

The Arahant and the Four Truths in Early Buddhist Discourse

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

lecture 2

MĀ 22 – Discourse on Being Accomplished in Virtue (Parallel to the *Nirodha-sutta*, AN 5.166/ AN III 192)

"If a monk is accomplished in virtue, concentration, and wisdom, then it is certainly possible that he may, in this life, enter and emerge from the concentration of the cessation of perception and feeling.

"If he does not attain final knowledge within this life, then with the breaking up of the body at death, he will pass beyond the gods that feed on gross food and be reborn among the mind-made gods.

"Once he has been reborn there, it is certainly possible that he may enter and emerge from the concentration of the cessation of perception and feeling."

At that time, the venerable Udāyin was also present in the assembly. The venerable Udāyin responded:

"Venerable Sāriputta, if a monk is reborn among the mind-made gods, it is certainly not possible that he may enter and emerge from the concentration of the cessation of perception and feeling."

[same happens three times]

Thereupon, the venerable Sāriputta thought: "This monk has contradicted what I said three times now, and not a single monk [in this assembly] has commended what I said. Perhaps I ought to approach the Blessed One."

[In front of the Buddha the same happens, i.e., three times Udāyin contradicts Sāriputta and the others keep silent. Finally the Buddha questions Udāyin and clarifies that Udāyin was wrong].

After having directly rebuked the venerable Udāyin, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

"A most highly regarded and virtuous elder monk has been [improperly] contradicted. For what reason did you show disrespect by not intervening? You too are a fool, with no loving-kindness, to turn your back on a most highly regarded and virtuous elder."

[The Buddha then repeats Sāriputta's statement approvingly and withdraws].

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AN 5.166

The Buddha's criticism in the Pāli version is worded less strongly, simply indicating that it is a lack of compassion to be looking on with indifference when a senior monk is being vexed

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MĀ 22

[In both versions Ānanda tells another monk to reply in his place once the Buddha has come back, apparently feeling embarrassed about what had taken place. The Buddha then asks this other monk about the qualities that make a monk worthy of respect and esteem, which are five:]

1) "Blessed One, a senior monk observes the training in the precepts, guards [against breaking] the code of rules, and skillfully controls his comportment in accordance with proper conduct. He trains in the precepts in this way, seeing great danger in even the slightest transgression and being apprehensive of it.

2) "Blessed One, a senior monk studies widely and learns much, retaining it and not forgetting it, accumulating wide learning of what is called the Dharma, which is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, which has [proper] meaning and expression, is endowed with purity, and reveals the holy life.

"In this way he studies widely and learns much regarding all the teachings, familiarizing himself with them even a thousand times, mentally considering and contemplating them with knowledge, vision, and profound penetration.

3) "Again, Blessed One, a senior monk attains the four higher states of mind [i.e. the four absorptions], happy abidings in the present; he attains them with ease, without difficulty.

4) "Again, Blessed One, a senior monk develops comprehension and wisdom, attains understanding concerning the rise and fall of phenomena, attains noble penetrative knowledge and discriminative understanding concerning the true cessation of *dukkha*.

5) "Again, Blessed One, a senior monk has destroyed all influxes, is freed from all fetters, [has attained] liberation of the mind and liberation through wisdom, in that very life, personally attained understanding and awakening, and dwells having personally realized it. He knows as it really is: 'Birth is ended, the holy life has been established, what was to be done has been done. There will not be another existence.'"

[in each of the above five cases]:

"Blessed One, such a morally restrained, elder and highly regarded monk is esteemed and revered by his companions in the holy life.

"Blessed One, if a senior monk does not possess these five qualities, there is no other reason that he should be esteemed and revered by his companions in the holy life. Only for his advanced age, hoary hair, lost teeth, deteriorating health, hunched body, unsteady step,

overweight body, shortness of breath, reliance on a walking cane, shrinking flesh, sagging skin, wrinkles like pock-marks, failing sense faculties, and unsightly complexion might his companions in the holy life still esteem and revere him."

[according to MĀ 22 the Buddha then points out that Sāriputta has all of the five qualities, a remark not recorded in AN 5.166]

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AN 5.166

five qualities:

- virtuous
- learned
- pleasant voice
- attains four absorptions
- has destroyed the influxes

MĀ 22 five qualities:

- virtuous
- learned
- attains four absorptions
- has insight into impermanence
- has destroyed the influxes

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main points:

- virtue, concentration, and wisdom lead to high meditative attainment
- virtue, concentration, and wisdom are what makes one worthy of esteem and respect

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MĀ 23 – Discourse on Wisdom
(Parallel to the *Kaḷāra-sutta* SN 12.32/ SN II 50)

The monk Kaḷārakhattiya ... approached the venerable Sāriputta and said: "Venerable Sāriputta, know that the monk Moliyaphagga has given up the precepts and stopped practicing the path."

The venerable Sāriputta asked: "Was the monk Moliyaphagga happy in the teaching?"

The monk Kaḷārakhattiya asked in return: "Is the venerable Sāriputta happy in the teaching?"

The venerable Sāriputta replied: "Kaḷārakhattiya, I harbor no doubts about the teaching."

The monk Kaḷārakhattiya further asked: "Venerable Sāriputta, how is it in regard to things yet to come?"

The venerable Sāriputta replied: "Kaḷārakhattiya, I am also without perplexity in regard to things yet to come."

On hearing this, Kaḷārakhattiya rose from his seat and approached the Buddha. Having paid homage, he sat down to one side and addressed the Buddha:

"Blessed One, the venerable Sāriputta has just now proclaimed that he has attained [final] knowledge, that he knows as it really is: 'Birth is ended, the holy life has been established, what was to be done has been done. There will not be another existence'."

[The Buddha then calls Sāriputta to his presence. Sāriputta explains that he had not used these words. Then the Buddha questions him]

The Blessed One asked: "Sāriputta, if companions in the holy life come and ask you, 'Venerable Sāriputta, knowing what and seeing what, do you declare having attained knowledge ...'?" – Sāriputta, on hearing this, how would you answer?"

The venerable Sāriputta replied: "... Blessed One, on hearing this, I will answer in the following manner: 'Venerable friends, birth has a cause. This cause for birth has been brought to an end. Knowing that the cause for birth has been brought to an end, I declare having attained final knowledge ...'"

[The Buddha approves and continues the question and answer exchange, which moves through the following topics:

- becoming
- clinging
- craving
- feeling, which are of three types]

The venerable Sāriputta replied: "... Blessed One, on hearing this, I will answer in the following manner: 'Venerable friends, these three kinds of feelings are impermanent by nature, *dukkha* by nature, of a nature to disintegrate. What is impermanent by nature is *dukkha*. Seeing this *dukkha*, there is no more delighting in these three kinds of feeling, no desire for them or grasping at them.'

[After expressing his approval, the Buddha remarks]: "Sāriputta, one could also give a brief summary of what you have just said. And what, Sāriputta, is this brief summary of what you have just said? It is this: 'Whatever is felt and acted upon is all *dukkha*' — Sāriputta, this is a brief summary of what you have just said."

[this is followed by a last question and answer exchange that proceeds from feeling to liberating insight]

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impermanent = *dukkha*

according to *Cūlavedalla-sutta* (MN 44/ MN I 303):
(a statement found similarly in the Chinese and Tibetan parallels)

"pleasant feeling is pleasant when it persists and painful when it changes."

"painful feeling is painful when it persists and pleasant when it changes."

	present	future
pleasant	+	-
painful	-	+

impermanence is not necessarily "suffering"
but it does make all feelings "unsatisfactory"

the 12 links in the standard presentation of dependent arising :

- 1) ignorance
- 2) volitional reactions
- 3) consciousness
- 4) name-and-form
- 5) six senses
- 6) contact
- 7) feeling**
- 8) craving
- 9) clinging
- 10) becoming
- 11) birth
- 12) old age and death

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MĀ 23

[After the Buddha has left, Sāriputta tells the other monks that after an initial hesitation on how to reply, he had become confident feeling he would have been able to continue discussing like this for up to seven days and nights with the Buddha.

Kaḷārahattiya then goes to report this to the Buddha, who approves of Sāriputta's proclamation]

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main points:

- potential of insight into feelings
- even arahants can become the object of animosity

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