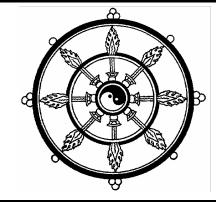
Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering





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We will begin with a few minutes of breathing meditation, so choose a comfortable and relaxing posture. As well as relaxing physically, we should also relax mentally by fully bringing the mind inward. Remove any outgoing thoughts and remove the state of mind that is preoccupied with outer objects. In this way the mind will dwell within, when we switch off all outer thoughts.

We should do the breathing meditation in a relaxed frame of mind and body. Make sure that the mind is fully focussed on the breath that comes in and out through your nostrils. Also make sure that the mind is not distracted by any other objects. We focus the mind on the breath in such a way that it becomes at one with the breath.

One benefit of meditation is that it helps us to understand our minds. Whenever we meditate we focus on the mind and by watching and examining it closely, we gain some understanding of its faults or qualities. Based on our knowledge of what are the right and wrong ways of thinking, we can develop qualities in our minds and thus, in the way in which we live.

Of all the activities we undertake in life, meditation is the most beneficial. The practice of meditation, when done properly, it can truly bring us inner peace and happiness. A meditation practice also ensures a positive state of The benefits of meditation are achievable. Meditation brings us recognition of the obstacles we face in finding inner peace and happiness, and teaches us how to put a stop to them. If we make the effort to successfully remove the obstacles, then naturally we will experience inner peace and happiness.

We are up to verse 45 of 'The Wheel of Sharp Weapons':

When no matter how well meant our actions towards others.

They always elicit a hostile response,

This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.

'Til now we have repaid loving-kindness with malice,

Hereafter let's always accepts others' favours

Both graciously and with most humble respect.

This verse illustrates one of the profound practices of a Bodhisattva, or of a very compassionate great being. But this verse is also a very relevant practice for ordinary beings as well. When we have been kind and caring to others and they have responded in a hostile way, we need to look at this situation in a different way and adopt

a more understanding attitude, otherwise it can be very hurtful for us.

This situation can arise for some parents and even some spiritual teachers wherein they act in a beneficial way out of complete concern for their children or their students. In order to benefit the child or student, the parent or teacher may need to talk softly, and in other situations a more harsh approach may be needed. motivation that causes them to act is one of pure love and care.

However, the response they receive from the children or students is completely negative, they respond as if everything said is designed to annoy or upset them. They can't understand why they, and not others, have been singled out for such unfair treatment. Out of this resentment, they show ingratitude towards their parents or teachers. This, in turn, can bring harm to the minds of the parents, as they can't understand why they deserve such bad treatment for acting out of love for their It can be very hurtful when we can't understand why this is happening.

In such situations we turn to the advice given:

'Til now we have repaid loving kindness with malice'.

We have to try and understand that the reason why we receive such negative responses from others when we are being so kind is due to our own karma. We have done the same in the past, we have abused and upset others who have been kind instead of feeling grateful. If we consider the situation in terms of the cause and effect of our own karma, this can help relieve the suffering and harm we receive from others.

It is important not to ignore the kind help and support that we receive from others, but to show them more respect. We shouldn't have too strong a self-centred mind and we shouldn't feel that everything we have accomplished in our lives has been done on our own.

Just think of how much support and affection we have received from our parents, all the sacrifices they made to give us our lives. Any education we have received we have not achieved on our own, it has depended on our teachers. When we think about how much others have helped us and how much kindness and support we have received, then any sensible person would be motivated to repay their kindness. At the very least we should not harm the people that have shown us this great kindness and love. To do so would make us less than fully human beings, we're inferior even to animals. Some people look

after animals with great affection and care. These animals naturally develop trust and friendship with these people, and so, of course, won't attack them.

Our main problem is our strong selfish mind. This makes it difficult for us to even admit that our achievements in life are not due entirely to our own efforts, but due to the kind support and help that we receive from others. Our selfish minds make us forget all the kindness that we have received from others like our parents. When we forget this, we don't realise the contribution they have made to our lives, to the point where we feel that they should do more and more for us in order to receive our thanks and gratitude.

If, as children, we hold this kind of attitude, then no matter how much help we have received from our parents, we never realise just what they have done for us, and we are always expecting more. Even when our parents have grown old and have no source of income we still expect them to support us financially.

This kind of attitude makes it very difficult to develop a good parent-child relationship, which is important for having more happiness and satisfaction in life, for both parents and children. Our ability to live a happy life depends on our relationships with others, so we need to think of how to improve our relationships. This depends on both parties. Parents need to have more understanding of their childrens' situation, likewise the children need to practise overcoming or reducing the self-centred mind and realising that the parents are not in a position to always be perfect, to always do the right thing or always fulfill our demands. Even if there is a time when they refuse to help out, or they say something bad, it is important that we don't see them as completely negative and unhelpful. We can do this by remembering all the good things and the great support they have given

In terms of spiritual practice there is no more beneficial practice than serving people, especially those that have been particularly kind to you. For example, looking after an elderly parent. Think about what you can do to repay all the kindness and all the support they have given over the years.

The last two lines:

Hereafter let's always accept other's favours Both graciously and with most humble respect.

refer to a situation where we receive harm and abuse from others to whom we have shown a great deal of love and support. This is happening because, in the past, we have responded like this towards people that have been kind to us. Now that we realise this, we need to make a commitment to always show respect and humility to those that have been helpful and kind to us, even if they are violent or abusive towards us.

We will finish the teaching here and, as usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. As we chant the mantra we should sit in a meditation posture, making sure that the body is relaxed and the mind is drawn inside. We should direct our mental focus to the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks Edited by Cynthia Karena Edit checked against the tapes by Richard Garward Edited Version

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