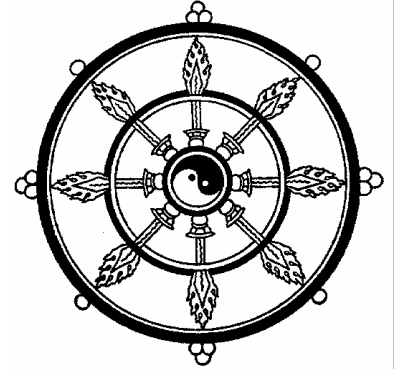


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཨྲ སྤྱུང་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



9 September 1998

We will do the breathing meditation first. Make sure that the sitting posture you have chosen is the most comfortable, and that your body is fully relaxed.

At the same time, your mind should also rest. Mental peace is the more important because, without mental peace, no matter how much peace exists in our environment or how much physical rest we have, if the mind is not resting, we don't feel we are at rest. We have to understand how important it is to achieve some mental peace and mental happiness.

What is the main hindrance to enjoying mental peace and happiness? If we check why the mind is not resting, it is because it is not controlled and is always wandering outside, even if we are physically at rest. While the mind is wandering, we cannot calm it. Therefore, before you engage in meditation practice, it is good to consider what you are trying to achieve through the practice, what this meditation is for. The meditation that we do is to calm the mind by overcoming all distracting thoughts. So, as we sit in this meditation posture with our body fully at rest, let us first try to get rid of all outgoing thoughts and let the mind fully rest inwardly.

We are going to do the breathing meditation, our object is the incoming and outgoing breath. As with any other meditation practice, what is most important is having single-pointed mental concentration on the meditation object, without losing even a portion of our concentration to any other object. Another important thing is that our concentration on the object should be such that our minds and the object become inseparable. Our focus on the object of the meditation practice should not be like when we are looking at an object with our eyes; rather, the mind dissolves into the object. There is absolutely no gap between the mind and the object.

When we begin learning about the meditation object, we may, as a base, have a symbol or representation of the object being used. You may have some physical object that you can gaze upon. Or it can be an object introduced to you by your meditation teachers; it can be even some meditation topic. Once the object has been introduced to you by your teacher or by your own visual contact, when you begin the meditation, the object is not the thing you see outside. Rather, the meditation object is whatever perception of that object is in your mind, a kind of mental image of that object. This is the object that we try to see as clearly as possible, the object on which we try to develop concentration. These are general things about meditation practice. We will now begin a few minutes of

meditation, focusing on the breath as it goes out and comes in through our nostrils.

We do meditation practice to safeguard and enhance our inner peace and happiness. This inner peace and happiness is very different from the outer peace and happiness that we normally experience. Physical satisfaction does not come from within, but is more conditional upon outer factors. In meditation, we are not trying to seek outer happiness but to safeguard our inner happiness. We are always thinking of how to secure outer happiness, yet we should consider that inner happiness is even more important. We should try to see that meditation practice is really very beneficial. It is good to engage in meditation practice on a regular basis, whatever the length of the time we can give to it.

Geshe Doga says that, in the past, he has often said that we should think of meditation practice as a holiday for the mind. We always have some problem on our minds, and before that problem is resolved, another comes, and then another. Our minds become filled with so many problems, so many things to worry about. However, if we engage in meditation practice, it is possible to at least reduce such problems in the mind. Sometimes, to reduce these problems, all we need to do is to give the mind a rest, to stop those objects that worry the mind, that really stress it. That is why we say that when we engage in meditation practice, we have to stop all thoughts of external objects, external activity. We just have to make an effort to stabilise the mind and let it fully rest within.

If we rest the mind by practising meditation for a short time, the mind will enjoy some peace, some rest. Even this very short time can make a lot of difference to the mind. One of the main reasons that there is no end to the worry in our minds is that this very worry is a creation of our own minds, it is a neurotic or bad way of thinking. When we think of our problems, in most cases, the actual cause or condition is not really serious. Sometimes, in facing a minor problem in life, if the mind is too worried about it, the problem can become big. Problems can become unending if we don't control our thoughts.

If we are able to control the mind, at least when we face some problem, instead of spending our time worrying about it, if we just bring the mind inward or stop the mind from thinking of the problem, it is possible to get rid of it. Of course, after that, another problem might arise in the mind, and we must deal with that problem, but at least we are not continuously storing more problems our minds.

The only difference between finding happiness or satisfaction through spiritual means or through worldly means is that, when using spiritual means you focus inward, you try to seek inner happiness; when you use worldly means, you focus outward. In the outer world, there are many sensual objects: objects that we can see, hear and touch. Of course, we don't always perceive all these objects equally; rather, when we encounter outer objects, we use our sense of discrimination or judgement. Based on our judgement, which is like our mental intelligence, we enjoy forms and pleasant sounds and touch and so forth.

Now when we seek inner happiness and peace, we have to focus our mind inwardly, and try to see which things bring happiness, and which things bring unhappiness. We try to develop an understanding of our own minds by knowing that there are certain ways of thinking that bring problems, and other ways of thinking that bring happiness and peace. If we see any unhappy thoughts in our minds, we must overcome them, because these thoughts make us weak and powerless. Someone may have a strongly built body, but if he has a lot of worry, he can have very low self-esteem and spirit. Such a person cannot achieve anything, or has to struggle to achieve anything.

Therefore, it is important to be a strong person, in the sense of having a positive mind. The way to be strong and positive within is by getting rid of all those ways of thinking that put oneself down, that discourage us from doing things. You can see the obvious benefit of developing some understanding about your mind, and using that understanding to try to get rid of those states of mind that bring unhappiness and discourage you, while trying to develop those other states of mind that enhance your self-esteem, a more positive way of thinking. When we inwardly have such strength and a positive way of thinking, it makes a great difference to what we can achieve in whatever we do.

We will stop tonight's teaching here. To finish, we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. While chanting this mantra, as before, we will sit in this meditation posture, trying to relax ourselves both physically and mentally, but we 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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