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(Dasaka) Puṇṇiya SuttaThe (Tens) Discourse to Puṇṇiya | **A 10.83****Vitthāra Puṇṇiya Sutta** The Greater Puṇṇiya Discourse

Theme: How to grow in true discipleship as a Dharma teacher

Translated by Piya Tan ©2020

1 Sutta summary and significance**1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY**

The **(Dasaka) Puṇṇiya Sutta** (A 10.83) describes the 10 stages of discipleship, how one evolves from the arising of faith in the 3 jewels, to understanding and practising the Dharma, and to become a good Dharma speaker. In other words, this is how we progress from wise faith to right practice to Dharma-inspired teacher as the basic stages of discipleship.

1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE: THE STAGES OF DISCIPLESHIP

The **(Dasaka) Puṇṇiya Sutta** (A 10.83), with its 10 steps of discipleship [§19], is an expanded version of the **(Aṭṭhaka) Puṇṇiya Sutta** (A 8.82), with its 8 steps. The 2nd step is the same as that in **A 10.83**, but differs from the respective step in the 12-step (full) discipleship of the Caṅkī Sutta (M 95) and the Kīṭā-giri Sutta (M 70).¹

The 10 steps of discipleship of A 10.83 defines a **Dharma-inspired teacher**, who is capable of teaching Dharma to both the laity and the monastics. The first 8 steps of this discipleship are the same as that of **A 8.82**, the 8 steps of discipleship for practitioners in general. The last 2 of the 10 steps of **A 10.83** are as follows:

- (9) he is a proficient Dharma teacher with a good voice and so on; and
- (10) he is an inspiring Dharma teacher who is able to effectively teach renunciants.

For further details, including a commentary on the 10 steps of discipleship, see SD 57.22 (1.2).

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(Dasaka) Puṇṇiya Sutta**The (Tens) Discourse to Puṇṇiya**

A 10.83

1 Then, the venerable **Puṇṇiya** approached the Blessed One. Having approached, saluted him, and sat down at one side. Sitting at one side, the venerable Puṇṇiya said this to the Blessed One:

1.2 “Bhante, what is the reason, the condition, that **it occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma**, that at times it does *not* occur to him to do so?”²

¹ See **Caṅkī S** (M 95,20), SD 21.15; **Kīṭā-giri S** (M 70,23 etc), SD 11.1,

² *Tathāgataṃ dhamma,desanā paṭibhāti*, lit, “a Dharma-teaching occurs to the Tathagata.” This is Pali idiom: **Anaṅgaṇa S** (M 5,31.1), SD 37.7.

2 (1) “When, Puṇṇiya, a monk has **faith**, but does *not* approach him, it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

3 (2) But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk has faith and (out of faith) **approaches him**, it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

4 (3) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk has *faith, approaches him*, but does *not* attend on him, it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

5 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk has *faith, approaches him, and attends on him*, it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

6 (4) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him*, but does *not* ask questions, it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

7 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, and questions him*, it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

8 (5) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him*, but does *not* listen to the Dharma attentively, it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

9 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, and listens to the Dharma attentively*, it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

10 (6) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively*, but, having heard it, does *not* hold it in mind, it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

11 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, and having heard it, he remembers it*, it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

12 (7) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, and, having heard it, he remembers it* but does *not* examine the meaning of the teachings that he holds in mind, it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

13 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, having heard it, he remembers it, and holds it in mind, and examines the meaning of the teachings that he holds in mind*, it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

14 (8) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, and, having heard it, he remembers it, examines the meaning of the teachings that he holds in mind*,

but understands neither the Dharma nor its meaning, and practises it not in keeping with the Dharma, it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

15 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, and, having heard it, he remembers it, and examines the meaning of the teachings that he holds in mind,*

and **understands [155] the Dharma and its meaning, and practises in keeping with the Dharma—** it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

16 (9) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk³

has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, and, having heard it, he remembers it, and examines the meaning of the teachings that he holds in mind, understands both the Dharma and its meaning, and practises in keeping with the Dharma,*

but he is *not* a good speaker with a good delivery,

who has a pleasant voice,

articulate in enunciation,

urbane [polished] in speech,

clear-voiced, free from hoarseness, and

that clarifies meanings—

it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

17 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk

has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, and, having heard it, he remembers it, and examines the meaning of the teachings that he holds in mind, understands both the Dharma and its meaning, and practises in keeping with the Dharma,*

and he is **a good speaker with a sweet voice,**⁴

who has a pleasant voice,

articulate in enunciation,

urbane [polished] in speech,

clear-voiced,

free from hoarseness, and

that clarifies meanings⁵—

it *thus* occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

18 (10) When, Puṇṇiya, a monk

has *faith, approaches him, attends on him, questions him, listens to the Dharma attentively, and, having heard it, he remembers it, and examines the meaning of the teachings that he holds in mind, understands both the Dharma and its meaning, and practises in keeping with the Dharma; and he is a good speaker*

³ These last 2 qualities—nos 9-10—are part of one who is “sufficiently capable (for the good of) self and sufficiently capable for (good of others)”: (**Aṭṭhaka**) **Alam S** (A 8.62), SD 46.5.

⁴ This and the foll II: *kalyāṇa, vāco ca hoti kalyāṇa, vāk, karaṇo poriyā vācāya samannāgato vissaṭṭhāya anela, galāya atthassa viññāpaniyā, sandassako ca hoti samādapako samuttejako sampahaṃsako sabrahmacārīnaṃ*. Comy glosses *kalyāṇa, vāk, karaṇatā* (A 1:38,16) by a good delivery and honey-sweet (*vacana, kiriyāya madhura, bhāvo*, AA 2:40,15).

⁵ *Kalyāṇa, vāco ca hoti kalyāṇa, vāk, karaṇo poriyā vācāya samannāgato vissaṭṭhāya an, ela, galāya atthassa viññāpaniyā*: this is stock, see D 1:114,8 f ≈ 132,3 = M 1:67,4 (MA 3:418,28 = DA 282,20); A 3: 114,5, 4:328,25 f. **Kalyāṇa-vāk-karaṇa** (mfn), “speaking, reciting pleasantly” (D 1:93,21 of Ambaṭṭha; D 1:122,16 of Soṇa, daṇḍa; M 2:168,30 of Kāpaṭhika Māṇava; A 1:24,13 Soṇa Kuṭi, kaṇṇa, foremost of monks with this quality (AA 1:237,11, qu UA 313,6); V 2:139,2 of 2 brahmin brothers: CPD sv. **An, ela, galāya** (lit, “not dripping with drivel,” or “not drooling,” said only of speech), ie “pure, clear, faultless” (only of speech), articulate: CPD sv.

with a good delivery, who has a pleasant voice, articulate in enunciation, urbane [polished] in speech, clear-voiced, free from hoarseness, and that clarifies meanings,
 but, he does *not* instruct, encourage, inspire and gladden his fellow monks—
 it does *not* occur to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.

19 But, Puṇṇiya, when a monk

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| (1) has faith; | <i>saddho</i> |
| (2) approaches (the Tathagata); | <i>upasaṅkamitā</i> |
| (3) attends on (the Tathagata); | <i>payirupāsītā</i> |
| (4) asks questions; | <i>paripucchitā</i> |
| (5) listens to the Dharma attentively; | <i>ohita,soto ca dhammaṃ suṇāti</i> |
| (6) having heard the Dharma, he remembers it; | <i>sutvā ca dhammaṃ dhāreti</i> |
| (7) examines the meaning of the teachings he remembers; | <i>dhatānañ ca dhammānaṃ atthaṃ</i>
<i>upaparikkhati</i> |
| (8) understands both the Dharma and its meaning;
practises in accordance with the Dharma; | <i>attham aññāya dhammam aññāya</i>
<i>dhammānudhamma,paṭipanno hoti</i> |
| (9) he is a good speaker with a good delivery, has a <u>pleasant voice</u> , articulate in enunciation, urbane [polished] in speech, clear-voiced, free from hoarseness, and that clarifies meanings; | <i>kalyāṇa,vāco ca hoti kalyāṇa,vāk,karaṇo</i>
<i>poriyā vācāya samannāgato vissaṭṭhāya</i>
<i>vissaṭṭhāya an,ela,galāya atthassa</i>
<i>viññāpaniyā</i> |
| (10) and he is one who <u>instructs, inspires, rouses and gladdens</u> his fellow brahmacharis ⁶ —
it <i>thus</i> occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma. ⁷ | <i>sandassako ca hoti samādapako samuttejako</i>
<i>sampahamsako sa,brahmacārīnaṃ</i> |

When, Puṇṇiya, one has these 10 qualities, it definitely occurs to the Tathagata to teach the Dharma.”

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⁶ The more common stock phrase here is *dhammiyā kathāya sandassetvā samādhapetvā samuttejetvā sampahamsetvā*, “... instructed (*sandassetvā*), inspired (*samādapetvā*), roused (*samuttejetvā*) and gladdened (*sampahamsetvā*) ... with a Dharma talk.” See (6) for details. ***Viññāpaniyā*** (gerundive) from *viññāpanī*, “instructive, making clear (of speech)” (D 1:114, *atthassa viññāpaniyā* = *viññāpana,samatthāya*, “capable of clarifying,” DA 1:282); A 3:114; Dh 408 (= *attha~* DhA 4:182); Sn 632.

⁷ *Ekanta,paṭibhāṇā tathāgataṃ dhamma,desanā hoti*. See §1.2 n.