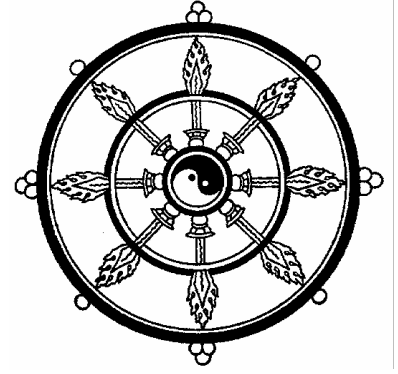


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

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1 April 1998

First we will do a breathing meditation for a few minutes. Make sure that you are seated comfortably and your body is fully relaxed. Relax your mind as well by trying to get rid of all thoughts and outer distractions. Just let the mind sit within.

Having brought the mind inward, start the breathing meditation by directing all mental attention on the breath. The flow of the incoming and outgoing breath should not be forced, it should be as natural as possible. Be fully aware of every breath that comes in and goes out. Make sure that the mind doesn't go to any other object. Just focus single-pointedly on the breath.

Always keep in mind that by meditating, or doing any spiritual practice, we are trying to find the right means and the wisdom to bring about more peace and happiness within our mind. The focus of our spiritual practice is totally different from that of our mundane life, where we focus outwardly to try and improve the outer conditions of our life. However, in a spiritual practice we have to be very clear in our minds that the purpose is to increase inner peace and happiness. We need to clearly understand that this inner peace and happiness comes from within our own mind. Through our meditation practice, we have to see clearly that the undisciplined mind is the source of all our emotional problems. Therefore, we apply meditation or spiritual practice to overcome our negative thought patterns, and try hard to cultivate the more positive states of mind, like loving kindness and compassion towards others.

As we develop more positive qualities within our mind, we can get rid of the negative states of mind. For instance, we can reduce the self-centred mind, which always thinks of our own needs first. In a broad sense, spiritual practice is working with our mind to try to change our life by transforming all our actions of body, speech and mind. Spiritual teachings are a guide to living life in the right way by showing us how to think, speak and act in the right way.

The key thing to remember in our spiritual practice is self-examination. Always observe your thoughts and your mental attitude, directing the focus of your mental attention on to yourself and on to your own life. The great Indian master Shantideva said that we have to know the reality or truth of our mind, so we can utilise our life more meaningfully and more creatively. Otherwise, if we are completely ignorant about our own mind and ourselves, we waste a lot of time. For instance, the many actions we create don't bring results of more

mental happiness or solve our problems. We have to be realistic about ourselves. If we think we are perfect in our thoughts and actions, we may be wrong! There may indeed be many faults with our mental attitude and in our communication with others, but we get upset and angry at people when they point out our faults to us. We have to think along these lines: that we don't want to have any faults in our thoughts and actions, and, just like everyone else, we want to be a good person and live a happy life with a sound body and a sound mind.

So we need to think about creating the causes for us to achieve what we want. The best way to improve ourselves is to turn the mind inward. Thoroughly examine whether your attitude towards others, towards friends, upsets or pleases them. Does your speech show respect and concern for others, is your appearance pleasant? If we are the first to find fault within ourselves, it saves us the humiliation of others pointing this out, and it gives us the opportunity to think about what we can do to reduce or overcome the fault.

We are talking about achieving more happiness in our life through our actions. At the end of the day, or just before going to bed, it is most effective, especially if you consider yourself to be a spiritual practitioner, to reflect on how you have spent the day, what sort of mental state you have had, how you have spoken to others, and what your outer gestures were. If, in your own judgement, after looking at yourself and your mind, you think you have done reasonably well in terms of your mental attitudes and your actions, then rejoice and congratulate yourself. But if you have had a negative mental state or have done something negative during the day, recognise this and feel regret. See this as your weakness and your fault, and as something to be overcome. As it says in the teachings – always try to be your own guide.

We are up to *Verse 31*:

When all our affairs, both religious and worldly,
Run into trouble and fall into ruin,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
'Til now we have felt cause and effect could be
slighted;

Hereafter let's practice with patience and strength.

Next week we will begin the teaching on the text. So we will stop here and, as usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Again, make sure that you have got the right sitting posture and make sure the mind is inward. Focus your mind on that mantra and at the same time, if you

like, you can evoke the Buddha and receive the inspiring energy or the blessing from the Buddha, which goes into your mind and body.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks
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Edited Version*

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