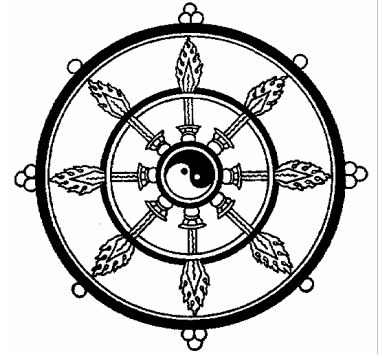


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འཇིགས་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ལྷོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་



1 November 2000

As usual, we will do some breathing meditation first. Adopt the most convenient posture for you, and fully relax your body.

Then try to understand that, unless we pacify and relax the mind, we are not going to find peace and happiness, even if we are physically at rest. Try to see how important mental peace and mental happiness are to us. If we do not rest the mind by stopping its preoccupation with outer distractions then, even if we are doing nothing, instead of feeling relaxed, more stress and tension may be building up inside us, making us feel even more restless.

On the other hand, peace and happiness will naturally flow from within us if, when we rest the body, our mind is also rest, completely staying within. Just as the body stays in the place where we sit, the mind can stay in the same place as the body.

If we can do this, then we will naturally experience peace and happiness – a good, positive experience. No matter what we are doing – whether it's walking, sitting, or sleeping – we are always pursuing true peace and happiness. We can find this by keeping the mind within us, fully under our control.

So, when we begin the breathing meditation, try to not only focus on physical relaxation, but also on relaxing the mind, trying to remove all outgoing thoughts and letting the mind completely abide within us.

Depending on the object we are meditating on, we try to focus our mind on that topic or object. If the mind is not focused on that object, it will just drift into its habit of wandering and becoming distracted. Therefore, at the start it is important to stop outgoing thoughts and to bring the mind inward. After this, we need to do give the mind something to do – because it is subjective, it always needs to have some object to focus on.

The meditation we are doing here a breathing meditation – the breathing serves as the mind's object. While the breathing meditation is simple and easy, it is also very effective in immediately calming the mind. It is effective because it helps us to gain some control over our (psychic) wind energy. When we gain control over the wind energy, it will be easier for us to control the mind, because it is said that the mind 'rides' on the wind energy.

Breathing meditation is also very effective in calming mind, especially if we experience overwhelming, negative emotions. For example, if you are experiencing

strong anger, someone may tell you that the remedy to anger is practising patience.

But it's hard to practise patience, especially with the anger being so intense. Instead, you can spend some time doing this breathing meditation, putting the mind for a while on your in-breath and out-breath. As a benefit of this breathing practice, the mind becomes very calm and settled. Therefore, later on, you will be in a position to practise patience.

We will do this breathing meditation for a few minutes. *[Pause for meditation.]*

We should always keep in mind that the reason we follow meditation practice is to bring about a positive change within the mind. No matter what meditation practice we follow, the aim of that practice is to control and calm the mind, or cleanse it of all negativities, or cultivate a positive mental attitude.

We have to think that our practice will bring about a positive influence on our life – even within a single day, it will have an effect on how we spend that day, particularly in terms of our attitude.

It would be most beneficial and constructive if we could bring about some change in our everyday way of thinking, if we could view everyone with whom we interact as being special, important, and as significant as one regards one's own self. This is so important for our wellbeing and happiness. The attitude that we should try to cultivate from day to day is to try and respect the wellbeing of other beings.

If we have this kind of attitude, a natural transformation will take place in our life. We will find more peace, happiness, and satisfaction. We will encounter fewer problems and less suffering. This is because, if we examine the main cause of our suffering, particularly the problems we receive from others – or at least the problems that we *think* other people are causing us – most of the time, the cause is to do with our actions towards them.

If we look closely, our attitude or actions towards them have been unpleasant or even harmful. However, if we adopt this attitude of showing some care and respect for all the beings with whom we interact and meet in our life, all the problems that we found in our past interactions can be stopped.

Thus, it's important to understand that meditation is not just about a few moments' silence when we try to calm

our mind. Rather, it is something we have to integrate into our everyday life, particularly our everyday way of thinking. As said before, it would be most beneficial if we could focus on cultivating some respect and concern for the wellbeing of others.

We have to regard meditation as something that is applicable and beneficial to our life. We do not necessarily have to think that the fruit of meditation practice is something we will receive later on, in the next life or some future life. Rather, we have to meditation practice as being very practical. Through meditation practice, we can develop more wisdom about how to live this life wisely, which means knowing how to find real peace and happiness.

The main aim of meditation practice, as said before, is to cultivate a positive state of mind – developing love, compassion, and kindness towards other beings.

It is also to cultivate the understanding that, whatever we want to achieve in our life such as peace and happiness, depends upon other beings. We cannot achieve our aims independently of others, or without regard for their wellbeing. Meditation practice helps us achieve this by enabling us to be aware of our own mind – the kind of attitude we have towards others, and our ideas about achieving our own peace and happiness.

Regarding the peace, happiness, and satisfaction that we all seek, we need to ask ourselves: Where does it come from? Who gives it to us? What causes and conditions will bring us happiness?

If we look closely, we can see that happiness comes from obvious sources and not-so-obvious ones. Obvious sources of happiness, such as having a job, are very important because work is an indispensable source of security for all of us. It gives us wealth, health, worldly satisfaction, comforts, and so on. But is it enough just to find physical comfort and pleasure?

For example, there may be a beautiful meal in front of us. Is that enough to truly satisfy us and make the meal enjoyable? We know from our own experience that the meal will give us even more pleasure and happiness if we can share it with a good companion, someone with whom we have a harmonious relationship.

We can see then, that what really secures our happiness is the love, care, and good feeling we receive from other beings. Other people bring happiness to one's life. Who are these 'other people'? They are all those who are close to you, with whom you interact in everyday life – your partner, parents, family, and so on.

This is how, through our meditation practice, we can bring about some positive change within our mind. We will then notice how much more positive and wholesome our thoughts are. Even our outer personality and actions will become more wholesome and positive. If we cultivate a greater sense of care, love, and compassion towards other beings around us, then naturally our actions will reflect this love and the compassion, this good attitude that we have cultivated within us.

On the contrary, when we have a wrong mental attitude

– in which one thinks only of oneself and thus acts selfishly – not only will we be unable to benefit others or show them love, but we will also bring them harm. As a result, other beings become a source of problems. As a result of one's own selfish mind and selfish actions, one only encounters more trouble and more problems. Whereas, if you could show more concern and love towards other beings, and consider their wellbeing, you will find more happiness and peace.

As we have been saying, the benefit of meditation practice is that we can develop more knowledge and wisdom. We can develop the wisdom to see how our attitude or mind-state can transform our experience of our environment and the world in which we live.

It is the mind that predetermines whether our experiences are good or bad. If we can generate a more positive state of mind, we will find more peace and happiness. Whereas, if we are driven by a negative state of mind, we will find more problems and misery in our life.

We leave tonight's teaching here and we'll chant the Buddha's mantra seven times. Before you begin chanting, again sit in the meditation posture with both the mind and the body fully relaxed, particularly making sure the mind is brought fully within. Then, as we chant the mantra, try to keep the mind focused on it, rather than being influenced by any outwardly directed thought.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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