

# 2019-02-10 Public Vs Private Practice

Tue, 8/11 12:35PM • 40:39

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, goodwill, loving kindness, monastics, concord, life, buddha, private, kindness, liberating, teachings, community, important, covers, unity, mind, unblocked, liberation, agitated, daggers

## SPEAKERS

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So, I would like to teach from a particular discourse by the Buddha and when that inspires me or challenges me or is evocative suggests all kinds of ways of like poetry. He would read it and see it in different ways and interpret different ways. And but I'm aware that that in the last few weeks here in Sunday morning, but also the other days of Monday evenings here at IMC I've been doing a lot of teachings kind of directly out of the sutras and so it you know, it might seem that I'm becoming a born again fundamentalist, you know, of Buddhist type and, you know, and so, I want to

I want to say that and say that you know, at the part of the way of reading this text for me, is not so much to look for the truth. But rather I find it a very provocative as I said evocative a wonderful set of teachings to grapple with to be inspired by to work with. And I'm sure there's lots of other teachings out in the world. No, there is that could do the same thing for people in other traditions and all that. And just this is the one that I know it's come come alive for me and so I'd like to share that and, but I don't I don't hold these teachings up as being the truth. In fact, some of the things I read in these books, I don't really agree with or even like, and, and so, you know, it's it's something to engage in, in a, you know, in a creative way, and also A very personal way. So I don't know how well I can convey the personal qualities of reading this today. I thought I'd maybe try to do it more personally as an example of someone who grapples with a text that would make it less seem like, you know, like we're in. So one of the ways I'd like to begin is there is some Western Christian theologian who has said something about something like this. That is something like spirituality is, is the relationship people have to the divine when they're alone. And I think this is very provocative this idea of when you're alone, and so you know, what if, if topologists from Mars could come and watch you when You're alone. No one's around. What conclusion though they come about what values you have and what interests you have? And, you know, and you know, what's most important for you? And? And would they? Would they ever guess that spiritual life was important for you based on what you do when you're alone? Or they Oh, wow. Yes, of course, that's what's going on. And to look at what we do when we're alone, when it's private, and what values we live by, and but more importantly, what understandings do we live by? What perspectives do we live by? And what practices do we live by? When we're alone? What do we really kind of what's what's most important for us when no one's watching? And Monroe, many people are well behaved when they're being watched and, and, and, you know, can be quite, you know, quite spiritual. They put on their spiritual clothes and when they're going to be in public, but alone, you know, you know, what's your actuality, when you before you've had your coffee, and you're still in your pajamas and for example like that, So this idea of what you know, you know, who are you when you're alone is, I think a very interesting one. But of course, who we are when we're together other people is important as well. And we're social beings. And so how we interact with people is very important. And ideally, our spirituality or inner life, as we find some deeper meaning and value and peace and, and freedom in that inner life, that is not just something that's deeply personal and even private, but it's something that completely

relates to the world around us and the communities we're in. And this particular text kind of weaves these two together in a very interesting way. The, it starts off, it's a discourse called the discourse at Kosambi because it was a town and is very famous in The Buddhist tradition because that was a time when it was a place where I guess the Buddha was living there with a large community of monastics, and a disagree a conflict arose in the monastic community. And that happens to human beings who live together, and, you know, share common life and they, you know, and there are things that can seem, really can be catalysts for conflict and hurt feelings, when people live together or share a common life, that they would not would not be an issue with people they don't know.

You know, people could say this small thing, you know, people you live together with and it's like a magnifying glass on it. Whereas if someone you know, some stranger said the same thing to you, you know, on the bus, you know, it's just like, you know, well, you know, you know, to doesn't really touch us personally. Something like that. So these monastics that live in together and a major conflict arises and there's two factions and they get divided into and, and this is the description of their, their conflict. The monastics were taken to quarreling and brawling, imagine Buddhist monastic brawling. And we're deep in disputes, stabbing each other with verbal daggers. Wow, I mean, this is graphic language. So, they could neither convince each other nor be pinched by others, they could neither persuade each other or nor be persuaded by others. So there was no way of having any discussion and trying to find a way verbal daggers. And so you know, must have been very important. So it had to do with a particular monk, a little bit senior monk who broke one of the monastic rules. And, and so that required something some kind of, I don't know, some consequence. I don't know what the consequence was. And but this monk said no, you know, I didn't break that rule. And so the half the community said you did and the other half to me say you didn't and they couldn't you know. And so it must have been pretty important than it was when they use the toilet back in the ancient world for monastics, the outhouse. They would have a Dipper, that they would dip with water to clean themselves because there was no toilet paper. And one of the rules was when you left the outhouse, you had to leave the dipper empty of water. And apparently someone thought he didn't. And he thought he did. So you know, this is pretty Big thing is like, you know, you know, you, it's like someone in your home, you know, for years, you've had the toilet paper, you know, the roll goes one way. And then someone puts it in and it's, you know, it's going the other way. And you know, that's like so. So it's, you know, amazing that the verbal daggers and all these arguments over this, but it's not so amazing because it's often human nature that sometimes small things loom big and they become major, major conflicts when people are living together and all that. So that was the beginning of it. And so they were arguing, and so, the Buddha Lord got wind of this, and he invited them. Well ask them to come to visit, come see him, and he gave his teachings to them. And, and in the first to get a little bit deeper them and says, when you're doing when you're brawling and correlating and having verbal daggers Do you think at that time, that you maintain acts of loving kindness, by body speech in mind, in public and in private, towards your companions in the spiritual life, so that you know and so, I imagine they gulped and, and they said no. And so then he says, There are six conditions or six qualities that are good to keep in mind. If for the purpose of creating love and respect, a sense of fellowship, to non dispute, to Concord and to unity so in some ways it misses this text might be a little bit of a literary work, setting up such a dramatic contrast between, you know, a community of verbal daggers, and maybe over this petty thing and this big division, and now the Buddha is going to talk about to really unity coming together. How do you have fellowship? How do you have love and respect for each other? How do you have Concord? So it's a pretty you know, significant what he's going to say here and he's going to give a list six things in some Westerners call it six principles of cordiality. But I don't use the word cordial very often, maybe you don't either.

So, six memorable qualities for creating love respect unity, concord. And so first, the first one is to create or word is maintain here to work to maintain maintain bodily action. Have loving kindness in public and in private the word word that the original word for public means in front of someone's eyes. So usually they see if they see you doing it they know they're doing it and the one in private also the word private in Pali means something like alone soon, no one no one sees you and no one knows you're doing it the person doesn't know it. And I think this is a nice kind of higher order of idea of having kindness to people is you do it you know when you're they see you You can do it and kind thing to but to do it when they'll never know for I was popular this idea of secret acts of kindness. And so you don't get any credit for it. Like what good is it if you don't get credit? What's good for you? And makes a big difference for you. And but I find that this this challenge or what do I do in private to kind of her me ups the ante a little bit about paying attention to what's important for me my relationship to people and in private not to forget the people I'm with and you know, so I come in here to IMC and sometimes I come here and there's dirty dishes in the sink here. Imagine that to the mindfulness center and so the dirty dishes are there in the sink and because me and so no one's here I'm hold on here and then occurs to me that would be nice for the people who come to come to a place that's clean and taken care of and I don't know if it's exactly loving kindness, but it's in that realm. So I cleaned the dishes and until I've made it public now and audio Dharma you know it No, no one knew. And, and so, you know, You know, so I might, you know, do I want to do this to under stretch myself? Do you have things to do? What do I want to do with my life? And who am I relating to and, and partly I do it in this invisible relationship that I have to other people when I'm alone. And so I stretched myself. So let's see I'm doing in private, I think, stretches us in some other way.

And there's a lot of things we can do in public, we will see you know, we can do and then it's interesting, this idea of, and then it goes on does the same thing for love acts of loving kindness, in speech. So you can say things to people, that's nice. And then to do it, so they don't see it when you're alone. So you can talk out loud to yourself, you know, saying nice things to people. I interpret this that means you one translator says, this word private. They translated this behind their back. And so sometimes it's nice. I think it's nice to speak well about people behind their back, and I find a great delight To speak well about people and say nice things about people through third parties, and it just seems like it creates Concord and unity. And, I mean, I don't I don't lie, I say what I appreciate by people. And I think it's a nice thing to do to share our appreciation and have that kind of travel out in our community, as opposed to can you believe what they did? And you know, you know, and, and, and, you know, and to kind of create gossip that kind of decreases the Unity or makes people feel like not so, you know, not so warm and happy about people. And so to end privately to speak well about people or you know, so they don't see it, speak well about them. And, and no, I've done I'd like to do that and it makes me feel good. It doesn't make very good for me to do that. And I think it's good for unity and Concord. And it makes me also then to increases my appreciation of people. I appreciate people but when I say it out loud, I could feel that my level of appreciation goes up or it's my love. goes up. And then to do it in the mind, So mental acts of kindness, publicly and privately. And so exactly how they can see it when it's in your mind, it's not so clear. But one of the ways that that works, I think, is it's a lot to do about what you don't do that, you know, you might want to say something mean, you might want to leave dirty dishes, or something, and because of something, but, but you know, to watch your mind and see notice what I'm doing now is not kind of what I'm going to do now is mean or something, or greedy or something. And then to not do it out of kindness for someone else, then they'll never know it. They just thought you were just being normal. And they and but you know, was that you just saved them from something really big and you know, and so and so but um Have a love for them or care for them. And, and, and also that creates unity and Concord because the opposite to say something mean does the opposite. So the first three memorable qualities that keep in mind are having to do with loving kindness, goodwill and unto myself reflecting on this, I find it a little bit oppressive that this idea that maybe I'm supposed to be going around having loving kindness all the time, and be have goodwill and you know, and, and

I've tried some times to kind of, you know, like, act my way into it then, you know, just, you know, be kind and, you know, and, and this is usually when I'm trying too hard. I don't get a very good response from people. You know, it's like, you know, maybe it feels too sticky or too, you know, I don't know, something, you know. So this idea of, you know, too much that acting and trying to be that way. I find it Holding on or trying too hard there's a kind of almost like a kind of an attachment and what I've learned about loving kindness, I find that it's tremendously I love this idea of goodwill and compassion and care and so hugely important part of my life that I cherish. But what I find and why I have a lot of put a lot of value in it or why I say differently, I have a lot of commitment to it or dedication to it is because I've learned that it's there when I let go of what hinders it.

So that what I what I devote myself to, is to notice when I'm caught when I'm annoyed or when I'm when things are going on inside of me that prevent the goodwill to be there. It covers it over. And when I know I know that thought that was covers it over. diminishes me, harms me Brings tension to me, it doesn't feel good, doesn't feel good. I'm not free when it's covered over. And so rather than trying to have goodwill, it's more like what I tried to do is not have it covered over not to have this stuff that's in the way. And, and then what flows out of my heart then is easeful and easy. You know, it does not like I'm trying to do something or be someone or something or hold on to something. And also, it allows for situations where goodwill or loving kindness is not the right thing. You know, so we go around the world thinking so we'll still be kind. It's kind of, you know, as I said, it's oppressive. But there's many different ways we want to respond to different situations. And if you get rid of the obstacles to loving kindness, it also gets rid of the obstacles to wisdom and to other possible healthy responses. So it kind of puts me in a better place. And, and, and so what I've also discovered when I don't have goodwill for people, it really represents the fact that there is something covering it over. And so I get really interested. It's kinda like my bumper stickers is I stopped for the absence of goodwill. You know, because then it's becomes, that's where my practice goes, Okay, let's look at this, let's work on this and try to find my way. And then sooner or later and sometimes this later, whatever is there is cleared away. And then there's, if the goodwill is the appropriate flow of the energy, that's what comes in, it feels it feels really nice. And, and this, this instruction here, but in public and in private. You know, sometimes I'm challenged in one of those two domains those days, sometimes it's in private. And so this is full teaching kind of inspires me or provokes me or to guilty mind to take a good look at how you are when you're in privately and don't just go around kind of, but you know, is there goodwill down? The people you're thinking about is their goodwill for them. And what's going on? Where should your practice be? And sometimes it's easy to do in private. Sometimes I can have infinite goodwill for all of humanity, you know, it's like you just, you know, sitting in private meditating and doing loving kindness, like, like, everyone's well behaved when I'm meditating. In my mind, right, and just like, oh, everyone's so great. And then but it's, you know, when you live with them, or when you, you know, when you, you know, come, you know, run into them and, you know, then, you know, it's a whole, you know, you know, sometimes, you know, the joke is, the life would be a lot easier if it wasn't for the people. Because, you know, and so, and so then sometimes it's sometimes this kind of teaching then inspires me to take a good look at how I am publicly and what's going on for me and why am I not having goodwill out to this person? And, and, and then again, rather than a duty that I should, it's an inspiration for me to take a look at what's happening. Why not kill What's happening? What's covering it over? How are you? Are you resentful or you're afraid? Are you angry? Are you wanting something so strongly that the wanting is interfering with just relaxed goodwill, what's going on? So these three qualities of goodwill, loving kindness, kindness that we're capable of doing is a powerful thing to do. And it's a powerful practice. And I want to emphasize that, that if you want to be free in Buddhism, a lot of it has to do with learning to become free of these kinds of obstacles to Goodwill. And so you want to really take the opportunity to use goodwill as a reference point to to see yourself to understand yourself and oh, there's no goodwill. Mm hmm. That's interesting. Gil, you should maybe take a good look. And, and look more deeply. And

that's a deep, it's not just a saccharin kind of Buddhism. It's pointing to the kind of deep inner work of liberation freedom that Buddhism is all about.

So, the next, the next, the fourth are these six things to keep in mind for unity, love respect, Concord non dispute is I wanted to say this about this text. The Buddha is speaking to a particular community of monastics. So he's talking to about dynamics within a particular, you know, community that's living together. It's not necessarily the same as what you do everywhere. maybe it's a little bit, maybe the emphasis the strength of it has to do with community life, people we're living with and all that certainly applies everywhere we go. But, but it might keep us in mind that this is not a necessarily universal teaching. It's a teaching being given to particular community that lived together and that are in conflict. So here's the next one. A monastic uses things in common. One of them is the plural so I can use it gender neutral. A monastic uses monastics use things in common with their virtuous companions in the holy life. Without making reservations, they share with them any gain of a kind that accords with the Dharma, and has been attained in a way that accords with the Dharma, including even the contents of their begging bowl, their own school. So whatever they have, they share in common with the people in community. So this idea of private property, it's mine is kind of relaxed and just to hear in even, you know, the door They don't have refrigerator to go get a snack from. They only have the food and they're begging bowl, they get food every day. So to share that this is share the food they have for the day. But even that this year, and I love this expression, that whatever we gain so much from our livelihood, whatever comes our way that that supports us of the kind that accords with the Dharma. And it's been obtained in a way that accords with the Dharma. So what he's asking people to share is not everything you have, but to share that's which you've received in a way that feels ethical, that feels appropriate and healthy, for oneself and for society. And it's kind of interesting, he says it that way. I guess if it doesn't come to you in an ethical way. Maybe it has a kind of spin on it. That maybe that shouldn't be shared. Many years ago, there was a when I was attempting Zen center. There was a drug dealer who was his end student. And, and one day, he left in the Donate donation box, a big, you know, lunch Brett bag, bag lunch, like kind of bag lunch bag, paper bag filled with lots of cash. And, and people knew where it came from. And then the question was, given how he got that money? Could they accept it? Could they use it? And I don't know the answer to the question. I don't remember after I was told, I don't remember. But I love the fact that they paused and said, you know, what should we do with this money? Can this money is this money that's appropriate for us to use and take and use for our community and pass on so so. So this is sharing and they're also the same principle applies us with loving kindness. Maybe it isn't so much that you have to share As a duty and share and share in common with people in the chair, your goods, your things, when you don't want to. But the principle is, when you don't want to share what's going on for you use that as a good, good look at yourself. I think that in our kind of United States culture, there's enough people who will often feel a sense of deserving and protected, being protected have their own thing and feel like they have rights to this is mine. The idea of mine is such a strong instinct and I think in many human beings, but sometimes what I see the United States seems, you know, over the top, in terms of this is my my things my this my that and my property, you know, and

and so what's going on inside when we have this mind, we don't want to share, is it healthy for us to have that attitude? What's really going on? And, and when we're being miserly or when we're being afraid to share? Is that really how we want to live? In the, you know, even if no one else knows, and what can we do, to look, you know, to look more deeply and free ourselves from the obstacles. And once we're free of the obstacles, then what? Maybe then there's what maybe a situation is doesn't warrant generosity. Maybe it's a situation where there's wise not to share. But at least we've been freed of what holds us back. So this is another way that I use these kinds of teachings. I don't use them as a should, but rather, this is a great I just been given a great mayor. This is a mirror to look at myself. And I like these mirrors. So to read this, I read this periodically, this text and I know oh, here's that mirror.

And, oh, this is not pleasant. But I like a certain kind of non pleasantness that I love that I delight in You know, without discomfort that comes from Oh, Gil. Here's where you got to grow. Here's where the practice is and I love practice. And, and sometimes it's really good when it's really good practice when it's not happy, not pleasant. So you know, so we don't have just had pleasant practice. Okay, so the fifth one. So monastics do well in public and in private, possessing in common with their companions and holy life, those virtues that are unbroken untorn. unblocked, unmodeled liberating, commanded by the wise, not miss apprehended and conducive to concentration. So living a virtuous life, and a lot of that in this ancient tradition has to do with living by precepts that don't cause harm. Really avoiding and not causing harm through her actions or words that they've done to other people to live this virtuous life. And so, you know, high bar that they would expect from an aesthetics unbroken and torn unblocked unmodeled You know, this is really high bar to really be careful to not cause harm to people around you. and here also, you know, what's, what's clear is that for myself, is are there ways in which I cause harm in ways which I, I inadvertently even cause harm and is my ethical life up to par? You have to snap up man, what's the right word, you know, up to what it needs to be to, to fit into this category here. And, but then, what's really interesting I like the last party says, you know, it says all this stuff on tour and unblocked unmodeled so forth, it ends with and conducive to concentration So, it's not just to be a good person, an ethical person for the world around you, it's to be ethical so that you can go deeper in the practice. So you create the conditions for the foundations for the for to become concentrated, still and settled and, and kind of comfortable with yourself. So you can keep going down, down down until the agitated mind settles down. And one of the functions of ethics in Buddhism is to create the conditions and take in the lesson to really absorb, absorb the fact that your ethics are good, and it's okay for your heart to rest. It's okay for your mind to be on agitated and not feel like you know, you're a terrible person. So this is a quality to remember. that's conducive to love, respect, Concord, harmony, unity. Now we come to the last one and before I tell you, the last one, I'll jump ahead a paragraph and of the six. The Buddha says the last one is the most important. He says,

he says is the highest so he should be poised climax coming here. m&s monastics dwell both in public and in private, possessing in common with their companions in the holy life, that view that is noble and emancipating and leads wonder practices in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering. So we live together and community with a perspective with a way of seeing that leads to the end of suffering that leads to liberation. That's it. Reading and, and that is the highest quality that creates love, respect, Concord unity. Again, I think a lot of it has to do with what I've been saying all along, that if we use these principles, to look at ourselves to look how we're holding back, how these are mirrors for us not living that way. And learn to let go of those and let go of those. A lot of it has to do with letting go of what covers over the heart. What blocks us and inhibits us from the goodness to flow. And those very things are what Buddhist practices be liberating us from those very things are the conditions for our suffering. And so, if you can liberate yourself from bring yourself bring self complete liberation from suffering, that's simultaneous as becoming free of all the stuff that covers your And once you do that, then you don't have to do so much work anymore. It's just they're yours. They're with an open heart, a clear heart, and then the goodwill, the generosity, the ethics just flows much more naturally. I think that's why he calls us the highest to do it. And it's maybe why some person visited the Buddha. And he said to the Buddha, Wow, you are just you know, radiating with loving kindness. And the Buddha said to him, Well, if what you mean by that, is that I'm free from greed, hate and delusion. I accept your statement. And then before this, like I said it better but I just you seem to be reading it radiating with compassion. And the Buddha said, Well, if what you mean by that, is that I I'm free of greed, hate and delusion, I allow you that the Buddha didn't want to identify himself as being a kind, compassionate, compassionate person, like this is who I am. He wanted to nothing identified with it. But how he wanted to be characterized by the absence of the obstacles, this freedom from all that gunk that can cover it over. And then what exists after that is what it is. Some people will see just loving kindness and

people's compassion maybe depends on the circumstances. But that's not you know, his identity of what you know, that's not the place the universe identify with these things. This is me. So this view that's liberating to have this view and what is this view, this liberating, and this can be a variety of different things. One is it's a way of viewing. It's a way of seeing whatever is happening in our experience, to see it from a place of stability inside, so that the eyes that gaze on the world gaze on our inner life, looks upon it in a stable, calm, relaxed way. Even if there's a lot of vegetation, we can just look, there it is, we have a place, it's almost like you have a vantage point from which to look. And there's a wonderful story, I may take a little detour. I've told this before, of some monarch of a realm, whose guess it has unhappy and agitated, and so wants to have a contest to see who could do a painting that evoke their demonstrated peace the most.

And there was a big reward for this contest. So all these the best artists of the realm submitted their paintings and came to us The monarch said, No, no, no, no. And then not happy to the ministers were looking out because scouring the country for artists who could make paintings and nothing worked. And then they heard about some poor, of course, artists, you know, deep deep in the mountains far far away and well, maybe that person. So they managed to convince the person that come to the Capitol, the person was given a canvas and spent some time painting. And it was finally time to unveil the painting. It was a big painting. And it was a roaring waterfall. You know, completely agitating or boiling, you know, the water was coming down, boiling is meant to the bottom and it was like, you know, you know, absolutely not a calm scene. And the Kings like, what's going on here, you know, and the artist said, Oh, wait a minute. You have to go closer. look really closely. So he The, the monarch looked closer. And in fact, there was a little opening like the little ledge In which the waterfall kind of parted little bit, you know such as. And if you looked underneath that ledge in a little bit deeper, there was a second legend there. And in there, there was a little nest with a bird sitting there peacefully, sitting very peacefully, very calmly, that's where the piece was. And this idea of finding that ledge in the middle of the tumbler of life, and wares has a lot to do with how we see how we view how we are mindful of our experience, and to view it to viewing to be liberating to have a sense of liberation not being caught. Not being agitated, is part of this view that's liberating. It's also the ability to different times, to see sometimes right next to our desires, or clinging to see non clinging, non desire You know, have you ever thought about, you know, some of you have a few desires. And if you could remember, though, back some time ago when you had some desire physically in terms of shape, how big was that desire? Didn't have a size. You know, you know, we can imagine that was really big was the biggest room here, maybe but, but you know, it doesn't really have a size. And you know, so can you imagine just be on the edges of it? Can you see beyond the edges of it? That which is non desire? Or is your desire to see your desire fill the universe? You know, is that, you know, you're you're that powerful. Or is it you know, it's, you know, it's, you know, it's it stays inside your skull or where does it live, but sometimes I feel like I can see the non desire the non clinging, the non attachment. And that is liberating to see that because both these ways of seeing from a place of peace and stability, and to see that non attachment allows me to look at what's going on here and not identify with it. Not to say it's me not to use it to represent me not to be selfish with it or egotistical with it, and to be freed of the self centeredness that, you know, certainly covers the heart and covers the goodwill. And so and so to have a view, or a viewing a way of seeing, that does this deep work that really sees liberation and freedom is also one of the ways to create Concord, and harmony and peace is what we do it for ourselves. It's a pretty phenomenal thing to Free the heart. And we do it for ourselves. It benefits others. It makes a huge difference for the world we live in, that we can walk through the world and not spill over our anger, our resentments, our lusts, our desires, our fears, and all kinds of ways that you know makes more divisions in our society, rather than mix Concord harmony. So that's what the Buddha taught, or at least skills version of it, or why Gil likes this teaching. Thank you for being here.