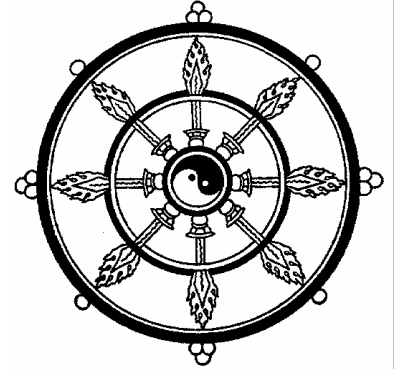


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

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So we'll begin with some breathing meditation together. Sit in the meditation posture which is most comfortable and relaxing for your body.

It is important to pay attention to the body posture because success in what you want to achieve depends a lot on the health and balance of the body. Even to realise the goals we have set for meditation practice depends on the support of physical wellbeing. It's on this basis of relaxed physical balance that we pay attention to the mind.

The goal of our meditations is to enhance the peace and the happiness within ourselves, so, as we begin the meditation, we should try to recognise the obstacles within us which prevent us from feeling relaxed, from enjoying peace. If we look within and observe the mind stream then we can recognise that there are certain states of mind which destroy our happiness and cause unease. So we should cultivate a strong intention that through this meditation we will challenge and remove these states of mind, realising that as long as we keep these mind states there is no hope for us to achieve inner peace and satisfaction. So with this motivation, you should now try to get rid of all thoughts concerned with external objects of distraction, excitement and so forth. Having removed all these thoughts, try to feel as if your mind has no object, that there's nothing for the mind to hold. Of course, we can't stay with this nothingness for long but before the mind resumes its habit of wandering after outside objects, you begin the breathing meditation. Direct the focus of the mind to the inhaling and exhaling of the breath.

We do the meditation properly when we are very clear about the goal - to oppose the disturbing forces within us with the appropriate remedy. If we're purposeful in this way, we'll discover that meditation brings some clarity of thinking and calmness to the mind.

In our daily life, we always think of what we need and what we don't need, what benefits us and what brings harm - but only from the perspective of outer conditions. We have a great deal of knowledge of what is good and bad among the outer things, the food and drink, for instance, which suit us and which don't. But, despite all this knowledge and the effort we put into overcoming unfavorable conditions, they never end. Sometimes the more we think of those outer situations the worse they become. Now, what meditation teaches us is that we should look inward and try to see what benefits and

what harms us- from within. If, through meditation, we could improve the inner living conditions, in terms of inner peace, inner happiness, then it is said that we would even enjoy better physical health. We'd also find ourselves much better able to cope with unfavorable outer circumstances. If we are inwardly strong and clear, and our thinking is positive, then outer situations cannot cause us much harm. In fact, we will learn that there is more advantage in overcoming the cause of harm within than in trying to overcome the outer causes. Even though we cannot always be peaceful and happy, we can, through meditation at least gain more control of our lives and our emotions, and we'll have a clearer understanding of our own experience. If we practice meditation and gain knowledge of our own minds, then we can recognise those negative states of mind which always cause us misery, which leave us feeling that there is no room for pleasure, no room for happiness.

Where these negative states of mind remain, whatever you do, whether trying to sit still or travelling somewhere there is always some unease. So, more than the outer causes of harm or unhappiness, we suffer unhappiness as a result of some inner cause, of some state of mind. But if we practice meditation, and always try to apply the remedies, we can transform negative states of mind into positive ones.

We learn from meditation that most of our problems arise from our way of thinking, so if we can change our way of thinking then that solves the problem. When we talk of transforming our minds as the very purpose of meditation, it implies that we can solve our problems ourselves. For instance, people often find great difficulty when they end a relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend. If we ask what is the cause of the difficulty, then of course the reason is very clear and simple - that he or she rejected me - and this we cannot accept. We can think of nothing but the fact that we've been left behind.

So now, if the situation is such that the friend who leaves you had bashed you, broken your legs, your arms and took away all your wealth, your knowledge, your dignity and your happiness, everything you have in life, and left you instead with all his or her problems, then our grief would be understandable, but, of course, this is not usually the case. You are still the same person. The friend who left you hasn't taken away your wealth, hasn't taken the knowledge and education you possess, or your potential. You haven't been left with all his or

her problems, all the unwanted things of his or her life. Of course we are not saying that its easy to solve the problem of separation, abandonment. To some extent, it is human nature to feel some isolation after spending intimate time with someone. But there is no reason to have this misery, this continuous suffering for the rest of one's life. Why should we worry so much? You are the same as the other person who should enjoy good health, you still, as we've said, have all your knowledge; the friend has not left some extra burden on your life. You can still look after yourself. So if you try to think in this positive way, you can lift your self esteem and try to realise your own potential and overcome the sadness of the separation. And, in this way, we can see again that its our way of thinking that brings us pain or pleasure, happiness or sadness.

Mediation emphasises the need to use our own knowledge to see the cause of the problem and how, by transforming our way of thinking, we can transform the situation. Meditation helps us to have a different view of things. From within ourselves, through our own knowledge, we can discover some solution to our problems. So, through meditation, as we practise transforming situations from within, we become a fully self-supporting, self-guided person.

So tonight we could not continue the commentary on the text because Geshe Doga says he just happened to talk on these other things. So, we'll finish here and, as we chant the Buddha's mantra, again just relax the body, sit in the meditation posture and direct the mind to the mantra.

TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks
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