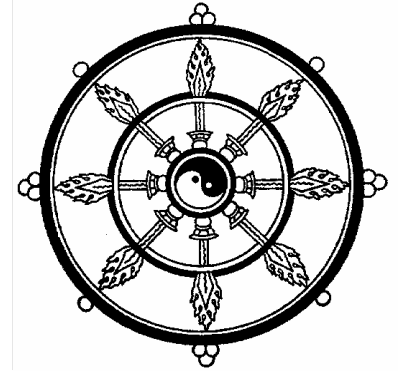

Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga
Translated by Samdup Tsering



ཨོ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།

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As usual we will start with some breathing meditation. Just choose a comfortable posture, relax your body and release all the tension.

If we have mental as well as physical rest, we can experience a true and full sense of rest. What we experience in our mind has a direct effect on our own experience and feelings. That is, if our mind has true inner stability, clarity and joy, then naturally we will also feel the same. There is no question about the advantages of having a mind that enjoys peace, happiness, clear thinking and stability.

Since we all want to have these qualities in our minds, we should investigate what is stopping us from enjoying such a peaceful state of mind. The main thing that deprives us of this inner peace and happiness is our mental distraction - the mind that wanders after external objects. Once we recognise this, then we can try to make an effort to get rid of all these wandering thoughts.

By staying within ourselves and bringing the mind inward, we can start to meditate. Use the breathing as the only object of our mental attention. As a way of disciplining and training the mind, make every effort to place the mind on the breath, and not let it go after any other objects. Let us do this for a short while.

Pause for meditation.

If we look into our mind, we can see that it is a part of ourselves, just as the body is a part of us. Our mind and our body are the two things most closely connected with our own existence. And of the two, the mind connection is the closest. This is because our body will one day be separated from us, but our mind is an entity from which we cannot be separated. Our mind will always accompany us. When we think about this link with the mind, we can see that we have the ability to control it, rather than having the mind always controlling us. We can control the mind. If the mind is not thinking well, we can fix it. If the mind is undisciplined, we can discipline it. We can change our problematic mental states.

The mind can develop its own positive potential until it becomes completely perfect. That is, when all the faults and limitations of the mind are removed, we are left with what is called omniscient mind. This is the all-knowing mind that has reached the ultimate state, which we call enlightenment or fully developed Buddhahood.

It is inspiring to know that, as far as the basic nature of our mind goes, it is not something which has a fixed way of thinking or perceiving the world. Its nature is flexible. This means, as was said before, that if there is something in the mind that is wild and harmful to us, we have the potential to get rid of it. Similarly, if we can see beneficial qualities within the mind, then we can cultivate those qualities and develop them fully. So from this point of view we can say that the mind is under our control.

We must look for support that is long lasting and reliable. Where can we find such support? We can't find lasting reliable support in the outside world, and any friends we have are only beneficial and supportive to a certain extent, and only at certain times. Even your closest friend is subject to change. As one famous master said, 'It is so easy to break a relationship with a very close friend. A single bad word or few words can finish one's connection, and change the relationship with that person'. We can see how relationships can change overnight. One night you can have a close friend, but the next morning they can turn out to be your worst enemy. So, as far as something external, which we can call a friend or which can give us security, there is nothing which is completely reliable. This quote is saying that it is important to seek some other friend, which is the support and positive energy within ourselves.

It is said that if we look into our mind we will find two potentials. One that is negative and destructive, and the other that is positive and creative. As was said earlier, whether we are happy or not depends on our relationship with the mind and the body. If we can cultivate harmony with our mind and body, then we can find a lasting peace and happiness; because, in this life, our mind and our present body always accompany us.

If our mind, which is always with us, is always in a positive state, then we will also be positive, regardless of any outer unfavourable circumstances. This is because we have inner strength and positive energy. It doesn't matter if you have to face an outer problem (e.g. a relationship problem), you can believe in yourself. This gives you the strength to feel hope, and not lose your self esteem or your courage.

If, on the other hand, we always place our hope in outer objects, like support from friends, then it is extremely difficult when we lose that external support. There seems

to be no hope, as if the friend who has left has taken all our energy and all our self potential. There is within us an inner potential, something which can guide us the right way and give us hope that problems can be solved and that things can be seen clearly.

It is said that if we work and make an effort to develop our inner potential, then we can be fully enlightened. We can liberate ourselves from the source of the problems. Shakyamuni Buddha was an ordinary being like us before he gained enlightenment. Like us, his life was totally influenced and overpowered by negative inner forces. But, by working through the problems with great effort, the Buddha was able to remove all of the negative forces within his mind and achieve enlightenment.

It is said that even meeting an enlightened being, or seeing the statue of a Buddha, brings peace and clarity to the mind. Such is the power of an enlightened being. The question of getting to enlightenment is the question of fully developing the potential within our own mind.

Our best friend is our own mind. It can bring happiness to our lives and to the lives of others. By utilising the positive potential of your mind you can fulfil your own goals, and the goals of others. The full state of enlightenment is reached when our minds are fully endowed with all excellent qualities, and are free of all faults.

The aims of our life, whether spiritual or mundane, all depend on our mental capacities as well as our physical health. These are the two most important contributing factors for our own wellbeing and in achieving any aims in life. Therefore, it is essential that we know how to take care of our mind and body. Put into practice your knowledge of what is good for the body and how to take proper care of it. Similarly, the spiritual knowledge of the Dharma shows us how to practise taking care of our mind and how we can protect it from harm or from being disturbed.

We will now recite the Buddha's mantra seven times. While we recite these mantras it is important that you physically relax and free your mind of all outer mental distractions and just concentrate on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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