

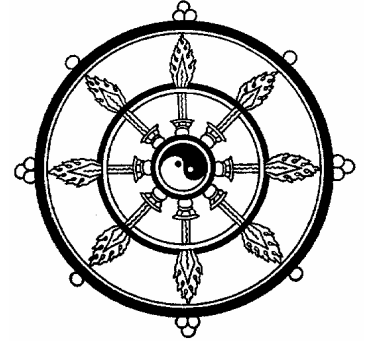
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# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

ཨོ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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To begin we shall do a few minutes of breathing meditation. Just try to relax your body, and sit in a comfortable posture for meditation.

Before starting the meditation, try to understand what you are trying to achieve through this meditation practice. It is to gain control over your mind, rather than allowing it to be always overpowered by uncontrolled thoughts or deluded states of mind.

Try to put aside all distracting thoughts and just let the mind rest within yourself. You will find that the mind does not just stay within, rather you will notice that it has the tendency to wander outwards. Therefore instead of allowing your mind to be preoccupied with the usual objects of distraction, try to direct and discipline the mind to focus on the in-breath and out-breath.

*Pause for meditation.*

It is very important that we know the benefits of following this meditation practice. We have to see its potential for resolving any problems that feel we cannot solve. We have to understand that when we practice meditation our purpose is not necessarily some ultimate aim beyond this lifetime. Rather we have to understand that meditation is directly relevant to everyday life. It can help us to control our emotions, and therefore to be a person with more inner peace, happiness and stability.

The benefits of meditation practice are not just limited to the few minutes that we sit in a meditation posture reflecting on our mind and our self. Rather the benefits extend to all our activities.

As said before, meditation practice always involves a process of observing one's thoughts and actions. The purpose of this is to try to recognise what brings confusion and disturbance to the mind, and to understand what lies behind all the faulty, and very unskillful negative actions that we do from time to time.

In practising meditation, we have to have a true knowledge of the main source of the problems that we find in our lives, which are mainly to do with the lack of control over our own emotions. Because we lack control, our mind is sometimes overpowered by what we call afflictive emotions.

One of the many types of these afflictive emotions is strong unfulfilled desire, which can be a continuous source of suffering and misery in one's life. We have all heard of people who, because they are not able to overcome these desires end up committing suicide. There is no sense of happiness or joy in their whole life, and all

they feel is the agony of their pain and suffering. What is important here, is to recognise that the cause of their suffering is no other than desire - an uncontrolled, very forceful desire that has occupied and overpowered their mind.

A desire such as this is an afflictive emotion, because when it overpowers our mind it can be a cause of suffering. What do we have to do to solve these kinds of problems? There is no outer solution, as the remedy has to be found within ourselves. We have to open our eyes to see that desire, for instance, is the cause of problems, and that it is caused by some kind of delusion within our mind.

It is for these reasons that we try to study and learn about the practice of meditation. Through this practice we can cultivate the necessary understanding and knowledge to not only recognise the cause of the problem, but also to see that we have the potential within ourselves to solve that problem. Knowledge and the practice of meditation can give us the self-confidence to deal with these situations. Then even if we cannot completely overcome the emotional problem we face, at least we know the cause. With this knowledge we can weaken the influence and force of these afflictive emotions. So in trying to understand meditation we not only gain some knowledge of meditation practice, but if we actually practise it, then we can see the effectiveness and benefit of the practice for ourselves. We can understand that if we practice meditation we can get over whatever emotional problems we have face.

Whenever we engage in meditation practice we are counteracting some of the mental delusions, or afflictive emotions. The purpose of meditation, as said before, is to rid ourselves of all these mental delusions or afflictive emotions, so as to be able to enjoy a very clear, peaceful, and happy state of mind. The way we counteract delusions varies according to the nature of the deluded misconception about the object. In order to overcome desire, for example, we engage in meditation to try to see that the object is not as desirable as our mind perceives it to be. In the meditation we try to understand that there are no valid reasons to cause the desire you perceive in the object. When we stop perceiving a desired object as very appealing, valuable, and precious, and as a true source of satisfaction, the desire will diminish. When the desire diminishes it means that our mind is not overpowered by it, and so therefore we are freeing ourselves from all these unresolved problems that we have been facing.

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As I said the other day, meditation is also a process of cleansing ones mind of all the faulty ways of thinking and so on. Basically meditation is very suitable and relevant to our lives, because it is the only way which shows us exactly how to control our mind to ensure peace and happiness. It is the only way of preventing the causes of unhappiness and disturbance in the mind.

*Transcribed from the tapes by Di Johns*  
*Edited by Adair Bunnett*  
*Edited Version*  
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When we talk of the importance of gaining some control over our mind we are trying to ensure some sort of sustainable peace and happiness in the mind. This is important because we have realised that this is our goal. We have realised that what we really want is happiness, which really comes down to the happiness of good health of body and mind. In fact it is very important to understand this, because sometimes we forget about how important our physical and mental health is.

If health of mind and body are so important, then who can give it to us? Then we understand that we have to take the main responsibility for ourselves. This is especially so for our mental health - the mental peace, happiness, and stability within our mind. Responsibility depends entirely upon ourselves. We have to stop thinking that there is someone else who will bring happiness in our life. Rather you have to take the entire responsibility for this upon yourself. That is because here we are talking about inner happiness and inner peace.

We are not talking about material happiness. Of course we can get help from others to provide material needs like food and drink and so on. If we are short we can go out and beg, and surely someone will provide them. In fact in the past I have gone out to beg for tea and so forth, and I have always found someone offering these things. However no one can offer mental peace and happiness, because they do not come from outside.

It is important that we not only cultivate some sense of responsibility for the good health of our body and our mind. We also need to cultivate some confidence within ourselves in terms of providing all the things that we need for the good health of the body and mind. What we are talking about here is to what do we give the highest priority in our life? This is an important question. Is it your company? Is it your work? Is it anything else? We are saying here that it should be your own happiness -the good health of your body and mind. Bearing this in mind, we can then be even more encouraged to practice meditation. This is because meditation practice is the only means of ensuring peace, happiness and stability in our mind. In meditation practice we learn to recognise any disturbance in our mind, and how to eliminate it.

We leave the teaching here. We shall finish with a short meditation and chanting of the Buddha's mantra. Please sit in the meditation posture again and fully relax your body. Then bring the mind inward ridding it of all disturbing thoughts. As we begin the chanting you focus your mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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