

2020-11-08 Buddha's Six Principles of Love and Concord

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SPEAKERS

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So, greetings from our Sunday morning in California, and welcome to the Dharma talk. And I would like to read a passage from the Middle Length Discourses, the discourse 48. And I debated not telling you where it was from, and just reading it, that passage. And maybe, if we could have asked you to guess, if you didn't know the context of the passage, what is this about? But I'll read you the passage.

They 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. So maybe you can think of occasions where this has been the case. Maybe for those in the United States, we can think of maybe very recent events or even current events, where this is still going on. And this passage opens up a discourse called Kosambiya - the Kosambians Sutta, where at a time when the the monastic followers of the Buddha were in dispute. Sometimes we idealize both the Buddha and his early monastics and have this idea that Buddha was just was infinitely wise and compassionate. And if we could, you know, whatever he says, you know, people would just be enlightened and be well behaved. And, however, that wasn't the case in the ancient world, and certainly he was an effective teacher. But not everyone got the message from him, that what he was trying to teach. And so sometimes, his monastics were not, we're kind of behaved poorly. And and here is one occasion there was a dispute over a monastic who may or may not have violated a monastic rule. And those who thought he did, we're arguing against those who thought he did not. And those who thought that he did not argued with verbal daggers against those who thought he did. And they could not convince each other, it could back and forth. They were kind of, we're stuck with each other. And so as was the occasion, someone would go to the Buddha and explained what was going on. And he called them for a meeting. And he asked them, is it true that you are that you're doing this? Is it true that you are quarreling and brawling deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers? And that you can't persuade each other? And

the Buddha? And the monk said, Yes. What I like about this is that the Buddha heard his story about what was going on, the disputes conflicts going on in his community. And the first thing he does is to ask the parties to come and he asked them what's this? What's happening? Giving them a chance to explain differently and find out for himself what was actually happening and not prejudging maybe the situation but waiting for the, you know, to hear from them, the parties. But as it was, the party said, Yes. They were, in fact doing all those things. And so the Buddha then said to them, when you take to quarreling 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 in mind, in public and in private, towards your companions in the holy life? And so, when you're arguing with each other, are you being kind and you have goodwill for each other? And the monastics maybe being honest people and direct people, they said, No, we're arguing there's no goodwill in our hearts towards the others. And then he goes, Buddha goes on to say, when you're that way, quarreling and brawling and in disputes stabbing each other with verbal daggers. What can you possibly know? What can you see? That you take to quarreling and brawling and are deep in disputes? So what is it that, you know, that makes it worthwhile, they're appropriate? What do you see, that gives reason really to be this way.

And and the Buddha says, in doing so, you lead and doings arguing, and you lead to your harm your own harm, and suffering for a long time. So he's kind of rhetorically saying, you know, what could you possibly believe that makes us appropriate to be having verbal daggers at each other and, and if you continue this way, without any loving kindness, you're, you're hurting yourself.

So it's kind of interesting, he points it back to them as individuals, he doesn't say you're hurting other people. And you shouldn't do that. Maybe he evokes something that's very personal. Maybe no one wants to hurt themselves. And so by evoking that's where he's going, then it's not an obligation to be kind and compassionate is not shaming them, that they're treating other people differently. He's in a sense, reminding them, you know, you're you're harming yourself, and maybe for a long time to continue this way. And so, continuing from this passage in the Middle Length Discourse, the discourse number 48. The Buddha goes on and says, there are these six principles of cordiality of friendliness, that this is what this passage next passage I really like. And I want to emphasize it. So six principles of cordiality that create love and respect and conduce, to cohesion, to non dispute, to concord, and to unity. So here we see the Buddha emphasizing values that he puts great value very great emphasis on that social values of love and respect. We love each other and respect each other. The word for love is piya, and some I don't know if it has a little different feeling than the English word love is so broad and vague and meaning sometimes. But and then respect and to love and respect each other. That's a social value of the Buddha puts in his teachings to his followers, his practitioners and into and the idea of cohesion, kind of togetherness, to non dispute, to concord and to unity. So this idea of concord and unity is extremely important for the Buddha. And one of the principles of right speech is to speak what brings unity brings, brings concord to a community. The idea of speaking in ways that's divisive, is considered unwholesome and Buddhism is harmful to oneself to do that, and to others. So then he's going to list the six principles of cordiality the six principles that are conducive to love

respect, non dispute, unity. And the first three I'll, I'll abbreviate because they're almost the same thing. One has to do with acts of body kind of what we do in the world physically, the other has to do with verbal acts, and the third has to do with mental acts, how we think and what goes on inside our minds towards others. Here, a person maintains bodily acts of loving kindness or goodwill, some people prefer the translation here. One maintains bodily acts of goodwill, both in public and in private, towards one's companions in the holy life. He's talking to monastics so he's talking about how to take care of your own community. This is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect and conduces. To cohesion to non dispute to conquered and to unity. And then he says the same thing for verbal acts of goodwill loving kindness and Then mental acts of loving kindness or goodwill. So the idea that one would did the privacy of one's own mind what we do there is consequential that the Buddha doesn't think it's only about what you're saying you do. But we really want to transform or appropriately evoke, or generate with inside of our side ourselves, goodwill towards others.

And the art of it is discover how to do it in a genuine way. And for some people, it's only after we really recognize our suffering, how we're hurt, or afraid, or angry, and really learn how to be present for it and see it, that we can somehow begin to break the, the frozen places inside the stuck places inside. So we can begin seeing or viewing others in ways that our goodwill can can flow outwards. And so, but to begin by having goodwill to our own place of anger and hurt, and Anyways, we're stuck not to, you know, make it worse by second arrows that we put on ourselves. And then Buddha says, To do that, both publicly and privately. And what privately I think means here is in ways that other people don't, don't know you're doing it. So if you're doing acts of loving kindness of goodwill, both into you know, physical acts in the world doing actually something or saying something, or thinking about people picking away, they might not have to know it, that you're doing it, perhaps you do it, you know, anonymously, or you speak about them or do something good for them in a time that they don't recognize it, that you're doing it and then maybe they never know, maybe in your home, you you know, you do the dishes when they're dirty in the sink, and no one ever knows you do it, you don't get any credit for it. But in fact, you're supporting whoever's in your house, if that's the case, or, or private acts of loving kindness might be if you're driving, and maybe you drive in a way that is very respectful and makes room for the drivers. And they're not really recognizing that you're not tailgating or then recognize that you have given them the right of way or that you're driving, you know, just you know, supportively for others. But in your mind, you're doing it privately, you're just supporting others your goodwill, your generosity is going out towards. So this idea of practicing loving kindness for some people, when you don't get any credit for it is, you know, so it's hard for some people, you know, but in fact, we get a lot of credit in our hearts in ourselves. And it makes a difference, we're beginning to transform ourselves through acts of goodwill. And one of the ways that transformational power of goodwill or love and these principles are cordiality, is that it's beginning to shift, the locus of attention, the locus of our life energy, from things which are unwholesome and harmful and painful, that kind of debilitate us or bring us down to the things that uplift us and move us in the path to freedom. And that that's a such an important shift in this practice, and to take the time, and the challenging time sometimes to discover how to have a genuine goodwill, genuine caring for others generosity of spirit to

others. That doesn't feel like a burden doesn't feel like an obligation, doesn't feel forced or artificial, to spend the time to learn that maybe in very small steps, the smallest steps possible, just that we're moving in that direction begin to awaken this possibility within us. So, this is three of the principles of cordiality the Buddha emphasized that lead to love and respect then unity and non dispute now that the fourth one I think it's also maybe somewhat understandable how this works. A person a person uses things in common people use the things in common with their virtuous companions in the holy life. That is, one doesn't hold on to just my stuff that's just you know, my my things that and, but rather we share with others. In here it's with companions and the holy life and the question is who our companions may be. People we live with our family or relatives or friends we know our community, our communities, maybe the whole world, a sense that of generosity and sharing and not holding to myself.

When I was 17, a formative experience for me was traveling around back then Yugoslavia and Greece, with four friends in a Volkswagen bug, that van Volkswagen van that only had the front seats, no back seats. So some of us are always sitting on the floor in the back. And, and we had very little money, I think, for the 43434 weeks in which I traveled with my friends we have maybe I had \$50 or so. And so we shared everything. There was no sense of, you know, mine and yours. And it was quite inspiring to whatever we had to share with our friends and get along and make our way sleeping in all kinds of places members, back then, a long time ago, we we slept in the park underneath the Acropolis, and sleeping outdoors. And probably it's impossible to do that now. And going over the dirt roads and passes over. I guess now it's What is it now? Anyways, back then Yugoslavia. And they say of sharing and you know that that was my formative experience that people can do this we can share, it was actually very hard to come back United States and experienced my friends not knowing how to do this not being inclined to do this at all. And it was kind of a little jarring for me as a teenager. And so the fourth act of cordiality. Baker uses things in common when monastics use things in common with one's virtuous companions in the holy life. Without making reservations, when shares with them, any gain of a kind that accords with a dumb has been attained in a way that accords with the Dhamma, including even the contents of their bowls, their begging bowls. So whatever gain whatever one has acquired, earned, in a just way, in an ethical way, and according to the dumb I hear. This too is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect and conduces to unity. And then it gets a little bit to know. The fifth one is they dwell both in public and in private possessing in common with their companions and the holy life. Those virtues that are unbroken unsworn unblanched unmodeled, liberating, commanded by the wise, not misapprehended and conducive to concentration. So here they're behaving virtuously, they're living an ethical life. And living an ethical life is conducive to love and respect and to unity. Living unethically is conducive to breaking unity to causing harm and separation and, and fracturing and rupturing relationships, we have something very inspiring to meet someone who has ethical integrity and feel like we're going to this person I can trust. Ah, yes, I can trust this person with with in all kinds of ways. And, and two things about this statement. It's the virtuous behavior that is liberating. So we don't often see virtue, ethics and liberation together in the same sentence. That's maybe they're not so separate from each other, they are quite intimately

connected, that the movement to being ethical is a movement to being free, spiritually free, heartfully free deliberation that the Buddhist emphasizes, and we see this because to be genuinely, in a relaxed way virtuous, means we have let go of being non virtuous, which is motivated by the opposite to liberation, motivated by ways in which we're caught up in greed, hate and delusion.

But then also very interesting is that this to being virtuous, it's that virtue which leads to concentration. And this is a high value in Buddhism to conduct your life in such a way that when you sit down to meditate, you can be settled. You don't sit with regrets resentments you don't sit with just feelings of shame or guilt or upset. You sit down and feel certain The ease and confidence. The Buddha even talked about a certain kind of happiness, the happiness of blamelessness, the happiness of being contented? No, I haven't caused any harm. It's a little bit hard sometimes, especially in, in western or hearing United States where a lot of people will feel guilty for no reason at all, they just feel like it's a policy of theirs to kind of inherited or have been acquired from society family, some idea of being inadequate and being wrong, they haven't really done anything but just an assumption, or a belief that that's the case. So then it's hard to feel the happiness of blameless ness, because we're to blame even though we haven't done anything, just breathing were somehow wrong. But it's a really deep look inside of ourselves and really recognize, you know, I, I haven't heard anybody today, at least for today, I can go to sleep content and happy that I haven't heard anyone, I've been careful with what I say and what I do. And the Buddha encourage this kind of contentment and happiness. And it doesn't have to be like your whole life. It, you know, let it be from now on. This tube is a principle of collegiality that creates love and respect, and conduces, to unity. And then to come to the sixth one, and this is an interesting one. And that's the heart of the Buddhist message of liberation. And they dwell both in public and in private, possessing in common with their companions and the holy life. That insight that is noble, and emancipating. That leaves one who practices in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering. This too, is a principle of cordiality that creates love and respect, and conduces, to cohesion to non dispute, to concord and to unity. So this idea that there's an insight, with a kind of mindfulness, insight meditation, we're coming to a direct experience direct seeing something about our life experience, what's going on here, that helps to release, the places were closed, holding on, clinging to something stuck, contracted, closed down. All that gets blown open, all that gets liberated and freed. And, and to have that insight, it liberating insight doesn't mean we're fully liberated. But that now we know how to keep opening how we keep opening, once we've let go and experienced some liberation, we know we have a taste for ever feel for it. And then they keep practicing and keep opening to that and, and realizing and more and more not because we have to or should. Because whenever when there's a genuine feeling of freedom of letting go of contraction clinging, there is not letting go an invitation a call I request. To to, to do it completely, to follow through on it. Don't let it be partial because the partial means we're still closed in some way. And the kind of the call or the request or the welcome, that is possible to feel from liberation itself. That liberation welcomes us beckons us, when they're the first kind of seed of liberation is strong enough. And to follow that beckoning to follow that yearning or that that kind of call is one of the great kind of tasks of life.

And in here, what we're seeing is that some people have said, some people feel that liberation is a personal goal of Buddhism, that though for each individual for themselves, they become liberated and free. That's selfish. You know, why would you do that? Just like you're abandoning people to do that. And really what we have to do is to be supportive other people and help the world and things like that. But here the Buddha offers it as one of the principles of cordiality that leads to the benefit for the world that leads to love and respect that leads to cohesion to non dispute to concord and to unity. There's an intimate connection to liberation and love and respect and care and, and to not wanting to be in dispute to wanting to move towards unity and, and support for others. That In fact, for the Buddha he considered taste goes on here in this text to say that are the six principles accordion ality The last one is the highest. And then he uses the idea of just like the pinnacle of a roof of a house is the highest point in the house. So this last one is the highest point that may be supported by all the others. That's why the metaphor of the house is so useful. All these other principles, cordiality, loving kindness and, and generosity and virtue are the support for the final one, the greatest one, which is liberation itself, and to live in liberation and to share that liberation with a community where there are people. This leads to lots of love, lots of respect, lots of movement towards unity, to connecting to breaking down the artificial and painful separations we have between people, to not be in dispute, but be in conversation and creative tension and finding a way together with all the different ways that people you know, have different points of view, we still have different points of view, but we don't have to be in dispute. So so love, respect, cohesion, non dispute, unity, concord. These are their principles, or the goal or the guiding lights of the teachings of the Buddha. And they're attain, they're realized, by practicing goodwill and loving kindness, by practicing and living with generosity, by being virtuous, the kind of virtue that really feels liberating and helps us to get concentrated. And to develop liberating insight, to have the mindfulness to sitting really helped us to see right down into the depths of our hearts, to that place where freedom is possible. And with that freedom, I'm confident that you will benefit the world. I don't think it's possible for someone who has attained some degree of letting go of their clinging to not benefit others, whether they want to or not. So may you reflect on these six principles of cordiality, and maybe practice them, both publicly and privately, especially privately, you might see what it's like to do these things, practice goodwill and generosity, without necessarily getting credit for it, but just doing it anyway. And see if there's some way that that can nourish you and support you and, and inspire you to greater and greater possibilities of love and respect and unity and concord. For this world of ours. Maybe put aside our verbal decors now and look for unity and non dispute and friendship with all beings.

Thank you.