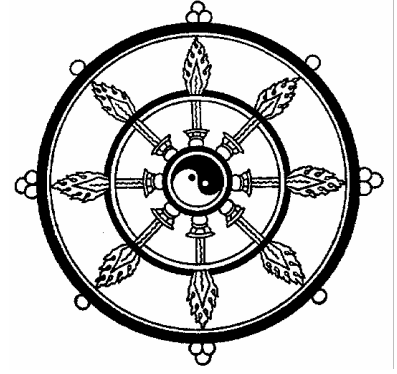


# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨོ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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As usual, we will begin with some breathing meditation together. Choose the most suitable and relaxing sitting posture for your body.

If our mind is not controlled, and under the influence of thoughts of the external world, it becomes a cause of many unnecessary problems. Realising this, we should generate the thought of controlling the mind. Try to let go of all thoughts of external objects until you find the mind resting within. Try to notice when the mind is about to drift off to external objects and focus it on the incoming and outgoing breath.

There is no doubt about the benefit of meditation, but it is important to know how to meditate, and which meditation is most suitable for you. Generally, we practice meditation to overcome our problems through training our mind. First, we have to see clearly that many of the problems we face in our daily life are created by our mind. This is why we cannot find satisfaction in life, even if we are surrounded by the best living conditions. The meditation practitioner must see that the main enemy in life is, in fact, within one's own mind.

With this in mind, one should choose the particular meditation practice most suited to overcoming one's most immediate problems, like confusion or unease within the mind. If we ignore the remedy to our most immediate problems, even if we undertake some other meditation practice, we will find it ineffective because we feel it is not solving our problems. Such meditation practice is not that beneficial to us.

As we have said, we have to identify the cause of problems within our mind very clearly. The way to do this is to observe one's mind and see how there is a continuous process of thoughts arising, and see that the object of these thoughts is something past, present, or future. We need to see whether the states of mind generated by these thoughts are beneficial or harmful to us. If we were to observe our thoughts in this way, we would gain more understanding of the effect our mind has on our day to day experience.

It is not so much some external factor that is the main cause of our problems, but some internal factor - a weakness in the mind - which is the continuous source of our problems. Once that internal cause is fixed, we can bring about inner stability, we'll have more clarity, and feel more in control of our daily experience. We'll see that even the unfavourable external factors that temporarily bother us can just disappear - if there is

something internal with which we can guide ourselves.

That is why it is said that meditation training can make you your own doctor, in the sense that you can cure your disease. The disease here is something within your mind. The symptoms are that our minds become dull, clouded by ignorance, confusion, or agitation. When this occurs, our mind is dark and no external thing can make us happy, make our life meaningful. The true cause of happiness is within our mind, and we can see the benefits of doing meditation practice. If we could develop more true understanding within our minds, we'd be in a better position to benefit other people.

The advantage of controlling our mind and developing good qualities within the mind is that, if our mind improves, our actions of speech and body also improve; in another words, our actions of speech and body follow the mind. Thus, to become a good person, we must first have a good mental attitude, because people judge us by our speech and our physical actions towards them. If we have an unhealthy state of mind, our actions of speech and body would also be unhealthy, making us seem bad in the eyes of others. Such bad actions not only harm other beings, they also harm our own life, because we find more problems in making lasting friendships and receiving help from other people.

So even if we want just to receive more help from other beings, and want society to accept us as a good person, the most important cause is the actions we perform in society with our speech and our body, which are in turn determined by our mind. Therefore, we can see how important it is to check our mind. If we check the mind, we can prevent our actions from becoming the cause of harm.

While we can sometimes expect material support from others, mental support mainly depends upon ourselves. We might be fortunate enough to have kind parents, relatives or friends - but they cannot help all the time. In fact, there is no real security in materially relying upon others; rather, it is best if one takes full responsibility for all aspects of one's life. When facing emotional problems, we have to see the cause of the problem and find the right means to resolve it ourselves.

As you practice meditation, you should immediately be able to see the benefits yourself; its hard to see its relevance if you don't see any benefits in this, your own life.

If you don't see the benefit of practicing meditation,

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perhaps its because you're unsure about the nature of its benefits. So, as we have said, the aim of meditation is to cultivate a positive state of mind, and eliminate negative states of mind. This too is the purpose of studying the spiritual teachings. Whether our meditation or spiritual practice is beneficial or not is a question of whether we have a positive or a negative state of mind. If we cultivate a positive state of mind, not only do we feel good, but we also benefit other people - particularly those close to us. Likewise, if we generate a negative state of mind, it harms our selves and others - not in the sense of other countries or strangers, but those who are close to us.

So if we focus on a positive state of mind, we see that it brings lasting happiness. It is said in many texts that such a positive state of mind is like one's inner spiritual guide.

We will now chant the Buddha's mantra. As before, sit in a comfortable meditation posture, try to bring the mind inward by removing all disturbing thoughts, and focus the mind on the sound of the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks  
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Edited Version*

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