

## 22

**(Iti) Moneyya Sutta**The (Thus-said) Discourse on Sagehood | **It 3.2.8**

Theme: The nature of silent sagehood

Translated by Piya Tan ©2016

**1 Sutta highlights****1.1 DEFINITION AND NATURE OF SAGEHOOD**

**1.1.1 The (Iti) Moneyya Sutta** (It 3.2.8) is a very short discourse that succinctly defines silent sagehood (*moneyya*)—like the slightly longer **(Tika) Moneyya Sutta** (A 3.120)<sup>1</sup>—as being threefold, that is, the bodily sagehood, verbal sagehood and mental sagehood, or sagehood of the body, of speech, and of the mind. This definition of sagehood encompasses the spiritual purification and freedom of the 3 doors of action, that is, the totality of our being in an awakened saint, the arhat.

**1.1.2** Although these two key suttas—and others dealing with the sage (*muni*)—generally define him as an arhat, the highest goal in early Buddhism, the terms *muni* and *moneyya* can refer to the being or state of an aspirant to full awakening in this life. As long as the aspirant or practitioner attains some aspects of the *muni*—that is, he emulates a *muni*, albeit be it for a moment or for the duration of the practice—he is, to that extent, a *muni*, a silent sage.

**1.1.3 The Param’attha,dīpanī 2** (the Commentary on the Iti,vuttaka by Dhammapāla) defines the “**sagehood**” (*moneyya*) and “**sage**” (*muni*) broadly, as follows:

**Sagehood** here is the good for self and for other, here and hereafter.<sup>2</sup>

One who is sagacious [deeply insightful and wise] is a “sage” (*munātīti muni*), whether he is a good worldling, along with the 7 learners and the arhat.<sup>3</sup>

Here [in the **(Iti) Moneyya Sutta**], only the arhat is meant. The state of being a sage, then, is the harmony of body, speech and mind that is worthy (of an arhat).<sup>4</sup> (ItA 2:35)

**1.1.4** The term *moneyya*, then, is not only an ideal, but also the path to that ideal. That ideal is, of course, the arhat, the goal as attained by the historical Buddha making him the fully self-awakened one (*sammā,sambuddha*) as well as those of numerous others who have practised the Buddha Dharma and become arhats, too. The Buddha is the first arhat and *muni* amongst equals who are also arhats and *munis*.

**1.1.5** Sagehood as the path is, of course, the noble eightfold path itself. This is the path of the 3 trainings of moral virtue, mental cultivation and insight wisdom leading to awakening and nirvana.<sup>5</sup> Those who are walking the path, but not yet become arhats (the spiritual adepts or *asekha*), are called “learners” (*sekha*)<sup>6</sup> because they are truly learning how to awaken to the freedom of true reality. They are all sages-to-be; they emulate the *muni*, and in due course, even in this life itself, they can become full-fledged *munis*, that is, the arhats.

**1.1.6** Even those who are not yet “noble ones” or aryas who sincerely and diligently emulate the way of the sage in their practice and living are *effectively sages* (*muni*). Indeed, when we meditate and attain deep levels of concentration, when we can even momentarily taste the bliss of mental solitude, we are to that extent “sages” in practice. It is, as if, we have taken a glimpse, even a gaze, through the open window

<sup>1</sup> A 3.120/1:273 (SD 49.21).

<sup>2</sup> *Moneyyān’ti etha idha.loka,para.lokaṃ atta.hita,para.hitañ ca* (ItA 2:35).

<sup>3</sup> *Kalyāṇaputhujjanena saddhiṃ satta sekkhā arahā ca* (ItA 2:35).

<sup>4</sup> *Munino bhāvāti moneyyāni, arahato kaya,vacī,mano,samācārā*. The syntax here is pl, but rendered as sg in universal sense.

<sup>5</sup> On the eightfold path, see *Ariya aṭṭh’āṅgika magga*, SD 10.16.

<sup>6</sup> These learners (*sekha*) are the streamwinner (*sotāpanna*), the once-returner (*sākadāgāmī*) and the non-returner (*anāgāmī*). Like the arhats, they are all called “noble ones” (*ariya*), because of their spiritual purity and wisdom, and the fact that they will never backslide to old unwholesome ways. See SD 10.16 (11-14).

of wisdom to see the truth and beauty of sagehood (*moneyya*). It is a vision we are unlikely to forget, and which inspires us to keep returning to the spiritual path even when we are constantly distracted by the world. It is the most natural conduct for us to seek the way out of the crowdedness of the world into the spaciousness of sagehood.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 TRADITIONAL COMMENTARY (GUH’AṬṬHAKA SUTTA NIDDESA)

### 1.2.1 (Niddesa) Moneyya Sutta (Nm 1:57 f)

1.2.1.1 The Mahā Niddesa has an “embedded” sutta that is theoretically identical to **the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta** (A 3.120). It gives the same definitions of sagehood, and also an almost identical closing verse. Since this interesting Sutta, despite its identity with the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta, has its own original definition of sagehood, it is here reproduced in full.

1.2.1.2 Or, alternately, notes Dhammapāla, the “different kinds of sagehood” (*moneyyāni*) are those states involving the practice that brings about the state of sage (*muni, bhāva*).<sup>8</sup> He then quotes **the Guh’-aṭṭhaka Sutta Niddesa** (Nm 1:57 f), in the Mahā, niddesa, on sagehood almost verbatim, but without its “Commentary” and the rest of the analysis (*niddesa*)—which follows:

## SD 49.22(1.2)

## Guh’ aṭṭhaka Sutta Niddesa

The analysis of the Guh’ aṭṭhaka Sutta | Nm 1:57 f on *muni* ad Sn 779

Traditional: Guhaṭṭhaka Sutta Niddesa Dutiya • The second analysis, on the Guh’ aṭṭhaka Sutta

Theme: The 3 kinds of silent sagehood

### Commentary

1 Regarding *muni*, knowledge (*ñāṇa*) is called “sagehood” (*mona*).

2 That which is wisdom, understanding, investigation, examination, dharma investigation, discernment, discrimination, differentiation, erudition, proficiency, subtlety, criticism, thinking, investigation, breadth, intelligence, guidance, insight, circumspection, the goad, wisdom, wisdom faculty, wisdom power, sword of wisdom, tower of wisdom, wisdom light, wisdom radiance, wisdom lamp, wisdom jewel,] non-delusion, dharma investigation, right view—

by accomplishing such wisdom, one is a *muni* attained to sagehood.

*Yā paññā pajānanā [vicayo  
pavicayo dhamma, vicayo sallakkhaṇā  
upalakkhaṇā paccupalakkhaṇā paṇḍiccaṃ  
kosallaṃ nepuññaṃ vebhavyā cintā  
upaparikkhā bhūri medhā pariṇāyikā  
vipassanā sampajaññaṃ patodo paññā  
paññ’indriyaṃ paññā, balaṃ paññā, satthaṃ  
paññā, pāsādo paññā, āloko paññā, obhāso  
paññā, pajjoto paññā, ratanaṃ]<sup>9</sup> amoho  
dhamma, vicayo sammā, diṭṭhi,*

*tena ñāṇena samannāgato muni mona-p, patto ’ti.*

## The (Niddesa) Moneyya Sutta

2 The 3 kinds of sagehood are bodily sagehood, verbal sagehood and mental sagehood.

4 (Therein,<sup>10</sup> what is bodily sagehood?  
The bodily sagehood that is the abandoning of the

<sup>7</sup> On spiritual space, see SD 49.21 (1.1.1.3).

<sup>8</sup> *Atha vā muni, bhāva, karā moneyya, paṭipadā, dhammā moneyyāni.* (ItA 2:35)

<sup>9</sup> The pericope is *Yā paññā ... sammā, diṭṭhi*: Nm:Be 34 = Ee Nm 1:44 etc (×14) = Nc:Be 30 (×13) = Pm 1:119×2 = Dhs §16/11, 19 etc (×38) def of *paññ’indriya* = Vbh 106, 25 etc (×68) def of *sammā, diṭṭhi* = Vbh §525/250 def of *sampajāna* = Pug 25, 26. Be omits the *peyyāla* here.

<sup>10</sup> “Therein” (*tattha*), only in **ItA 2:35** quote. “Therein” here limits the explanation only to the sagehood of the arhat.

3 kinds of bodily purity.

The bodily sagehood that is the threefold bodily purity  
The bodily sagehood that is the knowledge regarding  
the body as a meditation object.

The bodily sagehood that is full understanding of the body.

The bodily sagehood that is the path connected with the  
full understanding of the body.

The bodily sagehood that is the abandoning of lustful  
desire.

The bodily sagehood that is the ending of bodily forma-  
tion that is the attaining of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana.

This is bodily sagehood.

**5** (Therein,) what is verbal sagehood?

The verbal sagehood that is the abandoning of the  
fourfold verbal purity.

The verbal sagehood of the fourfold verbal purity

The verbal sagehood that is the knowledge regarding  
speech as a meditation object.

The verbal sagehood that is the full understanding of  
speech.

The verbal sagehood that is the path connected with the  
full understanding of speech.

The verbal sagehood that is the abandoning of lustful  
desire.

The verbal sagehood that is the cessation of speech  
formation that is the attaining of 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana.

This is verbal sagehood.

**6** (Therein,) what is mental sagehood?

The mental sagehood that is the abandoning of the  
3 kinds of mental conduct.

The mental sagehood that is the threefold mental purity.

The mental sagehood that is the knowledge regarding  
the mind as a meditation object

The mental sagehood that is the path connected with  
the full understanding of the mind.

The mental sagehood that is the abandoning of lustful  
desire

[ItA 2:36]

The mental sagehood that is the cessation of mental  
formation that is the cessation of perception and feeling.

This is mental sagehood.

*ti,vidhānaṃ kaya,duccaritānaṃ  
pahānaṃ kaya,moneyyaṃ  
tividhaṃ kaya,sucaritaṃ kaya,moneyyaṃ*

*kāy'ārammaṇe ñāṇaṃ kaya,moneyyaṃ  
kaya,pariññā kaya,moneyyaṃ*

*pariññā,sahagato maggo kaya,moneyyaṃ*

*kāye chanda,rāgassa pahānaṃ kaya,  
moneyyaṃ*

*kaya,saṅkhāra,nirodho catuttha-,jhāna,-  
samāpatti kaya,moneyyaṃ*

*catu-b,bidhānaṃ vacī,duccaritānaṃ  
pahānaṃ vacī,moneyyaṃ  
catu-b,bidhaṃ vacī,sucaritaṃ vacī,moneyyaṃ*

*vāc'ārammaṇe ñāṇaṃ vacī,moneyyaṃ*

*vācā,pariññā vacī,moneyyaṃ*

*pariññā,sahagato maggo vacī,moneyyaṃ*

*vācāya chanda,rāgassa pahānaṃ vacī,-  
moneyyaṃ*

*vacī,saṅkhāra,nirodho dutiya-j,jhāna,-  
samāpatti vacī,moneyyaṃ*

*ti,vidhānaṃ mano,duccaritānaṃ pahānaṃ  
mano,moneyyaṃ*

*ti,vidhaṃ mano,sucariyaṃ mano,moneyyaṃ  
citt'ārammaṇe ñāṇaṃ mano'moneyyaṃ  
citta'pariññā mano'moneyyaṃ*

*pariññā'sahagato maggo mano'moneyyaṃ*

*citte chanda'rāgassa pahānaṃ mano,  
moneyyaṃ*

*citta'saṅkhāra'nirodho saññā'vedayita'-  
nirodhaṃ mano'moneyyaṃ*

Sutta verses

- 7 *Kāya,munim vācā,munim  
ceto,munim anāsavaṃ  
munim moneyya,sampannaṃ  
āhu sabba-p,pahāyinaṃ*<sup>12</sup> The sage of the body, the sage of speech,  
the sage of the mind that is influx-free:  
the sage who is accomplished in sagehood<sup>11</sup>—  
he is said to have let go of the all.
- 8 *Kāya,munim vacā,munim  
mano,munim anāsavaṃ  
munim moneyya,sampannaṃ  
āhu niṇhāta,pāpakan'ti*<sup>13</sup> [§7] The sage of the body, the sage of speech,  
the sage of the mind that is influx-free:  
the sage who is accomplished in sagehood—  
he is said to be washed clean of all badness.<sup>14</sup>

The kinds of sages

9 There are 6 kinds of sages who are accomplished in the qualities of these 3 kinds of sagehood,<sup>15</sup> that is:

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) the house sages,       | <i>agāra,munino</i>   |
| (2) the homeless sages,    | <i>anagāra,munino</i> |
| (3) the learner sages,     | <i>sekha,munino</i>   |
| (4) the non-learner sages, | <i>asekha,munino</i>  |
| (5) the individual sages,  | <i>pacceka,munino</i> |
| (6) the sage of sages.     | <i>muni,munino</i>    |

10 What are the house sages? They are those householders who show visible signs that they have understood the teaching.<sup>16</sup> These are the house sages.

11 What are the homeless sages? They are those renunciants who show visible signs that they have understood the teaching. These are the homeless sages,

12 The 7 learners are the 7 learner sages.

13 The ahrhats are the non-learner sages.

14 The individual buddhas (pratyeka-buddhas) are the individual sages.

15 The tathagata [thus come] arhat, the full self-awakened Buddha is called the “sage of sages” (*muni,munino*).

Closing verses

- 16 *Na monena muni hoti  
mūḷha,rūpo aviddasu  
yo ca tulaṃ'va paggayha  
varam ādāya paṇḍito* **Dh 268** Not by silence is one a sage,  
one who is confused, ignorant.  
Like one holding a balance,  
the embraces what is noble,
- 17 *Pāpāni parivajjeti  
sa munī tena so munī  
yo munāti ubho loke  
munī tena pavuccati* **Dh 269** he shuns the bad—  
as such, that sage is indeed a sage,  
who is wise about both in the world—  
therefore, he is called a sage.

<sup>11</sup> Alt reading & tr: *sucim moneyya,sampannaṃ*, “the pure who is accomplished in sagehood.”

<sup>12</sup> This verse recurs at A 3.120/1:273,34. See also NmA 1:177; cf AA 2:265, 372; ItA 2:37.

<sup>13</sup> Se *niṃhata,pākaṃ*. Am 1. 277; Khu 1. 234; Khu 8. 73 pitṭhesupi. This verse recurs at It 3.2.8/56,9; cf A 3.119/-1:273,14

<sup>14</sup> For nn on Pali and tr, see below [§3].

<sup>15</sup> *Imehi tīhi moneyyehi dhammehi samannāgatā cha munino* [Be so; Ee Se *cha munayo*].

<sup>16</sup> *Ye te agārikā diṭṭha,padā viññāta,sāsanā*.

18 *Asatañ ca satañ ca ñatvā dhammañ  
ajjhattañ bahiddhā ca sabba,loke  
deva,manussehi pūjito yo  
saṅga,jālam aticca so muntī*

Sn 527

Knowing the truth about the bad and the good,  
inwardly and outwardly in all the worlds,  
who is honoured by devas and humans,  
having gone beyond the power of attachment—  
he is a sage.

— — —

## 2 Related suttas

### 2.1 The (Tika) Moneyya Sutta

**2.1.2 The (Iti) Moneyya Sutta** (It 3.2.8) is practically identical with **the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta** (A 3.120)<sup>17</sup> in the basic definitions of the 3 kinds of sagehood (*moneyya*). The (Tika) Moneyya is longer as it defines each of the 3 terms: bodily sagehood (*kaya,moneyya*), verbal sagehood (*vacī,moneyya*) and mental sagehood (*ceto,moneyya*). Another difference is that instead of *ceto,moneyya*, the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta has *mano,moneyya*. This difference is only in the word but there is identity in sense, as both *ceto* and *mano* translate as “mental.”<sup>18</sup>

**2.1.3 The closing verse** of each of the two Suttas—the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta (It 3.2.8) and the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta (A 3.120)—are practically identical, except for two differences. The first, already noted, is the use of *ceto,moneyya* in the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta and of *mano,moneyya* in the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta. The second difference is a significant one, that is, in the last line of the verses. In the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta, the last line of the verse reads “he is said to have let go of the all” (*āhu sabba-p,pahāyinañ*), while in the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta, it reads “he is said to be washed clean of all badness” (*āhu ninhāta,papakāñ*).

The closing verse of the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta (A 3.120) is also found in **the Mahā Niddessa** (Nm 1:58), the canonical commentary to the Aṭṭhaka,vagga (Sn ch 4).<sup>19</sup> That of the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta (It 3.2.8) recurs in Nc 229. This interesting feature shows that the two verse, differing in only a single term, are canonical and early.

**2.1.4** A definition of silent sagehood (*moneyya*)—as that of the body (*kaya,moneyya*), of speech (*vacī,moneyya*) and of the mind (*mano,moneyya*) as found in the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta—recurs in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33).<sup>20</sup> The same definition is found in **the (Tika) Muni Sutta** (A 3.120) except there the phrase *ceto,moneyya* is used instead of *mano,moneyya*—but they are synonyms and translated in the same way.

— — —

<sup>17</sup> A 3.120/1:271 (SD 49.21).

<sup>18</sup> They are often synonyms. On the technical difference amongst *mano*, *citta*, and *viññāṇa*. see **Assutava S 2** (S 12.61-62,7) SD 20.3.

<sup>19</sup> The Mahā Niddesa (Nm) and its companion book, the Cūḷa Niddesa (Nc)—which comments on **Pārāyana,vagga** (Sn ch 5) and **Khagga,visāṇa S** (Sn 1.3)—for the 10<sup>th</sup> of the 15 books of the Khuddaka Nikāya, the 5<sup>th</sup> collection of suttas (*nikāya*).

<sup>20</sup> D 33,1.10,(52)/3:220.

## The (Iti,vuttaka) Discourse on Sagehood

It 3.2.8

1 This was indeed spoken by the Blessed One, spoken by the Arhat, thus have I heard:<sup>21</sup>

2 Bhikshus, there are these 3 kinds of sagehood. What are the three?

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| (1) Bodily sagehood, | <i>kāya,moneyya</i> |
| (2) Verbal sagehood, | <i>vacī,moneyya</i> |
| (3) Mental sagehood. | <i>mano,moneyya</i> |

These, bhikshus, are the 3 kinds of sagehood.

3 The Blessed One spoke on this matter. In this connection, he said this:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Kāya,munim vacī,munim</i> <sup>22</sup>      | The sage of the body, the sage of speech,     |
| <i>mano,munim</i> <sup>23</sup> <i>anāsavaṃ</i> | the sage of the mind that is influx-free:     |
| <i>munim moneyya,sampannaṃ</i>                  | the sage who is accomplished in sagehood—     |
| <i>āhu niṇhāta,pāpakan'ti</i> <sup>24</sup>     | he is said to be washed clean of all badness. |

This matter, too, was spoken by the Blessed One. Thus I have heard.

— evaṃ —

[For **Bibliography**, see the end of SD 49c]

161210 161212 161228r

<sup>21</sup> This is said to be spoken by the laywoman **Khujj'uttarā**: see SD 16.14 (1).

<sup>22</sup> This whole verse also at (**Tika**) **Soceyya S 2** (A 3.119/1:273) & (**Iti**) **Soceyya S** (It 3.2.7/55). Cf (**Tika**) **Moneyya S** (A 3.120), which has “He is said to have let go of the all” (*āhu sabba-p,pahāyinaṃ*), SD 49.21.

<sup>23</sup> At (**Tika**) **Moneyya S** (A 3.120), this reads *ceto,munim*, which translates identically as here (SD 49.21).

<sup>24</sup> Cf NmA 1:177; SnA 2:428.