



Sayadaw U Jotika

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Dhamma Talk

Karuna

Sayadaw U Jotika
Transcribed by Viet Hung
with support of Sonix.ai tool

Words from the transcriber

This dhamma talk was taught by Sayadaw U Jotika on 10-4-1997. Due to the low quality of the recorded audio, there are quite a few of “can’t get the words” in this transcript. However, you still can catch the complete content and the points Sayadaw wanted to make, I believe. May all mindfulness, peace and happiness be with you.

Việt Hùng

Recorded Audio

Recorded audio can be found here: [https://
viethungnguyen.com/2024/01/29/dhamma-talk-
emotions/](https://viethungnguyen.com/2024/01/29/dhamma-talk-emotions/)

V. 01.00

Karuna

Welcome everyone... I'm glad to have you here. Another day for beginners. Thursday. Although it is a day for beginners, this lady sitting here may be one of the oldest practicing Buddhists in Australia. How many years have you been practicing? Since 73. So, that means 24 years. How old are you? Oh, you don't talk about it [laughing].

So, we've met many, many times here. We are familiar with the way I talk. But actually, I also talk in a different way. On Saturday, I talked in another way and on Sunday still another way. Because different context... In different context, I talk in a slightly different way, although the subject matter is quite the same. And also feels more relaxed on Thursday. Why is that? Not very formal. Actually, I talk in a very informal way on Thursday, very formal on Saturday. We are used to the way I talk. Some of my friends said that I talk like a haiku. You know what a haiku is? Haiku is a Japanese poem. I like using haiku. I have many books on haiku poems. I like reading them, very hard to understand. To understand the haiku, you need to understand the context of them. Our whole life is actually a context. If you take something out of

context, you may understand it, but sometimes you misunderstand it. So it's always very important to understand something in the context.

For example, since I'm talking about haiku, I'll give you an example. And I read that poem a long time ago. One friend here reminded me the same poem again, while we were talking about haiku. So, actually, I'm very interested in poems, poetry, music, meditation, on a whole lot of things too: science, philosophy, ecology, comparative religion, anthropology, history and what else... Too many things interesting, too little time. Life is so short. But I've done a lot of things in my past life. So, I can let go of a lot of things and this life I am trying to do something I have not done very well before. So anyway, poetry is one of my very deep interest. I think it's one of the greatest achievement of human beings, which is a great achievement. Actually, Buddha taught in poems. Maybe you have noticed them. Pajjaṃ are poems. Actually gathā really means song. Dhammapada, most of you have read Dhammapada, that's gathā, poem, verses, song. Sometimes, I sing gathā, like one gathā, I like it very, very much. It's about the quality of the Buddha. This is what I do to pay respect to the Buddha. At least, I sing that in my mind. Oh, yeah... that's what I'm going to talk about tonight. I almost forgot that.

And that gathā's first line is: Karuna sitala hadayam¹. I recited it very carefully because I know in Burmese way only. So, the other way [may be in a different form]. So, karuna sitala hadayam. I make it a song and I'll sing it like: Karuna sitala hadayam. I can make it sound even more beautiful. Let me do very deep, reverberating voice. And I sung this gathā for so many times, maybe thousands of times. But every time I recite it, I feel it. Karuna – Compassion. We talk a lot about mettā before. So, I would like to talk about karuna tonight. So, that means compassion. But what does compassion mean? Com and passion. Karuna – compassion. Sitala means cool. So, the Buddha's mind is cool because of karuna. Hadaya means heart. Karuna – compassion, cool heart, compassionate cool heart. Well, anyway, you can translate it. Because of compassion the Buddha's heart is cool. But for us, sometimes compassion is so hot. For me, at least it makes me so sad sometimes. Because of compassion, because I see somebody suffering, I suffer for that person and I feel like crying. And I do cry. I still cry quite a lot. So, karuna sitala hadayaṃ panna pajjota vihata moha tamam. It is a long sentence. Panna, you know the meaning of panna, wisdom. Pajjota means light, the wisdom of light. Light and wisdom, they are the same in the pajjota. Vihata means to eradicate. To eradicate is right would actually. And I'm trying to

¹ The complete gathā can be found from this link: https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.70777/2015.70777.Maha-Bodhi-And-The-United-Buddhist-World-Vol38_djvu.txt

find a more beautiful word.

Panna pajjota vihata moha, ignorance, delusion, not knowing, not understanding or wrong knowing. Wrong knowing is not knowing, the same. So, panna pajjota vihata moha tamam. Moha, not knowing... Tamam is darkness. Not knowing is darkness. Knowing is light. So whenever you know something, your mind becomes bright, you wake up. And darkness is gone. So that's the joy of knowing. Whenever we know the truth about something, it makes the mind become bright and light. It brings a lot of joy too. Because going in the dark is so painful. Groping in the dark is so painful, so scary, insecure. Darkness makes you insecure. Light makes you feel secure. So, wisdom, understanding is the kind of light that makes you feel secure. So, there is no other security, actually. We talk about Social Security. It's a very good social security system. Very good, but not really secure. It won't really make you feel secure. It will give you something to eat, but it will not really make you feel secure. Only wisdom can make you feel secure. Nobody else can do that, even not the Buddha. Nobody, no person, no being, no power can make you feel secure. Your own wisdom only, which can make you feel secure. So, panna pajjota vihata moha tamam. Panna – wisdom, pajjota – light, vihata – eradicated, moha – ignorance, tamam – darkness: with the light of wisdom, the Buddha had eradicated the darkness of illusion. Very beautiful meaning. Very beautiful. If you

dwell on it for a long time, you know that: Yes, this is truth: Understanding, wisdom eradicates darkness. Not knowing is so dark, so scary. You don't know where you're going, you might fall into a pit in the dark. You're not sure of your steps. But if you know where you are going, you can feel secure. You can walk really with confidence.

So, panna pajjota vihata moha tamam sanaramara lokagarum. The teacher of all the world of human beings, all the worlds of all beings. So, this is the teacher of all beings, Gods, human. And the last line is: vaiide sugatam gativimuttam. Vaiide means "I pay respect". Sugatam means the one who has gone well, or the one who speaks well. It has two meanings, and I like both meanings. The one who has gone well. Or the one who's gone to safety. It has many meanings. So this is the nature of poem. One word can mean so much, and each meaning has its depth, very deeply. So, I pay respect to the one who has gone well, has gone to safety and he spoke well. Buddha spoke very well. He spoke the truth. And sugatam gati vimuttam means... Gati means any kind of existence in the samsara. Vimuttam mean free, the one who is free from existence. And this is very difficult to understand. Why is this so good? Why is freedom from existence good? To understand this very deeply, we have to meditate and see that any existence is not satisfactory. You might find some enjoyment or pleasure once in a while. I do enjoy some pleasure

once in a while, but still it's very unsatisfactory. Because it doesn't last.

So I recite this gathā. I sing this gathā actually: Karuna sitala hadayam pannapajjota vihata mohatamam sanaramaralokagarum vaiide. I had to raise my voice to sing it: vaiide sugatam gativimuttam. Karuna sitala hadayam pannapajjota vihata mohatamam sanaramaralokagarum vaiide sugatam gativimuttam. It's like a classical music. And if you sing that with real deep attention, it is giving the meaning also. It really brings a lot of joy. And if you know the meaning, it gives you also wisdom too. So anything we do with understanding makes us understand things very deeply, and it can change us too. If we do something with understanding, it changes us. Actually understanding changes us. If you do something without understanding, even though we think that we are doing something good, it might not really change us. Because we don't understand. So only understanding can have real effect on our life, not just devotion. If I sing this gathā without understanding the meaning, I might feel happy about it. Because I think that, "Oh, I'm doing something good. I'm paying respect to the Buddha. I memorize the gathā, the sounds." But when I understand the meaning, it becomes very profound. So, even understanding this one verse, one gathā, really deeply or if you get really deeper into the meaning, it becomes meditation and it can lead to liberation too. Very deep

in meaning. So for example, *karuna sitala hadayam*, the Buddha's heart, which is cool with compassion. What does compassion mean? Do we see compassion? Of course, sometimes we feel compassion. Sometimes not always.

So, let's talk about the haiku again, back to the haiku. So I was discussing about this haiku with a friend here, who came in just now. And to understand this haiku, you need to understand the context. So, this little haiku verse is: "The world of dew is only world of dew. And yet and yet." The poem is written by Basho. "The world of dew is only a world of dew. And yet and yet." What did he mean? He was a monk, a Zen monk. Can anybody guess what he meant? You can guess. Somebody, just make a good guess. Very sad to me. His meaning is very, [very sad to me]. To understand that poem, you need to understand why he wrote that poem, and when he wrote the poem. You need to understand his life, at least at that time in his life, when he wrote the poem. His little daughter died, maybe about 3 or 4 years old. Very beautiful, loving daughter died. And he was a monk, a very learned monk, actually a meditator who is supposed to understand the impermanence of all existence. And he was teaching that too, in some ways. So he thought, the world of dew is the world of impermanence. How long does it, the dew, last? Only a few hours in the morning. When the sun comes out, it disappears. So he said, "The world of dew is only a world of dew." He

knows that people are born and they will die, the world of impermanence. But this is his daughter. So he said, "And yet and yet". What does that mean? "And yet and yet". "And although I know that things are impermanent, although I know that people are born and they will die. And yet when my daughter died, I feel so sad. I feel so sad." But he didn't mention those words. And can you feel his sadness, this monk, very learned monk, [meditation] teacher, a meditator who is supposed to be beyond these feelings. So, he said these beautiful, simple words. So beautiful and so simple. You can't make it more simple. That's the beauty of haiku. It's so simple. And minimum, minimum of words. But with so much meaning and so much feeling.

"The world of dew is only the world of dew. And yet and yet." And these two words, "and yet and yet", make me feel so tremble in my heart. Oh, this Zen monk, he feels it so strongly. And I feel some into it. What will happen if my children die, if any one of them die? I think I will say the same thing. Exactly the same thing. "The world of dew is only the world of dew. And yet and yet." If anything like this happens to my children, I'll feel very sad, very sad. But you might think, for some of you might think, oh, why should a monk feel sad that he spent all the time to study for so long and has been practicing for so long? Yes, I'm studying, I've studied and I'm practicing. I'm studying too. But I have a long way to go. Although I have

come a long way, I have a long way to go. It is a long, long time to overcome all this: attachment. So, “And yet and yet.”

So, I have another long poem, actually. I wanted to talk about this poem a long time ago. But I have a difficulty, or the reason of which I postpone to talk about this subject for so long, is that whenever I read this poem, I feel very, very sad again. So, this old monk has not yet overcome the sadness of [can't get the word] very compassionate, his heart was very cool. Not me. I'm just a human being like you. So, I hope... I've talked a lot about myself with you, to you. And I thank you very much for really listening to me too. I really want you to understand the person that I am. I don't want you to take me for somebody who I am not. You may have some idea of this monk, and you might think that he must be like this. Maybe you are right, but maybe you are wrong. This is “A prayer for children”. Sometimes, I want to talk about compassion. The first thing that came into my mind was children. Older people also need to... we need to feel compassion for them too. But the first thing came into my mind, the first person was children. So, I have this poem for a long time, but every time I read this poem, I feel so sad that I couldn't talk about it. I was afraid that I would break down here, in front of you. But I prepared myself for a long, long time, many, many days that I will not break down. I will not cry in front of you. But if I do, I hope you understand. I'm

not sure.

Well, this poem was written by Ina Hughes. And the title is “A prayer for children“. So touching. “We pray for children...” Do we pray for children? Yes, we do sometimes. We hope that they are very happy. They are loved. They are cared for. We do it for our children or our relative children or grandchildren. [Can't get the words] They grow up with a lot of love, a lot of nurture, a lot of understanding. We pray that they don't go through so much difficulties that we went through, what we have been through. Many, many times, I prayed for my children. I hope they will not make the same mistakes that I made. I hope they will not feel neglected. I hope they will not feel unloved. I hope they don't feel misunderstood. I pray for my children, quite often, almost every day. So, here is “A prayer for children”. “We pray for children who put chocolate fingers everywhere.” This second line makes me feel like crying. Think of little babies and little boys and little girls. They like to eat sweet so much. In our country, we don't have chocolates. Very, very expensive. One piece of chocolate will cost about [can't get the words]. So, we have brown sugar balls, natural toddy sugar, brown. It tastes very good. And we have sugar cane, natural sugar cane, unrefined, brown sugar cane [slams]. So, when we were young, we ate quite a lot. [Break] a piece and then chewed it. Sweet, sugar cane [slams], just like chocolates. And yet our hands really sticky with sugar. And the whole

face sticky with sugar. Sometimes even our clothes. With the sticky hands we touch here, we touch there. And everything are dirty. We touch table, the table cloths and those everything dirty.

So, when I read this, it reminded me of my younger, my childhood days. I saw myself a young little boy and I really like sugar cane sugar, sugar cane sugar [slams]. I ate a lot. And when I put my fingers everywhere, my mom, she got so upset, so angry. "You are making everything dirty again. On the door and on the table, on the tablecloth and all your clothes. How many times have I told you not to do that?" But no matter how many times she told me, every time I ate sugar [slaps], I got dirty. I put my finger everywhere. So it reminded me of my childhood. Sometimes, my mom, she scolded me so hard that I thought she didn't love me anymore. So, I just run away. And then I came back and looked at her. Does she love me? No. Maybe yes. "Go go go away. Go now. Go and wash yourself." So, I have to go and wash my hands, thinking I've done something wrong. You know, kids don't know. They don't know what is right and what is wrong. So not only me, I know many other kids like that. Now, I have nieces and nephews, so innocent. They don't know and we are correcting them all the time. "Don't do this, don't do that. You have done it again. How many times do I need to tell you? You've made the same mistake again and again." With this innocent eyes, you are looking, "What have I

done wrong? I don't know." So, whenever I read this poem, oh, I feel so sad, I cry. So, don't scold children so much. They don't know. You need to be very kind to them. You need to teach them to do things right. But don't make them feel bad. Don't tell them you are bad boy, bad girl. So, think of yourself when you were so young. Then, mom or dad scold or maybe hit you. [can't get the words]. We are still carrying that little kid inside. It's a kid, hold him in your arms, hold her in your arms.

So, "who like to be tickled." "We pray for children who put chocolate fingers everywhere, who like to be tickled." Would you like to be tickled from your parents, all of us? Because that shows that our parents enjoy us, they tickle us, they make us laugh and then they laugh and we laugh. The real laugh. Do you missed it? Think of that and think of the babies still around you, near you at home, or your friend's children, or your relatives, or your own children. And they like to be tickled. They like attention. So, when you tickle them, they feel that, "Oh, my parents enjoy us. They love us. They are [can't get the word]."

"Who stomp in mud puddles and ruin their new pants." Oh, we did that quite a lot. It rained a lot in our country. [Monsoon] rain, very heavy rain. We like to run in the rain and get ourselves dirty. Kids are like that. "Who stomp in mud puddles and ruin their new pants, who sneak popsicles before supper." So, parents

tell us, don't eat anything before your supper. Don't eat any sweet before your supper. My parents told me again and again, don't eat anything before your meal. Because if you eat sweet, then you won't eat your meal. But we always like to sneak some sweet stuff. Kids are like that, they are like that, like to get dirty, to sneak popsicles before supper. "Who erase holes in math workbooks." Yes, we did it. With eraser, we rub and rub and make holes. Simple things kids like to do. They just do it. So lovely, so innocent. For them [as kids], everything is like a game. They don't have the idea of work. They don't have the idea of study, actually. For them, everything is a game. And I think sometimes we lose that sort of attitude. We lose that we are seeing everything as a game. Actually, sometimes I tell my friends, life is a game, play it very well with intelligence, but don't take it so seriously. Sometimes you take things so, so seriously. That's a game. Let's play with real intelligence.

"Who can never find their shoes." Sometimes we keep the shoes somewhere and couldn't find it. Not only shoes, sometimes we couldn't find our socks. And we couldn't find our pencils and pens and whatever. We put away thing somewhere and we couldn't find it anymore. And we were scolded again and again to be disciplined. "We pray for children who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions." Look, imagine a little kid, maybe your children, maybe you yourself did that to your mom, to your father, to your dad, sticky kisses,

because you are so dirty. When you go and hug your mom or your dad and you give a kiss. "Oh, stinky, smelly." But they love you. You love them. [Can't get the words]. Your children love you. And "who brings us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions." Kids like to take wild flowers. And when they bring home, "mom, there are flowers." Sometimes she said, "Okay, put it over there." For them, it was very exciting to pick some flowers to bring home. Wonderful to do that. But older people lose that sense of wonder. We measure everything with money. But kids don't have the idea of money. They just love beautiful things. Wild flowers, the amazing gift of doing that, picking wild flowers and bringing home for your mother or your father. So lovely, so tender. You need to be very careful. They get hurt very easily. They are so tender. They are so scary, actually. If you're safe and secure, they'll feel that you love them, you will love them for no reason at all, unconditionally. If you say "I don't love you anymore", they feel really scared. One of my niece, her mother told her that "I will give you away." And she is so terrified. And also another child I know, her grandparents and her parents told her that "you don't belong to us. Look, you are so different." And this little girl, she is so young. She didn't know that they were just saying that as a joke or just as a punishment to make her behave well. You know what she did? She went away and she said "Thank you. Yes, that might be true. I haven't belonged in this home. They are not my relatives. They are nobody and I am

nobody". And for years she felt that very deeply. For years and years... And when I talk with her, she told me that "I felt that so strongly for so many years, always thinking that this is not my home. I was adopted."

Kids don't know. They feel it. They cannot [say] very much, but they can feel very deeply, more than grown up people. They feel it very deeply. So, we should be very careful when we talk with them, when we treat them. Think about yourself again when you were very young, even as a joke your parents told you something and it hurt you so deeply. You carried that hurt for years and years, and it got real serious psychological damage. And that little girl I know, she was really psychologically very damaged. Even now she is grown up, she said "I still can't relate to them as my close relatives. Although I know now that they are my blood relatives, I still cannot feel close." Because she felt like she was adopted. She felt like she didn't belong for so many years when she was young.

So, when we talk with each other, we need to be very careful not just to the young children, even to grown up people. Even one word can hurt another person so deeply and make him or her feel shame and neglected and worthless. You can do that. You can cause a lot of damage by just one word. So when we talk about compassion, it's not just an idea in our head. At first, compassion means: "May all beings be free from

suffering.” This is an idea. Later, when we keep developing this compassion, it becomes a feeling. We feel for another person. And if you keep on doing that, later it becomes wisdom. Then it becomes complete. Compassion, without wisdom, is not complete. Sometimes, we think that we have compassion and we hurt and caused a lot of damage, because we don’t have enough wisdom. So, compassion or metta (lovingkindness) in the beginning is just an idea or maybe a feeling. Maybe in the beginning it’s just attachment, not real metta. Later, it becomes a real feeling and then later it becomes wisdom. Then it becomes complete.

So, to have compassion for another person, we need to be very sensitive to understand how another person is feeling. This moment, when we talk to another person, you have to be very sensitive: How my words affect you? You have to be very sensitive, to read the signs on the face, the eyes, the way the eyes look. If the person is looking at you and pleased, smiling or looking away, looking down, quiet, sad, whatever the expression might be. You have to pay very close attention to them. So, when you become more and more mindful, you become more and more sensitive. When you become more more sensitive, you become more receptive. You can receive in more information, verbal information and non-verbal information. You can receive that and process that information correctly. When we are mindful, when we are paying

attention, then we know how another person feels. So only by being mindful, we can develop the sensitivity, receptivity and then compassion understanding. Without mindfulness, just with the idea that “I want to do something good for another person” and we force our idea on that person and hurt that person. We might force the other person to eat something and to do something and hurt that person too. So, to be really compassionate means to be wise also. Without deep wisdom, we cannot be really compassionate. But to be wise, you need to be mindful. Without mindfulness, there could be no wisdom. Without wisdom, there could be no real compassion. So, once in a while we feel for another person, sometimes, and in most cases we hurt another person, especially our family members. Even today, somebody came and talked about family matters, and I’ve noticed that they are not sensitive to each other. They are very dutiful and that even hurts more. Sometimes, dutiful hurts even more. We don’t neglect them. They are very dutiful and that makes another person very painful. So let’s be more mindful and more sensitive. Then we can even become more compassionate.

So, “We pray for children who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish.” Many different words. But think of it, it’s very real. When I was young, also, I had cats and dogs. So now here, there are cats and they are now my friends. And one little kitten with one broken leg, somebody left the kitten here. And she was so scary

and confused and very hungry and cold too. I gave some food and little kitten came and I touched the kitten, pat, hold. And she felt a little bit secure. And I picked the kitten and took her into my room, a warm place. And the little kitten is running around like wild and all she's trying is to get my attention. So, I let my hand, one hand down, when I was reading and patting the cat and reading also. Sometimes she wanted to climb on my body. So I picked up the little kitten and let it sit on my lap and put my hand on her, and after a while she became relaxed and looking up at me. Then later, she felt more secure and went down again and jumped on my bed and slept there for a while. Just like a person, just like a baby with [can't get the word]. So when my little kitten died when I was young, I buried that little kitten and I told my mom to do some funeral service also. Well, she didn't take it so seriously. She said, "Oh, forget about it." But I thought, I need a funeral service for my cat.

You know, children think very differently. For children, cats and dogs are personal. They are not animals. They are persons. And one of my nephews, her dog died and she demanded that I [did] a funeral service for the dog. And she said she will never have a dog anymore. She felt so strongly that she lost her brother. So, kids are like that, you know. You need to be very sensitive. They feel very deeply that we don't take them seriously. We forgot how we felt when we were young. So, it's important for us to go back to our

childhood days and try to understand how we felt when we were young. It's not a joke. Feelings are very real. It can really affect our mind, our heart, or it can really change our personality. Not just words. So, "we pray for children who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish." And I think about this and imagine a little kid burying the dog and burying the goldfish and demanding a funeral service for the dog. I can feel [can't get the words] that the kid was feeling very sad.

Not just only kid. All of us are big kids actually. In some ways, we are still big kids, overgrown kids. We see what we see very deeply. Sometimes we don't talk about it because we think that "if I talk about it, people might think that I'm just crazy". So, we keep things inside, although we feel it, very reluctant to talk about feelings. It is very important to acknowledge our feelings. Feelings are real. Understand it very deeply, and also understand that others also feel very deeply. We are not computerized robots. We are people with feelings. So, to understand another person's feeling means to be compassionate. The compassion doesn't mean just idea. You feel for another person, to understand other person's feelings and then do what is appropriate for that person. Compassion also is mental, verbal and bodily action. All three. You can't just sit and think: "May all beings be free from suffering." You can't just stop there. What are you doing about it? Say something. Do something about it.

And “we pray for children who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.” Kids are late for school. So, they run and give us a hug. And then they run on the bus and gone, forgot the money. I did that many times, and later on my sister or somebody will come with a lunch box and some money to school. And while I was reading this, I was thinking of my sister. She brought lunch for me many, many times when I was young.

“We pray for children to cover themselves with band aids and sing off key.” Children sing off key, because we cannot sing very well, right key. Off key, but it sounds so nice. So also, when I was reading this “sing off key”, I remember myself singing. I like singing very much. Since I was very young, I like singing, I like playing musical instruments, and I played musical instruments when I was young. Violin, mandolin, flute, harmonica. So I remember myself singing: “Tinkle, tinkle, little star. How I wonder what you are.” I remember myself singing that. [Can’t get the words] And I love the kid. I feel for him even now, when he was very lonely, when he felt very lonely. I even think now. Oh, he felt so lonely. And then... So, don’t forget how [can’t get the words] and how we feel now, even. Then understand that person, how he or she felt, how he or she feels now. “We pray for children who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink.” Well, some kids who use toothpaste. But when we were young, we didn’t use toothpaste. Anyway, we

spill everything, everywhere. So, you squeeze toothpaste all over the sink. “We pray for children who slurp their soup.” Think about that. Lovely, lovely kids, lovely children, lovely young boys, lovely young girls. If you can see that, even if you can feel his or her happiness, that’s the kind of feeling for him, feeling with him. Or sympathy or empathy, the word is very similar to compassion too. Sympathy or empathy, I’m not sure. Compassion, feeling with or feeling for another person, then understanding.

And “we pray for those who never get dessert.” There are thousands of children like that, no dessert, just plain food. Because dessert is luxury. There isn’t dessert every day in your country, in my country. “Who can’t find any bread to steal”. You’re so hungry. You are looking for something to steal and eat. But there is nothing there to steal, even to steal. So, sometimes in the forest where we plant some fruit trees and people, some young kids will come and steal. They are hungry. So sometimes, you see [can’t get the words] I just planted these trees because I love planting trees. And I am not expecting any fruit from these trees. “We pray for those who don’t have any rooms to clean up.” Many people have no rooms. Just a bed to sit, to lie down and sleep. Some don’t even have proper blankets. A lot of kids like that. “We pray for those whose pictures aren’t on anybody’s dresser.” So, some lovely children want to take pictures and then place the pictures somewhere on the dresser, on

the mantelpiece, somewhere, [can't get the words] But there are many children with no parent. [Can't get the words] "Whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser." There is nobody they can go and call mom or dad. Often many, many hundreds, maybe thousands. Everywhere in the country, in the world. Maybe even in this country. I'm not sure, but. [Can't get the words] You don't have anybody to call mom or dad.

And "we pray for those who will eat anything." Who will eat anything. Because they are hungry. Because they are starving. So, sometimes once, a long time ago, I saw pictures of Africans living, in Africa, where they are starving. One old man, he was lying down with a very torn blanket on his body, and somebody was giving him a packet of rehydration salts, and he was trying to reach the packet, and somebody took the picture. This person was almost a skeleton. And children also, with the National geographic magazine, they brought the child to the hospital, but the doctors said "it's too late". The child had died and the doctor can't do anything anymore. It's just too late. There are people like that. So when I see so much food here thrown away, you know what I did? Once I went into the kitchen and opened up the cupboard and opened the container, the bin where you throw the food and I look (into it). So much food there. Enough for 20 people I think. [can't get the words]. What can I do? I can't take this food, but I just think of some people are starving. 20 is plenty. I'm not blaming for those who

have plenty, but I just want you to think that we have plenty of [people] starving. So, this is compassion. Compassion is not just a word we think and say: “May all beings be free from suffering.” What can we do about it? What are we doing about it?

“We pray for those who have never seen a dentist.” Some people have swollen teeth, cry currently and they can’t go to a dentist, can’t afford to go to a dentist, not no dentists around. So you know what some people do? They call the kid, “come, come and take a chisel and hit the tooth off”. That’s all they can do. Just sit and open the mouth and then hit the teeth, take it off. Sometimes they put some medicine that burns. There are people like that. They have no medical treatment. You know how the toothache feel, [can’t get the words]. And “we pray for those who aren’t spoiled by anybody”. I thought nobody described him. “We pray for those who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep”. And “we pray for those who live and move, but have no being”. That’s the most touching point, that “no being”. What do you mean by “being”? Human beings are not born complete human beings. Human beings are born incomplete. To become a real human being, we need grown up people, parents or grandparents, relatives and friends to look after us, to love us, to teach us [with kindness], to become good human beings. If there is nobody to love us, nobody to teach us, you don’t become a being actually. So, “we pray for those

who live and move that has no being". There are thousands and thousands of people like that.

So, I've been very sad when I read this poem, and I can't really say that that is real compassion, but at least it's something like compassion. Because real compassion comes with deep wisdom and it doesn't make you unhappy. But I read this poem and it makes me unhappy. But that is where I have to begin. I can't begin from the end. I have to begin from where I am now. So, I can't do quite a lot for everybody. But if all of us try to do as much as we can for even for another person or another dog or another cat even, I think the world will be a better place, if we try. Too much suffer in the world. Why? Why? I can see that. I can feel that. People come and I can feel their feelings sometimes, at least sometimes I do. And I can feel their sadness, their loneliness. They are trying to touch another person, connect another person, try to stay in the present silently. Look, I want you to understand how I feel. I want you to know me. And I want to know you too, because knowing each other makes us feel very close. And that eradicates loneliness. I feel lonely and you feel lonely, too. But I am seeing that we cannot touch each other. Or you can say that you cannot feel for each other. Why is it that we cannot understand each other? Why? You have to think very deeply about these matters.

Whenever I talk about something, it's something I

really feel, not just words from books. So, I don't mean that I am a very compassionate person. I told you that in the last week too, sometimes I am very cold. [Can't get the words] But sometimes I really feel for people. So, why is there suffering in the world? One person asked this question and another person answered that question. I think it is difficult to answer the question when we asked him. Well, he does have the answer, very interesting answer, he said, is [can't get the words]. When you ask him the question, "why is there suffering in the world, so much suffering in the world?", he said to [can't get the words]. Yes, without suffering, the story will be so uninteresting. So much suffering in the world. If you try to write a story without any suffering in it, you'll find it very hard to write. You have to put in some problems, some suffering to make the story interesting. So I do not know why there is so much suffering in the world. But I know a few things that there are more and more suffering these days. Quite sad. I think with a little more mindfulness, with a little more sensitivity, with a little more clarity of our mind, with a little more peacefulness in our heart, we can pay more attention to another person and be more receptive to how the other person's feeling, our parents, our mother, our father, our brothers and sisters, our wife or husband, our children, our friends, maybe a stranger on the street or on a bus, if we are calm and peaceful, receptive, we can pay attention.

Mostly, we are not calm. We are not peaceful. We have our own suffering and happiness and loneliness so overwhelming that we cannot pay attention to another person. We have no time for another person. We have no place in our heart for another person. So in order to be compassionate for another person, the first thing you need to do is to pay attention to our stuff, to our own unhappiness, suffering, loneliness, to become more mindful. And understanding ourselves very deeply helps us to handle our own suffering, loneliness, and to overcome to a certain extent at least, to become more and more peaceful, more sensitive, more loving, more compassionate. So real love, real compassion, [can't get the words] comes from some kind of calmness, peacefulness, sensitivity, awareness. Without awareness, without mindfulness, without sensitivity, without space in our heart, how can we receive another person? So, we have to make space in our heart. We have too much stuff in our inside. Not enough space. So to become really loving and compassionate, we need to be mindful and meditate. Can you accept that? That is my point. Because you just you can't just sit and say "May all beings be happy. May all beings be free from suffering." That's just words. Do you really feel that? Do you really understand that, the deep wisdom? Can you really see why we are suffering? Why I am suffering? Why I feel so lonely? Why I feel nobody can really trust me? Why are we so scared? We don't really understand that. Start to understand that in ourselves, then we

will start to understand others too. So with more mindfulness, with more sensitivity, with more clarity, with some, at least some peacefulness, we can make space in our heart for another person.

So, that's one hour. Every time I come here, I want to say so much. That was a confession. Yes, I want you to think more about it, to pay attention. So, that is a little haiku poem: "The world of dew is only the world of dew. And yet and yet." People are born to die. You know that it's impermanent. And yet, I think this thing suffer so much unnecessarily. Although we will not be able to eradicate all suffering, I think if we really become more mindful, we can help ourselves, we can help others, at least to reduce that suffering. Suffering is a fact of life, but I think a lot of people are suffering unnecessarily. We are causing each other suffering sometimes. Because we are so insensitive. I did it also. Maybe I will still do that. But at least if I become more mindful and peaceful deep inside, I will do that less and less. At least I can hope that.

So today we just, we do... we have an hour paying attention, meditate for a while and then think of each person you know and see how much you can feel for that person. Loneliness, sadness, unhappiness, suffering, whatever that feeling might be. Father, mother, brother, sister, husband or wife, friends, even strangers. Slowly think of each person, even all those who are here. What you see? I am reluctant to talk

about it. But anyway, I said I need your compassion too. I need your loving kindness too. Yes, I need it. So let's think of each other here also [Sayadaw mentioned a few other names]. So, all of us here. Think of each person. You can even open your eyes and look at the face and even from the back, look at that person staying there and pay attention a little bit. It might be sometimes you feel so lonely. Just like me. Sometimes you want somebody to listen to you.

We meditate with breathing as what you usually do. You know how to do that. Breathe in deeply. Breathe out. Pay attention to the air coming in, touching your nostrils, feeling the air coming in, very cool. Going out warm, softly, gently touching. So that your mind calm down a bit. Breathe in, breathe out and then relax. So, when it becomes more relaxed, becomes more peaceful, then generate the compassion to each person you know, everybody here at home, at work, anywhere.

[Can't get the words] Breath in, breathe out. Your mind drifts away. Breathe in to yourself. Back to the person for whom you want to develop compassion for.

The name of the person. Create the image, the face of the body, the whole body of the person.

[Can't get the words] If your mind drifts away, pay attention to your breath, and gently, patiently and

compassionately bring your mind back. Calm down a bit, relax. And then generate compassionate thoughts.

Call each person's name in your heart. You will tell that person that you can see his or her feelings, any kind of feeling.

[Bell]

What do you feel now? Your heart is cool with compassion. Karuna sitala hadayam. You feel real compassion. You don't punish. If you really think about it, quite a lot of us, I don't mean everybody, but a lot of us are punishing each other in many ways. And if we punish any person, in some ways, we punish ourselves with that. That guilt acts indirectly, unconsciously upon ourselves.

If you have any questions, please.

Uh, that's a very good thing to do. Yes. That will solve the problem. And another thing is... Think of the bigger picture. It's very hard to talk about, actually. Because we don't see everything from the beginning to end. But at least, I think when you bring a child into the world, before we do that, we have to really think about it. Can I really parent that child? Can I be a good parent? Or why am I bringing a child? Why do I want a child? Not to tell everybody not to have any child. It's very difficult, almost impossible. I think it's

impossible to do. But at least, we can remind people to think more deeply before you have a child. Ask yourself, “Am I ready to be a parent?” You see, we don’t teach people to become good parents. We teach computers and other things, business, management. You don’t really teach how to be a good father? How to be a good mother? Is there a college, where they teach how to be a good mother and father? I don’t hear any college like that. How to be a good wife or a good husband? As if we think these things are just natural and easy to do. Not so easy to do. So, to be biologically a parent is quite natural, quite easy. But psychologically, emotionally to be a good parent is not that easy. Very difficult. So it’s partly our karma and partly the child’s karma also. But yet and yet, with a little bit more wisdom, we can reduce a lot of suffering.

So, before we become a parent, and even after we become a parent, we should think very deeply about it. How can I really help this person who has become my child? How can I really help this person to grow up to be a mature, intelligent and also spiritually developed person? How can I help this person in his or her spiritual development? We need to think about it very deeply. If you feel like you are not ready for a parents, then do not become a parent. Lot of people become parents [can’t get the words]. But at least, if we pay more attention, we prepare for it, there will be less suffering. Thank you for that question. It’s very

important. I've been thinking about it for a long, long time. You know why?

I reveal myself again, I talk a lot about myself. But let me tell you, when I was younger, I was very, very secretive. I never let anybody know what I am doing, what I am thinking and what I am feeling. When I was young, but later I found out that that made me feel even more and more lonely and desperate. That what I found. I understand that and develop enough courage to let people know about myself, good and bad. This is me. Take it or leave it. But I can't go on pretending the person that I am not. It's too tiring. It becomes bigger and bigger burden. I can't go on acting anymore. It's too much. I am getting older and there is no time for posturing anymore. Be real. If people don't like you, they will not come. They will just leave you. And those who like you will be real friends.

So, I will tell you another of my story. I think I already told you, but there may be some others who don't know. I left my children when they were very, very young. Many reasons. There are many reasons. Not only my fault, not only their fault, not anybody's total fault. We just did not understand. Not enough knowledge, not enough wisdom. We just reacted too much and things got worse and worse until we can't manage anything anymore. So, I thought that was the best thing for me to do. Because otherwise things could become even worse. So very desperately, I

decided to do the best. But anyway, when my children grew up, they asked me, “If you can’t love your children, if you can’t look after your children, why did you have them?”