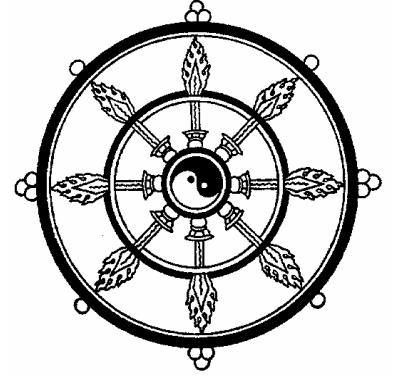

Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨོ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



1 October 97

First we will do some breathing meditation. Keep the back of the body straight and make sure that your sitting posture is relaxed. Try to calm the mind and keep it from wandering after external objects. Just let it rest within you. Having brought the mind inward, begin the breathing meditation by directing your mental attention onto the outgoing and incoming breath. Observe and focus on the breath so that your mind is completely absorbed in the breath. Your mind and breath are like one entity - the mind which observes and the breath which is observed become one. Rather than having a gap like that which occurs between the eyesight and the object, focus your mind so that it becomes completely absorbed in the object.

This meditation practice is one way of benefiting ourselves. The Buddha said that you are master of yourself because there is no one else who can be your master. It is important to know how we can best be our own master and protector when we face problems in life. We should have a strong sense of responsibility for ourselves instead of hoping that someone else can save us from our problems. There is no one but ourselves to solve our problems.

A major cause of our problems is our inability to deal with our own emotions. Meditation practice offers us guidelines on how to fix problems related to our own lack of inner stability. Meditation teaches us how to safeguard our minds so that there is lasting inner peace and happiness. In meditation the focus is on the mind, and this is where we learn what brings us suffering, stress, tension or frustration in our lives. We can see clearly in the meditation that one of the major, and continuous, sources of our problems is that of unfulfilled desires, like jealousy.

These negative states of mind arise because we are not disciplining our minds- we are easily influenced by distracted thought. We can observe for ourselves, at least in the short term, that when the mind is not distracted and is completely quiet, we can find some true sense of peace, relaxation and happiness.

In meditation we are challenging the various negative states of mind, which serve as a source of problems and which we have never really tried to defeat. So, before we start to generate any motivation, it is important to challenge these negative states of mind. If we make an effort then we can defeat them. And if we don't challenge these negative states of mind, then there is no way to rise

out of our misery. Don't think that because our habitual negative states of mind are ingrained that any effort is worthless. If we give up, we only become more overpowered by them. In this way we should try to see the overall purpose of meditation.

We have to ask ourselves, what are the most important things for our lives? Is it material possessions, or friends or is it something else? We all need to support our own lives, and, if we examine this need closely, then the most important thing is just the good health of the mind and body. More than anything else, we should know that the happiness we find is the result of good mental and physical health. So, next we should ask how best to enjoy our good health, how much do we know about maintaining it and how much do we realise the value of keeping our minds and bodies well. Most of us enjoy good physical health - we're not often deprived of it- and maintaining it is a matter of keeping good, balanced hygiene. But we do have a shortage of mental happiness. So it is important we learn how to train ourselves in finding happiness in the mind.

The cause of inner happiness is finding contentment in the mind. Contentment comes from controlling the mind, freeing it from desire and fantasy. If we don't achieve the many things we set out to do, there is no need to be mentally upset, to feel unfulfilled or discontent. Good health of the body and mental peace are more important. Once we have mental peace and happiness we can feel satisfied and content about our lives, regardless of how wealthy we are, whether or not we have family, whether we are single or live with others. We have to find a way to bring contentment to our minds. When we experience discomfort or mental worry, then it is important to fully utilise our intellects and find the exact cause of that worry. Is the cause an external object or not? Is your unhappiness due to your eyes coming into contact with a beautiful object? Is the unhappiness due to hearing a pleasant sound? We need to use our reasoning, observe the mind and identify the emotional cause of discomfort within.

Whenever you experience mental discomfort, try to see what type of mind you have at that moment, what is it thinking of and where is it going. We will learn that this discomfort or worry is a direct outcome of our state of mind. So the solution is to replace that negative mind with another, a positive one. Like calming down a child with a trick, we can trick the mind and direct it to some other object. Just this will bring some temporary relief. If

we take advantage of our knowledge, we can discover for ourselves the cause of our problems and, often, the solution as well.

We will finish by chanting the Buddha's mantra. As before we can sit in the meditation posture and try to stabilise the mind within. As we begin the chanting, use the sound of the mantra as the object of the mind.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks
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