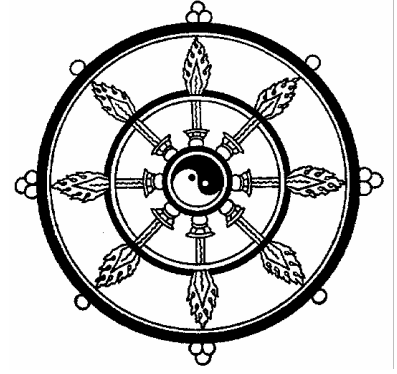


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨྲ ལྷོ་སྤྱིང་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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To begin the breathing meditation, make sure that you are in a comfortable sitting posture. Generate a strong motivation to not let your mind be overpowered by distracting thoughts of external objects. After you have stabilised the mind inwardly, then start the breathing meditation by directing the mind to the incoming and outgoing breath. The focus on the breath should be such that your mind and breath become inseparable.

And now to discuss the meaning of *Verse 29 of 'The Wheel of Sharp Weapons'*:

When sleep overwhelms us while practicing virtue,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning upon us
from wrongs we have done.

Till now we have gathered the causes for obstacles
hindering our practice of virtuous acts.

(We have lacked all respect for the scriptural
teachings;

We have sat on our books and left texts on the
ground.

We have also looked down upon those with deep
insight.)

Hereafter for the sake of our practice of Dharma

Let's gladly endure all the hardships we meet.

The meaning of this verse is clear and easily understood. However, we do need to know the implications of this verse and what type of practice it encourages and inspires us to follow. This verse refers to times when we face difficulties and obstacles in our spiritual practice, particularly ignorance. For example, falling asleep when we are trying to memorize a holy text, reciting our regular prayers, meditating or listening to the teachings. This is due to the influence of ignorance. Ignorance overpowers or hinders us in our spiritual actions. We need to understand that this is because of our negative or unworthy actions towards spiritual teachings in the past.

There are two types of Dharmas, or spiritual teachings. One is the scriptural texts and their oral transmission, the other is the internalised Dharma. Internalised Dharma can be the qualities of Dharma practitioners as well as forms of spiritual realisations. To overcome ignorance and mental dullness we need to develop our faith and respect towards both types of Dharmas. Respecting the verbal Dharma means respecting the scriptural texts, which are the perfect guide for people on the spiritual path. It is disrespectful to the texts when they are stepped on or if some dirty object, such as a dirty tissue or napkin, is placed on them. Any such actions undermine and put down the worthiness of a Dharma

text. Not only should we show respect towards texts that we believe are without fault, but even other texts, which are perhaps not useful to us personally but have benefited others. For example, Geshe Doga received a Christian Bible, and even though it is not the kind of text that he would personally use as a guide for his spiritual training, he respects this text because he believes that it benefits humanity and has the potential to help others become better people and eliminate their suffering.

We should also develop our respect towards others who are sincere Dharma practitioners, even if they don't have any immense spiritual realisations. Spiritual realisations are internalised Dharma qualities, so we should stop criticising or putting such people down, as this is disrespectful and is likely to be a cause to increase dullness and confusion in the mind. If you are someone with a great knowledge and skill of the Dharma compared to others, then instead of being arrogant and proud, you have to learn to show more compassion and love to those who don't have your qualities. And if you don't have these qualities, then you have to learn to respect others with more learning and skills. The benefit of applying such a practice of respecting the Dharma and the Dharma practitioner is to have more mental clarity and purity in this and future lifetimes.

This verse also teaches us what sort of attitude we should adopt towards others, for instance, what kind of attitude the teacher should have towards students, parents towards children, and vice versa. We should adopt an attitude of always respecting others. This brings the benefits of more harmony in our relationships. If there is no respect, there is no harmony. We should learn to respect others, rather than giving in to feelings of jealousy, pride or competitiveness. These negative feelings only bring unease and disharmony to our relationships as well as destroying our inner peace.

In the case of the student/teacher or the parent/child relationship, it is essential there's the right kind of attitude, where parents and teachers show true love and care for the development of their students and children. When this type attitude is shown, then children and students are more receptive to advice. In this way they can acquire an education and feel that this was due not only to their own efforts, but also to the efforts and kindness of parents and teachers. The students will always be grateful, and, since teachers do expect some gratitude and appreciation for what they give to students, this is important to them. Likewise, parents

find it difficult if there is no sign of appreciation from their children. When children don't show respect, many parents become discouraged and lose all motivation to support their children. It is important for children to show some respect for their parents, and equally important for parents to show true affection to the children.

This text gives a good guideline for our daily life, in terms of what sort of attitude and actions are best to adopt.

The last two lines:

Hereafter for the sake of our practice of Dharma
Let's gladly endure all the hardship we meet.

Having learnt the meaning of these lines, from now on we should resolve to show not even the slightest disrespect towards the Dharma and its practitioners. We should take on all hardship in our pursuit of Dharma.

Now, as usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Make sure that your body is relaxed and check your sitting posture. Try to bring the mind inward by stopping all thoughts. As we begin chanting, focus all your mental attention on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks
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