

# The Arahant and the Four Truths in Early Buddhist Discourse

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

## lecture 10

### MĀ 33 – Discourse on the Attendant (no parallel)

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### MĀ 34 – Discourse by Bakkula (Parallel to the *Bakkula-sutta* MN 124/ MN III 124)

The non-Buddhist practitioner asked, "Friend Bakkula, how long have you been practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline?"

The venerable Bakkula answered, "Practitioner of another school, I have been practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline for eighty years already."

The non-Buddhist practitioner asked further, "Friend Bakkula, during your eighty years of practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline, do you recall ever having had sexual intercourse?"

The venerable Bakkula answered the non-Buddhist practitioner, "You should not ask such a question. Instead [you should] ask a different question, 'Friend Bakkula, during your eighty years of practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline, do you recall ever having given rise to any thought of sexual desire?' This, practitioner of another school, is the question you should ask."

Then the non-Buddhist practitioner said this, "I now ask a different question, friend Bakkula: During your eighty years of practicing the

path in this true teaching and discipline, do you recall ever having given rise to any thought of sexual desire?"

1) At this, because the non-Buddhist practitioner asked the question, the venerable Bakkula said to the monks, "Venerable friends, I have been practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline for eighty years, but that for this reason conceit should arise [in me], this is not the case."

That the venerable Bakkula [was able to] make this declaration, this is said to be an extraordinary quality of the venerable Bakkula.

2) Again, the venerable Bakkula declared, "Venerable friends, during my eighty years of practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline I have never had any thought of sexual desire."

That the venerable Bakkula [was able to] make this declaration, this is said to be an extraordinary quality of the venerable Bakkula.

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## MN 124

1) "I do not recall any perception of sensual desire to have ever arisen in me."

That in the eighty years since he went forth the venerable Bakkula did not recall any perception of sensual desire to have ever arisen in him - this we remember as a wonderful and marvellous quality of the venerable Bakkula

2) "in the eighty years since I went forth I do not recall any perception of ill will to have ever arisen in me

3) in the eighty years since I went forth I do not recall any perception of cruelty to have ever arisen in me

4-6) [same then for the three corresponding types of thought]

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### MĀ 34

3) "I have been wearing rag robes for eighty years, but that for this reason conceit should arise [in me], this is not the case.

4) "I have been wearing rag robes for eighty years, I do not recall ever having accepted a robe from a lay follower, having cut up cloth to make a robe, having had other monks make a robe [for me], or having sewn a robe or bag with a needle, not even a single thread

5) " I have been begging food for eighty years, but that for this reason conceit should arise [in me], this is not the case.

6) "In my eighty years of begging food I do not recall ever having accepted an invitation from a lay follower, ever having gone beyond [the right time for] begging food, ever having begged food from a big household so as to get clean, good, very fine and luxurious food to eat, savor, and digest ...

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### MN 124

7) "I do not recall ever having accepted a robe from a householder ...

8) ... having worn a robe given by a householder

9) ... having cut a robe with a cutter

10) ... having sewn a robe with a needle

11) ... having coloured a robe with dye

12) ... sewn a robe at the kathina time

13) ... having worked on making robes for my companions in the holy life.”

14) ... having accepted an invitation to a meal

15) ... having given rise to the thought: 'Oh, may someone invite me to a meal!'

16) ... having sat down inside a house

17) ... having eaten inside a house

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#### MĀ 34

6) "I have never looked at a woman's face. I do not recall ever having entered a nunnery. I do not recall ever having exchanged greetings with a nun, or even having spoken [to a nun] on the road.

7) "During my eighty years of practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline I do not recall ever having trained a novice, nor do I recall ever having taught the Dharma to a lay follower, not even a verse of four lines."

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#### MN 124

18) "I do not recall ever having grasped at the signs and features of a woman

19) ... having taught the Dhamma to a woman, even as much as a four-line stanza

20) ... having gone to the bhikkhunis' quarters

- 21) ...having taught the Dhamma to a bhikkhunī
- 22) ... having taught the Dhamma to a female probationer
- 23) ... having taught the Dhamma to a female novice.
- 24) ... having given the going forth
- 25) ... having given the full admission
- 26) ... having given dependence
- 27) ... having had a novice wait on me.

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MĀ 34

- 8) "During my eighty years of practicing the path in this true teaching and discipline I have never been ill, not even having a headache for a moment. I do not recall ever having taken medicine, not even a single piece of myrobalan."
- 9) "In my eighty years of practicing sitting meditation in the cross-legged posture, I have never leaned against a wall or a tree."

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MN 124

- 28) "I do not recall ever having bathed in a bath house
- 29) ... having bathed with bath powder
- 30) ... having undertaking the work of massaging the limbs of my companions in the holy life

31) ... having had an affliction arise in me even for as long as it takes to milk a cow

32) ... having taken medicine, even as much as a piece of gallnut

33) ... having used a bolster

34) ... having made up a bed

35) ... having entered upon residence for the Rains in a resting place inside a village

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#### MĀ 34

10) "Within three days and nights, I attained the threefold realization."

11) " I will attain final Nirvāṇa in the cross-legged sitting posture." Then the venerable Bakkula attained final Nirvāṇa in the cross-legged sitting posture.

That the venerable Bakkula attained final Nirvāṇa in the cross-legged sitting posture, this is said to be an extraordinary quality of the venerable Bakkula.

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#### MN 124

36) "for seven days after going forth I ate the country's almsfood as a debtor; on the eighth day final knowledge arose"

37) Then, on a later occasion, the venerable Bakkula took a key and went from cell to cell, saying: "Come forth, venerable sirs; come forth, venerable sirs. Today I shall attain final Nibbāna."

38) Then, seated in the midst of the Sangha of monks, the venerable Bakkula attained final Nibbāna.

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### Survey of variations according to topic

#### topic of perceptions:

MĀ 34:	MN 124:
no conceit	-
no sensual perception	no sensual perception
-	no perception of ill will
-	no perception of cruelty
-	no sensual thought
-	no thought of ill will
-	no thought of cruelty

#### topic of robes:

MĀ 34:	MN 124:
no conceit	-
never robes from householders	never robes from householders
never cut robe material	never cut robe material
never got robe made by others	-
never sewed a robe	never sewed a robe
-	never dyed a robe
never sewed a bag	never sewed a <i>kaṭhina</i> robe
-	never made robes for others

## topic of invitations:

MĀ 34:	MN 124:
no conceit	-
never accepted invitation	never accepted invitation
-	never wished for invitation
never skipped alms round	-
-	never sat down in a house
never begged at superior house	-
-	never ate in a house

## topic of women:

MĀ 34:	MN 124:
never looked at woman's face	never grasped sign of woman
-	never taught woman
never entered nunnery	never entered nunnery
-	never taught nun
never greeted nun	-
-	never taught female probationer
-	never taught female novice

## topic of teaching:

MĀ 34:	MN 124:
-	never gave going forth
-	never gave ordination
-	never gave dependence
never had novice attendant	never had novice attendant
never taught laity	-

topic of body care and health:

MĀ 34:

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- never got sick
- never took medicine
- never leaned against support
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MN 124:

- never bathed in bathroom
- never used bath powder
- never received a massage
- never got sick
- never carried medicine
- never used a support
- never lay down
- never spent rains in village

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main point:

- change in the arahant ideal