy thereby be free from any kind of aggression. Whatever passion has been created by our friends, let us take that neurosis into ourselves and let our friends be freed from passion. And the indifference of those who are in the middle or unconcerned, those who are ignorant, deluded, or noncaring, let us bring that neurosis into ourselves, and let those people be free of ignorance.

...

The purpose of that is that when you begin to hold the three poisons as yours, when you possess them fully and completely, when you take charge of them fully, you will find, interestingly enough, that the logic is reversed. If you have no object of aggression, you cannot hold your own aggression purely by yourself. If you have no object of passion, you cannot hold your passion yourself. And in the same way, you cannot hold on to your ignorance either.

By holding the poison, you let go of the object, or the intent, of your poison... if your anger is not directed TOWARD something, the object of aggression falls apart.

*From Training the Mind & Cultivating Loving-Kindness by Chogyam Trungpa ,*

### **Three Objects, Three Poisons, Three Seeds of Virtue**

In the Buddhist teachings, the messy stuff is called klesha, which means poison...The pith instruction of all the Buddhist teachings and most explicitly of the lojong teachings is, whatever you do, don't try to make these unwanted feelings go away. That's an unusual thought; it's not our habitual tendency to let these feelings hang around. our habitual tendency is definitely to try to make those things go away.

People and situations in our lives are always triggering our passion, aggression, and ignorance. A good old innocent cup of coffee triggers some people's craving; they are addicted to it; it represents comfort and all the good things in life. If they can't get it, their life is a wreck. Other people have this elaborate story line about why it's bad for you, and they have aversion and a support group. Plenty of other people couldn't care less about a cup of coffee; it doesn't mean much at all to them.

And then there's good old Mortimer...Some people are lusting when they see Mortimer. A good deal of their discursive thought is taken up what they'd like to do with Mortimer. A certain number of people hate him. They haven't even talked to him yet, but the minute they saw him, they felt loathing. Some of us haven't noticed him, and we may never notice him. In fact, a few years from now he'll tell us he was here, and we'll be surprised.

Our experience would write the formula as "Three objects, three poisons, and lots of misery" or "Three objects, three poisons, and three seeds of confusion, bewilderment, pain," because the more the poisons arise and the bigger they get in our life, the more they drive us crazy. They keep us from seeing the world as it is; they make us blind, deaf, and dumb. The world doesn't speak for itself because we're so caught up in our story line that instead of feeling that there's a lot of space in which we could lead our life as a child of illusion, we're robbing ourselves, robbing ourselves from letting the world speak for itself. You just keep speaking to yourself, nothing speaks to you.

The three poisons are always trapping you in one way or another, imprisoning you and making your world really small. When you feel craving, you could be sitting on the edge of the Grand Canyon, but all you can see is this piece of chocolate cake you're craving. With aversion, you're sitting on the edge of the Grand Canyon, and all you can hear is the angry words you said to someone ten years ago. With ignorance, you're sitting on the edge of the Grand Canyon with a paper bag over your head. Each of the three poisons has the power to capture you so completely that you don't even perceive what's in front of you.

*From Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron,*

### **Three Objects, Three Poisons, Three Seeds of Virtue**

The three poisons continually arise in connection with three objects. Compulsive attachment arises for objects that are pleasant or useful; aversion arises for objects that are unpleasant or harmful; and stupidity or indifference for other objects. Recognize these poisons as soon as they arise. Then, for example, when attachment arises, think:

May every bit of every sentient beings' attachment be contained in this attachment of mine. May all sentient beings have the seed of virtue of being free of attachment. May this attachment of mine contain all their disturbing emotions and, until they attain buddhahood, may they be free of such disturbing emotions.

Aversion and other emotions are used in practice by working with them the same way. Thus, the three poisons become three limitless seeds of virtue.

*From The Great Path of Awakening : An Easily Accessible Introduction for Ordinary People by Jamgon Kongtrul, translated by Ken McLeod*

### **Three Objects, Three Poisons, Three Roots of Virtue**

The next verse refers to the three objects: agreeable, disagreeable, and neutral objects. As we relate to these three types of objects, the three mental poisons arise: attachment, hostility, and confusion. The point is to use these poisons as opportunities to nurture the roots of virtue.

As we engage in the affairs of daily life, as soon as we become aware that attachment, craving, or clinging has arisen, right then is the time to recognize that there are an immeasurable number of sentient beings who are subject to the same mental afflictions. Expand your awareness of this right on the spot, and let the aspiration arise: "May those countless sentient beings be endowed with the root of virtue that is freedom from attachment. May they be free of this attachment that I am now experiencing." The aspiration itself is a root of virtue.

Similarly, in moments of anger, simply recognize the anger as it arises. This presents a way for those of us with a dharma friend or spouse to help each other. Provided the anger is not directed at the other person, when one flies off the handle the other can simply say, "Anger has arisen." This can, if not vanquish the anger, at least snap us halfway out of its craziness. The anger presents us also with the opportunity, once we have recognized it, to recognize also that there are innumerable sentient beings who, like ourselves, are subject to anger. And so let the aspiration arise: "May they be endowed with

the root of virtue of freedom from anger." We can likewise apply the same practice to the third poison, confusion or ignorance. This is truly a practice for our daily life.

*Excerpted from: The Seven-Point Mind Training(first published as A Passage from Solitude : Training the Mind in a Life Embracing the World), by B. Alan Wallace.*

### **There are Three Objects, Three Poisons, and Three Sources of Virtue.**

Worldly beings regard objects in three ways. Agreeable objects are looked upon with the poison of attachment, or desire, disagreeable objects with the poison of aversion, or hatred, and indifferent objects with the poison of ignorance of their true mode of existence, emptiness. In our meditation we should imagine accepting these three poisons, the source of all misery, from every being in cyclic existence, and replacing them with the three sources of virtue and happiness: nonattachment, non-aggression, and non-ignorance. This is the abbreviated final instruction. If we seriously practice giving and taking, little harm or suffering comes to us. When it does, we accept it and, by realizing that its deep cause lies in a past unwholesome action, we transform it into the path to liberation. Just as a bird flaps its wings to fly higher and is further assisted by the wind blowing from beneath, in the same way we too are assisted by two vital forces as we develop the awakening mind: these are accepting all the trouble and suffering of others upon ourselves, and giving them all our merit, virtues, and excellent qualities such as wisdom and compassion. We should practice this not only in our imagination, but when circumstances arise and there is a chance to help others; in fact, we must spontaneously do whatever we can to assist them. If we do not apply our practice to our everyday actions, we are being hypocritical and deceiving ourselves.

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### **Three Objects, Three Poisons, Three Roots of Virtue**

For objects that please us and for people that we love, for example our parents and relatives, we experience attachment. But when confronted by uncomfortable situations, when for example we see enemies or people we dislike, we experience aversion. When we see people who are neither close friends nor enemies, we feel indifferent. In pleasant situations, we feel attachment; in unpleasant situations, anger; in indifferent situations, ignorance.

Many people, like myself, are infected by the three poisons! Therefore we should pray, 'May the obscurations of all beings, arising through these three poisons, come upon me as a load to bear. May all beings live virtuously, performing positive actions, and be free from the three poisons of attachment, anger and ignorance.' We will be greatly benefited if we constantly train ourselves in thinking like this.

*From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche*

