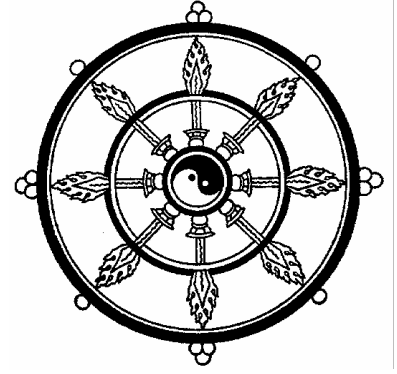


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

འདྲེན་ལྷན་པུས་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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First we will do some breathing meditation. Make yourself comfortable in a sitting posture and relax the body. We should make sure that the mind is also relaxed and at peace. We should try to get rid of all distracting thoughts, otherwise the mind won't be at rest, and we won't be truly at rest either.

If the mind is left unchecked, then it gives way for unending uncontrolled thoughts to arise. This has the effect of a thought arising that will upset us, and causing unnecessary problems in our lives. The real causes of the problems that we face in life, the kinds of problems that can put our health at risk or make our living conditions difficult, are due to some sort of worry or unhappiness in our minds. Most of the time our problems are not due to the apparent immediate causes around us.

We may have some physical pain or an unfavorable situation, but the causes are all created by us. We have just created this uncontrolled thought that has arisen in the mind. For example, in spontaneously thinking about the future, our thoughts are not controlled. When our thoughts are untamed, then we can generate all manner of thoughts. Our minds will wander, occupied with all sorts of objects. Uncontrolled thoughts bring problems and unhappiness to our lives. So we sit in meditation to try to remove all these outgoing thoughts, and let the mind just rest within itself. We can now start our breathing meditation and make sure that our minds don't go out towards outer objects or distractions. Instead, the mind is just focussed on the in-breath and the out-breath.

Whenever we practise meditation, we are trying to overcome all negative disturbing thoughts and states of mind within us. Meditation benefits us in that it does diminish our disturbing thoughts and negative states of mind. Our minds will become clearer, more pure and more stable. Usually the mind is not stable. We cannot think clearly because our minds are obscured and clouded by its negative states. Practising meditation will cultivate a more positive state of mind. This has immediate benefits for our lives.

To continue the commentary on the text, the *Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, quoting the second half of Verse 49:

I recognise clearly the bandit who plunders,
The liar who lures by pretending he is part of me
Oh what relief that I have conquered this doubt.

In these lines, the self-cherishing mind is compared to a thief. The common ground between the two is stealing.

The self-cherishing mind robs us of our inner treasure. Another common factor is the secret and sneaky way in which the robbery is done, as if by ambush. If someone physically steals all our money then we would be rendered penniless. However, the self-cherishing mind is slowly, quietly and gently stealing all our good inner qualities and treasures. These good qualities include showing compassion, love and generosity to others, as well as stopping desire and jealousy.

We may be able to generate some feeling of love towards others, and out of this love we can actually perform an action that benefits others, but suddenly we may lose interest. This is our weakness in performing positive beneficial deeds towards others. This is due to the self-cherishing mind, which can't even take a personal loss, even from a friend, because we feel that this loss is not fair to us. When we have a strong concern for our own self or our own ego, then we can find it difficult, and sometimes see no reason, to show compassion and tolerance to others.

Even if we are capable of practising all these virtues of generosity and moral ethics in order to stop harming others, the practice is not sustained for a long time. We need to see the self-cherishing mind as an obstacle to any progress or to benefiting others. We are so poor with respect to inner qualities because the self-cherishing mind steals them away. Losing our inner qualities is a far greater loss to us than losing any material possessions or wealth. If we could cultivate and enrich ourselves with inner qualities then their benefit is all ours and can never be taken from us. These qualities are of more benefit to us than any outer wealth.

Thoughts of benefiting others can free us from all unnecessary problems and suffering. We can see the difference between one who has a compassionate mind, always thinking of how they can benefit others, and someone who hasn't. These compassionate people don't get too disturbed or too upset if someone steals their material possessions. They actually wish that the thief gets the best use and benefit out of the stolen wealth. Generally people who steal are desperate to make money, so cultivate the compassionate person's way of thinking: that whatever they have taken can be of some benefit. If we think in this way from our hearts, then we don't feel so upset. Of course there are some people who have enough wealth and still steal out of greed.

People with a strong self-cherishing mind normally have a strong attachment to their wealth. Losing their

possessions can be a source of great distress to them, and they feel strong hatred towards the person who stole their goods, to the point that, out of their hatred, they would not only apprehend the thief, but retaliate physically.

But then there is this positive state of mind, with a good heart, that can be cultivated and has great potential to secure happiness and joy in our minds, regardless of what situation we are in.

So we will leave the teaching here and as usual we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. To chant this mantra, we sit in the meditation posture, relaxing both the mind and body, and focus on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Nancy Patton
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