

THE WHEEL OF SHARP WEAPONS



WITH COMMENTARY BY
GESHE NGAWANG DHARGYE

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A Mahayana Training of the Mind

THE
WHEEL
OF
SHARP WEAPONS

In Tibetan “Theg-pa-chen-pohi-blo-sbyong
mtson-cha-hkhor-lo”

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Wheel of Sharp Weapons, a basic text for the Mahayana Training of the mind, was composed by the great Yogi Dharmaraksita. It was brought to Tibet by the great Indian Pandit Atisa (982-1054) and was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by Atisa and his main disciple Upasaka hBrom-ston-pa.

The present English translation from the Tibetan text has been prepared by the Translation Bureau of the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives and published as a separate booklet in 1973.

In this volume, we have been able to add the commentary to *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons* given by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey at the LTWA's Buddhist philosophy course.

We hope that the publication of this work will benefit many.

Gyatso Tsering
Director
July, 1981.

A Mahayana Training of the Mind

The Wheel of Sharp Weapons

The name of this work is 'The Wheel of Sharp Weapons
Effectively Striking the Heart of the Foe'.
I pay heartfelt homage to you, Yamantaka;
Your wrath is opposed to the Great Lord of Death.¹

1

In jungles of poisonous plants strut the peacocks,
Though medicine gardens of beauty lie near.
The masses of peacocks do not find gardens pleasant,
But thrive on the essence of poisonous plants.

2

In similar fashion,² the brave Bodhisattvas
Remain in the jungle of worldly concern.
No matter how joyful this world's pleasure gardens,
These Brave Ones are never attracted to pleasures,
But thrive in the jungle of suffering and pain.

3

We spend our whole life in the search for enjoyment,
Yet tremble with fear at the mere thought of pain;
Thus since we are cowards, we are miserable still.
But the brave Bodhisattvas accept suffering gladly
And gain from their courage a true lasting joy.

4

Now³ desire is the jungle of poisonous plants here.⁴
Only Brave Ones, like peacocks, can thrive on such fare.
If cowardly beings, like crows, were to try it,
Because they are greedy they might lose their lives.⁵

5

How can someone who cherishes self more than others
 Take lust and such dangerous poisons for food?
 If he tried like a crow to use other delusions,⁶
 He would probably forfeit his chance for release.

6

And thus Bodhisattvas are likened to peacocks:
 They live on delusions—those poisonous plants.
 Transforming them into the essence of practice,
 They thrive in the jungle of everyday life.
 Whatever is presented they always accept,
 While destroying the poison of clinging desire.

7

Uncontrollable wandering through rounds of existence
 Is caused by our grasping at egos as real.
 This ignorant attitude heralds the demon
 Of selfish concern for our welfare alone:
 We seek some security for our own egos;
 We want only pleasure and shun any pain.
 But now we must banish all selfish compulsion
 And gladly take hardship for all others' sake.

8

All of our sufferings derive from our habits
 Of selfish delusions we heed and act out.
 As all of us share in this tragic misfortune,
 Which stems from our narrow and self-centred ways,
 We must take all our sufferings and the miseries of others
 And smother our wishes of selfish concern.

9

Should the impulse arise now to seek our own pleasure,
 We must turn it aside to please others instead;
 For even if loved ones should rise up against us,
 We must blame our self-interest and feel it's our due.

10

When our bodies are aching and racked with great torment
Of dreadful diseases we cannot endure,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have injured the bodies of others;
Hereafter let's take on what sickness is theirs.

11

Depressed and forlorn, when we feel mental anguish,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have deeply disturbed minds of others;
Hereafter let's take on this suffering ourselves.

12

When hunger or violent thirst overwhelms us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have kept what we had without sharing;
We have plundered and stolen and lured people on.
Hereafter let's take from them hunger and thirst.

13

When we lack any freedom, but must obey others,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have looked down upon those who were lowly
And used them as servants for our own selfish needs;
Hereafter let's offer our service to others
With humble devotion of body and life.

14

When we hear only language that is foul and abusive,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have said many things without thinking;
We have slandered and caused many friendships to end.
Hereafter let's censure all thoughtless remarks.

15

When we are born in oppressive and wretched conditions,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have always had a negative outlook—
We have criticised others, seeing only their flaws.
Hereafter let's cultivate positive feelings
And view our surroundings as stainless and pure.

16

When we are parted from friends and from those who can help us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have taken the friends and good servants
Of others away, wanting them for ourselves;
Hereafter let's never cause close friends to part.

17

When supreme holy Gurus find us displeasing,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have turned from the Gurus and teachings,
Preferring the counsel of misleading friends;
Hereafter let's end our dependent relations
With those who would turn us away from the path.

18

When unjustly we are blamed for the misdeeds of others,
And are falsely accused of flaws that we lack,
And are always the object of verbal abuse,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have despised and belittled our Gurus;
Hereafter let's never accuse others falsely,
But give them full credit for virtues they have.

19

When the things we require for daily consumption
And use, fall apart or are wasted or spoilt,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have been careless with others' possessions;
Hereafter let's give them whatever they need.

20

When our minds are unclear and our hearts are unhappy,
We are bored doing virtue but excited by vice,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have led others to acts of non-virtue;
Hereafter let's never provide the conditions
That rouse them to follow their negative traits.

21

When our minds are disturbed and we feel great frustration
That things never happen the way that we wish,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have caused interfering disturbance
When others were focused on virtuous acts;-
Hereafter let's stop causing such interruption.

22

When nothing we do ever pleases our Gurus,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now with our Gurus we have feigned pious manners,
But out of their presence have reverted to sin.
Hereafter let's try to be less hypocritical
And take all the teachings sincerely to heart.

23

When others find fault with whatever we are doing
And people seem eager to blame only us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have been shameless, not caring about others,
We have thought that our deeds did not matter at all,
Hereafter let's stop our offensive behaviour.

24

When our servants and friends are annoyed by our habits,
And after a while cannot stay in our homes,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have imposed our bad habits on others;
Hereafter let's change and show only kind ways.

25

When all who are close turn against us as enemies,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have held grudges inside us with anger
With thoughts of sly methods to cause others pain;
Hereafter let's try to have less affection,
Nor pretend to be kind while we harbour base aims.

26

When we suffer from sickness and such interference,
Especially when gout has swollen our legs,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now without shame and with no self-control
We have stolen or misused what others have given;
Hereafter let's never take anything offered
To the Three Jewels of Refuge⁷ as if it were ours.

27

When strokes and diseases strike without warning,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have broken our vowed words of honour;⁸
Hereafter let's shun such non-virtuous deeds.

28

When our mind becomes clouded whenever we study,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have thought that the study of Dharma
Lacked prime importance and could be ignored;
Hereafter let's build up the habits of wisdom
To hear and to think about what Buddha taught.

29

When sleep overwhelms us while practising virtue,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have gathered the causes for obstacles
Hindering our practice of virtuous acts.
(We have lacked all respect for the scriptural teachings;
We have sat on our books and left texts on the ground.
We have also looked down upon those with deep insight.)
Hereafter for the sake of our practice of Dharma
Let's gladly endure all the hardships we meet.

30

When our mind wanders greatly and runs towards delusion,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have neglected to meditate fully
On defects pervading this transient world;
Hereafter let's work to renounce this existence
(And see the impermanent nature of things).

31

When all our affairs, both religious and worldly,
 Run into trouble and fall into ruin,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have felt cause and effect⁹ could be slighted;
 Hereafter let's practise with patience and strength.

32

When rites we perform never seem to be fruitful,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have relied on the gods of this world
 Or on unskilful actions to bring us relief;
 Hereafter let's turn in another direction
 And leave our non-virtuous actions behind.

33

When none of the wishes we make reach fulfilment,
 Although we have made prayers to the Three Precious Gems,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have had an imperfect commitment
 To Buddha whose teachings deserve complete trust;
 Hereafter let's place our exclusive reliance
 On Buddha, his teachings and those in his fold.

34

When prejudice, polio or strokes have us crippled
 And external forces or harm rise against us,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have collected vast stores of non-virtue
 By breaking our vows and offending protectors
 In our practice from Guru-devotion to tantra;¹⁰
 Hereafter let's banish all prejudiced views.

35

When we lack all control over where we must travel
 And always must wander like waifs with no home,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circles upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have disturbed holy Gurus and others
 And forced them to move from their homes or their seats;
 Hereafter let's never cause others disturbance
 By evicting them cruelly from where they reside.

36

When the crops in our fields are continually plagued
 By drought, floods and hailstones, insects and frost,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have failed to honour our pledges;
 Hereafter let's keep all our moral vows pure.

37

When we are poor, yet are filled with much greed and desire,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have been misers, reluctant to share.
 The offerings we have made to the Three Jewels were meagre;
 Hereafter let's give with a generous heart.

38

When our bodies are ugly and others torment us
 By mocking our flaws, never showing respect,
 This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
 Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
 Till now we have made images¹¹ lacking in beauty,
 By venting our anger we have made ugly scenes;
 Hereafter let's print books and make pleasing statues,
 And not be short-tempered, but be of good cheer.

39

When attachment and anger disturb and upset us
No matter how much we may try to suppress them,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have held on to the improper outlook:
Stubbornly cherishing only ourselves;
Hereafter let's uproot self-interest completely.

40

When success in our practices always eludes us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now, deep within, we have clung to our ego,
Fully immersed in self-cherishing ways;
Hereafter let's dedicate all of the virtuous
Actions we do, so that others may thrive.

41

When our mind is untamed though we act with great virtue,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have engaged in those worldly ambitions
That aim at success for ourselves in this life;
Hereafter let's work with pure one-pointed effort
To nourish the wish to gain freedom's far shore.

42

When after we do any virtuous action
We feel deep regret or we doubt its effect,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have been fickle and, stirred by base motives,
Have courted only those who had power or wealth;
Hereafter let's act with complete self-awareness,
Exerting great care in the way we make friends.

43

When those with ambition repay trusting friendship
By luring us on with their devious schemes,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now from ambition we have acted with arrogance,
Hereafter let's dampen our self-centred pride.

44

When the force of attraction or that of repulsion
Colours whatever we hear or we say,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have ignored what has caused all our troubles:
The mass of delusion that dwells in our heart;
Hereafter let's try to bandon all hindrances—
Note their arisal, examine them well.

45

When no matter how well-meant our actions towards others,
They always elicit a hostile response,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have repaid loving-kindness with malice;
Hereafter let's always accept others' favours
Both graciously and with most humble respect.

46

In short then, whenever unfortunate sufferings
We haven't desired crash upon us like thunder,
This is the same as the smith who had taken
His life with a sword he had fashioned himself.
Our suffering is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.¹²
Hereafter let's always have care and awareness
Never to act in non-virtuous ways.

47

All of the sufferings that we have endured
In the lives we have led in the three lower states,¹³
As well as our pains of the present and future,
Are the same as the case of the forger of arrows
Who later was killed by an arrow he had made.
Our suffering is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Hereafter let's always have care and awareness
Never to act in non-virtuous ways.

48

When the troubles and worries of family life grieve us,
This is the same as the case of a child
Who was cared for with love later killing his parents.
Our suffering is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Hereafter it is fitting in all of our lifetimes
For us to live purely as monks or as nuns.

49

As it's true what I have said about self-centred interest,
I recognise clearly my enemy now.
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!

50

And so Yamantaka spin round with great power
The wheel of sharp weapons of good actions now.
Three times turn it round,¹⁴ in your wrathful-like aspect—
Your legs set apart for the two grades of truth,
With your eyes blazing open for wisdom and means.

51

Baring your fangs of the four great opponents,¹⁵
 Devour the foe—our cruel selfish concern!
 With your powerful mantra¹⁶ of cherishing others,
 Demolish this enemy lurking within!

52

Frantically running through life's tangled jungle,
 We are chased by sharp weapons of wrongs we have done
 Returning upon us; we are out of control.
 This sly, deadly villain—the selfishness in us,
 Deceiving ourselves and all others as well—
 Capture him, capture him, fierce Yamantaka,
 Summon this enemy, bring him forth now!

53

Batter him, batter him, rip out the heart
 Of our grasping for ego, our love for ourselves!
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern!
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release!

54

Hum! Hum! Show all your powers, O mighty protector.
 Dza! Dza! Tie up this enemy; do not let him loose.
 P'a! P'a!¹⁷ Set us free by your might, O great Lord over Death.
 Cut! Cut! Break the knot of self-interest that binds us inside.

55

Appear Yamantaka, O wrathful protector;
 I have further entreaties to make of you still.
 This sack of five poisons,¹⁸ mistakes and delusions,
 Drags us down in the quicksand of life's daily toil—
 Cut it off, cut it off, rip it to shreds!

56

We are drawn to the sufferings of miserable rebirths,
 Yet mindless of pain, we go after its cause.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

57

We have high expectations of speedy attainments,
 Yet do not wish to work at the practice involved.
 We have many fine projects we plan to accomplish,
 Yet none of them ever are done in the end.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

58

Our wish to be happy is strong at all times,
 Yet we do not gather merit to yield this result.
 We have little endurance for hardship and suffering,
 Yet ruthlessly push for the things we desire.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

59

With comparative ease, we develop new friendships,
 Yet since we are callous, not one of them lasts.
 We are filled with desire for food and fine clothing,
 Yet failing to earn them, we steal and we scheme.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

60

We are experts as flattering others for favours,
 Yet always complaining, we are sad and depressed.
 The money we have gathered we cannot bear to part with;
 Like misers we hoard it and feel we are poor.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

61

We have done very little to benefit someone,
 Yet always remind him how much we have done.
 We have never accomplished a thing in our lifetime,
 Yet boasting and bragging, we are filled with conceit.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

62

We have many great masters and teachers to guide us,
 Yet shirking our duty, ignore what they teach.
 We have many disciples, yet do not ever help them;
 We cannot be bothered to give them advice.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

63

We promise to do many glorious deeds,
 Yet in practice we give others minimal help.
 Our spiritual fame has been spread far and wide,
 Yet inwardly all of our thoughts are repulsive
 Not only to gods, but to demons and ghosts.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

64

We have read very little, heard only few teachings,
 Yet talk with authority expertly on Voidness.
 Our knowledge of scriptures is pitifully lacking,
 Yet glibly we make up and say what we like.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

65

We have many attendants and people around us,
 Yet no one obeys us or heeds what we say.
 We feel we have friends in positions of power,
 Yet should we need help, we are left on our own.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

66

We have gained lofty status and ranks of prestige.
 Yet our knowledge is poorer than that of a ghost.
 We are considered great Gurus, yet even the demons
 Do not harbour such hatred or clinging desire
 Or as closed-minded an outlook as we seem to have.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

67

We talk about theories and the most advanced teachings,
 Yet our everyday conduct is worse than a dog's.
 We are learned, intelligent, versed in great knowledge,
 Yet cast to the wind wisdom's ethical base.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

68

We have selfish desires and horrible anger,
 Which fester inside us, we would never admit;
 Yet without provocation we criticise others
 And self-righteously charge them with faults we possess.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

69

We wear robes of saffron, yet seek our protection
 And refuge in spirits and gods of this world.
 We have promised to keep solemn vows of strict morals,
 Yet our actions accord with the demons, foul ways.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

70

Our pleasure and happiness come from the Buddhas,
 The Gurus, the teachings, and those who live by them,
 Yet still we make offerings to ghosts and the spirits.
 All of our guidance derives from the teachings,
 And yet we deceive those who give this advice.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

71

We seek to have homes in monastic seclusion,
 Yet drawn by distractions, we venture to town.
 Discourses we hear teach us most noble practice,
 Yet we spend all our time telling fortunes with dice.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

72

We give up monks' vows, the true path to gain freedom,
 We would rather be married, have children and homes.
 We cast to the wind this rare chance to be happy,
 And pursue further suffering, more problems and woes.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

73

Discarding our practice to reach Liberation,
 We drift about searching for pleasure or trade.
 We have obtained human bodies with precious endowments,
 Yet use them to gain only hellish rebirths.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

74

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.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

75

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 this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

It's amazing how little endurance we have
 To do meditation, and yet we pretend
 To have gained special powers so others are fooled.
 We never catch up with the paths of deep wisdom,
 Yet run here and there in a needless great haste.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

Someone gives us advice from the depths of his heart,
 Which is for our own good, but is harsh to our ears,
 And with anger we view him as if he is our foe.
 Yet when someone without any true feelings for us
 Deceitfully tells us what we like to hear,
 Without taste or discernment we are kind in return.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

When others consider us close and dear friends
 And relate in strict confidence all they know,
 We disclose their deep secrets especially to their foes.
 When we have a good friend who is constantly with us,
 We locate his weak points so we can torment him.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

Our jealousy is strong and whatever is said
 We are always the sceptic, we doubt what is meant.
 We are fussy, bad-tempered and hard to get on with,
 Inflicting obnoxious behaviour on others.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

When someone requests us to do something for him,
 We are never obliging, but think up instead
 Clever devious methods to do him some harm.
 When others concede and agree with our viewpoint,
 We do not acquiesce—we argue still more.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

We do not pay attention to what others tell us;
 We are a trial to be with; we strain others' nerves.
 Our feelings are hurt at the slightest remark,
 And we hold grudges strongly—we never forgive.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

We always are jealous of those of great status;
 We feel holy Gurus are threats to avoid.
 Overwhelmed by attachment and ruled by our passions,
 We spend all our time lusting after young loves.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

83

We do not think of friendships as long-term commitments
 We treat old companions with thoughtless neglect.
 And wehn we are making new friends with a stranger,
 We try to impress him with grandiose ways
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish-concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

84

We lack clairvoyance, yet lie, feigning powers,
 And then when proved wrong, we must bear all complaints.
 We have little compassion for those who are near us;
 Whenever they blunder, we are quick to lash out.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

85

We have poor education and limited knowledge;
 Whenever we speak we are unsure of ourselves.
 Our learning in scriptural texts is so meagre,
 When hearing new teachings we doubt they are true.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

86

By making a habit of anger and passion,
 We come to despise everyone that we meet;
 And by making a habit of jealous resentment,
 We ascribe fruits to others, disclaiming their worth.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

We do not follow proper procedures of study;
 We say it is needless to read the vast texts.
 We feel there is no value in learning from Gurus;
 We slight oral teachings and think we know best.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

We fail to explain what the 'Three Baskets'¹⁹ teach,
 But instead dwell on theories we have made up ourselves.
 We lack deep conviction and faith in the teachings,
 Whatever we say leaves disciples confused.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

We do not despise actions unwise and immoral,
 Instead we dispute and attempt to pick flaws
 In the excellent teachings and great masters' works.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

We are never embarrassed when acting disgracefully,
 Only respectable deeds cause us shame.
 Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
 Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
 Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
 Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

91

All the things we should do we do not do even once,
For improper behaviour takes up all our time.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

92

O mighty destroyer of selfishness-demons,
With Body of Wisdom unchained from all bonds,
Yamantaka come brandish your skull-headed bludgeon
Of egoless wisdom of Voidness and Bliss.
Without any misgiving now wield your fierce weapon
And wrathfully swing it three times²⁰ round your head.

93

With all of your fierceness come smash this foul enemy!
Burst ego-concepts with your wisdom's great might!
With your boundless compassion protect us from suffering
The miseries caused by our self-centred actions,
Destroy our self-cherishing once and for all!

94

With all of the sufferings that others experience,
Smother completely our selfish concern.
The sufferings of others arise from five poisons;
Thus whichever delusion afflicts other beings
Take it to smother delusions of self.

95

Though we have not a doubt, for we recognise fully
The cause and the root of mistakes we all make,
If there is still left a part of our minds that would tend
To support this delusion of self that we have,
Then destroy the firm hold of this part of our minds
That, against our true wishes, makes fools of us still.

As all that is wrong can be traced to one source:

Our concern for ourselves whom we cherish the most,
We must meditate now on the kindness of others.

Accepting the suffering that they never wished for,
We must dedicate fully our virtues to all.

Thus accepting ourselves all deluded non-virtuous

Actions that others have done in the past,
In the present and future with mind, speech and body,
May delusions of others as well as our own
Be the favoured conditions to gain our Enlightenment,
Just as the peacocks eat poison and thrive.

As crows may be cured after swallowing poison

By a powerful antidote given in time,
Let's direct to all others our virtuous merit,
That this may replenish their chances for freedom—
May all sentient beings reach Buddhahood soon!

Till the time when all motherly beings and I

Gain the perfect conditions for us to be Buddhas,
Though the force of our actions may cause us to wander
Through various realms in the six rebirth states,
May we always be able to help one another
To keep our aim fixed on Enlightenment's shore.

Then for even the sake of but one sentient being

May we gladly take birth in the three lower states.
With Enlightening Conduct that never grows weak
May we lead all the beings in miserable rebirths
Out of their sufferings and causes for pain.

101

As soon as we have placed ourselves into their realm
 May the guards of the hells come to see us as Gurus.
May the weapons of torture they hold turn to flowers;
 May all harm be stilled—peace and happiness grow.

102

Then may even hell beings develop clairvoyance
 And take higher rebirths as men or as gods.
By developing strongly the wish to be Buddhas,
 May they pay back our kindness through heeding the teaching
And regard us as Gurus with confident trust.

103

Then may all sentient beings of the three higher rebirths
 Perfect meditation on Egolessness.
In this way may they realise the non-self-existence
 Of worldly involvement and freedom as well.
May they place concentration on both of these equally,
 Seeing their natures as equally void.

104

If we practise these methods we shall soon overcome
 Our true enemies: selfish concern and self-love.
If we practise these methods we shall overcome also
 False concepts of ego we hold to be real.
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?

105

O mind, understand that the topics discussed here
 Are interdependent phenomena all;
 For things must rely on dependent-arising
 To have an existence—they cannot stand alone.
 The process of change is alluring like magic,
 For physical form is but mental appearance,
 As a torch whirling round seems a circle of flame.

106

There is nothing substantial to anyone's life-force—
 It crumbles apart like a water-soaked log
 And there is nothing substantial to anyone's life-span—
 It bursts in an instant like bubbles of foam.
 All the things of this world are but fog-like appearance;
 When closely examined, they fade out of sight.
 Like mirages these things at a distance seem lovely,
 But when we come closer, they are not to be found.

107

All things are like images found in a mirror,
 And yet we imagine they are real, very real;
 All things are like mist or like clouds on a mountain,
 And yet we imagine they are stable and firm.
 Our foe: our insistence on ego-identities
 Truly our own, which we wish were secure,
 And our butcher: the selfish concern for ourselves—
 Like all things these appear to be truly existent,
 Though they never have been truly existent at all.

108

Although they appear to be concrete and real,
 They have never been real, any time, anywhere.
 They are not things we should burden with ultimate value,
 Nor should we deny them their relative truth.
 As our grasping for egos and love for ourselves
 Lack substantial foundations with true independence,
 How can they yield acts that exist by themselves?
 And then how can this cruel vicious circle of suffering,
 The fruit of these actions, be real from its core?

109

Although all things thus lack inherent existence,
 Yet just as the face of the moon can be seen
 In a cup of clear water reflecting its image,
 The various aspects of cause and effect
 Appear in this relative world as reflections.
 So please, in this world of appearances only,
 Let's always be sure what we do is of virtue
 And shun all those acts that would cause us great pain.

110

When our bodies are charred in a horrible nightmare
 By the world-ending flames of a stellar explosion,
 Although this ordeal is not actually happening
 We nevertheless feel great terror and scream.
 In similar fashion, unfortunate rebirths
 In hells or as ghosts are not actually real,
 And yet we can fully experience their pain.
 Thus fearing such suffering as burning alive,
 We must cease all these actions that yield this result.

111

When our minds are delirious, burning with fever,
 Although there is no darkness, we feel we are plummeting
 Further and further inside a black pit
 With the walls pressing closer the deeper we fall.
 In similar fashion, although our dark ignorance
 Lacks self-existence, we nevertheless
 Must by all means break out of its strangling constriction
 By putting the three kinds of wisdom²¹ to use.

112

When musicians are playing a beautiful melody,
 Should we examine the sound they are making
 We would see that it does not exist by itself.
 But when we are not making our formal analysis,
 Still there is a beautiful tune to be heard,
 Which is merely a label on notes and on players—
 That is why lovely music can lighten sad hearts.

113

When we closely examine effects and their causes,
 We see that they both lack inherent existence—
 They cannot stand alone, either whole or apart.
 Yet there seem to exist independently rising
 And falling events, which, in fact, are conditioned
 By various forces, components and parts.
 It is this very level on which we experience
 Birth and our death and whatever life brings.
 So please, in this world of appearances only,
 Let's always be sure what we do is of virtue
 And shun all those acts that would cause us great pain.

114

When a vase has been filled by the dripping of water,
 The first drops themselves did not fill it alone;
 Nor was it made full by the last several drops.
 It was filled by an interdependent collection
 Of causes and forces that came all together—
 The water, the pourer, the vase and such things.

115

It is precisely the same when we come to experience
 Pleasure and pain: the results of our past.
 Effects never come from the first causal actions,
 Nor do they arise from the last several acts.
 Both pleasure and pain come from interdependent
 Collections of forces and causes combined.
 So please, in this world of appearances only,
 Let's always be sure what we do is of virtue
 And shun all those acts that would cause us great pain.

116

When not making formal dissections with logic,
 Merely letting life's happenings flow freely on,
 Although we experience feelings of pleasure,
 In ultimate truth this appearance of happiness
 Lacks self-existence inherently real.
 And yet on the everyday operative level
 This seeming appearance has relative truth.
 To understand fully this deep profound meaning
 For slow-minded persons, alas, will be hard.

And now when we try to do close contemplation
 On Voidness, how can we have even a feeling
 Of conventional truth at the very same time?
 Yet what can there be that has true self-existence;
 And what can there be that lacks relative truth?
 How can anyone anywhere believe in such things?

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.
 In fact, on the whole, they are lacking completely
 All mental projections and all pre-conceptions.
 Thus if we can focus our clear concentration
 On Voidness without our mind wandering astray,
 Then truly we shall come to be wondrous beings
 With a deep understanding of the most profound Void.

By practising this way the two Bodhicittas,
 Of the ultimate and the conventional truth,
 And thus by completing without interference
 Collections of insight and merit as well,
 May all of us quickly attain Full Enlightenment
 Granting what we and all others have wished.

EPILOGUE

'The wheel of Sharp Weapons Effectively Striking the Heart of the Foe' has been composed by the great Yogi Dharmaraksita in his retreat in the jungle where many fierce animals prey. What this great Yogi, the possessor of vast scriptural knowledge, the

full powers of logic and deep profound insight, has written here is the essence of the teachings of all his holy Gurus. He always practised in accordance with this essence in his fearsome jungle retreat during the degenerate age in which he lived.

From among his many disciples, Dharmaraksita transmitted these teachings to Atisa (982–1054); and Atisa practised them wherever he travelled in order to tame those who were most wild. When Atisa developed true insight into the two Bodhichittas through these teachings, he composed the following verses:

I went through much hardship abandoning royalty,
But, by collecting much virtuous merit,
I met my true Guru, Dharmaraksita,
By showing me these supreme nectar-like teachings,
He has granted me sovereignty over my mind;
So that now I have attained all the forceful opponents,
Having memorised fully these words he has taught.

Although I do not favour a partisan viewpoint—
Whenever I study the various 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.

From among his many unimaginably great disciples in both India and Tibet, Atisa transmitted these teachings to Upasaka hBrom-ston-pa,²² who had been prophesied to be his most fitting disciple by many of Atisa's meditational deities such as Tara. Atisa transmitted these teachings to hBrom-ston-pa in order to pacify the minds of the disciples of remote Tibet who were difficult to tame.

This work has been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by the fatherly Atisa himself and his spiritual son hBrom-ston-pa.

This translation of the Tibetan *Theg-pa-chen-pohi-blo-sbyong-mtson-cha-hkhor-lo* into English has been prepared by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, Sharpa Tulku, Khamlung Tulku, Alexander Berzin and Jonathan Landaw at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, at the Headquarters of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala, India, 1975.

A COMMENTARY
TO
THE WHEEL OF SHARP WEAPONS

by

Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey

This commentary was given in kindness by the most learned Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey to a group of students at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala in his house 'The Garden of Manjushri' between the 2nd and 10th days of Saga Dawa Earthhorse year—9th to 17th May, 1978. His commentary, spoken in Tibetan, was translated into English by Lobsang Gyaltzen. The following is an edited rendering of notes written at the time. All misinterpretations and omissions are the fault of the editor. Thanks go to Lobsang Gyaltzen for translating, Mr Gyatso Tsering and Glenn H. Mullin for their improvement and encouragement, Philippa Russell for typing and Anila Ursulla for retyping.

JEREMY RUSSELL

Komagane, Japan, September 1980

A COMMENTARY TO THE WHEEL OF SHARP WEAPONS

From the viewpoint of the Dharma *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons* is an excellent text; therefore approach it with bodhicitta motivation. The great Lama Tsong Khapa (1357-1413) has said that it is not enough merely to listen to Mahayana teachings: to derive maximum benefit from them the listener should have the most excellent thought, the Mahaya motivation.

This text is called *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, for just as a weapon cuts through the body of an enemy, this teaching cuts through the twofold grasping which deprives us of spiritual liberation: grasping at a self and the self-cherishing attitude.

This teaching was often given by Purchok Jhampa Rinpoche (1683-1762) and his disciples, but after them the tradition became scarce. Tenpa Rabgay, the Second Reting Rinpoche (18th cent.), whose predecessor had been a tutor to the Seventh Dalai Lama (1708-1757), noticed this scarcity and requested Kalsang Norbu (18th/16th cent.) to teach the text. Thereafter the tradition was revived. Thus the lineage comes down to us through the kindness of these three great teachers.

The transmission of the commentary was held by Manla Rinpoche (born mid-nineteenth cent.) from Amdo who passed it on to the two tutors of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama: Kyabje Ling Rinpoche and Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang. I (Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey) received it from Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang, the Junior Tutor. To receive the transmission of this commentary is very rare and most fortunate, for the lineage is traced directly from Vajradhara, the tantric manifestation of Buddha Shakyamuni.

The text is classified as mind-training (Tib. bLo-sByong) because it trains and subdues the vulgar mind. Given to the Indian master Jowo Je Atisha (982-1054) by Dharmarakshita, the great Indonesian teacher, it is called *The Wheel of Sharp*

Weapons because it is the best method for destroying the worst enemies: the grasping of self and self-cherishing.

In order to effectively destroy these foes we must strike at just the right point in a manner similar to that in which a wood-cutter, a butcher and a magician employ their skills. The *tala* tree, which grows in the east of India, must be cut at exactly the right point to completely fell it, otherwise it will grow up again. If its water channel is first blocked, felling it is easy. Similarly, a butcher knows well the vital veins of an animal and simply by piercing these can kill swiftly, whereas one unskilled would cause a slow and painful death. Lastly, a magician well versed in the art of illusion could surround a palace with a magic circle, only he knowing the exact point at which it is to be entered. Likewise this text shows the weapon and the key by which to destroy one's greatest enemy, the enemy within.

"I pay heartfelt homage to you, Yamantaka." This is the homage to the great wrathful one who opposes the two negative attitudes: self-grasping and self-cherishing. All Bodhisattvas are wrathful in this context for they seek faults in attitudes of self-cherishing and self-concern. Thus any Bodhisattva on the path of accumulation (first of the five paths to enlightenment) is a 'wrathful one', but Yamantaka is the Great Wrathful One, for he is the Butcher of the Lord of Death.

There are three aspects of 'Yama': outer, inner and secret, while 'taka' means butcher, opponent or antidote. Yamantaka opposes all three aspects of 'Yama'. The outer Yama is the external Lord of Death, who lives in an iron palace seven stages below the earth in the direction of the south. He is constantly watchful for opportunities to destroy living beings. Longing desire and so forth are the inner Yama, while subtle dualistic perception of the three types of awareness are the secret Yama. Yamantaka has abandoned and opposes all three types of Yamas.

There is both a definitive and an interpretive Yamantaka. The definitive Yamantaka is the definitive awareness of the wisdom of all the Buddhas. The interpretive Yamantaka is this wisdom of the non-duality of bliss and voidness as the perceivable form of a wrathful deity, which is represented in paintings and statues.

This homage contains not only prostration to the wisdom

of bliss and voidness, but also the wish to gain it. During this age of the five degenerations this teaching is indispensable.

1. When peacocks wander amidst poisonous plants they are not attracted to medicinal or other plants. Living on the essence of poisons, their life thrives and the brilliance of their feathers augments.

2. Similarly, the great, undaunted Bodhisattvas are completely unconcerned with selfish pursuits but are preoccupied with the concerns of others. They are true heroes whereas those who wield physical weapons are not. When such true heroes wander in the forests of worldly existence, they are not attracted by the many alluring things, for they see the disadvantages and sufferings produced by them. Like peacocks who thrive on poison, the Bodhisattvas use impediments in their environment as conditions conducive to the development of bodhicitta.

We need to train our minds by seeing the disadvantages of mere selfish concerns and the advantages of cherishing others. There has been no Buddha who has lacked bodhicitta. Therefore it is the most precious of treasures.

3. Since beginningless time we have chased after prosperity, yet we are still forced to occasionally experience suffering. Being cowards we have not cherished others and have run from suffering in pursuit of pleasure. If we cannot embrace suffering now we shall not see its end.

The great being, the Bodhisattva, embraces suffering for the sake of all sentient beings. He is courageous and therefore is always happy. Because he is able to exchange self with others, he accomplishes well-being in a short time.

4. Unless one has trained one's mind in the initial and medium levels of motivation (i.e. the motivation to transcend lower sam-saric states of being and to gain nirvana) one will never achieve Mahayana thought and cannot take suffering and so forth as a path. Only the brave Bodhisattvas, who have already undergone those trainings, can take suffering as a path.

Longing desire is similar to a poisonous plant. If a cowardly

crow should eat poison, it would kill him. Similarly, if an unqualified person attempts this great path he might sever his chance for release. In order to take longing desire as a path one must be free of selfish concerns. This is especially important to anyone who wishes to take lust as a path in tantric practice.

5. This is not taught for those who aspire solely to the happiness of the self, for to do so would not yield release. The delusions can be taken as a path only by undaunted Bodhisattvas. Should a coward attempt it, not only would he not attain enlightenment, he would not even gain release from suffering. To take longing desire as a path is unique to the practice of Anuttarayoga Tantra.

6. The great Bodhisattvas are likened to peacocks because they prefer to live amongst the most rampant delusions and to transform them into conditions beneficial to beings. As an example of our own situation: if we have a beautiful house to live in and we have attachment to it, we should think in the following way: "Until today, completely influenced by such vulgar thoughts as attachment, I have been wandering in cyclic existence. From now on, I should use this house only as a tool to help me to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all beings." We should think similarly about food: that it is to be eaten to benefit others.

Peacocks may be likened to Bodhisattvas in a number of ways. Just as peacocks look beautiful to the eye, so Bodhisattvas appeal to the minds of living beings. Peacocks eat poison yet inflict no harm on others, just as Bodhisattvas persist in working with samsaric conditions solely to benefit others. The peacock's crest has five parts, just as the Bodhisattva paths are also fivefold.

When Atisha came to Tibet in 1042 he brought a particularly unpleasant Indian teacher with him only in order to further his practice of patience. Later on he sent the object of his patience back to India because, he said, "having met the Tibetans, the Indian was no longer needed". We too should willingly embrace suffering and delusions just as did Atisha; having subdued them, we should finally eliminate them.

With these first six verses the general survey of the paths and stages is concluded. Following is the general explanation.

7. Roaming uncontrolledly in the rounds of existence with no freedom of birth, we are thrown here and there into suffering. We must subjugate the self-cherishing attitude, which is essential in order to achieve the three paths. Self-cherishing and self-grasping are the attendant and the leader of our problems. Self-grasping is the internal dictator, while self-cherishing is his external attendant. In this context self-cherishing heralds the demon of self-grasping. We should make a strong determination not to be influenced by these two.

8. We have been chased by karma since beginningless time. Without any freedom we have been bound to cyclic existence with its many obstacles, all because of unbroken familiarity with delusions. Place the blame for all your sufferings upon the selfish thought of wanting solely your own happiness, and determine to destroy it.

9. Whenever selfish concern enters the mind, be aware of it and, disregarding it, banish it. In averting selfish thought as it arises, dedicate all your good qualities to the benefit of all beings. For example, if you receive nothing but harm from those whom you have benefitted, remain unmoved. Instead of being harmful in return, think of it as the fruit of your principal distraction, which is the self-cherishing thought. Hate this attitude, not other beings.

10. When our bodies are aching or weak with disease, it is because in this and past lives we have beaten other beings, imprisoned them and in many ways brought them harm. Think that the sharp weapon of the karma of having harmed others before has returned to yourself. Just as an ordinary weapon deprives us of life, so the sharp weapon of karma takes away happiness. Take all sufferings upon yourself.

Visualize that in the space in front of you sits your Guru and make this request to him: "May all the diseases of both others and myself ripen upon me." As you breathe out of the left nostril, visualize beams of light radiating to all beings. As you breathe in through the right nostril, inhale all suffering and disease in the form of black smoke. The smoke vanishes at the site of your

own pain. Again breathe out from the left nostril, sending happiness in the form of lights to all beings.

11. When we have mental problems, they certainly arise because we have disturbed the minds of others, such as our Gurus, parents, fellow practitioners and so forth. Now, determined to take all this suffering upon yourself, again make requests to your Gurus and meditational deities.

In training the mind, never see the faults in yourself as having a source in other beings. See them as being caused by the self. Instead of blaming others, generate thoughts of great kindness for all beings. All the sufferings of body and mind result from having previously disturbed the bodies and minds of others and also from breaking any precepts that we have taken. Think about this teaching, which cannot but benefit the mind.

Nagarjuna has said that the merit of one moment's thought of bodhicitta cannot be calculated even by Buddha.

Shantideva (8th cent.) asked, "If people such as fishermen and farmers bear hardship merely to gain their living, why can we not bear hardship for the greater purpose of enlightenment?"

12. When we are troubled by hunger, thirst and so forth, this is the wheel of sharp weapons returning to us for having deprived others of their goods while being mean with our own. These sufferings are the result of our wrong attitudes and our miserliness, which is a cause for birth as a hungry ghost or as an impoverished human being. The great Lama Tsong Khapa said, "Miserliness is the way to become poor, not rich. Generosity is the means to become rich, not poor." Also, the illustrious Sakya Pandit (12th cent.) wrote, "The result of generosity is always richness, the result of miserliness is always poverty. This principle is constant." Nagarjuna wrote, "From generosity we derive wealth, from morality we derive a high status birth."

Hereafter we should accept hunger and thirst happily and perform the practice "Giving and Taking" (Tib. mThong-len). Make requests that the hunger and thirst of all beings may ripen upon yourself and that you may give all goodness to them. In connection with this meditation, the fasting ceremony may also be performed. Many Tibetans do this once a year for sixteen

days, alternating between totally fasting on one day and having only one meal on the next. When you feel overwhelmed by hunger and thirst, engage in the practice of “Giving and Taking”, while rejoicing at your great opportunity. Realise that hunger and thirst have matured in you through the kindness of your Guru and the Three Jewels in order to further the purpose of your Dharma practice.

13. When we are enslaved and dictated to by others and lack any freedom, recognise that what is happening is not without a cause. It is caused by having looked down on lowly beings and having ordered them to do unpleasant tasks. This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning. Resolve that from now on you will entrust your body and life to the purpose of others.

Shantideva wrote, “Having dedicated my body to others, it is up to them how they use it: whether they beat it or whatever.”

14. When we cannot avoid harsh speech and constantly hear unpleasant, belittling, threatening and scolding words, it is because of slander we have spread and friends we have separated in the past. Also it is caused by the harsh abuse we have hurled at others; we have cast aspersion on them and underestimated their qualities. The same treatment returns to us.

Hereafter, be humble, moderate your speech and hold your own harsh words in contempt. A jealous man whose merit is low will constantly belittle others, which in the long run harms no one but himself and ruins his own reputation. One who is always aggressive towards and critical of others will lose the trust of others.

15. When our birthplace is impure and unattractive, the cause is our self-grasping and perverted views. We have been unable to maintain a correct view such as that of Tantric practice, which sees all things as pure.

Henceforth contemplate everything as stainless and pure. Once we begin to criticise others we shall never find an end to their faults. If you have an enemy, a correct perception is to think that the Buddha and Bodhisattvas have emanated as such a being to exhaust the fruit of your evil karma.

In Tantric practice one is supposed to view all objects as the union of bliss and voidness in the higher aspect of Vajradharā. If there is someone in this house who has high realisation of the completion stages of Tantra, then this house is the Akanistha Pure Land. For example, at the time of King Srong Tsen Gampo (7th cent.) Lhasa was a Pure Land.

Once while meditating on the clear Light, Milarepa's (11th cent.) disciple Rechungpa was transported to a Pure Land. There the Buddha was signalled by five young maidens to listen. They were discussing how excellent were the Buddhas who had attained enlightenment in three countless aeons, yet how supremely excellent was Milarepa, who had attained it in a single lifetime. One of the girls asked where Milarepa lived and was told the Akanistha Heaven. Rechungpa had always known his master as an ordinary yogi in Tibet, never being aware of this higher dimension. When he later arose from meditation he wept, for he realised how impure were his ordinary perceptions of his Guru.

16. At times we are separated from our dearest friends without choice, or we lose our friends to death. In past lives we have taken our Guru's students and servants for our own, and now this action returns to ourselves. From now on never separate those who are dear to each other, nor cause anyone to be parted from his or your own Guru, nor treat any of his attendants maliciously.

17. Sometimes we are unable to please our Gurus and the other holy beings. Yet we should never seek shortcomings in the Guru, but within ourselves. In past lives we have never met or have never followed the holy Gurus. We ignored them and instead cultivated evil friends. Now this contaminated action ripens upon ourselves.

Even today we do not follow those in the Dharma but are inclined to follow misleading friends. Hereafter resolve not to follow those who turn you away from the right path, though of course do not exclude them from your compassion, for to do so would break the Bodhisattva vow.

After reciting each of these verses, perform the practice of "Giving and Taking" and make strong resolutions.

18. Sometimes we are falsely accused of doing wrong or we are made into a scapegoat for some issue. This once happened to a monk who was dyeing one of his robes. At that time a family upstream had lost a calf and were looking for it. When the monk's robe was searched it was found to be full of blood. He was imprisoned for seven months but was released when the calf was later found. Many lifetimes previously he had falsely accused a monk, who as a result was imprisoned for seven days.

19. When we have trouble with things we use in daily life, the wheel of sharp weapons has returned to us for harming others and wishing for qualities for self alone. We have also wished that we alone should be free from suffering. Now we should think that, if we can, we shall materialise goods for others.

20. When we are unhappy but have difficulty in finding the cause of our misery; when our heart and mind are unclear and we cannot, for example, visualise Yamantaka; at times when we can clearly think about negativities but trying to think of virtue makes us feel as if there were a pitcher over our head; and when we fall asleep during our prayer recitations but can stay awake for two nights to play dice—all these are the results of our latent inclination towards negative thoughts rather than virtue. Likewise, if it is very hot we feel we cannot attend discourses, yet if there is some kind of entertainment we want to go to it immediately.

These circumstances of confusion arise because we have harmed the Dharma protectors. The leader of evil spirits is the self-grasping attitude and so we experience interference. Self-grasping is certainly the most prominent evil spirit, causing us to perform negative deeds that offend the Dharma protectors.

When we see such problems in ourselves we need not tell others about them. We only have to admit them to ourselves and determine to overcome them.

21. At times our minds are disturbed and we are thoroughly frustrated. For instance, parents may put their son into a college hoping he will become a scholar, but he drops out. Similarly we try to make a profit in business but it fails or we sow seed expecting a good crop but there is a drought.

In the past we have interfered with religious discourses and have interrupted others' daily recitations, studies and meditations. Because of this, we now experience frustration. From now on, avoid interfering with and hindering others' good actions, but instead rejoice, admire them and encourage such qualities.

22. If you cannot please your Guru even though you try in every way, never blame the Guru nor seek the fault in him. In past lives we have been two-faced about the Dharma. We have pretended before our teacher to be subdued like a cat, but behind his back we have behaved vulgarly like dogs and pigs. The teacher has given specific advice and we have resolved to follow it, yet behind his back we have done the opposite and single-heartedly pursued negativity.

So the wheel of sharp weapons returns to us. Hereafter avoid such hypocrisy and engage wholly in the Dharma.

There are four maturations mentioned in Nagarjuna's *Friendly Letter*. The best is for one to be matured both within and without. To appear mature externally, but to be green within is not a good sign.

23. If others blame us and announce our shortcomings even when we have not done wrong, this is the wheel of sharp weapons returning for our having belittled shame and decency in others, especially Dharma friends. Having shame is to remember that whatever we do is done before the Buddhas and teachers. From now on, avoid all actions which do not conform with the Dharma.

24. When little things inspire us with hatred, we feel the consequences of our careless attitude about how our actions will effect others. We should be loving and gentle to all beings, not hostile and disturbing to them.

25. If our parents and all our friends have turned against us, we should not feel great self-pity. In previous lives, with spiteful thoughts we have wished to damage and undermine others' qualities. We should decide not to engage in pretensions and unwholesome actions any longer. Pretension is the thought not

to reveal our faults to others; hypocrisy is to pretend to have qualities one has not.

26. When we suffer from gout and other interferences, this is the wheel of sharp weapons returning for our having recklessly enjoyed other people's devoted offerings and for our having worn out morality. In future let us not take as our own offerings belonging to The Three Jewels.

In Bodhgaya and Sarnath we offer lighted candles, but the moment we turn away they are gone. It is very important not to take from the Three Jewels, especially the Sangha; for wrongs against the Buddha and Dharma can be purified through spiritual exercises while wrongs against the Sangha must bear fruit to be purified. Always hold the Sangha in good regard and in this way respect the Buddhas of the three times. Lack of respect for the Sangha is equal to disrespecting the Buddhas.

27. We suffer from fainting and strokes because in this and past lives we have broken our vows and pledges to our Gurus. In order to make a pledge to our Guru it is not necessary to have had a vajra placed upon our head; even the lay practitioner vows (upasaka) are such pledges. Honouring the pledges made to the Guru is most important to successful practice. Abandon mistaken actions which lead to the breaking of such commitments.

28. If we study hard yet cannot contemplate or recite a word nor gain knowledge equal to that of our fellow students, if we try to meditate but feel only darkness as though we have a jug over our head, then place a finger on your nose and remember that no one but you is responsible for these things. They arise because we have belittled the Dharma in all our past lives. Whenever anything was to be left out of our lives, we left out Dharma.

Hereafter listen to the Dharma and contemplate it, while remembering that any present inability to study is the result of not having done so before. If we do not study now, in the future our difficulties will be even greater. When we are thirsty we do not need to drink a whole stream; similarly we do not need to know everything, only the paths and stages to liberation.

29. If we fall asleep while engaged in positive activities such as recitation of prayers or listening to teachers, this indicates that we have disrespected Dharma scriptures in the past by perhaps placing other things on them or leaving them on the ground. Such habits are disrespectful to the Dharma transmission. Also, to lack respect for the Dharma of Insight is to belittle those who possess it. Now and in the future, instead of lacking respect for it, endure all hardships for the Dharma.

Even when the Kadampa Lamas were very old they would stand when texts were brought out in order to show respect for them. The greater the respect we show to the Three Jewels, the greater the respect we ourselves shall receive.

The main point of this teaching is to blame all our afflictions on nothing but our self-cherishing attitudes. In this time of the five degenerations we should be very careful not to criticise or harbour had thoughts for the Sangha or even one monk. To do so can be a cause for inability to meet or live near monks. In Ceylon and Burma monks are still venerated. In Tibet the forty-seventh king introduced the custom of one monk receiving support from seven families.

Once we displease our Guru we abandon all hope of enlightenment in this lifetime. This has been said by Buddha Vajradhara and many Gurus, as well as by the author of the principal commentary to *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, Tenpa Rabgay, who wrote: "If I had relied on worldly power alone I would now be as stupid as a sheep; but I have studied like an ordinary monk and cultivated my Gurus. So now, even though I am old and can no longer see, you call me Dorje Chang."

Atisa said, "I gave up my princely life and underwent hardships for liberation. Having collected immense merit I met the holy Guru Dharmarakshita, who gave me the initiation of the Dharma and transformed my understanding. Without being biased, I have perused all tenets and I have found that during this time of five degenerations the Dharma of changing self-cherishing into cherishing others is the most effective precept.

Atisa gave this teaching solely to the Upasaka Drom Tonpa who was skilled in taming those of remote lands. Atisa said that although he gave tantric initiations to other disciples, he could entrust the *Lo-jong* teachings only to Drom Tonpa. The essence

of *Lo-jong* practice is to try to bring the teachings and the mind together. If there is a gap between them, the essence of the teachings is not present.

Motivation is most important. Wish that you may apply this teaching so that you may generate bodhicitta in this life and attain enlightenment for all beings. Rejoice at this rare opportunity.

30. Sometimes we are very attracted to delusion and develop covetous thoughts and longing desire. We are jealous of our enemies' benefits and pleased by their downfalls. Being overly fond of sleep is another example of closed mindedness, still rubbing our eyes when everyone else has long got up. All these things occur because we are not aware of our mortality and of death. Were we aware of them, we would not sleep so long.

We are fond of delusions and are easily distracted, with no time to practise Dharma. Instead we pursue business and so forth. When this happens, reflect that it is all the outcome of not remembering death. Propelled by evil actions, the wheel of sharp weapons returns to us—think of “Giving and Taking”!

Henceforth work hard to develop renunciation and cut off worldly concerns. Never be separate from the thought of impermanence. Awareness of impermanence is an indispensable training at all levels of practice. If we do not think of death in the morning, the morning is wasted on mundane affairs. If we do not remember death at noon and in the evening, afternoon and evening are likewise wasted. Develop the thought of impermanence. Although you may be young, age will soon be upon you, expect it or not. There was once a monk who was lazy all his life. When age finally came upon him, he wept and lamented, for he had never expected it to happen.

From the moment of entering our mother's womb we begin to age. It seems as though years pass quicker now, and every moment we come closer to death. We must develop the thought of impermanence.

31. However we try to gain improvement in our practices, they continue to deteriorate. Our worldly affairs are the same. Trying to make a Profit we make a loss, sowing for a bounteous harvest

we do not even regain the seed we planted. The occurrence of such circumstances, while others are completely successful, implies the existence of more than obvious conditions, that is, the working of the law of cause and effect.

Everyone thinks he will receive the best, but it does not happen because of his previous actions. In past lives we have had no respect for the law of cause and effect. We have killed and beaten other beings, have stolen from them and indulged in sexual excesses. The wheel of sharp weapons returns because in the past we have only performed the ten unwholesome actions.

Now, respect and abide by the law of cause and effect and endure all hardships for the sake of the Dharma.

32. When rituals we perform in order to avert disease and so forth, are fruitless in spite of our efforts and we become even sicker, we should not have distorted thoughts towards the ritual. The ineffectiveness of the ritual is because of our own accumulation of unwholesome actions.

When these things happen, practise “Giving and Taking”, while thinking of how the wheel of sharp weapons returns to us for always inclining further to the negative. Hereafter try well to avoid those things aligned with the black.

33. If we receive nothing even though we make strong requests to the Three Jewels for long-life, prosperity and so forth it is because we have not respected the Three Jewels in the past. We have upheld distorted doctrines and disbelieved the teachings of Dharma. Our faith has been weak.

Henceforth determine that whatever conditions you face you will take no ultimate refuge other than in the Buddha as the teacher, the Dharma as guide and the Sangha as supportive friends. We should cultivate principally these Three Refuges.

34. We suffer strokes and similar afflictions and evil spirits harm us because our vows and pledges have degenerated. Many people go crazy through possession by evil spirits. These all arise because of our negative attitudes towards the meditational deities and mantras, as well as our underestimating the power and effectiveness of such practices.

What is mantra? '*Man*' means mind, '*traya*' means protector or guide. This mind-protector refers to the paths and stages of all three Vehicles. In Tantric practice we must eradicate all ordinary clinging, while in the Sutrayana, the Path of the Practice of Perfection, we must subjugate all distorted views. If we do this, we will have achieved a high state.

35. When we have no freedom and are involuntarily exiled or we are servants without choice, this means that we have formerly made our Gurus and parents leave their places and have evicted other beings from their homes. From now on instead of evicting beings from their dwellings, try to help them to find shelter.

36. We repeatedly receive droughts, hailstorms and other natural calamities, or our cattle do not thrive and the seed we have sown is eaten by insects so we gain no harvest at all; this is the wheel of sharp weapons returning. Previously we have not maintained proper morality nor kept the words of honour we have given to our Gurus. If our morality is full of holes, it matures upon our environment.

From this moment on maintain your Tantric commitments as purely as you can, as well as any vows you may hold. Lay people should keep the lay practitioners' vows cleanly. These were given by the Buddha according to the needs of beings, so it is not impossible to uphold them.

37. When we wish to be rich yet all efforts fail and we remain poor, it means that in the past we have been miserly. We have made no offerings to the Three Jewels nor given to the poor who begged for assistance. We should meditate on "Giving and Taking", and remember that clinging tightfistedness has produced our present problems. Unlike before we should now and in future make offerings to the Three Jewels, the Sangha and to the poverty-stricken.

Atisa said, "To save our wealth is useless because it cannot accompany us through death. To give it away now is a treasure for the future."

At the time of the Buddha there was a couple who lived in a house magnificent enough to be compared to that of the God

of Wealth. The householder invited king Ajatashastru to visit them even though his wife tried to dissuade him, knowing that the king was a grasping, angry man. The king came and as the wife poured tea for him two tears ran down her cheeks. She excused herself saying, "I am not displeased with your visit but your clothes smell of smoke". King Ajatashastru later ordered the couple to exchange their fine house for his palace. However, when this was done the house became an ordinary stone dwelling for the king, while his palace became even more glorious for them. This resulted from their having given shelter to the Buddhas and other beings in the past.

More important than the offering is the motivation, as illustrated by the couple who shared but one robe between them, taking turns to wear it to go out begging. One day Buddha Shakyamuni visited their town and many people made offerings to him. In rejoicing at seeing this, the old woman restored the lack of merit which had caused her to have nothing to offer, a lack which would have otherwise worsened in the future. She asked Ananda if she might offer her one lice-ridden, smelly robe and arranged to leave it on a rock the next day to avoid appearing naked before the Buddha. This was done and Shakyamuni was very pleased, carrying the robe in his golden hand for a mile or so.

The offering we make should be pure. Geshe Potawa said, "Don't offer the yellow part of the green vegetable nor the green part of the butter." He further said, "Don't offer incense whose smell you cannot bear." Likewise do not hoard money and then offer mere water on your altar, for your merits will degenerate. Whenever eating or drinking we should always first offer everything.

38. We might be hideously ugly and others abuse us for our faults, yet beautiful appearance is one of the eight qualities for attracting disciples. Sakya Pandit said, "Having all qualities yet not being beautiful, one will be belittled by others."

Milarepa's disciple Rechungpa was so extraordinarily handsome that his sponsors were more attracted to him than to his master. On one occasion as he entered a house to beg, a cow kicked over the milk bucket. The mistress of the house came out

to scold him, but on seeing him her mind was changed and she made offerings to him instead.

However, when we are ugly, blind, lame, noseless or otherwise disfigured, so that even our own attendants belittle us, we should recognise that we are ugly because we have ignored opportunities to build stupas or statues of Buddhas. We have criticised statues and images and made vulgar comparisons between them, or we have shown disrespect to scriptural texts. For example, the Chinese burned all the collections of the *Kangyur* (collection of translated words of Buddha) and *Tangyur* (collection of translated commentaries) in Lhasa, filling the city with smoke for days.

Henceforth we should make good statues of our Gurus and the Buddhas and show appreciation for other images. We should not act harshly towards others but be constantly friendly. While making this resolve, practise “Giving and Taking”.

We can see the different effects of appearance when we travel by train, for people of a certain appearance are respected by all, even the ticket collector, while those of poor appearance are abused.

39. Sometimes, no matter how we may apply antidotes to our attachment, it only increases. This occurs because we have previously allowed our self-cherishing attitude to run rampant. No longer shall we be dominated by this great enemy, the self-cherishing attitude, which is the cause of so many detrimental activities.

40. Similarly, it may be that no matter how hard we try to practise the teachings of the Graded Path or even of the developing and completion stages of Tantra, we make no progress. This is because both in this and past lives we have had base motivations and have forsaken good thoughts. The wheel of sharp weapons returns, thus rendering us incapable. Whatever virtues we may perform from now on shall be motivated by not a fraction of selfishness, but solely by the wish to benefit others.

41. However much we may try to engage in virtuous activity, no positive effect appears in our minds; for in present and past lives we have done no virtuous practice other than by chance,

or to fulfil this life's aim. Having too strong a fascination with the material benefits of this life, our minds have not improved.

Recalling this, practise "Giving and Taking" and resolve no longer to let the mind be distracted towards temporal benefits. Aim solely to remove all obscurations and attain non-abiding Nirvana. Practise single pointedly in this way.

42. The moment we begin some virtuous action such as studying or doing a meditational retreat, we expect to become a scholar or to receive a manifestation of the deity. Yet we soon find ourselves unable to accomplish the real purpose and regret even beginning. We go up the mountain without even a superficial renunciation and consequently soon feel unable to go down, while unable to stay. What can we do.

We find ourselves in this quandary because we have previously been fickle, eager at the beginning but tiring soon and saying derogatory things about our actions. We have done practices without accomplishing the real point and have not changed our minds. We have attended teachings only because they have special names.

If we attempt or boast of practices we cannot accomplish because we do not undergo the proper training, we will receive this fruitless result. For example, we may take an initiation of Avalokiteshvara and keep the practice for a while, but then we take an initiation of Manjushri and change to that practice for a few months, after which we switch to Vajrapani. This way we shall achieve nothing. Ra Lotsawa (11th cent.) said, "Don't act like the hunter who first pursues a hawk, then a fox and then a musk deer for he returns empty handed. You will not attain Vajradhara. Cultivate the meditational deities and their practices steadily."

Should one of our spiritual masters advise us to perform an advanced meditation when our actual practice is only at the level of initial motivation, we should still continue our usual practices. To fulfil his words we should, however, also dedicate some time to the subject he has recommended. We should not continually run after new practices and so forth.

43. When others cheat and deceive us, it is because in the past we have been very egotistical and arrogant. We have thought

ourselves to be the cleverest, most handsome and so on. We have continued greedily to only receive from others. Now the wheel of sharp weapons returns. Practise "Giving and Taking". Here and in future lives we should try to have less greed and arrogance and to cultivate contentment.

44. If listening to or giving discourses encourages our delusions rather than dispel them, if we are jealous of the teacher and listen while being envious of the teachings other people receive, it is because in this and previous lifetimes we have not thought truly about the disadvantages of our being possessed by the devillish self-cherishing attitude and on the contrary have cultivated it. Remember this and practise "Giving and Taking". Now and in future, shake off the influence of delusions. Properly contemplating its disadvantages, abandon the self-cherishing attitude.

45. Sometimes, no matter how we try to be kind to others, we only meet with their displeasure. Similarly, when kind teachers have scolded us, we have held grudges against them, although they actually scold us only out of care for us. We should not be discouraged at receiving no thanks for our good intentions. It is the return of the wheel of sharp weapons for our similar actions.

Think in this way: "Although all sentient beings have been our mothers, not recognising them we have been unkind to them. Now we receive an appropriate result. Even if abused and scolded by others, we should revere and respect them. The afflictions we receive are the outcome only of our own unwholesome actions."

46. When we are overwhelmed by circumstances not sought after, just as a blacksmith may be killed by the weapons he himself forged, the weapons of our own unwholesome actions turn against us. It is impossible to experience the results of another's evil actions. Whatever afflictions grieve us, blame your own past actions and meditate on "Giving and Taking". In future abstain conscientiously from all unwholesome actions. Conscientiousness is the mindfulness and mental alertness that binds us to wholesome actions, recklessness is its opposite.

The Kadampa Lamas said that mind-training is the treasure of all attainments. If we never try to train our mind it will be oversensitive, too easily swayed in joy and too easily depressed. The slightest change can be overwhelming if we are without mind-training. However, if we are familiar with it, we can, when harm befalls us, meditate that suffering is the nature of cyclic existence and remain undisturbed.

We should concentrate on the setbacks and disadvantages of the self-cherishing attitude. As Shantideva has said: "All calamities in the world arise from cherishing self, while all fortune arises from cherishing others. There is no need to say more. Compare the attainments of the Buddhas to our own."

The great Lama Tsong Khapa said, "This precious human rebirth is far more valuable than the wish-fulfilling jewel, which merely fulfils the needs of this life. With this precious human rebirth, all opportunities from here to enlightenment can be accomplished. This is perhaps our first opportunity in many aeons, and we shall find it again only with difficulty. Hard to find, it is quickly lost like a flash of lightening. Contemplating in this way and seeing that mundane affairs are like rice husks, it is imperative to extract the essence of this opportunity in the six times of the day and night. I, a yogi, have done so. Others who seek liberation should do likewise."

The Kadampa Lamas said, "Now is the time to distinguish ourselves from animals."

47. Should we be reborn in the lower realms, there is no suffering we will not endure, and if we do not end worldly existence, there are myriads of sufferings to come. No one but ourselves is to blame, for if we had not done negative actions we would not go to the lower realms. Once we fall into lower realms, even all the efforts of the Buddhas are unable to pull us out again. Our situation is like that of the archer who made poison-tipped arrows and was pierced himself by one of them on his way to battle. Thus the wheel of sharp weapons returns upon us.

Hereafter scrupulously avoid all the causes of sufferings in the lower realms. We should really be afraid of evil, for it is the cause of all misery. When the Fifth Dalai Lama (17th cent.) was asked of what he was most afraid, he replied, "Wrong actions".

48. We may be overcome by family troubles, problems with our partner or our children. Some children receive the greatest care from their parents, but from the earliest age they are under the influence of delusions. The slightest scolding inflames them with hatred so that they even contemplate killing their parents. Killing one's parents is one of the worst karmas that can be created and is the wheel of sharp weapons returning for mistreating them in the past.

There are two traps: monks and nuns are caught in the lesser one of having to work in the administration of monasteries and so on; lay people are caught in the greater one of having to care for a family and attendants.

The robes of ancient rishis were part of their detachment from the world, unlike the robes of most monks today. If we want to do real practice we need to placate nobody first. Real happiness is assured through real practice. If we try to practise wholesomeness, the laws of dependent arising assure progress. From now on be detached from mundane life and keep pure discipline coupled with renunciation.

In his commentary Tenpa Rabgay notes that most of the analogies to weapons in this text concern implements such as bows and arrows, swords etc. At the time this was written the gun did not exist in India, nor do any of the meditational deities wield one. The sword symbolises ultimate bodhicitta, for just as the sword kills by cutting, so does ultimate bodhicitta sever the root of cyclic existence. Moreover, just as the spear or arrow pierces, so does the relative bodhicitta and destroys the self-cherishing attitude.

49. All degeneration and undesirable experiences are the result of the self-cherishing attitude. Now we have understood this. Its demerits should not be underestimated.

Think in this way: "Previously I had not recognised this enemy self-cherishing, but through the kindness of the Guru and the Dharma I have caught him. I have now apprehended the thief who had been sneaking into my thoughts and stealing my wealth of positive karma. I have finally caught this worst of the worst enemies, for the worldly enemy steals merely the materials of this life, but the self-cherishing attitude steals the opportunities of eternity.

“Today I have seized this liar and cheat who had been coming seemingly as a friend since beginningless time to deceive me, who has influenced me towards all unwholesomeness and has caused me great suffering. Just as a treacherous minister is hard to recognise, so is this enemy, self-cherishing, whom today I have caught. Until today I could not recognise this traitor who deceived me into believing that he cared for me so much. I resolve from now on no more to be governed by this negative thought.

“O, how wonderful to have caught this deceiver, who previously was not even doubted. It is by the magnificence of my Spiritual Master and the Dharma teachings that I have achieved this.”

The value of the bodhicitta attitude can be seen in the life of Atisa. Whenever he mentioned Dharmarakshita he folded his hands, his body hair raised and he shivered and wept, yet he did not react in this way towards any of his other one hundred and fifty-five Gurus. He said there was no difference in his faith towards any of his Gurus but if he had a fraction of a kind heart he owed it to this Guru, Dharmarakshita.

Likewise, Lama Trijang Dorje Chang, Junior Tutor to His Holiness the present Dalai Lama, folds his hands upon the crown of his head whenever he mentions Kyabje Pa-bongkha Rinpoche. He was such a great Lama, unsurpassed by any, that hardly any Lamas or Geshes of the Three Pillars (the monasteries of Ganden, Sera and Drepung) had not been his disciples.

Once, in the Cave-under-water, he experienced a manifestation of Yamantaka for nine days, while he himself was essentially Heruka Chakrasambhava. Further, he experienced a manifestation of Vajra Yogini who told him of the benefits to be derived from merging the Vajra Yogini teachings of the Sakya and Gelug traditions into one meditational practice. When he once made a great (tsog) offering beside a Heruka statue near Lhasa, the Wisdom Body actually entered into the statue. The statue danced and told him that whoever received Heruka initiation from him up to the seventh generation would be taken to the Dakini realms.

50. Dharmarakshita was also a great adept of Yamantaka practices. The pointed image he used for his practice was until

recently in Reting monastery. Once when the Moslems invaded India, he struck this painting and the war was averted. Thereafter his handprint remained on the painting.

Now entreat Yamantaka. "Please turn the wheel of sharp weapons above your head and strike out hard against our self-grasping and self-cherishing attitude towards which you are wrathful." This wrath is not directed against self but against delusions. In order that this may happen we must focus all attention upon developing this bodhicitta through exchanging self-awareness for awareness of others. Thus we request the great Yamantaka to assist us in this task.

"With great fury please turn the wheel three times above your head and strike at the attitude of self-grasping and self-cherishing." In order to eradicate these attitudes ourselves we need relative and ultimate bodhicitta as well as the union of the two. These are the three necessities symbolised by the three turnings of the wheel of sharp weapons by Great Yamantaka.

Yamantaka's two legs symbolise the two truths. The right leg, bent, symbolises relative bodhicitta, the left one, outstretched, ultimate bodhicitta. Relative and ultimate bodhicitta should be equal and balanced, so his two sharp eyes, blazing with the fire of wisdom and method, are equal and parallel.

51. Yamantaka's four fangs symbolise the four opponent powers. Request him. "Please hurl your weapons upon my enemies". Although certain meditational deities are wrathful, their wrath is but a manifestation of compassion, while the smiling Yama is the butcher of beings. Once there was an old cat who was no longer able to catch mice, so he told them that, as he had vowed against killing, they could circumambulate him every day. In this way he was able to catch the last of them. This is like Yama, Lord of Death. The spiritual master also sometimes manifests the wrath of a meditational deity, if it is to our benefit.

52. "Please catch hold of this very enemy who has made me wander in the jungle of cyclic existence. Please obliterate this devilish, selfish grasping which has chased me from high to low. Ensnare this sly one who is responsible for all the deteriorations of self and others, kill him outright." "Entice him, fearful

Yamantaka”—this is repeated, implying relative and ultimate bodhicitta. “Draw out this degenerated word of honour and remove this negative thought!”

53. “Bash him, bash him, and rip out the heart of this self-cherishing thought. Dance on the head of this treacherous foe, stamp on him, trample and demolish him.” Like an elephant who first catches a man with his trunk but then tramples him to death.

If the self-cherishing thought is rampant in us, we will have no thought of helping others, and even if we do, our motives will be impure. Thus, “Tear out the heart of this butcher who slaughters our chances of final release”. The enemy is self-grasping and his attendant is the self-cherishing thought.

54. “HUM HUM”—the first syllable represents relative, and the second ultimate bodhicitta. “O great deity Yamantaka, please manifest all your miracles and through them subjugate the two enemies: self-grasping and self-cherishing thought.

“DZA DZA”—an imperative request for the deities to approach. “Please entice them with relative and ultimate bodhicitta. Bind them and never set them free.

“PHAT PHAT”—subjugate them through relative and ultimate bodhicitta. “Oh Yamantaka, you great Lord over Death, free me from the bondage of this self-cherishing thought. With relative and ultimate bodhicitta loosen and sever this knot of self-cherishing thought and its grasping.”

55. “Reveal yourself, O great protector, I still have something more to ask to you.” We are sinking in the quicksand of cyclic existence because of actions and delusions. Weighed down by a sack of delusions, we bear it and sink by self-grasping and self-cherishing. Please cut off this sack immediately, not in the future but right now. Free us! Liberate us through the two bodhicittas.

56. Although we have repeatedly been propelled to lower realms and have undergone great suffering, we are still unable to recognise the disadvantages of grasping at and cherishing the self. We cannot be terrified by suffering. We create the causes for the lower realms over and over again. What compels us? The self-

cherishing attitude. "Please trample him, trample him, kill and destroy this enemy together with his butcherous attendant."

57. We have high expectations of speedy attainments. Only beginning to study, we wish to be respected as a great scholar; making a retreat we expect an immediate manifestation of the deity. Even with these expectations we lack the enthusiastic perseverance by which such attainments are achieved. Usually we are exhausted after a few days and give up.

We have so many plans to begin with, yet bring none to a proper end. We try to study in a dialectic monastery, then enter a tantric one, but after all we end up with nothing. The very force responsible for these failures is the treacherous self-cherishing thought—"Trample him..."

58. We aspire to prosperity and happiness, while having no time to collect their causes through generosity and the other perfections. With little endurance, patience or persistence we study for a short time or break retreats. Yet we stubbornly covet the objects of our desire and anticipate achieving what is beyond us. Outrageous expectation is aspiration without creation of the cause. This is like an illiterate scavenger expecting to become a prime minister. It is self-cherishing which produces outrageous expectations. "Trample him..."

59. We form fickle companionships without prior examination and choose teachers without discrimination. Thus we select our friends from whom we are inseparable in the beginning but who soon become unbearable to us.

While we greedily covet food, clothes and wealth, we do not create their causes by making offerings to the Three Jewels or being generous to the poor and lowly. We rob others of their wealth and go anywhere in search of profit. The self-cherishing thought is responsible for all this.—"Trample, trample him..."

Here it not only emphasises that self-cherishing is the cause of all deterioration, but also that cherishing others is the cause of all happiness and prosperity.

60. We are skilled in flattering for gain. We do not ask bluntly

but rather indirectly suggest, 'what you gave me last year was very useful'. For Dharma practitioners this form of wrong livelihood is very bad, as Santideva says. One should not live either from wealth gained by claiming an undeserved share through one's power or authority, e.g. like the king who levies an unreasonable tax. Other forms of wrong livelihood are giving while expecting a return or that gained through hypocrisy: getting up unusually early to make special preparations and offerings when one knows that one's patron is coming for a visit, hoping to impress him.

We live by the five wrong livelihoods yet think of ourselves as starving. We always think we are lacking something. We do not wear but lock away the clothes we have, and likewise we hoard food and do not eat it. Although we do have a little money and some goods, under the bondage of miserliness we are unable to be generous or make offerings. All these mistakes are the responsibility of the self-cherishing attitude—"Trample upon him again...".

61. We have done nothing to our credit, yet we claim to have helped this monastery and done this or that. We become prominent in our own speech. With bad manners we remind others of how we have helped them. We should not so remind them, for we have anyway promised to help all other beings to gain release.

Though we have done nothing, we boast. Such conceit is caused by self-cherishing—"Trample upon this self-concern which slaughters our chances of release...".

62. We have many spiritual masters but the maintenance of our spiritual resolutions made before them is deplorable. We have too many relationships and too many disciples, none of which we care for well. More concerned with reputation than spiritual results, we gather huge numbers of students but care not for them either spiritually or materially. During the time of the Kadampe Lamas (11th-14th cent.) it was difficult to become a disciple of a spiritual master. A very concentrated approach and introduction were necessary.

63. We have promised to keep spiritual commitments but do not.

Although we have committed ourselves to training enlightenment for all beings, in fact even our moral discipline is full of holes. Our actions are so poor that they shock even the evil spirit. What need to mention the transcended deities?

We should seek a spiritual guide who causes our delusions to decrease, not one who stimulates them further. Great Lama Tsong Khapa said, "Whomever we choose to be our spiritual guide, he should be one who will cause our delusions to recede and our wholesome thoughts to flourish."

Seeing self-cherishing thought at the cause of these various downfalls "Trample upon it..."

If this teaching cannot transform our minds, what will? Yet we keep them on the shelf and away from our minds, how can any effect take place? At least intensify the urgency of developing essential bodhicitta and cutting off the self-cherishing thought. Great Lama Tsong Khapa said, "Bodhicitta is the lifestone (the piece of wood placed in the centre of a statue when it is consecrated) of the Mahayana path. It is the most extensive of the inconceivable means. It is the elixir of the two kinds of accumulations, for the smallest virtue done with this motivation earns great merit. Thus it is a true treasure attracting and condensing all accumulations. Knowing this, the great, undaunted bodhisattvas take it as their practice. I, a yogi, have practised this way. Those who wish for liberation should do likewise."

Bodhicitta is the essence of all the hundreds of different practices. If one is devoid of bodhicitta, even if one practised the Three Meditational Deities together, one would not attain even the Path of Accumulation, not to speak of becoming a Mahayanist. Having the opportunity to hear the teachings of both relative and ultimate bodhicitta yields vast merits, greater by far than those necessary to be born in Brahma's realms.'

While having a glorious name, our practice is so poor that our misdeeds shock even evil spirits. The cause is the self-cherishing thought. "Trample him and rip out his heart!" If as a teacher we do not practise these teachings, it is like turning a god into a devil. We need no teacher to feed our longing desire and hatred but we must cultivate the spiritual guide who helps reduce our delusions.

The words of Dharmarakshita are very powerful, striking directly at our shortcomings. He is an exemplary teacher. Both

teacher and teaching must strike our shortcomings unerringly. If they are complacent towards them, they show the lack of compassion of one who allows a blind man to walk towards a precipice.

64. Although we have listened to but limited teachings, we speak as if with authority and spout nonsense, not answering the needs of disciples. On the other hand, if we had listened properly to impeccable teachings, we would never be at a loss to teach others. We have listened so little and so narrowly that we proclaim all sorts of undesirable interpretations while knowing nothing.

As an example of the effects of limited knowledge: a man was once requested to bless a monk's robe according to Vinaya, but not wanting to admit his ignorance, he asked for a vase to be brought and sprinkled the robes with water. We too have proclaimed distorted realizations and so forth, all because of our self-cherishing attitude. "Trample him..."

65. We may have a great entourage of attendants and disciples and may give them equal care materially and spiritually, yet they become outrageous, paying no attention to advice. Even when we have been kind we receive rough treatment in return. Likewise, though we have cultivated friendships, in our time of need we are without help. As Reting Rinpoche said, "Never place any expectations in human beings. Trust the Three Jewels alone." Self-cherishing is the cause of these misfortunes—"Trample upon him and rip out the heart of this butcher."

66. Although we have high qualifications our knowledge is actually less than a ghost. Tenpa Rabgay (second Reting Rinpoche, Regent and Tutor to the twelfth Dalai Lama), said, "Had I remained satisfied with my credentials, I would have been nowhere. But having studied and practised, you regard me as Dorje Chang and I teach without stumbling." The Third Reting Rinpoche was Tutor to Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang, while the Fourth was the Lama who took responsibility for finding His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

Having credentials but no knowledge is worth nothing. Claiming to be a high lama, one's craving desire and hatred are

worse than those of a ghost or Devputra Mara, a conglomeration of all delusions. Who puts us in this situation? The self-cherishing attitude. Again, "Trample him..."

67. While we are very proud of our specialities, our actual behaviour is worse than a dog's. Our type of person is abundant. We claim very high views—that there is no inherent existence and so on—and boast of having entered the highly esoteric Vajrayana, but our behaviour thoroughly belittles the law of cause and effect and morality. We seek loose women and intoxicants and end up vomiting in the street. Such people cast all thoughts of morality into the wind and with it their hopes of gaining prosperity in this or future lives. All this arises from self-cherishing: "Trample him, trample him..."

We should be very careful before entering the Vajrayana. As Gyalwa Ngawang Gyatso, the Fifth Dalai Lama (17th cent.) said, "To enter the Tantric path without first training in the common paths is like putting a child on a wild elephant." A motorcycle goes very fast, and if a man with no skill were to ride it, he would soon find himself in a ditch.

If we enter the Tantric paths, we should be especially careful of the Pratimoksha and Bodhisattva vows, as well as of the Tantric vows. Buddha Vajradhara never advised carelessness towards Pratimoksha or Bodhisattva vows, nor do any of the Tantric texts. To underestimate or transgress the word of the Buddha is a Tantric root downfall.

Here it is stressed that in the time of the five degenerations great spiritual friends are ignored, while drunken charlatans are exalted. We must be careful, for according to the Tantras it is only after achieving certain realizations that one can take women and intoxicants as a conscious, controlled Dharma practice. Without these realizations, practices such as the various Male-Female union yogas are only causes for lower rebirth. Even if one has the prerequisite realizations for cultivating a consort, the woman with whom one will practise should have trained in the common paths, received the initiations and preserved her Tantric pledges more carefully than her eyes. The man should have realized emptiness and the woman should have the same level of realization. Milarepa said, "To train the energy

channels properly one should act with these three, but to follow such practices without qualification is to climb the hill of swords in hell.”

If possible, our practice should accord with the advice of the root text of the *Guyha Samaja Tantra*. We should be externally an impeccable practitioner of the manner of a Shravakas, while internally we should have the realizations of bliss and voidness.

68. We cherish the thought of profit and success despite the fact that as practitioners of the Mahayana we should offer all benefits to others and gather all losses for ourselves. We try to make someone else responsible for everything that goes wrong and find scapegoats for our own low reputation. Not to make someone else a scapegoat—not to say “I did such and such but he didn’t, so there was no success”—is one of the twenty-two precepts of mind-training. All these downfalls are caused by self-cherishing—“Trample the destroyer of our chance of release”.

69/70. Next is some scolding for those ordained beings who, though clad in saffron robes, seek guidance from evil spirits and ghosts rather than from the Three Jewels. For example, when a monk goes to an oracle and prostrates to the spirit, if his homage is heartfelt it breaks his refuge.

Having taken the Three Vows we do not abide by their precepts and our behaviour is that of the Devputra Mara, exclusively unwholesome. These mistakes are provoked by the self-cherishing attitude. “Trample him...”.

71. While trying to remain in seclusion, we frequently visit the town and indulge in worldly distractions. At the same time we claim to be recluses. Although we have received very great teachings we do not try to put into practice what has been learned. Instead we engage continually in casting horoscopes and divinations for others and visiting families to perform rituals. Self-cherishing is responsible for all these too. “Dance upon his head...”.

72. We abandon discipline which, had it been maintained, would have yielded liberation. Thus we give up both liberation,

and its causes. Pursuing suffering, we lose all opportunities for temporal and lasting happiness. Seeing that this folly is caused by self-cherishing, "Dance upon his head and do away with him".

73. The Dharma is the door of liberation as a canal is the path of water, but we reject it and instead chase after business matters. Discarding the Dharma and not caring about receiving suffering and woe, we engage in business and create causes for rebirth in lower realms.

74. Likewise, we forsake the company and teachings of our spiritual guides, preferring to waste time in the marketplace seeking a good time. This too is caused by the self-cherishing thought, "Trample his head and tear out his heart..."

75. In keeping food and our valuables safely aside, we try to deprive the Sangha of offerings and their means of support. Further we steal and so on. Seeing these downfalls caused by self-cherishing. "Trample him..."

76. We expect to gain extra-sensory perceptions for which the causal condition is meditative control and so forth. However, we do not have enough endurance, and we want these perceptions only in order to interfere with others. It can happen that we ourselves are seriously interfered with by evil spirits and experience great and weird hallucinations. Even so, according to the Vinaya, it is a downfall to declare one's realizations.

If we were so quick, we should speed to enlightenment, yet in our haste we have not yet achieved even the first stage of the path. Meanwhile, we are speeding around in India, America, Bodhgaya and everywhere else. The self-cherishing attitude is the cause. "Trample him..."

77. We receive beneficial advice but hear it as spiteful and are harsh in return. Words with a thought of care are never uttered, while others deceive us with flattery. Such worldly people are unable to discriminate between the wholesome and unwholesome. Self-cherishing is the cause. "Trample him and dance on his head..."

78. We have confidential attendants to whom we entrust our secrets, yet they pass them on to our worst enemies. Likewise, a spiritual teacher's close disciples betray his secret words.

We should always be able to keep a secret, for once disclosed it is impossible for it not to be spread. The one who gave it to you will lose faith in you. Drom Tonpa said, "If you can keep your secrets even from your son, you will be consistent."

There was once a minister who wanted to check his wife's integrity. He hid the king's favourite bird and after killing another one brought the meat home. He explained to his wife that it was the meat of the king's bird and that she must keep it a secret for the sake of their lives. Announcing the bird's loss, the king offered a high reward or the queen's throne for information about the lost bird. The wife betrayed her husband but the arrested minister explained the experiment and was promoted for his intelligence.

We keep company with others, accepting them as close friends. Later we observe only their faults and turn our backs on them. Such people are thieves of the heart and are governed by self-cherishing. "Dance upon his head..."

79. Being so jealous and angry as an evil spirit, we are easily annoyed by others and brood even over their appearance. We are overwhelmed by suspicion and superstition and as a result are inhospitable and unadaptable to others. This arises from self-cherishing "Dance upon him..."

The Kadampa Lamas said that we should be pleasant and open with others, treating them with love.

80. Advised to follow certain disciplines, we ignore it and do the opposite out of malice and spite. If someone tries to become close to us and seeks our advice, though we should be kind to him. We try in every way to oppose and disgrace him. As this too arises from self-cherishing, "Trample him and rip out his heart..."

81. When we find another's activities disturbing and are upset by all he does, we are negatively sensitive to his every word and gesture. We brood and bear a strong grudge. Exalted Nagarjuna

said, "There are two kinds of mind: one like the writing on rock, the other like the writing on water. Our negative mind should be like the writing on water, but our positive mind like the inscriptions on rock." The cause for begrudging others is the self-cherishing attitude, "Stamp him out..."

82. We feel threatened by the high status others have achieved through great study and practice. Instead of rejoicing, we are jealous and abnoxiously backbiting. We look on holy beings as threatening enemies rather than objects of veneration. At the same time we are overwhelmed by blatant longing desire and seek out random sexual partners. As this is also caused by the self-cherishing concern, "Trample him and rip out his heart".

The author of the commentary said, "Whenever the great scholars debate in the Great Cathedral, I rejoice and wish that I myself may one day do the same. Again, I rejoice at others' discourses and request the Holder of the Ganden Throne that I may do the same. Never have I harboured a negative thought about other people's high status."

83. We are unable to maintain long-term friendships because of small faults or slights we see in our friends. We are fickle with new friends, make false promises to them. Finding people initially attractive but later falling out with them is caused by self-cherishing. "Trample him..."

84. Although we lack extra-sensory powers, we accept requests for divinations, but then, making false predictions, we eventually have to face their consequences. If we had compassion we would avoid hurting our companions but, having little or none, we try to retaliate if someone hurts us. Do not return trust with hurt feelings or disappointment.

In this time of the five degenerations it is important to find a noble teacher with great compassion, for only he will care for us, however gross we may be. Meanwhile, taking the self-cherishing attitude as our worst enemy, we should try to eliminate it by whatever means we can.

85. Listening inattentively to teachings, we are always guessing

or presuming their meaning without any clarity. We study merely either to pass the time or to deceive or please others. Then when later we give teachings ourselves, we are an embarrassment to great scholars. Studying only a few scriptures and receiving but a few traditional transmissions, we become sceptical about their value. Because we have not seen or experienced much, we lead our disciples with false advice such as telling them that learning is unnecessary and to meditate blank-mindedly. This is the result of self-cherishing, "Dance upon him...".

86. If one wishes to attain peerless enlightenment, one must be rich in listening to, thinking about and contemplating the teachings. However, because of habituation with anger and passion, our study becomes partial and our Dharmic discussions spiteful towards our opponents. Also through habituation with jealousy, we overestimate and overact to the faults of others. This all arises from self-cherishing. "Dance on his head...".

If someone who was once coarse has become spiritually refined, we are still inclined to doubt him and say we cannot trust him. Even the Buddha was once mundane. We should not belittle people by their past records but should judge them for what they are now. We should recognise our own fortune and train our minds in these teachings.

Great Nagarjuna said, "If you wish to attain enlightenment for self and others, the root practice to emphasise is bodhicitta."

It is because of excessive and habitual familiarity with hatred and longing desire in many previous lives that we belittle others and are strongly attached to our own point of view. This too is the result of self-cherishing. Hatred is the worst obstacle to the development and increase of bodhicitta. While we continue to inflict harm upon others and to undermine their qualities, we will neither develop nor increase bodhicitta. We do not cultivate jealousy, yet out of habit we are intolerant with the qualities of others. As is said in *Bodhicaryavatara*. "Having taken vows to liberate all sentient beings, if by themselves they should find happiness, we should never be jealous."

However, being habitually jealous, we denigrate, repudiate and abuse others. We both overestimate and underestimate them. We exaggerate their bad qualities and underestimate their good

ones. Seeing that this too is caused by self-cherishing, we should dance upon the head of this traitor who destroys our chances of final release.

87. Not having studied extensively, we underestimate the value of study. Through poor understanding we make false proclamations about the lack of necessity of a particular field of study. We have not cultivated spiritual teachers and accordingly hold their transmissions in contempt. We have wrong attitudes towards initiations, lineages and so forth and even transfer these prejudices to others. This is most detrimental.

Without cultivating a well qualified spiritual guide we will gain no realisations. This is stated in the *Gandhavuya Sutra* and others. Sun rays have the power to burn cotton, yet unless a magnifying glass focuses them there will be no fire. "Dance on this concept of selfish concern..."

88. Instead of teaching from the Three Baskets, we do the ooposite. Being antagonistic towards them, we claim to have experimental visions from dreams and letters from space. Teaching from these sources, from one's supposed "self-realisation", is extremely detrimental. Instead of developing good thoughts towards others, we make cynical and sarcastic remarks to and about them. We should have pure thoughts towards others' tenets and practices. Our mistakes arise from self-cherishing. "Dance upon him..."

89. We do not hold actions contrary to the Dharma in contempt but willingly embrace them. For example, when we think of something spiteful we once said to someone we dislike, we rejoice at the hurt to him. Similarly, when we finally catch an irritating flea, we crush him gleefully. This too arises from self-cherishing "Dance upon him..."

90. We do not regard objects of embarrassment as shameful, nor are we ashamed of indulging in the shameful. Being especially unconcerned about transgressing the vows we have taken before the Buddhas and Bodhisattava, we are proud and ostentatious about our downfalls. On the contrary, we are embarrassed

about things for which we need feel no shame. For instance, when a rich man is converted to practising the Dharma and gives up his wealth and goods, we are embarrassed and ashamed of him.

Lack of wealth is no cause for shame. Gyalwa Jhampa Gyatso the Eighth Dalai Lama, once said of his teacher Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen: "My tutor had a harder time than Milarepa who at least had good-tasting nettle soup and sometimes tsampa. My teacher was unable to get even those." Indeed his statue shows him as frail.

Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen once travelled from Tsang to Central Tibet to visit his close teacher, Purchok Ngawang Jhampa, for teachings. He met a caravan of his relatives coming the other way who, rather than praising him, abused him for having nothing to eat or wear. After arriving at his teacher's house, he lived on small bowls of tsampa offerings. On another occasion he met with the King of Tibet (actually an emanation of this Guru), who gave him many offerings. At this he thought. "It seems I am quite famous." Later his teacher rebuked him for thinking that he received offerings because of his own good reputation, for all such things came from the kindness of the Guru. When this Lama eventually became tutor to the Dalai Lama, he found many people suddenly claiming to be his relatives.

If we practise sincerely, we will never be short of strength and well-wishers, for our Lamas, the Yidams, the Dakas, Dakinis and Dharmapalas will support us. Sincere practitioners will never die of starvation. Buddha Skahyamuni dedicated merits for birth as a Universal Monarch 60,000 times to the sustenance of pure practitioners, even when famine requires the trade of one bushel of pearls for one bushel of rice. Lamas in the great monasteries used to study in great hardship, often short of food for many days, but they persisted.

We are little concerned with actions of which we should be ashamed, while we are shy about those of which we should not be embarrassed. This is due to self-cherishing. Tenpa Rabgay says, we cannot count the disadvantages of the self-cherishing attitude even summarily.

91. We do not do the things worth doing, which are the methods

for achieving liberation and enlightenment. From beginningless time we have indulged in improper, unwholesome actions, the cause of which is the self-cherishing attitude. "Dance upon him..."

Until this verse we have talked about the demerits of self-cherishing and the need to recognise these disadvantages. Now Yamantaka is entreated.

92. "O how wonderful to be able to see the demerits of self-cherishing more clearly than ever before. And how wonderful to know you, O great, wrathful Yamantaka, who have all the qualities to conquer self-cherishing and its disadvantages. How wonderful to know such effective destroyer of the great demon, a liberating destroyer who possesses the great Blissfully Gone Body."

Blissfully gone from the viewpoint of abandoning the two defilements, the obstructions to omniscience and liberation, the great guru Yamantaka is Blissfully Gone to liberation possessing omniscient knowledge of all things. In a definitive sense Yamantaka is the non-dual bliss and void, the knowledge and wisdom of all Buddhas.

The wisdom of selflessness is common to the paths of both Sutra and Tantra. The wisdom particular to the highest thought of Tantra is the great bliss that realises voidness. The implement with which to shatter self-cherishing and grasping for self is the wisdom of selflessness and the non-dual union of bliss and voidness. This is symbolised by the skull-headed cudgel wielded by Yamantaka.

We beseech Yamantaka to swing his cudgel three times over his head. According to the common explanation he swings for the first time to destroy grasping for self, a second time to destroy its outcome, the self-cherishing attitude; and a third time to subjugate the contaminated aggregates arising from the former two. In the uncommon explanation the three swings represent the Illusory Body, the Clear Light and the Great Union, respectively.

93. "With great fury, fangs bared, legs in wrathful stance, flying hair on end, O great Yamantaka, please obliterate the self-cherishing attitude once and for all. With boundless compassion

protect us and guide us away from suffering.” So we entreat the great Lama Yamantaka. “Please save us and all sentient beings from the results of self-cherishing. Certain now that this attitude is my worst enemy, please at once expel self-cherishing from my mental stream.”

94. Collect together all the sufferings of this worldly existence and heap them up on the self-cherishing attitude to annihilate it. Practicing “Giving and Taking”, this time send out great rays of light from the left nostril and with the right draw in all suffering, poisons etc. of all sentient beings. Absorbing them, pile them up on the self-cherishing attitude at the heart. Take the five poisonous delusions and stock them up on self-cherishing. The five delusions are the three root poisons, clinging, aversion and ignorance, together with pride and jealousy.

95. Through the great kindness of our Lamas and you, Yamantaka, we have been able to recognise the self-cherishing thought as the cause of all our downfalls. We have become certain that this thought is our worst enemy. Still, if we are inclined to uphold this thought, please quell it and our support of it.

96. All deteriorations are to be blamed on the self-cherishing thought. To no one else should blame be given. Contemplate all sentient beings as being kind throughout the three times. We have gained this precious human rebirth as a result of previous virtuous actions performed with the help and kindness of all sentient beings. Generate a clear thought of the kindness of all sentient beings.

At this point we should practise “Giving and Taking” very effectively. Taking all the afflictions and sufferings of beings upon ourselves, dedicate to them all virtue from the three times. Send it forth for the benefit of all beings by the medium of breath. If we generate even a shred of the enlightened mind, practising “Giving and Taking” helps to develop it.

97. A peacock thrives on poison and becomes more beautiful. We take all the unwholesome actions and delusions of beings in the three times upon our own mindstream. These too shall become

supportive conditions of virtue, so for the purposes of all sentient beings may we attain enlightenment.

98. We should also frequently make extensive prayers of dedication. A crow who has eaten poison is about to die but finds an antidote just in time. "May the virtue we send forth similarly help all embodied beings, whose very root of virtue is at stake because they are overwhelmed by delusion and karma and are excessively tortured by suffering. Under our care may all beings develop the two types of bodhicitta and achieve the state of enlightenment." We should make such selfless prayers.

99. "Dependent on the extensive deeds of Bodhisattvas, when we and all sentient beings, how have been our mothers, dwell in Akanistha Pure Realm, the Heaven Beneath None, may we attain supreme enlightenment."

"May all beings wandering in the six realms, who are now overwhelmed by their karma and dominated by hostile feelings to each other, become close to one another. May they serve as perfect conditions for each others' enlightenment." These are the most excellent prayers.

100. Following are prayers of encouragement: "Until I achieve the state of a Buddha, if I had to go to the lower realms even for the sake of a louse, may I go gladly. When I am there, not separated from the Bodhisattva's extensive deeds and not expecting any assistance, in helping other beings, may I lead them all out of those realms." We should make such bold prayers for the benefit of others. The time will come when our prayers will be realised, so there is no need for timidity.

101. "When the hellguards who torture others see me at the very moment I enter the most glowing heat of hell, their hateful feelings will be subdued. May they see me as their guru. When they ask, "For what reason have you, holy being, come here?" I will reply that as the beings there are undergoing such great suffering I have come to free them. At this the guards release those who are bound, cease torturing the tortured, while the rain of weapons becomes a rain of flowers and the heat becomes cool. May all be enveloped by coolness, the results of bodhicitta.

102. By my power may these denizens of the hells and so forth receive the five clairvoyant powers. May they find birth as an endowed god or human and generate the wish for enlightenment for all beings. May they engage in the Bodhisattva's deeds, such as the six perfections and the four ways of benefitting disciples. Repaying my kindness, may they abide in the extensive deeds and the coolness of bodhicitta. Taking me as their guru and cultivating me in the proper, undistorted manner, may they achieve all the accomplishments of the paths and stages.

103. May I be able to benefit all beings as I benefitted the hell beings. When I work for them, may they too help others to become undistracted by the pleasures of worldly existence or by selfcomplacent peace. May I too realise the ultimate fact of the voidness of inherent existence of these two, thus seeing the equality of worldly existence and selfcomplacent peace.

104. If we do these things we can overcome our preconceptions, our enemies, but if we do otherwise, we will never subdue self-cherishing thoughts.

When the method of great bliss and the wisdom of selflessness are practised together, we will definitely achieve the state of Great Union. If all causes and conditions are assembled, the result will appear.

Up to this verse the disadvantages of self-cherishing and the advantages of cherishing others have been explained. Thus all effort should be made in the practice of "Exchanging self with others". Transference of benefit to others is stressed. However, even if we possess immaculate relative bodhicitta and do not also practise ultimate bodhicitta, the end-result will not be achieved. To have one without the other is to be like a one-winged bird who can never fly.

The author of this text, Dharmarakshita, was a Cittamatrin by tenet, who initially meditated intensely on the enlightened thought alone. But he had a spontaneous realisation of voidness and attained the first Bodhisattva stage. Both ultimate and relative bodhicitta are essential to the attainment of enlightenment. The following verses deal with ultimate bodhicitta, the realisation of voidness

105. Grasping at a self, the self-cherishing thought and all the associated preconceptions arise spontaneously. They arise mutually dependent on causes and conditions. Interdependent arising or relativity mean that phenomena are merely appearances lacking any inherent existence of their own accord.

The author writes that all the things explained above are interdependently arising. Yet someone who understands nothing of dependent arising will, on hearing the word voidness, think only of nothingness or nihilism. If we gain understanding of interdependent arising we can easily achieve insight into voidness. For example, we speak of The Tibetan Library. There are the porch, the wells and pillars, the beams and cavities etc. When these are assembled they are called or imputed to be The Library, but it is impossible for the Library to exist independently of these parts. Likewise when we say a person exists, we mean he depends on all or any of the four or five aggregates. Try to apply these examples to all phenomena.

The change of one thing into another is possible because of the lack of inherent existence. If all things existed independently such interchangeability would be impossible. For example when the sky before us is filled with clouds, we say it is overcast. Later when the clouds have passed away, we say the sky is clear. This can happen only because of dependent arising, because of the lack of inherent existence of the sky and clouds. When we swing a firebrand, a wheel of fire appears. In the same manner all phenomena only appear.

The *Bodhicaryavatara* says, "Without this path none of the three liberations or achievements are possible. The path is the wisdom understanding voidness."

106. A water-soaked log is useless in as much as it cannot fulfil the function of wood and soon disintegrates. Our life, too, can quickly be lost under adverse conditions. We can never afford to delay the development of both relative and ultimate bodhicitta. As a water bubble easily bursts, so can our life suddenly end. We cannot expect either a long or a permanent life, at the most we shall live seventy or eighty years.

Mountain mist appears to have substance, but when we approach it it cannot be found. Functional phenomena at first

appear to be substantially existent but under analysis they cannot be found. From the presence of sensory visual cognition, hot sand, and sunlight a flowing river appears in a mirage, yet on approaching it not a drop of water is to be found. Similarly, functional phenomena produced by cause and conditions appear to be inherently existent, but when analysed are found not to be so.

107. Reality is such that when we do not analyse or scrutinize it, there appears to be an existence, yet when we check there is not.

When a stainless mirror and a person's face come together it seems as if the face is within the mirror. In reality the mirror is devoid of a face. Although all phenomena appear to be true, from their own side there is not even the smallest atom that exists inherently. The clouds in the sky and the mist on the mountain trail look as if they would remain for ever, yet in a few minutes they have disappeared. Functional phenomena appear to exist unchanged, but when we check them we see that in fact they ebb and flow from moment to moment.

So the enemy and the butcher, the enemy of grasping at a self and the butcher which is the self-cherishing thought, as well as the conventional self, which is the object of grasping, all appear to be truly existent. If we check, we find that they never had true existence in the past, nor will they have it in the future, nor do they have it now. Never have they been true.

108. Although appearing to have self-sufficient existence, karma and delusion, the causes of the wheel of suffering, lack true or inherent existence. They are mere appearances.

So far we have seen the establishment of ultimate truth with its various reasonings. From here it is shown that on the functional level things are validly established but still lack inherent existence.

109. Although all worldly and transworldly phenomena lack inherent existence, it is not necessary that they are completely non-existent. In a clear lake, the moon can be seen as a reflection. Likewise the aspects of cause and effect merely appear. We should

establish this by cultivating virtue and abandoning unwholesomeness.

110. In a dream, our bodies can be agonizingly burned by hell fire, but to someone not asleep no fire exists. Although the fire does not actually exist, the dreamer still experiences the burning, the pain and the fear. Similarly the fire and glowing floor of the hells and the hungry ghost realms do not truly, inherently or ultimately exist but the perception of one who has created evil actions develops intense fear while he suffers the agonies of being burned, boiled or chopped up. We should, therefore, never create the evil karma of unwholesome actions. Shantideva says of the glowing hot iron floor of hell, "All these horrors are the product of the negative mind."

One who is suffering great fear perceives himself as being drawn into a deep dungeon, although this is not actually happening. So those things which are to be abandoned—ignorance and delusions, self-grasping and so forth—all lack inherent existence, yet on the conventional level they cause all sorts of negativity to be enacted as well as the ensuing suffering. With the help of the three wisdoms we must try to avoid these mistakes.

The wisdom that understands emptiness is the outcome of the wisdoms of listening, thinking and contemplating. It cuts through the self-grasping and self-cherishing thoughts.

112. When a musician plays the violin, he consoles the saddened heart with beautiful music. Where does the music come from? Not from the body of the instrument, nor from the strings, nor from the bow nor from the musician's effort. None of these individual parts make the music but their confluence does. When we are depressed, beautiful objects console and cheer us up. With reasoning we must establish essentially the lack of inherent existence inseparable from conventional and functional validity.

113. When we examine cause and effect of inherent existence of phenomena we find that they all lack it. Still, on the conventional level production and decay are valid. The word "appearance" is mentioned twice in this verse, once for cause and once for effect.

Similarly, although wholesome and unwholesome actions lack inherent existence, we experience their effect powerfully at the conventional level. If we pay due attention to this teaching of *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons* we will find it interesting as well as effective.

114. When a vase is filled with water it is filled neither by the first nor by any of the following drops individually. It is filled by an accumulation of the drops.

115. Happiness and suffering are not experienced in the individual moment of their cause but in the interdependent collection of causes and conditions. For example, it is not the first blast of the freezing wind that makes us feel cold in the winter but its continuous blowing over a period of time.

116. How wonderful that the perception of appearance and voidness, being mutually supportive, are not contradictory to one another. To be able to see them together in all worldly and transworldly things is truly excellent.

Although the conventional, mere appearance is thoroughly devoid of inherent existence, to those whose perception is sullied by grasping at self it seems to be inherently existence. To see voidness and interdependent arising together as not contradictory but complementary is most profound. This is not perceived by those of lesser intelligence or holders of lower tenets, this view is the profoundest of the profound.

117. When we embark on the contemplation of this voidness, we must have a basic understanding of it. First establish the fact of voidness through proper reasoning, then engage in single-pointed contemplation of it. In the perception of this non-dual contemplation relative phenomena do not appear for it is single-pointedly set upon voidness. To this deep contemplation of voidness only voidness appears. Such excellence is mainly possessed by Aryas only.

118. Just as an object is void of inherent existence, so that voidness itself is also an imputation of terms and concepts and lacks

inherent existence. It would be a mistake to say that, because it is excellent, voidness truly or inherently exists.

When Gampopa (11th cent.) was about to go the Central Tibet, his Guru Milarepa gave him this advice: "Sometimes you will remember your guru. Visualise him on the crown of your head, but remember that he too is devoid of inherent existence. Sometimes you will think of food, but be discriminative: whether it is sweet or bitter, it is nevertheless illusory. Feed on the food of samadhi."

From the point of view of true existence we cannot speak of what is to be done or not done, but in the sphere of primordial originality place your mind on voidness. Repeatedly place your mind so. No sooner have you done so, then you will become the great one with the direct, unwavering view of voidness.

Such greatness can be achieved but generally we lack enthusiastic perseverance. Our present deplorable condition of helplessness both to ourselves and others comes from our lack of effort in generating the two kinds of bodhicitta. The Buddhas had this perseverance, we don't.

119. As explained, cherishing the self is the source of all deteriorations and downfalls whereas cherishing others is the fount of all good qualities. Through the practice of exchanging self with others, meditate in order to develop relative bodhicitta. With the help of logical reasoning, similes etc. as well as the three wisdoms of listening, thinking and contemplating and by proper collection of merits and insight, accomplish the wisdom and physical bodies of a Buddha. Thus, achieve the welfare of self and others.

May we fulfil this great purpose.

Epilogue

The great yogi Dharmarakshita wrote this text in his jungle retreat. The external jungle is infested with wild beasts, while the internal jungle is the mind. In this time of the five degenerate conditions, the jungle is also the place where great negativity is enacted. The great yogi knew all the tenets of Mahayana and received all the transmissions and their explanations. He placed his mind in the sphere of Dharma and thus is called Yogi. His name Dharmarakshita means "He who defends the Dharma",

and his other name, Shilarakshita, means "He who safeguards discipline". From the initial stages of practice up to the attainment of Great Union he protected the Dharma, so he is called Dharmarakshita. Discipline is the very source of all attainments and he kept all of the three kinds of vows without the slightest transgression. For this reason, he is also called Shilarakshita. Considering all the teachings he had received, this excellent spiritual friend summarised them here in verse form.

In the dreadful forest of this blatantly degenerate age, beings engage joyfully in unwholesome actions. Their delusions are indeed a dreadful forest. Still not disheartened, but wishing to train even the most ignorant, wild, transmigrant beings and taking this aim as his whole practice, the great yogi engaged in these teachings. He passed them on to the Lord of the Doctrine, the great Atisa, who attained complete realisation of the two kinds of bodhicitta. It was he who brought them to Tibet.

Atisha, whose ordination name was Dipamkara Srinanana, was born into the family of the King of Zahor (Bengal). His father was a "Dharma-king" and was so rich that he was comparable to an Universal Monarch. However, Atisa gave up his magnificent life as one might spit in the dust and embraced the Dharma. Atisa himself said in this context: "I gave up royalty for austerity. Living in cemeteries and so on, I underwent great hardships for the Dharma. Then, because of my past collection of merit, I met my most excellent Guru Dharmarakshita." Dharmarakshita became Atisa's major spiritual teacher. Because he gave these excellent teachings on mind training to Atisa, he was his teacher. Atisa said, "Among all the teachings of Sutra and Tantra, the teaching on the two kinds of bodhicitta is the essence of all the Buddha's thought, the most ambrosia like one purifying delusions. He gave this to me, and therefore I am now empowered by it rather than by the self-cherishing attitude, whose slave I no longer am."

Now that we too are so empowered, we should cease to be governed by the self-cherishing thought. Of all empowerments, that of the mind is best. Like Atisa, we should engage in its practice.

"Having seen the supremacy of this teaching of the two kinds of bodhicitta over all others prevailing in India and Tibet, I,

Atisa, have disseminated it.

“Amidst all the tenets of Hinayana or Mahayana, Sutra or all classes of Tantra, I have broadened my mind extensively without taking a partisan viewpoint.” We too should study the thoughts and tenets of others in order to understand our own school of thought. “I saw qualities in all, especially the common and uncommon Mahayana, but in this time of rampant decay, when the five degenerate conditions thrive and trainees are stupid and deluded, the most profound tantric teachings will be as indigestible as poison to a crow. A teaching like *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons* is peerless for leading others to enlightenment and to no one will it be like poison.” At a time like this, it is not a good sign when we fail to pay attention to teachings like this, especially if we hanker after texts which bear great names. Particularly if one has no knowledge of the three principles of the path (renunciation, bodhicitta and the wisdom of emptiness) yet seek Tantric teachings, this is not a good sign.

Atisa was recommended by his meditational deities, in particular by Arya Tara, to give this text and its tradition to Drom Tonpa, in order to tame the wild people who live in remote places. Drom Tonpa, the Great Upasaka, the Victory Banner of the Doctrine, was given it as a confidential, secret teaching because he was the most suitable disciple. He practised it pre-eminently and then gave it to the Three Brothers of the Kadam—Geshe Potawa, Geshe Chekawa and Geshe Purchungwa. Later, the teaching was entrusted to the Great Lama Tsong Khapa and his sons. Thus it was greatly disseminated by both the old and new Kadampa.

The text was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by Drom Tonpa together with the fatherly Atisa.

Having received this teaching, we should practise it. We have such great difficulties in obtaining this human form, a Mahayana Guru and the Teachings of the Buddha. The best way to repay the kindness of our guru is to practise as he has advised.

NOTES

- 1 Yamantaka is the wrathful aspect of Manjusri, the emanation of the wisdom of the Buddhas. Yamantaka's wrath is directed against selfishness, self-cherishing attitudes, ego-grasping and grasping for true independent existence. These ignorant attitudes take the life of our chance to gain Enlightenment, and thus Yamantaka's wrath is opposed to the Great Lord of Death.
- 2 Bodhisattvas, or Brave Ones, Sons of the Buddhas, are those beings who have the Enlightened Attitude (Bodhicitta) to work towards the attainment of Buddhahood, that is Enlightenment, for the sake of all beings. There are five points of similarity between Bodhisattvas and peacocks. Just as the colours of the peacocks' feathers grow more radiantly brilliant when they eat plants that are poisonous to other animals, Bodhisattvas shine with blissful happiness by making use of such poisonous delusions as desire and attachment for the benefit of others. Just as peacocks have five crown feathers, Bodhisattvas have the attainment of the five graded paths for Enlightenment. Just as the sight of a peacock's colourful display gives us great pleasure, the sight of a Bodhisattva uplifts our mind because of his Bodhicitta. Just as peacocks live mostly on poisonous plants and never eat insects or cause others harm, Bodhisattvas never cause even the slightest harm to other sentient beings. Just as peacocks eat poisonous plants with pleasure, when Bodhisattvas are offered sensory objects, although they have no attachment for these objects, they accept them with pleasure to allow the donor to gain merit from his offering.
- 3 There are three levels of training of the mind according to the three levels of motivation outlined in the 'Lam-rin' teaching of

the 'Graded Course to Enlightenment'. On the initial level of motivation, we work to attain a better future rebirth. On the intermediate level, we work to attain Liberation (Nirvana) from the vicious circle of rebirth (samsara) for ourselves alone. On the advanced level, as a follower of the Mahayana path, with Bodhicitta motivation we work to attain the Full Enlightenment of Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings. The word 'now' in the text indicates the importance of practising the teachings with the advanced level of motivation, having previously trained our mind along the 'Graded Course'.

- 4 With the advanced level motivation, there are two ways in which we can follow the Mahayana path. By following the Perfection Vehicle (Paramitayana), it may take many lifetimes before we reach our goal of Enlightenment. By following the Tantra Vehicle (Vajrayana), however, we may attain Enlightenment within one human lifetime. The word 'here' in the text indicates the immediacy of practising the tantra path with an especially strong Bodhicitta motivation.
- 5 The tantra system teaches many methods for the speedy attainment of Enlightenment. Included among these is the use as a path of the normally poisonous delusions. In order to use delusions, such as lustful desire, as a path, however, we must first be devoid of the self-cherishing attitude, that is the greedy attachment to our own self-interest. In addition we must have a sound understanding of Voidness—the fact that all things, including ourselves, lack a truly independent manner of existence. To use delusions as a path without these two prerequisites is extremely dangerous and, far from achieving our intended goal, we may completely destroy our chance for attaining Enlightenment.
- 6 Any of the delusions may be used in the tantra system as an actual path to Enlightenment. In the Perfection Vehicle, the delusions may only be used as a method for directly benefitting others when the circumstances demand it. They may not, however, be practised as an actual path.
- 7 The Three Jewels of Refuge are Buddha, his teachings

(Dharma), and the monastic community (Sangha) of those who understand and practise these teachings. The Three Jewels of Refuge are also referred to as the Three Precious Gems or the Triple Gem.

- 8 The practice of tantra requires receiving initiations. These entail the taking of vows concerning moral conduct and the giving of your sacred word of honour to follow the tantric practices in the prescribed manner.
- 9 Cause and effect describes the universal law of karma whereby virtuous actions result in happiness and non-virtuous actions in suffering.
- 10 The practice from Guru-devotion to tantra defines the range of the 'Graded Course to Enlightenment'; of above, note 3.
- 11 Images of Buddha and the various meditational deities representing different aspects of the Buddha's Enlightenment have an important use in both the Perfection and Tantra Vehicles. They are used as meditative aids for developing single-minded concentration (samadhi). By using such images as objects of devotion, we collect the merit to attain the Physical Body of a Buddha.
- 12 It is never possible for us to experience the consequences of the non-virtuous actions of others. Whatever suffering we have must be the result of non-virtuous actions we ourselves have committed in the past.
- 13 The six realms of existence are divided into the three higher and the three lower states. The three lower unfortunate states of re-birth are those of the hell creatures, hungry ghosts (preta) and animals. The three higher fortunate states of rebirth are those of the gods, anti-gods (asura) and humans.
- 14 We request Yamantaka to turn the wheel of sharp weapons three times. These three refer to (1) the conventional or relative level of truth on which conventional Bodhicitta operates as the

means for leading both self and others to Enlightenment; (2) the ultimate level of truth on which ultimate Bodhicitta functions as the wisdom understanding Voidness and (3) these two levels or grades of truth realised together.

- 15 The four great opponents eliminate the necessity for us to experience the unfortunate consequences of our previously committed non-virtuous actions. These four are (1) feeling regret and disgust with our non-virtue; (2) taking refuge in the Three Jewels of Refuge and meditating on Bodhicitta; (3) offering our promise never to commit such non-virtue again and (4) performing and dedicating the merit of virtuous actions for the benefit of all sentient beings.
- 16 Mantras are words of power, combinations of Sanskrit syllables used as invocations.
- 17 Hum, dza and p'a (spelled 'phat') are mantric seed syllables. The first repetition of each is for conventional Bodhicitta, the opponent for our self-cherishing attitude. The second repetition is for ultimate Bodhicitta, which destroys our ego-grasping.
- 18 The sack of our body is filled with the five poisonous delusions of longing desire, fearful and angered repulsion, closed-minded ignorance, arrogant pride and jealousy.
- 19 The 'Three Baskets' ('Tripitaka') of Buddha's teachings concern disciplined morality (vinaya), discourses on meditation (sutra), and philosophy and metaphysics (abhidharma).
- 20 We request Yamantaka to swing three times round his head his skill-headed bludgeon representing both the wisdom of Egolessness, common to both the Perfection and Tantra Vehicles, as well as the non-dual wisdom of Voidness and Bliss. The three-times he swings this bludgeon destroy (1) ego-grasping, (2) our self-cherishing attitude and (3) our defiled bodies of delusion produced by these two types of ignorance.

21 The three kinds of wisdom can refer either to the wisdoms of acquaintance, contemplation and meditation, or to intellectual, conceptual and non-conceptual wisdoms.

22 hBrom-ston-pa.