The Asian Classics Institute Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Reading Eight

Herein lie the instructions on developing the good heart entitled "The Wheel of Knives"

This work on developing the good heart was presented to Lord Atisha (982-1052) by the Indian master Dharma Rakshita. The selections found here are taken from a version in the Dharmsala edition of The Compendium of Texts on Developing the Good Heart, pp. 96-110. Please note that many different editions of the texts exist, with spellings that sometimes vary greatly; we have used some of these in the present translation where it appeared more correct.

ારગોંન અર્ઠેના નશ્યુય બાદ્યના વર્ષવા વે

I bow down to the Three Precious Jewels.

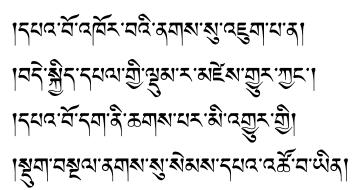
।न्याः में याक्नायान्यायाः स्रोकेंक्र करें याकेंक्र सें लिखानुः मा

Here is "The Wheel of Knives," an instruction which strikes the enemy at his heart.



I bow down to the Angry One, the Lord of Death.

Peacocks wander in the midst Of a forest of poison trees; A garden of healing herbs and plants May be something lovely, But peacocks have no love for them— They live off poison itself.



Bodhisattva warriors are the same: A garden of comfort and pleasures May be something lovely, But the warriors have no attachment for them— They live off a forest of pain.

The kings of cowardice who pursue Comfort and pleasure find themselves Transported instead to pain. Those mighty warriors who pursue Pain for others find themselves Forever surrounded by bliss, By the power of their courage.

Now in this place desire is like A forest of poison trees; Bodhisattva warriors, like peacocks, Are strong enough to take it. Cowards though are like the crow, For these same leaves are death to it— How could those who only think Of what they want themselves Ever have the strength to eat This poison?

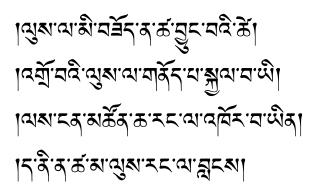
The same is true with all the other Mental afflictions there are; These are enough to threaten the life Of nirvana for those like crows. The peacock bodhisattvas though Turn the poison forest of Their mental afflictions into opportunities, And food to keep them strong. They leap then into the forest Of this vicious circle of life; They make it an opportunity, And thus destroy the poison.

Realize now that grasping for yourself Is the henchman of the devil And keeps you here in this vicious circle, Helpless to help yourself. Run now far from the state of mind That only wants what's good for me, That only wants what feels good, And happily take upon yourself Any hardship for others' sake.

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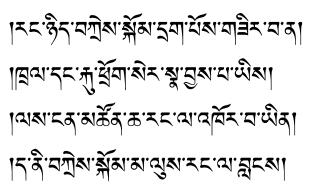
The mass of living beings are just like me: Driven on against their will by karma, Minds forever filled with negative thoughts. Let me take now all their pain And throw it down in heaps Upon the head of the part of me That wants only me to be happy.

Whenever I feel myself being carried Away by what I want, May I stop myself and give away My own happiness to others. Whenever those who've pledged to help me Instead do something very wrong, May I say to myself, "It's because I failed To keep my mind on goodness," And thus put my heart at ease.



Whenever my body is stricken By some unbearable sickness, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of doing harm To the bodies of other people. From now on then I'll take upon My own body all the sickness That comes to anyone at all.

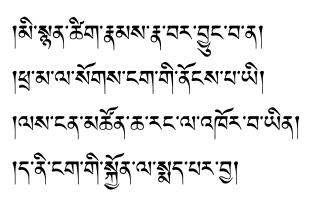
Whenever I feel any pain Inside of my own thoughts, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: Beyond a doubt it's the karma Of upsetting other people. From now on then I'll take on myself The hurt that others feel.



Whenever I find myself tormented By feelings of thirst and hunger, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of burdening others financially, Of thieving, of stealing, of failing to share. From now on then I'll take on myself The hunger and thirst of others.

าณสารสามสั้สาธารราณาวุศีราราพิสา 15 के खुरू र्श्वेग मालक मु र्नेक र मांगिया

Whenever I suffer in the service Of another whose authority is more, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of arrogance towards those Who are less than me, And forcing others to do my work. From now on then I'll force another, I'll force my own body and life, Into the service of others.



Whenever an unpleasant word from another Comes and reaches my ears, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of mistakes I've made In different things I've said, Divisive talk and such. From now on then the only thing That I'll talk bad about Is what I say that's wrong.

ารสิรสารฐราวสวาสิมารฐัญเนราญ

Any time a single thing Strikes me as something unpleasant, Is because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of constantly seeing my world As something less than totally pure. From now on then I'll devote myself To seeing things only as purity.

।ধর ঀ৾৾৴ অর্ছ ৭ সেই র্য্মাম স্ স্ স্র এ সেই ঠা । মান্তর স্রী এর্মি র রমম স্ স্ সা মীর্মা ম স্ স্ ম । এম্ব স্ র স্টর্র ক স্ স্ এর্মি স্ স্ স্ রা । স্ র মান্তর স্ রা এর্মি স্ স্ স্ রা মার্য মার্য স্ রা

Whenever I find myself without Anyone to help me, no friends of my own, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of leading away Those who were close to another. From now on then I'll never act In a way that makes others lose The ones who are close to them.

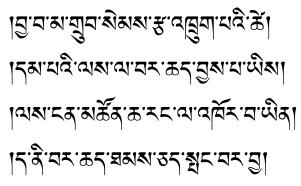
Suppose it comes that not a single Spiritual kind of person Likes me in the least.

It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of giving up spiritual friends, And associating with people Who have no noble thoughts. From now on then I'll give up being Close to people like this.

Whenever someone threatens me, Or anything of the like, Says I'm bad when I've been good, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of speaking badly About real spiritual people. From now on then I'll never Say someone good is not, Say something bad of others.

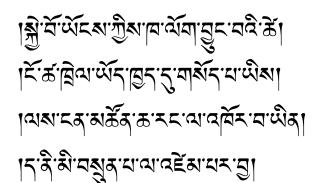
When it happens that I suddenly lose All that I need to live on, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of laying to waste The things that others depend on. From now on then I'll always Find ways to supply for others The things they need to live.

When I can't think clearly, When I feel depressed at heart, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of leading others To constantly do bad deeds. From now on then I'll avoid Ever being a reason For others to do something wrong.



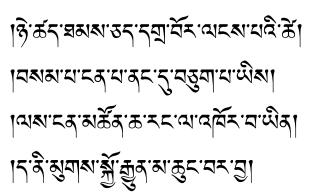
When the things I try to accomplish Never seem to work out, And I feel upset to the core, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of obstructing The work of holy beings. From now on then I'll give up Ever being a hindrance to them.

When no matter what I do My Lama never seems pleased, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of hypocrisy In my practice of the Dharma. From now on then I'll try To be less insincere Within my spiritual life.



When everyone around me seems To criticize my every move, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of not caring From my own side whether I'm good, Or how what I do affects others. From now on then I'll avoid Doing any actions That are inconsiderate.

When it happens that, as soon as I bring together A group of people around me, They begin to strive against one another, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of wishing ill on others, And splitting people into sides. From now on then I'll never Wish ill on others, But only do them well.



When all those closest to me Turn instead to enemies, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again, The karma of hiding within me Thoughts to bring others harm. From now on then I'll try To lessen my tendency Of planning to trip up others.

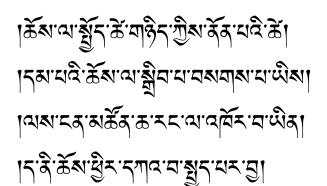
भननः मार्डेदः झुनानदानुद्धुः कुः दनायवेः के าสิมพามีรารที่ราณาสาามีราวสามพานาพิพา เฉลาะสามส์สาธาระาณาวุณีราราพิสา ารสิ สิ ้าวส์ ๆ ณ สิ ๆ พ สรรรรา

When serious sickness comes to me— Pneumonia, fevers of death, Cancer, water filling my limbs— It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again, The karma of breaking the rules And sullying myself by the act Of wrongly using those things That were supposed to be used for Dharma. From now on then I'll never Do anything like stealing Objects meant for Dharma use.

।র্শ্ম ন্থম নের্মা বিদ এজা আজি মার্থমের্ট ক্রা । দুর্মা ক্রী মান্য সমা মারী দ্রা দা মার্য । নার্যা মার্য । নার্বা মার্য মার্য

When suddenly I'm stricken By migraines that wrack my body, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again, The karma of doing those things That I pledged to never do. From now on then I'll avoid Every non-virtuous act.

When I find myself unable To understand a single thing, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again, The karma of following spiritual paths That are better left behind. From now on then I'll spend my time In learning and the rest, In pursuing perfect wisdom.



When I find myself overcome By sleepiness as I try To do my spiritual practices, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of behaving In a way towards the Dharma that blocks My future understanding. From now on I'll undertake Any kind of hardship For the sake of my spiritual life.

हिंदर्सेट्सायान्यायाद्वसायायीयाकेप्तिके เมิรุญาวุโร้า เวลิ ซิมารุมิญพามารุสิมมาเม เฉลาะสามส์สาธาระาณาวุณีราราพิสา וךיאימדיאישרימקָביאישן

When my own mind seems to enjoy The mental afflictions within it And constantly wanders away, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of failing to think Of the fact that I'll not be here long, And the many other problems Of this vicious circle of life. From now on then I'll try To feel more tired of living Here in the cycle of pain.

ા કે ર્સુવા નુશ્વ ગાુન અન વર્વેન વેન નવે છે | ๅ๛ฺฆฺๅะฺสฺฺู๛ฺฐฆฺๅฏๅๅๅ๚๙ๅ๚๛ํ๚ าณสารสามสั้สาธารราณาวุศีราราพิสา ารสิ นสัร สุมมายสัยาณ นารายา

When all the activities that I begin Go steadily down, then fail, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of disregarding The laws of karma itself As well as the consequences Of the things I do. From now on then I'll try My best to collect good karma.

শিমার্শ্মন্থার্জনের্থনিয়ান্যসার্মন্যন্থনিয় ।বিশার্শনি স্রিদ্যান্যান্যার্শ্বিমান্ত্রমান্যভিমা ।অম্বাদ্বরামর্ক্রিরাজান্যমান্ত্র্মিয়ান্যসার্দ্বা ।বারীবিশার্শনিই স্রিদ্যান্যজান ব্রিন্যান্যসান্ত্রা

When all the attempts I make To honor and offer to holy ones Seem to go awry, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of putting my hopes In the negative side of things. From now on then I'll reject All negativity.

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When I find myself unable To seek the help of the Triple Gem, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of not believing In the Buddha, an enlightened being. From now on then I'll place myself Only in the care Of all three of the Jewels.

When I'm attacked by worries, By obstacles in my mind, When spirits come to haunt me, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of doing wrong deeds Towards Angels and around The teachings of the secret word. From now on then I'll stop All the negative thoughts that wander Throughout my mind all day.

When I find I have no place to stay, Wandering helpless here and there Like a bear lost far from home, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of forcing Lamas and such To leave behind their homes. From now on then I'll never drive Someone from the place they live.

When disasters like frost or hail Or anything of the like appear, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of failing to properly keep My pledges and other such codes. From now on then I'll keep My pledges and such pure clean.

When my want for things is great, But I've nothing to pay for them, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of failing to give to others, And offer to the Jewels. From now on then I'll work hard To make offerings, and to give.



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When I look ugly to others And those around me insult me for it, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of making holy images Without taking the proper care, And of letting anger drive me Into a state of turmoil. From now on then I'll craft These holy images right, And learn to endure with patience.

เฉลาะสามส์สาธารราญาญส์รามาพิสา ารลิราษีราฐราสสารฐราสราย

When no matter what I do I find my peace of mind Disturbed by likes and dislikes, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of allowing myself To wallow in negative states of mind. From now on then I'll reject All feelings of "you against me."



When whatever I undertake Fails in the aim I'd hoped for, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of holding in my heart A harmful way of seeing things. From now on then whatever I do I'll do for the sake of others.

When I practice Dharma as much as I can But still cannot control my mind, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of seeking ways to be Important in a worldly way. From now on then I'll only hope For freedom, devoting myself to it.

When I second-guess some virtuous thoughts I've had, and start to regret them, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again:

The karma of failing to care For others' feelings, making friends With anyone I meet, pretending To be more than I am. From now on then I'll take great care In choosing those I associate with.

When another person weaves their wiles And totally misleads me, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of thinking only of me, Of pride, of hoping for recognition. From now on then I'll not let on To anyone all the personal qualities That I've been able to gain.

When all the teaching and learning Of Dharma that I do Has degenerated into feelings Of liking and dislike, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of failing to consider

Deep within my thoughts All the trouble the demons can bring. From now on then I'll watch For things that can hurt my practice And give up all of them.

When all the things that I've done right Suddenly turn to something wrong, It's because the wheel of knives Has turned on me again: The karma of repaying kindnesses That others have done for me With the very opposite. From now on then I'll bow my head And with the utmost respect Return each kindness granted.

To put it in a nutshell, Anything that ever falls Upon us that we never wanted Is just the same as a blacksmith Who accidentally kills himself Forging a sword for someone. It's all because the wheel of knives Has turned on us again; Decide then that from now on You'll be careful not to commit A single negative act.

।দর ঊর্দ মার্ মার্য স্থু মানস্থ মার্ ট্রিন ন অেন্ । ।মন মে মেরি মন্দ মী মন মে অিম ন মন্দ মা ।মে মান্দ মার্টির ক্র মন্দ মে মের্মি মান্দ মিরা । নি ন মা স্থী মান্দ মি মে মান্দ মার্ মির্ ন ন্রা।

When a person goes to the lower realms And goes through all the pain there, It's just the same as an archer Who accidentally kills himself With an arrow of his own. It's all because the wheel of knives Has turned on us again; So come, decide, that from now on You'll be careful not to commit A single negative act.

।ষ্ট্রিম'শ্রী'স্থুনা'নস্থম'র্ষনা'দ্য'ননঝ'ম'অন'। ।নস্ক্রীনঝ'নর'র'র'র'র'ম'ম'নআন্বর্মন'ম'শ্বেন। ।অঝ'নর'মর্ক্রি'ক'নন'থ'রের্মিন'ন'থ্রি। ।ন'রী'রন্ম'মন'নন'দ্য'শ্রুন'নন'নীমা।

And when the troubles of the home life Fall upon you in a flash, It's just as if a child Brought up safely by its parents Turns around and kills them; It's all because the wheel of knives Has turned on us again. From now on then the wisest thing Is to live the life of a person Who has left the home life behind.