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

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

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As usual, we shall begin with a meditation. As Christmas is coming and during that period we may not find time for much rest we should now take full advantage of this opportunity to gain some relaxation for ourselves. Make sure your sitting posture is comfortable and suitable to facilitate good meditation.

Real happiness or relaxation is something we deeply experience. We find such true happiness or relaxation by finding physical relaxation and then on top of that we also must bring our mind to rest.

Therefore we have to see this meditation practice as a means of bringing about both physical and mental happiness. To actually personally experience true relaxation and gain the benefits of obtaining that, we must understand that relaxation stems from not just our body, but it also stems from our mind.

By working within the meditation practice we attempt to gain control over our mind. In doing so we can prevent many unnecessary unhappy states of mind or mental distractions arising within us. As we engage in meditation practice we begin to control our mind by disciplining it to focus and abide on a given meditation object. If we are very successful in keeping control of the mind we can find inner peace and happiness whenever we want to.

Likewise, as we make progress, meditation becomes easier. You can choose different types of meditation such as cultivating love and compassion or just a breathing meditation. Whatever meditation you choose, if you are successful then you will be able to perform that meditation almost automatically. If our mind has the potential to develop very strong desire and lust, then as soon as the mind meets a desired object it automatically becomes strongly attracted to that object. So if our mind is already very familiar or acquainted with the topic of meditation it can control strong desire. We can secure inner peace and happiness with regard to strong desire during this life time, as well as at the time of death. We can begin to develop the ability to perform meditations which will enhance our inner peace and happiness naturally.

Keeping all this in mind we shall begin the meditation.

We begin by firstly removing all mental distractions of external objects. After doing this, as our mind settles inward, we can begin to focus on the breath. Continue to focus on the breath, maintaining awareness without any thought of other objects; just be aware only of the breath passing in and out.

There is happiness and peace to be found within oneself by calming our mind, and getting rid of all our distracting thoughts. To appreciate the great benefit of

pursuing a meditation practice we must understand the fact that we can undergo a lot of unnecessary suffering and restlessness just because of the lack of rest within our mind. We can trace the cause of our lack of restfulness to the emotional problems in our mind - our lack of inner stability. Our mind is not in the habit of resting or merely dwelling within. Rather it is in the habit of always wandering outwards and always occupying itself in various thoughts.

We need to determine whether our mind can be brought under control. If that is possible then it means that the mind can be transformed, which means that in its nature the mind is very flexible. At present the mind may seem to be very fixed in certain ways of thinking or in certain attitudes. At the same time, however, we can see that it is possible to make some changes to that fixed attitude of the mind. We can see in the nature of our mind that the mind follows the directions which are most familiar to itself. If the direction is the wrong one then it goes to that direction very easily, and likewise where the mind has more familiarity with something positive then it goes there easily. By understanding this we can see that there is the possibility to train our mind in a positive attitude or way of thinking. Such training is what we call 'meditation' or 'Dharma practice'.

If we are going to put some effort into meditation practice we must know what benefits will be gained from following that practice. By knowing this we will be aware of the downfall of neglecting our practice. We have to develop the ability to discriminate between those actions that are useful to us as individuals and those actions that are destructive to us as individuals. With this knowledge we are able to then follow the meditational practice of mindfulness.

Mindfulness practice should be based on wisdom, a clear sense of discrimination. When it is based on this, then applying mindfulness to our practice or thoughts and deeds can ensure that all our actions, both mental or physical, are meaningful and beneficial.

Basically, controlling the mind means getting rid of all negative states of mind that serve as the cause to bring trouble and mental disturbances. As we turn our interests towards meditation it is as if we are turning our attention towards our own mind. We begin to become familiar with it, and we begin to develop an understanding of how it functions. As it is said, 'all our problems arise from our own mind'.

How can we determine whether this is true? In our life there always seems to be some sort of problem cropping up, whether we live alone or with other people. It doesn't matter what we do in our life or how we live, there always seems to be some difficulty we have to confront.

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Therefore to solve our problems we have to look for some solutions whereby we can find peace and happiness, regardless of how we live.

To resolve our problems, the most important thing is to know and gain good understanding of the true cause of how those problems arise. Let us examine this. Is the true cause something that comes to us from the outside? We can easily see that there are external factors that determine our experience and emotions. If, for example, some external beautiful object appears, then immediately we are attracted to and desire that object. If some ugly object appears then we are repulsed and don't want to be even close to it. We can also see (especially in our relationships) how if we have to make our decisions based primarily on external factors then when the other person is very nice and helpful to us we are favourable to them; when the person appears very attractive, we are attracted to that person. However, if the same person changes his or her response towards us then immediately we also change our attitude towards them. We may immediately begin to dislike that person and feel very strongly within us that it is better to stop living with them - that there is no longer any benefit in living with that person. This way of thinking, wanting to keep oneself distant from that person is building hatred within ourselves.

Some outer situations can also cause us to generate jealousy. When we think in a jealous way we feel that something is very bad and negative. But in fact it is all very unnecessary if we analyse the cause of our jealousy properly. Even though it is unnecessary to behave with jealousy, we cannot stop ourselves from behaving in that way. It is also very easy for us to feel competitive with some other people and the result of that is that we deprive ourselves of mental rest.

We can see how it is impossible to establish some stability and lasting peace and happiness in our life if we approach life believing that the outside world will provide us with our happiness, stability and security. Therefore the solution to solve all these problems and to find lasting inner stability, peace and happiness must be found within ourselves. We have to meet the friend within ourselves. The inner friend is not like the outer friend who can change very quickly causing us to develop attachment, jealousy, hatred, like and dislike, etc.

It is said, if you have found such an inner friend, some strength and positive energy within yourself, then the problems will come to an end. One will find that one's life depends less on the outer conditions. So for example, if one is living by oneself in a solitary place one will never feel alone. Without having any other beings around it is still possible to fill one's life with great tremendous peace, joy and happiness. Likewise, if one chooses to live in a society with other people, then by relying on the inner friend within one can enjoy some stability in one's life, and can safeguard one's own inner peace and happiness.

The way we safeguard such inner stability, peace and

happiness is by safeguarding our mind from the harmful influence of various negative states of mind such as desire, anger, jealousy, competitiveness and pride. By having less negative states of mind within, one can live happily and peacefully within the society. By enjoying individual peace and happiness in our personal life then naturally we will benefit and contribute the same to the other beings surrounding oneself. Naturally we can then develop good relationships with other beings.

Geshe-la said that what he has taught is whatever has come into his mind. If what he has said makes any sense then the important thing is to put it into practise.

We stop the teaching here and Geshe-la was advised to recite the *Twenty-One Tara Prayers*. Can we do it in English?

We shall now recite the Buddha's mantra seven times. If everyone could again choose the meditation posture and try to calm the mind. As we recite the mantra keep the focus of the mind just on the sound of the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

Geshe Doga would like to thank you all and on behalf of Tara Institute Geshe-la wants to wish you all a merry Christmas and happy new year.

Also Geshe-la says that he prays for your good health, successful life and that in your life you will be free from any hindrances.

*Transcribed from the tapes by Gaye Radcliffe  
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