

## **Lesson 12 – AVOID JEALOUSY**

*Opening chants, meditation and review of last lesson.*

*Question to think about before the story:* Have you ever felt **jealous** when a friend wanted to be with someone else rather than with you?

### **Story: Moggallana and Sariputta**

After the Buddha ordained the Kassapas and their 1000 students, they went with the Buddha to Rajagaha. The King of Magadha, King Bimbisara, along with 120,000 people of the brahmin caste in his kingdom came to visit the Buddha, who instructed them in the Dharma. Most of them, including the king, fully understood the Dharma when they heard it, and all of them became followers of the Buddha. The king invited the Buddha and bhikkshus (monks) for breakfast the next day. After they ate, the king thought, “where could the Buddha stay that is quiet and not too far from the town or too near?” He offered the Buddha and his Sangha (community of monks) the Bamboo Grove, Veluvana, which became the first Buddhist monastery.

Also staying in Rajagaha at that time was a wandering monk named Sanjaya with his 250 students. The two highest level students, Sariputta (also called Upatissa) and Moggallana (also called Kolita), had made a promise to each other that the first one to reach the Deathless (knowing the Truth and being released from the cycle of birth and death) would tell the other. One morning, one of the Buddha’s monks, Venerable Assaji, went into Rajagaha with his bowl to get food (alms). He walked very gracefully, always looking down. Sariputta saw him and thought Ven. Assaji must be an arahant.

After Ven. Assaji gathered his food, Sariputta said to him, “Friend, you look serene and your skin is clear and bright. Who is your teacher? Whose Dharma have you learned?” Ven. Assaji replied, “The Great Monk from the Sakyan clan is my teacher, and it is his Dharma that I learn.” Sariputta asked, “What does he teach?” Ven. Assaji humbly said, “I have only recently become a monk, friend, so I cannot teach you the Dharma in detail. The Perfect One has told us the cause of all things that arise, and what causes things to end.” Sariputta then fully realized that everything that arises must end.

Sariputta went to his friend Moggallana, who said to Sariputta, “You look serene and your skin is clear and bright. Is it possible that you found the Deathless?” Sariputta said, “Yes, I have found it,” and told him what Ven. Assaji said. Moggallana then also fully realized that everything that arises must end. He said, “Let us go to the Buddha. He is our teacher.” Sariputta said, “But friend, these 250 wandering monks are depending on us. We should tell them, and they can do as they like.” They told the students, who said that they depended on Sariputta and Moggallana, so they also would go to the Buddha.

Sariputta and Moggallana then went to Sanjaya and told him what they were going to do. Sanjaya said, “Friends, don’t go, let us three guide this community together.” But Sariputta and Moggallana had decided to go to the Buddha, so they went with the 250 students to the Bamboo Grove where the Buddha and his Sangha was. Sanjaya was so upset that he felt that hot blood was gushing from his mouth.

The Buddha saw Sariputta and Moggallana coming in the distance, and said, “Here come these two friends. They will be my chief disciples, an auspicious pair.” When they arrived, Sariputta and Moggallana bowed to the Buddha and asked to be ordained, and he immediately ordained them. A few days later, they became arahants.

By now, many well known men in Maghada had become Buddhist monks. Some people did not like the men to leave their families. They thought that Buddha was causing women not to have husbands or children because the men had become monks. When they saw the bhikkshus, they made fun of them, saying “Gautama the monk came to Magadha and led away all of Sanjaya’s men; who will he lead away today?” When the bhikkshus told the Buddha about it, the Buddha said, “This will not last long, only seven days, and after seven days it will go away. When they say that, tell them ‘Led by Dharma they are great heroes and Perfect Ones; when they are led by Dharma, where is the reason for jealousy?’” When the people mocked the bhikkshus again, the monks said what the Buddha told them to say. Then the people began to think, “The Sakyan monks lead by Dharma, it seems, not against Dharma.” After seven days, they stopped mocking the bhikkshus.

*Questions after the story:*

1. What did Sariputta notice about Venerable Assaji?
2. Why did Sariputta and Moggallana decide that the Buddha is their teacher?
3. How did Sanjaya feel when all of his students left to go to the Buddha?
4. What does “chief disciples” mean?
5. What does “auspicious” mean?
6. Do you think that the bhikkshus felt jealous when the Buddha announced that Moggallana and Sariputta will be his chief disciples? Why or why not?
7. Why did people make fun of the bhikkshus?

*Quotation of Buddha about the moral of the story:*

**“Paravajjānupassissa, niccaṃ ujjhānasaññino, āsavā tassa vaḍḍhanti, ārā so āsavakkhayā.”**

**“He who seeks another person’s faults, who is ever critical of others - his pain grows. He is far from the destruction of the pain.”**

Dhammapada 253 (18:19)

*Application of the moral(s) in the story to our daily lives:*

Sanjaya was so upset that he felt like hot blood was gushing from his mouth when he lost his students. If they had all suddenly died, do you think he would have

felt the same way? If they died, he might feel sad, lonely and would miss them. But instead, he felt severe mental pain. He did not want them to leave, but he did not want to join them to go to the Buddha. He probably felt that his students belonged to him, and he could not stand to see them go to another teacher who they preferred rather than being with him. He did not want them to pay attention to another teacher and not to him. This is jealousy, a feeling that “he belongs to me, not to you,” “get away- she is *my* friend, not yours!” or “don’t pay attention to them, pay attention to me!” A truly holy person who is not jealous probably would have gone with his students to see the Buddha. Sanjaya was an example of a jealous person.

How do you think the bhikkshus felt when the Buddha, before even meeting Sariputta and Moggallana, said that they would be his chief disciples? Other bhikkshus may have wanted to be the special student of the Buddha, feeling “he’s *my* teacher, he pays special attention to me.” They may have not wanted him to give special attention to Sariputta and Moggallana instead. They could have felt jealous. But, if they understood the Dharma very well, they would not feel jealous.

Who else was jealous in the story? The people who thought the men should be married rather than become monks. They may have thought “These are *our* men, and the Buddha is stealing them away from us.” So, they criticized the Buddha, hoping that he would feel bad about it and then leave their men alone.

Has a friend ever ignored you and become close friends with someone else? That happens to almost everyone at some time in life. Maybe we thought “What is so great about him (or her)?” Maybe we felt rejected; we don’t like to think that we are not good enough, or inferior to the other person. So, we may have quickly tried to find out that the other person is not so great: we watched that person, talked to others about him or her, and tried to find out all the bad things about him or her. In other words, we were “seeking another person’s faults.” Because of our jealousy, we may have had many negative thoughts about that person. We may have criticized, spoken unkindly or acted arrogantly to him or her. We may have said bad things about him or her.

How do you feel when a brother or sister gets more attention from your parent or other family member than you get? Have you ever felt jealous? When we feel jealous, we may criticize our brother or sister, or we may tell our parents about his or her misbehavior, hoping that we will then get more attention.

Do we really feel better when we criticize someone? The Buddha tells us that seeking another person’s faults (noticing something bad, weak, ugly, or ignorant in a person), and being critical of others, increases our mental pain. Then why would we do this? Because we also cannot stand the pain of jealousy. When we are rejected and someone else gets all the attention, it hurts. We don’t want to think that person is better than we are. We think that by criticizing that person, we make ourselves seem better than him or her, so then we will feel better about

ourselves. But does it really make us any better? No, it makes us worse. We waste time trying to find faults, we worry if we don't find faults, we may even try to find faults that don't exist. We then develop a bad habit of finding fault, criticizing others. This increases our mental pain, makes the pain grow.

Knowing this, we can decide not to find fault, not to criticize, and just let friends go if they want to. We can find another friend, especially if we have good character - which includes not criticizing or saying bad things about others! Good people will like us more when we are happy, kind and peaceful, so then it is very easy to find really good friends. Similarly, we don't need to criticize our brother or sister to get attention; we will impress our parents more by our good character than by criticizing.

How can we stop criticizing and looking for faults? By noticing when we do it, and then quickly thinking of some good things about the person instead.

*Activity to reinforce the lesson:* List of Criticisms and Praises:

Students write the lesson's quotation of the Buddha at the top of a paper, and then write "Think and speak praises, not criticisms." Underneath, draw a vertical line down the middle of the paper, making two columns. Title the left column "Criticisms" and in that column, list some typical criticisms against another person (for example, "talks too much"). Title the right column "Praises" and in that column, list typical phrases of admiration about another person (for example, "talks about interesting things").

*Closing chant:* Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā      May all beings have happy minds!