

MN-48  
The Kosambians - Kosambiya Sutta  
Bhante Vimalaramsi  
DSMC  
06-Aug-07

BV: This is kind of an interesting sutta, because it tells you exactly what loving-kindness is.

MN:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Kosambi in Ghosita's Park.

2. Now on that occasion the monks at Kosambi had taken to quarrelling and brawling and were deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers. They could neither convince each other nor be convinced by others; they could neither persuade each other nor be persuaded by others.

BV: Now what happened was, there was two monasteries in Kosambi, and one of them was a sutta study monastery, and the other was a Vinaya study monastery. Now Vinaya is the rules, not only for monks, but they're the rules and discipline. And the sutta monk went to visit the other monastery, the Vinaya one, and while he was there, he had to go to the bathroom. Now in Asia, they don't use toilet paper, they use water, to clean with. Actually it's much cleaner than toilet paper is, anyway, but that's neither here nor there. And when the monk had got done, with the cleaning himself, he left a little bit of water in the bowl. Right after he went to the bathroom, the Vinaya monk went to the bathroom. And he saw that there was water in the bowl. That is a minor offense. It's not a biggie, but it is a minor offense. So the Vinaya master came out to the sutta master and said: "Do you know that you just broke one of the rules? Because if you leave water in the bowl, then insects can come and you wind up killing the insects." And the sutta master said: "Well actually, I didn't really think about it, and I won't do it again,

but I thank you for admonishing me like this, telling me about it.”  
And then the sutta master left and went back to his monastery.

Now the Vinaya master started talking to all of his students about how bad that monk was because he broke such a bad rule. And they started complaining to each other about: “All of the sutta monks are like that. They don’t really follow the rules as closely as they’re supposed to.” So when they went out on almsround the next morning, the Vinaya students started talking to all the laymen about them, the sutta students being bad monks. And the sutta students heard about this. And they went to their teacher and told him. So their teacher started complaining about how poor the scholarship was for the suttas, with the Vinaya people. Now they started really getting into it. And they really were stabbing each other with verbal daggers, and they were really arguing a lot and they couldn’t, they, if they saw each other they would have a look of disgust on their face and turn around and walk away from them, they couldn’t even talk to each other. That’s what this is all about.

MN:

3. Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and informed him of what was happening.

4. Then the Blessed One addressed a certain monk thus: “Come, monk, tell those monks in my name that the Teacher calls them.”—  
“Yes, venerable sir,” he replied, and he went to those monks and told them: “The Teacher calls the venerable ones.”

“Yes, friend,” they replied,

BV: Friend is, you hear monks calling each other “Bhante”. That’s kind of a formal word that generally gets used for a junior monk to a senior monk. He’s older than I am, in the Dhamma, by a few months. So he’s Bhante, to me. It means venerable sir, reverend sir, very respectful. During the time of the Buddha, they didn’t have that rule. It didn’t happen until right on the death bed, when the Buddha made that rule. They always called each other friend. And it kind of gives

you a warm feeling to whoever you're talking to when you say: "Friend, what do you think about this?" So it was a nice way of talking with each other.

TT: 5:38

MN:

and they went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, they sat down at one side. The Blessed One then asked them: "Monks, is it true that you have taken to quarrelling and brawling and are deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers; that you can neither convince each other nor be convinced by others, that you can neither persuade each other nor be persuaded by others?"

"Yes, venerable sir."

5. "Monks, what do you think? When you take to quarrelling and brawling and are deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers, do you on that occasion maintain acts of loving-kindness by body, speech, and mind in public and in private towards your companions in the holy life?"

"No, venerable sir."

"So, monks, when you take to quarrelling and brawling and are deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers, on that occasion you do not maintain acts of loving-kindness in body, speech, and mind in public and in private towards your companions in the holy life.

BV: This is a heavy one.

MN:

Misguided men, what can you possibly know, what can you see, that you take to quarrelling and brawling and are deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers? That you can neither convince each other nor be convinced by others, that you can neither

persuade each other nor be persuaded by others? Misguided men, that will lead to your harm and suffering for a long time.”

6. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks thus: “Monks, there are these six principles of cordiality that create love and respect and conduce to cohesion, to non-dispute, to concord, and to unity. What are the six?

“Here a monk maintains bodily acts of loving-kindness both in public and in private towards his companions in the holy life. This is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to cohesion, to non-dispute, to concord, and to unity.

“Again, a monk maintains verbal acts of loving-kindness both in public and in private towards his companions in the holy life. This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to unity.

“Again, a monk maintains mental acts of loving-kindness both in public and in private towards his companions in the holy life. This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces to unity.

BV: Now the thing is, this is a set formula, ok, body, speech and mind. You always hear body, speech, and mind. But, when you start taking a look at this in particular, it doesn't happen that way. It happens, mind, speech, and body. So, what does it mean to have thoughts of loving-kindness, in mind? It means radiating that feeling, that smile. When you develop the smile in your mind, and in your heart, it naturally comes out through your eyes and your mouth. And the thing is, we have so many habitual tendencies toward thinking this or that, and just letting your mind ho hum around, doing this and doing that, thinking this, thinking that, thousand miles away, not paying attention to what you're doing.

TT: 10:21

Now when you walk from here to your cabin, what are you doing with your mind? What you want to be doing is focusing on the loving-kindness, radiating that happy feeling, smiling. Now if your eye gets distracted by something, a flower or some kind of a sight, then you put loving-kindness into that.

See, the problem happens because of craving and clinging. The craving, it always there's a feeling that arises and then there's a tension and tightness, and right on its tail, all of the reasons and story about why you like or don't like whatever it is, and then what happens is, you start thinking about something else, and then something else. And you don't even know you have a body anymore, you're caught completely in your head. So, when you're doing your daily activities, you want to be focusing on loving-kindness.

That doesn't mean you still don't have observation thoughts. You do. But they're thoughts about what needs to be done right now. You don't have to think it over and over and over again, right? One time is enough. You got it. You understand what needs to be done so then you go do it. If while you're starting to do that, you allow your mind to start thinking about other things, you're caught by the craving and clinging, and you don't see it.

One of the things that I rather insist that you do is smile, and I want you to smile a lot. Why? Because it makes you much more aware of what mind is doing in the present moment. When you start to have joy arise because you're smiling, it's real easy to see when your mind starts to get heavy: "I don't like this. I don't want it this way. I wish it was different than it is." The more you get caught in those kind of unwholesome thoughts, the more pain and suffering you experience. So what to do? Smile more. Laugh with your mind for being so crazy. Welcome to the human race. Everybody is crazy unless they're an arahat. It says in the Aṅguttara Nikāya. The only people that aren't crazy are arahats. So it's ok to have fun while being crazy. As you develop your sense of humor about how dumb your mind can be sometimes, you're not identifying with it anymore. You go from taking your thoughts and feelings personally, to seeing them as an impersonal process. It's real easy to let it go. So, the more you smile

and laugh, the more balance you have in your mind, the more, you have equanimity, and it makes your mindfulness exceptional, not just regular good. It really makes your alertness to what's happening in the present moment very, very good.

TT 14:30

Now we have this thing that we call the six r's, and there's going to be periods of time that you're going to forget them, but you can't criticize yourself because you forgot. Why? What is criticism? It's a form of aversion, dislike, and that is unwholesome. Why is it unwholesome? Because you're taking it personally. Because you're really strongly identifying with those thoughts and feelings as being: "This is who I am." And I don't like myself when I forget things, so I beat myself up all over the place, and that's why it's unwholesome. We are our own worst enemy. We're always criticizing ourselves because we don't meet the expectations that we want to meet. So, you need to be smiling and laughing, if you catch the mind doing that, and pulling you down in the mud because once you get in the mud it's hard to get out again, and you go from one muddy thought to another to another and be lost for long periods of time. That's not anything to do with either being mindful or practicing meditation. Meditation is an all the time practice. What is mind doing? Pay attention. See how your mind grabs onto things.

Any time that you see that you have a repeat thought, that means there's an attachment there, and there's a hindrance there. Oh boy, I get my friends visiting. And the more you are able to play with that instead of be serious with it, the more alert your mind becomes. This is really necessary. It's a necessary part of the practice to develop loving-kindness mentally. You do something, one of the favorite ones is going in the back of the truck and pulling something out and smacking your shin across that ball that's on the back of the truck. I've done that too many times, right? So what do you do when that happens? If you re-act, like you always act when you bump your shin, first thing you do, you notice that there's pain, and you notice that you don't like the pain, and then you start getting angry because there is pain, and you try to control the pain with the angry emotion,

and all the thoughts go along with it. But when we go back to the instructions in the meditation: when a sensation arises, the first thing you'll notice is there's thoughts about that sensation, and the more thoughts there are about that sensation, the bigger and more intense that sensation becomes. So the first thing you need to do is let go of the thoughts and relax. Smile. Now you see a tight mental fist around that sensation. That's aversion. "I don't like that. I don't want that feeling to be there." That happens every time a painful feeling arises. But the truth is when that painful feeling arises it's there, and it's got to be ok for it to be there because that's the truth. It's there.

You can't control the truth. Ok? The truth, is what's happening exactly in the present moment. There's no shades of truth. Either it's there, or it's not. Any time you try to control the truth, or, make the truth be the way you want it to be, that's the cause of suffering, and it really gets intense sometimes.

TT 19:58

The more, you allow the space for that sensation to be there, the less suffering there is. Why? Because you let go of identifying with that feeling. You let go of the want to control that feeling, and make it be the way you want it to be. You give it the space to be there by itself. Loving-kindness meditation is learning how to lovingly accept whatever arises in the present moment. And that means that there's no tension. There's no tightness. There's only this openness, relaxing, smiling, coming back to that sensation. If you want start putting love in that sensation. When you do that for a couple of minutes, and it's just a couple of minutes, then you go on and start doing whatever. You forget that you even did it 'til you look down and you see blood running down your leg. You go: "Oh!" It's real easy to forget it because it's not, something that you're trying to control anymore.

Where we get into all of our problems is we have thoughts and opinions and concepts of the way we think things are supposed to be, and they don't wind up being that way. When I was in Burma the first time, it got to be the end of the rain's retreat, and they were shooting a lot of people at that time and they said: "We don't want

any foreign monks in the country, so you have to leave." Now they told us about a week before the end of the rain's retreat. And, I started thinking about what I wanted to do when I got out of the rain's retreat and I had to go back to Thailand. And there was a monk there. He was quite brilliant. He had access to all kinds of different things. And I started planning that what I wanted to do was make a time exposure of a human body decaying. I had this planned down to the tiniest detail, exactly how to do it, when I got there, what I was going to say to him, what he was going to say back to me, he was going to be real enthusiastic about it, think it's a great idea, and I spent a whole week doing that. I wasn't meditating anymore, I was really caught up in my restlessness and planning mind. So finally we left Burma, and I went to the monastery that he was at in Bangkok, and during the rain's retreat he had disrobed and gotten married. He wasn't even anywhere close to being there. He went back to England or Germany or some place like that. I wasted an entire week. And it was a lot of repeat thoughts. My mindfulness was not very good. I had a lot of fun doing it. It was a lot of pleasure figuring all this stuff out, and how to do it, and get to see all of the different organs when they start, body gets bloated and all of that, so it was going to be great. The maggots and you know, the whole nine yards. But when I got there, there was nobody there that could help me. We didn't have any of the filming equipment that he had access to. So, what could I do? I let that one go and I went down to Malaysia and did a six month retreat in metta.

TT: 24:33

But that shows you how tricky mind can be, especially if you like what you're planning. And the more you think about it, the more repeat thoughts there are about it, the more excited you get by it, and the pleasure is so great, that it's hard to keep your mindfulness going. Now this is before I knew anything about smiling and laughing and I was really, really serious about the meditation, and I was so serious that at the start of the rain's retreat, I went to see Sayadaw. He said: "How much sleep are you taking?" I was going to bed at eleven o'clock; getting up at three o'clock. I said: "Four hours." He said: "What are you sleeping so much for?" I said: "Ok, fine." So I

cut it down to two hours. I went to bed at midnight, got up at two, for three months. And I found out all kinds of interesting things doing that. I was eating about three times more food than I normally would, and I was losing weight like you can't believe. It takes a lot of energy to stay up. When I got done, and we had to leave Burma, I didn't go straight to Malaysia, I went down to practice the meditation with Venerable Buddhadasa. And I would go out on almsround, and I would come back, and I would eat the food, and then I'd kind of say: "Well, ahhh, maybe I'll take a nap now." And about five o'clock in the afternoon, I'd get up and I'd wander around for a little bit, and then I went to bed and stayed asleep until it was time to get up the next morning. I was exhausted because I'd pushed so hard.

Now, one of the things that happens, is that there are times in your meditation when your mind is very calm, but you'll feel like staying up, and meditating more. I highly recommend doing that. But don't force it. After I left Burma I was in Malaysia for a couple of years, and then I got back into Burma, and I went to a different teacher, and I started out with four hours sleep a night and the teacher said: "How much sleep are you taking?" I said: "Four hours." He said: "Why don't you sleep more?"—"What? You mean it's ok to take six hours sleep?"—"Yeah. I don't want you walking around being tired all the time. I want you to be alert."—"Ah, this is a walk in the park. Great stuff."

After a little while, I started developing the habit of staying up later than everybody else, and at this center about nine o'clock is the last sitting and everybody gets real sleepy, and it's like a group nodding period. And then about nine-thirty, they preferred getting up and dragging over to where their beds are, and go to sleep. I got in the habit of doing my walking meditation during that time because it was hard not to become overcome by sleep because everybody was tired, or they convinced themselves that they were tired, and when about two thirds of the people left, then I would go and sit, and this is a very quiet time of the evening, and sometimes I would sit until one o'clock in the morning, two o'clock in the morning. So I asked Sayadaw if I could forego doing the first meditation at four o'clock, and sleep until breakfast, and he said: "Yeah." And I told him all the

things that I was doing and he was very impressed with that, but I've always been a night person. I've never been a morning person. I don't like morning. I'll stay up until two or three or four o'clock in the morning doing meditation, but I don't like getting up at six o'clock and doing the meditation. The psychic energy is much more pure one or two o'clock in the morning, much quieter. Anyway.

TT:29:47

When you start to notice that you're taking pleasure in certain kinds of thoughts, that's the time to gently let them go and kind of laugh being caught by these because you like them, and then let them go, relax into that, and start seeing how that process works. See, your mind is going to be tricky. It knows every one of the buttons to push to make all kinds of things come up, and distract. And one of the first things that it does is it makes painful things come up. But after a while, it'll make pleasurable things come up. And when the pleasurable things come up, you have to treat them in the same way that you treat the painful things. Joy and aversion, they're just feeling. So you don't try to control the feeling. You allow the space for the feeling to be there and relax into it. The pleasurable feeling, your mind wants to go: "Whish! Yeah, let's hold on. I like that feeling, that's a good one." One of the fastest ways to make it disappear, is by grabbing on to it and investigating with your mind how much you like it. You're not being mindful at that time. Being mindful means observing how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. Let it be. Relax. Don't hold on to anything. Don't push away anything. Loving acceptance of the present moment. So the joy will actually stay quite a bit longer, when you let it be and focus how mind's attention has joy come up. How did that happen? Why did it happen? Doesn't matter at all. How did it happen? What happened first? What happened after that? What happened after that? But what you're going to do is see then reverse order. Your mind gets really distracted into the joy and you start thinking about it and you notice it and you let the thoughts go and relax and allow the feeling to be there, smile and come back to your object of meditation, but your mind is going to go back to that again. How did it happen? How did that movement occur?

We have to be able to see things over and over again before we actually start to recognize things. But before long, you'll start to see: "Oh, this happened right before that happened. So the next time, you see this happen, start relaxing right then. And then you notice that you're coming back to your object of meditation a little bit quicker. You don't get caught for, sometimes it seems like hours, sometimes it's minutes, sometimes it's seconds. But the amount of time that you're distracted becomes less, and less, and less. As you do that, you are gaining very good strong equanimity. You're gaining this balance of mind. And you're teaching yourself these wonderful lessons how the process works. Now, the whole thing with practicing loving-kindness is learning how to develop new wholesome uplifting habits, and let go of the old reactionary unwholesome habits.

One of the things that I like most about Buddhism, is the self responsibility. Nobody out there causes your pain. You can blame them; that doesn't make it true. You can blame anything you want, but that doesn't mean that it's the truth. As you start seeing how the process works, you start seeing how you cause your own pain. Well, don't do that anymore. You know? That's the whole thing, and that's what you wind up telling yourself: "Why am I doing this to myself? I don't need to do this." And then it gets to be a funny game, and the more you start laughing with how crazy your mind is for causing all of these troubles for yourself, the easier it is to let go of these old habitual tendencies, by developing how the 6rs work.

TT 35:23

The 6rs is a habit you want to get into developing because they lead directly to how dependent origination arises, and we'll get into more of that a little later, but basically, the things that you really want to be able to see is how feeling arises at all of the sense doors. Sometimes it's pleasant, sometimes it's painful. But when you do the 6rs, when you recognize that your mind is distracted in one way or another, and you let it be and relax, smile and come back to the loving-kindness, you're becoming more and more alert to how the

process occurs, and you will be able to see a feeling arise, and right after that feeling, you'll be able to see it go like (gestures)... that tightness, start to come. It takes practice to be able to do this. It's not going to happen right away, but, when it happens, the first time you see it, it's almost time for a celebration. It's time to go to the ice cream store. (laughs)

But the thing with the practice is that, it doesn't matter where you're walking or what you're doing, what are you doing with your mind? Are you radiating loving-kindness and seeing how your mind gets pulled over here, and how to let it go and relax and come back, or do you let your mind just kind of ho hum? If you let your mind ho hum, you're going to get caught, and your progress is not going to be very good. Now this is with your daily activities I'm talking about, because the better your daily activities are, better your sitting is. Better your sitting is, better your daily activities. It's all interconnected. And it has to do with having fun with what you're doing while you're doing it, from petting the dogs to going to the bathroom, to taking a shower, to doing this or that work, whatever. Doesn't really matter what the task is, your job is to see what mind is doing in the present moment, and relax into that. So relaxing can't be overstated. The relaxing is where you let go of the craving. Every time you let go of the craving, even if the tension is still there, there is a brief moment of clarity.

Now, some of the habits that people get into with doing this, is they have a hindrance come up and they try to release, release, release, release, release, release, and they say: "Well, it doesn't work. Keeps coming back." Well, yeah, course it will. If you don't have that relax, smile, and come back to your object of meditation, you're spinning your wheels, you're not learning anything at all, and that is the cause of a lot of frustration. So don't forget, it's all of the 6rs. And you don't have to do it verbally like I said before. It just turns into a process, as you become more and more familiar with it. Now the more you use the 6rs, the more automatic the 6rs become. And then you'll start seeing things more and more clearly, more quickly, and you'll see your mind actually start to do this, (gesture) and when that happens, you give it the 6rs right then, and then it calms down.

Doesn't mean it won't start doing this again in a few minutes, or a few moments, it will.

TT: 40:17

S: What do you mean by this? (gesture)

BV: Wobble

S: What do you mean by wobble?

BV: Your mind starts moving.

S: ~

BV: Your mind gets pulled away and your mind is starting to move. When your mind is on your object of meditation it stays there without any movement.

S: ~

BV: Now this is all part of the dependent origination. When mind starts moving and wobbling, it's very subtle when it happens. Now, there is something in the Satipattana Sutta that I wanted to read. It's the section called full awareness. It says:

MN 10:

(3. Full Awareness)

8. "Again, monks, a monk is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

BV: Full awareness of what?

S: ~

BV: That's it. Full awareness of what mind is doing in the present moment. And this is translated by people that do straight vipassanā, as trying to see all of the tiny movements while you're straightening your hands and... But you're not watching what mind is doing. You're watching what body is doing, and that's once removed from what really needs to be seen. While you're doing all of these other activities, watch what your mind is doing. Radiate your loving-kindness to your friend. Stay with your friend just like your friend is as close as your skin, all the time. The more you have fun, radiating the loving-kindness to your friend, the stronger the metta becomes.

Now, a lot of people ask me whether the person you're sending loving-kindness to, can tell you're sending loving-kindness to them. They may not recognize that you're sending them loving-kindness, but they definitely feel it, and everything becomes easier for them for awhile. When I was in Thailand, I heard that my teacher, U Silananda, had a stroke, and he was in the hospital. So I was spending a good two or three hours every day radiating loving-kindness to him. And I guess it was about ten days later, I got a letter from him, thanking me for loving-kindness, (laughs) and that shows you how sensitive his mind was, that he could recognize who was doing it and how much they were doing it. But unless you have developed some good discipline, you won't really recognize who it's coming from.

Now one of the things that's real interesting about the loving-kindness, when somebody is sending you loving-kindness, you will feel heat arise in your body. All of a sudden, I'll be sitting and just, for no reason, temperature hasn't changed at all, I start breaking out in a sweat. Somebody is sending me loving-kindness. So I thank them very much and continue on, and send some back. It'll go where it's supposed to go, because I don't have to know who does it.

When you're brushing your teeth, what are you doing with your mind? When you're reaching for a doorknob, what are you doing with your mind? When you change your posture, from sitting to walking, what are you doing with your mind? Now if you see that you forgot, then go back and start over again. You're sitting down and you stand up and you forgot that you were supposed to be with your loving-kindness, then sit down again and start over again, that's all. You catch yourself reaching for a doorknob, and not thinking about it, and you go: "Oh, I wasn't radiating loving-kindness.", and then close the door, and do it over again. This is a process of do it again, and again, and again, until you get into the habit of radiating love and happy feelings.

TT: 45:28

Now some of the wishes that some people would come to me and they'd ask me to send loving-kindness to somebody. This is to say : "What's their problem?"—"Well, they're going through a real rough time right now, and their mind is not very centered." So what do I wish, and send to them? A happy, centered, balanced, accepting mind. Do you know what that feels like? Put that feeling in your heart, surround that person with that, radiate that feeling.

One of the true disservices that the commentaries made was saying you must make four wishes, and repeat those four wishes over and over and over again. That impersonalizes it, and it turns into a mantra, and you start thinking about something else while you're just surface saying it, and it's hard to make a lot of progress when you're doing that. So when you make a wish that's relevant: "Ah, my friend is real restless right now, so I'm going to radiate peace and calm." Doing that, you're helping yourself, because you can't give something to somebody else if you don't have it, so you need to have that feeling, and then when you give that feeling away, you're practicing your generosity, which is the next part of this particular sutta.

A lot of people have the idea that generosity only means material things. Generosity is a lot bigger than that. You give kind speech when you make somebody happy. You say things that are very kind

and gentle. You practice loving-kindness with your action. Somebody's car died and they need a push. So you help them. And you practice loving-kindness with your mind. But all of these are different forms of giving, and the more fun you have and realize: "Oh, this is great fun to give", the more uplifted your mind becomes. The happier your mind becomes. When you have the time and you start getting good at that, then just planning to say something nice to somebody else makes your mind happy. And while you're doing it, of course you're happy. After doing it, you'll reflect on that: "Wow, this is great stuff." Now all of that means you have an uplifted mind, doesn't it? All of that leads to more and more joy. So the more things that you can say that are uplifting, the more things you can do to help other people overcome their suffering, in whatever way. I'm not talking just about just on retreat, I'm talking about all the time. It helps your practice.

You want to change the world around you? Practice your generosity. Practice putting that smile on your lips and giving it to everybody you see.

Something that's really interesting now, when I go into town, and help Khema with going to the store or whatever, I'm walking around and I have a little kind of pixie-grin on my face, I'm not really not paying much attention, but it's there, and I'm catching people smiling back. "Wow!" See, I have no idea how long it's taken for this to happen. But people are generally much kinder and nicer in town than they used to be, and it's kind of fun. You know, I look forward to going to town because I'm starting to have friends there now. Whether I talk to these friends or not doesn't really matter. They're still friends.

TT: 50:03

So the practice of generosity is absolutely a necessary part of meditation. See when the Buddha taught meditation, he didn't say: "You gotta sit." He said there's three parts to the meditation. You gotta practice your generosity. You have to practice keeping the precepts. And of course there's always somebody that will say: "Ok,

ok, I'll keep the precepts. How long do I have to do that?" And my answer is generally: "We'll start at a hundred years and go beyond that." But the thing with the precepts is if you happen to break a precept, you can't come down on yourself. Remember, that's unwholesome. You forgive yourself for making a mistake. Take the precepts again, with the determination I'm not going to break them again. That's the next part of the practice of loving-kindness the Buddha was talking about.

Now there's a practice that monks can do, in practicing generosity. And that is a certain kind of material generosity. What kind of material generosity do monks have? They go out on almsround and collect food. Now this is a practice that has to happen every day for twelve years, without a break. And the catch is, you can't reflect with remorse that you gave food to this monk or that monk. Sometimes monks can be real different. And you can start resenting the fact that you gave this clown some food. Now if you hold one thought of that, you don't gain any benefit.

Now the way you do it is you tell the abbot: "I'm going to be practicing this kind of generosity. And the abbot will generally go around to the different people that are giving food and let them know that you might see me come around collecting more than one time. It's not because I'm going to fill my stomach, it's because he's trying to fill everybody else's stomach.

So you go around and you collect the food and you come in and you go to the abbot, and you let him take whatever he wants. And then you go to the next senior monk, and let him take whatever he wants, and then you go to the next monk, however many monks there are. Only then can you sit down and eat. Now, you go out, you say: "I ran out of food, I'll be back in a little while." You go out on almsround, you start at the abbot again because this is different food, and there might be something that he wants there, and then the next senior monk, and it always goes by seniority. And doing this for twelve years without a break, and without any remorse, where ever you go, there's always going to be food in your bowl. When it's time to eat, food will be there. Doesn't matter if you're in the middle of the

ocean, and there's nobody else around, you're on a boat or by yourself. When it's time to eat, there will be food in your bowl.

Now there's a story that there was a monk that practiced this during the time of the Buddha. And the Buddha decided he wanted to go through the forest, and Sāriputta said: "Well, if we go right now, that means we're not going to get to go on our almsround." And the Buddha said: "That doesn't matter." So they walked into the forest, and it got to be time to eat, and the Buddha called this one monk forward and he said: "Walk in front of me for a little ways, and then stop, and open up your bowl, and we'll all get our food." And supposedly there was five hundred arahats. You know, there's always five hundred. And he fed everybody and still had food left over.

So practicing your generosity in that way, it's a hard practice, because there's monks that are coming through all the time that, they do very peculiar things, and it's hard to have a lot of respect, so you have to develop this mind that says it doesn't matter; he's a monk; he's a member of the sangha; I'm giving to the sangha. And of course there's always that one commentary that tells about the guy on the last day of his eleven year, three hundred and sixty three days, that the monk fed everybody and then he put his food aside and he went and took a bath, and he came back and somebody saw his food and ate it all and he had remorse and he never did get the benefit of that. (laughs) So, I don't know whether that's really for real or not, but it's a great story. (laughs)

TT: 55:27

But the last part of these six different things that the Buddha said that are conducive for peace and calm and unity for everyone, is developing your wisdom. And always when it's talking about wisdom in the suttas, it is talking about seeing, understanding, and realizing the Four Noble Truths and dependent origination. When you see how dependent origination actually arises, your mind becomes very, very clear and bright, and open, and alert, and you start seeing it in every little thing that arises, you lose that attachment to a self, that we have cultivated for a few million lifetimes or more. It's a really deeply

ingrained habitual tendency that we have. We get caught up in our concepts, and our opinions, and our ideas of the way we think things are, and all of a sudden, I'm there protecting that, and that turns into a real problem. And again that's what Sāriputta, he had two weeks of watching dependent origination and how it all worked, and then he was really fascinated by it, but he hadn't become an arahat yet, and he was fanning the Buddha, as the Buddha was giving a Dhamma talk, and he realized that the Buddha is not even attached to the Dhamma. And with that realization, he let go of that "I need to know, I need to understand" and just let the Dhamma flow through, and he became an arahat. So we have to let go of the way we think things are supposed to be, and just see the way the things really are, and that is how dependent origination is, and how works. Now each link of the dependent origination, is the first Noble Truth, and there's a cause for that, and there's the cessation of that, and there's the way leading to the cessation of that. So you start out at death. What's the cause of death? Birth. And, how do you let go of death? In each one of those Four Noble Truths there is slight amount of craving, to be. Subtle like you can't believe, and when you relax and allow the ageing and death to be, then there is the cessation of the attachment of ageing and death. The way to do it? Relax. Every time you relax, you're experiencing the entire eight fold path. Every time you relax, you're letting go of that tension and tightness, and there is clear, pure mind. And it goes backwards: birth, and the habitual tendency, and the clinging and then the craving... they're all interconnected that way. Now when you go from birth, all the way down to the formations, and you relax into the formations, you will experience nibanna at that time. That's the way it works. That's the way it says it works. That's the way it actually does work.

TT: 59:40

So, developing your wisdom, means letting go of all the taints, letting go of all of the little tiny colors that we paint and identify with. Relaxing into all of it, and letting it be. The more you relax, the more clear your mind becomes. The more pure your mind becomes. Pure from what? Pure from ageing and death. And you only have to do that a few million times to develop the habit. But it all gets easier and

easier as you train yourself and let go of: "I know it's this way". You have to let go of all the concepts. You don't know what's going to happen next. You don't know how it's going to happen. But, the loving acceptance of the present moment allows you the space to see how mind's attention actually does arise. And as you see it over and over again, you become more and more familiar with it, and just like everything, the more practice you have with it the better you get at it.

There was a, a Burmese girl, that, her mother was teaching her how to take these rice things and roll them in a particular way, and she came to the monastery, and she looked beat. She'd stayed up all night, learning how to roll these things, and it took her eight or nine hours to do it. Of course, her mother could do it in about twenty minutes. But her mother had practiced enough. It didn't take any time at all, but she was tearing the rice thing and she'd have to make another one, and she... and it took her a long time to figure it out. But a few years later it didn't take her near as long because she started to get used to it, she started to get good at it because of the practice she had. This is the same way only it happens faster, you don't have to use years. You've developed your hindrances all over your whole life; you don't have to use the rest of your life to overcome the hindrances. This is the fast track, to be able to let go of the hindrances reasonably easily as you recognize how the process works and you stop identifying with whatever arises.

Ok, I've been talking for a long time. It's a real interesting phenomenon, one of the reasons my throat gets... I get phlegm in my throat is I don't talk much all day. When I come and I talk for an hour and a half or two hours (laughs) without break I mean... (laughs). Interesting stuff.

Can't have fun when you have an adverse mind. Have fun. How many meditations teachers have you ever heard say that? (laughs). It's ok to have fun to smile and be happy? If you're going to be serious, be seriously happy.

It's kind of an interesting thing, when I was in Malaysia, I got invited to be at one of the biggest monasteries in all of Malaysia, the biggest one in Kuala Lumpur. And the head monk there was incredibly famous, and he didn't tell me, that the reason that he invited me was he wanted to listen to my Dhamma talks, and he wanted to learn how to meditate. Now I was giving meditation classes every night, at some place. He was always going with me, and he would sit outside the room and listen, and it never dawned on me that I was teaching him.

Every morning, I would go down to see him, after breakfast about, oh, right around nine o'clock, and we became little children. Giggling and laughing at who knows what? And we did that for about a half an hour, every day. I really got to look forward to it, because it was so much fun. And, as I was getting ready to leave, and I made my final respects to him, he said that that was one of the things that he was going to miss most about me, was our little get together every morning, and playing and giggling and laughing. It's a great way to start the day. There is Dhamma, while we're eating the lunch too.

TT: 1:05:24

We have a lot of people come here that have done retreats at other places and they complain because there's too much talking. But if you can't keep your mindfulness while you're talking, what's the sense in practice?

Anyway... why don't we share some merit?

May suffering ones, be suffering free  
And the fear struck, fearless be  
May the grieving shed all grief  
And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired  
For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth  
Devas and nagas of mighty power

Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Lord Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

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