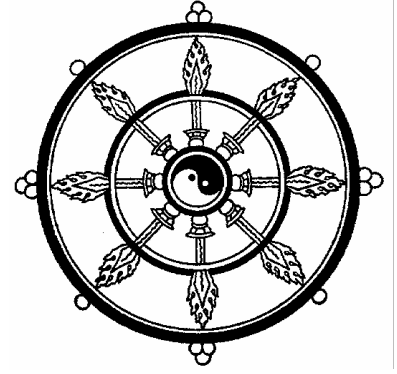


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨོ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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First, we will do some breathing meditation together. Choose a sitting posture, making sure your body is fully relaxed. Think that we are sitting in meditation to bring calmness and more true understanding to our minds.

The mind is important in making your life successful and meaningful. However, if the mind is not disciplined, we will end up generating all kinds of thought. For instance, we may desire many things, but often this desire cannot be fulfilled because the object is beyond our reach or it is something we lack the energy to pursue. In meditation, we try to control the mind so that we have fewer thoughts, less desire. As a result, we can focus our minds more sharply. Otherwise, it is scattered and there is not enough energy to accomplish our goals. Through meditation practice, instead of being scattered, we try to bring the mind inward. We can then see the mind become more focused - we can see our own creative potential - and thus we can feel that what we wish for in life we can accomplish.

With this awareness, we make sure that the mind sits within, and overcome all distracting thought. We then start the breathing meditation, simply focusing the mind on the outgoing and the incoming breath.

Geshe-la says he knows you are all enjoying meditation, but now it is his turn to teach!

As we practice meditation, it is important to be aware of the benefits of practicing. The most important benefit is that it helps us control or calm our minds. We must see this benefit in terms of any goal we set ourselves in life, whether spiritual or worldly. If we study and practice meditation, we can achieve our goals. This is not to say that we are not achieving anything otherwise. But we can see that, of the many things we want to achieve- for some, spiritual goals, others worldly- we are not always successful in achieving our goals.

One cause of our continuous failure is not being able to focus our mental and physical energy onto the actions we perform to achieve a goal. It not enough to direct our physical energy towards our goal; we also need to direct our mind towards the actions we perform. Many people have a bad habit of not directing their energy towards their actions. Even while physically doing something directed towards a goal, their mind is not engaged in the action. It is easy to lose interest, and because there is less interest, there is less determination. Because there is less determination, we exert less effort. As a result, we just give up. Then we undertake to achieve something else, but because of our past bad habit, we do the same thing

again. We identify a goal but do not fully direct our energies towards it.

The cause of failure is not that we lack the required potential. We may be mentally and physically equipped to achieve a goal, with the freedom to create the cause to achieve it. Our failure we can blame on our lack of interest, of mental or physical focus.

This is how we fail to achieve a lot of the things we desire. We may have some spiritual goal in mind so, like our friend may have done, we do some practice to achieve it. However, we seem to be behind our friend in achieving the goal. What we are trying to understand here is that the main cause is that we have not fully directed our energy towards achieving that goal. As His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, has said, if running water spreads in many different directions, there is not much power. But if the water is focused in one direction, it creates a powerful current. This illustrates the importance of directing our attention, focus and energy towards whatever action we undertake in order to achieve the result.

Some people suffer greatly because of a broken relationship with their boyfriend or girlfriend. Of course people need to do their best to deal with this situation. But there are many cases where, despite their hope and effort, people become depressed and find themselves in difficulty. Yet others who have been through the same experience have resolved the problem, and may even have made their lives happier and more satisfying. The main difference is that a person who takes a long time to get over separation is not able to overcome desire- the mind is obsessed with the other person. Because the mind is always thinking of that person, if you make an effort to overcome the problem, it seems futile. It does not resolve your problem or recover your past peace and happiness. Even though you make a concerted effort to overcome the problem, it seems fruitless. Your mind is not on your actions. Whatever you do, you're still thinking of the friend.

So try to see this distracting thought as the direct source of your suffering, the enemy of your happiness and peace. Instead of being influenced by such a thought, direct your mind towards whatever action you undertake, rather than letting it go backwards. As a result, even though you may confront very bad situations later on, the effort you make now to change your life will help you. As we come to see how our present actions can make our lives more meaningful, we become very

satisfied, very happy. We develop more faith in ourselves because we can see that we can change, that we are in control of our own lives.

We should use meditation practice to gain a deeper understanding of our minds- how we generate various emotions and attitudes, and how these are all conditional, how they arise when our minds contact certain objects. For instance, when anger arises in the mind, we know that it is not a fundamental part of the mind. If we identify anger as being destructive and harmful to us, there is no reason not to make an effort to overcome it. We must also recognise that we have the capacity and the freedom to overcome it. Thus, the more we understand our minds, the more we benefit from meditation practice. After seeing a certain state of mind as harmful, we can learn which meditation practice is its antidote. This is how meditation practice can have an immediate benefit.

That is the end of the teaching tonight. We will now chant the Buddha's mantra. As before, sit in meditation posture, relax the mind and body, and focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks
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Edited Version*

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