

# The Arahant and the Four Truths in Early Buddhist Discourse

by Bhikkhu Anālayo

## lecture 11

### MĀ 35 – Discourse to an Asura

(Parallel to the *Pahārāda-sutta* AN 8.19/ AN IV 197)

Eight qualities of the Dharma:

- 1) "just as from the bottom to the surface the ocean becomes gradually greater in circumference, evenly and uniformly increasing up to the shore; and just as its water is always full but never overflowing, similarly my true teaching and discipline is [to be] gradually practiced, gradually trained in, gradually completed, and gradually taught."
- 2) just as the ocean's tide is never out of time, similarly in my true teaching and discipline, the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen will never, until the end of their lives, break the precepts, which I have established for these clansmen."
- 3) "just as the water of the ocean is very deep, bottomless, and extremely broad, boundless, similarly in my true teaching and discipline, the teachings are profound."
- 4) "just as the water of the ocean is salty, having everywhere the same taste, similarly my true teaching and discipline has the taste of dispassion, the taste of awakening, the taste of tranquility, as well as the taste of the path."
- 5) "just as the ocean abounds with treasures ... similarly my true teaching and discipline abounds with treasures ... such as the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of supernormal power, the five faculties, the five

powers, the seven factors of awakening, and the eightfold noble path."

- 6) "just as in the ocean dwell most wonderful and most remarkable beings ... similarly in my true teaching and discipline there is the community of nobles, of great spiritual beings all dwelling within it, namely arahants and those who are on the path to arahantship, non-returners and those who are on the path to non-returning, once-returners and those who are on the path to once-returning, and stream-enterers and those who are on the path to stream-entry."
- 7) "just as the ocean is pure and does not accept corpses, and if someone dies in the ocean, the body is blown by the wind and thrown up on the shore overnight, similarly in my true teaching and discipline, the noble assembly is pure; it does not accept 'corpses'. If there are those who are without vigor, wicked, fake celibates though professing to be celibates, fake recluses though professing to be recluses, then even though they may be in the midst of the community of nobles, they are far away from the community of nobles and the community of nobles is far away from them.
- 8) "just as there are five large rivers of Jambudīpa that enter the ocean ... having entered it, forsake their original names and are all [just] called 'great ocean', similarly in my true teaching and discipline, the warrior ... brahmins ... [merchant] householders ... workers clansmen who shave off hair and beard, don the yellow robe, leave home out of faith, and go forth to practice the path, these forsake their original names and are all called recluses".

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sequence of eight qualities in AN 8.19:

- 1) gradual training (= 1 in MĀ 35)

- 2) not transgressing rules (= 2 in MĀ 35)
- 3) no communion with the wicked (= 7 in MĀ 35)
- 4) four casts become one (= 8 in MĀ 35)
- 5) Nirvāṇa not affected by how many realize it, just as the ocean is not affected by the rivers that flow into it (not in MĀ 35)
- 6) taste of liberation (= 4 in MĀ 35)
- 7) treasures of the Dharma (= 5 in MĀ 35)
- 8) remarkable beings are noble beings (= 6 in MĀ 35)

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main point:

- similes that illustrate qualities of the Dharma

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### **MĀ 36 – Discourse on Earthquakes** (Parallel to the *Bhūmicāla-sutta* AN 8.70/ AN IV 308)

three reasons for an earthquake

- 1) "this earth rests upon water; the water rests upon wind; and the wind depends upon space. Ānanda, there comes a time when a great wind begins blowing in the sky. When the wind begins blowing, the water becomes disturbed; and when the water is disturbed, the earth quakes."
- 2) "a monk who possesses great supernormal power, great and mighty virtue, great merit, great and mighty power, is able, with the supernormal power of mastery over the mind, to develop perception of earth as minute and perception of water as infinite. On account of this, this earth behaves according to his wish, according to his will, being disturbed again and again, quaking again and again."

(same holds for a god with great supernormal power)

- 3) "if a Tathāgata will be attaining final Nirvāṇa soon, within three months, for this reason the earth quakes violently"

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### AN 8.70

lists eight causes for earthquakes instead, which are embedded in the narration of the events before the Buddha's final Nirvāṇa. The other five causes are:

- when a bodhisattva leaves Tusita heaven
- when a bodhisattva is born
- when a Buddha attains complete awakening
- when a Buddha sets in motion the wheel of Dharma
- when a Buddha has attained final Nirvāṇa

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main point:

causes of earthquakes

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### **MĀ 37 – Discourse at Campā**

(Parallel to the *Uposatha-sutta* AN 8.20/ AN IV 204)

again the eight qualities of the Dharma

- 1) gradual training like gradual sloping of ocean
- 2) not transgressing rules like ocean tide
- 3) Dharma is profound like the depth of the ocean
- 4) taste of liberation like salty taste of sea water

- 5) meditation teachings are like treasures in the ocean
- 6) noble beings are like amazing beings in the ocean
- 7) the wicked are like trash washed to the shore
- 8) four casts become one just as all rivers become the ocean

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main point:

qualities of the Dharma

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**MĀ 38 – Discourse by Ugga (1<sup>st</sup>)**  
 (Parallel to the *Ugga-sutta* AN 8.21-22/ AN IV 208)

eight remarkable qualities of the householder Ugga:

- 1) the mere sight of the Buddha he sobered up
- 2) he gained stream-entry during a gradual talk at that first meeting
- 3) since then he kept the five precepts and lived in celibacy
- 4) he remarries his chief wife to whom she likes to be married without any regret
- 5) he does not look down on any monk
- 6) he makes offering to monks without discrimination, even though he knows of their higher or lesser level of attainment
- 7) gods inform him of the qualities of the Buddha and his disciples
- 8) he has eradicated the five lower fetters

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main point:

inspiring qualities of a lay disciple

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**MĀ 39 – Discourse by Ugga (2<sup>nd</sup>)**  
(no Parallel)

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**MĀ 40 – Discourse on Hatthaka (1<sup>st</sup>)**  
(Parallel to the *Dutiyahatthaka-sutta* AN 8.24/ AN IV 218)

Hatthaka lists four qualities for gathering a great assembly:

- charitable giving
- speaking friendly
- providing helpful advice
- being impartial

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main point:

qualities that make for friendship

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**MĀ 41 – Discourse on Hatthaka (2<sup>nd</sup>)**  
(Parallel to the *Paṭhamahatthaka-sutta* AN 8.23/ AN IV 216)

Hatthaka has eight marvelous qualities:

- few desires
- faith

- a sense of shame
- scruple
- energy
- mindfulness
- concentration
- wisdom

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Hatthaka's seven marvelous qualities in AN 8.23:

- faith
- virtue
- a sense of shame
- scruple
- great learning
- charitableness
- wisdom

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main point:

inspiring qualities of a lay disciple

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