

Dharmarakshita's "*The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

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First we will begin with a breathing meditation. Choose the most comfortable sitting posture for yourself and be relaxed. Try to feel comfortable with this sitting posture.

Let us look at what meditation practice is all about. Meditation is a practice to make our mind familiar with a given object. It is training the mind, disciplining the mind using a given object.

In meditation we always have to counteract or remedy some opponent force. For instance, desire can be an opponent force. With meditation practice we try to prevent the mind from being influenced by desire, or any causes of desire, and then we transform our mind into the state of non desire. In this practice we try to familiarise our mind with the state of non desire and non attachment by applying this discipline of preventing or stopping the mind from going after the object of desire.

Likewise we are trying to overcome wrong view, or a misbelief with respect to the refuge objects through doing meditation practice and by trying to apply the teachings. Through this we can then abandon these wrong views and misconceptions. As we cultivate the right view, we should try to keep this view in our mind all the time.

Similarly, if we are overcoming hatred or anger towards any other being then we can transform our mind into a feeling of love and compassion towards that being.

In this meditation practice there is always some opponent force which must be clearly recognised so that we can subdue and defeat that force. By doing this we cultivate the opposing remedial force which makes us strong.

As we decrease or weaken the opponent forces our mind gains more clarity and peace.

Now with this in mind, and with the intention to bring inner peace and calm, we should first try to let go of all wandering or disturbing thoughts. After removing all these distracting thoughts then we can stabilize the mind inward and begin this breathing meditation by directing the focus of the mind onto the breath coming in and going out at the nostrils.

Everybody wants peace and happiness of mind. Therefore we have to look for the most effective way to achieve that. The most effective method is engaging in meditation practice, because mental peace and happiness is something which is experienced within our mind. Therefore the way to achieve this is to always watch our mind, or the mental mind stream, because if you watch the mind stream then you will see what is the cause of inner disturbances and the cause of inner peace. Both of these causes are within our mind. If you want to increase inner peace and happiness in the mind then the practice

is to get rid of anything in our mind which is the cause of inner disturbance and mental unhappiness. We try to invest in our mind anything which brings peace and happiness. In this way, mental peace and happiness is our own personal experience - we are each individually fully responsible in experiencing it.

One famous teacher Geshe Karawa said 'the reason why there is not enough inner peace and happiness is because we do not know which object our mind should avoid and which object our mind should dwell or should engage in'. What this highly realised teacher said is very true if we closely observe our mind and we try to know in what way it changes as it occupies itself in various objects and thought processes.

So we should simply watch the mind and observe how the mind is going in various directions, chasing after various objects and occupying itself in various thought processes. As these things happen, and you observe how they affect your feelings or emotions, you can then recognise that sometimes when the mind is occupied with certain objects it becomes very attracted to them - the object completely overpowers the mind and this gives rise to a strong desire for those objects. And then, with this feeling of desire, we can think of the consequences of the desire over our mind and over our immediate experience.

The consequence of generating and entertaining desire is frustration, for the reason that it is difficult to obtain the object, or because we lose that object. But it is our desire which is the main cause of our suffering, because of not having or losing that object. Such desire has also arisen in our mind because our mind is pre-occupied with certain objects and we project onto that object in a variety of ways - that is the cause of desire.

It is said that whenever we experience any imbalance or anything unsatisfactory then the main cause is not external but can be identified within our mind. If we become more aware of our mind and gain more understanding of it then we can see that the number one enemy of our life is here within us. By becoming more aware we can recognise the cause of difficulty and recognise any type of emotional problem that we will face in life. We can see that no matter what we do or how we try to orient or change our external lifestyle there will still be no rest and no satisfaction - there is no assurance of being happy whether we take a walk, sleep or indulge in any food or drink.

By becoming more aware we will see that in certain circumstances we are not happy, not fully relaxed, not fully calm. It is said that we experience a dullness in our life. It is said that this dullness would be dispelled if we gained the understanding of the reality of our mind.

It is very important that we take full responsibility for our own life. If we face a problem and if we don't want to have any problems, then we have to realise that it is no one else's responsibility but our own. Even if we talk about how to make our life more stable or talk of how to transform our mind, then who is going to do this? It has to be ourselves - there should not be any hope that some outer condition will make it happen, will make our life stable or clean our mind. It is so important that we are self sufficient. We are not putting our fate into the hands of some outer condition. If we do this then our life here would be very unstable. For example, if we met a favorable outer condition, even if it was something minor we become excited and delighted with the situation. But if we meet even a very minor unfavourable outer condition then we could very easily become very disturbed and lose tolerance.

So it is the level of our tolerance which is the main factor that decides how much we get affected by some outer condition. If our inner tolerance is very weak then we can be overwhelmingly disturbed and be made very unhappy, even by facing a very small hindrance. In other words, a small outer hindrance can be a great cause of disturbance if we are intolerant. But if we have the tolerance then we can remain unaffected even if we are confronted with a serious hindrance. Tolerance means not being moved, not being changed.

So we might leave the teaching here and maybe we have time for just one question.

Question: Is the final goal to go beyond the forces of desire to a state of desirelessness?

Answer: It is not just the desirelessness, or not possessing any desire, but if you reach the state where you are completely liberated and permanently released from desires together with the seeds or the latencies of the desire, and when you have completely uprooted the desire, then it can be called the final spiritual goal.

There is a meditation which, if we follow it, can at least temporarily relieve us from the misery and fatigue of desire. This meditation involves knowing or identifying the cause of the desire.

One of the causes is an object which is very attractive or appealing to our mind. It is very obvious to us that because we have that object in our mind, there is desire. This object will serve as a cause to arouse desire in our mind. Furthermore, we can also examine by thinking - 'well there is the object, but why is my mind attracted to that object?' If we examine the substance of the beauty which makes our mind attracted to the object, is it in the object or what is it? Does our desire for the object and projection of beauty toward the object truly reflect the reality of that object?

So as we examine this substance, the beauty substance, it is nothing but the projections, and the exaggerations of something superimposed onto that object by our mind.

As a remedy to overcome the object of desire and as well as the misconceptions of the object, there is one meditation where we just imagine a very tiny white bone in the centre of our forehead, half the size of a small coin.

If we focus our mind on that object and then, it is said

that if one is successful in focusing the mind on that object, we will immediately see the benefit of this meditation in terms of decreasing the desires and the influence of desire. You can feel through this meditation that the unfulfilled desire has gone away.

We will finish by chanting the Buddha's mantra. So as before try to sit in a meditation posture, relaxing the body and trying to bring the mind fully inward. As we begin the chanting try to place the focus of the mind on the sound of the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Editor's summary:

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 - One famous teacher Geshe Karawa said 'the reason why there is not enough inner peace and happiness is because we do not know which object our mind should avoid and which object our mind should dwell or should engage in'. What this exalted teacher said is very true if we closely observe our mind and we try to know in what way our mind changes as the mind occupies itself in various objects and thought processes.
 - We should simply watch the mind and observe how the mind is going in various directions, chasing after various objects and occupying itself in various thought processes. As these things happen, and you observe how they affect your feelings or emotions, you can then recognise that sometimes when the mind is occupied with certain objects it becomes very attracted to them - the object completely overpowers the mind and this gives rise to a strong desire for that object.
 - It is very important that we take full responsibility for our own life. If we face a problem and if we don't want to have any problems, then we have to realise that it is no one else's responsibility but our own.
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