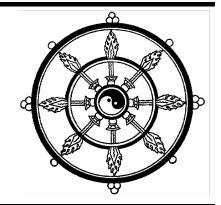
Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering





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We are going to do our usual breathing meditation for a few minutes.

Make sure that your sitting posture is comfortable and that your body is fully relaxed. We should also try to make sure that the mind is relaxed and is sitting fully within us. If you check the mind, you may see that it is following its usual habits - it is not within us, but rather it is scattered by many distracting thoughts. It is important to rest the mind, bring it inward and get rid of these distracting thoughts. It is possible then to find that the mind just sits within. However, it is likely to go outwards again because of some outside influence, some distracting thought. Therefore, after you bring the mind inward, it is important that you start to do breathing meditation immediately, focusing the mind on the inbreath and out-breath, and not giving it any chance to go after outside objects. What we do in meditation is to maintain the mind on this object of the incoming and outgoing breath.

First, we should try as much as possible to see the benefit of practicing meditation and integrating it into everyday life. Next, we should learn about is the meditation practice. After this, we should engage in the practice. Of all these steps, you will find that the practice part is the most difficult, because anyone can learn about meditation. The most difficult part is that, when you engage in meditation practice, you may find it difficult make the practice work for you. Meditation practice calms and transforms the mind. Achieving this result is the hardest part of meditation.

Whenever we engage in meditation practice, the mind must abide with the meditation object. If the mind is not staying on the object, we are not really practising meditation. Initially we will find it better to make our meditation session short, even if it is only one to two minutes. Because of the short length of time, the mind can stay within, resting on the object. After this, if the mind leaves the object, you need to try to bring it back in order to continue the practice. Again, it may stay for a little while, for even less time than before. If we get frustrated and force the mind [by doing longer meditation sessions], instead of achieving mental discipline, our mind develops the bad habit of staying on an object for a very short while. If you can't keep the mind focused for even a short meditation period, it is better to take a break, refresh yourself and relax. After taking a break, do some more practice. You can repeat this process a few times, and then perhaps extend the

length of time [of the meditation session]. In this way, you can make progress in developing concentration, a little bit at a time. It's better to make a little bit of progress, to practice consistently and regularly, than to do longer sessions irregularly.

We can only appreciate the benefit of meditation if we do the practice properly and effectively. Whenever we practice meditation, we are not just sitting with the mind going everywhere. Rather, the mind sits on the object. When the mind sits on the object, we can engage in the practice and experience some sense of inner peace. If the mind does not sit on the meditation object, we cannot experience any benefit, any peace. Sometimes, at the end of a session, we may even feel physically tired, or feel pain in the body, and so on.

In understanding the benefits of meditation, we need to realise that it is an effective means of overcoming anything that brings stress, unhappiness or disturbance to the mind. We all wish to have a mind that is calm, relaxed and peaceful. However, we do not always find this. Instead, we usually find instead that the mind is filled with unwanted feelings, thoughts and emotions that are difficult to cope with. This makes our life confused, difficult and unhappy, as well as unstable. We need to recognise why there is no peace, happiness or stability in the mind and see what is it that stops us having these qualities in the mind. We cannot pinpoint the cause because the mind does not rest or stop. Our unending thinking prevents us from seeing the cause. The mind is too busy. If our mind is always in that preoccupied state, we cannot be stable. The direct cause of all the problems we think are bothering us, upsetting us, disturbing us and confusing us are the various conceptualised thoughts that fill our mind. Meditation practice is a means of removing or subduing all these disturbing thoughts. Meditation is like good medicine for the mind, because it can cure all the mind's problems. When we have overcome these problems, we will find that we have a more peaceful, happy and stable life.

We will now continue the commentary on the text called *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. We are up to the end of verse 52, which says:

Capture him, capture him, fierce Yamantaka, Summon this enemy, bring him forth now!

The enemy referred to here is our wrong view, the self-grasping and self-cherishing mind. These two are said to be the root cause of all other kinds of delusions and misconceptions arising in the mind. [To deal with these

two minds], the author of this text prays to one of his favourite meditation deities, Yamantaka. When he says "capture him, capture him" twice, this indicates the two types of bodhi mind, or the two types of bodhicitta -conventional bodhicitta and ultimate bodhicitta. These two are the two main opponent forces for destroying or challenging the two enemies of the self-cherishing mind and the self-grasping mind.

The self-cherishing mind is the mind that prevents us from helping other beings. As long as we have this self-cherishing mind, even if we have some love and compassion for other beings, we cannot perfect it. The remedy to this self-cherishing mind is conventional bodhicitta, which needs to be cultivated. The wrong view of self-grasping binds us to this suffering world, this cyclic existence, and does not let us get out of it. Through this view, we perceive all phenomena, all objects, as existing inherently from their own side. In order to destroy this wrong view of self-grasping, we have to achieve a realisation of the correct view - that all phenomena lack inherent or true existence. This is why the author used the words "capture him" twice when praying to his deity.

To further explain the meaning of self-grasping, one way of understanding it is how, deep within us, we have this thought of liking and disliking. Deep inside, we have ideas about what we like and what we don't like. This sense of like and dislike is derived from a deep-seated sense of "I". Because of this "I", we have thoughts of liking and disliking. The best thing for us to do is to examine how the two enemies; the self-grasping and the self-cherishing minds, shape and influence our life. The self-cherishing mind is the self-centred mind, and is like a servant of self-grasping - it works for the self-grasping mind. If we contemplate this topic, we can understand how all our problems have as their root cause, these two minds - the self-grasping and self-cherishing minds.

Examining this topic in terms of cause and effect, we saw before that, because we have this self-grasping view, we also have this self-cherishing mind, which is our experience of this very forceful sense of "I", of ego. Because this sense of "I" is so strong, we naturally feel attachment to some beings and hatred toward others. If you did not have this attitude of liking and disliking, of seeing certain people as close and others as distant, there would be no cause for most of the trouble that you go through in life. Because of attachment and the anger, even with our own close friends or relatives, as our attitude changes, we then have to suffer. We create our actions and their results from our attitude of either liking or not liking, and our motivation of love, desire or hatred.

Whether an object is regarded as a friend or otherwise, our attitude is not always the same. One day we can view all these objects as pleasant, but as a result of attachment or even some form of love, the next day our attitude changes. We then show anger or hatred, and because of such an attitude of desire or hatred, we create various actions. [The text] says that the actions we create result in some sort of suffering.

Under the influence of this self-cherishing mind, we may even think that the attitude we hold towards someone else is love or compassion. But when there is the influence of this self-cherishing mind, it is not completely love or compassion because it is not based on an understanding of the other person - there is also attachment and self-interest. With a self-cherishing mind, when we say we love someone close to us, we may feel it is love. The reason why is that they are "my" friend, someone special to "me", so the base on which this feeling arises is this sense of "I" or of "mine", but not the complete base of knowledge about the object.

Instead of holding attachment and hatred towards other beings, you should try to cultivate true love and compassion towards them. True love and compassion are more beneficial to us as they can be the most effective causes for bringing harmony with others. On the other hand, we don't need to explain how this feeling of attachment and hatred confuses and complicates not only our life, but the lives of others, how the attitude of liking someone or not confuses the mind. It all depends on whether we have attachment or hatred.

With attachment and hatred, liking and disliking others, we cannot have meaningful relationships because they are based on our perceptions. But our perceptions are continuously changing. If the object appears ugly, we can immediately decrease our attachment, and even feel hatred towards the object. When we respond to this attitude and experience hatred, we have to distance ourself from that person. Having gone through this, we may perceive the object as being pleasant. This perception has come from our own selfish mind. It can make us suffer and confuse others - within the same day, you may not know what to do or how to respond because of such actions.

So as said in the *Praise to the Taras*, it says that you cannot find any trust, any reliability in any other worldly friend for whether they consider you as friend or as an enemy is dependant on whether they see anything desirable for themselves. So therefore you pray to Tara - that you are the only one who can rely upon...[tape inaudible] so you pray to Tara to...[tape inaudible] that the accept as was guide or the friend....[tape inaudible]

We will leave the teaching here. As usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra. As at the beginning of this session, try to again relax yourself, calm the mind, [bring it] inward and focus the mind on this mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Rita Feldmann Edited by Mary-Lou Considine Edit checked against the tapes by Rita Feldmann Edited Version

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