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

৩৩ ব্রাস্ট্রন মের্কির ফ্রাম্রার্ম থেঁ।

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We will begin with a few minutes breathing meditation. Just relax your body and choose a comfortable sitting posture.

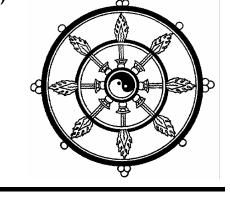
Finding mental, as well as physical rest definitely gives us a true and complete sense of rest. In order to rest the mind we need to know how, and what prevents it from doing so. Resting the mind is just a matter of overcoming what prevents it from resting. So we need to recognise the obstacles; the main one being our habit of always going from one object to the next, never allowing the mind to sit with a single object. It is said that our mind is like a monkey that keeps jumping from one branch to the other, never sitting on just one branch.

We have to realise that if we don't overcome this habit of being under the influence of distracting thoughts, then we will always have some mental stress and unease in our mind. It is important to practise meditation so that we can gain some control over the mind, making it rest on one object, rather than letting it always wander after different objects.

Now we will try to slowly get rid of these distracting thoughts by bringing the mind fully inward, then we'll begin the breathing meditation by focusing the mind single pointedly on the in breath and the out breath.

We all want to be good people and would like others to think well of us too. We like to be positive and good hearted in the way that we do things. It is important to realise that we can be such a person; not only are there good-hearted people out there to admire, but that we too can be like them. To become a good person we need to look into our personalities and try to see what habits we need to change. If we can at least see that if we get rid of our bad habits, whether they are habits of attitude or in our daily actions, then we can become good people. The main force which shapes our personalities is the mind. Unless we can develop some understanding of our own minds, the negative forces which create our bad habitsand change these negative states of mind- then it will be almost impossible to bring lasting change and transform our personalities.

It is not hard to differentiate and then to judge the manner of others in terms of their way of talking and their outward expressions. Recently Geshe Doga went for an x-ray where he was very impressed by the way in which a young girl working at the hospital looked after him. The way she talked and the way she looked after him showed a great deal of caring and friendship. Geshe Doga really felt it, and when he came back to his room,



he remembered her amazing quality of caring for others. Helping others is like a social skill. When others help us, it does give us great pleasure and makes us happy. So imagine how this young girl has made so many people happy in one day in her role as hospital staff.

We live in a society and our well being is very much dependent on other members of the society in which we live. As social beings we interact with others, so it follows that if we can develop skills of relating to others, making them happy and making friends, then naturally there will be more people who are friendly towards us, who like and admire us. The admiration and friendship that we receive from others is a source of joy in our lives. We feel safer in life if we know that when we go through a difficult time there will be people who will help. The good habits that we develop in our attitudes and daily actions can make us good people, as well as bringing happiness to ourselves and all the other people that we meet.

We don't normally consider what we can do to bring more happiness into our lives, or to bring happiness to others. Take a small thing like facial expressions; some can be annoying and upset people and other expressions can make people happy. By examining any actions that we do, and especially their consequences, then we can judge for ourselves whether an action is beneficial or something that will leave a negative impression on others. If we have a choice, then we will of course choose the action which leaves a positive impression. Creating the causes of happiness is in our hands. In order to bring happiness into our lives, we can train ourselves to behave in a certain way and to develop a positive mental attitude.

All we are talking about is cultivating or developing a good nature, because developing a good nature can be a sure source of happiness in our life. While if we have a bad nature, that is always a source of misery in our lives. When we are ill natured, then it is hard for people to become friends with us, let alone support us when we are sick or in trouble. Often an ill-natured person will become even worse when he or she faces a problem like sickness. But if we are a good natured, then even if we are sick in hospital, the staff will find it very easy to deal Somehow we will develop a close and with us. harmonious relationship with the doctors and staff. Even if we don't recover quickly, we will find that spending time in the hospital will be a lot easier due to our good nature and friendly relations with the hospital staff. This

topic is being brought up because our nature is important and effects us all the time. If we develop a good nature, then the benefit is everlasting.

Question and Answer

Q: I was thinking about Geshela's point about facial expressions. Part of the trouble is that we don't know how we look to other people. If our mind is good, will our facial expressions become good?

A: It is right that if you have good will from your heart then naturally this will appear in your expression. If someone is angry, then others can tell from that person's face. When we talk about a good facial expression, we don't mean to fake it. People realise that pretending doesn't come from the heart, but from some obligation to observe a social convention. It is different when people express genuine loving feelings from the heart.

Certainly, our inner feelings are often expressed in our outer expressions. We can observe the difference by looking in the mirror and comparing how our faces look when we have a strong mind of anger, with when we are in a happier mood. This difference is a result of the mind. So it is better not to look in the mirror when you are in an unhappy mood or have strong anger, you might get a fright!

Q: What are the conditions that support a daily meditation practice?

A: We need a good understanding of our meditation practice. For example, know the benefits and advantages of doing your meditation practice, and understand the disadvantages and shortcomings of not practising meditation. This knowledge has to be clear in our minds in order to have a good, strong and genuine motivation. A strong motivation is needed to keep doing the practice all the time.

In order to do the actual practice, we need an understanding of the practice itself. Learn how to go about the meditation if some obstacle arises. Know what type of obstacles are likely to arise in meditation. Once we have prepared ourselves with the knowledge of the meditation, then we are well equipped when sitting in meditation, able to remove and solve any obstacle or problem that arises.

Another important condition for the meditation practice is to have a contented mind, that is, having minimal desires. Meditation is a practice that involves some mental discipline. This can be very hard if one's mind is not content. If the mind has too many desires, then this can be a cause of distraction in our meditation practice. So being content and having less desire is an important condition for meditating successfully.

Also we have to follow the meditation according to our own limit, and judge according to our own level of progress and development. That is why initially it is better to make the meditation session short, otherwise it is said that high expectations and greed for meditation can be an obstacle to development. It is not so much the length of time spent meditating, but the quality of the practice that counts. We have to make sure that it is helping our minds sit with a given object. If in a longer meditation session there is no proper concentration and the mind intermittently rests on the object, i.e. sits with the object, wanders away, and then back again, then there is no discipline being developed and we are not gaining any control over the mind. In such a meditation not much progress is being made.

Now we will recite Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra seven times. Try, as before, to draw the mind inward, away from all the outer objects. While we are reciting the mantra the mind is focused on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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