

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

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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First, we will do a breathing meditation together. Choose a meditation posture and fully relax your body.

Besides relaxing the body, we need to relax our mind by removing distracting thoughts. Then our mind can be peaceful. We can keep this inward focus of the mind by concentrating on the inhalation and exhalation of the breath at the nostrils. Try to maintain this focus, not letting any other object distract you.

We know from experience that the more stable our mind is, and the more concentration we have, the more we benefit. To improve our mind, we have to take some action. When we think about what we can do to improve our concentration and pacify the mind, we realise that meditation practice is the most effective means of bringing inner peace and stability.

Tonight we will continue the teaching on the text, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. We have finished discussing the significance of the name of this teaching, this particular teaching on thought transformation. The next subject is the author paying homage. The text says:

I pay heartfelt homage to you, Yamantaka;
Your wrath is opposed to the Great Lord of Death.

In the Tibetan version of this first verse, it says that the object to which the author pays homage generates anger or hatred.

Generally, when we generate anger or hatred, it indicates our dislike of something. Here it says, 'your wrath is opposed', so if we think of, for example, a bodhisattva with a wrathful expression, we can use the term showing anger, showing hatred. In this context, one is showing hatred to the self-cherishing mind or the self-centred mind. Where it says 'your wrath is opposed', it means it is opposed to the self-cherishing mind.

The true cause of problems is the self-centred mind. Bodhisattvas have identified the self-centred mind as the cause of all problems, and so exert effort to oppose it. Ordinary beings, on the other hand, blame their problems on other people rather than on the underlying state of mind. For example, if a friend scowls and speaks harshly to you, you would be angry with them, and blame that friend for your anger.

However the bodhisattvas would identify the cause (of the anger) by knowing the reason why and from where the undesirable action performed by the friend comes from.

They would see that it comes from the mind of the friend. The mind which makes that friend do that negative action is the self-cherishing mind, the selfish mind. With a selfish mind, even if a person normally speaks gently with you or looks at you kindly, under the

influence of the selfish mind they can behave in the opposite way. Bodhisattvas are able to see the true cause as the self-cherishing mind, and they oppose that mind with great compassion, with understanding and empathy for that person's helplessness.

If we relate this to our own experience, when someone close to us behaves in an abnormal way and causes us problems, by looking at the cause of the situation with a clear and discriminating mind, we see that the person is overpowered by self-cherishing, an influence so strong that the person is incapable of behaving in any other way.

In thinking like this, we can develop patience or tolerance, which is essential in such a situation because the person you are dealing with is not a stranger. In the spiritual teachings, we talk about universal compassion towards all beings. But in practice we cannot cultivate such compassion unless we are able to cultivate compassion for those around us. If you relate this practice to those close to you, it is immediately relevant and beneficial.

We are trying to develop a better understanding of our own mind. The more we understand our mind and the reality of our situation, the more we will understand others.

All our actions of body and speech originate in our mind. This is also true for other beings. Therefore, we should not judge others simply by their outer behaviour. Rather, we need to see their inner situation, their inner reality.

The inner reality of a friend who exhibits anger towards you and abuses you is one of unhappiness. Something has upset them deeply - there is no calm, no satisfaction. The way your friend is behaving is not the way someone would normally behave when they are happy and peaceful.

As a friend who has gained some spiritual knowledge, you can try to understand their situation, rather than lose your temper or become impatient with them. If you can control your anger, you can maintain your stability and peace, and also you can help that friend. With such an understanding, you know that retaliation would only make your friend angrier and more unhappy. But if you show tolerance and understanding - even if you manage to practice only a few moments of tolerance - this can benefit you and your friend, and your relationship with that friend.

On the contrary, if we lack this understanding of our true situation, and if our friend also lacks such understanding, our outer response to each other will not

reflect the true situation, and will trigger confrontation. This can be very damaging. Thus, when we talk about developing an understanding of the mind, spiritual teachings are indispensable.

In the verse from the text, homage is payed to Yamantaka, the wrathful tantric deity. Yamantaka can be defined in two ways. In one sense (definitive), Yamantaka is exalted wisdom, the inseparable union of method and wisdom. In another sense (indefinite), Yamantaka refers to the wrathful manifestation of this exalted wisdom.

The term 'homage' in Tibetan is 'chag tsal'. 'Chag tsal' can have different meanings. It can mean wishing for experiencing, or gaining exalted wisdom. The more mundane meaning of 'chag tsal' is as follows: the first syllable 'chag' (literally, 'to sweep') means to sweep away negativities of body, speech and mind; and the second syllable 'tsal' means to venerate, or show respect by bowing.

Before finishing tonight we have time for a question.

Question: When an enemy tries to cause you harm and you try to practise patience, you could appear to that enemy to be too weak and the enemy will continue to harm you time and time again. Can Geshe comment on that situation where one maybe should practice patience in a more forthright manner so that the enemy will learn from the situation and show some respect toward the person they are trying to harm?

Answer: When we speak of patience, we are referring to our mind. However, what you are asking is how outwardly one should face such a confrontation.

Here we are talking out what skills we should use. Sometimes it is necessary and more beneficial to be aggressive, and at other times to outwardly display a peaceful and calm response. What skills you choose to use depends upon the type of person you are confronting.

Under all situations, we should try to maintain our calm and maintain the right attitude or understanding of the other person's situation. As to how to respond to the other person - whether it's better to remain silent or express your view strongly, even aggressively - that's up to the individual. But inwardly maintaining some patience, clear understanding of the situation, and compassion for the other is important.

Sometimes a mother has to frighten her child with a frown or angry expression in order to teach the child a lesson, or to calm or discipline the child. However, when she does this, her heart's motivation is to teach the right lesson to the child - the motivation is love, care and concern for the child's well-being.

Geshe-la relates an incident that happened to him when he was studying at Sarnath University in Varanasi. One day, he went to the city of Varanasi with a reincarnate lama (tulku) who was a good friend of his. At the market, this lama got into a fight with one of the Indian merchants while he was trying to bargain. Because that

merchant abused the lama, the lama raised his hand as if to slap at the merchant's face. So they got into a fight, and to make things worse the other merchants nearby also suddenly joined into the fight against the lamas. While they were fighting one of the merchants tried to pull off the lama's wrist-watch. As things were getting out of hand Geshe Doga tried to think of what to do. In order to calm the situation he put one of his hands inside his shirt, pretending he had a knife, and luckily the merchants thought that he did have one, so they retreated. Later on the lama asked Geshe Doga how such an idea came to him - anyway, it managed to pacify things and save them from a situation that was becoming quite dangerous.

Now we will recite the Buddha's mantra. Try to relax the body as before and sit in the right posture. Try to calm the mind so that it rests inward.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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