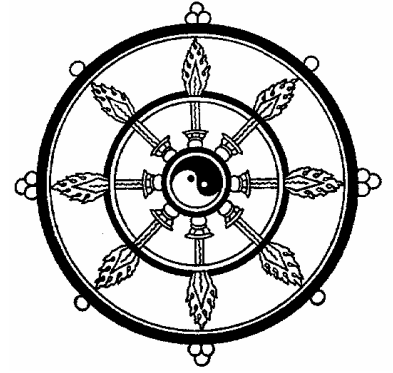

Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨྌ སྤྱིང་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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We will do the breathing meditation first. Try to relax your body. Choose a sitting posture, making sure you are comfortable. At the same time we want our mind to rest because, without mental rest, even this physical rest defeats its purpose. It is important to remove any thought that brings unhappiness to the mind, then try to rest the mind within.

After you calm the mind and rest it within, it is important to not lose this peaceful mind because of external distractions. We then begin the meditation, simply being aware of the breath coming in and going out.

In daily life it's beneficial to have discipline. We should have a set timetable of what to do each day. Even a serious spiritual practitioner would have such a timetable. Each day he or she would abide by that timetable and make progress in their practice. Even with worldly commitments, it is good to have a timetable in which we can put aside some time for meditation because this benefits us. Even if what we have in the timetable is not all spiritual or dharma practice, because we spend our time in a disciplined way, it helps us stabilise our minds and achieve stability in our lives.

We will continue the commentary on *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. We are up to Verse 19 which reads:

Verse 19

When the things we require for daily consumption
And use, fall apart or are wasted or spoilt,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done
Till now we have been careless with others'
possessions;
Hereafter let's give them whatever they need.

This verse concerns the fact that sometimes we receive accusations or blame from others - people hearing about something we haven't done but accusing us of having done it, or thinking that we haven't done something we have done. In facing such an unfavourable situation, it is important to not just look for the outer cause, but to also look at the inner cause. If you look inward, such situations indicate our negative karma or negative actions in the past, such as deceiving or cheating others, or always wanting to gain victory for ourselves, and ignoring or even abusing others' needs or rights. One may even have caused great harm to others for very selfish reasons. So we should reflect upon our actions in the past, and try to see that what we face is the result of our actions.

Whatever we face in our lives is our responsibility. Once we see this, we can show more tolerance towards outer, unfavourable conditions. When people accuse or belittle you, you don't immediately lose your temper. You understand that the unwanted circumstance you face is not completely created by others. This understanding helps you show patience, and it also helps you protect your mind from being upset by the situation.

To understand how our actions are the cause of what happens in our lives, we don't need to go a long way back into the actions of past lives. Even in this lifetime, we can see how our actions shape our lives and our relationships with others. When we say 'actions', we also have to consider our mental attitude, because that is the main source of our actions. The mental attitude that influences us to commit unskilful actions is the one that is completely self-centred. With this self-centred mind, we show no regard for the needs of other beings. All we are concerned about is what we want. We have no sense of shame or responsibility. Whatever we do, as long as it lets us achieve what we want, it doesn't concern us that our actions may harm our parents, our partners or a close friend. And when we achieve what we desire, we don't want to care about the needs of others. With such an attitude, we even put others down, abuse them, and so on.

Who loses with such attitude? We lose, we are the losers. With such an attitude, even if you once had many close friends, acquaintances, and family members, because of the way you treat them, they leave. When this happens it hurts our feelings. However, we usually do not realise that they are being unfriendly because we have done something wrong to them. Rather, we blame them.

Think about how we feel when others treat us in a self-centred way, exploiting us to fulfill their own selfish needs. Of course we do not like it. So we have to realise that the common bond between us and all other beings is that we all want happiness, and do not want suffering. With this understanding, we try to minimise the self-centred mind and become more responsible for our actions towards others. Then our actions become a cause for bringing happiness to our own and others' lives, improving the quality of our lives.

Geshe Doga said that he has had complaints from people saying they find their work difficult because of someone who seems to dislike them. The real cause for the complaint may be that they hate their work! Nevertheless,

these people say that because of the problem in their working relationship with that other person, they are considering quitting their job. Geshe Doga has suggested that they must think about why they are at work - obviously they are not there to make this other person happy. What is more important is that they focus on their performance, on the responsibilities they are paid for. So first we have to make this clear in our minds - the reason for working is to get a wage. Thus, if we perform our work to the best of our ability and with an honest mind, there is no reason to worry. We fully deserve our wage, no matter what any other person may say.

Also, you have to try and understand that the other person may be unhappy, or have a problem. If you can help that person, do so; otherwise, don't just assume that the person is unhappy because of some fault in you. If you do your job properly and, each morning when you see this person, just greet them and get on with your work - if you do this day after day, the problem can be solved. That person might even turn out to be your closest work friend! One thing that Geshe Doga tells people when they face problems at work is that if they compare the problem of having a job with not having a job, the problem of not having a job is far greater.

On the one hand, we have to look at the immediate cause of our problems and deal with it. On the other hand, as we said before, we have to know the indirect cause - our own past karma. It is also important to know that, whenever someone has problems or worries, that person will express this to those around them, even those in the work place, in the same way as at home they express it to family members or partners.

In the last two lines of the verse 19 it says:

Till now we have been careless with others'
possessions;
Hereafter let's give them whatever they need.

And the last two lines of verse 18 read:

Hereafter let's never accuse others falsely,
But give them full credit for virtues they have.

As discussed earlier, it is not good for us to have a self-centred mind and want victory merely for ourselves. Realising this we try to change and think of the needs of others. If we can help them or solve their problems we do so, but if we cannot directly help them, in our minds we try to cultivate the wish that we may be of benefit to other beings. When we say "all other sentient beings", in practice it is those near us - our partner, our friends, people at work, and so on. We think of their needs and whether we can fulfill them.

If we cannot, we make the resolution that one day we will be able to benefit others.

This is very important, because we see that most of the problems we face are to do with our relationships with others - we complain that our friends do not care or understand what we want. Now we can understand that the same thing happens for our friends. The way to bring such a friend closer to us is to understand his or her needs, and the best way of fulfilling those needs.

So we will leave the teaching here and, as usual, we will chant Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra. Again try to relax and choose a meditation posture, and try to bring the mind inward using this mantra as the object of our mind.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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