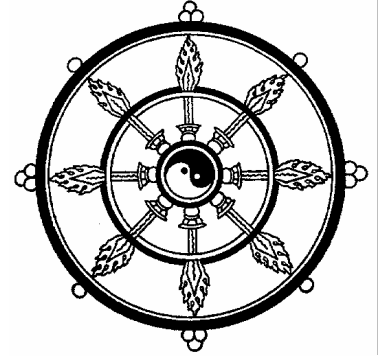


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by The Venerable Tenzin Dongak

འཇིགས་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



27 June 2001

So, we will practice meditation for a little while as usual. Please sit down in a relaxed manner, relaxing the body as well as the mind. Normally, our mind is very confused, continually going here and there to various objects, so what we have to try to do now when we meditate is to focus the mind on one object of meditation. The more our awareness and introspection increases, the more easy it will become for our mind to remain on the object of meditation.

The more our mind can remain single-pointedly on the object of meditation, the more we will experience clarity and bliss within the mind. Equally, the less our mind is distracted by conceptual thoughts, the more happiness, bliss and single-pointedness we will experience in the mind. At the moment, the mind is not happy because it gets disturbed by conceptual thoughts.

The conceptualising mind obscures our consciousness and takes away the power, or lessens the power and ability of our mind. Our mind can't act. We can't use the potential of our mind because it is obscured by conceptualising or disturbing thoughts in the same way that a sick body cannot act according to its full potential. Therefore we have to purify our mind of conceptual thinking. As Shantideva said, "ignorance which comes from beginningless time" is what disturbs the mind the most. The more we are able to do purify the mind of this, the more we will experience single-pointedness, stability, clarity and bliss within the mind.

Even though we not able to sit all day in meditation, it is still very important that during meditation we can generate some wisdom, some increased awareness which we can take with us into the post-meditational period. If, through our meditation, we are able to lessen the conceptualising mind, then through this lessening of the conceptualising mind, we can experience a naturally, spontaneously arising wisdom within the mind. And that wisdom we can take with us from the meditation session into daily life.

For those who are seriously interested in meditation, it is important to follow the three steps of listening, contemplating and meditating. First, one has to listen to teachings. Then, after having listened to teachings, one has to contemplate those teachings. Once one has contemplated those teachings, one meditates on them. If one tries to jump past the first step, one will be like a man who is trying to climb a mountain without any arms, as was said by Shakya Pandita.

At first, when we listen to the teachings, we generate a certain faith and conviction that what was explained in

the teachings is correct. This faith and conviction is generated through the outside condition of the teacher and his teachings. After this we need to develop wisdom through our own investigation and analysis by practising the second step of contemplation.

We can meditate on the coming and going of the breathing by first bringing the mind back home, and focusing it inwards instead of letting it be distracted by outer objects or by conceptualising. After having brought the mind home, focusing inwards, we leave it for some time in an empty state, remaining in this non-conceptual state without focusing on any particular object.

Then, once we realise that the mind is again trying to escape to various outside objects, we focus it on the coming and going of the breath. When we focus the mind on the coming and going of the breath, there shouldn't be a separation of subject and object, a sense of looking at the breath. Rather, the mind should actually enter the breathing, and become one with it. One should be able to feel the coming and going of the breathing within one's mind. *[Pause for meditation]*

Please arise from meditative equipoise!

When we meditate, we should be aware of the benefits to us arising from meditation. Also, the mind during our meditation should be tuned just right. If the mind is too tight, if we grasp too tightly at the object, that will cause mental excitement. If we leave the mind too relaxed, then even though it might appear as if we are concentrating, there is the danger that our meditation will become unclear. The mind needs to be tuned just right, not too tight and not too relaxed, for us to be able to meditate in the proper manner.

The meaning of meditation is to 'hold' the mind, using the tools of remembrance and introspection. Ordinarily, our mind gets distracted by the objects of the five senses – sound, smell, taste, touch, and so forth. As a result, the various delusions arise – attachment, anger, pride and so forth. In order to prevent this, we have to first employ remembrance, not forgetting about the virtuous states of the mind. When our mind wanders towards non-virtuous objects, we forget about virtuous states of mind. So, staying focused on the virtuous states of the mind means remembering them.

Introspection is a mental factor that analyses what the rest of the mind is doing, for example, asking: 'Is my mind at the present moment under the control of the delusion? And if there are delusions within my mind, which is the strongest?'

Through these two tools, remembrance and introspection, we will be able to control our mind more and more, and keep it focused on a virtuous object of meditation. For example, if we decide that we are going to a certain place, then while we are going there, we will not forget where we are going. We will have it constantly in our mind.

Now we will go to Verse 112 of the text.

When musicians are playing a beautiful melody,
Should we examine the sound they are making
We would see that it does not exist by itself.
But when we are not making our formal analysis,
Still there is a beautiful tune to be heard,
Which is merely a label on notes and on players –
That is why lovely music can lighten sad hearts.

Independent existence not arising through causes and conditions doesn't exist. So, compounded phenomena arise through causes and conditions. If they did arise without depending upon causes and conditions, independently, then they would be inherently existing. But they are empty of inherent existence because they are generated from causes and conditions, just like person.

In this example, Geshe-la says it is giving the example of a sitar player. The sound of the sitar player comes about through causes and conditions, and when we listen to the music of the sitar player, it can lighten our minds. For example, when we are in a depressed or sad state of mind and we listen to nice music, it can have a lightening effect on our mind. Geshe-la says he sometimes recommends just doing that – listening single-pointedly to these nice sounds.

But even though that music coming from the sitar has the ability to lighten our minds, when we analyse it, where is that music actually found? Can it be found in the strings of the sitar, in the fingers of the sitar player, or in the body of the instrument? If we analyse all those options, we won't find the sound. But even though the sound is not findable in that manner, it still conventionally has an effect on our mind.

As it says in the example, the sound comes about through the accumulation of causes and conditions, and only through the accumulation of those causes and conditions does the sound arise. No sound will arise without the accumulation of the causes and conditions, and if we try to pinpoint the source of the sound to one particular cause or condition, we find that we cannot.

So, effects come only into existence through the accumulation of causes and conditions. In the same way, our happiness is also an effect and therefore has to come from the accumulation of causes and conditions. If those causes and conditions are not complete, happiness won't arise. If, for example, an inner condition, such as the right way of thinking, is missing, then even though the outer conditions are there, the person won't experience happiness. This is a very important point, which is worth contemplating. To attain happiness, we need to first create the inner conditions and the right way of thinking.

If the inner causes and conditions for happiness are not present, then even though the outer conditions might be

there, the person will not experience happiness. And as we all know from personal experience, if we are in a positive state of mind, even the food we eat which might ordinarily not be considered good food can still taste nice. On the other hand, if we have had a fight with our partner or friend, then at dinner when we have to sit opposite that person with whom we are angry, even though the food might be good quality, it will not taste good at all.

Your way of thinking becomes very important for the attainment of happiness. If you just try to accumulate the outer causes for happiness, then even though one can say, "I have so and so many possessions ... I have such and such", that alone will not make the mind happy.

On the other hand, if we develop the inner causes for happiness, if we develop the right way of thinking, even though the outer conditions might not be perfect, we can still experience great mental happiness and bliss. If one is harmonious with one's friend or with one's partner, if one's mind is happy, if one's mind is experiencing peace, if one is peaceful inside, then when one has dinner together with that friend, even though the food might be a little bit poorer, it will still taste nice. The more we develop a right way of thinking, the more inner happiness we will experience.

Geshe-la said there is not much time left, so are there some questions?

Question: How does one pacify the conceptualising mind?

Answer: The reason we haven't pacified our conceptual mind yet is because we don't regard the conceptual mind as an enemy, and because of that we don't oppose the conceptual mind. To pacify the conceptual mind, we have to view it as an enemy and we have to oppose it.

For example, with regard to desire, we have to apply the antidote to desire, which is the mind that views the object in an opposing way. It is the same with anger. To oppose anger, we have to apply the antidote to anger, which views the object of anger in a different way.

If you have strong attachment towards the body of another person, what you have to do is to meditate on the impurities of the body. Instead of letting your mind get distracted and drawn towards the body of the other person, you focus it inwards on your own body, and you perform analytical meditation on the constituents of your body. Then you will pretty soon understand that there's nothing in particular to be attached to in a physical body. This acts as the antidote to attachment. But Geshe-la says he doesn't know whether you like to do that meditation.

Each of the delusions has a particular antidote, and the antidote is always a state of mind that opposes those delusions directly in the way the object is viewed. And the only reason we are yet not experiencing the benefit of those meditations is that we haven't practised them.

The root of the conceptualising mind, the root of the disturbing thoughts, is a particular concept called self-grasping. Once we have opposed self-grasping, then no disturbing thoughts will arise in our mind at all.

Are there any more questions?

Question: My main delusion is anger. I know it is preceded by boredom and unhappiness.

Answer: Geshe-la says so that your mind is unhappy – because you said you are usually bored and then you are unhappy – so that is a sign of a mind being disturbed by delusions. As we said the other day, the function of the delusions is to disturb the mind. Even when our mind is in a happy state, for no apparent reason it eventually gets disturbed by the delusions. That is exactly what the delusions do, disturb the mind.

Also what happens is that, because we are mentally unhappy, we become uptight and angry, so then we are uptight physically as well as mentally. If one is in such a state of mind, even small things can cause great anger to arise within the mind. So, it is important to try to let go, try to relax the mind, try to relax the body, sit down in a relaxed manner, the way we do at the beginning of a meditation, just relax and eat good food, heavy food. It is important to take great care that one doesn't become too uptight.

As Geshe-la says, relax physically as well as mentally, because otherwise, if we are uptight in the mind and in the body, we will not be able to stop thinking. The mind will just go around and around and around. Even though at that point one wouldn't say that the person is yet mentally disturbed, this way of thinking can lead to serious mental disturbance if it is not checked in time. If that person continues to be uptight, and can't relax, that can lead to states of mental disturbance where you actually see things which are not there – you might see flames where there is no flame, or you might hear voices and so forth. That actually happens quite often to people.

This is why it's very important to stay relaxed and to take great care of yourself. Sleep well, eat well, relax, sleep well, and your mind will be happy. Happiness is what all humans want. And if you live in Australia, and you relax, and sleep well, and eat good food, yet you are not happy, then happiness cannot be found anywhere.

Geshe-la says that he tells people to think about other countries, like India, where the outer conditions are unbelievably difficult for the people there – no good food, not enough of it, no good drink, and so forth. Sometimes just arriving at the airport in those countries becomes almost unbearable. Geshe-la says that our happiness depends on us, so we have to be relaxed. If we continue to agitate the mind, then there is nothing that can be done. So, it is up to us to relax and bring some peace to the mind, to keep it in a contented, happy and relaxed state. Then, automatically we'll experience mental happiness.

As Geshe-la has mentioned many times before, instead of being content and satisfied with the partner we have, and the friends we have, if we instead create problems by being dissatisfied and wanting to have somebody else as a partner or friend, then that's completely our own fault. If you act in that way, you open the door to countless problems, because you will probably lose the harmonious relationship that you had with the person you are together with now, and probably you won't achieve the greater happiness you are looking for. So,

you won't achieve what you set out to get, and you will lose what you have.

As we said before, bring the mind home and focus it one hundred percent inwards, and then concentrate single-pointedly on the mantra we are going to recite.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

*Transcribed from tape by Gabrielle Thomson
Edited by Mary-Lou Considine
Final edit & check by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version*

©Tara Institute