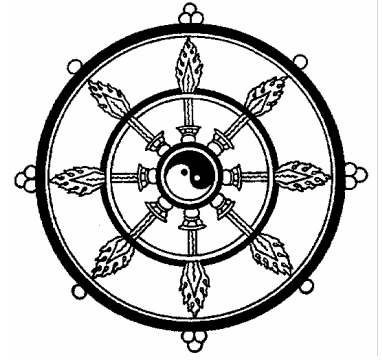


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འཇིགས་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ལྷོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ།



23 February 2000

Let's first do the breathing meditation. Relax your body and sit in the meditation posture. Think about the meaning of meditation. Meditation is the practice of preventing the mind from being preoccupied with a wrong or negative object or thought. It is then free to concentrate on right or wholesome objects. In meditation practice, we make a concerted effort not only to keep the mind focused on a given object, but as much as possible to familiarise the mind with that object.

Through meditation practice, we can enhance our inner peace and joy. However, to achieve such benefits, we need to understand how to do the practice properly, so that we can do it effectively.

Meditation practice enables us to understand that the main source of our problems lies within. This is contrary to our normal belief, which is that the source of our problems is always external. For instance, we tend to blame other people whenever anything goes wrong. Through meditation, we can recognise this as part of a pattern of uncontrolled and undisciplined thinking. We need to identify this undisciplined thinking as the main source of all our problems, past and present.

If we do not try to counteract such negative states of mind, then delusions and confusion will continue to arise: our untamed mind will keep deluding us. So, once we recognise a negative state of mind as the main source of our problems, we should choose a meditation practice that will overcome that mind. You will then begin to experience benefits from that practice because you will be overcoming the inner source of your problems.

Meditation practice is also a spiritual (or Dharma) practice, and is thus related to the mind. We need to be very clear about which Dharma or meditation practice we should do, and which ones are suggested as being beneficial in the texts.

It is important to continually remind ourselves that the cause of all our problems and happiness is largely internal, not external. The Lord Buddha said that you are your own master - other than yourself, there is no master who rules your life. These words of the Buddha also relate to this teaching: your mind is the main cause of all your pain, pleasure, and other experiences. The Buddha is saying that when we have gained true knowledge and wisdom, we will see that we can indeed be our own master, and that our achievement of happiness and elimination of unhappiness lies in our own hands.

Further, when we have developed a better

understanding of our mind, we will see that, generally, we generate two different states of mind - negative and positive. The negative states of mind are the main sources of our problems. They are a destructive force that lies within us, ready to manifest as different mental delusions.

However, through meditation practice, we can purify these delusions. When the delusions and obscurations diminish and disappear, we can begin to see the clear, fundamental nature of the mind. Because our negative states of mind and delusions are temporary, arising in response to immediate conditions, it is possible for each of us to perfect our minds. Delusions are not in the fundamental nature of our mind - they cannot pollute it.

In making any decision, it's always best to use our knowledge and sense of discrimination, however limited it may seem. This enables us to judge whether something is desirable or not, or is beneficial or harmful. For our meditation practice to be successful, we must have some conviction or belief in the benefits that it will bring. Such conviction can only be based on our own knowledge and wisdom.

In looking at what is beneficial or harmful to our life or to others' lives, it is important to first focus on ourselves - the actions *we* should or should not do - rather than on other peoples' action. This is the only way we can transform our own mind and develop ourselves. It is easier to positively change our own verbal or physical actions than those of others.

Our mind can determine whether the action we are about to undertake will be pleasant or unpleasant, beneficial or harmful to ourselves and others. If we observe this causal link between our thoughts and action, we can clearly see how a negative thought, attitude or motivation will automatically lead to negative or unpleasant speech and actions.

The reason for this discussion is to focus our practice of meditation on the mind. The meditation we are doing is called breathing meditation, in which the object is the inhaling and exhaling of your breath. This meditation has the added benefit of being effective in calming the mind, and settling down all disturbing, agitated thoughts. It is very effective for easing and relaxing the mind.

When we do breathing meditation for a while, our mind becomes fully relaxed and settled down, making it easy for us to place our attention on whatever action we

undertake. However, the object we choose to meditate upon is really a matter of what suits each of us. For instance, it's OK to imagine white light or droplets at one's heart, and just focus on that. Or, if you belong to a particular religion such as Buddhism, you might use an image or a statue of Lord Buddha as an object of meditation. If you are Christian, you might choose a Crucifix or Jesus as an object of meditation. However, the common feature of all meditation practice is keeping the mind on the object to achieve a common aim - getting rid of negative states of mind and distracting thoughts. So we will start a short breathing meditation together.

Geshe-la doesn't think there's much time to go over the text, so we will have a question and answer. If anyone has a question, Geshe-la requests that it be simple and easy to answer! [Silence - no questions]

Geshe-la says that some teachers give students up to 5 minutes to do a silent meditation and think of what question they would like to ask. Maybe allowing time could be helpful. He has also heard of some teachers who give every student a piece of paper and a pen, and then give them 5 minutes to write down any thoughts that arise, whatever they are.

Techniques such as these may be beneficial for different people. Some people may draw pictures depicting their sadness. Or, they may do an abstract drawing and explain to others the 'black things' they are experiencing in their mind.

If you haven't got any questions, that's fine. Now we will finish tonight's session with the recitations, chanting of the Buddha's mantra seven times. As before, could you all please sit in meditation posture, making sure you are fully relaxed and that your mind is fully stabilised within? Then, when the chanting begins focus the mind on the chanting, not getting distracted by any other object.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Gabrielle Thompson
Edited by Mary-Lou Considine
Edit checked against the tapes by Dianne McDonald
Edit checked by Sandup Tsering
Edited Version*

© Tara Institute
