

# **Purification, Ethics and Karma in Early Buddhist Discourse**

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

lecture 11

four step-investigation of the Buddha:

- 1) Searching for impurities by empirical observation
- 2) Scrutiny of the attitude of the teacher
- 3) Direct query of the teacher
- 4) Personal verification

## **review MĀ 17**

main points:

rebirth in hell or heaven  
depends on one's own conduct  
not on prayers by others

just as a stone thrown in water will sink to the bottom  
just as oil thrown in water will rise up to the surface

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## **review MĀ 18**

reinterpretation of concepts like

“non-action”  
“annihilation”  
“asceticism”

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on meat consumption:

demerit on five occasions  
related to offering meat

threefold purity in regard to  
abstaining from killing

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**MĀ 19 – Discourse to the Nigaṇṭhas**  
(Parallel to the *Devadaha-sutta* MN 101 / MN II 214)

main points:

- 1) criticism of ascetic practices  
simile of the poisoned arrow:  
it is meaningful to undergo suffering,  
if that is part of a verifiable cure
  
- 2) in themselves insufficient sources of knowledge:
  - belief,
  - liking,
  - oral tradition,
  - memory,
  - well-considered view.

- 3) criticism of attributing present experiences entirely to
- karma (i.e. karmic determinism)
  - company one kept
  - destiny / type of life form
  - one's view / one's practice
  - supreme god

4) based on overcoming what is unwholesome,  
strive to abandon a particular source of *dukkha*,  
once that has been achieved, no more need to strive

like a fletcher, who has straightened an arrow  
like a man in love, whose love is over

5) only in MĀ: five hindrances are a source of *dukkha*

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### **MĀ 20 – Discourse to Pāṭaliya**

(Parallel to the *Pāṭaliya-sutta*, SN 42.13 / SN IV 340)

main points:

karmic fruition is not necessarily  
visible in the present moment

living a moral life and developing the brahmavihāras  
gives an inner confidence  
that is unshaken by various views

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Waxing Syllables

Theme:	Pāli terms:	Syllable count:
old	<i>jinno vuddho mahallako addhagato vayo-anuppatto</i>	2+2+4+4+6
growth	<i>vuddhiṃ virūlhiṃ vepullam</i>	2+3+3
fear	<i>bhīto samviggo lomahaṭṭhajāto</i>	2+3+6
to (mis)-meditate	<i>jhāyanti pajjhāyanti nijjhāyanti apajjhāyanti</i>	3+4+4+5
able to attain	<i>nikāmalābhī akicchālābhī akasiralābhī</i>	5+5+6
poor	<i>daliddo assako anālhiyo</i>	3+3+4
wealthy	<i>aḍḍho mahaddhano mahābhogo</i>	2+4+4

### Subunits in the description of irrelevant types of talk

1<sup>st</sup> subunit, syllable-count 4+4+6:

*rājakatham, corakatham, mahāmmattakatham,*

talk on men to be reckoned with: "kings, robbers, ministers".

2<sup>nd</sup> subunit, syllable-count 4+4+4:

*senākatham, bhayakatham, yuddhakatham,*

talk on war: "armies, dangers, battles".

3<sup>rd</sup> subunit, syllable-count 4+4+4+5:

*annakatham, pānakatham, vatthakatham, sayanakatham,*

talk on requisites: "food, drink, clothing, beds".

4<sup>th</sup> subunit, syllable-count: 4+4+4+4:

*mālākatham, gandhakatham, nātikatham, yānakatham,*

talk on household life: "garlands, perfumes, relatives, vehicles".

5<sup>th</sup> subunit, syllable-count: 4+5+5+6:

*gāmakatham, nigamakatham, nagarakatham, janapadakatham,*

talk on geographical localities: "villages, towns, cities, counties".

6<sup>th</sup> subunit, syllable-count: 4+4+5+6+6:

*itthikatham, sūrakatham, visikhākatham, kumbaṭṭhānakatham,*

*pubbapetakatham,*

talk on gossip: "women, heroes, streets, wells, the departed".

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## Pericope Variations

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I.1) When the Blessed One had eaten and had removed [his] hands from the bowl, Prince Bodhi took a low seat and sat down on one side.

*Bodhi rājakumāro ... bhagavantaṃ bhuttāviṃ onītapattapāṇiṃ aññataraṃ nīcaṃ āsanaṃ gahetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi.*

(MN 85 at MN II 93,9)

I.2) When the Blessed One had eaten and had removed [his] hands from the bowl, Prince Bodhi sat down on one side.

*Bodhi rājakumāro ... bhagavantaṃ bhuttāviṃ onītapattapāṇiṃ ekamantaṃ nisīdi.*

(Vin II 128,36)

II.1) Vassakāro ... assented [to the order given to him] by Ajātasattu Vedehiputta, the king of Magadha, got the state carriages ready and mounted them, left Rājagaha by state carriage and went towards Mount Vulture Peak. After going as far as the ground was passable for carriages he descended from the carriage and approached the Blessed One on foot.

*Vassakāro ... rañño Māgadhassa Ajātasattussa Vedehiputtassa paṭissutvā, bhaddāni bhaddāni yānāni yojāpetvā, bhaddaṃ yānaṃ abhirūhitvā, bhaddehi bhaddehi yānehi Rājagahamhā niyyāsi, yena Gijjhakūṭo pabbato tena pāyāsi, yāvatikā yānassa bhūmi yānena gantvā yānā paccorohitvā pattiko yena bhagavā ten' upasaṅkami.*

(DN 16 at DN II 73,4)

II.2) Vassakāro ... assented [to the order given to him] by Ajātasattu Vedehiputta, the king of Magadha and approached the Blessed One.

*Vassakāro ... rañño Māgadhassa Ajātasattussa Vedehiputtassa paṭissuṇitvā, yena bhagavā ten' upasaṅkami.*

(AN 7:20 at AN IV 18,4)

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III.1) Not long after venerable Ānanda had left, Māra the Evil One approached the Blessed One; having approached he stood on one side; standing on one side, Māra the Evil One said this to the Blessed One ...

*Māro pāpimā acirapakkante āyasmante Ānande yena bhagavā ten' upasaṅkami, upasaṅkamitvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi; ekamantaṃ thito kho Māro pāpimā bhagavantaṃ etad avoca ...*

(DN 16 at DN II 104,12 and Ud 6:1 at Ud 63,13)

III.2) Not long after venerable Ānanda had left, Māra the Evil One approached the Blessed One; having approached he said this ...

*Māro pāpimā acirapakkante āyasmante Ānande yena bhagavā ten' upasaṅkami, upasaṅkamitvā etad avoca ...*

(SN 51:10 at SN V 260,25)

III.3) Not long after venerable Ānanda had left, Māra the Evil One said this to the Blessed One ...

*Māro pāpimā acirapakkante āyasmante Ānande bhagavantaṃ etad avoca.*

(AN 8:70 at AN IV 310,11)

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IV. 1) "I go for refuge to venerable Gotama, to the Dharma and to the community of monks, may venerable Gotama remember me as a lay follower who from today on has gone for refuge for life."

*esāhaṃ bhavantam Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi dhammañ ca bhikkhusaṅghañ ca, upāsakaṃ maṃ bhavaṃ Gotamo dhāretu ajjatagge pānupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gatan'ti.*

(SN 7:11 at SN I 173,<sup>23</sup>)

IV.2) "I go for refuge to venerable Gotama, to the Dharma and to the community of monks, may I receive the going forth in the presence of venerable Gotama and the full admission ... and the venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the arahats.

*esāhaṃ bhavantam Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi dhammañ ca bhikkhusaṅghañ ca, labheyyāhaṃ bhoto Gotamassa santike pabbajjam labheyyaṃ upasampadan'ti ... aññataro ca kho paṇāyasmā Bhāradvājo arahataṃ ahosi.*

(Sn 1:4 at Sn p. 15,<sup>23</sup>)