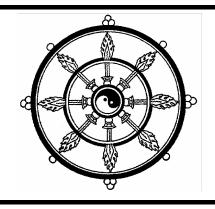
## Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Sandup Tsering



## 26 April 2000



First, we will do breathing meditation together for a few minutes. Take up a comfortable sitting posture. While you are engaged in this meditation practice, resolve to take full control of your mind instead of letting the mind take control of you. Try to remove all distracting thoughts about external objects and bring the mind inward. Then begin the breathing meditation.

In this meditation, you focus your mind completely on the inhaling and exhaling of the breath, not losing even a fraction of your attention to other objects.

The benefits we derive from this meditation practice depend on our understanding of the practice, and on the goals we have set. If we look at what can be achieved through meditation practice, we can see that the potential benefits are enormous. Meditation practice has the potential to bring great peace and happiness to one's life and to the lives of many others.

We may initially use our practice of meditation to try and find some respite, some sort of break, from the busyness and problems we face in life. However, this will provide us with only temporary relief. Instead, the main aim of our practice should be to diminish the negative and unruly states of mind within us.

When we try to identify these negative states of mind, we can see that there is always something distracting the mind. For example, if we are sitting in meditation practice focusing on a given object and suddenly check the mind, we notice that it is not settled on that object but is distracted by random thoughts. This demonstrates the habitually unruly state of the mind.

Meditation practice enables us to understand the mind, and to increase its positive qualities. The benefit of cultivating positive states of mind and of subduing unruly states of mind is that we will enjoy a more stable outlook on life. Our day to day problems are caused by the negative states of mind that we continuously generate.

On the other hand, we possess a unique human intelligence that is not shared by any other life forms. Every one of us has an intelligent human mind. However, we are prevented from using that intelligence when we are under the strong influence of negative states of mind or delusions, such as desire or hatred. These delusions diminish the benefits we try to achieve through our actions. Our actions are either self-centred or extremely biased.

If, instead of having an attitude of desire or hatred

towards others, we had an attitude of caring for and benefiting them, this would not only bring happiness to others, but would also bring happiness and joy to ourselves. If we think about why we need to consider others' needs, it is because they are important to us. We, ourselves, enjoy being shown friendship by others. Therefore, any meditation practice we do should counteract our negative, unfriendly states of mind.

To make progress in your meditation practice, you need to understand your mind. As said earlier, when we really investigate our problems, we can see that they are caused by the way we perceive our situation. Our state of mind influences our actions and thus affects our relationships with others. So, it is more important to use meditation practice for checking the mind and being aware of what it is doing than using it to find physical relaxation.

At least for the duration of our meditation, we have to try and understand the mind and make sure it stays in the same place as the body. As with the body, the mind also needs to stop running around and being busy!

If we use meditation practice to bring more peace and understanding to the mind, and to reduce confusion, ignorance and dullness - if we could bring about a clearer state of mind, then we would feel greater happiness and joy. This is a direct result of cultivating a clear, peaceful and positive state of mind. With such a state of mind, whatever actions you do will reflect your state of mind - they will be peaceful and positive. When we are able to act from within this calm inner space, our actions will naturally benefit everyone around us. So, by controlling your mind, you can achieve inner peace and happiness for yourself and all other beings.

Whether your situation is good or bad, you must look for its cause within your own self. According to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we should spend at least 50% of our effort in developing ourselves inwardly, while spending the other 50% on our outer development. In other words, we need to get rid of the attitude that our current situation is caused by outer objects and forces.

For instance, if we experience strong hatred or uncontrollable desire, we cannot find peace. The advice here is that, if you feel hatred, don't become obsessed with the external object of hatred, whether it is a person or a situation. Rather, try to observe the hatred itself - or whatever strong emotion you are experiencing - and notice how and why it arises in your mind. Some teachings say that if we closely observe the arising and the nature of negative mind states, they will eventually

vanish by themselves.

If we do this, we will see that the cause of us feeling anger, hatred or attachment is not only some beautiful or ugly outer object. Rather, we can see that the reason why we hate an object is that we perceive it as being unpleasant. In our mind there is a perception that the object is unattractive and ugly, independently of the way the object actually exists. This perception is nothing but a projection of our own mind.

When we direct the mind inward, we will begin to see that we categorise outer objects and situations in many different ways – as good or bad, beautiful or ugly, useful or not useful, beneficial or harmful, and so on. Broadly, we generate two different states of mind – positive or negative. Whenever negative states of mind manifest within us, they bring unhappiness. Therefore, we need to get rid of these negative states of mind, such as anger and unnecessary desire. This means, instead of blaming our anger on outer causes, we should try to get into the habit of inwardly investigating the causes of that anger or hatred.

Geshe-la refers to the example of being in a serious conflict with a friend, which may result in a communication breakdown. Rather than continuing to dwell on the nasty remarks the friend has made, or the hurtful things they have done, try to focus on the emotion that you are experiencing. If it is anger, try to observe that anger, and try to understand its deeper causes. If you spend enough time about thinking this, Geshe-la says that maybe your friend might find the right moment to talk to you again!

Further, if do this meditation practice well, you won't have any trouble going to sleep. You will sleep better, because meditation not only helps you readily control your mind, it also helps you readily bring your mind inward. We can only get to sleep after gross or coarse states of mind cease.

For instance, if the mind is preoccupied with intense desire or anger, there is no way we will go to sleep. If you lie in bed dwelling on some bad remark someone made to you during the day, naturally you will feel anger towards that person. As you dwell on it more and more, you begin to exaggerate it. Eventually, your mind perceives the casual remark as being a serious slur on you character, and you become angrier and more restless.

Likewise, if you dwell on some object you were attracted to during the day, your mind will begin to endow it with more and more positive and attractive qualities. Eventually, your desire will become overpowering. With this kind of mind, there is no hope of getting to sleep.

Geshe-la tells a story that he says he can't imagine to be true, but it could be! [laughter] It is supposed to have happened many years ago in China when many people did not have houses. During the day, they earned their living by doing manual work. At night, because they did not have a house, they had to hire a huge clay pot just big enough for one person to fit into, but not big enough to

stretch out their legs.

On one occasion, a worker was resting in one of these pots, supposedly sleeping. However, his mind was busy counting, thinking about how much money he made during the day, and about how he would multiply these earnings the next day. As a result, he lost his concentration and broke the pot by stretching his legs. Of course, the next day, he lost all his money, plus he had to pay for the pot. Geshe-la says if we also do not control our wandering thoughts while lying in bed, we could fall off the bed and break a leg!

We'll leave the teaching here. As usual, we will chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Could people again sit in the meditation posture, making sure that the body is fully relaxed, and that all distracting thoughts are removed from the mind. Then, as we chant, try to focus the mind on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA

Transcribed from the tapes by Gabrielle Thomson Edited by Mary-Lou Considine Edited checked by Sandup Tsering Edited Version

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