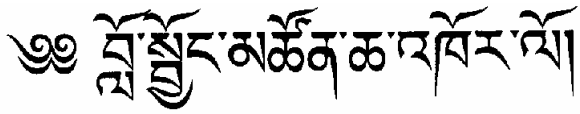

Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering



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We start with a few minutes of breathing meditation.

Just try to relax your body, and choose a comfortable posture.

Now check your mind and if it is distracted towards external objects then try to stop that. Make an effort to fully rest the mind inwardly, and try to feel this.

Having brought the mind inward then, in order to not be distracted by any external objects again, just place your mind on the incoming and outgoing breath. Make an effort to prevent any distractions from occurring, trying as much as possible to focus the mind fully or single-pointedly on the breath. (Pause for meditation.)

The benefit of meditation is that it helps us to build within us a positive mental habit. Also meditation helps us to gain more control of our mind. Sometimes, in order to find inner peace we have to put aside all thoughts, whether they are good or bad, worthwhile or not. This is necessary because unless we let go of all these thoughts we cannot find mental rest and peace.

We have to realise that if we give all our free will over to the mind, or if we give independence to our mind, then the result is not always something that is beneficial to ourself. We should try to get rid of this idea that we are controlled by the mind. For instance when there is some strong feeling or emotion in the mind, then you feel that you are very weak and helpless. You have to realise that this way of thinking is wrong, and is in fact undermining your own capacity to act.

If we think of what we can do, then we can change the mind. Why? Because the mind is not by its nature fixed with a specific nature. The mind just follows whatever it is used to. For somebody who has a mind with a very angry nature, for example, the mind of that person is very easily influenced by anger and becomes habituated to it.

However, if we consider that anger is a fixed nature of the mind, then it is not. The nature of your mind is generally very flexible; it is not rigid and it can be changed. There is a certain type of mind which is, you realise, not beneficial to have. However you can replace that mind with some other type of mind. You do not necessarily have to change it, but at least you can try to

understand that you do not have to be enslaved by that particular mind.

This is important because often when we come to changing our mind, our mental attitude, and our emotions, then we are very easily discouraged. We always think that we can't change and overcome our mind. We say to ourselves that this is the nature of our mind, that our mind always has had this same strong feeling. So the result is that you cannot see any way out problems which are brought about because of having that unwanted state of mind. Therefore it is important to realise that your mind and yourself are two separate entities.

It is always beneficial to check on the mind which motivates us. Therefore before you respond to anything, check your mind. Then there is some benefit. It is beneficial if you recognise that a specific mind is not one of positive thoughts, and then try to make an effort to not to listen to that mind, and to be in command of it.

We can understand this for ourself by just observing how much our mind can influence us, and its effect in terms of finding happiness and suffering. As Shantideva says, although we all seek happiness it, we do not find enough happiness, and although we do not want any suffering we find suffering. This happens to us because of not understanding the essence of our mind.

In fact we can understand very clearly from our own experience that happiness, pain, pleasure, and unhappiness is the outcome of the type of the mind that is present within us. So we can see how, just by simply removing or trying to forget certain thoughts and objects in the mind, that we can at least enjoy some rest, and feel so feel better. Then we can sleep with no problem.

Whereas when we remember certain objects, then the outcome is that we become very restless. We become very disturbed and emotionally very unstable. Then we find it impossible to go to sleep, and even in a comfortable bed we cannot relax our body. So in this things the mind has a lot of influence and effect on our experiences. If mind is very agitated by thoughts or some external object of distraction, then which that sleep doesn't happen.

So it is important to always check and ensure that mind goes in the right direction, and that it is occupied with the right kind of objects, in the sense of something that brings positive feelings. If the mind introduces something negative or disturbing, then we have to try to stop the mind from going in that direction, and then being occupied with that particular object. If that happens then we introduce something to replace that mind. If we focus on the mind like this we can understand how we can benefit ourselves by putting some effort into training our minds.

As stated before, through meditation practice we can achieve some control over our mind to the point that the mind can listen to us. It is said that if you make a good progress in meditation then your mind becomes, as is literally said, serviceable. It is serviceable in the sense that it can perform functions according to how you direct it. If you want the mind to sit, it can sit without any movement. If you want mind to travel, it can go without any limit, it can penetrate any truth with insight. This can benefit us, and help us to solve our problems.

We can find this capacity to direct our mind very helpful, especially if we go through some very big crisis in our life, such as a lot of people do when they experience a breakdown in their relationship with their partner, with whom they have lived and shared their life over many years. This can be a very painful experience. You feel that you cannot cope because you always feel pain from the hurt within yourself.

If we examine the actual cause of why we undergo this painful suffering after such changes in our relationships, then the cause is just that your mind is still remembering and pondering over events of the past. For instance, when you remember some place where you spent time together with your former partner, then it can feel as if there is a fire burning inside you. The pain can be so severe and serious. However when we think about the real cause it is just because your mind is remembering that place, and the memory keeps returning.

If you are able to engage in meditation practice, then you are able to bring your mind out of that unhappy place, and direct it to some other place. As you do this your mind actually now starts to forget that unhappy place. If you then try to occupy your mind with some different objects, then you find that you no longer have to suffer. So you can find some happiness. Even if you do not find complete solutions to your problems, then at least with this meditation technique you know that if it is too much, there is a way to at least temporarily escape from your mental problem, and find some peace elsewhere.

If you think more on this then you can understand how some problems cannot be overcome unless we try to forget certain objects, like particular events and other parts of our life. You can see unless we train our mind to completely wipe all those things from our mind, we cannot solve our problems, and that this is the only way of solving our problems.

We now continue teaching on *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*.

We are up to Verse 50. We did the first three lines last week, and the next two lines of that verse are:

Your legs set apart for the two grades of truth,
With your eyes blazing open for wisdom and means.

In this, and some following verses Dharmarakshita, the author of this text, prays to his most favoured deity Yamantaka, who is in a very wrathful aspect. Dharmarakshita prays to Yamantaka to destroy his biggest enemy, which is this self-cherishing mind or attitude. The line "Your two legs set apart for the two grades of truth", shows that Yamantaka's two legs indicate the two truths, which are the two types of Bodhicitta, conventional Bodhicitta and ultimate Bodhicitta. Yamantaka's right leg, which is drawn in, indicates conventional Bodhicitta, whereas the outstretched left leg indicates ultimate Bodhicitta. The line "With your eyes blazing open for wisdom and means" refers to both of Yamantaka's being evenly open, which is to indicate the necessity of the evenness of both method and the wisdom on the path - not one without the other.

Then the text continues with this verse which says:

Baring your fangs of the four great opponents,
Devour the foe - our cruel selfish concern!
With your powerful mantra of cherishing others,
Demolish this enemy lurking within!

Here the four fangs of Yamantaka indicates the four forces which are the remedy to each of the four evils, which are the demon of mental delusions, the lord of death, the demon of the contaminated aggregates, and the demon of the son of the god. Each of the four forces is a remedy to these four demons. Metaphorically this verse is praying that by closing these four fangs symbolising the four forces, may you, Yamantaka completely destroy the enemy of the self-cherishing mind.

We leave tonight's teaching here, and as usual we chant the Buddha's mantra seven times before finishing. Try to sit in the meditation posture, making sure your body is relaxed and comfortable. Make sure that you bring the mind inward by overcoming all the distracting thoughts. Then as we start chanting the mantra focus please your mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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