

Purification, Ethics and Karma in Early Buddhist Discourse

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lecture 2

review MĀ 1

7 qualities in MĀ 1:

- 1) good knowledge of the Buddha's teachings
- 2) understand the meaning of what others say
- 3) know the proper time for or during meditation etc.
- 4) be restrained in behaviour or else moderate with requisites
- 5) know one's own strength and weakness
- 6) able to adopt one's behaviour
- 7) know how to progress to what is superior.

A slightly stronger emphasis on meditation appears to reflect a general tendency in the Chinese *Āgamas* vis-à-vis Pāli discourses:

- *Cūḷagosiṅga-sutta* (MN I 207) describes how Anuruddha lives together with other monks in harmony, indicating that they keep silent and meet every five days to discuss the Dharma. A *Madhyama-āgama* (MĀ 185) parallel adds to this description that after the meal they take their sitting mats and retire into seclusion to meditate, and when they meet every five days, they either meditate together or discuss the Dharma.
- The *Dīghanakha-sutta* (MN I 501) reports that Sāriputta attained full awakening while listening to a discourse by the Buddha. Parallels found in two extant *Samyukta-āgamas* (SĀ 969 and SĀ² 203), in Sanskrit fragments, and in the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (preserved in Tibetan), indicate that he undertook

contemplation of impermanence etc. and then became an arahant

- The *Dhammacetiya-sutta* (MN II 124) describes that the two courtiers of King Pasenadi on an occasion of travelling with the king spent the whole night in discussion of the Dharma. According to a parallel in the *Madhyama-āgama* (MĀ 213), they spent the first part of the night in silent meditation. In this case, however, the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivada *Vinaya* (this section is preserved in Chinese and Tibetan) agrees with the *Dhammacetiya-sutta*, as it reports that the two were discussing the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha
- The *Dhānañjāni-sutta* (MN II 195) reports that the Brahmin Dhānañjāni was reborn in the Brahmā world after receiving an instruction by Sāriputta on the *brahmavihāras*. A *Madhyama-āgama* parallel (MĀ 27) explicitly indicates that he actually practiced them and overcame sensuality, whereon he was reborn in the Brahmā world.
- The *Upakkilesa-sutta* (MN III 155) describes how the Buddha visits the monk Bhagu. According to the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel (MĀ 72), on being asked if he lived at ease Bhagu described his meditation practice, a description not found in the Pāli version.
- The *Nandakovāda-sutta* (MN III 271) reports that the monk Nandaka, after having collected alms and eaten them, went to the nuns' quarters to deliver a teaching. Parallels found in the *Samyukta-āgama* and in the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivada *Vinaya* (preserved in Chinese and Tibetan) add that he spent some time in meditation before going to the nunnery

As a result of the 7 qualities listed in MĀ 1 or AN 7.64 one

- a) gains joy and progresses to awakening (MĀ 1)
- b) becomes worthy of support and a source of merit (AN 7.64)

The four collections and their respective emphasis:

a) The *Vinayavibhāṣā* (of the Sarvāstivāda tradition, preserved in Chinese, T 23.503c27) indicates (sequence rearranged):

- the *Dīrgha* collection is to confront outsiders,
- the *Madhyama* collection offers profound doctrines for intelligent people and is therefore employed by those under training,
- the *Samyukta* collection sets forth various meditations and is therefore made use of by meditators,
- the *Ekottarika* collection is for the sake of gods and men and is therefore used by preachers.

b) The Pāli commentarial tradition (Sv I 15) indicates that chief disciples and their followers were responsible for the transmission of each collection:

- The *Dīrgha* collection: Ānanda
- the *Majjhima* collection: Sāriputta
- the *Samyutta* collection: Mahākassapa
- the *Aṅguttara* collection: Anuruddha

c) The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* has almost three times as many discourses related to Anāthapiṇḍika as the other three *Nikāyas* together

review MĀ 2

withering leaves = leaving household

grown buds = absorption attainment

flowers in full bloom = awakening

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MĀ 3 – Discourse on the Simile of the Citadel
(Parallel to the *Nagaropama-sutta*, AN 7.63 / AN IV 106)

7 equipments of [border] town:

- 1) a watchtower has been constructed, built firmly in the earth, indestructible
- 2) a moat has been excavated, very deep and wide, well designed and reliable
- 3) is surrounded by a road that is open and clear, level and wide
- 4) has raised an army with the four divisions – elephant troops, cavalry, chariot troops, and infantry
- 5) is provided with weapons – bows and arrows, swords and spears
- 6) general has been appointed as gate-keeper, one who is sharp-witted and wise in making decisions, brave and resolute, of excellent counsel, who allows entry to the good and keeps out the bad
- 7) a high rampart has been constructed, extremely solid, plastered with mud and painted with whitewash

(all): to ensure peace within and control outside enemies

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AN 7.63:

pillar (= 1)
 moat (= 2)
 road (= 3)
 weapons (= 5)
 army (= 4)
 gate keeper (= 6)
 rampart (= 7)

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MĀ 3

4 supplies:

- a) provided with plentiful quantities of water, grass, and firewood
- b) has harvested plenty of rice and stored up plenty of wheat
- c) has amassed plenty of grain and beans of various sorts
- d) has stored up ghee, honey, sugar cane, sugar, fish, salt, and dried meat, is equipped with all of these

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main points:

- 1) firm faith = watchtower / pillar
- 2) sense of shame = moat
- 3) fear of wrongdoing = road around town
- 4) effort = armies
- 5) wide learning = armoury
- 6) mindfulness = gate keeper
- 7) wisdom = rampart

absorptions = provisions

- a) water, grass, wood, = first
- b) rice, wheat = second
- c) grains, beans = third
- d) ghee, honey etc. = fourth

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MĀ 4 – Discourse on the Water Simile

(Parallel to the *Udakūpama-sutta*, AN 7.15 / AN IV 11)

seven persons:

- a person remains lying in the water [below the surface].
- another person surfaces but then sinks again.
- another person surfaces and remains standing [in the water].

- another person surfaces and ... having remained standing, observes.
- another person surfaces and ... and having observed, crosses over [toward the farther bank].
- another person surfaces ... and having crossed over, reaches the farther bank.
- another person surfaces ... and having reached the farther bank, is called a 'Brahmin dwelling on the [farther] bank.'

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main points:

- remains lying in the water = immoral person
- surfaces but then sinks again = backslider
- remains standing = moral person
- observes = stream-entrant
- crosses over = once-returner
- reaches the farther bank = non-returner
- is called a 'Brahmin dwelling on the [farther] bank' = arahant