

# Shorter Discourse on Gosinga

Bhante Bodhidhamma · YouTube Talks · 19:52

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Good evening. I trust you've had a fruitful day. I do not say happy. I hope it has been happy.

*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa* – homage to the Buddha, the blessed noble and fully self-awakened one.

Just to tell you that if the screen freezes, if I lose the transmission, just keep renewing the page. If we're in meditation, if you put your alarm clock on for about seven minutes past nine o'clock and it's frozen, then just renew the page and I may be back on. It doesn't take me long to get back on. I think the upload just collapsed every so often. We're not getting the full upload that we're actually paying for. I have, of course, complained.

Now tomorrow begins this retreat I'm doing for Gaia House, so if you want to join it you're very welcome. It's best to go through Gaia House – just register with them – and hopefully you've received the news bite about that. If you don't receive the news bite you can get it on the website, it's on the front page there just on your right. You can click on the – ah, no, excuse me, wrong. This is not on the News Byte. So if you didn't get the News Byte, drop me an email and I'll send it to you. We start tomorrow morning at eight o'clock, if you can make it.

So we're going to move on to a different discourse. This one is called the Shorter Discourse on Gosinga. And Gosinga is a place, though "At Gosinga" would just as well have been a good translation.

So I shall read it and you'll see very quickly what it's about. Thus have I heard: on one occasion the Blessed One was living at Nadika in the brick house. Now that's interesting. Most houses, of course, were wooden. So when the scriptures mention a brick house, it's obviously something that wasn't usual in those days, or sometimes perhaps the first floor was brick and the rest was wood. But most houses would have been wood, I think. The jungles were all around them. There was only a small population.

In fact, it brought to mind when I went up to North Thailand to visit Ajahn Tate, who was a very well-known monk, in fact, was understood to be fully liberated. And he had this beautiful monastery. It was a royal monastery. So it was excruciatingly beautiful. Now, when I went to the border, I had to go to the border to renew my visa. When I looked across to Thailand, it was all agriculture. When I looked across the Mekong into Laos, it was just this thick jungle. It was quite apparent that the distinction between the two was obvious. So that would have been all jungle really around and about them.

Anyway, now on that occasion the Venerable Anuruddha, the Venerable Nandiya and the Venerable Kimbila were living in the park at Gosinga Sala Tree Wood. Then when it was evening, the Blessed One

rose from meditation and went to the park. The park keeper saw the Blessed One coming in the distance and said to him, "Do not enter the park, recluse. There are three clansmen here seeking their own good. Do not disturb them."

Now the Venerable Anuruddha heard the park keeper speaking to the Blessed One and told him, "Friend park keeper, do not keep the Blessed One out. It is our teacher, the Blessed One, who has come." Then the Venerable Anuruddha went to the Venerable Nandiya and the Venerable Kimbila and said, "Come out, venerable sirs, come out. Our teacher, the Blessed One, has come."

Then all three went to meet the Blessed One. One took his bowl and outer robe. One prepared his seat and one set water to wash their feet. So in the East, often when the monks line up for food and they're going into the dining hall for it, the refectory, often lay people there will pour water over your feet and dry your feet. It's an ancient tradition. But the Blessed One sat down on the seat made ready and washed his own feet.

Then these three Venerable Ones paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. When they were seated the Blessed One said to them, "I hope you're all keeping well, Anuruddha. I hope you're all comfortable. I hope you're not having any trouble getting alms food." So there's the preoccupation of all monks – the alms food. What are we going to eat today? They've got to go on alms round. So remember in these times there would have been famines and so often they would have to go with a little bit of rice or perhaps nothing.

"We are keeping well, Blessed One. We are comfortable and we're not having any trouble getting alms food."

"I hope, Anuruddha, that you're all living in concord with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes."

Now, look at that for a statement of congenial living together. Living in concord – harmony, concord with mutual appreciation. Now that's one step up from respect. You can respect somebody but not really appreciate them. You can respect their view but not appreciate it. But appreciation – there is a sense of joy. It's one step above respect. You appreciate them, there's a joy in there. Without disputing or arguing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.

So there we have it. So if you are living with somebody, you can ask yourself, are we living in concord? Do we have mutual appreciation? Are we living without disputing, at least too much? And do we blend like milk and water? And are we viewing each other with kindly eyes?

"Surely, Venerable Sir, we are living in concord with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes."

"But Anuruddha, how do you live like this?"

"Venerable Sir, as to that, I think thus: it is a gain for me, it is a great gain for me that I'm living with such companions in the holy life." So there's your appreciation. "I maintain bodily acts of loving kindness towards these venerable ones both openly and privately. I maintain verbal acts of loving kindness towards them both openly and privately. I maintain mental acts of loving kindness towards them both openly and privately. And I consider: why should I not set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do? Then I set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do. We are different in body, Venerable Sir, but one in mind."

Now, have a look at this one then. Why should I not set aside – well, first of all, it's this whole business of appreciation and thinking well of people, acting well towards people. It doesn't mean to say that sometimes they don't do things which they ought not to do or you don't do things which you ought not to do. But in general, there is this attitude of loving kindness, attitude of goodwill.

But then: why should I not set aside what I wish to do and do what the Venerables wish to do? Now, remember, the three of them are all saying this to themselves. So therefore, you have three people who might sit together and say, "What would you like to do? What would you like to do?" And then after some discussion, come to an agreement of what ought to be done. But obviously, you've all got to say it. In a household of three where only one says it, then there's no doubt that you might feel abused because everybody else will just want to do what they want to do.

But that as an attitude in your household, if you are living with somebody, sharing or living with somebody, that is something that obviously brings about this feeling of milk and water. So you might try that if you find that you're always at loggerheads with people – there's a bit of irritation: "I want to do this, you want to do that, why don't we do it this way, this should be over here" – and then just to give up a little.

For me this was a bit of a training when I opened the center because obviously I thought well we should do things this way. Often I had an assistant, a facilitator. We had a set of facilitators, about one, two, three, about four different men who came to facilitate. And they were all brilliant. But of course, they would do it their way. And sometimes I would say, "Why don't we do it this way?" And no notice would be taken. Well. And then I would say it again, just to see in case they've forgotten. And they didn't do it the way I would suggest it. So I would feel a little irritation.

I would wait for that to pass and I would give them one more go. So I would then, next time I would meet them and say, "Perhaps we ought to do it this way," in a gentle way. And then they wouldn't. And then I thought to myself, well, to hell with it, let them do it their way. Because what's the point of getting into an argument about it? And it seemed to me that I lived very peacefully generally with everybody. As far as I know, they might not have lived peacefully with me but I generally lived peacefully with them by recognizing that so long as something wasn't immoral, it was fine. It was just the way they wanted to do it. So that was a bit of a nice little learning for me there.

So then Venerable Nandiya and Venerable Kimbila each spoke likewise, adding, "This is how, Venerable Sir, we are living in concord with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes."

"Good, good, Anuruddha. I hope that you all abide diligent, ardent, and resolute." Diligent, ardent and resolute. So diligence – really committing yourself to a particular meditation in the morning or whatever, being diligent with it, being ardent, putting your energy with it, and resolute – and those times when you don't want to do it.

"Surely, Venerable Sir, we do. We abide diligent, ardent and resolute."

"But how do you abide in this way?"

"Venerable Sir, as to that, whichever of us returns first from the village with alms food, prepares the seats, sets out the water for drinking and washing, and puts the refuse bucket in its place. Whichever of us returns last, eats any food left over if he wishes, otherwise he throws it away where there's no greenery or drops it into water where there's no life. He puts away the seats and the water for drinking and for washing. He puts away the refuse bucket after washing it and he sweeps out the refectory. Whoever notices the pots of water for drinking, washing and the latrine are low or empty, takes care of them. If they are too heavy for him, he calls someone else by a signal of the hand and they move it by joining hands. But because of this, they do not break out into speech. But every five days we sit together all night discussing the Dharma. This is how we abide diligent, ardent and resolute."

So now then, whichever of us returns first from the village with alms food, prepares the seat, sets out the water for drinking and washing and puts the refuse bucket in its place. So how many – I'm thinking of times when I've shared with people and you come back and there's a load of dishes that haven't been washed. What's the reaction? Irritation, perhaps you just eat and leave your dishes as well, out of spite really. But if we're going to live like milk and water, then of course, when something has to be done and you've got some free time in your hand, you do it. That doesn't mean to say that you then end up doing all the cleaning and the washing and everything like that. I'm sure with some gentle discussion, the others might also wash their plates, et cetera, et cetera. But it's just that attitude of, well, this has to be done. I've got time. I'll just do it.

And whichever returns last eats any food left if he wishes, otherwise he throws it away where there's no greenery and drops it into water where there's no life. So this just goes back to the idea of not – even plants were thought to have some level of consciousness and so monks are not allowed to cut the grass or anything like that or do gardening really. And also throwing away where there's life – it might harm the life that's in the pond or the water. So the idea was to put food or throw food away where it wouldn't harm anybody or harm any living being.

He puts away the seats and the water for drinking and for washing. He puts away the refuse bucket after

washing it and he sweeps out the refectory. Now, whoever – this is it – whoever notices the pots of water for drinking, washing and latrine are low and empty takes care of them. That's it. If you see it, then in a sense you take on that responsibility. If they're too heavy for him, he calls someone else by a signal of the hand and they move it joining hands. But because of this, they do not break out into speech.

So this is not wasting one's energy on silly talk, wasting energy, wasting one's energy on just needing to talk about anything, about silly stuff. But every five days they sit together, discuss the Dharma. So every so often they would sit together and purposefully discuss the Dharma. In other words, when we speak, it should be for a purpose. So this gives us some idea of how we can live peacefully with each other, gives us some hints.

The rest of the discourse is really about their attainments – all the *jhānas* that they've done, all the *jhānas* they're capable of getting, right up to what's known as *nirodhasamāpatti*, which is the point where feeling and perception disappear and it's often thought to be the same as *Nibbāna*, but there's a bit of dispute about that.

And then at that time – and this is more to do with the age – there's a spirit or a god or a disembodied being, Digha Parajana. And what the Buddha says is that it's a great benefit that they're living close to a village so they can have an effect on the town and the people will praise them, et cetera, et cetera. And because the spirit is aware of that, it also becomes – he makes other gods aware of it too and it goes all the way up to the highest heaven of the Brahmās.

And finally, there's just a point and we should remember that. So and then it says that all the people on Earth – the nobles should remember these three clansmen with confident heart that would lead to the welfare and happiness of the nobles for a long time. So in other words, it's this business of being exemplars. And it's the same with the Brahmins and merchants and the workers should remember these three clansmen for the welfare, et cetera. And then it goes through the world of the gods.

"See, Digha, how these three clansmen are practicing for the welfare and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans." This is what the Blessed One said and the spirit Digha Parajana was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

So he's very much concerned with being an example. And often when we have a rule in the order he'll often say it's there to build up the confidence of lay people. Because when you see a monk behaving badly obviously it undermines not just your confidence in that monk but in the whole order – people's confidence and faith can just drop away if they see this corruption.

Very good. So I hope you found that discourse of some interest. Tomorrow it will be more aimed towards the *Vipassanā*, the Mahāsi *Vipassanā*. So I hope my words have been of some assistance, that they have not caused any disturbance and that you will by your diligent, ardent and vigorous practice achieve full liberation sooner rather than later.

So don't forget if I go off screen or something just every so often refresh and I might reappear. Okay, so let's do a little bit of meditation.

*[The text ends here as the speaker transitions to a meditation session]*

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