

Sallekha Sutta (MN 8)

Humility

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti, in Jeta's Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Then in the evening Venerable Mahā-Cunda emerged from seclusion, approached the Blessed One, paid respects to him, and sat to one side. When he was seated to one side, Venerable Mahā-Cunda said to the Blessed One, "Bhante, there are many kinds of perspectives that arise in the world, connected with beliefs about self or beliefs about the world. Bhante, when he is just beginning, what should a monk pay attention to so that these perspectives are abandoned and relinquished?"

"Cunda, there are many kinds of perspectives that arise in the world, connected with beliefs about self or beliefs about the world. Where these perspectives arise, where they lay dormant, and where they occur, one sees them as they are with correct discernment in this way: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' In this way these perspectives are abandoned and relinquished.

"Cunda, it is possible that, secluded from sensuality and from unwholesome phenomena, a monk might attain and remain in the first Jhāna, which has thought, examination, and the rapture and happiness born from seclusion. He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living happily here and now' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, it is possible that, with the abatement of thought and evaluation, a monk might attain and remain in the second Jhāna, which has internal serenity, mental focus, no thought, no evaluation, and has the rapture and happiness produced by concentration. He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living happily here and now' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, it is possible that, with the fading of rapture, a monk might attain and remain in the third Jhāna, and is equanimous, mindful, and completely aware, experiencing happiness through the body - what the noble ones call 'one who is equanimous, mindful, and happy.' He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living happily here and now' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, it is possible that, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the prior disappearance of elation and depression, a monk might attain and remain in the fourth Jhāna, which is neither painful nor pleasant and has purity of mindfulness and equanimity. He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living happily here and now' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, it is possible that, by completely transcending all perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and by not paying attention to perceptions of

diversity, [perceiving] infinite space, a monk might attain and remain in the dimension of infinite space. He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living peacefully' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, it is possible that, by completely transcending the dimension of infinite space, [perceiving] infinite consciousness, a monk might attain and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living peacefully' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, it is possible that, by completely transcending the dimension of infinite consciousness, [perceiving] nothing existing, a monk might attain and remain in the dimension of nothingness. He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living peacefully' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, it is possible that, by completely transcending the dimension of nothingness, a monk might attain and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. He might think 'I am living with humility.' Cunda, this is not what is called 'humility' in the discipline of the noble ones. This is called 'living peacefully' in the discipline of the noble ones.

"Cunda, this is how you are to practice humility:

""Others will be cruel; we will not be cruel.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will kill; we will not kill.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will steal; we will not steal.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will live a non-spiritual life¹; we will live a spiritual life.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will lie; we will not lie.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will speak divisively; we will not speak divisively.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will speak harshly; we will not speak harshly.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will speak frivolously; we will not speak frivolously.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will covet; we will not covet.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will be aversive; we will not be aversive.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will have wrong view; we will have right view.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will have wrong attitude; we will have right attitude.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will have wrong speech; we will have right speech.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will have wrong action; we will have right action.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will have wrong livelihood; we will have right livelihood.' This is how to practice humility.

""Others will have wrong effort; we will have right effort.' This is how to practice humility.

1 *Brahma-cariya*. This term is often used to refer to celibacy.

“Others will have wrong mindfulness; we will have right mindfulness.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will have wrong concentration; we will have right concentration.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will have wrong knowledge; we will have right knowledge.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will have wrong liberation; we will have right liberation.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be overcome by torpidity and dullness; we will be free of torpidity and dullness.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be agitated; we will not be agitated.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be skeptical; we will be beyond skepticism.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be angry; we will not be angry.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be resentful; we will not be resentful.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will denigrate; we will not denigrate.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be malicious; we will not be malicious.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be envious; we will not be envious.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be stingy; we will not be stingy.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be fraudulent; we will not be fraudulent.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be deceitful; we will not be deceitful.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be stubborn; we will not be stubborn.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be conceited; we will not be conceited.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be hard to speak to; we will be easy to speak to.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will have evil friends; we will have good friends².’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be negligent; we will not be negligent.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will lack faith; we will have faith.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will lack conscience; we will have conscience.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will lack consideration; we will have consideration.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will know little; we will know much.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be lazy; we will be energetic.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be absent-minded; we will have firmly established mindfulness.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will be unwise; we will be consummate in wisdom.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Others will hold tightly to their opinions and relinquish them with difficulty; we will not hold tightly to our opinions and we will relinquish them easily.’ This is how to practice humility.

“Cunda, I say that even directing the mind towards wholesome phenomena is very helpful – not to speak of acting accordingly with body and speech! Therefore, Cunda, one is to direct the mind in this way: ‘Others will be cruel; we will not be cruel.’ ...one is to direct the mind in this way: ‘Others will hold tightly to their opinions and relinquish them with difficulty; we will not hold tightly to our opinions and we will relinquish them easily.’

2 *Kalyāṇa-mitta*. This particularly means “friends who support your spiritual practice.”

“Cunda, it is as if there was an uneven road, and there was a different road that was even that one could use to circumvent it; or there was an uneven ford, and there was a different ford that was even that one could use to circumvent it. In the same way, Cunda, for a person who is cruel, there is non-cruelty to circumvent it; for a person who kills, there is non-killing to avoid it... for a person who holds tightly to their opinions and relinquishes them with difficulty, there is not holding tightly to one’s opinions and relinquishing them easily to circumvent it.

“Cunda, just as all unwholesome phenomena lead down and all wholesome phenomena lead up, in the same way, Cunda, for a person who is cruel, there is non-cruelty for rising up... for one who holds tightly to their opinions and relinquishes them with difficulty, there is not holding tightly to one’s opinions and relinquishing them easily for rising up.

“Cunda, it is impossible for a person who is stuck in mud to pull another person out of the mud. Cunda, it is possible for a person who is not stuck in mud to pull another person out of the mud. Cunda, it is impossible for a person who is not trained, not disciplined, and not enlightened to train, discipline, and enlighten another person. Cunda, it is possible for a person who is trained, disciplined, and enlightened to train, discipline, and enlighten another person. In the same way, Cunda, for a person who is cruel, there is non-cruelty for attaining enlightenment... for a person who holds tightly to their opinions and relinquishes them with difficulty, there is not holding tightly to one’s opinions and relinquishing them easily for attaining enlightenment.

“Cunda, I have taught you a discourse on humility. I have taught you a discourse on directing the mind. I have taught you a discourse on circumventing. I have taught you a discourse on rising up. I have taught you a discourse on attaining enlightenment. Cunda, I have compassionately done for you what should be done by a teacher who compassionately seeks to benefit his disciples. Cunda, there are the feet of trees, there are empty buildings; meditate, Cunda, do not be negligent, do not do what you will later regret: this is my instruction for you.”

This is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, Venerable Mahā-Cunda delighted in the Blessed One’s statement.