

# Tranquillity and Insight in Early Buddhist Discourse

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## lecture 4

### MA 72 – Discourse on the History of King Long-lifespan (Parallel to MN 128/ MN III 153)

"In my mind the affliction of doubt shall not arise!" Anuruddhas, because I aspired for the non-arising of this affliction, I went to stay in a remote and solitary place and practiced diligently with a mind free of indolence. Through practicing diligently with a mind free of indolence while staying in a remote and solitary place, I attained [inner] light and vision of forms; but that vision of forms and [inner] light soon disappeared again.

"Anuruddhas, I further had this thought: 'What affliction in my mind has caused my concentration to fall away and the [inner] eye to cease? – for with the ceasing of the [inner] eye, the [experience] of bright light and the vision of forms I earlier attained, that vision of forms and [inner] light soon disappeared again.'

"Anuruddhas, I further had this thought: 'In my mind the affliction of inattention arose. Because of this affliction of inattention, my concentration fell away and the [inner] eye ceased; and with the ceasing of the [inner] eye, the [experience] of bright light and the vision of forms I earlier attained, that vision of forms and [inner] light soon disappeared again.'

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MN 128	MA 72
doubt (1)	doubt (→ 1)
lack of attention (2)	lack of attention (→ 2)
sloth-and-torpor (3)	inertia (→ 6)
fear (4)	sloth-and-torpor (→ 3)

elation (5)	excess of energy (→ 7)
inertia (6)	lack of energy (→ 8)
excess of energy (7)	fear (→ 4)
lack of energy (8)	elation (→ 5)
longing (9)	conceit (→ 9?)
perception of diversity (10)	perception of diversity (→ 10)
excessive medit. on forms (11)	not contemplating forms (→ 11?)

similes:

fear: being attacked by thieves or murderers while travelling

elation: coming across five entrances to a treasure when searching for only one entrance (MN 128), coming across four treasure deposits when searching for only one treasure deposit (MĀ 72)

excessive energy: gripping a quail so tight that it will die (MN 128), gripping a fly so tight that it will die (MĀ 72)

lack of energy: gripping a quail (MN 128) or a fly (MĀ 72) so loosely that it will fly away

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(once all of these obstructions are overcome):  
MĀ 72

"Anuruddhas, I further had this thought: 'I shall practice three [levels] of concentration:

- [I shall] practice concentration that is with [directed] awareness and [sustained] contemplation;
- [I shall] practice concentration that is without [directed] awareness and with only [sustained] contemplation;
- [I shall] practice concentration that is without [directed] awareness and [sustained] contemplation.'

(in the case of each): "for a whole day, for a whole night, for a whole day and night I practiced concentration that is ..."

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### MN 128

(where this comes towards the end of the discourse):

- with *vitakka* and *vicāra*
- without *vitakka* but with a remainder of *vicāra*
- without *vitakka* and without *vicāra*

the counterparts to *vitakka* and *vicāra* in MĀ 72 are 覺 and 觀

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### MĀ 72

"Anuruddhas, at that time I practiced this practice of dwelling in tranquillity..."

"Anuruddhas, I further had this thought: 'If I am aware of the sign of [inner] light [but] am not aware of the sign of forms, then at that time I have knowledge of [inner] light but not vision of forms.' ...

"Anuruddhas, I further had this thought: 'If I am aware of the sign of form, then I am not aware of the sign of [inner] light. At that time I have knowledge of forms but do not have knowledge of [inner] light.' ...

"Anuruddhas, I further had this thought: 'If I enter limited concentration, then because of having entered limited concentration, the [inner] eye has limited purity. Because the [inner] eye has limited purity, I have limited knowledge of [inner] light and limited vision of forms.'

"Anuruddhas, I further had this thought: 'If I enter concentration expansively, then because of having entered concentration expansively, the [inner] eye has expansive purity. Because the

[inner] eye has expansive purity, I have expansive knowledge of [inner] light and expansive vision of forms.'

"I aroused knowledge and vision that were fully clear and pure, and I progressed toward established concentration. Energetically cultivating the requisites of the path, I came to know as it truly is: 'birth is ended, the holy life has been established, what was to be done has been done. There will not be another existence.' Anuruddhas, at that time I practiced this practice of dwelling in tranquillity."

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main points:

- foundation for tranquillity in harmonious behaviour/ *mettā*, and willingness to give up one's own ideas
- cultivation of *nimitta* and overcoming of finer defilements
- culmination point of concentration is awakening

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### **MA 73 – Discourse on Gods** (Parallel to AN 8.64/ AN IV 302)

The Blessed One told the monks: "At a former time, when I had not yet attained awakening to the supremely right and true path, I had this thought:

(1) 'If only I could give rise [inwardly] to bright light and, because of that bright light, see forms. In this way my knowledge and vision would be supremely clear and pure.'

"In order that my knowledge and vision might become supremely clear and pure, I went to stay in a remote and solitary place, where I practiced diligently with a mind free of indolence. Through staying

in that remote and solitary place and practicing diligently with a mind free of indolence, I attained bright light and then saw forms.

(2) "However, I did not meet those gods, did not exchange greetings with them, did not converse with them, and did not get a response from them.

"I further had this thought: 'If only I could give rise to bright light and, because of that bright light, see forms; and meet those gods, exchange greetings with them, converse with them, and get a response from them. In this way my knowledge and vision would be supremely clear and pure.'

"... I attained bright light and saw forms; and then I met those gods, exchanged greetings with them, conversed with them, and got a response from them.

(3) "However, I did not know the family names of those gods, their given names, or [the nature of] their birth.

(4) "... However, I did not know how those gods nourished themselves or what types of pleasure and pain they experienced.

(5) "... However, I did not know the lifespan of those gods, how long they would remain, and how their lives would end.

(6) "... However, I did not know what kind of deeds those gods had done that caused them to be reborn there after dying here.

(7) "... However, I did not recognize the [individual] gods among those gods.

(8) "... However, I did not know whether or not I had previously taken birth among those gods.

"Once I had rightly come to know these eight courses, then I could claim to have attained them. I then knew that I had awakened to the

supremely right and true path, and had transcended this world with its gods, Māras, Brahmās, renunciants, and brahmins; and I had become freed through the various liberations. I became separated from all distortions and knew as it truly is: 'Birth is ended, the holy life has been established, what was to be done has been done. There will not be another existence.'"

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AN 8.64 concludes similarly:

"When my knowledge and vision about the *devas* with its eight facets was well purified, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect awakening in this world ... knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakeable is my liberation of the mind, this is my last birth, now there is no more renewed existence.'"

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Comparison of the eight topics in MĀ 73 and AN 8.64

- 1) light & forms (AN: light)
- 2) converse with *devas* (AN: light & forms = 1)
- 3) names of *devas* (AN: converse with *devas* = 2)
- 4) pleasure and pain of *devas* (AN: order of *devas*  $\approx$  3 names)
- 5) lifespan of *devas* (AN: karma leading to their rebirth = 6)
- 6) karma leading to *deva* rebirth (AN: their pleasure and pain = 4)
- 7) recognize individual *devas* (AN: their lifespan = 5)
- 8) himself previous been such a *deva* (= AN)

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Main point:

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(this is your homework)

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