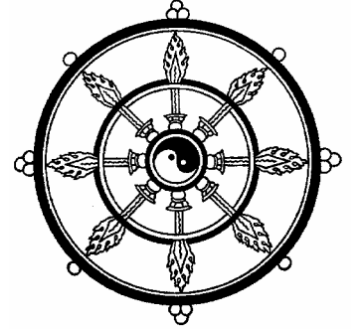

Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering



ཨྲ སྤྱི་སྤྱོད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།

6 August 1998

As usual we will first do some breathing meditation. Choose a suitable meditation posture and make sure that your body is fully relaxed. Try to get rid of the mind that habitually wanders all over the place and produces all types of disturbing thoughts. We need to discipline the mind in order to get rid of these unwanted habits. It is important to begin the meditation by overcoming the undisciplined and unruly state of mind. We will then find a true sense of peace and tranquility, which ensures inner stability.

In order to maintain this peaceful and stable inner environment that we have created we need to meditate so that the mind doesn't go back to its old wandering habits. So with this meditation we focus the mind only on the inhaling and the exhaling of the breath, just the breath and nothing else.

If this meditation practice is one activity that we choose to do in our lives, then it will be one of the most beneficial activities we can do. It is the true cause of bringing the happiness we desire into our lives. So what does our mind see as happiness? How do we bring about happiness? We seem to have the idea that happiness is something conditional, related to outer objects. It is said that there are ten main objects of desire - form, sound, smell, touch, mental desire, hatred, object of ignorance and mental dullness.

If we think that these outer objects of desire can make us happy and satisfied, then it won't be easy to get that happiness because these objects are beyond our control. Now if we think of the happiness and the causes of happiness that meditation and teachings can give us, then we have to understand that the focus is on the inside, on ourselves. The happiness that we talk about, and the way to get it, are in our hands and are our choice. Meditation makes us realise that any happiness we have is through the inner experience gained from controlling the mind and making it free from the strong influence of desire. So it is important to clearly see the purpose of a meditation practice before beginning it. You will then have a stronger motivation and your practice will also be more effective.

Our daily experience is predetermined by our state of mind. If we have a desirous state of mind on a daily basis, e.g. desire for sensual objects, then we won't have any sense of satisfaction. But if our mind is free from such an unsatisfied mind, then it doesn't matter where we go or who we are with, we will always be peaceful, calm and satisfied. Basically, if we want happiness we need to look for inner happiness. Happiness in the outer world, or sensual happiness, actually brings more dissatisfaction and unhappiness in our lives. It is said that sensual objects or the desire for sensual objects is like salty water, it doesn't quench your thirst, but the more you drink the more you want to drink.

The five sensual objects of form, sound, smell, touch and other objects, as well as the male and female objects of desire, all seem to be the source of satisfying our needs. But, it is important to realise that, upon examination, our own experience confirms that they only bring temporary pleasure to our mind and, in fact, bring the opposite result of increasing the desire in our mind. This sensual object will never satisfy us and never make our minds fully content. Sensual objects don't bring us satisfaction, only more disturbing thoughts and unease in our mind.

If our mind can't concentrate and objects distract us while we are meditating, this is most likely caused by some object of desire. If sensual objects did bring us satisfaction, then we should have been very satisfied by now. Our experience of sensual objects in the past has left us with even stronger desires, leaving us even more unfulfilled. If we feel that we are sick of all this dissatisfaction, then this is a good time to go beyond the sensual and look further. It is said that out of all the delusions desire is the main one that brings unease and discomfort in the mind and is the main obstacle to our meditation practice.

We focus particularly on overcoming desire or attachment because the unhappiness in our mind is mostly due to not being able to calm or confront our desires. Even if we find it difficult to overcome desire completely, it is still worthwhile to at least go into combat with desire. We

confront our desires by fully utilising our intellectual knowledge and developing an understanding of desire and its consequences. For example, if the cause of your unhappiness is rejection by someone you are in love with then, while it is a difficult situation to cope with, you have to realise that you don't want to be in that situation for months and months, or for years and years. So you need to realise that if you don't adjust yourself now then you will have this problem for a long time.

The cause is clear. You are emotionally tied up with that person, while they have clearly cut off the ties of the relationship and have actually left you. The reason you feel unhappy is because your mind is still with the person that you love and feel close to. So is that doing you any good or not? Is it more beneficial to keep the mind there or cut off the emotional ties with that person? At least look at it on an intellectual level. See that it is important for you to cut off the relationship and accept the separation; not necessarily because you want to, but because the other person does.

Even understanding on an intellectual level that you have to pull yourself out of the relationship is an inspiration to forget the person and direct your energy and time towards other things you are doing, or want to do, in your life. Even though you might go through some problems in the initial stages, because you made your mind up to make a fresh start, as time passes you would completely overcome this problem. You can also overcome the problem through overcoming your desire and attachment.

We have run out of time to go over the text, but this is okay as long as the teaching has some relevance to your practice and some benefit to your life.

In summary, we should not always think of happiness in terms of outer factors but rather that happiness does come from our own side, from within ourselves and from our own current happy conditions. It is important to focus on the good conditions of happiness that we do have, otherwise we tend to completely neglect and ignore all our good inner qualities and conditions and keep looking outside ourselves for better conditions and happiness.

Now, as usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Relax and sit in the meditation posture and, as before, try to calm the mind and turn it inward by removing all outgoing thoughts. Then chant the mantra, focusing the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA