

# Reflections on the Karaniya mettā sutta discourse 3

(Transcribed from the translated talks given by ven. Kidagammulle Pemasiri Mahā Thera)



## The third discourse

So the first means of acquiring knowledge is by listening. In those days it was not by reading, but by listening. That was the way first to become acquainted with the Buddhas teaching and so on. And then, after that, one is expected to bear it in mind *dhāramī*... There was reading and writing but in the majority of cases it would be by listening, that one was exposed to the *Dhamma*... It is when we don't retain it in our minds, what has been heard, that we are not able to recall and, sort of, give a summary of the next day.

[ ...*Sakko, ujū ca sūjū ca, suvaco cassa mudu anantimānī*... ]

*Sakko, ujū ca sūjū ca*... all what we have discussed before with regard to *sīla*, has been said completely. If there is something more to be said, it would be with regard to the virtue pertaining to bodily action and speech... He (LH) would like us to reflect from what we have learned earlier about the four types of restraint and what is, sort of, relevant to the mind, in particular to the mind... So it is very important, that the *ājīva pārisuddha* that is purity of livelihood is established. That is what is... sort of ... the mind ... connected with the mind foremost, because he says, that sometimes it is possible to do, you know, a wholesome thing, but with the wrong intention, with wrong motivation - with cunning, with, sort of, a wish to perform or to show others what one is doing... That is... actually, this person is not deceiving others. He is deceiving himself, if he is doing it with the wrong motivation. This is, this aspect of purity of livelihood, what is connected with the mind. At times it is possible, that a monk may go on *pīnapāta*/alms round because he is displeased with the set up... Sometimes maybe because of some mental illness they will go... At times it has happened, that some monk, who got angry with the rest of the monks, said: "No, I don't want to eat here and I will go on alms round with my bowl." ... if purity of livelihood is properly done, undertaken, then this practice of alms round is taken with the idea that it helps us to attain *nibbāna*. Even for the householder it is this purity of livelihood, which.. which will have an important role... So even in the case of a householder, a lay person, who, say, is going for a job, government job, so he waits for his leave, his holiday to come and meditate: so there are other things he might be doing in that time, but he devotes, decides to devote his time, this holiday time, to practice, doing practice of meditation. So that is also this purity of livelihood...

## [ Sakko ]

Ven. Dhammarakkhita: “So the word *sakko* means, that the duties he has to perform very big or small, he has to be clever... in whatever he has to do... all the duties.

Komi: “Skilled?” Some people are skilled to do small jobs and they can’t do big jobs; some people can do big ... duties, big things and can’t do small things... So then one part is lacking... So then we have to clearly understand, what are the big duties and what are the small duties... As a yogi he must be able to do big things as well as small things in a clever manner... We are going to discuss in detail what are these big/deep things and small things... Some people think, that sweeping, cleaning, helping others, dying robes, preparing bowls, doing *Buddha-pūja* chanting – these things are small things and meditating/meditation, learning, giving advice to others for meditation, such things are big things... Some people... All these things are OK... Good... But Lord Buddha’s explanation, idea is a little bit different regarding this matter. Without the eight fold path we can’t go towards *nibbāna* for this eight fold path we ... we are introducing another word that is the *brahmacariya*: the word *brahmacariya* is also used for the eight-fold path. So in this, life, in this yogi life, there are eight things, or eight steps. Eight things coming to become a practice... *Sammā ditthi*/right view... *Sammā samādhi*/right concentration... yes, yesterday we talked about what we should do and should not do... Also *attha kusala* and *anattha kusala*... that is: what we have to do and not to do... And all these things we talked with virtue, with *sīla*... Now the eight fold path starts with right view, for the eight fold path right view means the knowledge about *dukkha*, *samudaya*, *nirodha*, *magga* or the suffering, cause, cessation and the way leading to the cessation of suffering. Whatever... when one is practicing this eight fold path, minor jobs or big jobs or whatever you are doing: when you are performing the jobs the eight fold path should be developed within that action, even a blinking of an eye, or even sweeping... Whatever small thing or big thing – that should be used to develop the eight fold path. For a yogi even in a blinking he sees *dukkha* and cause of *dukkha* or suffering and cause of suffering. Even in a word, he expresses, within that word he realizes one of these four: *dukkha* or cause of *dukkha* or cessation or path, one of these four things he can realize through even... from one word... So he has to be clever to work within the eight fold path, whatever he is doing he is always within the eightfold path... within the *dukkha* and *samudaya* ; probably... When a yogi is doing sweeping, preaching, dying robes, preparing bowls, or offering *dāna*, or listening or accepting *dāna*, or eating *dāna*, teaching, studying, giving meditation instruction – whatever thing he is doing, he has to have understanding about the four noble truths, at least two noble truths: *dukkha* or cause of *dukkha*, that means he is always within the eight fold path. So our level is very much lesser/insufficient than the level *Karaṇīya mettā sutta* (Sn 1.8 & Khp 9) expects it to be. It is we are in the garden (?)... So in deep meaning *sakko* means clever in the eight fold path, or the noble four truths, but in superficial way also clever in all the activities, in performing all the duties - he has to be clever in that duties. These explanations are available in the *Vibhanga prakarana* [?] a in *Abhidhamma pitaka*; there is another book called *Nittika karana* [?], in that book also... All the *gāthas* (in *Dhammapada*) contain some of the four noble truths, some *gāthas* contain one noble truth, some two noble truths, some all four... Now when we consider this *gātha*: “*Appamādo amatapadam pamādo maccuno padam ...*” (the first stanza in *Pamāda vagga*, Dh 23) This *gātha* has all these four noble truths... This *gātha*, this: “*Mano pubbangamā dhammā...*” That is the very first *gātha* (of *Dhammapada*, Dh 1), it explains the second noble truth. When a bhikkhu is preaching *Dhamma* on this



*gātha*, he has to realize this second noble truth properly. Some *gāthas* explain only about the noble eight fold path... This word *sakko* explains the fourth noble truth - the noble eight fold path. *Sakko* means normally 'clever one'... sometimes, some other *gāthas* explain the three characteristics *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā* and some other *gāthas* mainly explain the four noble truths, sometimes four, sometimes two, etc... So all, all the *gāthas* explain the fourth noble truth or the first noble truth, or the second noble truth, that way... The third noble truth... etc. ... If one understands one *gātha* properly, he understands the four noble truths... This is for the *Dhamma*-preachers: when they finish *Dhamma*-preaching, either one noble truth or two noble truths and so on, he has to finish his *Dhamma*-discourse with. Nowadays people praise some *Dhamma*-preaching's, but although these preaching's are very pleasant to listen to, none of the four noble truths may be included there. People, who know, who know *Dhamma*, they listen to very small part of the preaching, not the whole thing... Even if the *Dhamma*-preaching satisfied one, at the end of the preaching, but one forgot all the preaching after the finish of the *Dhamma*-talk, then that *Dhamma*-preaching was not correct. But after listening to the *Dhamma*, if the listener gets thoughts about that, thinks about that, then that *Dhamma*-preaching was successful. Through this *Dhamma*-preaching if the listener can get at least a small thing to adjust his life, then this *Dhamma*-preaching is successful. That means, that in that *Dhamma*-preaching there was something explained about noble truths. That means, if there is an influence to the listener, that means, he has listened properly also. So he practices to some extent according to the listening, what he listened to. So that's why it is said, that preaching and listening is also important or even essential to develop for the developing the path. At the beginning of the eight fold path this *sakko* or this kind of cleverness is essential. Sometimes in very small things he can grasp all the four noble truths and sometimes about very big jobs or things only one or two noble truths are available there. So in this *Karaniya mettā sutta* Lord Buddha explained this idea, this word explains this idea. Even if we go for *dāna* or we sweep, or we clean the toilet. Whatever we are doing, we have to have an understanding about the four noble truths, one of the ... and so on. At least one noble truth we have to identify in our jobs. If one is living in the *aranas*, then it is easy to understand these things. But here yogis are living a very comfortable life, luxurious life, so for them it is not easy to understand the four noble truths. This center is good for well-experienced yogis to practice further, but not for the beginners. Unlike *aranas* this center is not strong[harsh] enough to realize the four noble truths. Anyway meditation here is not developed properly according to the *Karaniya mettā sutta*: if it's in a proper way, then it is like a person who has fire on his head: also as an example when there is a dry forest, even a very small fire can make a very big fast raging inferno, same way if yogis are very well they have to work very... with much more energy than now.

Now, forest fire sometimes spreads very very quickly. Sometimes, because of a cigarette, one can create a forest fire. So, LH also knows about this thing: in an area called 'Blue mountain', when he was living there, somebody explained to him that young people come here and they use these cigarettes and because of them big forest fires come up. Some people are purposely doing forest fires.

When one realizes the meditation properly, he is also like this forest fire, his development is very fast. Night and day he meditates. He is very fast, his development is very fast.

[ Ujū ca ]

Now we are going to talk about *ujū ca*. *Ujū* here means, here has two meanings: in general context we say *ujū* means honest and straightforward. But when we look at the deep meaning, it means all the components of the noble eight fold path, work in harmony, in balance, that is the real meaning of the *ujū* or straight. Whatever he does, says or things – all these things are included in the noble eight fold path. All his physical and vocal actions are very straightforward, not crooked, no any kind of crookedness in the life. Talk, when he is talking or his physical action – all these things are directed towards nibbāna, no any kind of dishonesty or crookedness: This crookedness - there are two similes... Loku Hāmuduru explained them earlier... One simile is like... moon... some days... aah: a crescent moon... one should not be like a crescent moon. And the other one is like the crookedness of a plough. So all these kinds of crookednesses are not there when one has this *ujū*, *ujū ca*... Yes, all ... all these things are very much connected to each other: *sīla* and this cleverness *sakko* and this *ujū*... straight or honest.

### [ *Sūjū ca* ]

Next *sūjū ca*, more honest, or more straightforward or more... Now all his activities are very much within the noble eight fold path: *sakko* means a person... when we are talking about these qualities... these things may be with *jhānas*, when one possesses *jhānas*, he has these three qualities: *sakko*, *ujū ca*, *sūjū ca*. When he is a *sūjū ca*, that means he is very very close to *nibbāna*. So the reality is much more different then we think. Even in normal situation, normal worldly conditions, also these things have their own practical aspect, even an average person should be a clever one in day to day affairs and a straightforward one and a honest one. When LH was at ‘Blue mountain’ ten people came to meditate for ten days, so one person was appointed to do all the jobs in the center. So one person is appointed to do the cooking, and treating others, washing, cleaning, all these things; one person does. And he also meditates for five hours. Next day another person... That way... So that everybody gets nine days... nine days everybody can meditate very properly. After ten days, then the next group of ten people comes to meditate, these ten days also the same way as before. So it is a very good method. Here some yogis are very careless, sometimes they don’t clean anything, they put spoons into the dustbin also. We see the yogis are not developed up to the level of this meditation center: so if he is a *sakko* – if he is a clever one – he doesn’t do such kind of mistakes. But these things are not easy to correct.

### [ *Suvaco* ]

Now *suvaca*... *Suvaca* means ‘obedient, very obedient’: this obedience is always with good qualities, he is obedient to develop good qualities: he doesn’t agree with unwholesome things. Although he is obedient he never agrees with unwholesome performances: because he has achieved a good knowledge about the eight fold path and the four noble truths. So his obedience always tends to develop the noble eight fold path, not otherwise, not opposed to the eight fold path. So true obedience here means that he is always obedient to develop the noble eight fold path and not obedient to harm or go otherwise off the noble eight fold path. He cannot be misused by others: for them it is not possible to give any wrong view to his head... Yes, so for unwholesome aspect he is not obedient... Yes... and this *suvaca* person is able to associate with anybody else also, anybody else can associate with *suvaca* one... Young or old... anybody. Sometimes somebody might think he is like a small child, because



his thinking and work is very simple, so other people think: “This person can be used for our work, our jobs.” Or think to misuse him, but it is not so – it is not possible to use him for bad things. So that is the nature of *suva*. It is also not possible for others to deceive him, but other people may think he has been deceived, but it is not possible to deceive him – yes, other people may think: “He is been cheated.” But it is not so. One who is going to cheat him, is the one who is cheated, that is the nature of *suva* one or the obedient one.

### [ **Mudu** ]

Next good quality *mudu* means ‘soft’... Is soft... All these qualities come up because of the practice of the noble eightfold path. Good qualities arise because of the practice of the noble eight fold path. If one is not engaging the noble eightfold path properly, all these qualities are not within his mind or his life. Here softness means like the very high quality gold is possible to use for any work, for any kind of ornament, we can create or make from it, from the very high quality gold. This *mudu* or softness is also like that. His physical actions and vocal actions and mental actions – all these actions are very soft/gentle/mild... Yes, all this softness comes up because of the noble eight fold path. There are two names for the *Buddha Thāma* and *Thāmavara*, because *Lord Buddha* is a very soft one, even a small child can associate with *Sammā Sambuddha* and very great people also can associate with *Sammā Sambuddha*. If one becomes... this soft one when, at certain point, he becomes hard, so it is very difficult to change the situation. After that point even if hundreds and thousands of people want to change him, it is not easy to change him. This is the nature of the soft one: this *Ālavaka's* story, *Ālavaka sutta* ( *Sagātha Vagga*, 10 - *Yakkha Samyutta* #12: SN 10.1.12 or SN X.12; and Sn 1.10) explains this: [What follows here is an almost word-by-word citation from the sutta itself]

At one time the auspicious one was dwelling near *Ālavī* in the domicile of the yakkha *Ālavaka*, then the yakkha *Ālavaka* approached the auspicious one and after approaching he said to the auspicious one: “Get out, ascetic!” “Yes, friend.” Said the auspicious one and he got out. “Go in, ascetic!” “Yes, friend.” Said the auspicious one and he went in. For a second time the yakkha *Ālavaka* said this to the auspicious one: “Get out, ascetic!” “Yes, friend.” Said the auspicious one and he got out. “Go in, ascetic!” “Yes, friend.” Said the auspicious one and he went in. For the third time the yakkha *Ālavaka* said this to the auspicious one: “Get out, ascetic!” “Yes, friend.” Said the auspicious one and he got out. “Go in, ascetic!” “Yes, friend.” Said the auspicious one and he went in. For a fourth time the yakkha *Ālavaka* said this to the auspicious one: “Get out, ascetic!” “I certainly will not get out, friend, so please do whatever it is you must do.” “I will ask you a question, ascetic, and if you do not answer me, I will over through your mind or split your heart or seize you by the feet and throw you across the river.” “I certainly do not see, friend, in the world with it’s gods, *Māra* and *Brahma*, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins and princes and men, anyone, who could overthrow my mind or split my mind or seize me by the feet and throw me across the river. Still you may ask what you want, friend.” Then the yakkha *Ālavaka* recited a verse to the auspicious one: “What is the greatest wealth for a person here, what, when accomplished, brings about happiness, what for sure is the sweetest of tastes, living what life, do they say, is the greatest?” “Confidence is a person’s greatest wealth here, the *Dhamma*, when accomplished, brings about happiness, truth, for sure, is the sweetest of tastes, living a wise live, they say, is the greatest.” “How does one cross over the flood? How does one cross over the

sea? How does one overcome suffering? How does one become purified?” “Through confidence one crosses the flood, through heedfulness one crosses the sea, through energy one overcomes suffering, and through wisdom one is purified.” “How is it, one attains to wisdom? How is it one finds true wealth? How does one acquire good repute? How does one bind friends to oneself? How, after passing from this world to the next world, does one not grief?” “Confident in the worthy one, a worthy ones Dhamma taught for the attaining nibbāna... one gains wisdom through actually wanting to hear it, heedfulness...”

(LH): Read it later!

If this 'soft one' becomes hardened at a time, so after that it is very difficult to make him again soft. So, to melt or to soften this one, other should be soft. Then this one is possible to make soft again. Aah.. This softness is not possible for others to misuse, but that doesn't ... If anybody else asks to do some work, he will do it. But he won't do everything according to others wish. No, when we ask to do something, he will do it, but if we think, that: “I am going to use this person for my job.” If that one understands this thing, then after that he won't work. So after that others can't use, can't get any help from him. So this is the meaning here: Soft, softness. Now according to the *Ālavaka sutta*, Lord Buddha was very flexible to the world of Ālavaka three times, but the fourth time Lord Buddha said, you or anybody else cannot shake me... Yes, Ālavaka said (to himself) before: “I can make him tired this way: asking ‘come in, come out’ and so on... That way I can make this ascetic tired.” But after the third time Lord Buddha said: “OK, do you whatever you can do, but I don't see anybody else in the world who can shake me.” This softness comes up because of the noble eight-fold path, but he understands, that anybody else is going to misuse his softness, and then he is not soft any more. Afterwards others can't get any use from him or his knowledge of the noble eight fold path and so on...

### [ **Anatimānī** ]

So when he comes to this level, he is quite a mature one in the noble eightfold path: then the next quality is *anatimānī*. *Anatimānī* means humbleness. Here humble means not poor, not weak people; not helpless, poor. Such people are not counted under this *anatimānī*, or humble here. Humble here has a different meaning. There are helpless people in the world, like beggars... At the tsunami time many people became helpless people. In that group there are innocent people, there is a slight difference in between an innocent one and a helpless one. Sometimes this innocent one has wealth, he could even fight with others and he could do whatever he likes. But he is the innocent one that is he doesn't do any of these things - such person we call an innocent person. But this *anatimānī*, the humble one, is not included in either of these. None of them are humble ones, but these innocent ones and helpless ones can get a lot of benefit from the humble one: even a king can get a lot of benefit from this humble one: even a beggar or a king – anybody, can get help or benefits from the humble one. Same as, the earlier one, that soft one, same way this humble one is also not possible to be misused by others. No conceit... Humble means no conceit. There are three kinds of conceit: *māna*, *adhimāna* and *atimāna*. *Māna* means conceit. *Adhimāna* means...great conceit [this is an *upakkilesa*], *Atimāna* means very high conceit... more conceit [superiority complex]. These *adhimāna* and *atimāna*... :- ( ...this *adhimāna* can come only to a meditator, good meditator, not a bad meditator,



only to a good meditator *adhimāna* can come... These yogis here, they don't get *adhimāna*... [everybody starts laughing].

George: „If you don't go into water, you can't drawn.“

LH: „That's a good one.

Ven. Dhammarakkhita: „*Adhimāna* means big *māna*.“

Komi: „Like we are a little bit better than others because we have left our homes and whatever, and come here to meditate... You think so, what? ...

... And others are also the same... *Adhimāna* ... *adhimāna* comes only to very good meditators. If they reach at least up to *sankhārā upekkhā ñāna* level, then they start to see, you know, other people: „Oh, poor people, they don't understand anything.“ And also the quality of *adhimāna* is that he tries to explain *Dhamma* to the others, and one who is participating in meditation courses continually, he also can get this kind of *adhimāna*: some people are saying: „Aiyoo, what are these people doing? They are just sweeping, preaching... doing unnecessary things.“ When one is saying these words, Loku Hāmuduru understands he has *adhimāna*, kind of *adhimāna*. So these things happen to good meditators only. All these good yogis get this state, get these kind of things as George said: „If one doesn't jump into the water, he won't sink ever.“ After overcoming *adhimāna* and all other types of *māna*, he can become a humble one, be a humble one. Then with situation we call this *anātimānika*... *Suvaco cassa, mudu, anātimānī*... *anātimānī* is that. The real meditator or the real yogi is a very very strange person. For this particular yogi he knows many things are happening outside in the world, but because of this outside happenings, nothing builds up within him... There are various types of yogis: When we think about a good yogi, when he goes to the dining hall, if there are not enough plates and other things, he silently brings the plates and keep suitable place, and he does all the work without uttering a word, without showing anything artificial. But there are other yogis also, when they see this kind of thing, they think: „Oh, there are not enough plates, these people they don't keep these things, nobody is looking after these.“ Like that, he is doing something artificial: so then we can understand, this yogi is not developed enough and other one is a developed yogi. In a good yogi everything happens in a kind, silent manner. But he has done everything, because he has that base – all that we talked about before: *Sakko, ujū ca sūjū ca*... And so on. Because of this outside happenings doesn't have any influence to his inner development. This is the nature of *anātimānī* or humble one. I (LH) explain these things because we all are meditators.

*Transcribed and edited by: David Young*