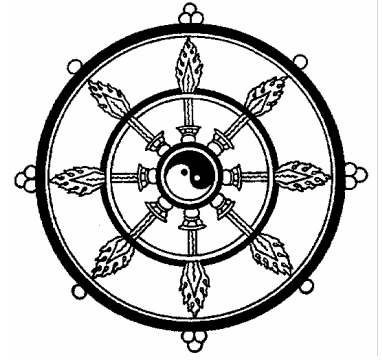


# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

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First of all we will do some breathing meditation. Choose the sitting posture that is most comfortable and relaxing.

The famous Tibetan master, Lama Tsong Khapa, said that meditation is a form of discipline or training for the mind. In meditation, the mind is placed on a specific meditation object. The actual practice is to maintain this mental focus clearly, for as long as possible.

The aim of meditation practice is to gain full control over the mind. Without having control over the mind, we cannot remove faulty states of mind and faulty actions, which results in unending confusion and dissatisfaction. Lama Tsong Khapa says that if we look at our current situation, we will see that the mind is not under our control. Furthermore, if we investigate, we can see that the states of mind responsible for controlling our thoughts, actions, and destiny are the delusions.

Whenever we engage in meditation practice, the aim of our practice is to gain control over the mind. Then we can utilise the mind's energies and power for our own benefit, adopting more positive ways of thinking that lead us to undertake more positive actions.

Remembering the above points, we begin our meditation practice. First, we try to remove all distracting thoughts from the mind, whether they are positive or negative, and draw the mind fully inward - this is important before one begins the actual meditation. After this, we direct the mind onto the incoming and outgoing breath so that it is fully absorbed by this process. Whenever we practice meditation, we should spend some time beforehand thinking about why we are practising meditation, and what we are trying to achieve with our practice.

We will continue with the teaching on *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. Verse 74 reads:

Ignoring effects that the teachings can bring us,  
We travel on business for profit and gain.  
Leaving behind all our gurus' wise lectures,  
We tour different places in search of some fun.

We covered this in the last teaching. The next verse is:

We hoard what we have, never willing to use it,  
And leech all our food and our clothing from friends.  
We leave aside wealth from our father's inheritance,  
Taking from others as much as we can.  
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.

Tear out the heart of the self-centred butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

The main advice here is to be honest in one's living and livelihood. It doesn't matter whether you are sangha or ordained persons or lay persons, the verse is saying that you have to be honest with other people. The particular reference here is not to take advantage of other people's belongings and resources.

We are talking here about communities, such as monasteries or organisations. If you are a part of such a community, the reminder here is that you do not use the wealth or funds of these communities or organisations for your own benefit or pleasure. It is important to practise the law of karmic cause and effect - if you perform the right actions, then the result is beneficial to yourself and others. If, on the other hand, you perform wrong actions - like stealing monastic funds - the consequences are severe (i.e. receiving harm and suffering in the future).

A practical example is that of someone in a position of authority in a monastery of say 20-100 people, who uses the community's funds. Instead of distributing the funds to the members, if you use them for your own benefit, even from a worldly point of view it is an illegitimate, immoral, and negative action - let alone creating problems from a spiritual point of view

The positive aspect of this is that if you have responsibilities to other people - whether they are in an organisation or a community - it is important that you do not use your position or influence to satisfy your own needs. Rather, you have to see your position as being a good opportunity to benefit and serve other beings.

Obviously, one of the causes for a community not being successful is the presence of corruption and dishonesty. The reason people steal others' belongings even when they have enough wealth, and take every opportunity to cheat others and steal from them is the strong self-cherishing mind. The self-cherishing mind wants you to be the richest - no matter how much wealth you possess you are not satisfied, and you shy away from using the wealth you already possess. Instead, you want to increase your wealth. With the self-cherishing mind, you undertake actions such as stealing from others, robbing them openly or secretly. Your mind is not concerned about the needs and feelings of others.

We see many cases of theft occurring in wealthy,

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developed countries. You may hear in the news, for example, about how a large chain of department stores has lost millions of dollars through theft or dishonesty. Interestingly, if you look at who steals such things, it is mainly wealthy people. You can see how sick someone's mind can be - there is no reason for a wealthy person to steal. Their stealing just shows their strong attachment to wealth, and their strong self-centredness. On the other hand, if someone who has had real problems in finding the basic necessities of food and clothing steals, even though his or her actions are not right, we can understand them because life is so precious, and he or she is just trying to stay alive. Their actions are just a desperate grab for survival. Even from a legal point of view, such actions are considered less of a crime.

As the verse suggests, we should try to recognise the negative influence and effects of this self-cherishing mind.

Some thieves seem to have compassionate minds. Geshe Doga said that he heard a story of a Tibetan migrant in America, who was in an area notorious for robberies. The Tibetan knew about this, and only carried small amounts of money, like ten dollars. When a thief eventually confronted him, he told him that he only had ten dollars. The thief told him to keep the money, it wasn't worth his while. Thus, he showed some sympathy to the Tibetan who appeared to be so poor.

We will leave the teaching here. As usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Could people once again sit in the meditation posture, relax the body as much as possible, and get rid of outwardly directed thoughts. When we begin the meditation, focus the mind on the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from the tapes by Rita Feldmann  
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