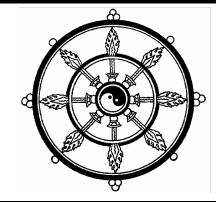
Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering





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As usual, first we will do some breathing meditation together. Relax your body and choose a comfortable sitting posture. Realising that the mind is the source of all our actions – verbal, bodily or mental – we ensure we have the right frame of mind before we act. When we engage in meditation, the right frame of mind is to establish the right motivation, such as genuine love or compassion, or the thought to benefit others. We use the thought of benefiting others as the driving force for undertaking this meditation practice. We can also think about why we practise meditation: because we want to be a better human being and want to get rid negative thoughts and deeds. Through thinking about the purpose of the meditation, you establish the correct motivation.

Now try to remove all distracting thoughts from the mind until it gradually abides peacefully. Then focus the mind on the outgoing and the incoming breath, making sure it is natural, calm and unforced. Try to place the mind singlepointedly on the outgoing and incoming breath for the next few minutes.

Meditation not only brings more inner peace and happiness, but also helps us enjoy better physical health. To know how our meditation practice can improve our physical wellbeing requires an understanding of the relationship between mind and body. It is obvious that our mental and physical well-being effect each other. When our mind is scattered, uncontrolled and occupied with many thoughts, anxiety and tension increase in the mind. Due to this, we may even lose our self-confidence, and lose all confidence in our ideas and in what to do. Instability and tension in the mind can also affect our body, bringing on back-pain, for example. So, by not controlling our mind, we risk the health of our body. On the other hand, being mentally stable, calm and happy contributes to our physical health and peace. Thus we can see the immediate benefits of meditation practice.

If we ask whether it is beneficial for our minds to remain undisturbed by delusions and always be calm and content, the answer is that this is what anybody would want. But if we then ask how we can achieve this peace of mind, the answer is not so easy. There are many types of disturbing thought that can obscure our minds and deprive us of our peace of mind. Yet the fundamental nature of our mind is clear and not affected by such disturbing thoughts.

We need to investigate whether our mind can be changed, because when we understand that we can change habitual thought patterns in the mind, we can see the benefit of meditation practice. Whether our minds can be changed or not is a matter of whether our minds can be trained to think or behave in a different way. This is important to

understand because, at the moment, we lack control over our minds and it serves as a source of problems. If we examine the mind, we see that it is by not taking the right direction but heading in the wrong direction and generating disturbing thoughts that we experience instability in our lives. If we understand that we can train the mind and break its negative habits, training our minds towards a positive way of thinking, we can see the benefits and strengthen our motivation to practise meditation.

In the texts, training the mind is compared to training a wild elephant. It is said that this uncontrolled mind is like a mad elephant that can cause much destruction and damage to life and property. We have to see that our minds are responsible for all our failures and losses. To discipline an elephant you train it by tying it to a firm pole, making sure that the rope or chain is strong and unbreakable. If the elephant is still stubborn, the trainer uses a hook to hit the elephant. When this is done, the elephant makes a lot of noise but still does the job required of it. Similarly, to train the mind we need a 'pole' - a virtuous meditation object to which we can tie the mind. We also need a 'rope'-in meditation we need the 'rope' of mindfulness. We also need to be fully alert so that the mind remains on the object; if it strays, we use alertness to immediately bring it back.

If we apply the meditation tools of mindfulness and alertness consistently- observing our thoughts and deeds with mindfulness to make sure they are positive, and using alertness to see faults as they arise and to immediately try to correct them, then slowly the mind will become more calm and disciplined. It is said you can even transform your mind to remain as steadfast as Mount Meru, but when you let it go towards virtuous objects, it naturally goes by itself. Through meditation practice we can fully calm the mind.

Geshe Doga says that tonight, as you can see, he has a bit of a cold. Usually he tries to fight the cold and usually he wins, but this time he is losing, so he is going to stop the teaching here. Sometimes he eats lots of chillies to cure the cold, but this one he thinks will not go away!

Next, we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Prepare yourself with the right posture and, making sure you are relaxed and that your mind is not distracted, focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks Edited by Mary-Lou Considine Edit checked against the tapes by Richard Garward **Edited Version**

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