
Dharmarakshita's "*The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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As usual we will do a few minutes of breathing meditation. Please adopt a posture most suitable for meditation. We sit in the meditation posture to enhance peace within our mind. For us physical relaxation alone is not sufficient but if on top of this physical relaxation we also enjoy mental relaxation then we can truly feel some sense of peace.

The meaning of mental peace is that there is no outer objects which can distract and disturb our mind. If we examine why our mind is not at peace we find it is because our mind is not abiding or resting within. Rather we find that when the mind is disturbed it is wandering after various outer objects. So we can see that the obstacles to mental or inner peace are the distractions that fill our mind. If we try to define what are distractions then we find that distractions occur in our mind when we are thinking of various external objects. A distraction occurs when an image of an external object appears in our mind having the effect of causing our mind to lose its peace.

With this in mind, try to remove any images of external objects and let the mind rest within.

Having rested the mind inward then before it runs after external objects direct its focus onto one's breath. So maintain this meditation for a short while.

As we are practitioners of meditation then we should have a precise understanding of what meditation is and what are the most effective types of meditation. Also we should know what are the aims and benefits of our practice.

In general meditation should focus the mind on the given objects of concentration or subject matter of the meditation practice. Though exerting constant effort and perseverance we can begin to familiarise ourselves with them.

By choosing to follow meditation we transform our mind in order to find more satisfaction and happiness in our lives. If we think of a major cause of our unhappiness such as a jealous and competitive attitude then we see that the mind can be a direct cause of our unhappiness. We can see that as soon as such an attitude arises in our mind all our inner happiness is gone. And as long as the jealousy remains in our mind we are unable to experience any peace and happiness.

We train our mind in the meditation practice to gain some concentration on a specific object or specific topic and when our mind is engaged in that there is no room for our mind to be occupied in those objects or events that arouse such minds, such as the jealous mind. This gives us space begin to transform our mind.

If we investigate the cause for the jealous mind to arise we see that the immediate cause is our mind engaging in certain objects. The longer we maintain our concentration on a meditation object then our mind becomes more distant from the objects which cause the jealous mind to arise. The jealous mind becomes very weak so that it is no longer the cause of harm to our mind. We can relate this process to any other negative states which may arise in our mind.

If we look at our mind we see there is always two sides to it. Just as we see that we can have a jealous mind we can also see that we can have a non-jealous mind. So any type of mind we take as an example we will find that it will have a positive and a negative side. Each of these types of mind are conditional things, that is, when certain factors are present jealous mind would arise. As these various minds that cause us suffering are conditional then we can see that it is possible to change or transform them.

However if our meditation practice does not involve analysis then this may lead us to the belief that there is no control of our mind. We tend to believe that whatever arises in our mind is actually the nature of our mind, even some negative state of mind such as jealous mind. If we don't analyse we may think that these various states of mind that arise are the natural function of our mind. If we are led to think in this way then we will not make any attempt to overcome our negativity.

By understanding the fact that our states of mind are conditioned then no matter how negative a state of mind may be, with a strong intention to eliminate it and the application of meditation on a consistent basis over weeks, months and years we can see that it is possible to eliminate any negative state of mind that we have within us.

It is said that the purpose of meditation is to reduce the mental delusion. If we wish to see whether our practice is working then when we practise meditation we need to check to see whether the power of the mental delusion has decreased within us. To test our development, for example if we hear of another who is engaging diligently in a meditation practice and has gained a great deal of knowledge through doing this practice, when we hear this we may feel very positive and feel great admiration toward that person. This is a sign that our practise is working. But if we feel negative and jealous toward that person it shows that the meditation practise that we have been following may have helped us to keep our concentration on the objects of our practice but it has not helped us to overcome our mental delusion. By looking at this we can see that our meditation practise needs to be able to not only help us to develop strong

concentration on the given objects and subject matter but it also needs to be able to provide a remedy to our mental delusion.

Let us take the example of a person who before they came into contact with the meditation practice always showed strong jealousy toward others, even feeling jealous towards one's own friends and relatives when they are making money and becoming successful. So for that person hearing about the success of others was the cause of pain. But later, after engaging in a meditation practice which lessens delusion, hearing such news about the success of others would be a source of gaining much joy for them.

By using this example we can see that through transforming the mind then outer conditions that may have once caused us pain now become the source of joy and happiness.

We won't be discussing the text tonight but if anyone has any questions then please ask.

Question: The Dalai Lama mentioned that one should use meditation constructively and not for the purpose of creating a state of bliss. I find that sometimes when I meditate I am using it for an escape. Is that becoming deluded through meditation?

Answer: To answer your question we will start with this. Suppose if someone has only one dollar but they decided they wanted to buy a car, would that person face any problems or not?

What we achieve in our meditation depends on the amount of effort we are making. If in our meditation we are expecting to achieve the fully enlightened state in this life but considering the amount of effort we are putting toward achieving that goal then we see that it is almost impossible to achieve it in this life. In this case we hope for something that we could not achieve because our current level of input is not enough. But this still doesn't mean that our practice bears no fruit. There is benefit and slowly we will make progress in our pursuit.

If we want our minds to be completely under control and peaceful we need to engage in the meditation practice. But we have to realise that we are not going to reach our goal straight away. So even if we do not quickly reach our goal our practise is not wasted. In fact there is great benefit because we are moving toward our goal.

If there is a tree with a huge trunk and many branches, then if you wish to change that tree into something that tastes sweet, placing a small amount of sweet substance on the roots would not have much effect.

If our desire is great but our means to fulfill that desire is limited then we need to develop more skills in order to fulfill our goal.

When we are deprived of skills and the knowledge of how to fulfill our goals then our effort seems to be inadequate.

We will leave the teaching here and chant the buddha's mantra. Choose the correct posture, calming the mind

inward, so as we chant the mantra just focus on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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