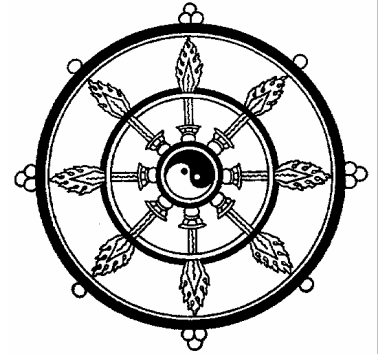


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འཇིགས་མེད་ཀྱི་མཚན་མོའི་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



6 December 2000

First, we will do a few minutes breathing meditation together, so make yourself comfortable.

After choosing a relaxed and comfortable posture, check your frame of mind. Before going ahead with the meditation practice, recall the advice of the great Indian master Shantideva, who said that before undertaking any physical or verbal action, you should first investigate the thought presiding over that action, and determine whether you have right frame of mind to proceed. If strong anger, obsessive desire, or any such afflictive emotion overpowers your mind, you should try to overcome that before undertaking the outer action. If you are about to say or do something, it is better not to proceed until you have transformed your frame of mind.

By transforming our state of mind from negative to positive before engaging in everyday actions and tasks, we will find that any such actions will become beneficial and productive, and cause others to regard us as being honest, thoughtful and worthy of their trust.

The activity does not necessarily have to be religious or spiritual; it can be worldly or mundane. If it is carried out under the influence of a positive mind, then others will regard that action as positive, admirable, reasonable, and fair.

There are other physical factors we normally regard as being important in the way we appear to others, such as our facial expression and our communication and speaking skills. Of course, these are also important, but not as important as our actions and their consequences. If our deeds reflect a selfish state of mind, then we will appear to others in a negative way.

If we look at our past actions that have led to bad results – actions that we recognise as being unfair, crooked, or selfish – we can see that the causes of these actions can be traced to our own mind. Therefore, if we try to ensure that we always undertake any action with a positive frame of mind, we can be guaranteed that we will be regarded as an honest and good person, and that whatever we do will be of benefit to others and to oneself.

When we examine the mind and recognise a negative attitude, we should identify this as the source of all our problems. From beginningless time until now, this negative state of mind has misled and confused us when we have tried to choose the right direction in our life. When we understand this, we will see the urgent need to alter this negative state of mind that has continuously

overpowered us.

Regular meditation practice will enable us to get rid of our negative states of mind. Before beginning one's meditation practice, one should generate the motivation that, while engaged in the practice, one will not fall under the influence of these negative states of mind, even for a moment. Then, when we begin the meditation, such as this breathing meditation, we should first try to let go of all outgoing thoughts or external distractions, and let the mind fully rest within us.

After we have brought the mind inward, instead of letting it just drift away again with the force of distracting thoughts, we should focus it on the meditation object which, here, is the incoming and outgoing breath. Try to place your focus on the incoming and outgoing breath and, as much as possible, maintain this single-pointed focus on the in-breath and out-breath by preventing outer distractions from arising within the mind. [A few minutes pause for meditation.]

We'll now do the rest of the verse 104 of the thought-transformation text, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. The lines say:

Thus by joint meditation on egolessness
And on non-dual wisdom of voidness and bliss,
How can anyone not gain the causes to win
A Buddha's physical body and its fruit, Buddhahood?

These lines imply that when the combination of non-dual wisdom of voidness (which is the ultimate view of the nature of things) and bliss (which is the method aspect of the path) is achieved, there is no reason for anyone not to achieve the full state of Buddhahood – the truth body and physical body of a Buddha. In other words, when all the causes are created, and the conditions are met, then the result is inevitable, even if you did not want to attain that result!

The main topic we have covered so far in this text, has been how to achieve bodhicitta or the altruistic mind of enlightenment. This mind naturally arises after we have cultivated realisations arising from practising the meditation technique of exchanging the self with others. We make progress in this meditation by recognising that the self-cherishing mind is the root cause of all the downfalls we have ever experienced; whereas, the mind that cherishes other beings is the root cause of all the excellent qualities and benefits we have ever gained.

With the cultivation of this bodhicitta mind or altruistic mind of enlightenment within us, we become determined

to do only actions that benefit other beings.

In the lines just quoted, the text is saying that, as well as the bodhicitta mind or the motivation to benefit all other beings – which is referred to as the *method* aspect of the path to complete enlightenment – there is another quality we need to cultivate. Along with cultivating method – known as the ‘conventional’ bodhicitta mind – we also need to cultivate the ultimate *wisdom* of voidness – which is known as the ‘ultimate’ bodhicitta mind.

These two together are indispensable for achieving complete enlightenment – the method of the ‘conventional’ bodhicitta and the wisdom of ‘ultimate’ bodhicitta are likened to the two wings that enable a bird to fly to its destination.

Method mainly refers to the practice of generating love and compassion towards other beings, generating the bodhicitta mind, and undertaking actions that directly benefit other beings. Wisdom in the context of these lines is the ultimate view of emptiness: that everything is empty of inherent or independent existence.

To enjoy the result of the path (Buddhahood), we must apply both. If we apply one but not the other, we won’t achieve the result. When we apply both method and wisdom, we are creating all the necessary causes to achieve enlightenment.

Because we have accumulated the causes to achieve the result, the teachings sometimes refer to method and wisdom as the two types of accumulations (of all the causes to achieve enlightenment).

The method side of the practice is the accumulation of merit. Whenever we engage in the method side of our practice – for example when we cultivate love and compassion towards other beings – we are accumulating merit. In spiritual terms, we are actually ‘boosting our good fortune’. In other words we are accumulating the causes for all our wishes to come true – anyone who possess enough merit will achieve all his or her wishes. We must try to understand that we accumulate a vast amount of merit whenever we show love and compassion to other beings.

Method and the wisdom are not only important for the attainment of our spiritual goals. Even to achieve worldly or mundane goals, we have to be fully aware of the causes we need to create to achieve a goal. Whenever we utilise our wisdom or intelligent mind, we are able to see the many different options open to us, enabling us to identify the things we have to do in order to attain our goal. Wisdom is essential for us to be able to discern which causes will lead to our goal.

However, simply knowing about what we need to do is not enough. Next, we have to actualise all those steps using the right method to attain the goal. We have to put our wisdom into action.

Everything is a result of the law of cause and effect, so achieving our desires is simply a matter of creating the necessary causes. If the necessary cause is not created, then no matter how much we know about the right way

to create a cause, and no matter how much we worry about achieving it, the result won’t happen.

So, first we need to become familiar with all the necessary causes we need to create to attain our goal. Then, if all these causes are created, the result will automatically arise. If the result does not arise, this indicates that the causes have not been fully created.

We have just been talking about how to achieve complete enlightenment. But what is ‘complete enlightenment’? It is a state we achieve where our physical body becomes perfect, the body of a fully enlightened being, the *form body* of a Buddha. Further, all the qualities of our mind become perfect, and the mind becomes fully awakened – we call this the state the *truth body* of a Buddha. In terms of cause and effect, the merit we accumulate through the work we do on the method side of the path is the main cause to achieve the perfect body of a Buddha. When we generate love and compassion and so on, we create the substantial causes of achieving the form body of a Buddha.

In summary, there are two bodies which are the fruit of the path – the form body of a Buddha, and the truth body of a Buddha. The causes for the two ultimate fruits can also be classified into two – method and wisdom which are the actual path. To make progress in the path of method and the wisdom, we have to know about the two truths which are its basis – the conventional truth and the ultimate truth. So first we need to understand the two truths in order to cultivate or to enter into the path of method and the wisdom.

We will leave tonight’s teaching here. As usual, we will chant the Buddha’s mantra. Again, could we sit in the meditation posture, with a relaxed mind and body, and make an effort to overcome all distracting thoughts, so that the mind is again fully quietened within us. Then, when we begin the chanting, try to focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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