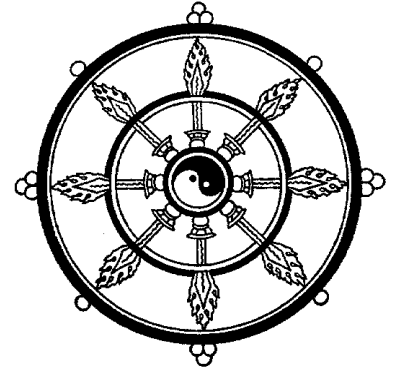


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# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering



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23 April 1997

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First we will do some breathing meditation. Sit comfortably, relax and make sure that your back is straight.

The meditation we are about to do is a stabilising meditation. The most important thing in this type of meditation is to have single-pointed concentration on the given object. The main hindrances are outer distractions, where the mind wanders after external objects. So it is important to get rid of, and overcome these distractions.

We need to make sure that our mind is brought fully inside. Then we begin the breathing meditation by placing the focus of the mind on our breath, on the movement of the air coming in and leaving through our nostrils. To keep our mind on the breath we continually need to remove any mental distractions that arise within our mind.

We have to see ourselves as more powerful than our own mind. Generally speaking, we are controlled by our mind, and our life is ruled and led by our mind. We have to change this view of seeing our mind as the ruler, and ourselves like the slave. When we say 'my mind, my body', there is often an implication that the mind and body are in possession of us. In fact, we are the possessor. We are the rulers, and the mind is to be ruled.

Whenever we engage in meditation we are trying to gain more freedom and empower ourselves, rather than always being overpowered by our mind. Our mind is not always the same, sometimes we can have a negative and destructive mind. If we hand over all power to the mind in this negative state, then this can cause us great harm. It is similar to placing all our trust in a friend. There is a risk in placing all our power and freedom in the hands of our friend. If our friend is reliable and trustworthy, always honest and so forth then of course we will be fine. However if the friend is dishonest and untrustworthy, then giving them our power and freedom would be very risky.

If our mind is in a good state then, as we know from experience, we too are happy and peaceful. Having more control over our the mind that leads us and accompanies us is our goal. So there are great benefits in practising meditation.

We learn in meditation that our mind can be changed. We also realise that we have tremendous potential. By utilising this personal potential we can challenge and

overcome any form of hardship.

Recall an experience in which we were helpless and felt as if we had no self control, a time when we were overpowered by negative thoughts. In this state we have no freedom, we don't even have any confidence in how to act. Any actions that we do will not benefit us; they will harm our lives as well as causing harm to others. If we don't check the force of this negative state of mind, then its power can be overwhelming.

If we want to enjoy more freedom, and have more control over our life, then we have to control and challenge our mind. We cannot trust the mind's influence on us. There are some very strong negative states of mind that, despite our wishes, influence us to cause harm to ourselves or others.

Our mind can't be trusted. So we shouldn't give up our power, our freedom and our rights to our mind. Instead, through meditation practice, we can reclaim these rights and try as much as possible, to realise our potential.

To get the full benefit of our meditation practice, we should be very clear in our minds about the aim of our practice before we even start. Succeeding in meditation requires a consistent effort, with strong determination and courage. We have seen that meditation and spiritual practice are a remedy to the problems which derive from, and are caused by, our mind. It is important to recognise the cause of our problems, and to find their remedy, otherwise there will be no end to the problems in our life.

For example, imagine you have a chronic disease that recurs easily. If you make some mistake in what you eat and drink, or if there is a small change in conditions, then that disease can arise again. You would go and see a doctor and do everything you could to remove that disease. Even if the doctor advises you to stay in hospital for a long time, you would be happy to do so, because you know how serious that disease is. Even though you're presently alright, you can't be sure that you will be well in the future.

Perhaps, in our minds we have something similar in the form of some neurosis, or some old, narrow habitual way of thinking. This is when we are most vulnerable to outer situations; in terms of who we meet and what we hear. Our mind is weak, in the sense that at any moment some small external change can disturb our minds, influence

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our emotions and our way of thinking. Like the example of a chronic disease, unless this condition is overcome, we can't be too sure about ourselves. Even if we are happy today, we can't be certain that we'll be that same happy person tomorrow.

We can recognise the internal cause of these problems through meditation practice. Once we recognise clearly that there is no stability in our lives because of the fault in our narrow and self-centred attitude, the next step is to find the correct remedy, and then apply it with a consistent effort. It is not enough to make the effort for one month and then give up, as there is no good reason to do so. If we recognise the benefits, then we'll see that this effort is worthwhile, even if we have to continuously make that effort throughout our lifetime.

We need to see that our practice must continue because it is the true means of achieving happiness and eliminating problems. We mustn't abandon our meditation because of feeling tired, or because you think you're not making quick enough progress. If we want to achieve happiness, if we want to solve and eliminate problems, then we have to continue our practice and endure any hardships.

It's also important to take responsibility for ourselves. Whether it is facing a problem, or wanting to accomplish something in life, we have to take personal responsibility for making it happen. We have to stop placing our hopes on others, and making it their responsibility. We always have to be mindful of looking after ourselves and our interests. By thinking in this way we can maintain self-determination and feel more confident in ourselves.

We will finish tonight's teaching here. Before the dedication we will recite Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra seven times. As before, try to sit in the meditation posture, relaxing the body and calming the mind inwardly. As you recite the mantra, focus your mind on the mantra.

**TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA**

*Transcribed from the tapes by Mark Emerson*

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