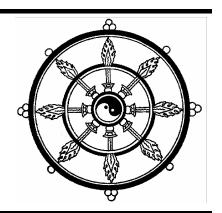
## Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering

७७ तें हें र मर्केन क प्रविर पें।

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We shall begin with a few minutes of breathing meditation together. Choose a sitting posture which allows your body to be comfortable.

Why are we doing this meditation? To challenge the negative states of mind which breed within us, which not only bring harm to our lives but also to the lives of others. So before we start we should generate the intention that, through this meditation, we will challenge and defeat our negative states of mind.

Cultivate this motivation and then get rid of all distracting thoughts so that the mind is fully at rest. We can now begin the breathing meditation. Breathe in and out without being distracted by any other objects, and single pointedly focus on the breath.

This meditation is useful and relevant in our daily lives, it has many benefits in the workplace and at home. Just as it is important to physically rest and relax, resting ourselves mentally is also essential. In fact, without some inner peace and stability, then no matter what we do or where we are, we are not at rest. For example, if at work we carry some worry in our minds, we can find the work boring. Our effort isn't fruitful, because the lack of stability in the mind prevents us from being able to concentrate on our work.

The only way to create the causes and conditions to bring about mental stability and inner peace is by removing, as much as possible, all disturbing thoughts. This is why we meditate. We can appreciate the benefits of meditation if we can see the benefits of having more stability, both physically and mentally. It is said that it is best for our mind to always hold wholesome objects. We should at least keep the mind in the same place as our body. If our minds are with us in the present then we will experience our actions differently.

Meditation helps us to train our minds in a positive way of thinking. The mind has an effect on our emotions and our actions, effecting even the little things that we do, like having a cup of tea. If we are not mindful and our mind is distracted, we could burn our hand while holding the cup of tea. The hand which holds the cup is like the mindfulness we employ in meditation to hold given objects in the mind. As we have to look with our eyes at the cup we are holding in our hand, in meditation we have to apply the alertness which checks and examines the meditation object.

By applying mindfulness and alertness, we can train and transform the mind beneficially and enhance our inner peace and stability. This mind training is effective - and essential - because the lack of stability in the mind is the reason why people keep going through the same types of problems. We get so used to this instability and it is responsible for all the ups and downs in our lives. Our state of mind is so unpredictable, like Melbourne's weather! You know how quickly it changes, one moment there is bright sunshine and then suddenly it is overcast.

We are too vulnerable to the situations that we face in life. When we face a pleasant situation our mind immediately becomes very excited and joyous. But as soon as we confront some unpleasant situation, even if it is something minor, it immediately makes us feel unhappy and depressed. Our emotions fluctuate wildly not so much because of changing circumstances as the familiar negative states of mind within us.

We always talk about how to live this life happily, and it is clear to us that happiness is our goal and is the meaning of our lives. But we think that the causes and other factors in achieving happiness are complex and depend upon so many things. These are just misleading delusions. Practically speaking, happiness is when we enjoy good physical health and a sound mind, being happy and satisfied with ourselves and our life. If we accept that the happiness we seek means having a good body and a good mind, then once you find these two you have achieved your goal. You have good reason to be satisfied, no matter what view others may have of your lifestyle.

When Geshe Doga was at Sera Monastery in central Tibet, the living conditions were very poor. There were problems with basic things like food, drink and clothing. Whenever Geshe Doga had visitors from his home town, a two month journey by horse, they were always shocked to see him living in these conditions. Physically Geshe Doga looked unhealthy, his clothes looked poor and everything was in such bad condition. Compared to the monastery, Geshe Doga's family lived an affluent life. They said he must be crazy to stay at the monastery in such bad conditions. Geshe Doga can still recall laughing at his friends who made these comments. He knew that they did not understand the real situation, so what they said did not affect his mind.

We need to be our own best friends, supporters and protectors. But we can also be our own worst enemy. Generally we think that the harm in our lives is always caused by some outside person or some outside condition. But if we look closely, we can see that we give

ourselves more harm than we receive from others. Stopping this self inflicted harm is in our hands; we have to find a way to help ourselves. We need to find the directions within ourselves and follow that direction without being easily influenced by the outside world.

Last week we finished Verse 11 and we learnt that we receive mental harm from others because we have caused the same harm to their minds in the past. In past lives we have even caused harm to the minds of our spiritual teachers, parents and close friends. The instruction here is to engage in the meditation practice of giving and taking. In this we pray to the Guru Buddha, visualised on the crown of one's head, and imagine that we take upon ourselves all the sufferings of all other beings. These dissolve into the centre of our self-cherishing mind, and we then give all our happiness away to all sentient beings.

We'll stop here because there is not enough time to finish the next verse. If any of you have a question to put to Geshe Doga then you are welcome.

## Question:

What if one person finds there is a lot of Spiritual Materialism in the practice, would it be false?

Samdup (clarifying): If delusions increase instead of decreasing when you practise, then what should you do?

## Answer:

Delusions, or the negative states of mind, are supposed to decrease as a result of meditation. If the delusions aren't decreasing, this shows that your meditation is not targetted at remedying the delusion. If the meditation is directed towards the delusion, then it will naturally decrease. That's why it's important that we are always clear in our minds that the sole purpose of meditation is to decrease delusions or negative states of mind. Before we start we have to know the benefits of meditation, of overcoming delusions.

Think of the shortcomings of the delusion, for example the shortcomings of having strong desires or attachments. If you have a strong desire then you can't find any contentment. Having strong desire in the mind means the result of more wealth, more possessions is more suffering. You'll worry all the time about your possessions, and losing them brings even more suffering to the mind. If two people lose the same amount of wealth, we can see differences between the person who has little desire and the one who has more desire. The one with more desire clings to the wealth and its loss causes great mental suffering. The person with less desire will not experience such suffering if the wealth is lost. The same can be said for people who lose or are separated from their close friend.

The more we understand the detrimental effects of delusions like desire and anger, the stronger our motivation to challenge and minimise these delusions. As we approach our meditation, we should remind ourselves that its goal is to reduce these delusions. Each has its own remedy and, if we apply the remedy, the delusion will decrease.

If you seek to win over an enemy who holds strong bitterness towards you then begging him for help won't work, you have to find your own way to succeed. You have to do something from your own side; for example, showing him love and friendship might work. Engaging in meditation practice is like engaging in a battle with the delusions. If we engage in meditation in this way then the result is diminished delusion.

All our problems, whether we are single or married, all begin with our own minds. We begin with a small thought which leads to more thought. For example, you may be single and happy and satisfied with the way you are, but then suddenly you have a thought, "Maybe I should find a partner, maybe this is important for my life." You then picture the type of person you want to find. But finding this person proves difficult bringing more frustration and problems to the mind. If you do find the right person, then you'll think about whether to marry, whether to have children, how many and so on. All these lines of thought are generated and you're now bewildered about the direction your life should take. This thought has completely confused your mind. This wouldn't have happened if you had remained content with your life.

Likewise, there are lots of cases where, within a marriage, one of the partners wants to meet others outside of the family because of discontent. Because these people are unhappy they cause unhappiness for the whole family, including the children. So it is important to control our minds and lessen the delusions that reside there. Try to be content with what you have and think that the partner you have is the best one, the right one for you.

If we could settle our minds, we would have less delusion, less confusion and fewer worries.

We'll stop here and chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Again, please sit in a comfortable meditation posture and try to fully calm the mind inward and focus it on the sound of the mantra.

## TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks Edited by Cynthia Kareena Edit checked against the tapes by Richard Garward Edited Version

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