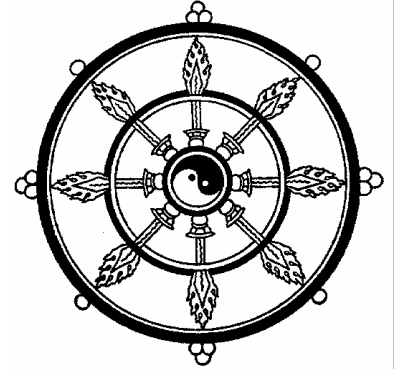


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

འཇིགས་མེད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



7 July 1999

We will do some breathing meditation first. Just relax your body and try to choose the most comfortable sitting posture.

The meditation we are doing now is one in which we use the breath as an object of concentration. This meditation is very effective for calming the mind and eliminating disturbing thoughts. As an object of meditation, because the breath is shapeless and colourless, you'll find it easier for the mind to concentrate on.

Through engaging in meditation practice, we are trying to gain some control over the mind, to discipline it so that it can abide on a virtuous or positive object - or any object you choose - for as long as you wish the mind to abide there.

When you engage in the meditation, the first thing you must do is to pacify all distracted states of mind, which occur when your mind is occupied by thoughts of external objects - in other words, when your mind keeps making contact with external objects. Pacifying these disturbances means preventing external objects from appearing in the mind. When we do this, the mind stays within us. So, once we have brought our minds inward by pacifying all thoughts of external objects, we will spend a few minutes in meditation, focussing on the breath.

It is very beneficial to integrate some meditation practice with our lives, because it can help us realise what we aspire to - mental and physical happiness. If we really think about what we and others seek in life, the answer will include mental and physical happiness. Therefore, we must try to create actions that bring about such happiness. On the other hand, we have to avoid actions that prevent us finding mental and physical happiness.

Further, if finding mental and physical happiness is our life's purpose, we can see that finding mental happiness is the more essential - it is true happiness. Without mental happiness, we cannot find physical or material happiness.

Meditation practice is beneficial because if you think about how to achieve mental happiness, meditation is the answer, because mental happiness has to come from within. If you try to think of a true way of finding mental happiness, you will find that no external way will guarantee it. Rather, the true way is within you. To find inner happiness, you must gain some discriminating wisdom, because if you have true wisdom, you will

know what is truly beneficial and what is harmful.

Having gained true wisdom with this discriminating mind, the next thing we have to do is to follow the direction it shows to us. To successfully follow the direction of our true wisdom knowledge, we have to practise meditation. Meditation is the practice of training ourselves in the right path. We have to train ourselves to create the right mental and physical actions. We have to achieve true inner happiness or mental happiness, without which there is no other happiness. This requires us to get rid of disturbing or discursive thoughts.

Through meditation practice we are also trying to achieve control over, and stability within, the mind. Because of this lack of stability within the mind, our experience of happiness is fleeting. We experience very rapid changes of emotions due to external distractions. What we are constantly responding to is rapid changes in external conditions or objects, and changes in ourselves. On the other hand, if we could gain some inner control over our emotions and states of mind, then it would be possible to find a more stable experience of peace and joy. No matter where or who you lived with, you would find stability.

We normally undertake an action for an immediate result. We do not usually think about its long-term result. However, there are many cases where we have faced problems because of wanting to see some benefit at the beginning of an action. So it is important to always use our intelligence not just to seek immediate results. Rather, using this judgement we will find that in many cases, even if we have to bear short-term hardship or loss to ourselves and sacrifice some immediate enjoyment, in the long run we will gain a greater benefit.

It doesn't matter whether you are pursuing a spiritual or worldly goal, it is important to always use your discriminating wisdom, and try to have the courage and determination to face hardship and sacrifice your immediate enjoyment to achieve that goal.

As there is not much time left, Geshe Doga wondered if anyone has a question to ask. Sometimes, it seems that he is playing the role of a parent! Parents feel they have to say things that they think will benefit their children.

Student: When it says that the Buddha's mind knows all the objects of knowledge, that Buddha['s mind] pervades all things, what does this mean?

Geshe Doga: When it says that the mind of Buddha

pervades all things, it is another way of saying that the Buddha knows or perceives all things. In the texts, it means the way the Buddha's mind cognises all phenomena. It is as if all things are in the palm of his hand, there are no obstructions, he directly perceives everything.

Just as we can clearly see anything right in front of us, in the same way in the Buddha's mind everything is in the palm of his hand, whether things exist in the past, present or future. If anyone in this room were to achieve the state of Buddhahood in the future, he or she would perceive everyone sitting in this room, exactly the way that they are right now.

This also means that our perception of an object depends on the level of mind we experience. If the level of mind that we experience is a gross one, we will forget things easily and find it hard to retain them in our mind for a long time. We will constantly need to re-learn things, because we lose hold of things that we have learned and never developed. This is because we are utilising a very gross level of mind. However, these things will not happen if we use a subtle level of mind, because the subtle mind has more power and ability to hold more knowledge and memories.

There is also a connection between our body and mind, in the sense that if our body is healthy and sound, this is a supporting factor for having a sound and healthy mind (although it does not guarantee it).

To a large extent, the type of mind that we experience depends on our gross body. As the body ages and disintegrates, this often affects the disintegration of the mind - we lose our memories, as well as clarity and sharpness of mind. Young people, on the other hand, tend to have sharper and clearer minds.

Some older people remain physically and mentally sound. This shows that the kind of mind we use depends on our body - if our mind depends on the gross body, then as the gross body loses its vitality, the mind also loses its vitality. However, if the body that the mind depends on is a more subtle kind of body, then the disintegration of the gross body does not affect the mind, but the level of mind becomes even subtler. So sometimes, in order to refresh our mind, we have to have a shower!

Geshe Doga wants to tell you about his experience of having a general anaesthetic some years ago. He was given an injection of a heavy anaesthetic, and went into a state of unconsciousness. He remained in that state for what seemed like just five minutes and then woke up, because he heard someone calling his name very clearly! When he woke up in the hospital room, there were other people in the room who had just woken up.

Geshe-la thinks that the effect of anaesthetic is to make the gross substance of the body become as if it were dead. Therefore, the mind that you experience is like a dead person's mind. But when the effect of the anaesthetic chemical starts to wear off, the gross body starts to revive, so the mind that you normally use also

returns. This shows how the mind that we normally use depends on this gross body.

We will finish the teaching here and, as usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Once again, sit in the meditation posture, relaxing your body and removing all distracting thoughts, and we will focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Rita Feldmann

Edited by Mary-Lou Considine

Edit checked against the tapes by Dianne McDonald

Edited Version

© **Tara Institute**