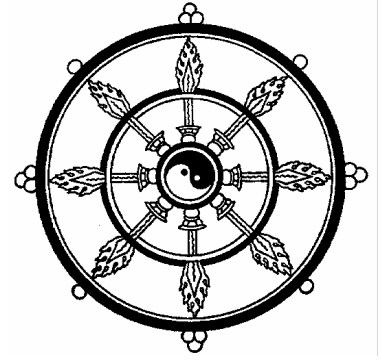


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

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14 March 2001

We will begin tonight with the breathing meditation so make yourself comfortable and choose a suitable meditation posture. Then, before beginning, we should consider what benefit we are trying to achieve from this meditation. We meditate in order to bring some change within our mind, and to generate more concentration, focus and clarity.

There is great potential within our mind, however, we do not fully utilise it to bring the greatest benefit. Furthermore, despite this inner potential, our mind seems very weak and lacking in energy. We lack the capacity to focus the mind and penetrate reality. The reason why our mind lacks energy and the ability to focus is not because there is no power or potential within the mind but because this power is so divided. Our energy is dispersed mainly because of distracting thoughts which cause our mental focus to scatter and wander after various external objects.

When a group of people work together to achieve a particular goal, each person contributes according to his/her skills and ability. By all working together harmoniously in a united effort, results can be achieved very quickly and easily.

Similarly, we will find that through this meditation practice we are able to diminish mental distractions which divide and scatter our inner energy. By decreasing distraction we can consolidate this energy within us. Equipped with the strength of focused mental power we can fully utilise our intellect. Our wisdom-knowledge or sense of discrimination is very powerful to penetrate the truth and perceive reality clearly.

Keeping this in mind we will begin the breathing meditation. In these few minutes, as much as possible, try to direct the mind to the in-breath and out-breath without allowing it to wander to any other object. (*Pause for meditation.*)

Basically, meditation practice is meant to show us the true cause of happiness - the way to find lasting satisfaction and peace. In meditation the emphasis is on the mind. Creating the true cause of happiness comes through controlling or transforming our state of mind.

In the eight verses of Thought Transformation, the famous master Geshe Langri Tangpa has said:

In all actions examine one's own mind
The moment an unsubdued thought arises
Because it endangers oneself and others
Immediately face and avert it.

Always observing our actions and checking our mental

continuum, if we notice the presence of any delusion, by understanding that afflicted minds can destroy the welfare of ourself and others, we should immediately apply the remedy to counteract that delusion.

It is important to realise that true happiness and satisfaction in life is to be found within ourself. This raises the question: Is there any degree of external success that can bring the meaning and fulfilment that we always seek in life? We have exerted a huge amount of time and effort in trying to find true satisfaction externally, and in the process may have managed to achieve some worldly success. If, however, the happiness we seek is really something the external world can offer us, we should by now have achieved considerable satisfaction.

It is not that external objects cannot offer any happiness or comfort in life. Of course, to a certain degree, good companionship, friends and luxurious living conditions provide an opportunity for some level of enjoyment. If we check, however, we find this experience of pleasure very fleeting. In fact, if we look within ourself, this experience is empty - it means nothing. Deep down, there is nothing - there is no meaning, no satisfaction in the mind.

So regardless of whether we consider ourself religious or not, since we all are the same in seeking true satisfaction in life, it is important to realise that the happiness we receive from external objects or conditions is only very temporary and is not reliable. To find the true cause of happiness we have to look within ourself. True happiness comes when we transform our deluded or negative state of mind into a positive one.

If we exert more effort in outer affairs and neglect our inner state of mind we will not find the happiness we seek. Despite all the good conditions and worldly success we achieve, becoming very wealthy and owning expensive cars and so on, without diminishing the negative state of mind, we lack happiness and contentment. Outwardly we have all the possessions; inwardly we are empty. Even worse, we are confused and restless - the deluded minds leave us no rest.

For instance, delusions such as the uncontrolled mind of desire, will not let us rest in peace. When desire is not tamed, whatever we own is not good enough - we always want something better. No matter how many things we acquire, despite their excellent quality, we are not satisfied. Our mind is continuously, endlessly caught up with desire - seeking objects of desire. When desire is not controlled we live in restlessness.

On the other hand, meditation provides the tools to completely transform the way we normally view our life. With meditation we learn that the happiness and satisfaction which we seek has to come by controlling the deluded mind, such as desire. By subduing our mind from being always distracted to outer objects we decrease the dissatisfaction and the restless wandering.

Normally when we are attracted to something we expect it to bring us some form of enjoyment or satisfaction. When our mind is wandering outside our intention is to find some type of pleasure. So in our normal view it is almost like, without desire, without possessing all the objects which we desire, we cannot see any way of bringing happiness.

Reiterating what was said before - if happiness is to be found outside, then the more we understand the world and the more external progress we make, the more contented we must become. Whereas this, of course, is not the case. It is through meditation practice that we find the source of our happiness - our inner refuge. The Dharma is our refuge or guidance within. Instead of looking for direction and help outwardly from friends or relatives or outer objects we should seek protection within. Again, we are not saying that all outer things are completely useless, however, if you look at it from a different perspective, such things are actually no use and can in fact be a source of pain and misery in our life.

One Geshe told me about a couple who were desperate to have their own child, but could not conceive. The Geshe advised them to look at the advantages of not having a child. He reminded them that children are an extra burden and responsibility, being subject to suffering from the beginning of their lives to the end. In everyday life it is worthwhile to observe our own thoughts and actions and try to learn from these as much as possible. Check which thoughts or actions are beneficial or harmful to ourself and others, and on that basis try to change our attitudes and behaviour.

The aim of meditation is to counteract any mental delusion. Instead of living our life constantly under the force of some overwhelming delusion, we need to recognise how that negative mind is harming us and look at its effect on our way of thinking. We should also acknowledge the effect it has on those who are close to us. Just as the master of Thought Transformation has said, we must look very closely in order to clearly recognise the afflicted mind because it has the potential to destroy ourself and others. As for first-hand experience, most of us have enough experience of deluded minds such as desire or obsessive attachment.

Consider the suffering that desire can bring in a relationship when one of the partners is not happy with the other. If the dissatisfied one becomes involved in another person, very desirously, what is the effect of this desire? In such a situation every moment of that mind-state is discontentment. Overwhelmed with strong desire all our mental energy is consumed. Even if we sit in meditation, we cannot perform the practice properly, finding it extremely hard to concentrate the mind on the topic. Not only that, the tastiest meal goes unnoticed, the

most comfortable bed does not bring sleep. Whether we stay at home or go out there is no pleasure to be found in life. Even our outer countenance is one of misery.

When overpowered by desire, the state of our mind is very unpleasant. This then becomes the state of our life. It will only get worse if year after year we allow space in our mind for unfulfilled desire. Eventually, it will come to the point where it is almost impossible to get our life back to where we were before.

If desire is a constant problem for us, it is because we allow the object of desire to occupy our mind. We let our mind pursue that object. As the master of Thought Transformation says, it is important to recognise the delusion when it arises, and the harm that it brings upon ourself and others. We also need to see how the delusion misleads us. We often fail to recognise that the true source of our pain is nothing but this very delusion. When we lack this awareness we always blame the cause of our problems on others. Our suffering is then all because of our friend. It is essential to see the negative minds as the source of our troubles, and that meditation is the perfect means to overcome them.

So we leave the teaching here, and as usual we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Please adopt a comfortable and relaxing meditation posture, making sure that the mind is completely within. As we chant the mantra, focus the mind on the mantra only.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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