

Tranquillity and Insight in Early Buddhist Discourse

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

lecture 5

MĀ 73 – Discourse on Gods (Parallel to AN 8.64/ AN IV 302)

- 1) light & forms
- 2) converse with *devas*
- 3) names of *devas*
- 4) pleasure and pain of *devas*
- 5) lifespan of *devas*
- 6) karma leading to *deva* rebirth
- 7) recognize individual *devas*
- 8) himself previous been such a *deva*

"Once I had rightly come to know these eight courses, then I could claim to have attained them. I then knew that I had awakened to the supremely right and true path, and had transcended this world with its gods, Māras, Brahmās, renunciants, and brahmins; and I had become freed through the various liberations. I became separated from all distortions and knew as it truly is: 'Birth is ended, the holy life has been established, what was to be done has been done. There will not be another existence.'"

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MĀ 74 – Discourse on Eight Thoughts (Parallel to AN 8.30 / AN IV 228)

At that time the venerable Anuruddha was seated in meditation in a quiet place, reflecting. He had these [seven] thoughts:

- (1) "The path is attained through having no desires, not through having desires."
- (2) "... through contentment, not through dissatisfaction."
- (3) "... through seclusion, not through rejoicing in company, dwelling in company, being together with company."
- (4) "... through effort, not through indolence."
- (5) "... through right mindfulness, not through wrong mindfulness."
- (6) "... through a concentrated mind, not through a distracted mind."
- (7) "... through wisdom, not through delusion."

Then, through the [supernormal] knowledge of other minds the Blessed One came to know the thoughts, reflections, and activities in the mind of the venerable Anuruddha. Having come to know this, the Blessed One entered a certain concentrated state. Through this concentrated state, just as a strong man might bend and stretch out his arm, the Blessed One disappeared from the Deer Park in the Bhesakaḷa Forest on Suṃsumāra Mountain in the Bhagga country and appeared before the venerable Anuruddha in the Sandbank Forest in the Ceti country.

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The Buddha praises Anuruddha for these seven thoughts and adds an eighth thought:

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MĀ 74

(8) 'The path is attained through absence of proliferation, delighting in absence of proliferation, and practicing absence of proliferation, not through proliferation, not through delighting in proliferation, not through practicing proliferation.'

"Anuruddha, if you become accomplished in these eight thoughts of a great man, you will certainly be able to attain [the four absorptions]: 'Separated from desires, separated from evil and unwholesome states ... (*up to*) having attained the fourth absorption.'

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8 qualities that lead to attaining absorption:

- 1) fewness of desires or no desires
- 2) contentment
- 3) seclusion
- 4) effort
- 5) mindfulness
- 6) concentration
- 7) wisdom
- 8) no proliferation

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MĀ 74

1) "Anuruddha, if you become accomplished in the eight thoughts of a great man and also attain these four higher states of mind, happy abidings in the present, attaining them with ease and without difficulty, then you will be like a king or a royal minister who has a fine chest full of various types of clothes: whatever he desires to wear in the morning, he takes and puts on; whatever clothes he desires to wear at noon or in the afternoon he takes and puts on, freely according to his wish.

"Anuruddha, you will be like that. The rag robes you get will be the best of garments; for your mind will be without desires as you practice this, established in the practice of tranquillity.

2) "... you will be like a king or a royal minister who has a good chef [preparing] various types of pure, refined, and delectable dishes and meals.

"Anuruddha, you will be like that. The alms-food that you constantly beg will be the best of meals; for your mind will be without desires, as you practice this, established in the practice of tranquillity.

3) " ... you will be like a king or a royal minister who has a fine house or a storied palace.

"Anuruddha, you will be like that. The tree beneath which you stay will be the best of houses; for your mind will be without desires, as you practice this, established in the practice of tranquillity.

4) "... you will be like a king or a royal minister who has fine couches and seats, upholstered with woollen textiles, draped with brocades and fine silk fabric, with lined and quilted coverlets, and with cushions [made of] antelope hide at both ends.

"Anuruddha, you will be like that. A seat of grass or a seat of leaves will be the best of seats; for your mind will be without desires, as you practice this, established in the practice of tranquillity.

5) "... if you wander like this in the eastern direction, you will certainly be at ease, free of affliction by the multitude of *dukkhas*. If you wander in the southern direction ... the western direction ... the northern direction you will certainly be at ease, free of affliction by the multitude of *dukkhas*.

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5 types of contentment:

- 1) rag robes
- 2) alms food
- 3) tree root
- 4) grass seat
- 5) MĀ: wander in any direction, AN: fermented cow's urine as medicine

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"Anuruddha, if you become accomplished in the eight thoughts of a great man and also attain these four higher states of mind, happy abidings in the present, attaining them with ease and without difficulty, then you will certainly attain one of two fruits: either you will attain final knowledge here and now or, if there is a remainder [of clinging], you will attain non-return."

Then the Blessed One ... entered a certain concentrated state. Through this concentrated state, just as a strong man might bend and stretch out his arm, the Blessed One disappeared from the Sandbank Forest in the Ceti country and appeared in the Deer Park in the Bhesakaḷa Forest on Suṃsumāra Mountain in the Bhagga country.

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(according to MĀ 74 the Buddha tells Ānanda to assemble the monks, which Ānanda does. In AN 8.30 the monks are already assembled)

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MĀ 74

"Monks, I will now teach you the eight thoughts of a great man. Listen and pay proper attention!"

(The Buddha lists the eight thoughts and then explains them:)

1) "How is the path attained through having no desires, not through having desires? This means that when a monk has attained absence of desires, he knows himself that he has attained absence of desires, but he does not let others know: 'I am without desires'.

"When he has attained contentment ... has attained effort ... has attained right mindfulness ... has attained right concentration ... has attained wisdom ... has attained absence of proliferation, he knows himself that he has attained absence of proliferation, but he does not desire to let others know: ['I have attained absence of proliferation'].

This is how the path is attained through having no desires, not through having desires.

2) "How is the path attained through contentment, not through dissatisfaction? This means that a monk practices contentment by taking robes [just] to cover his physical frame and taking food [just] to fulfil [the needs] of the body ...

3) "How is the path attained through seclusion, not through rejoicing in company, dwelling in company, being together with company? This means that a monk practices seclusion by accomplishing twofold seclusion: both bodily and mental seclusion ...

4) "How is the path attained through effort, not through indolence? This means that a monk constantly practices with effort to abandon evil and unwholesome [states] and develop wholesome states, persistently arousing his mind, single-mindedly and steadfastly, with relentless energy, for the sake of [developing] the roots of wholesomeness ...

5) "How is the path attained through right mindfulness, not through wrong mindfulness? This means that a monk contemplates the internal body as body, contemplates internal feelings ... states of mind ... phenomena as phenomena ...

6) "How is the path attained through a concentrated mind, not through a distracted mind? This means that a monk dwells separated from desires, separated from evil and unwholesome states ... *up to* ... having attained the fourth absorption ...

7) "How is the path attained through wisdom, not through delusion? This means that a monk dwells developing wisdom, contemplating the rise and fall of phenomena, thus attaining knowledge, noble wisdom that is brightly penetrating, discriminative understanding, for the true ending of *dukkha* ...

8) "How is the path attained through absence of proliferation, delighting in absence of proliferation, and practicing absence of proliferation, not through proliferation, not through delighting in proliferation, not through practicing proliferation? This means that a monk's mind constantly extinguishes proliferation and enjoys abiding in remainderless Nirvāṇa. His mind continuously delights in this abiding, rejoicing in mental freedom."

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Detailed exposition of eight thoughts:

- 1) fewness of desires or even no desires: not desiring to be known for one's good qualities
- 2) contentment: with one's requisites
- 3) seclusion: MĀ: bodily & mental, AN: detached attitude towards visitors
- 4) effort: to overcome unwholesome and cultivate wholesome
- 5) mindfulness: MĀ: 4 *satipaṭṭhānas*, AN: being mindful
- 6) concentration: 4 absorptions
- 7) wisdom: insight into impermanence
- 8) no proliferation: MĀ: Nirvāṇa, AN: cessation of proliferation

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(by practicing the eight thoughts, Anuruddha becomes an arahant)

At that time he spoke these verses:

"Knowing from afar my reflections,
the Supreme Teacher of the world,
with body upright entered concentration with his mind
and immediately traversing space he came to me.

"He taught me regarding the [seven] thoughts in my mind
and then added a further one,
[namely] that all Buddhas delight in absence of proliferation,

being far removed from any proliferation.

"Having come to know the Dharma from him,
happily established in the true Dharma,
I attained concentration and penetrative wisdom:
'What was to be done in the Buddha's teaching has been done.'"

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According to the final verses in AN 8.30 at AN IV 235, Anuruddha describes the Buddha visiting him as follows:

manomayena kāyena iddhiyā upasaṅkamī, "he approached me through supernatural power with a mind-made body"

His stanzas recorded in Th 901 use the same expression

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main points:

8 qualities conducive to tranquillity and insight:

- 1) not advertising one's good qualities
- 2) contentment with what one has
- 3) bodily and mental seclusion, detachment with visitors
- 4) effort to overcome unwholesome, cultivate wholesome
- 5) being mindful / practice 4 *satipaṭṭhānas*
- 6) cultivating concentration up to 4 absorptions
- 7) having insight into impermanence
- 8) delighting in the cessation of proliferation, Nirvāṇa