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

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First, as usual, we will do a breathing meditation. Choose a comfortable sitting posture, making sure your body is fully relaxed. At the same time, we should try to calm our minds. While we are physically at rest, if the mind is also at rest, it is of great benefit.

We might find that resting our body is not difficult, but resting our mind is. If you are wondering how to rest the mind, it is important to first recognise what stops it from resting. Our body is easy to relax because we simply leave work behind and sit in this very peaceful place.

For the mind to relax, it also needs a peaceful environment. But it is not peaceful, because it is occupied by distractions. You see that you are here physically, but your mind is not - rather, it is blowing all over the place, like paper blown about by wind. Disturbing thoughts do not allow the mind to rest. This not only brings unease in the mind, but can also cause physical unease. Therefore, to completely calm the mind, what we need to do in meditation is get rid of thoughts of external objects.

Once you have brought the mind inward, try to direct all your mental attention to your breath coming in and out through the nostrils, without allowing your thoughts to wander.

If we observe the mind, we see that the experience of joy or happiness is short-lasting. Without us having to do anything, it quickly goes. Our experience of unhappiness or dissatisfaction, on the other hand, does not go away so quickly. We can see that it takes a lot of our effort to bring happiness to the mind, but it only takes a minor circumstance to experience dissatisfaction. Sometimes our minds change from happiness to suffering because of seeing or hearing something. This shows that we lack inner stability. It also shows that the mind is controlled by disturbing thoughts that can make us lose concentration. There is tremendous benefit if, through meditation practice, we could minimise disturbing thoughts and have more control over the mind.

Having gained control over the mind, you find it easy to concentrate on present actions. For instance, if you are eating food and your mind concentrates on the food, you find it tastes better. Likewise, when we go to sleep, if our minds are in the present, we do not have any trouble going to sleep and enjoy our sleep. As a result, when we wake up next morning, we find our mind and body refreshed.

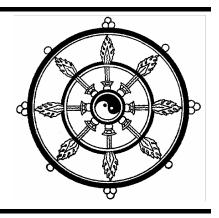
As said before, if disturbing thoughts strongly influence

our minds, they become like paper blown about by the wind. However, if the mind is like a solid object, it cannot be so easily disturbed. It is said that meditative concentration is like Mount Meru - the king of mountains - in stabilising the mind. In meditation terms, a stable mind means a mind that cannot easily be moved by thoughts. If our mind is not stable, it is easy for many thoughts to arise in us as a result of outer conditions. But if we could find inner stability, the mind would be less influenced by outer conditions.

Metaphorically speaking, if the mind is like a mountain, it cannot be moved by the wind of conceptual thought. Therefore the aim of meditative concentration is to make our minds as stable as a mountain.

Some years ago, Geshe-la says that he and I and another friend, we were on our way from Delhi to Bangkok but the plane was delayed a few hours. At the airport Geshe-la saw a couple about 45 years old, having tea together. Both looked very happy, laughing and talking with each other. Suddenly the woman spilt the tea on the floor and the man laughed at her. Geshe-la says he didn't know whether it was to make her feel better, or make fun of her. But she reacted angrily, got upset and left him. Geshe-la says that, as an observer, he could see no other cause than her spilling the tea. However, what he could see was that she got upset and left because of a negative thought. It is obvious how, with such a thought, we can destroy a peaceful and harmonious time together. Geshe Doga says he mentions this because it was strange, seeing a couple enjoying tea together, and all that happened was that one spilt the tea and the whole thing completely changed.

Geshe Doga says he remembers having a bad morning his plane had been delayed for many hours and he should have been the one in a bad mood! We had caught the plane from Bangkok to Delhi but, because of bad weather or some other delay, it landed in Bombay. Actually, we didn't realise until we got there and heard the announcement; I thought I was dreaming! We saw many western tourists cry because it spoilt their itineraries; also, at Bombay the reception area was poor and the crowds made it hard to find a place to sit, let alone sleep. After many hours, the airline put us on another plane to Delhi. We got to Delhi in the early morning, but could only stay a few hours. We went to the Tushita Centre to try to rest. Geshe-la says that Robert Liesk and Kathy came - Robert knocked on Geshe-la's door and told him he could not sleep because



the plane to Bangalore was leaving at 5 or something. Geshe-la thought it could not have been 5, but Robert seemed so serious, he took his word for it. After they left, he had to apologise to Geshe-la because the ticket said 7! Then we caught a taxi - which took us to the wrong airport - there was a new airport and the taxi dropped them in the old one, so they had to walk to the new one. When they got to the right airport, they were told the plane was due to leave at 7, but they had to wait until 11.

You probably all have such funny travel stories - Geshe Doga says he has got more! Robert has got a special torch and is very possessive of it. The group had to walk somewhere and it was very dark - Geshe-la asked, where is the torch? Robert couldn't find it but then, he got caught by a customs officer - because of that torch he got delayed another three hours!

We have to leave it here because it is hard for Geshe-la to teach. Geshe Doga says he could not stop laughing because he remembers the incident very clearly, Robert's face and everything!

We will finish with the Buddha's mantra:

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA.

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