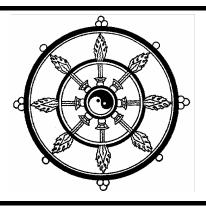
Dharmarakshita's "*The* Wheel *of* Sharp Weapons" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Sandup Tsering

৩৩ ব্রার্শ্র্র্রান্ডরের রাজনের্শ্বিমার্শ্ব



## 24 May 2000

First, we will begin with a breathing meditation for a few minutes. Make yourself comfortable in a sitting posture, trying to fully relax your body. To relax the mind as well, try to let go of distracting thoughts of external objects, and the mind rest fully within. Then, without being distracted by any other object, focus the mind on the inbreath and out-breath, trying to maintain a singlepointed focus.

Whatever actions we perform, if our mind is peaceful, stable and happy, it makes a huge difference in terms of enjoying what we do and what we achieve. The aim of the meditation practice we are attempting is to understand one's mind so that we can gain some control over it.

We can see that we are emotionally and mentally vulnerable to external changes. Even minor changes in our life can be very disturbing to our mind and outlook. If we examine the external conditions that appear to make our life so up and down, we can see that they are not the main reason we undergo so much suffering and feel so disturbed. Rather, on closer examination, we can see that the main cause of our suffering is a lack of stability within the mind.

We need to sustain a way of thinking that brings peace and happiness to the mind. Inner peace and happiness are essential for everyone, even those who consider themselves to be meditators or spiritual practitioners. No matter how much time a spiritual practitioner spends trying to do meditation practice and trying to acquire more knowledge about the spiritual practice, if they lack inner stability, peace and happiness, they will have an unhappy life and may even go insane.

If the mind that always accompanies you is strong, stable, peaceful and happy, then no matter what you do, you can be assured of enjoying peace and happiness. Whether our verbal or physical actions are beneficial or harmful, or pleasant or unpleasant depends on the thoughts that drive those actions. If we want to transform our daily actions from negative to positive, we have to first transform the mind, because the mind is the source of all our actions.

In fact, the mind is also not only the source of one's individual peace and happiness, but it is also the source of peace and happiness in the world and in our own community. Peace and stability with any country depend on the people living in that country – their way of thinking, what they value in their lives, their beliefs and

their actions.

There is a real benefit in trying to understand one's mind and in trying to develop the mind's positive qualities. At the same time, we must recognise the mind's faults and negative attitudes. Then we can see that it is possible for us to change our way of thinking. First, however, you have to recognise what is in your mind. After having recognised a certain way of thinking as being unpleasant and destructive, you have to then see the possibility of you replacing that way of thinking with something more positive and beneficial.

We must always focus on our own mind. For instance, if we want to overcome anger, we should not see the source of that anger is being outside us, as something 'out there'. Thinking of anger as a destructive and negative thing that is outside of us and unrelated to us will not help us to overcome it. Rather, we need to recognise the angry, destructive mind within ourselves and try to apply whatever remedy we can to counteract it.

We'll now continue the commentary on the thought transformation text, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. Verse 89 reads:

We do not despise actions unwise and immoral, Instead we dispute and attempt to pick flaws In the excellent teachings and great masters' works.

This verse takes into account how we ordinary beings view things using wrong values. We do not know how to discriminate between what is of beneficial value and what is harmful. We value and adopt negative actions that contradict the noble teachings on virtue. We even take pleasure in those negative actions, whether they are of body, speech or mind.

However, the main aspect of all the perfect and true teachings, such as those of the Lord Buddha, is showing love and compassion towards other beings. Instead of valuing such teachings that deserve respect and are worthy of putting into practice, we may even dispute them and uphold a view that completely contradicts those teachings. The message that this verse conveys is about the good actions we should adopt and the negative actions that we should abandon.

When we talk about following a spiritual path or spiritual practice, this encompasses all of the daily actions that we create through our 'three doors' of body, speech and mind. So this verse is referring to the actions of body speech and mind that we should adopt and those we should avoid. The actions we should avoid are mainly the 10 non-virtuous or unwholesome actions, which are:

- three of body (killing, stealing and sexual misconduct)
- four of speech (lying, divisive speech, harsh speech and idle gossip)
- three of mind (ill-will, covetousness and wrong view).

As part of our spiritual practice, we should avoid these actions. Instead, the actions we should adopt are the 10 virtuous actions, which means refraining from the 10 non-virtuous actions. We should also study texts that show us which right actions to adopt and which wrong actions to abandon. This will enable us to generate strong conviction in what these texts are saying, so that we will regard those texts as objects worthy of our respect.

The next part of the verse states the reason why ordinary beings adopt non-virtuous or negative actions, which they are supposed to abandon, and why they criticise texts written by distinguished spiritual masters – texts that they should respect. The reason why our actions normally contradict the teachings is as stated:

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern. Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

That's all for tonight's teaching. Does anyone have a question?

Question: When the text uses words like 'tear out the heart', isn't this very aggressive and violent and cause anger to arise?

Answer: Geshe-la agrees that the words "Tear out the heart..." are violent and, as you said, can generate anger. But anger towards whom?

The words "Tear out the heart of this self-centred butcher..." in this context mean to 'kill' the self-cherishing mind. Even the root text uses the Sanskrit word *'mara'*, which also means to kill. To this day, Indian people use the word *mara* to mean 'hit'. In a dispute, people say this word if they want to taunt you rather than hit you. So it means 'hit' as well as means 'kill'.

The use of the words is metaphorical. If you are fighting an enemy, you talk about striking at the enemy and finishing them off, or killing them off. Some people might use the term 'beat them up'. These are all words you use when you want to challenge an enemy. Here, the enemy is the self-cherishing mind and the main weapons you need to use to challenge this enemy are the two types of bodhicitta mind: the conventional bodhi mind and the ultimate bodhi mind.

The term 'conventional bodhi mind' refers to the altruistic mind of enlightenment, or bodhicitta, which is a fully developed sense of universal compassion and loving kindness. When such a mind of loving kindness and compassion is generated, it fills one's mind, so that there is no place for the self-cherishing mind to dwell. So generating loving kindness and compassion means that you get rid of the self-cherishing mind.

The ultimate bodhi mind or bodhicitta is the wisdom that realises the emptiness of inherent existence of all phenomena. This wisdom is said to be the most powerful force for combatting the ignorance of self-grasping. Just as the conventional bodhicitta mind is the most powerful force to combat with the self-cherishing mind, the wisdom of selflessness or emptiness is the most powerful antidote to the ignorance of self-grasping.

The difference between having a self-cherishing mind and feeling love and compassion for other beings is that the self-cherishing mind is only concerned about oneself and doesn't consider any other beings. Whereas, when you have the love and compassion for other beings, you naturally think of their needs; with such a mind, you naturally begin to share your goodness with other beings. So there is a huge difference between these two attitudes.

It is said that the teachings and practice of generating love and compassion are the essence or heart of the Great Vehicle of Buddhism, or Mahayana path.

That's all for tonight. We will now chant the Buddha's mantra. Could people again sit in the meditation posture, and try to rest both mind and body. As we begin the chanting, we will focus the mind on the sound of the mantra.

## TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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