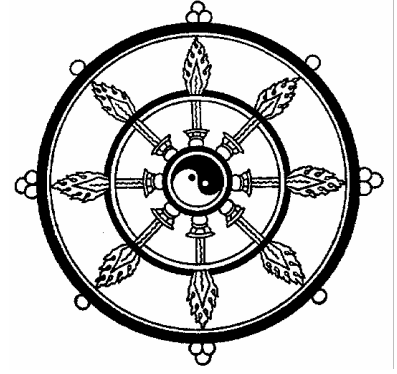


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨྌ སྤྱིང་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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As usual we will first do some breathing meditation together. Relax your body and choose a comfortable sitting posture. Turn your focus on the mind by stopping it from wandering after outside objects. The important thing is to fully calm the mind inward and be peaceful within, having no distracting thoughts and occupying no external objects. Having achieved this inner mental stability, we then resolve, for the next few minutes, to focus the mind just on our breath, without allowing any other objects to distract us. With this intention we can begin the breathing meditation, just being aware of breathing in and out.

In our daily life it is important to remember that happiness can't always be found through external means. However, it can always be found by controlling and calming our mind. There are tremendous benefits to be found on the basis of this understanding. We can find happiness within ourselves by meditating regularly.

The Wheel of Sharp Weapons is a famous mind training text. We are up to Verse 30:

When our mind wanders greatly and runs towards
delusion,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have neglected to meditate fully
On defects pervading this transient world;
Hereafter let's work to renounce this existence
(And see the impermanent nature of things).

Desire can easily develop due to our tendencies of indulging in delusions, achieving afflicted states of mind as a result of meeting an object that we can see, hear, etc. For instance we could easily develop the desire to possess a pleasant object, like beautiful clothes, someone else's wealth, or a particular type of food or drink. When we see this object we generate the thought of having that object. This is the way we generate desire. Desire is like a type of mental defilement or delusion. Likewise, some other objects can easily arouse anger and other types of mental delusion. Unless we overcome or reduce our self-indulgent time spent in mental delusions, then there is no way that we can find true peace and happiness.

There are many types of delusions that arise in our mind. Desire arises when we see an attractive or pleasant object. The thought of wanting to have that object is an indication that desire has arisen in our mind. In what way does this desire shape our lives and experiences? Having the desire makes us think about how to fulfil that desire. We then have to make an effort, invest our time,

work hard and endure difficulties; all this to fulfill a desire.

Nowadays some older people say that life is more challenging and difficult for younger people. Due to technological developments there is more news to hear and new things to see. This has the effect of generating more desire in our mind. As a result, there are more demands in our lives today and it seems that we have to work harder than ever before. So we have to think about what is important and whether there is an end to all the difficulties in leading such busy lives. In other words, is there any fulfillment or satisfaction that we have achieved at the end of our busy lives? Of course, if the end result is satisfaction, then it has all been worthwhile.

But unfortunately our lives are ruled by desire and all we see is frustration, disappointment and misery. There is great suffering if we aren't successful in achieving what we want. But even if we do get the object of our desire, there is still suffering. It doesn't end. We still want to work hard to get more things. As soon as we accomplish one thing, we have something newer, more appealing and more important to achieve in life. Furthermore, when we have our object, we are then afraid of losing it. This is what desire brings and how it influences our life.

We can talk about other delusions, like anger and ignorance, in the same way. For instance, we feel unease within ourselves when we are angry towards others. And when ignorance rules our life we feel like not wanting to do anything, just indulge ourselves in sleeping and doing nothing. When all these mental types of delusions rule our life, there is no time to do any spiritual practice. There is also no time for mental peace and happiness.

We may think that there is nothing complex about these issues, but they are something we all go through in life. It is important to review our life and to look for a solution to end the continuous suffering that pervades our whole life. It is clear that in order to live a happy life, we need more than just good external living conditions. We can also learn from people who materially have friends, wealth and reputation. Some of these people say that they aren't particularly religious minded and they complain that they can't understand why they feel empty inside when they have everything they need.

Some people feel that to find some inner peace and satisfaction they have to go to a quiet, remote place with no telephones, etc. But we need to think of our life situation. Many people get up early at 6am to go to work

and come home late, like 11 or 12 o'clock at night. Imagine if you spent your whole life like this. In the end you might have achieved great wealth as a result of your hard work, but you might be faced with the problem of not knowing how to rest and relax. You may get agitated when you are by yourself in a room. This is due to whole lifetimes of mental busyness, where the mind is always busy with distracting thoughts of the outside world. It is a sad situation when all our successes and achievements in life are not the source of our satisfaction and fulfillment and we cannot even content or please our own mind.

Can the mind ever be content? It is up to us to make it so. But if we let ourselves be overruled by our mind, then we will never be content. So it is important to learn how to make the mind content. This is achieved by calming our mind in the face of agitation and influence of outside objects. As the text says:

'When our mind wanders greatly and runs towards delusion,

This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.

'Till now we have neglected to meditate fully

On defects pervading this transient world.'

It is easy to be attracted and disturbed by external objects. This is because we lack an understanding of the transitory and impermanent nature of our existence; as well as a lack of understanding of the fault of our existence. Our lack of understanding of the impermanent nature of our existence and our friends and wealth, etc, is why we face continuous suffering. Because of this lack of understanding, we also blame ourselves when things change with our friends or with our money situation. It is natural that all things are subject to change. Likewise, our suffering is also caused because our life is subject to cyclic existence. There is always fault with the things we find in cyclic existence. When we need things they are not there, and when we don't need them they appear. This is a fault of the objects in cyclic existence or samsara.

There are two main causes of our never-ending problems: not realising impermanence, and not realising the fault of our existence. Now that we understand this, we should generate the motivation to gain the realisation of impermanence.

As usual we will now chant the Buddha's mantra. As before, choose a mediation posture where you can relax the body and calm the mind inward. As we begin the chanting we should focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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