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

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We will begin with some breathing meditation. Choose a comfortable sitting posture and fully rest the body. If our mind is at rest, as well as our body, then we can feel fully at rest. This meditation brings true peace and inner comfort to our mind. As we begin the meditation, we should try to let go of all disturbing and distracting thoughts so that our mind can become calm and peaceful.

Having overcome all distracting thoughts in the mind, then we can direct our mental focus on our breath and be fully aware that we are breathing in and out. The advantage in doing this type of meditation practice is to stabilise and discipline our mind.

Verse 25 of 'The Wheel of Sharp Weapons':

When all who are close turn against us as enemies, This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done. Till now we have held grudges inside us with anger With thoughts of sly methods to cause others pain; Hereafter let's try to have less affectation, Nor pretend to be kind while we harbor base aims.

This verse indicates that it is possible for us to face an adverse circumstance or situation where people close to us, like our spiritual teacher or our partner, turn around as enemies. This type of situation can be a great cause of misery and suffering in our life. When we face these situations we need to act. We don't want to be completely oppressed by such misery and suffering.

The most effective action is to correct our way of thinking, particularly our own views of the situation. Generally speaking, we tend to think that all the problems that come into our lives are caused by some external conditions. Based on this erroneous presumption, we think that we can resolve our problems externally. But just as soon as we solve one problem, we face another - we can't bring our problems completely to an end. This shows us that the cause is not external, otherwise when the external causes of a problem were overcome then the problem would also be overcome. We can see that this is not the case. Removing the external causes of the problem does not remove it. The instruction given here is to focus inward and see what changes we can bring within ourselves.

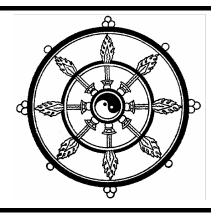
Whenever someone dislikes us or demonstrates some negative behaviour towards us, we get angry because we don't like what they have done. Even if that person was once a close friend, we can still get angry. Emotionally disturbed, our anger causes us to lose our peace of mind, our happiness. On one hand it seems that our emotions are almost controlled by external conditions. For example, when our close friend appears to be kind and beautiful our response is desire and attachment. Then, if they show some negative appearance, we generate some anger or hatred. However, if we manage to respond towards a bad situation without anger, then we have no reason to feel negative about the situation.

The solution to unease and bitterness in our minds is to cultivate patience and tolerance. If there was no remedy for our anger or if there is no method by which we could cultivate patience, then our problems couldn't be solved because there would be no way to prevent anger from arising. It is important to train our minds in a way of thinking which can help us to practise tolerance and patience, and so help us to accept or endure unpleasant situations. Facing an unpleasant situation like an angry friend is not desirable, but whether that situation causes us to suffer pain or not depends to a large extent upon our mental attitude.

The instruction given here, to cultivate the tolerance that we need, says to view any unfavorable situations as the result of our past actions. Our friends harm us as a result of our past harmful actions. We either caused others harm or we held some ill thought towards them. Because of this we now face situations of others harming us. We need to familiarise ourselves with this reasoning. Instead of blaming our experiences on other people, on external conditions, we need to be clear that our negative experiences are the result of any harm we have directly or indirectly inflicted on other beings.

The famous Indian master Shantideva said that we should reward or respond to enemies with a gesture of friendship. Putting this advice into practise is the most beneficial action that we can take. When others harm us, for example if our family or close friends speak harshly to us, we might retaliate. But what do we achieve by retaliating? We cause more distance and bitterness in the relationship. Retaliation gives us no advantage. Instead, it causes us more problems because the other person will also retaliate and everyone's anger will increase until all peace, stability and self-control is lost.

It's obvious that conflict with people, even strangers, can cause problems in our lives. If our attitude is to return the behaviour, then it will be difficult to find any friendships. On the other hand if we remain calm and control our minds, our speech and our actions, then this



safeguards our own inner peace and happiness. This also helps others to see how wrong their actions are, so they won't make their situation worse. In general, if we train ourselves to be tolerant and friendly towards people causing us harm, then our actions can restore harmony and resolve conflicts. We can bring people closer together as a result of our actions. Even our enemies can be brought closer to us if we can verbally and physically show good gestures.

The last lines of the verse say:

Hereafter let's try to have less affectations

Nor pretend to be kind while we harbor base aims.

This is to encourage us, from now on, to not show any pretension or deceit towards other beings. By 'pretension' we mean hiding our faults in order maintain our reputations or to make some material gain. With pretension we will try to hide all our weaknesses and faults with the motivation of becoming famous or rich or suchlike. The term 'deceit' refers not only to deceiving or cheating others with the motivation of gaining a good name or material possessions, but further, to pretending that you have qualifications and qualities which you don't. An example would be someone with a wild and unruly mind pretending to others that he or she is peaceful and calm - while concealing the motivation to become famous or rich.

We'll finish the teaching here and as usual we will chant the Buddha's mantra. Sit in meditation posture and make sure your body is relaxed and your mind is calm and drawn inward. Then focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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