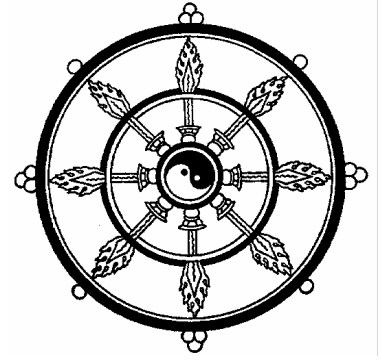


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

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25 July 2001

First, we will do a little bit of meditation. As usual, please sit in a correct and comfortable posture.

What we have to do when we sit in the appropriate posture and try to meditate is to lessen unsuitable or distracted thoughts. The distracted mind is always going outside, being distracted by outside objects. We have to diminish that kind of thinking and bring the mind home, focusing it one hundred percent within, and letting it abide calmly there.

It is important to have a relaxed body. If you don't have a relaxed body then it would be difficult for you to generate the appropriate state of mind. Do, in a relaxed manner, bring the mind home from outer distractions, focusing it one hundred percent within in a relaxed manner, and staying focused single-pointedly in this way. (*Pause for meditation.*)

Today, we will finish the text (*The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*).

So just as objects of voidness are non-self existent,
The voidness of objects itself is the same.
The shunning of vice and the practice of virtue
Are likewise devoid of all mental constructions
That they are independent, self-contained acts.

With regards to those first two lines, "just as objects of voidness are non-self existent, the voidness of objects itself is the same", as we said before, impermanent phenomena are empty of independent or inherent existence, and are generated in dependence upon their causes and conditions.

This absence of independent or inherent existence is what is called "emptiness" or "voidness". Voidness itself is also empty of self-existence, of independent, inherent existence. Thus, the absence of true existence of voidness itself is also a voidness, the final mode of abiding of emptiness itself.

Then the text says: "The shunning of vice and the practice of virtue are likewise devoid of all mental constructions". The wisdom realising emptiness directly is free from all mental elaborations and mental constructions - as we had said the other day. Even though all kinds of conventional appearances appear to the normal mind, to the non-dual mind realising emptiness, all conventional appearance appears completely devoid of mental constructions. After the meditator first realises emptiness conceptually, he or she must focus single-pointedly with clear concentration free from mental elaborations of true existence on that realisation of emptiness again and again, familiarising him- or herself with that realisation, without the mind wandering astray. Then one will become what is called a wondrous being, an Arya being, a superior being who has realised emptiness directly.

That person who has realised emptiness is referred to as a superior being because that person has become superior to his or her delusions. An ordinary being's mind is under the

control of the delusions. Within the state of an ordinary being, the delusions are superior. But when a person realises emptiness directly, the delusions become inferior, and the person becomes a superior to his or her delusions, to his or her self-grasping.

By practising the two bodhichittas of ultimate and the conventional truth this way, and by completing without interference the collections of insight and merit as well, may all of us quickly attain full enlightenment, and be granted what we and all others have wished.

As explained in the earlier part of the text, one practises exchanging self and others by realising the faults of self-cherishing and the benefits of cherishing others - by understanding that all the problems that one experiences are the result of self-cherishing and that the door to all qualities is cherishing others. So, one practises exchanging self and others, and in that way generates and meditates on conventional bodhicitta.

Having generated conventional bodhicitta, with the help of various signs, reasons and analysis, the Bodhisattva extensively investigates the ultimate truth of phenomena, trying to understand ultimate truth or emptiness. In this way, he or she meditates on and develops ultimate bodhicitta. Having generated conventional and ultimate bodhicitta, the Bodhisattva then meditates on the union of conventional and ultimate bodhicitta, attempting to complete the two collections of wisdom (or insight) and merit. When these two collections of insight and merit have been completed, the Bodhisattva attains complete Buddhahood or full enlightenment and then is able to completely fulfil the wishes of other sentient beings.

So, we have the base, the path and the result. The "base" is the two truths - ultimate and conventional truth. The "path" has two aspects - method and wisdom. As the result, we have the wisdom truth body of the Buddha, and the form body of the Buddha. So, on the basis of the two truths, one practises method and wisdom, the union of method and wisdom. Then, through practising the union of method and wisdom on the basis of the two truths, one will attain the wisdom truth body and the form body of a Buddha. The practice of method or the accumulation of merit is the cause of the form body of the Buddha, and the practice of wisdom is the cause of the wisdom truth body of the Buddha.

These two aspects of enlightenment - the wisdom truth body and the form body of the Buddha - are also sometimes referred to the fulfilment of one's own purpose and the fulfilment of the purpose of others. The wisdom truth body refers to the enlightened mind of the Buddha and the enlightened sphere of that mind is referred to as the fulfilment of one's own purpose, because they are attained when one attains non-abiding nirvana. They are one's own nirvana - one has fulfilled one's own purpose.

But, in order to fulfil the purpose of others, the Buddha needs to have various form bodies. These form bodies are manifested and generated for the purpose of other sentient beings, in order to be able to teach and help them. Therefore, the form body of the Buddha is referred to as the body for the purpose of others, and the wisdom truth body is referred to as the body for one's own purpose.

So then we will look at who wrote this text, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*? It was composed by the great yogi, Dharmarakshita, while he was doing retreat in the jungle where there were many fierce animals.

I shall read here from the text ... from among his many disciples, Dharmarakshita transmitted these teachings to Atisha and Atisha practised them wherever he travelled in order to tame the wildest beings. So Atisha received these teachings from his teacher, Dharmarakshita, and Atisha regarded Dharmarakshita as his main teacher, out of the many gurus he had. After having received these teachings from Dharmarakshita, he put them into practice. It is said here that, wherever he went and whatever he did, in dependence upon these teachings, he developed true insight into the two bodhicittas, and then also taught these teachings to others.

The text says:

I went through much hardship abandoning royalty,
But, by collecting much virtuous merit,
I met my true guru, Dharmarakshita,
By showing me these supreme nectar-like teachings,
He has granted me sovereignty over my mind;

This line refers to what we were saying before – through putting these teachings into practice, Atisha could overcome the two enemies of self-cherishing and self-grasping within his own mind. He could become superior to his own delusions and gain control over his own mind through putting these teachings into practice, and having attained all the forceful antidotes after memorising fully the verses that he was taught. Atisha memorised the text.

“Although I do not favour a partisan viewpoint -” ... this means that Atisha did always try to be impartial about the various teachings and the various tenets.

“Whenever I study the various teachings” ... this means the Hinayana teachings and the Mahayana teachings, and within the Mahayana, the Sutrayana and Tantrayana teachings.

I always make efforts to broaden my wisdom
To see boundless wonders in every tradition
Yet I have to admit that these teachings especially
Have been of great help in this age of decay.

The teachings referred to here are the teachings of thought transformation which, out of the various teachings available, Atisha found to be especially beneficial for his mind.

This completes the teaching of *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. Next time, we will have a new text.

In order for sicknesses, obstacles, delusions, obscurations, and negative karma to be purified and removed, we can all recite the Tara praises.

(21 Tara Praises recited here in English.)

Then, sitting in the appropriate and comfortable posture as explained at the beginning, please bring your mind home, not letting it be distracted outside, and focusing it within. Then, while reciting the main mantra of Shakyamuni

Buddha, concentrate single-pointedly on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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