

Tranquillity and Insight in Early Buddhist Discourse

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

lecture 3

MĀ 72 – Discourse on the History of King Long-lifespan (Parallel to MN 128/ MN III 153)

"Monks, those monarchs, anointed warrior kings, rulers of great countries, in governing their country, themselves practiced patience in the face of insult and in turn praised [such] patience, themselves practiced loving-kindness and in turn praised loving kindness ...

"Monks, you too should be like that. Having left home out of faith and gone forth to practice the path, you should practice patience in the face of insult and also praise [such] patience, yourselves practice loving-kindness and also praise loving-kindness ..."

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(But monks are unwilling to stop their quarrel, so the Buddha leaves them. He first visits the monk Bhagu, who lives alone by himself. Then the Buddha lives by himself in the company of an elephant, after which he approaches Anuruddha and his companions)

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Those venerable ones were practicing in this way:

Whichever of them came back first from begging alms-food would set out the seats, draw water, and put out the utensils for washing feet: the foot mat, the cloth for wiping feet, the water pot, and the bathing bowl. If he was able to finish the food he had received, he would finish it; but if there were leftovers, he would put them in a

container and cover it. Having completed his meal, he would put away his bowl, wash his hands and feet and, with his sitting mat over his shoulder, go into a hut to sit in meditation.

Whichever of them came back last from begging alms-food would eat all of the food if he was able to; and if it was not sufficient, he would take from the food previously left over and eat until he had had enough. If there were still leftovers, he would empty them out on the bare ground or into water that contained no living beings.

He would take the eating utensils and, having washed them clean and wiped them, would put them away to one side. He would gather and roll up the sitting mats and put away the utensils for washing feet, collecting the foot mat, the cloth for wiping feet, the water pot, and the bathing bowl. After having swept and sprinkled the dining hall so that it was clean and free of refuse, he would put away his robe and bowl, wash his hands and feet and, with his sitting mat over his shoulder, go into a hut to sit in meditation.

In the afternoon, if the first of those venerable ones to rise from sitting in meditation saw that the water pot or the bathing bowl was empty of water, he would take it and go to fetch [water]. If he was able to, he would carry it back and place it to one side. If he was not able to [carry it], he would beckon with his hand to another monk, and the two would carry it together and place it to one side, without speaking to each other, without asking each other anything.

Once in five days those venerable ones would assemble to discuss Dharma together or to maintain noble silence.

Then the park warden, who had seen the Blessed One coming in the distance, stopped him, saying: "Renuciant, renuciant, do not enter this park. Why? In this park there are three clansmen, the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandiya, and the venerable Kimbila. If they were to see you, they might disapprove."

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(Anuruddha stops the park warden and invites the Buddha in)

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At that time the Buddha, having washed his hands and feet, sat down on the seat set out by that venerable one. Having sat down, he asked: "Anuruddha, are you constantly at ease, lacking nothing?" The venerable Anuruddha replied: "Blessed One, I am constantly at ease, lacking nothing."

The Blessed One asked: "Anuruddha, in what way are you constantly at ease, lacking nothing?" The venerable Anuruddha replied:

"Blessed One, I have this thought: 'It is a great gain for me, it is a great blessing for me, that I am practicing together with such companions in the holy life.

"Blessed One, towards these companions in the holy life I constantly practice bodily deeds of loving-kindness, both seen and unseen, equally and without distinction; I practice verbal deeds of loving-kindness and mental deeds of loving kindness, both seen and unseen, equally and without distinction.

"Blessed One, I have this thought: 'Let me now forgo my own state of mind and follow the state of mind of those venerable friends. Then, Blessed One, I forgo my own state of mind and follow the state of mind of those venerable friends.

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(the other two monks report the same)

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The Blessed One praised them: "Well done, well done, Anuruddhas! In these ways you are constantly together in harmony, at ease and

without contention, of a single mind, of a single teacher, blending like water and milk. No doubt you [also] attain a superhuman state, a distinction, a peaceful abiding in tranquility?"

The venerable Anuruddha replied: "Blessed One, in these ways we are [indeed] constantly together in harmony, at ease and without contention, of a single mind, of a single teacher, blending like water and milk. [We also] attain a superhuman state, a state of distinction, a peaceful abiding in tranquillity. Blessed One, we attain [inner] light and consequently vision of forms; [but] that vision of forms and [inner] light soon disappear again."

The Blessed One said: "Anuruddhas, you have not penetrated that sign, namely the sign of attaining [inner] light and vision of forms. [Consequently] the vision of forms and the [inner] light soon disappear again.

"Formerly, Anuruddhas, when I had not yet attained awakening to the supremely right and true Path, I too attained [inner] light and vision of forms; [but] that vision of forms and [inner] light soon disappeared again.

"Anuruddhas, I had this thought: 'Practicing diligently, without negligence, with the body tranquil and settled, with right mindfulness and right attentiveness, without confusion, I have attained concentration and mental unification. What in this world does not exist, could I see it and or know that?' This doubt, this affliction, arose in my mind.

Because of this affliction of doubt, my concentration fell away and the [inner] eye ceased; and with the ceasing of the [inner] eye, the [experience] of bright light and the vision of forms I earlier attained, that vision of forms and [inner] light soon disappeared again.