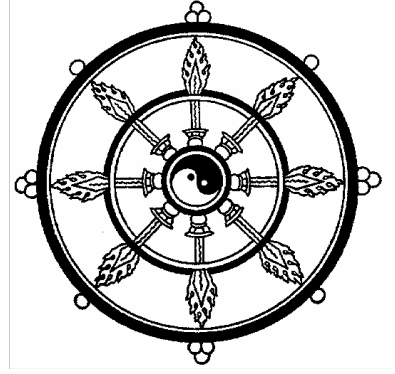


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨྱ སྤྱུང་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



19 June 1996

As Geshe-la is always reminding us, from the time we get up in the morning to when we go to sleep at night, every action we do is aimed at achieving happiness - mental, physical or material.

We are always seeking happiness behind our actions. So it is important for us to understand the causes of happiness, i.e. we need to be clear on how we can achieve happiness in our lives.

For example, physical happiness is enjoying good health. The cause for good health is good bodily hygiene. So it follows that if we make an effort to maintain good hygiene, then we will enjoy sound physical health. As a benefit of having sound physical health we can find satisfaction and comfort from enjoying our healthy body.

Similarly, in order to enjoy mental happiness we need to understand, and then create, the cause. There is also a mental hygiene that we need to maintain for our mind to be sound and healthy. The comfort and satisfaction we experience from enjoying a healthy and sound mind is far greater and longer lasting than any physical or material comfort and satisfaction.

In order to achieve our goals, we have to create their causes. It is in the law of cause and effect that if we create the right causes then inevitably a result will occur. So even if there is no specific desire for happiness, if we create the right causes for happiness and mental satisfaction then we will surely gain them.

Good health of both body and mind is important because there is a close link between them. They are linked because they are both with us in this lifetime, the body and mind are never separated in our life. We have a notion of this when we think and say 'this is *my* mind, *my* body'. Also when our mind is hurt we experience pain and when our body is sick again we experience pain. Likewise if our body is healthy, our mind is happy. So think of the body and mind as our companions, in the sense that they are always with us.

Therefore if we look after them well, we will enjoy both good physical and mental health; and our mind will have less confusion and less unhappiness. So if our mind and body are in sound health, then all the external conditions in which we live are not so important. It doesn't matter so much to us whether our friends are close to us, or whether our relatives are distant, or whether we have enemies or not. All these external things are not important.

If we enjoy sound physical health and a clear positive frame of mind, then we become very self sufficient in the sense that there are almost no other conditions required to make us happier. We can see that the most important conditions for enjoying and being satisfied with our life is our own physical and mental health. Without understanding that our physical and mental health is an important and immediate condition for our happiness, we then tend to believe that the primary condition for happiness is external, and so then ignore our health.

This ignorance may cause us, for example, to eat or drink things which risk our physical health. If we risk our physical health we won't be able to achieve any far reaching goals in our life, let alone achieve the immediate conditions to improve our life, like finding a job. And if we do find a job, poor health will prevent us from doing it satisfactorily.

So whatever our goal may be, whether it is just to live this life happily, or to find a better life in the future, or to seek the ultimate state of enlightenment, we still need to work on the most basic cause of happiness; improving the quality of our own mind and body.

With this understanding, we now need to think of finding suitable conditions for the good health of our body and mind. In our case (living in Australia), the conditions for a healthy body are of no concern as we have already present very good conditions. The conditions for good physical health are all to do with the environment and the availability of good food and water.

So we can see that most people here enjoy the right conditions for a healthy body for most of their lives. It is only for short periods in their lives that people tolerate illness. However in terms of our mind, we can see that we haven't made much of an effort in providing suitable conditions for our mind to enjoy peace and sound clear thinking.

We can also see that our problems are mostly related to our mind, to our emotions or feelings. Even though we realise that it is most important for us to have both a healthy body and a healthy mind, of the two we can see that we have to focus more on the mind as most of our problems actually stem from our mind. It is obvious that we have to focus on our mind in order to understand why there is something in our mind that makes us feel unhappy, angry or sad and so on.

It is said that all these feelings of ups and down that we

experience arise from our mind, but they do not reflect the basic nature of our mind; which is like a clear sky free from any stains. These feelings are like a cloud obstructing the sky, preventing the true blue color of the sky from being realised.

If we watch our minds, we can see that there is something which obscures, dulls or pollutes our mind. We can see that various disturbing thoughts can confuse us. When these thoughts arise they make our mind unclear and negative; they are the immediate cause of our confusion. It is important to try to recognise these disturbing thoughts and observe them closely and realise that they arise from certain conditions similar to a cloud in the sky. So like a cloud moving away due to the condition of wind, our up and down feelings and emotions can also be removed from our mind.

How can we remove a disturbing thought? This first involves identifying the thought very clearly - what is its object, how does the thought develop. When we understand all the details of the thought we can then remove or change the thought by changing our way of developing the thought or even directing our mind towards some other (positive) object. This is where the practice of meditation comes in as a remedy for unnecessary thinking.

We will finish the talk here and do just five minutes of breathing meditation. After that we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Begin the meditation by choosing the right posture, making sure that you are fully relaxed and comfortable. Try to bring the mind inward by stopping all outgoing thoughts. As soon as your mind is fully stabilised inside then begin the meditation by focusing the mind just on the breath, which goes out and comes in through the nose.

So we now chant the Buddha's mantra and, as before, not getting distracted by any outer objects we now focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Gaye Radcliffe

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Edited Version

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Editor's summary:

- Every action we do is aimed at achieving happiness.
- We need to understand, then create, the causes for both physical and mental happiness.
- Mental happiness is far greater and longer lasting than any physical or material happiness we may enjoy.
- Whatever our goal may be, whether it is just to live this life happily, or to find a better life in the future, or to seek the ultimate state of enlightenment, we still

need to work on the most basic cause of happiness by improving the quality of our own mind and body.

- It is obvious that we have to focus on our mind in order to understand why there is something in our mind that makes us feel unhappy, angry or sad.
- It is said that all these feelings of ups and down that we experience arise from our mind, but they do not reflect the basic nature of our mind; which is like a clear sky free from any stains. These feelings are like a cloud obstructing the sky, preventing the true blue color of the sky from being realised.
- Removing disturbing thoughts involves watching them closely. When we understand them we can get rid of them by changing our way of thinking or even directing our mind towards some other (positive) object. This is where the practice of meditation comes in as a remedy for unnecessary thinking.