

Reflections on the Karanīya mettā sutta discourse 2

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



The second discourse

So actually today he (LH) happened to switch the TV. It was by coincidence that the theme of the talk discussed by scholarly monks was this *Karanīya mettā sutta* (Sn 1.8 & Khp 9). And basically it was explaining what and how the qualities have to be developed. Before practicing meditation these, as outlined in the *Karanīya mettā sutta*, have to be developed. Some people come, sort of, with the idea of attaining nibbāna - that is their main goal; some come with other problems in their heads and then they, sort of, impose something on others, causing problems. He (LH) has recently encountered two such cases and had to take actions. In one case asking him to leave. Sometimes yogis that come don't seem to have any kind of idea of how to go about settling in the place. There might be shortcomings but their way of addressing the problems and talking to Loku Hāmuduru about it and solving these problems which they kind of become more agitated. They are not in position to take their practice further ... Try to maintain the *kuti* in best possible order... But then, in his (LH's) mind, when these yogis come and start complaining about all the facilities available to them in the *kuti*, then he (LH) has doubts about even the boys, that are working here and who are supposed to maintain the facilities. This all must be clarified and it is difficult to settle down to meditation afterwards. A degree of patience and kindness and so forth, these qualities have to be developed before we can, maybe, meditate. Some amount of suffering is also necessary for the meditator. We shouldn't, sort of, 'mollycoddle' them or spoil them... [Here Loku Hāmuduru asked about Stephan and if you check one upon another]... That is good, if you look one after another, find out how people are doing and share whether there is a class or there is not, and just share your information and look one after another. So, sort of, harmony is very delightful, is very comforting to monks and to those who are practicing. Another requirement is described like this: that when you are in a meditating community, you should regard one another with kindness and love, with concern for each other and there is a simile given: they should be like water and milk – mix together so close (blending with ease), very well. Sometimes we look at each other in an unkindly, uncaring way and, sort of, think of the faults: “This person has prevented me from meditating today.” Or something like that. But it is better to have concern and be caring in the very looks we give one another or ready to interact with each other..[*Pātimokkha samvara sīla*] Firstly about the rules of training pertaining

to restraint. There are four types of restraint. One *pātimokkha samvara sīla* – high ordination one, *indriya samvara sīla* – restraint of the faculties, then *ājīva pārisuddha* – purity of livelihood, is the third one. Wisely using the four requirements is the fourth one [*paccaya sannissita*], so for a monk with higher ordination there is no training that is left out. So whatever rules of restraint there are, they have to observe them in a way that it encompasses everything, every system of training and restraining oneself and the word *pātimokkha* means “arriving at nibbāna quickly”. There is a simile used by the Buddha in one of the suttas (in *Sutta Nipāta*). He says with regard to lay people, they are like peacocks, you know, with very colorful feathers. Colorful, beautiful – they might dance and attract other people and generally show off and it’s compared with lay people who are so busy with so many activities and what they get involved with. But the bhikkhu, recluse is compared to a swan, which is quite simple in appearance (being only white) but its speed is much higher. And the swan can also fly higher whereas the peacock can, sort of, at most jump from the high height of a tree. So on this spiritual journey monks and recluses are like the swans. Peacocks sort of get involved in fighting with snakes and surviving, sometimes they are beautiful, but they also have to struggle with, sort of life, experiences. The monk, he has, it seems, a better situation, there are no, sort of, problems with regards to family, parents, property, children.. ... and other distractions. So the path seems relatively clear. For the lay people there are more involvements in their lives, it’s not that they cannot progress, they can progress on the special way, but more slowly. So you have expressed the desire to ordain (to David), you can do so even for a couple of months and give up robes after that. So once again *pātimokkha* is, sort of, a path or a fast track to nibbāna. The *pātimokkha samvara sīla* is also referred to, sort of, as things like and uncountable or...

Komi asks: “ “kōtiyak” is a million Swāmin wahanse?” Ven. Dhammarakkhita: “Ten millions.”

“Kōtiyak” *samvara sīla* is also used – this phrase, which means, sort of, rules of restraint and this (kōtiyak), sort of, just gives you the scope of it. That practically every kind of restraint would fall under that category. It is something to be undertaken with faith and confidence. Without faith and confidence it would be difficult to follow this kind of thing. The more faith and confidence you have in the teaching the easier it is and the better it will proceed. The head monk of Malwatta chapter (*Nikāya*) by the name Dhammarakkhita, he had a big, like a forest group, temple (*arana*) in place called Maliande. So with a lot of faith and confidence this monk used to visit us in Kanduboda with all kinds of grains and corn and so on, with his assistants who would come by bus carrying all these things. As he comes he would generally ask for me (Loku Hāmuduru) or look for me. So, then he is a head monk of that *arana*, but he says to me: “Pemasiri, you are the one in charge of ringing the bell for these yogis, I want your job.” So Loku Hāmuduru would think, “Why does he want to wake up at three in the morning, walk all this way and ring the bell? Wouldn’t it be a problem for him?” So he (LH) said,: “You know you don’t have to do this.” And the monk replied “No, no, no, I want to do this, because whoever rings the bell, is the one, who summons everyone to meditation. They have to get up, wash their faces and make the effort to come to the hall and meditate, and I want all these merits of this type of wholesome action. And you do this every day, so why don’t you give me the chance, while I am here, to do the same thing and acquire the merits?” So he (Loku Hāmuduru) would be glad to give these. So while he, this guest monk, is around, this would be the one to ring the bell in the morning, afternoon, evening, etc. If he goes

out, usually on *pindapāta*, for alms, he would tell me: “I am going out. And probably I would be back by this time..., but in my absence, if the bell needs ringing, you would better do it,” early morning he would get up and go for his alms. Sometimes he would walk as far as Kelaniya and he would go on foot! Then there he would participate in the Buddha *pūja*, so he would have his *dāna* there and then come back on foot, and it might be evening by the time he returns.. So one day Loku Hāmuduru asks this guest monk why he was spending all his time walking in order to get to Kelaniya and come back when whole day is gone like that and what is the point of all this. “Just to go and keep the *pūja*, you can go by bus or you know some other way of getting there quickly.” And the reply was: “No,” and then he recited a *gātha* and explain that there is a certain type of merit that accrues to one, who walks on foot – not when he goes everywhere, but if one goes to do *pūja*, to see the Buddha, to give *dāna* – that kind of walking. So there is a special merit accruing to this type of devotion, to make offering to the Buddha going on foot... Compared to ... say this merit of taking one step towards the Buddha in this meritorious act.. to go and see the Buddha in some form, what would venerate the Buddha. It's worth more than giving a thousand of elephants, a thousand of horses, a thousand of vehicles and a thousand of young maidens that are decked in all their jewelry and finery. This is giving expression of his great devotion, faith and confidence in the Buddha. Because he explained it in this way: “I, I... every step I take, take me closer to the Buddha there. Place, where the Buddha himself was present and then I come back, I come back with him and go to my *kuti*.” So when he explained that - this, that every step he was with the Buddha - Loku Hāmuduru also got a lot faith and confidence arising in him. After that I (LH) would wait for this monk to come. After his trip to Kelaniya, I (LH) would make sure that I would make some drink for him. So also Loku Hāmuduru was in a habit of sort of venerating the *cetiyas*, but sitting in the shade so that he is protected from the harsh sunlight.

[... “He’s implying that it is not proper to do that – while venerating the Buddha to get advantage of the shade,” said ven. Dhammarakkhita. ...]

So it cut deeply into him and it went to his mind. Then sometimes he didn’t sort of look for the shade of the *cetiya*, he would go maybe to a shade of a tree of a house or of a building and do his meditation. This was the way of developing his faculty of *saddhā*, or faith/confidence. In Burma I (LH) learned another lesson. When I was in Burma, there was a man who used to translate from English to Burmese, and one day I got two pictures of the same *cetiya*. One was taken in the morning, one was taken in the evening. As I (LH) was looking at these pictures, I was sort of just wondering aloud and I told this man: “Which of these pictures is better?” And he was somehow offended – he just left and he didn’t want to say, because it was the same *cetiya*, only taken in different times. With this, sort of, expression of his face ...“”. So then I asked some of the Burmese monks for an explanation, because I couldn’t understand his behavior. Then I was told: “Look, it is the Buddha! The *cetiya* represents the Buddha and it’s like asking: ‘Does he look better in daylight or at night.’” So that type of question they don’t ask in that country. That was a lesson for me. So there are different ways of developing *saddhā*. [*Indriya samvara sīla*] So the second point we come to now, is the restraint of sense faculties, *indriya samvara sīla*. So here we are referring to eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and the mind, all six factors. So *sati* or mindfulness is required for the restraint of the sense faculties. So it is extremely important for the meditating yogi, because the whole point of it - when one is asked just to stop at the object without proliferating thoughts and so forth - that requires

this restraint of the sense faculties. So it really refers to the *Satipatthāna sutta* (MN 10 & 'Mahā ...' DN 22); all is about when you look in front, look to the side, you go, you come, you sit, you eat, all these things are done with mindfulness. So before that happens - with lack of restraint - what happens, there is a fundamental advice to it given in the *Satipatthāna sutta*. So because what happens without this restraint, there is a sort of a judgment, evaluation and then there is, you know, a lot of complications arising after that. So what is recommended is this restraint of the sense faculties at the very beginning... ? So you have the method of how *saddhā*/confidence arose, and how mindfulness has to be established and so forth. Sati or mindfulness is, sort of, crucial and helps this restraint of sense faculties. This is also referred to as *kāya bhāvanā*. There are three aspects: the *kāya bhāvanā* meditation with regard to the body, the *citta bhāvanā* with regard to the mind and *paññā bhāvanā*. So, if this *indriya samvara* - the restraint of the sense faculties - refers more to the *kāya bhāvanā*, so as ven. Dhammarakkhita mentioned earlier [a short comment that was not translated] then, where there is restraint with regard to the eye faculty, there is no, sort of, faults running further or proliferation of thoughts and getting caught up in this. So there is a tendency to become calm and tranquil. [*Ājīva pārisuddha*] *Viriya*/effort is the cause or because of effort there is purity of livelihood and similarly in the previous ones also. And effort is very closely tied with livelihood aspects. So what is really the fundamental to this word, that is *virīya*, is to maintain the wholesomeness, the wholesome aspect in the mind. So one who is practicing like this, with refined effort, he will not allow unwholesomeness to arise and he will not act out of, sort of, cunning or slyness. No deceit; ideas of deceit will not arise. Correct effort is completely wholesome. It is purely pure and completely wholesome and it is engaging in what is wholesome. So there is a keenness to develop wholesome states that have not yet developed. So it is with the combination of *ājīva*, spiritual livelihood, and *virīya* that meditator will think or incline towards making arise the wholesome states that have not yet arisen. Yeah, sometimes we have the habit of ... because we chant this quite frequently – this *Karaṇīya mettā sutta* (Sn 1.8 & Khp 9)... sometimes we go very fast in order to finish it from the beginning to the end, but - even that is alright - but it is even better if one can, sort of ... takes the time to recite and thinks about what is being said, it is more beneficial. So even if one has to recite fast, it's alright, if he understands the meaning of what is being said. And you will find your *saddhā*/confidence grow. Similarly with the *Mangala sutta* (Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.), whether you recite it fast or slow, doesn't matter, as long as you know the ideas what is being expressed, you will take the benefits and it's alright, you can go fast. As *ājīva*/livelihood becomes more pure, the mental concomitant called *virīya*/energy is present. One will incline to get up in the morning, early morning, and will be wanting to ... they have a desire to meditate, to do all the duties and obligations, all this is part of purity of livelihood and based on *virīya*/energy. As you meditate more and more, these things become clear and one begins to understand how it works... [*Paccaya sannissita*] So ... the “*praktiya*” is support or the use of requisites, in the case of monks, recluses there are four. With the regard to monks it is the requisite of robes, alms, lodgings and medicines in case of the lay people there are basically these two – food and drink, which is one, and the lodging that we have – residence. So it is requirement to be content with what one has got, one has received in the way of requisites, and to live the yogi life. So actually, one must speak well of contentment – of what one has got, it is speaking well of what one has received. This implies, not sort of engineering or manipulating in order to get good robes or good food or and putting oneself in a position to get that. So basically what he (LH) says is for lay people who come and associate us – don't sort of make peacocks of us.

[Ven. Dhammarakkhita now explained the reflection on the four requisites as follows...] So there is a point about this knowledge of it, this means with certain knowledge and awareness that one makes the use of these requisites. And monks have a certain type of reflection before the partaking of food and use the robes and so on. They reflect wisely why it is, they are eating and so on... [Insert the proper *pāli* formula and translation for the “food reflection”]... and the same way they wear the robes... [Insert the proper *pāli* formula and translation for the “robes reflection”]...

LH: They have to be used with knowledge and wisdom. And the meditating lay person will also use these requisites ideally with wisdom. Whether the lay person comes even for short time - ten days, a weekend or whatever. We should use these requisites that we get, in the way of food and lodging, with wisdom and with thought why they are doing this activity – they have left their homes, even for a short time, to come and practice. They will be, sort of, contented with what they get in the way of these requisites and whether there are shortcomings or not they will make the best of it...

I (LH) used to think, when I was a boy that this duty of bringing “kanda” – conjei – the herbal “drink” (brew) was not a very meritorious thing to do. I understood this sometime later, earlier on I used to actually bring my food from home when I went to meditate. But later my older brother or one of my father’s employees would bring me food and the drink/gilampasse also. Every day one of these people would bring me food, in the morning and at noon-meal-time (and some refreshment in the afternoon). So after my coming to Kanduboda, *dāna* was provided. Also a sort of ledge built out of cement, with cushions made out from gunny bags, there was a place for walking meditation, so although the facilities are not so good at Kanduboda - unlike at home, where I used to meditate, but because of meditation practice I didn’t feel this – that there was a shortcoming, or that there was something lacking. There were no mosquitoes that were also a great relief. So this usefulness of requisites became very clear to me at that time. So we had to be at our *kuti* at 1:30 for the afternoon drink (gilampasse) because by 2:00 we would go to meet the head monk for meditation instruction. And then again at 6:00 in the evening there would be another drink. And that was all till the next morning at 5:30. This is quite good – so there was a good training method also. So one begins to understand the right use of requisites and develops knowledge also in this way. So it’s really the beginning of *satipatthāna* – these are the preliminary, sort of, items.

He (LH) now also gives the words: “*Satima ātapi and sampajañña*”. So *satima* is on the, sort of, same line as *indriya samvara* or the restraint of the sense faculties; *ātapi* same line as energy/indriya and purity of livelihood. *Sampajañña* which is same as wisdom and wise use of requisites. It is a very practical teaching – *sanīpa* – reachable, something we can attain easily, something you can do ...

George: “Can I have a question on another topic? Some days ago ven. Pemasiri said something, or I don’t know if it was translated good, like: ‘perceptions work against feelings’”.

Translator: “He (LH) remembers that, and it is good that you remember it. It is basically, that *vedanā* is, I don’t know, if I am doing it right, *vedanā* is spoiled by *sañña* – feelings are spoiled or distorted by perception. Is that what you meant?”

George: “Because I remember this, because it crept in the back of my mind, and I would come up to it again. Because something is not clear there. Because of restraint of the sense faculties you try to keep away from this ‘spoiling factor’ of perceptions, that wander off, like for example I look at your face, and of course the old habit of like and dislike comes up – perception – which spoils the act of a new thing in the center, the focusing and not falling victim of like and dislike. Is this too complicated?”

Translator: “No, I understand.”

Ven. Dhammarakkhita: “This is second one – restraint in the sense faculty is a very, very basic thing. While one is standing on that base he has to study perceptions or feelings and other things. If one starts to try to understand perceptions, feelings, and other things without any sense restriction, he can’t do it. Because this is basic *sīla*/virtue. While standing on virtue, he can develop wisdom. What we are... when we are analyzing, feelings and all these things it can be counted under wisdom. We can’t reach that wisdom at once without having sense restriction.

LH: We take present objects while standing on past perceptions – our base is past perception, so.. the past ... so in the past there is an object that you have considered, that started with perception. There is an object that you take in the present that starts with *vedanā* – feeling. In the past it would be with *saññā*/perception, in the present you take up, it starts with *vedanā*/feeling. There is enough material for a book, if you take ... some ... to discuss this ... the first one, he (LH) says is *cittānupassanā* ... and *dhammānupassanā* for objects taken in present that start from *vedanā*. And for both, this restraint of the senses places measure all in both cases.

George: “That’s why I came to this question, because it’s immediately linked with it. And I feel, yes, I don’t want to start something off ... the offshoot ... because there is huge process ...

Translator & LH: “George... so actually, your question sort of inspired or made something else come up in the talk, which is quite useful for us, who are plodding in the past and the present on this road ... Taking up of the past or the present through *saññā* or *vedanā* respectively.

George: “Of course, if you only take this, it’s clear you take or like, but they ‘work against’, as I remember the translation. Yes, but continuing the path and working on both this is all hooked on the word ‘perception’. I can’t use the old perception, because the feeling, the working with the *vedanā*, changes doesn’t allow the old perception. So I have a new perception, which already turns old, that’s why I said: ‘it’s a huge process’.

LH: So from the *vedanā* there is a *saññā*. So actually, as one considers the usefulness of requisites with wisdom more and more, what you brought out one begins to understand more – about taking of the objects in present through, beginning with *vedanā* and then it turns into *saññā*.

George: “Yes, that’s what happened in the past, but this happens in the present too! But the perception will be different.” ...

LH: “and the process continues...”

George: “It, yes, continues!!” ...

LH: “That’s true indeed, but that’s how we have to break it.

George: “But, er... I am sorry, why should I break the process, it is very rewarding for me?! I learn a lot by it.

Ven. Dhammarakkhita: “It is not for the purpose of learning and sort of increasing our knowledge, that we do this, it’s for our liberation.

George: “No, not, definitely not, no.. no... not talking about knowledge. It increases my sati in ...

LH: Good, good. Keep going, keep working. Even observing this process of *vedanā* – *saññā* working is not the goal of the teaching – it is for the sake of liberation alone. So it is important to observe this *saññā* – *vedanā* working, but one has to transcend this process in order to attain liberation, liberation lies beyond this. So LH says, there is a reference to this very thing in two suttas in Majjhima Nikāya: *Sārôpama* (MN29 & 30 - “*Mahā... & Cūla* ”) and *Rathavinīta* (MN 24). So this is sort of mentioned... be aware, that you might have, like some sort of, conceit arising; that, you know, I understand these... WELL! Because Loku Hāmuduru experiences things like that, be wary of the conceit arising then ... so this, what we discussed earlier, it’s relevant to the *Karanīya mettā sutta*...

Ven. Vineethe: “Which part of the sutta, the first words?”

LH: “Aah, sorry, so we actually haven’t started discussing the sutta. [Everybody’s laughing :-)]

This is a preliminary ground for it. We are not yet come to the sutta. So this is a preliminary ground to turn one’s life to nibbāna... Keep constantly reflecting *paccavekkhitvā*... Constantly reflect... That was the advice to *Rāhula*: To establish oneself in wholesomeness this kind of contemplation/reflection is very useful. So then, what we discussed yesterday [talk #1], about what can harm a monk or a recluse or a lay person in his practice, that is what was discussed. This is all part of the preliminary – what is beneficial for one seeking liberation.

[comments to -> *Anattha kusala*]

So on this path there are obstacles [ten palibodhas Vism III.29] also. So one should recognize these obstacles and get out of the way. So there are ten obstacles to one who is practicing this spiritual path, and he should be aware of these obstacles: so these obstacles include *āvāsa* – one’s lodging, one’s place of residence. *Bogha* – possessions, *yāluwa* – even one’s friends, and associates and family can be an obstacle sometimes, *ābādha* – disease and sickness, “?” when one pursues sort of educational aspirations, also sometimes this could be an obstacle in the sense of exams and so on. Then, sometimes, people offer, like dwelling places for monks, which are, like, falling down, old houses and that also becomes a big obstacle, because then they have to, you know, spend time repairing it and maintaining it. So that also can become an obstacle. A monk did not become a monk to fix up houses and so on. It’s a different matter, going to an empty house to meditate, but having to look after and maintain it... Sometimes monks are offered *kuti* in, sort of, the middle of a tea or

a coconut estate and they are told: “You just look after everything around and also meditate in this *kuti*... much merits to you, venerable sir, and it would be a merit to me also, if you stay and meditate and use this.” But then what happens, this with thieves who come to pluck the coconuts, if it’s a tea estate they take the tea... you know, lot of responsibility goes with it. So these are obstacles, and if I am unwise, if I am foolish, I will go and reside in such a place, so this type of offering is suitable for temple monks, who are used to work, and so on. But not ideal for a meditating monk. So he is not trying to discourage anybody from giving anyone... He is relating and anecdote of someone, who had a house and then he asked for a sort of guard dog to guard the place and then for a man to look after the guard dog and then it ended up wanting a gun for the man looking after the dog... Sort of, property and all this kind of acquisitions are also, part of the obstacles to one’s practice... Then sort of gathering of friends and so on, this happens so often... Visits by relatives... you know, people... one’s family members, might come and ask, you know: “Please, chant some *pirit* for us.” So as, as far as possible, a meditating monk should be free of these obstacles and even the supporters should not, sort of, burden them with these things. That is what is meant by *anatta kusala*: they prevent, these obstacles prevent one’s, sort of, progress on the spiritual path to nibbāna. George: “It’s nearly impossible to reach nibbāna by a lay man, because you have these ten obstacles constantly on your back. ...

LH: So actually... You have temporary or a little bit, you have discarded those things or give them less prominence by coming here and practicing.

George: “That’s correct, now I understand why they take so much longer to cross the desert.

Hāmuduru (LH) also said that this is actually not much of *Karanīya mettā sutta*, it’s related to bhikkhus. He’s saying now, that a lay person can also go quickly on this path. It is possible, especially for younger people, but householders, who have sort of left their household responsibilities for a month or two, maybe delegate the work, you know, the children or other people, who could do it, and then come and practice. Actually, a lot of the adolescents can practice very well. Like before the age of twenty, the practice goes very well. At that age they are with their parents. They can take leave from their parents and come and practice. The parents won’t be anxious about the whereabouts of the kid – they know, that the kid/child is in a particular place. I was given only one admonition, or words of warning: “Don’t behave in a way, that brings shame to the family.” That was all I was told. So, this was the impression in his mind very strongly. That as long as I don’t bring dishonor to my family, to my parents and the old generation of my family – I could do anything else. By that was meant not to steal, not to lie, and not to be deceitful. So, if I protected myself from those things, I was on the right track, and it was easy to meditate with that base. At a young age it’s possible to really do one’s meditation very well. Young monks also have an advantage in this respect. It’s in the, sort of, in the middle of one’s life that things become a bit complicated with the family responsibilities: husbands, wives, jobs, kids and so on. But if inspired of that is sort of the let’s say two or three family members: a mother, father, the children understand each other, it is possible to progress on this, sort of, way... It can go smoothly, if there is, sort of, understanding between the family members. So, for example, the father might be meditating and the others cooperate by not making noise and disturbing him. Similarly when the mother takes her turn to meditate she also gets the same treatment... So then it becomes, sort of, balanced and

it's possible to progress in the lay life. You can find this in *Samyutta Nikāya* in the *Nākulapitu sutta (Khandha Vagga, 21 - Khandha Samyutta #1: SN 21.1.1.1 or SN XXII.1)*. So members *Nākula's* father and mother had developed the equal degree and in balance these faculties of *sīla/virtue, saddhā/confidence, learning/Dhamma-sutta, cāga/generosity, and wisdom*. So because of these developments and balance of faculties both of them... both of them were *sakadāgāmīs/once-returners* - the second fruit... And they were born after death in the *Tusita deva* realm. So persons called *Migāra's* father and father's younger brother, who were, sort of, the make up artists of the king *Kosala*, were meditators, though they were householders, with this job, but they had only very few problems and obstacles to their progress. So their job, the responsibilities they had, was to, sort of, apply make up and make the wives of the king beautiful and, sort of, dress them up and place them on the backs of the elephants. So they said, they had three problems, they claimed they had three problems, whereas other people had only two. So the Buddha asked: "What are the problems?" This is in the *Thapati (Chamberlains) sutta in Samyutta Nikāya (Mahā Vagga, 54 - Sotāpatti Samyutta #6: SN 11.1.6 or SN LV.6)*. ... "We have to look after the elephants, we have to protect the princesses and, more than that, we have to look after our minds..." Aah... "The princesses are so soft, so delicate and so sweet smelling like devas..." so very soft and delicate and they have to be protected... So the obstacle for them was that at the moment of placing, like a, almost like a relic, they have to lift up these princesses and to place them on the back of the elephant and they are so soft and delicate, at that moment if a thought of desire and lust arose in their minds, then the elephant will go wild, will be agitated, the princesses will get agitated and they will be finished. So this was the third obstacle.

George: "It's a direct link to my perception and feeling problem, you know, because there is a tribe in Africa, they have to learn for a very long time before they go hunting elephants, not to think about elephants while they are hunting.

Komi: "I said (to LH), that the king also had a lot of trust because of the job, but *Loku Hāmuduru* says, they were *sakadāgāmīs*...

So they would have been chosen for that, because of their *saddhā* and development in the *Dhamma*... In other instance, he says, that there are white-clad lay people for whom the path is not difficult, it is this one category of people. So there is no need to fear and one should not stop making effort to walk the path. So... it is not to, sort of flatter anyone, but the journey, so far, has been fruitful and then keep going. So whatever obstacles we have: it may be family, wealth, jobs, responsibilities, beauties and other problems which come up sometimes and overtake your life, but then after a while they get resolved; so we have all experienced that kind of thing...

[Ven. Dhammarakkhita later on Shaming read the *sutta*]

Despite their obstacles, that they had in their lives and with regard to the responsibilities, they were able to... This would relate to the *anatta kusala* - what takes you away from the wholesomeness. So this discussion falls within this aspect [*anatta kusala*], as we said earlier. The one that was to do with obstacles to the path - and this would also be considered as a part of that [*anatta kusala*]. So, sometimes, the duties of running a center like this also can become an obstacle, like that. Facilities have been created here, and those who come, they must use their wisdom, their intelligence and use these facilities for their benefit. That is all that is required.

If they use their requisites wisely, then because, for whatever, the obstacles are less here than elsewhere, so they can use it as a base for their progress. I remember in other places, even in Colombo, we had a major water problem. If there too many yogis – meditators, then sometimes we had not enough water to bath. There were never problems with food and drink, wherever I went, but there have been some problems with water. Even next door there was a water problem and I had a very big well dug up and at that time I had to listen to some criticism: “Are you trying to give water to whole the village?” But we were able to give water for everybody (I guess in the center). So here, we will not have a water problem at all, the way it is done also this I considered lessening obstacles. The well water here is even more pure than that you could get in bottled water bottles, it is enough water to bath, eat, drink, cook ... and you can use it without fear. There is one well just for watering trees and plants. So it has been constructed to minimize the obstacles. So there is also this rule about 'not feeding animals here', this is also in order to lessen the obstacles to meditators. Even they [the animals :-)] can find food to eat. Actually in these grounds there are more birds and squirrels than in other places. We don't feed them [...]. Yes, if we, sort of, use our facilities like toilets and so on, cleanly and in a hygienic manner, then we can normalize diseases born of mosquitoes and so on... So we have this responsibility to, sort of, minimize our own obstacles, sort of, maximize the use of the facilities here.

So sometime back, there was a lady here, who wanted ... tried to teach me something about compassion and said that there was this little mouse in her *kuti*, that was looking at her in very kind manner, and that this mouse had a lot of compassion... So I asked her: “Is it to contemplate the look on a mouse's face that you gave up all and came here?” She didn't say anything – if she had said anything more, I would have chased her away.

So this is the way I act. I consider that there are no obstacles here. And what should we be doing is to minimize the obstacles and walk the path. There is a place for meditation. There is a place to consult books, to refer books and also to do the daily observances. There is a place to go and have our news without problems. There is a place to practice walking meditation. Also the ladies have an area for themselves, if they wish, in the *Upāsikā ārāma*. You can make use of these facilities and lead a good life. So when that, sort of, breaks down or some people do things to disrupt the smooth functioning of this, I don't like. Because of one person, there should not be problems for seven or eight people, then it becomes *anatta kusala* sort of thing. We may even consider that these people haven't learned the true meaning of the *Karaṇīya mettā sutta*.

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