

# The Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel

## (Cakkavatti-Sihanada Sutta)

1. Thus have I heard.

Once the Lord was staying among the Magadhans at Matula.

Then he said: 'Monks!'

'Lord', they replied, and the Lord said :

'Monks,

be an island unto yourselves,

be a refuge unto yourselves with no other refuge.

Let the Dhamma be your island,

let the Dhamma be your refuge, with no other refuge.

And how does a monk dwell as an island unto himself,

as a refuge unto himself with no other refuge,

with the Dhamma as his island,

with the Dhamma as his refuge,

with no other refuge?

Here, a monk abides contemplating body as body,

ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Here, a monk abides contemplating feelings as feelings,

ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Here, a monk abides contemplating mind as mind,

ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Here, a monk abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects,

ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Keep to your own preserves, monks, to your ancestral haunts.

If you do so, the Mara will find no lodgement, no foothold.

It is just by the building-up of wholesome states that this merit increases.

2. 'Once, monks,

there was a monarch named Dalhanemi,

a righteous monarch of the law,

conqueror of the four quarters,



who had established the security of his realm and was possessed of the seven treasures.

These are : the Wheel Treasure, the Elephant Treasure, the Horse Treasure, the Jewel Treasure, the Woman Treasure, the Householder Treasure, and seventh, the Counsellor Treasure.

He has more than a thousand sons who are heroes, of heroic stature, conquerors of the hostile army.

He dwells having conquered this sea-girt land without stick or sword, by the law.

3. 'And, after many hundreds and thousands of years, King Dalhanemi said to a certain man:

"My good man,  
whenever you see the sacred wheel-treasure has slipped from its position, report to me."

"Yes, sire", the man replied.

And after many hundreds and thousands of years  
the man saw that the sacred Wheel-Treasure had slipped from its position.  
Seeing this, he reported the fact to the King.

Then King Dalhanemi sent for his eldest son, the crown prince, and said: "My son, the sacred Wheel-treasure has slipped from its position. And I have heard say that when this happens to a wheel-turning monarch, he has not much longer to live. I have had my fill of human pleasures, now is the time to seek heavenly pleasures.

You, my son, take over control of this ocean-bounded land.

I will shave off my hair and beard, don yellow robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness."

And having installed his eldest son in due form as king,  
King Dalhanemi shaved off his hair and beard, donned yellow robes, and went forth from the household life into the homelessness.  
And seven days after the royal sage had gone forth,  
the sacred Wheel-Treasure vanished.

4. "Then a certain man came to the anointed Khattiya King and said:  
"Sire, you should know that the sacred Wheel-Treasure has disappeared."  
At this the King was grieved and felt sad.  
He went to the royal sage and told him the news.  
And the royal sage said to him,  
"My son, you should not grieve or feel sad at the disappearance of the Wheel-Treasure.  
The Wheel-Treasure is not an heirloom from your fathers.





But now, my son, you must turn yourself into an Ariyan wheel-turner.  
And then it may come about that,  
if you perform the duties of an Ariyan wheel-turning monarch,  
on the fast day of the fifteenth,  
when you have washed your head and gone up to the verandah  
on top of your palace for the fast-day,  
the sacred Wheel-Treasure will appear to you, thousand-spoked,  
complete with fellow, hub and all appurtenances."

5. "But what, sire, is the duty of an Ariyan wheel-turning monarch?"

"It is this, my son:  
Yourself depending on the Dhamma,  
honouring it,  
revering it,  
cherishing it,  
doing homage to it and  
venerating it,  
having the Dhamma as your badge and banner,  
acknowledging the Dhamma as your master,  
you should establish guard,  
ward and protect according to Dhamma  
for your own household, your troops, your nobles and vassals,  
for Brahmins and householders, town and country folk,  
ascetics and Brahmins, for beasts and birds.

Let no crime prevail in your kingdom,  
and those who are in need, give property.  
And whatever ascetics and Brahmins in your kingdom  
have renounced the life of sensual infatuation and are  
devoted to forbearance and gentleness,  
each one calming himself and each one striving for the end of craving,  
if from time to time they should come to you and consult you as to  
what is wholesome and what is unwholesome,  
what is blameworthy and what is blameless,  
what is to be followed and what is not to be followed,  
and what action will in the long-run lead to harm and  
what to welfare and happiness,  
you should listen, and tell them to avoid evil and do what is good.

That, my son, is the duty of an Ariyan wheel-turning monarch.

6. "Then, rising from his seat,  
covering one shoulder with his robe,  
the King took a gold vessel in his left hand,  
sprinkled the Wheel with his right hand, and said:  
"May the noble Wheel-Treasure turn, may the noble Wheel-Treasure conquer!"



The Wheel turned to the east, and the King followed it with his fourfold army.

And in whatever country the Wheel stopped,  
the King took up residence with his fourfold army.

And those who opposed him in the eastern region came and said:

"Come, Your Majesty, welcome!

We are yours, Your majesty. Rule us, Your Majesty."

And the King said:

"Do not take life.

Do not take what is not given.

Do not commit sexual misconduct.

Do not tell lies.

Do not drink strong drink. Be moderate in eating."

And those who had opposed him in the eastern region became his subjects.

7. "Then the wheel turned south, west, east, and north ... (as verse 6).

Then the Wheel-Treasure, having conquered the lands from sea to sea,  
returned to the royal capital and stopped before the King's palace as he  
was trying a case,  
as if to adorn the royal palace.

8. "And a second wheel-turning monarch did likewise,

and a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, a seventh king also ...

told a man to see if the Wheel had slipped from the its position (as verse 3).

And seven days after the royal sage had gone forth wheel disappeared.

9. "Then a man came to the King

and said: "Sire, you should know that the sacred Wheel-Treasure has  
disappeared."

At this the King was grieved and felt sad.

But he did not go to the royal sage and ask him about the duties of a wheel-  
turning monarch.

Instead, he ruled the people according to his own ideas,

and, being so ruled, the people did not prosper so well as they had done  
under the previous kings

who had performed the duties of a wheel-turning monarch.

Then the ministers, counsellors, treasury officials, guards and doorkeepers,  
and the chanters of mantras came to the King and said:

"Sire, as long as you rule the people according to your own ideas,

and differently from the way they were ruled before the previous wheel-turning monarchs,  
the people do not prosper so well.

Sire, there are ministers, counsellors, treasury officials, guards and doorkeepers,





and the chanters of mantras in your realm, including ourselves,  
who have preserved the knowledge of how a wheel-turning monarch  
should rule.

Ask us, Your Majesty, and we will tell you!"

10. 'Then the King ordered all the ministers and others to come together,  
and he consulted them. And they explained to him the duties of a wheel-  
turning monarch.

And, having listened to them, the King established guard and protection,  
but he did not give property to the needy, and as a result poverty became  
rife.

With the spread of poverty,  
a man took what is not given, thus committing what was called theft.

They arrested him, and brought him before the King, saying:  
"Your Majesty, this man took what was not given, which we call theft."

The King said to him:

"Is it true that you took what was not given - which was called theft?"

"Your Majesty, I have nothing to live on."

Then the King gave the man some property, saying:

"With this, my good man, you can keep yourself,  
support your mother and father, keep your wife and children,  
carry on a business and make gifts to ascetics and Brahmins,  
which will promote your spiritual welfare and  
lead to a happy rebirth with pleasant result in the heavenly sphere."

"Very good, Your Majesty", replied the man.

11. 'And exactly the same thing happened with another man.

12. 'Then the people heard that king was giving away property  
to those who took what was not given, and they thought:

"Suppose we were to do likewise!"

And then another man took what was not given,  
and they brought him before the King.

The King asked him why he had done this, and he replied:

"If I give property to everybody who takes what is not given,  
this theft will increase more and more.

I had better make an end of him,  
finish him off once for all, and cut his head off."

So he commanded his men:

"Bind this man's arms tightly behind him with a strong rope, shave his head closely,



and lead him to the rough sound of a drum through the streets and squares and out through the southern gate,  
and there finish by inflicting the capital penalty and cutting off his head!"  
And they did so.

13. 'Hearing about this, people thought:

"Now let us get sharp swords made for us,  
and then we can take from anybody what is not given [which is called theft],  
we will make an end of them, finish them off once for all and cut off their heads."

So, having procured some sharp swords,  
they launched murderous assaults on villages, towns and cities,  
and went in for highway-robbery, killing their victims by cutting off their heads.

14. 'Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife,  
from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased,  
from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased,  
from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased - and

from the increase in the taking of life,  
people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased,  
and as a result this decrease of life-span and beauty, the children of those whose life-span had been eighty thousand years lived for only forty thousand.

'And a man of the generation that lived for forty thousand years took what was not given.

He was brought before the King, who asked:

"Is it true that you took what was not given - that is called theft?"

"No, Your Majesty", he replied, thus telling a deliberate lie.

15. 'Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife,  
from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased,  
from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased,  
from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased, and  
from the taking of life increased, lying increased,

from the increase in lying,  
people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased,  
and as a result this decrease of life-span and beauty,  
the children of those whose life-span had been forty thousand years lived for only twenty thousand.





'And a man of the generation that lived for twenty thousand years took what was not given. Another man denounced him to the King, saying: "Sire, such-and-such a man has taken what was not given", thus speaking evil of another.

16. 'Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife, from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased, from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased, from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased, and from the taking of life increased, lying increased, from the increase in lying, the speaking evil of others increased,

and in consequence, people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result this decrease of life-span and beauty, the children of those whose life-span had been twenty thousand years lived for only ten thousand.

'And of the generation that lived for ten thousands years, some were beautiful, and some were ugly. And those who were ugly, being envious of those who were beautiful, committed adultery with other's wives.

17. 'Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife, from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased, from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased, from the increase use of weapons, the taking of life increased, and from the taking of life increased, lying increased, from the increase in lying, the speaking evil of others increased, sexual misconduct increased,

and in consequence, people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result this decrease of life-span and beauty, the children of those whose life-span had been ten thousand years lived for only five thousand.

'And among the generation whose life-span was five thousand years, two things increased: harsh speech and idle chatter, in consequence of which people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose life-span had been five thousand years lived, some for two-and-a half thousand years, and some for only two thousand.



'And among the generation whose life-span was two-and-a-half thousand years,  
 covetousness and hatred increased,  
 and in consequence of which people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased,  
 and as result, the children of those whose life-span had been two-and-a-half thousand years  
 lived for only a thousand.



'And among the generation whose life-span was a thousand year,  
 false opinions increased,  
 and in consequence of which people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased,  
 and as result, the children of those whose life-span had been a thousand years  
 lived for only five hundred.



'And among the generation whose life-span was five hundred year,  
 three things increased: incest, excessive greed and deviant practices,  
 and in consequence of which people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased,  
 and as result, the children of those whose life-span had been five hundred years  
 lived for only two hundred and fifty years, some for only two hundred.



18. 'Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife,  
 from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased,  
 from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased,  
 from the increase use of weapons, the taking of life increased, and  
 from the taking of life increased, lying increased,

from the increase in lying,  
 the speaking evil of others increased,  
sexual misconduct increased,  
 harsh speech and idle chatter increased, and

from the increase of harsh speech and idle chatter, covetousness and hatred increased, and  
 from the increase in covetousness and hatred, false opinions increased,  
 and  
 from the increase in false opinions, incest, excessive greed and deviant practices increased, and  
 from the increase of excessive greed and deviant practices,  
 lack of respect for mother and father,  
 for ascetics and Brahmins, and  
 for head of the clan increased,



and in consequence, people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result of this decrease of life-span and beauty, the children of those whose life-span had been two-and-a-half centuries lived for only a hundred years.

19. 'Monks, a time will come when the children of these people will have a life-span of ten years.

And with them, girls will be marriageable at the five years old.

And with them, these flavours will disappear: ghee, butter, sesame-oil, molasses and salt.

Among them, kudrusa-grain will be the chief food, just as rice and curry are today.

And with them,

the ten courses of moral conduct will completely disappear, and

the ten courses of evil will prevail exceedingly:

for those of a ten-year life-span there will be no word for "moral",

so how can there be anyone who acts in a moral way?

Those people who have no respect for the mother and father,

for ascetics and Brahmins, for the head of the clan,

will be the ones who will enjoy honour and prestige.

Just as it is now the people

who show respect for mother and father, for ascetics and Brahmins,

for the head of the clan, who are praised and honoured,

so it will be with those who do the opposite.

20. 'Among those of a ten-year life-span

no account will be taken of mother or aunt,

of mother's sister-in-law, of teacher's wife or of one's father's wives and so on

- all will be promiscuous in the world like goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, dogs and jackals.

Among them, fierce enmity will prevail one for another,

fierce hatred, fierce anger and thoughts of killing

mother against child and child against mother,

father against child and child against father,

brother against brother, brother against sister,

just as the hunter feels hatred for the beast he stalks ....

21. 'And for those of a ten-year life-span ,

there will come to a "sword-interval" of seven days,

during which they will mistake one another for wild beasts.

Sharp swords will appear in their hands, thinking:

"There is a wild beast!" they will take each other's lives with those swords.



But there will be some beings who will think:

"Let us not kill or be killed by anyone!

Let us make some grassy thickets or jungle-recesses or clumps of trees,  
for rivers hard to ford or inaccessible mountains and live on roots and  
fruits of the forest."

And they will do this for seven days.

Then at the end of the seven days,

they will emerge from their hiding-places and rejoice together of one  
accord, saying:

"Good beings, I see that you are alive!"

And then the thought will occur to those beings:

"It is only because we became addicted to evil ways  
that we suffered this loss of our kindred, so let us now do good!

What good things can we do?

Let us abstain from the taking of life, and,  
having undertaken this good thing, will practise it.

And through having undertaken such wholesome things,  
they will increase in life span and beauty.

And the children of those whose life-span was ten years will live for twenty  
years.

22. 'Then it will occur to those beings:

"It is through having taken to wholesome practises  
that we have increased in life-span and beauty,  
so let us perform still more wholesome practises.

Let us refrain

from taking what is not given,

from sexual misconduct,

from lying speech,

from harsh speech,

from idle chatter,

from covetousness,

from ill-will,

from wrong views;

let us abstain from three things: incest, excessive greed, and deviant  
practices;

let us respect our mothers and fathers, ascetics and Brahmins, and the  
head of the clan, and

let us persevere in these wholesome actions."

'And so they will these things, and on account of this,

they will increase in life-span and in beauty.

The children of those whose life-span is twenty years will live to forty,





their children will live to be eighty,  
 .....  
 their children to be six hundred and forty;

the children of those whose life-span is six hundred and forty  
 will live for two thousand years,  
 their children for four thousand, and  
 their children for twenty thousand.  
 The children of those whose life-span is twenty thousand years  
 will live to be forty thousand, and  
 their children will attain to eighty thousand years.

23. 'Among the people who live with an eighty thousand-year life-span,  
 girls will become marriageable at five hundred.  
 And such people will know only three kinds of disease: greed, fasting, and  
old age.  
 And in the time of those people this continent of Jambudipa will be  
 powerful and prosperous,  
 and villages, towns and cities will be but a cock's flight one from the next.

This Jambudipa, like Avici,  
 will be as thick as with people as the jungle is thick with reeds and rushes.  
 At that time the Varanasi of today will be royal city called Ketumati,  
 powerful and prosperous, crowded with people and well-supplied.  
 In Jambudipa there will be eighty-four thousand cities headed by Ketumati  
 as the royal capital.

24. 'And in the time of the people with an eighty thousand-year life-span  
 there will arise in the capital city Ketumati a King called Sankha,  
 a wheel-turning monarch,  
 a righteous monarch of the law,  
 conqueror of the four quarters,  
 who had established the security of his realm and was possessed of the  
seven treasures.

These are : the Wheel Treasure, the Elephant Treasure, the Horse Treasure,  
 the Jewel Treasure, the Woman Treasure, the Householder Treasure,  
 and seventh, the Counsellor Treasure.

He has more than a thousand sons who are heroes, of heroic stature,  
 conquerors of the hostile army.  
 He dwells having conquered this sea-girt land without stick or sword, by  
 the law

25. 'And in the time of the people with eighty thousand-year life-span,  
 there will arise in the world a Blessed Lord,  
 an Arahant fully-enlightened Buddha named Metteyya,



endowed with wisdom and conduct,  
 a Well-Farer, Knower of the worlds,  
 an incomparable Trainer of men to be tamed,  
Teacher of gods and humans],  
enlightened and blessed,  
 just as I am now.

He will thoroughly know by his own super-knowledge,  
 and proclaim, this universe with its devas and maras and Brahmas, its  
ascetics and Brahmins,  
 and this generation with its princes and people, just as I do now.  
 He will teach the Dhamma,  
 lovely in the beginning,  
 lovely in its middle, in the spirit and in the letter,  
 and proclaim, just as I do now, the holy life in its fullness and purity.  
 He will be attended by a company of thousands of monks,  
 just as I am attended by a company of hundreds.

26. 'Then King Sankha will re-erect the palace once built by King Maha-Panada and having,  
 lived in it, will give it up and present it to the ascetics and Brahmins,  
 the beggars, the wayfarers, the destitute.  
 Then, shaving off hair and beard, he will don yellow robes and  
 go forth from the household life into the homelessness under the supreme  
Buddha Metteyya.

Having gone forth,  
 he will remain alone, in seclusion, ardent, eager and resolute,  
 and before long he will have attained in this very life,  
 by his own super-knowledge and resolution, that unequalled goal of the  
holy life,  
 for the sake of which young men of good equal family  
 go forth from the household life into homelessness, and will abide therein.

27. 'Monks, be an islands unto yourselves,  
 be a refuge unto yourselves with no other refuge.  
 Let the Dhamma be your island,  
 let the Dhamma be your refuge, with no other refuge.

And how does a monk dwell as an island unto himself,  
 as a refuge unto himself with no other refuge,  
 with the Dhamma as his island,  
 with the Dhamma as his refuge,  
 with no other refuge?

Here, a monk abides contemplating body as body,  
 ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.





Here, a monk abides contemplating feelings as feelings,  
ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Here, a monk abides contemplating mind as mind,  
ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Here, a monk abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects,  
ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

28. 'Keep to your own preserves, monks, to your ancestral haunts.  
If you do so, your life-span will increase, your beauty will increase,  
your happiness will increase, your wealth will increase, your power will increase.  
'And what is the length of life for a monk?

Here, a monk develops  
the road to power which is concentration of intention accompanied by effort of will,  
the road to power which is concentration of energy accompanied by effort of will,  
the road to power which is concentration of consciousness accompanied by effort of will,  
the road to power which is concentration of investigations accompanied by effort of will.

By frequently practicing these four roads to power he can, if he wishes,  
live for a full century, or the remaining part of a century.

This is what I call the length of life for a monk.

'And what is the beauty for a monk?

Here a monk practices right conduct,  
is restrained according to the discipline,  
is perfect in behavior and habits,  
sees danger in the slightest fault,  
and trains in the rules of training he has undertaken.

That is the beauty for a monk.

'And what is happiness for a monk?

Here a monk, detached from sense desire  
detached from unwholesome mental states,  
enters and remains in the First Jhana,  
which is with thinking and pondering (initial application and sustained application),  
born of detachment, filled with delight and joy.

And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering,  
by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,  
enters and remains in the Second Jhana,

which without thinking and pondering (initial application and sustained application),  
born of concentration, filled with delight and joy.

And with the fading away of delight,  
remaining imperturbable,  
mindful and clearly aware,  
he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:  
"Happy is he who dwells with equanimity and mindfulness",  
he enters the Third Jhana.

And, having given up pleasure and pain, and  
with the disappearance of former gladness and sadness,  
he enters and remains in the Fourth Jhana,  
which is beyond pleasure and pain,  
and purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

That is happiness for a monk.  
'And what is wealth for a monk?

Here, a monk, with his heart filled with loving-kindness,  
dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth.  
Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across - everywhere,  
always with the mind filled with loving-kindness, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill-will.

Then, with his heart filled with compassion,  
dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth.  
Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across - everywhere,  
always with the mind filled with compassion, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill-will.

Then, with his heart filled with sympathetic joy,  
dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth.  
Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across - everywhere,  
always with the mind filled with sympathetic joy, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill-will.

Then, with his heart filled with equanimity,  
dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth.  
Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across - everywhere,  
always with the mind filled with equanimity, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill-will.

That is the wealth for a monk.

'And what is the power for a monk?

Here, a monk, by destruction of the corruptions,  
enters into and abides in that corruptionless liberation of heart  
and liberation by wisdom which he has attained,  
in this very life, by his own super-knowledge and realisation.



That is the power for a monk.

'Monks, I do not consider any power so hard to conquer as the power of Mara.  
It is used by this building-up of wholesome states that this merit increases.'

Thus the Lord spoke, and the monks were delighted and rejoiced at his words.

Cakkavatti-Sihanada Sutta - The Lion's Roar Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel

Sutta Pitaka - Nigha Nikaya

## Source

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This page was last edited on 5 April 2016, at 02:22.