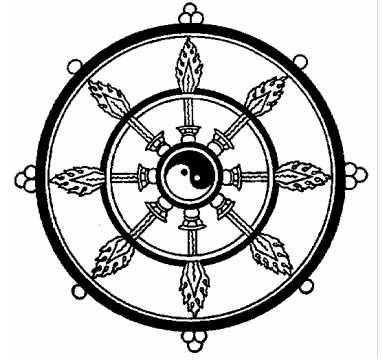


# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འདྲེན་གྱི་ལྷོ་མཚོ་མེ་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



29 September 1999

As usual, first we'll do some breathing meditation together. Just choose the most comfortable sitting posture for yourself and relax your body. If your mind is distracted by external objects, try to remove these distracting thoughts and bring the mind fully inwards. You should then focus the mind single-pointedly on the in-breath and out-breath.

For every being, finding happiness is precious. Inner or mental happiness is the most precious of all the types of happiness to which we aspire. Therefore, engaging in meditation practice is beneficial, because it is an effective way to bring about inner peace and happiness.

The causes of the peace and happiness we seek are not always external, but are related to the state of mind we generate within. Our happiness depends on our way of thinking. If we engage in meditation practice, we can find happiness by understanding and changing the mind.

Sometimes, we need to investigate our thoughts and actions and judge whether the results they bring are desirable or not. We perform all kinds of actions and, even though they may not yet have achieved any satisfaction for us, the intention behind everything that we do is to secure more happiness for ourselves. Generally, we do not intentionally act in a way that will bring us harm or trouble – rather we seek a beneficial result.

Therefore, we should investigate the results of our actions – for example, using harsh speech or frowning at other people. We carry out many actions like these that are negative and destructive, and that even look unpleasant to others. We need to understand that if we don't control the mind, we cannot prevent doing unpleasant actions. If we check, we can see that each of our verbal or bodily actions derives from the preceding thought that motivated that action. Whenever we generate a negative thought such as ill-will, it can make us say abusive words to other beings, or even be aggressive towards them.

If we do not want to cause ourselves harm or create the causes for suffering, we have to try to recognise harmful actions and refrain from them. When we investigate, we can see that the destructive actions we perform are a direct source of suffering, not only for others but also for oneself. In day-to-day life, it is good to remember this and try to make sure that one's actions are wise and skilful. If we try to maintain a positive state of mind and carry out all of our actions with this attitude, then the

actions we perform will have a soft, gentle, and pleasing quality to them in the eyes of others. If our intention is to benefit ourselves and bring more peace and happiness to our lives, then we need to train ourselves as much as possible to adopt the habit of doing positive actions.

Obviously, material conditions do not solve all of our problems. Apart from working and attending to our basic living requirements, we need to reduce the problems in the mind. We need to do the inner work of understanding the mind and knowing how to transform it – by eliminating those states of mind that bring problems, and sustaining those states of mind that bring us more peace and happiness.

As discussed before, we always want to do right actions, which will bring more meaning, peace, and happiness to our life. So, we have to look for a beneficial result from the actions we perform over a single day, in the sense that they will add to our physical and mental well-being. Finding more peace and happiness is an important cause of achieving what we want from life. It is important to understand this truth for yourself, to experience how strong the desire for happiness is within you. Likewise, you have a strong aversion to suffering.

You have to understand that this truth applies to all other beings – they also have the same strong wish for happiness and aversion to suffering. If our wish for happiness is completely self-centred, and we do not understand and respect the welfare of other beings, we will never achieve the happiness we seek. Apart from thinking about the benefit to ourselves, we can talk about the benefit to others – for example, we can consider the importance of world peace and harmony. The main thing is that such aspirations must come from the bottom of our heart – just as we have a strong wish to have happiness and not have suffering, we need to respect this same wish inside other beings.

The most important cause of our own peace and happiness and of the peace and happiness of other beings is cultivating a good heart – love and compassion – within us. If you do not respect other beings or if you cause them harm, eventually you will harm yourself. This is the meaning of karma, of karmic cause and effect – if you cause harm to other beings, it will also come to you.

Whether we believe in the causal nature of karma or not, if we observe the actions of different people, we can get some understanding of how people who are careless or dishonest with others may appear to have no problems

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and be happy in the short-term, but the end of their life may be another matter.

If you try to adopt an attitude and behaviour based on honesty and the principle of love and compassion for others, it will give your life more meaning. On the one hand, we have this human life with a human body and stomach. To survive, we need to find food and shelter for the body. We must work to satisfy these essential needs and conditions for sustaining our life. However, as said before, we also need to take care of the well-being of the mind, and know how to prevent problems in the mind.

We can solve the problems we experience in the mind through our spiritual practice, through understanding our ability to transform our own mind. If we do not know how to transform the mind, then we become helpless when we face a problem. Even having material possessions may make the problem appear worse to the mind. Whether they are related to material things or not, problems will always arise within the mind, and it is important to deal with them. If we do not, we will continue to suffer day after day, month after month, year after year.

Peace and happiness in the mind has to come from within, and meditation practice, or spiritual practice, is the means of transforming the mind into a more positive state. We have to understand how meditation is beneficial and relevant to our lives. Everyone – whether they are living alone or with others – values mental peace and happiness. On the other hand, if we hold on to negative states of mind, they can destroy our well-being.

If you share your life with a spouse or family, you can see how having a negative mind can be destructive. Look at the unending problems that can arise between a husband and wife. There are many cases in which, to secure a more peaceful and happy life together, both partners will work hard for many years, and finally manage to become financially secure, with a good position, and many possessions – everything they wanted. However, one of the partners, may harbour a negative state of mind – a grudge, resentment or some other problem – which could bring an end to that relationship.

In that situation, the problem clearly lies within themselves, as they cannot blame any external condition. In fact, given their external conditions, they have every reason to be peaceful and happy. Such cases clearly show that our problems and suffering are not necessarily due to external conditions. Rather, something within the mind continually gives rise to our suffering and problems.

In the example we discussed before, in the worst case, a husband and wife may lose all their affection for each other, but not lose their attachment to their wealth. This attachment to wealth, and the ensuing conflict caused by it, will become a further source of problems. So, if you do not have much wealth, divorce is easy!

We will end tonight's teaching here. As usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Could you once again sit in the meditation posture, relax the mind and

the body, and focus the mind on the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from the tapes by Rita Feldmann  
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Edited Version*

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