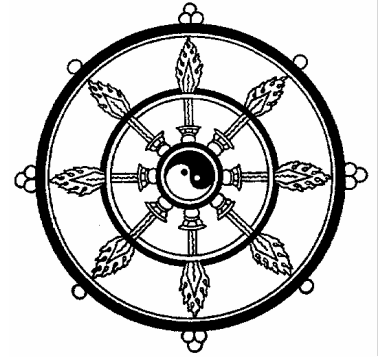


# Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

ཨོ ལྷོ་སྤྱད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



5 April 2000

We will do the usual breathing meditation first. Even if we engage in meditation for only a short time, it's important to first adopt the right sitting posture, which the teachings recommend to be a cross-legged posture, having the seven features of Vairochana Buddha. This posture, which also relaxes the body, is important for effective meditation.

The other important thing to remember in doing the meditation is to measure our progress with the practice. The real benefit of doing meditation is reducing the delusions. To determine whether or not you are making progress, you should check to see if you have reduced the delusions in your mind. From the very beginning of our meditation practice, we should understand that its main purpose is to subdue the mind.

But which meditation practice should we choose? The best practice is one that acts as an antidote to the most harmful, recurrent or disturbing delusion afflicting you at the moment. For instance, unfulfilled desire may be an immediate cause of unhappiness or problems for you. The specific meditation to overcome desire is meditation on the object of desire, in which one contemplates the ugly, unpleasant aspects of the object of desire.

This meditation overcomes desire by allowing us to view the object from a completely different perspective. Normally, the desirous mind views the object as being very attractive. The mind then tries to grasp that object and become attached to it. But the mind can also view the same object as unpleasant, unattractive and undesirable. These two views of the object - as being desirable or undesirable - are mutually exclusive. Your mind cannot hold both views at the same time.

Another general meditation for overcoming the desirous mind is to objectively focus on one's own body, reflecting on every part. When we do this, we perceive our body and its parts in a more accurate way. We realise that there is nothing in the body for us to be attracted to.

If anger or hatred is the most disturbing delusion in your mind, you should meditate on cultivating compassion, which specifically counteracts hatred. If the delusion disturbing one's inner continuum is pride, you can turn your mind to all the things you don't know, for instance, reflecting on all the constituents of the body, categorising all objects of knowledge, and so on. If the main delusion is ignorance, the specific meditation recommended is that of dependent arising and the ultimate truth of emptiness.

If your mind is disturbed by uncontrolled thinking, the

meditation that is highly recommended is breathing meditation, focusing on the inhaling and exhaling of the breath. This is the one we always do at the beginning of these teachings.

We talk a lot about controlling the mind. The reason is that if we cannot control the mind, it is impossible for us to experience peace and happiness.

If we look at it closely, finding peace and happiness depends more on the mind than on our external conditions. We can experience more peace and happiness by understanding the mind. This encourages us to take more responsibility for ourselves, because we realise that everything we experience - whether it is pain or pleasure - derives from the way we think.

By observing and examining the mind, we can make progress. We come to understand that our unwanted suffering can be traced to some negative state of mind within us. Normally, whenever we face a problem, we tend to think that it is caused by what some other person has said or done to us. We keep looking for an outer cause to blame. This also leads us to have the unrealistic expectation that others will provide us with peace, happiness and stability.

We have to examine whether this view can really help us eliminate suffering and achieve happiness. If your state of mind does depend on other people, how many of them are totally concerned about your peace of mind and happiness? We can see that there's no hope of finding such a person, even those nearest to us, such as a close friend.

Then we can investigate whether our close friends are always reliable, trustworthy and supportive. In fact, we can see many cases in which other people and ourselves have received the worst harm from those once considered to be close friends.

If our goal is to find more peace and happiness and diminish problems and sufferings, it is essential that we take full responsibility for it. You must direct all of your effort and determination towards bringing more happiness into your life. You must generate the strong realisation that all of your happiness and suffering comes from yourself and not from other people.

Your mind is main force that shapes your life. If you understand this, you will feel a strong determination to try and improve your way of thinking and behaving. Then it doesn't matter what path you choose. Whether

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you choose a spiritual or worldly path, you will be successful, while experiencing more peace and satisfaction

Every being has the potential to achieve happiness and eliminate suffering. Not only do they have the potential, but they also have a right to pursue this goal. Therefore, it is important that you realise your potential as a human being. With the realisation of your human potential, no obstacle will ever discourage you.

We can easily get discouraged. So much depends on our attitude, our way of thinking. If your mental attitude is strong and you are broad minded, you will always have a stable life. Every time you face some obstacle, you will not lose courage and become upset.

The benefit of practising meditation is knowing about the difference that transforming the mind can make to our lives. Meditation can bring more stability and clarity to the mind. With inner stability and clarity, even if we face some external problem, we will be able to cope. We do not let the problem completely take over our life. So there is a positive energy that we have generated in the mind, which enables us to sustain inner peace. We will not be easily disturbed by external changes in our living conditions.

Geshe-la would like us to chant the Buddha's mantra. Before doing this, could we all try to relax our bodies in the meditation sitting posture. Remove all distracting thoughts from the mind and bring the mind fully inward. Then, try to let it stay there for a short while, after which we can begin chanting the mantra and focus the mind on the sound of the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from the tapes by Gabrielle Thompson*

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