

# 3

## Ratha Vinīta Sutta

The Discourse on the Relay of Chariots | M 24

Chinese Āgama MĀ 9<sup>1</sup> = T1.26.429c28-431c12

Theme: The stages of spiritual purification and liberation]

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006; 2009

### 1 The 7 stages of purification: a perspective

#### 1.1 MENTIONED ONLY TWICE

After the time of Buddha,ghosa (5<sup>th</sup> century), Theravāda meditation primarily works with a system of “7 (stages of) purifications” (*satta,visuddhi*). Interestingly, in the Pali Canon, this teaching is found only in **the Ratha Vinīta Sutta** (M 24)<sup>2</sup> and listed in **the Das’uttara Sutta** (D 34), with two additional items<sup>3</sup> [2]. **The Visuddhi,magga**, on the other hand, is an encyclopaedic tome based the 7 purifications.<sup>4</sup> The 7 purifications (*satta visuddhi*) are as follows:<sup>5</sup>

|   |   |
|---|---|
| (1) the purification of moral virtue                                      | <i>sīla,visuddhi</i>                    |
| (2) the purification of the mind  | <i>citta,visuddhi</i>                   |
| (3) the purification of views   | <i>diṭṭhi,visuddhi</i>                  |
| (4) the purification by overcoming doubt                                  | <i>kaṅkhā,vitaraṇa,visuddhi</i>         |
| (5) the purification by knowledge and vision of the path and the not-path | <i>maggāmagga,ñāṇa,dassana,visuddhi</i> |
| (6) the purification by knowledge and vision of the way                   | <i>paṭipadā,ñāṇa,dassana,visuddhi</i>   |
| (7) the purification of knowledge and vision                              | <i>ñāṇa,dassana,visuddhi</i>            |

These 7 purifications are to be cultivated successively, each stage leading to and supporting the next, until liberation (that is, nirvana) is attained. None of these 7 stages, *not even* the 7<sup>th</sup> and last, is liberation or nirvana itself. They are all mundane states, except for the last, which is supramundane [1.2]. A more complete version of this set is called “the 9 states to be cultivated” (*nava dhammā bhāvetabba*) [3.1].

<sup>1</sup> 中阿含七法品七車經第九, Madhyama Āgama 9, Seven Dharma Chapter, Seven-chariot Sutra.

<sup>2</sup> M 24/1:145-151 @ SD 28.3. Qu at Vism 93, 671; MA 1:92, 2:246; SnA 446; MAṬ 553.

<sup>3</sup> D 34,2.2(2)/3:288.

<sup>4</sup> The division of Vism according to the 7 purifications are (ch/pp): (1) 1/1-58; (2) 2-17/59-586; (3) 18/587-597; (4) 19/598-605; (5) 20/606-638; (6) 21/638-671; (7) 22-23/672-710.

<sup>5</sup> M 24/1:145-151. For further analysis of the 7 purifications (incl other insight knowledges), see **Āpaṇa S** (S 48.50/5:225 f), SD 10.4(3b). See also Gunaratana 1985:154-174 & Moneyya 2005.

**1.2 PRACTICE OF THE PURIFICATIONS (SUMMARY)**

In terms of practice, **the 7 purifications** can be briefly explained as follows:<sup>6</sup>

| <u>Purification</u>                                      | <u>Practice</u>   |
|--|---|
| (1) of virtue  | fully keeping to the precepts and training-rules (explained in the Visuddhi,magga in terms of the monastic “4 purifications of moral virtue” ( <i>catu parisuddhi,sīla</i> ) <sup>7</sup> |
| (2) of the mind  | overcoming of the 5 hindrances <sup>8</sup> through attaining access concentration and full concentration (ie dhyana) <sup>9</sup>  |
| (3) of views   | understanding the 3 characteristics, <sup>10</sup> etc, of mental and physical phenomena, especially how the 5 aggregates <sup>11</sup> constitutes a living being                        |
| (4) by overcoming doubt                                  | discernment of conditions for mental and physical phenomena <sup>12</sup>   |
| (5) by knowledge and vision of the path and the not-path | the correct discrimination between the false path of worldly ecstasy and euphoria, and the true insight into impermanence, suffering and non-self   |
| (6) by knowledge and vision of the way                   | this is a series of insight-knowledges up to the supramundane paths [1.3]   |
| (7) by knowledge and vision                              | knowledge of the 4 supramundane paths (the 4 levels of sainthood), short of arhathood [3.3]   |

The Commentary says that the first 6 stages are “accompanied by clinging” (*upādāna sam-payutta*) in the sense of both being conditioned, and of existing in one who still has grasping. The seventh stage, being supramundane, is understood only in the sense of being conditioned. (MA 2:156). It is still “conditioned” (*saṅkhata*) because it is not yet the fruition of arhathood or nirvana. [2.0]

<sup>6</sup> For further details, see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (11+12).

<sup>7</sup> See Vism 1.42-125/15-44.

<sup>8</sup> *Pañca nīvarana*, ie (1) sense-desire (*kāma-c, chanda*), (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*), (3) sloth and torpor (*ithīna, middha*), (4) restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca, kukkuccha*), and (5) doubt (*vicikicchā*) : see **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55/5:121-126), SD 46.55.

<sup>9</sup> See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

<sup>10</sup> The 3 characteristics are impermanence (*aniccatā*), suffering (*sukkhata*) and non-self (*anattatā*): see **Atam, mayatā**, SD 19.13 (1).

<sup>11</sup> “The 5 aggregates” (*pañca-k, khandha*), see SD 17, esp (**Dve**) **Khandhā S** (S 22.48/3:47 f), SD 17.1a.

<sup>12</sup> Cf (**Kaṅkhā**) **Revata S** (U 5.7/60), SD 25.15.

### 1.3 PURIFICATION AND THE INSIGHT KNOWLEDGES

According to the Abhidhamma tradition, the 7 purifications and the 11 insight knowledges (*vipassana ñāṇa*) are related as follows:

#### **Purification (*visuddhi*)**

- (5) by knowledge and vision of the path and the not-path  
(6) by knowledge and vision of the way

Between 6 & 7 [1.2]

- (7) by knowledge and vision.

#### **The insight knowledges (*vipassanā,ñāṇa*)<sup>13</sup>**

- [ ]. *knowledge of comprehension*  
1a. *knowledge of arising and passing away (tender phase)*  
1b. *knowledge of arising and passing away (mature phase)*  
2. *knowledge of dissolution*  
3. *knowledge of fearfulness*  
4. *knowledge of danger*  
5. *knowledge of revulsion*  
6. *knowledge of the desire for freedom*  
7. *knowledge of review contemplation*  
8. *knowledge of equanimity regarding formations*  
9. *knowledge of conformity*  
10. *change of lineage, that is, attaining of streamwinning*  
11. *knowledge of the 4 supramundane paths*

Unlike the suttas [1.2], the Abhidhamma tradition defines the 7<sup>th</sup> purification as including full awakening or nirvana itself. It is this new interpretation of the 7 purifications that Buddha,ghosa follows in his *Visuddhi,magga* [2].

**1.4 CONFORMITY KNOWLEDGE** or “adaptation knowledge” (*anuloma,ñāṇa*) is identical with the “adptation-to-truth knowledge” (*saccānuloma,ñāṇa*), the last of the 9 insight-knowledges (*vipassanā,ñāṇa*), which constitute “the purification of knowledge and vision of the path-progress.” This is the knowledge, while contemplating impermanence, etc, adapts itself to the preceding 8 kinds of insight-knowledge, as well as to the immediately following supramundane path (*lok’uttara,magga*) and the 37 factors conducive to awakening (*bodhi,pakkhiya,dhamma*).<sup>14</sup>

The historical Bodhisattvas, the buddhas-to-be, when they renounce under another Buddha, as in the case of Jotipāla, for example, practise all the recluse’s duties, but cultivate insight only up to the stage of “conformity knowledge,” that is, just before attaining streamwinning. They do not attain any path or fruit, but which they will attain in their last life, and become fully self-awakened buddhas.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.5 NIRVANA

Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta’s teaching is that *the 7 stages of purification*, neither single nor as a whole is nirvana. It progresses through the various stages of purification that leads us to nirvana. The 7 stages of purification, in other words, are the spiritual means to a liberating end.

<sup>13</sup> Vism 20.93-21.136/630-671. An early set of 9 knowledges is given in Pm 1:1. **Abhidhamm’attha,saṅgaha** list 11 knowledges (Abhs 9.25; Abhs:BRS 344-347, 351-356; Abhs:SR 210 f; Abhs:WG 346). **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, incorporating the 8 knowledges, gives a more comprehensive list of 16 knowledges (*sojasa,ñāṇa*) (Pm 1; Vism 18.1-22.31/587-678).

<sup>14</sup> Detailed in Vism 21. See also BDict: visuddhi.

<sup>15</sup> On Jotipāla’s case, see **Ghaṭikāra S** (M 81,12.4) @ SD 39.3.

However, the holy life can be defined as the effecting of the purifications, and the purpose of the holy is the attaining of nirvana, as stated in the key passage of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta:

... it is for the sake of the attaining of final nirvana without clinging that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One. [§15]

Nirvana is referred to in the Sutta as “the final nirvana without clinging” (*anupāda parinibbāna*), and glossed by the Commentary as “the final nirvana that has no conditions” (*appaccaya, parinibbāna*). It goes on to explain that “clinging” (*upādāna*) has 2 meanings:

- (1) grasping (*gahaṇa*), as in the usual passage on the 4 types of clinging,<sup>16</sup> and
- (2) condition (*paccaya*), as illustrated by this passage.

The commentator adds that “final nirvana without clinging”, thus has 2 meanings:

- (1) the fruit of arhathood (*arahatta, phala*), because it cannot be grasped by any of the 4 types of clinging, or
- (2) the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*), because it has not arisen through any condition.

(MA 2:156)

## 2 The 7 stages of purification: an analysis

### **2.0 PRACTICE OF THE 7 STAGES OF PURIFICATION (DETAILS)**

We have above briefly listed how the 7 purifications *should be practised* [1.2]. Here we shall look into each of the 7 stages of purification in some detail.<sup>17</sup>

#### **2.01 Progressive training**

The set of 7 stages of purification (*satta visuddhi*) is nowhere elaborated on in the Pali Canon. It is the main theme of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta and its Sanskrit and Chinese parallels, where apparently previous knowledge of the set is assumed. None of these texts give any explanation on the individual implication of the 7 purifications. The discussion in these texts shows that these 7 purifications are successive stages required to reach the final destination, each stage constituting the basis for the next one, comparable to a relay of 7 chariots used to quickly cover a great distance.

#### **2.02 The 3 trainings**

The first 3 stages of purification—the purification of moral virtue (*sīla, visuddhi*), the purification of the mind (*citta, visuddhi*), and the purification of views (*diṭṭhi, visuddhi*)—have practically the same names in the Pali and Chinese versions of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta and the Das’uttara Sutta.<sup>18</sup> The three stages are interesting in that they also constitute the three trainings (*ti, sikkhā*), which are here listed with the functions or benefits:

<sup>16</sup> The 4 types of clinging are: (1) clinging to sensuality (*kām’upādāna*), (2) clinging to view (*diṭṭh’upādāna*), (3) clinging to rituals and vows (*sīla-b, bata’upādāna*), and (4) clinging to self-doctrine (*atta, vād’upādāna*) (D 3:211; M 1:66; Vbh 375)

<sup>17</sup> For further details, see *Bhāvanā*, SD 15.1 (11+12).

<sup>18</sup> DĀ 10 = T1.56a23 & T13 = T1.238c25. The 9 purifications recur in the same terms in DĀ 11 = T1.58c18, which has no Pali parallel.

| <b>the 3 trainings</b>               | <b>Pali term</b>      | <b>function or benefit</b>   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| The training in moral virtue         | <i>sīla sikkhā</i>    | restraint in body and speech |
| The training in mental concentration | <i>samādhi sikkhā</i> | mental calm                  |
| The training in wisdom               | <i>paññā sikkhā</i>   | overcoming wrong views       |

The 3 trainings then are *an abridged model or summary of the disciple's training*. It can be said that the three trainings form the basis for spiritual growth leading to sainthood and nirvana. The brevity of the three training is expeditious, as it is easier for the beginner to understand and remember these 3 trainings, their practice and goal, rather than a longer list, such as the 7 stages of purification or the 9 purifications. In the case of the more advanced practitioners, namely, those with high moral virtue, deep mental concentration, and some level of wisdom, the third training then would be *a synecdoche or short form for the rest of the purification stages*.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.1 THE PURIFICATION OF MORAL VIRTUE (*SĪLA, VISUDDHI*)<sup>20</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> purification occurs in the Suttas by itself,<sup>21</sup> and with purification of views (*diṭṭhi, visuddhi*).<sup>22</sup> We do have a discourse where the purification of moral virtue is defined, that is, in **the Sāpūgiya (or Sāmugiya) Sutta** (A 4.194). The Sutta, in fact, features four types of “total purity” (*pārisuddhi*), that is, the purity of morality, of the mind, of views and of freedom.<sup>23</sup>

Though the term “total purity” (*pārisuddhi*), used in this discourse differs from the term “purification” (*visuddhi*) as used in the Ratha Vinīta Sutta, the two terms are evidently closely related, even synonymous, since the Das’uttara Sutta’s model of nine purifications also employs the term “total purity” (*pārisuddhi*).<sup>24</sup> “Total purity” of moral virtue, according to the Sāmūgiya Sutta, refers to the keeping to the precepts, which effectively is another way of referring to the purification of moral virtue.

### 2.2 THE PURIFICATION OF MIND (*CITTA, VISUDDHI*)

This 2<sup>nd</sup> purification is called “the total purification of mind” in **the Sāmūgiya Sutta** (A 4.194), is there as the attainment of the four dhyanas.<sup>25</sup> However, in the context of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta (M 24), the level of mental purification required may not necessarily comprise all the 4 dhyanas.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly, the mind needs to be *purified* of all mental hindrances<sup>27</sup> to be able to attain the dhyanas,<sup>28</sup> but we need not attain all four dhyanas to be spiritually liberated.<sup>29</sup> However, total

<sup>19</sup> For details on the 3 trainings, see *Sīla samādhi paññā*, SD 21.6.

<sup>20</sup> The rest of this section is heavily based on Analayo 2005.

<sup>21</sup> A 4.194/2: 200,12. Purification of moral virtue is mentioned without explanation.

<sup>22</sup> D 33.1.9(28)/3: 214,1, A 2.15/1:195,4 & Ekottara Āgama Skt fragments ed C Trīpaṭhī, *Ekottarāgama-Fragmente der Gilgit Handschrift*, Reinbek 1995: 195. Each of these instances merely lists these terms and thus yields no further information on their implications.

<sup>23</sup> A 4.194/2:194-196 (SD 56.6).

<sup>24</sup> D 34/3: 288,16.

<sup>25</sup> A 4.194/2:195 (SD 56.6).

<sup>26</sup> (*Āsava-k,khaya*) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36/4:422,7), SD 33.8 speaks of attaining the destruction of the influxes based on the first dhyana only. Cf **Aṭṭhaka,nāgara S** (M 52/1:350,10) & **Mahā Māluṅkya,putta S** (M 64/-1:435,29).

<sup>27</sup> The Sutta’s standard expression here “the mind is purified” (*cittam parisodheti*), eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,68/1:71,21). The 5 mental hindrances (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*) are: (1) sensual lust (*kāma-c,chanda*), (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*), (3) restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), (4) sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*),

mental purification is necessary for the attaining of the dhyanas and for the full development of insight. Such a “purification” (*visuddhi*) of mind can lead up to those levels of “total purity” (*pārisuddhi*), as described in the Sāmūgiya Sutta. Hence, concludes **Analayo**, the relation between the 2 terms, used in the Ratha Vinīta Sutta and the Sāmūgiya Sutta respectively, could be that “purification” represents the process that leads up to “(total) purity.” (2009:128)

### 2.3 THE PURIFICATION OF VIEWS (*DIṬṬHI, VISUDDHI*)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> purification in the Ratha Vinīta Sutta occurs on its own in two other Pāli discourses: **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33) and **the Duka Nipāta** (A 2.15).<sup>30</sup> In both cases, the purification is merely listed without further information. According to the Sāmūgiya Sutta (A 4.194), the similar term “purity of views” (*diṭṭhi, pārisuddhi*) refers to understanding the four noble truths “as they really are.”<sup>31</sup>

Several discourses use the same formulation in relation to the attainment of streamwinning, at which point there is penetrative insight into the four noble truths.<sup>32</sup> The most frequent occurrence of this formulation in the discourses leads progressively higher culminating in the destruction of the influxes (*āsava-k, khaya*), that is, arhathood.<sup>33</sup>

The purification of views in the Ratha Vinīta Sutta’s model of successive stages of purifications clearly refers *only* to the process that leads up to *the purity of views arising with streamwinning*. This can be deduced from the fact that once purification of views has been accomplished, the next stage, “purification of overcoming doubt,” still needs to be attained. In the case of streamwinning, however, all spiritual doubts are overcome, too.

### 2.4 THE PURIFICATION BY OVERCOMING DOUBT (*KAṆKHĀ, VITARAṆA, VISUDDHI*)

This expression is found in only one other text, namely, **the (Kaṅkhā) Revata Sutta** (U 5.7),<sup>34</sup> a short but significant discourse on how the monk Revata sits in meditation, “reviewing his own purification by overcoming doubt” (*kaṅkhā, vitaraṇa, visuddhiṃ paccavekkhamāno*). In the Sutta’s concluding verse, the doubt (*kaṅkhā*) is said to be about here and beyond, oneself and others, as one meditates. In other words, here *kaṅkhā* is synonymous with *vicikicchā*, both often translated as “doubt.” In fact, the Madhyama Āgama version specifies this doubt as *vicikicchā*: 疑蓋 *yígài* (MĀ 9 = T1.430b29).<sup>35</sup>

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and (5) doubt (*vicikicchā*): see **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55 @ SD 3.12). Cf **Mahā Assa, pura S** (M 39.13/1:274); see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13); **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation; **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.68/1:71) @ SD 8.10.

<sup>28</sup> See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

<sup>29</sup> See **The Layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5.

<sup>30</sup> D 33.1.9.28+29/3:214,1+2 & A 2.15.13+14/1: 95,4+5 respectively.

<sup>31</sup> A 4.194/2:195,27: *idaṃ dukkhaṃ ti yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānāti ...* (etc).

<sup>32</sup> To understand each noble truth “as it really is” constitutes a distinctive characteristic of the assembly of noble ones (*ariyā parisā*) according to A 2.5/1:71,31; the same expression represents the wisdom of the trainee (*sekhā paññā*) in A 3.73/1:220,9; and signifies that the stage of a noble one has been reached (*ariya-p, patto*) according to A 4.190/2:184,30. These instances indicate the close relationship of this formulation to the insight gained with streamwinning.

<sup>33</sup> Cf D 2/1:83,35; D 10/1:209,16; M 51/1:348,24; M 60/1:413,9; M 65/1:442,12; etc.

<sup>34</sup> U 5.7/60,5 @ SD 32.15.

<sup>35</sup> The MĀ version here apparently takes this to be not as the removal of the “fetter” (*saṃyojana*) of doubt, but only a removal of the “hindrance” (*nīvaraṇa*) of doubt. While the former has to do with progress of insight, the latter only relates of meditation progress. See further **Vyāpāda**, SD 32.5.

The commentary to the (Kaṅkhā) Revata Sutta explains that Revata is reviewing his purification of overcoming doubt achieved through full liberation. The commentary specifies that through the wisdom of the supramundane path, *he has gone beyond any doubt* related to speculations about a self in past, present or future, and regarding the Buddha, the Dharma and the sangha.

This closely relates to the purification by overcoming doubt to the attainment of stream-winning, since to go beyond such speculations and to have firm confidence in the Three Jewels are qualities of a streamwinner, one who through the strength of his or her realization *has completely removed doubt*.<sup>36</sup>

Having said that, we should further note a significant difference between *vicikicchā* and *kaṅkhā*. Although both can be rendered as “doubt,” the former has a more restricted (almost technical) sense, used usually in the context of meditation, and the latter is more broad sense of spiritual progress as a whole. In simple terms, if we have *vicikicchā*, we would not attain samadhi or dhyana; if we have *kaṅkhā*, we would not be able to attain streamwinning.

In other words, though the removal of doubt forms part of the standard descriptions of streamwinning,<sup>37</sup> the purification of the mind by overcoming such doubts also occurs in the standard description of overcoming the 5 hindrances prior to the development of deeper stages of concentration, a context not directly related to streamwinning.<sup>38</sup>

As such, “the purification of overcoming doubt (*kaṅkhā*)” need not necessarily be taken in a supramundane sense. It would be problematic if we were to do so: for, with the attainment of streamwinning, not only the fetter of doubt is eradicated, but also the fetter of self-identity view, so that one’s view is also purified. The discourses clearly show that these two fetters are eradicated simultaneously at the moment of **streamwinning** itself.<sup>39</sup>

The three versions of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta [2.01], however, present purification of views and purification of overcoming doubt as two separate and successive stages, which would be meaningless if the two were to occur simultaneously. As such, **Analayo** points out, neither of these two stages of purification can be identified with stream-entry.

Alternatively, then, “purification of overcoming doubt” would seem to be concerned with the hindrance of doubt, as indicated by the Madhyama Āgama version. Yet this interpretation is also not satisfactory, since the 5 hindrances should have already been temporarily overcome with the preceding purification of the mind. Hence, concludes Analayo, the fourth stage of purification does not seem to fit too well into either of these two schemes. (2009: 130)

I think this is merely a “technical” problem. It is useful to remember that the early Buddhist teachings rarely make use of technical terms: the terminology is, as a rule, *contextual*. The sense of the word or expression must be teased out from its context. In other words, although *vicikicchā* and *kaṅkhā* have their special senses, they may be used interchangeably, and their sense must be understood contextually.

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<sup>36</sup> The expression *kaṅkhā pahīnā* occurs in the first section of **Diṭṭhi Saṃyutta** (S 24.1-18/3:203-216) as a quality of a streamwinner. Similarly, **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2) relates going beyond speculations in regard to a self in the past, the present and the future to overcoming the 3 fetters, viz streamwinning (M 2/1:9,21). Furthermore, wise faith in the 3 jewels as a special quality of a streamwinner is a recurring theme in **Sot-āpatti Saṃy**: see eg S 55.2/5:343,27.

<sup>37</sup> *Tiṇṇa, vicikicchā*, eg D 3/1:110,15.

<sup>38</sup> *Tiṇṇa, vicikicchā*, eg D 2/1:71,29.

<sup>39</sup> A 3.92/1:242,19 & Sn 231.

## 2.5 THE PURIFICATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF THE PATH AND THE NOT-PATH (*MAGĠAMAGGA, ÑĀNA, DASSANA, VISUDDHI*)

While the Madhyama Āgama version and Sanskrit fragments of the Daśottara Sūtra agree with the Pāli versions,<sup>40</sup> the Dīrgha Āgama version speaks at this point of purification of “discrimination,”<sup>41</sup> while the Ekottara Āgama version has purification of “the path of practice.”<sup>42</sup> The last two, if taken together, indicate that this purification should have something to do with clear discrimination of what is the proper path of practice.

The expression “path and not-path” also occurs in **the Tevijja Sutta** (D 13) in a discussion between two young brahmins about the capability of their respective teachers to teach the right path to companionship with Brahma.<sup>43</sup> This passage corroborates that the expression “path and not-path” refers to the right type of path as against the wrong one.

Knowledge and capability in this crucial distinction occurs in several Pāli discourses.<sup>44</sup> Only one of these instances, **the Kālī Sutta** (A 10.26), has the expression found in the stage of purification discussed here.<sup>45</sup> In this discourse, the Buddha’s “knowledge and vision of path and not-path” constitutes an aspect of his penetrative insight into the nature of deep levels of concentration attained through kasiṇa meditation. These passages support the impression, gained from the Dīrgha Āgama and Ekottara Āgama versions, that this stage of purification requires a clear discrimination of what is the proper path of practice.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.6 THE PURIFICATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF THE WAY (*PAṬIPADĀ, ÑĀNA, DASSANA, VISUDDHI*)

The term *paṭipadā* here is a near-synonym of *magga*, both referring to “path” or “way,” though the term *paṭipadā* usually refers to the practice itself. As such, *paṭipadā* often occurs in relation to the fourth noble truth as the way of practice leading to the eradication of *dukkha*, which is moreover the middle “path.”<sup>47</sup> This sense of *paṭipadā* as practice is clearly seen in **the Mahā Sakul’udāyi Sutta** (M 77), which lists a broad range of meditation practices under the heading *paṭipadā*.<sup>48</sup>

The Chinese versions of this purification more or less agree with the Pāli.<sup>49</sup> Of particular interest from a comparative perspective regarding this stage of purification is the Ekottara

<sup>40</sup> MĀ 9 = T1.430c1 has 道非道知見 *dào fēi dào zhī jiàn*, the same as the Pāli version. T13 has “path-path” (T1.238c27: 道道 *dào dào*), which could be a textual corruption of “path and not-path,” in which case T13 would also be similar to the Pāli version. The Skt fragment of the Daśottara Sūtra reads *mārgamā[r]g(a)*, which Schlingloff 1962: 11 n 1 corrects to *mārgāmārg(a)*, a “mistake” corresponding to that made in T13.

<sup>41</sup> DĀ 10 = T1.56a24: 分別 *fēn bié*.

<sup>42</sup> EĀ 39.10 = T2.734b26: 行跡 *xíng jì*.

<sup>43</sup> D 13/1:236,28.

<sup>44</sup> In S 8.6/1:190,14 (= Tha 1231) as a quality of Sāriputta; in A 4.35/2:37,19 & in A 10.26/5:47,7 as a quality of the Buddha; and at Sn 627 (= Dh 403) as a quality of a true brahmin.

<sup>45</sup> A 10.26/5:47,7.

<sup>46</sup> Analayo 2005: 130 f.

<sup>47</sup> *Dukkha, nirodha, gāminī paṭipadā*, eg in D 2/1:84,3, ie, the “middle way” (*majjhimā paṭipadā*), eg M 3/1:15,26.

<sup>48</sup> M 77/2:11-22.

<sup>49</sup> DĀ 10 = T1.56a25 speaks simply of the “path” 道 *dào*, while MĀ 9 = T1. 430c1 has 道跡知見 *dào jì zhī jiàn*, lit “knowledge and vision of the way and path,” an expression is quite close to the Pāli version. T 13 = T1. 1238c27 has merely 慧見 *huì jiàn*, “wisdom and vision.” The Skt fragment version of this purification reads *pr(a)[t](ipa)[d]* (Schlingloff 1962: 11) and thus appears to correspond to the Pāli version.

Āgama discourse, which speaks of “development of knowledge in the middle of the path.”<sup>50</sup> This confirms that this stage of purification has to do with being in the midst of the practical undertaking of the path.<sup>51</sup>

## 2.7 THE PURIFICATION BY KNOWLEDGE AND VISION (*ÑĀNA, DASSANA, VISUDDHI*)

While the Ekottara Āgama version agrees with the Pāli, the Dīrgha Āgama version speaks of “discarding,” the Madhyama Āgama version, of “knowledge of the way and path of eradication”, and the individual Chinese translation of **the Das’uttara Sutta** (D 45), of “vision and wisdom eradicating craving.”<sup>52</sup> These three Chinese versions of the seventh stage of purification thus make it clear that, from their perspective, *eradication or discarding* is a central theme of this stage. Such eradicating or discarding could be intended in a supramundane sense, or else it could refer to eradicating and discarding wrong notions through knowing and seeing in accordance with reality.

The Pāli expression “knowledge and vision” features prominently in the Buddha’s insight into the 4 noble truths, as recorded in **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11).<sup>53</sup> Similarly, the stock passages on full awakening speak of “knowing” and “seeing” as leading up to the destruction of the influx.<sup>54</sup> The same expression, however, can also connote lesser realizations; for example, it may refer to insight into the distinction between the physical body and consciousness, to knowing the mind of others, to knowing the past and the future, or to internal perception of brightness.<sup>55</sup>

That knowledge and vision need not be identical with realization is further evident in a passage in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33), which differentiates between a type of concentration that leads to knowledge and vision, and one that leads to realization. While the former is to practise the perception of light (*āloka,saññā*),<sup>56</sup> the latter requires meditative insight into the arising and passing away of the 5 aggregates.<sup>57</sup>

All this indicates that the expression “knowledge and vision” can refer a variety of realizations, and do not necessarily imply the attainment of nirvana. In fact, **the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29) and **the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30) attest that “knowledge and vision” can refer only to a stage leading up to, but not yet identical with, realization.<sup>58</sup> These two discourses are especially relevant here, since they are concerned with the same central issue as that of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta, *the goal of living the holy life*. The Mahā Sārôpama and Cūḷa Sārôpama Suttas agree with the Ratha Vinīta Sutta that neither pure moral virtue, nor deep concentration, nor the attainment of “knowledge and vision” should be mistaken for the final goal.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>50</sup> EĀ 39.10 = T2.734b28: 於道之中智修 yúdào zhīzhōngzhīxiū.

<sup>51</sup> Analayo 2005: 131.

<sup>52</sup> DĀ 10 = T1.56a25: 除 chù; MĀ 9 at T I 430c1: 道跡斷智 dào jì duàn zhì; T 13 at T I 238c28: 見慧愛斷 jiàn-huì’ài duàn.

<sup>53</sup> According to S 56.11/5:423,6, the Buddha only claimed to be fully awakened when his knowledge-and-vision (*ñāna,dassana*) regarding all aspects of the 4 noble truths is thoroughly purified (*suvisuddha*).

<sup>54</sup> Eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2/1:84,8): *evam jānato evam passato kām’āsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati ...* (etc).

<sup>55</sup> *Ñāna,dassana* refers to the insight into the distinction between the physical body and consciousness in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2/1:76,31); to knowing the minds of others in **Jana,vasabha S** (D 18/2: 216,14); to knowing past and future in **Pāsādika S** (D 29/3:134,3+5); and to the internal perception of brightness (*obhāsa*) in **Gayā S** (A 8.64/4:302,12).

<sup>56</sup> D 33,1.11(5)(b)/3:223,2; the same recurs in **Samādhi,bhāvanā S** (A 4.41/2:45,7).

<sup>57</sup> D 33,1.11(5)(d)/3:223,17; the same recurs in **Samādhi,bhāvanā S** (A 4.41/2:45,22).

<sup>58</sup> M 29/1:196,1 & M 30/1:202,21.

<sup>59</sup> Analayo 2005: 132.

## 2.8 THE 9 PURIFICATIONS

The point that needs to be kept in mind concerning knowledge and vision as a stage of purification is that the model of *the 7 purifications* forms part of the model of *the 9 purifications* found in the Pāli, Chinese and Sanskrit versions of **the Das'uttara Sutta**. This 9-stage model could well be in the background of the questions posed by Sāriputta in the 3 versions of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta. The whole purpose of this is the narrator's desire to draw out Puṇṇa's wisdom by his presenting the stages of purification that still fall short of the final goal.

The remainder of the discussion between Sāriputta and Puṇṇa is quite clear that for both of them, this model of 7 purifications is *incomplete* as the process of purification. According to *the chariot simile* found in all three versions, just as when mounting the seventh chariot the destination is still to be reached, so too with the seventh stage of purification the final goal is still to be attained. According to Puṇṇa's explicit statement in the Pāli and Chinese versions of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta, the seventh stage of purification is *still affected by clinging* (*sa, upādāna*) and thus cannot be considered the final goal.<sup>60</sup> If this is taken into account, an interpretation of this seventh stage as including the attainment of all four levels of awakening, such as advanced by the Visuddhi, magga, is curious.<sup>61</sup> At best, it would include only the *trainee levels*, that is, all the levels of sainthood except the arhathood.

If full liberation were already accomplished with the seventh stage of purification, we would wonder what the significance of the eighth and the ninth stages of purification could be. The Pāli and the Dīrgha Āgama versions of the Das'uttara Sutta, however, speak of purification of "freedom" only with the ninth stage, indicating that only at this stage the highest goal is reached.<sup>62</sup> The similar expression, "purity of freedom" (*vimutti, pārisuddhi*), in **the Sāmuḍdiya Sutta** [2.1] also refers to full realization.<sup>63</sup>

## 2.9 ANALAYO'S EXPLANATIONS

### 2.9.1 Why Punna does not recognize Sāriputta

Looking back on the information collected so far regarding these 7 stages of purification, it is a little puzzling that Sāriputta and Puṇṇa both appear to have been quite familiar with a model of stages of purification that recurs only once in the Pāli discourses. The Madhyama Āgama version may hold a key to this puzzle. However, to explore this, we must return to the starting of the discussion between Sāriputta and Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta.

According to the 3 versions of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta, this discussion between the 2 monks is actually *their first meeting*, at which Sāriputta does not reveal his identity, in order to elicit a detailed explanation of the Dharma from Puṇṇa. As Puṇṇa explicitly states at the conclusion of their exchange, if he had known from the outset the true identity of his interlocutor, he would *not* have answered in such detail. According to the Madhyama Āgama version, he would not have been able to say even a single sentence!<sup>64</sup> Hence, for Sāriputta to conceal his identity is indeed necessary in order to elicit such a detailed exposition from Puṇṇa.

<sup>60</sup> M 24/1:148,30; MĀ 9 = T1.430c24 & EĀ 39.10 = T2.735a8.

<sup>61</sup> *Sotāpatti, maggo sākāgāmi, maggo anāgāmi, maggo arahatta, maggo 'ti imesu pana catusu maggesu ñāṇaṃ ñāṇa, dassana, visuddhi nāma* (Vism 22.2/672,6).

<sup>62</sup> The 9th purification in the version at DĀ 10 = T1.56a25 reads 解脫 *jiētuō*, corresponding to the Pāli version's *vimutti* in D 34/3:288,23.

<sup>63</sup> A 4.194/2:195,35.

<sup>64</sup> MĀ 9 = T1.431c1: 不能答一句 *bù néng dá yí jù*. A similar statement can be reconstructed from a Skt fragment of this discourse, published in *Sanskrihandchriften aus den Turfanfunden*, E Waldschmidt (ed), Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1968, 2:16.

In the Pāli account, the first question asked by Sāriputta is *if Puṇṇa is living the holy life under the Blessed One*. This question seems a little strange, since for a Buddhist monk there would seem to be little reason to ask another Buddhist monk if he is living the holy life under the Buddha.<sup>65</sup> The Madhyama Āgama version has the same question, with the curious difference that according to its presentation Sāriputta speaks consistently of living the holy life under the “recluse Gotama.”<sup>66</sup> Only at the end of the Madhyama Āgama discourse, when asking for Puṇṇa’s name and just before revealing his true identity, does Sāriputta change expression and use the more appropriate *Tathāgata* to refer to the Buddha.<sup>67</sup>

In other discourses in the Pāli Nikāyas and Chinese Āgamas, only those who do *not* belong to the Buddhist monastic or lay community use the expression “recluse Gotama” to refer to the Buddha. In view of this, it seems strange that Sāriputta, as a Buddhist monk, should use such an expression. Sanskrit fragments of a version of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta appear however to support the Madhyama Āgama version, since they have preserved part of a question after the purpose of purification which uses the same expression “recluse.”<sup>68</sup> Hence, before dismissing this for Sāriputta’s improbable way of referring to the Buddha as a textual error, we need to take a closer look at the situation behind this question.

In order to explore the historical background behind the posing of this question, **Analayo** begins by noting that the proper way of sewing up and dyeing robes appears to have been decided only at a later stage of the growth of the monastic order.<sup>69</sup> In view of this, during the early historical stages of the monastic community, its members were possibly not easily distinguishable by their outer appearance as Buddhist monks, as they may have just dressed in the manner of other recluses and wanderers roaming the Ganges valley. This suggestion finds support in the Tibetan **Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya**, which reports that the rajah Pasenadi, on several occasions, mistakes outside wanderers for Buddhist monks, on account of the similarity of the type of dress used by both Buddhist monks and other wanderers and recluses.<sup>70</sup>

Both Puṇṇa and Sāriputta are ordained very early in the Buddha’s ministry, that is, soon after the Buddha’s awakening, so that their meeting recounted in the Ratha Vinīta Sutta could have taken place early in the ministry.<sup>71</sup> Thus, it is quite possible that when they meet, Sāriputta is not immediately recognizable as a Buddhist monk. If Sāriputta were not recognizable as such, and if he wants to avoid being asked his name, which Puṇṇa might have done if he knows his visitor to be a Buddhist monk like himself, we would expect Sāriputta to act in such a way as

<sup>65</sup> Comy explains that Sāriputta asks this question to start off a conversation (MA 2:155). This gloss shows that the commentator was also at a loss as for an explanation.

<sup>66</sup> MĀ 9 = T1.430b26: 沙門瞿曇 *shā mén qū tán*, which in Pāli is “*samaṇa gotama*.”

<sup>67</sup> MĀ 9 = T1.431b15: 如來 *rú lái*.

<sup>68</sup> [Ś]uddhyartham [śra]maṇe: Cat no 1329 B1 in Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden, H Bechert (ed), Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1989, 6:84.

<sup>69</sup> V 1: 286 recounts the Buddha allowing which colours to be used to dye robes, and V 1: 287 recounts his requesting Ānanda to design a robe pattern and he patterns it after paddy-fields of Magadha. As Ānanda becomes the Buddha’s personal attendant only 20 years after the Buddha’s awakening (Tha 1041), it is probable that the rules concerning the colour and cut of robes do not belong to the earliest stage in the history of the Buddhist monastic order. (Analayo 2005: 138 n53)

<sup>70</sup> Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, London, 1907: 50.

<sup>71</sup> On Puṇṇa’s early ordination, see DPPN, sv Puṇṇa-Mantāniputta Thera (2:222); on Sāriputta’s ordination, see V 1:43.

not to be recognized as the Buddha's follower. Most renunciants of those days dress very much in the same way.<sup>72</sup>

Hence, Sāriputta would appear to Puṇṇa just like any outside wanderer, who visits to find out more about the Buddha's teaching. In such a situation, it would only be natural for Sāriputta to use the expression "recluse Gotama," since if he were to use the expression "Blessed One" or "Tathāgata," he would have prematurely given himself away as the Buddha's follower.

### **2.9.2 An imported model**

If this much is granted, an intriguing perspective emerges concerning the 7 stages of purification. With Sāriputta acting in such a way that Puṇṇa is not able to recognize him as a Buddhist monk, one would also expect the type of terminology used by him not to be specifically Buddhist terminology, but rather to be such terms and expressions as are in common use among recluses and wanderers in ancient India. In order to continue acting as if he were an interested outsider, he would have to word his questions in a way that does not compromise the role he has assumed.

From this it would follow that the 7 purifications could have been a list of purifications commonly discussed and aspired to among the various contemplative and philosophical traditions in ancient India. That is, these 7 stages of purification are (at least at that time) not necessarily a specific Buddhist teaching, but only types or stages of purification aspired to and under discussion in general among recluses and wanderers.

This would explain why Puṇṇa, without any hesitation, knew what is being spoken about. It would also explain why relatively little material can be found concerning these stages of purification in other discourses. *The rarity of the stages of purification model* would be understandable if they are not an original Buddhist model, and therefore does not merit as much attention as other teaching models of the Buddha.

Granted this, what is *Buddhist* about this model of purifications would then be mainly *the perspective* taken in regard to them. Understood in this way, the central message of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta is not a presentation of the 7 individual purifications as such, but to highlight that, while all of them are *means* to reach the goal, none of them, each by themselves, constitutes the type of purification that is the goal of the holy life, namely, complete nirvana without clinging.<sup>73</sup>

## **3 The 7 purities and the 9 striving factors**

**3.1 The 7 stages of purification** (*satta, visuddhi*) are listed in **the Das'uttara Sutta** (D 34) and its two Chinese parallels,<sup>74</sup> with 2 additional factors—*purification by wisdom* and *purification by freedom*—but without any further comment. Unlike in the 7 "purifications" (*visuddhi*) of the Ratha Vinīta Sutta, each of the nine factors is called "a factor of striving for total purity" (*pāri-*

<sup>72</sup> On at least 2 occasions, the Buddha himself is not recognized: (1) **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140) recounts how Pukkusāti, having gone forth out of faith in the Buddha, address him as *āvuso* during the 1st meeting (M 140.5-6/3:238 f); also found in MĀ 162 = T1.690; (2) **(Anuruddha) Upakkilesa S** (M 128) recounts how the keeper of park where Anuruddha, Nandiya and Kimbila are residing, does not recognize the Buddha and stops him from entering the park (M 128,8/3:155); also found in MĀ 72 = T1.532, EĀ 24.8 = T2.125.-629b6-7, T152.10 = T3.5, T161 = T3.386, T1428.28 = T22.879.

<sup>73</sup> Analayo 2005:133-135.

<sup>74</sup> See [2.2] n on Das'uttara S..

*suddhi padhāniy'āṅgāni*), and which are “the 9 states to be cultivated” (*nava dhammā bhāvettabba*), that is, namely:

|  |   |                     |
|--|---|---------------------|
| (1) the purification of moral virtue,                                      | <i>sīla,visuddhi</i>                    |                     |
| (2) the purification of the mind,  | <i>citta,visuddhi</i>                   |                     |
| (3) the purification of views,   | <i>diṭṭhi,visuddhi</i>                  |                     |
| (4) the purification by overcoming doubt,                                  | <i>kaṅkhā,vitaraṇa,visuddhi</i>         | (U 5.7/60,5)        |
| (5) the purification by knowledge and vision of the path and the not-path, | <i>maggāmagga,ñāṇa,dassana,visuddhi</i> |                     |
| (6) the purification by knowledge and vision of the way,                   | <i>paṭipadā,ñāṇa,dassana,visuddhi</i>   |                     |
| (7) the purification of knowledge and vision,                              | <i>ñāṇa,dassana,visuddhi</i>            | (M 24/1:145-151)    |
| (8) the purification of wisdom, and  | <i>paññā,visuddhi</i>                   |                     |
| (9) the purification of freedom.   | <i>vimutti,visuddhi</i>                 | (D 34,2.2(2)/3:288) |

It is interesting that although the 7 stages of purification are listed in the Das'uttara Sutta, the set appears only once in the whole Pali Canon, that is, in the Ratha Vinīta Sutta (M 24). We likewise find no explanation for them in the Chinese parallel to the Das'uttara Sutta (D 34), that is, the Discourse on the Ten Upwards (十上經 *shíshàng jīng*) in the Dīrgha-āgama.<sup>75</sup> Relevant sections of this discourse have been preserved in the Daśottara Sūtra, found in the Sanskrit fragments discovered in Central Asia.<sup>76</sup>

**3.2 Bodhi** notes that “it is curious that they are not analysed as a set anywhere in the Nikāyas; and this becomes even more puzzling when both these great disciples [Sāriputta and Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta] seem to recognize them as a fixed group of doctrinal categories.” (M:ÑB 1214 n287). **Analayo** gives this explanation:

The reference in the Path to Liberation [Vimutti,magga] to the first four purifications could easily have been the starting point for a revision undertaken by Buddhaghosa, during which he may have decided to complete the scheme of purifications. Yet, it is rather puzzling that Buddhaghosa should employ only the 7 stages of purification in order to delineate the progress to insight. As a result of having recourse to the seven-fold scheme, instead of availing himself of the complete scheme of nine purifications, Buddhaghosa treats awakening under the heading of “purification by knowledge and vision.” (Analayo 2009: 9)

**3.3 Analayo** adds that in the Suttas, the expression “knowledge and vision” does not necessarily simply mean the attainment of final liberation (id), and refers to **the Saṅgīti Sutta**, which lists 4 kinds of “cultivation of concentration” (*samādhi bhāvanā*), that is, 4 types of concentration and their benefits, thus:

<sup>75</sup> DĀ 10 = T1.1.56a23; also at DĀ 11 = T 1.1.58c18 which has no Pali parallel.

<sup>76</sup> In D Schlingloff 1962: 18. Cf J W de Jong, “The Daśottarasūtra,” in *Buddhist Studies*, ed Schopen, Berkeley, 1979: 262, 271.

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| (1) dhyanas                                       | happiness here and now          |
| (2) perception of light                           | knowledge and vision            |
| (3) observing impermanence <sup>77</sup>          | mindfulness and clear knowing   |
| (4) contemplating rise and fall of the aggregates | the destruction of the influxes |

It is clear here that “knowledge and vision” is different “the destruction of the influxes.”<sup>78</sup>

Similarly in **the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29) and **the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30), “knowledge and vision” refer only to a stage leading up to, but not yet identical with realization.<sup>79</sup> Both these Suttas mention the meditator’s progress in terms of the accomplishment of moral virtue, the accomplishment of concentration, effort in attaining higher states, and attainment of knowledge and vision.<sup>80</sup>

In other words, as pointed out by **Analayo**, these 2 discourses “are concerned with the same issue that also forms the central topic of the Ratha,vinīta Sutta, the goal of living the holy life under the Buddha.” (2009: 10). In both cases, the point is highlighted that knowledge and vision should not be mistaken as the final goal, that is, nirvana.

**Rupert Gethin**, too, in his book, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, has commented that the practice of watching rise and fall of the aggregates “seems to be particularly associated with the gaining of the insight that leads directly to the destruction of the *āsavas*, directly to awakening.” (1992: 56). He discusses this point in an earlier article on “The five khandhas: Their treatment in the Nikāyas and early Abhidhamma” (1986:43 f).

In fact, the Ratha Vinīta Sutta (M 24) and its Madhyama Āgama counterpart (MĀ 9) explicitly qualify the seventh stage of purification (like all the rest) as still being *affected by clinging* (*sa,upādāna*), and therefore cannot be considered as the final goal.<sup>81</sup> In the Ratha Vinīta Sutta, Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta declares

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification of knowledge and vision* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging. (M 24,13/1:148)

**3.4** The question now is: Why did Buddha,ghosa adopt the model of the 7 purifications for his work on the progress of insight, the Visuddhi,magga? It would have clearly been better for him to use the complete nine-purification model of the Das’uttara Sutta and its Dīrgha Āgama paral-

<sup>77</sup> That is, knowing feelings, perceptions, and thoughts as they arise, stabilize and end.

<sup>78</sup> D 331.11(5)/3:222 f; cf A 4.41/2:45.

<sup>79</sup> M 29.5/1:195 & M 30.11/1:202 respectively.

<sup>80</sup> Comy to M 29 however explains “knowledge and vision” (*ñāṇa,dassana*) as referring to the 5 super knowledges or psychic powers ending with “the divine eye,” ie the ability to see forms beyond the power of normal vision (MA 2:231). However, this is unattested, as only the word *ñāṇa* might be synonymous with *iddhi* (psychic power) or *abhiññā* (super knowledge). The term *ñāṇa,dassana* clearly is not used in the sense of psychic powers (certainly not during the pre-commentarial period). On the 5 superknowledges, see **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (5.0).

<sup>81</sup> M 24,12/1:148 (*sa,upādāna*); MĀ 9 = T1.26.430c26 (有餘 *yōuyú*, “with remainder”). EĀ 39.10 = T2.-125.735a8 makes the same point in a different formulation, as it classifies each of the seven stage of purification as 受入 *shòurù* (which is a difficult term: 受 *shòu* usu means *vedanā* (feeling), *upādāna* (clinging), or to experience, or to accept; while 入 *rù* can mean *āyatana* (sense-field). See Analayo 2009: 10 n58.

el, where the ninth and final stage, “the purification of freedom” (*vimutti,visuddhi*, 解脫淨 *jiě-tuōjìng*).<sup>82</sup>

**Analayo** points out that while Upatissa’s **Vimutti,magga** bases itself on the format of the traditional formula of *the 4 noble truths*, Buddha,ghosa bases his **Visuddhi,magga** on the mundane model of *the 7 purifications*.<sup>83</sup> It is likely that the Ratha Vinīta Sutta was composed at a time when a growing number of monastics were turning away the wandering forest tradition for a more settled community. In the growing luxury and comfort of an urbanized monastery, with greater social engagement, the monastics paid less attention to meditation, and placed more emphasis on scriptural learning and rituals.<sup>84</sup>

In such a monastic environment, monastic rules, instead of preparing and maintaining a conducive environment for meditation training, reincarnated into a ritualistic corpus that defined a monastic before the laity. In such a situation, the externality of monkhood (such as emphasis on the ascetic practices)<sup>85</sup> took precedence over its spirituality.

**Analayo**, in his article, comparing Upatissa’s *Vimutti,magga* and Buddha,ghosa’s *Visuddhi,magga*, observes:

With the passage of time, however, such an introspective attitude [of mindfulness and meditation] can easily get lost and become replaced by an emphasis on externals of behaviour, whose adopting is assumed to automatically ensure that wholesomeness increases. Such an attitude can then find its expression in a concern with precise enacting of minute aspects of behavioural codes according to the prescriptions given in the *Vinaya* and its commentaries, thereby running the danger of losing the purpose of such prescriptions out of sight.

Buddhaghosa’s treatment of the nature of wholesomeness probably makes explicit what would have been a gradually growing tendency in the Theravāda tradition, where certain modes of conduct or behaviour, such as for example undertaking ascetic practices, are believed to be necessarily of a wholesome nature.

In the case of the progress of insight, the scheme of the 7 purifications adopted by Buddhaghosa has become a paradigm within which Theravāda *vipassanā* meditation operates. Even though this scheme is rather marginal in the discourses, and the set of seven stages is moreover also incomplete, modern day Theravāda meditation traditions that differ considerably from each other on how the path of insight should be developed, or what degree of concentration is required in order to progress to awakening, unanimously adopt this scheme of purifications as the basic framework for practice.

(Analayo 2009: 11 f)

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<sup>82</sup> See Analayo 2009: 8-12.

<sup>83</sup> Buddha,ghosa compiled the *Visuddhi,magga* as a sort of dissertation for the Mahā,viḥāra, then the Buddhist central “church” of Sri Lanka, so that it would grant him access to their Pali Canon and Commentaries. Understandably, although Buddha,ghosa probably was familiar with Upatissa’s *Vimutti,magga* (affiliated with the rival Abhaya,giri monastery), he had to present his views in a manner that was acceptable to the Mahā,viḥāra orthodoxy.

<sup>84</sup> See **Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja**, SD 27.6a Intro.

<sup>85</sup> See eg **Bakkula S** (M 124), SD3.15.

## 4 Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta

### 4.1 PUṆṆA IN KAPILA.VATTHU

Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta comes from a brahmin family of Dona,vatthu near Kapila,vatthu. His mother was Mantānī, sister of Aññā Kondañña, the first Buddhist saint after the Buddha. After teaching **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11),<sup>86</sup> the Buddha goes to Rājagaha, while **Aññā Kondañña** goes to Kapila,vatthu, where he ordains Puṇṇa.<sup>87</sup> He lives there, intent on his practice and in due course becomes an arhat.

Puṇṇa gathers around him five hundred clansmen who all become monks, and he teaches them the 10 bases of discourse (*dasa kathā,vatthu*) [§2b], which he himself has learnt, and they all become arhats. When they wish to visit the Buddha, Puṇṇa sends them ahead advance to Rājagaha, asking them to pay homage to the Buddha in his name.<sup>88</sup> (MA 2:157 f)

### 4.2 PUṆṆA IN SĀVATTHĪ

Later, when the Buddha leaves Rājagaha and comes to Sāvatti, Puṇṇa visits him and is taught the Dharma in the Buddha's own Fragrant Cell (*gandha,kuti*). Sāriputta, hearing of Puñña's fame, wishes to meet him, and goes to Andha,vana, where Puṇṇa is spending his day-rest. Sāriputta questions him on the 7 stages of purification (*satta,visuddhi*), and Puṇṇa answers him. The two monks find great joy in each other's words.

The interview with Sāriputta is given in the **Ratha Vinīta Sutta** (M 24). Buddha,ghosa, in his Commentary, says that the two great elders have many things in common (MA 2:159). The Buddha declares Puṇṇa to be the foremost of those monks who teach the Dharma. (A 1:23; S 2:156). The Ratha Vinīta Sutta also states that Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta is also the most well-respected of the Sakya monks in terms of the 10 bases of discourse (*dasa kathā,vatthu*) [§2c].

### 4.3 PUṆṆA'S SPIRITUAL ROOTS

**The Thera,gāthā Commentary** says that in the time of Padumuttara Buddha, Puṇṇa was born into a rich brahmin family of Haṃsavatī, just before the Buddha's birth. As an adult, he visits the Buddha, and as he sits on the edge of a large crowd, he witnesses the Buddha declaring one of his monks to be the foremost amongst monks who are Dharma teachers, and Puṇṇa, wishing for the same honour under a future Buddha, pays homage to Padumuttara.<sup>89</sup> (ThaA 1:37-40)

In **the Aṅguttara Commentary**, however, we are told that in the time of Padumuttara Buddha, Puṇṇa is named Gotama and is an expert in the Vedas. But finding no solace in the Vedas, he becomes an ascetic (*tāpasa*) with a following of eighteen thousand matted-hair ascetics (*jaṭila*), all of whom, under his guidance, developed great psychic powers. Puṇṇa has reached old age when Padumuttara attains awakening. (AA 1:199)

<sup>86</sup> S 56.11/5:420-424 @ SD 1.1.

<sup>87</sup> After ordaining Puṇṇa, Kondañña returns to Rājagaha, where, having taken leave of the Buddha, retires to the shores of Chaddanta,daha (the Lake of the Six-Tusked) (MA 3:34), for 12 years, attended by 8000 elephants who had once ministered to Pacceka Buddhas (AA 1:148; KhpA 51; J 5:37; ThaA 3:2, 7, 196; ApA 299; cf J 5:38, 45), and where he enters parinirvana (DA 2:549; SA 3:213). SA says he lives in the elephant Chaddanta's dwelling, *chaddanta,bhavane*, beside the Mandākinī Lake (SA 1:180, 283). It is possible that the names refer to the same lake.

<sup>88</sup> MA 2:157 f; ThaA 1:39.

<sup>89</sup> ApA 272

One day, the Buddha visits Gotama's hermitage, and Gotama and his disciples entertain him to a meal. Afterwards, the Buddha wishes his chief disciple Mahādeva to come to the hermitage with one hundred thousand monks. He does so, and the ascetics provide flowers for their seats. For 7 days, the Buddha and his monks remain in dhyana on their seats, at the end of which period the Buddha asks the foremost of the Dharma-teachers to offer thanksgiving.

At the conclusion of the thanksgiving, all except Gotama become arhats. Gotama wishes to become the foremost of Dharma teachers amongst the monks under a future Buddha. Padumuttara proclaims that his wish would be fulfilled. (AA 1:199 f)

**The Apadāna** (Ap 6.16/1:38) contains yet another version, according to which Puṇṇa was called Sunanda in the time of Padumuttara Buddha. The Apadāna verses are quoted in the Upāli Thera.gāthā Commentary (ThaA 2:101).

#### 4.4 PUṆṆA'S SPIRITUALITY

While the Ratha Vinīta Sutta attests to Puṇṇa's skill as a teacher, another, **the (Puṇṇa) Ānanda Sutta** (S 22.83), according to the Thera.gāthā Commentary (ThaA ii.124), Ānanda becomes a streamwinner after hearing a discourse by Puṇṇa. Ānanda then declares before the assembled monks that Puṇṇa is of great help to him and others even when they were still newly ordained. Puṇṇa instructs them on the conditionality of the 5 aggregates, which they are able to understand due to his skilful exposition.<sup>90</sup>

Malalasekera says that Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta was probably the gate-keeper (*dovārika*) of **the Kuru,dhamma Jātaka** (J 276/2:381), and with one of the seven brothers of **the Bhisā Jātaka** (J 488/4:314).

**The Mahāvastu** (Mvst 3:382) contains twenty verses attributed to Pūrna Maitrayānīputra.

Although Puṇṇa is declared as the foremost of the monks who are Dharma teachers, his Thera.gāthā, uttered as a result of great joy in his attaining of arhathood, is only a single verse, thus:

*Sabbhi<sup>91</sup>-r-eva samāsetha,  
paṇḍiteh'attha,dassibhi,  
Atthaṃ mahantaṃ gambhīraṃ,  
duddasaṃ nipuṇaṃ aṇuṃ;  
Dhīrā samadhigacchanti,  
appamattā vicakkhaṇā ti.*

One should associate only with the good,  
the wise, who see the goal,  
the goal that is great and profound,  
hard to see, subtle, fine:  
the wise fully attain it,  
being heedful and discerning. (Tha 4)

— — —

<sup>90</sup> S 22.83/3:105 f (SD 52.4).

<sup>91</sup> *Sabbhi* (Dh 151), from *sat* (mf), participle from *atthi* ("is, being"), here meaning "good, right, righteous"; other forms: *santaṃ*, eg *santaṃ padaṃ*, "the good place" (of nirvana) (Dh 368), *santo* (Dh 83, 151, 304). *Sat* (in the sense of "good") is also found in *sak-kaccaṃ*, *sak-kāra*, *sad-dhamma*, *sap-purisa*; in the sense of "is, being," in *satta* ("living being"). See Andersen, *A Pāli Glossary I* 1901: 253, sv *sat*.

## Ratha,vinīta Sutta

### The Discourse on the Relay of Chariots

M 24

1 Thus have I heard.

#### The Buddha opens with a question

1.2 At one time the Blessed One was residing in the squirrels' feeding ground in the Bamboo Forest near Rājagaha.

2 Then some monks from the native land,<sup>92</sup> who had observed [emerged from] the rains retreat in their native country,<sup>93</sup> approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One, they saluted him, and then sat down at one side. The Blessed One said this to these monks seated thus at one side:

2.2 "Now, bhikshus, who in the native land is esteemed by fellow brahmacharis [colleagues in the holy life]<sup>94</sup> in the native land,<sup>95</sup> thus:

THE 10 BASES OF DISCOURSE<sup>96</sup>

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>2.3 'Having few wishes himself,<br/>being content himself,<br/>being secluded himself,<br/>not socializing himself,<br/>intent on effort himself,<br/>accomplished in moral virtue himself,<sup>97</sup></p> | <p>he speaks to the monks on fewness of wishes;<br/>he speaks to the monks on contentment;<br/>he speaks to the monks on seclusion;<br/>he speaks to the monks on not socializing;<br/>he speaks to the monks on exerting effort;<br/>he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in moral virtue;</p> |
|---|---|

<sup>92</sup> *Jāti, bhūmaka...jāti, bhūmiya*. Both occur in (**Akkosaka**) **Dhammika S** (A 6.54/3:366). Comy glosses them with "place of birth" (*jāta-ṭ, ṭhāna*), and gives Kapila, vatthu as the *jāta-ṭ, ṭhāna* of the Buddha, and hence his "native country" (*jāti, bhūmi*). (MA 3:135)

<sup>93</sup> *Jāti, bhūmiyaṃ*: see prec n.

<sup>94</sup> A **brahmachari** (*brahma, cārī*) is a celibate practitioner; such a celibacy (*brahma, cariya*) is for the purpose of practising deep meditation and attaining dhyana. Dhyanic bliss is of such a profound nature that the true practitioner who is a dhyana-attainer is no more attracted to sensual pleasure of any kind.

<sup>95</sup> *Ko nu kho, bhikkhave, jāti, bhūmiyaṃ jāti, bhūmakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ sabrahmacārīnaṃ evaṃ sambhāvito*.

<sup>96</sup> These **dasa kathā, vatthu** are listed in **Ratha Vinīta S** (M 24, 2.3/1:145), **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122, 12/3:113); **Vatthu Kathā S 1** (A 10.49/5:129). In **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122), this list is preceded by the stock, "Such talk concerning austerity [effacement], conducing as a support for mind's release, and that leads to complete disillusionment, to fading away [of lust], to ending [of suffering], to inner peace, to higher knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana; that is to say,..." (WT *Yā ca kho ayam, ānanda, kathā abhisallekhikā ceto, vinīvaraṇa, sappāyā* [Ce Se Ke *ceto, vicāraṇ, asappāyā*; Ee *ceto, vivaraṇa, sappāyā*] *ekanta, nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati, seyyathidaṃ*) (M 122, 12/3:113), SD 11.4.. Cf (**Sāriputta**) **Susīma S** (S 2.29/1:63). Some of these qualities are mentioned separately, eg **Jiṇṇa S** (S 16.5) says that this passage constitutes Mahā Kassapa's lion-roar regarding his forest-dwelling (S 16.5/2:202); so too in **Mahā Gosiṅga S** (M 32), he describes the ideal monk in the same terms; **Piṇḍola S** (U 4.6/42 f); **Vaṅganta,putta Upasena Tha** (Tha 581).

<sup>97</sup> The foll 5 **accomplishments** (*sampadā*) are called "the 5 aggregates of dharma [reality] (*pañca dhamma-k, khandha*)" in **Cunda S** (S 47.13/5:162); also found at Pug 54; cf S 1:139; A 3:12 ff.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| accomplished in concentration himself,                       | he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in concentration;                       |
| accomplished in wisdom himself,                              | he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in wisdom;                              |
| accomplished in freedom himself,                             | he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in freedom; and                         |
| accomplished in the knowledge and vision of freedom himself, | he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in the knowledge and vision of freedom. |

2.4 He is one who advises,<sup>98</sup> informs, instructs, inspires, [146] rouses, and gladdens fellow brahmacharis’?<sup>99</sup>

### Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta

2.5 “Bhante, the venerable **Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta**<sup>100</sup> is the one in the native land so esteemed by fellow brahmacharis<sup>101</sup> in the native land, thus:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>‘Having few wishes himself,</i>            | <i>he speaks to the monks on fewness of wishes;</i>               |
| <i>being content himself,</i>                 | <i>he speaks to the monks on contentment;</i>                     |
| <i>being secluded himself,</i>                | <i>he speaks to the monks on seclusion;</i>                       |
| <i>not socializing himself,</i>               | <i>he speaks to the monks on not socializing;<sup>102</sup></i>   |
| <i>intent on effort himself,</i>              | <i>he speaks to the monks on exerting effort;</i>                 |
| <i>accomplished in moral virtue himself,</i>  | <i>he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in moral virtue;</i>  |
| <i>accomplished in concentration himself,</i> | <i>he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in concentration;</i> |

<sup>98</sup> This and the foll qualities (*ovāda viññāpaka*) are applied to the recently deceased Sāriputta: see **Cunda S** (S 47.13/5:162); also Miln 373. See foll n.

<sup>99</sup> *Ovādako viññāpako sandassako samādapako samuttejako sampahaṃsako sabrahmacārīnaṃ*. The last 5 actions for the well-known stock passage, *dharmiyā kathāya sandassetvā samādhapetvā samuttejetvā sampahaṃsetvā*, “...having instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened...with a Dharma talk.” This action sequence reflects the basic structure of the Buddha’s teaching method: see details, eg **Anuruddha Upakkilesa S** (M 128.7b/3:155), SD 5.18.

<sup>100</sup> See Intro (2).

<sup>101</sup> On *brahmacharis*, see §2.2 n.

<sup>102</sup> *Asaṃsaṭṭha*. This is a clear allusion to the character of the forest eremite, a wandering forest monk. The expression, “(he) lives socializing” (*saṃsaṭṭhā viharissanti*) occurs at **Anāgata,bhaya S 4** (A 5.80.5+6-/3:109), SD 1.10 (3.4). The **Vinaya** eg disapproves of the nun Thulla,nandā “living and socializing [in close proximity]” with unwholesome lay companions (Saṅgh 9 = V 4:239); Thulla,nandā’s female probationer Caṇḍa,kālī “socializing with houselords and houselords’ sons” (*saṃsaṭṭhā viharati gahapatināpi gahapati,-puttena pi*, V 4:293); the female probationer Caṇḍa,kālī who lived “in close proximity with men and youths” (*purisa,saṃsaṭṭha kumāraka,saṃsaṭṭha*) who were violent (V 4:333); monks should carry out an act of censure (*tajjanīya,kamma*) against monastics living “in the company of householders” (*gihi,saṃsaṭṭha*, Cv 1.4.1 = V 2:4). VA says that they were “mixed up” (*missī,bhūtā*) with the world: in terms of *the body*, they were pounding and cooking for householders, perfuming and adoring themselves, using garlands and chains; in terms of *speech*, they were acting as go-between, running errands (VA 915). Comy gives 5 kinds of *socializing* (*saṃsagga*): through hearing, seeing, conversing, eating with, and bodily contact (MA 2:143).

*accomplished in wisdom himself, he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in wisdom;*  
*accomplished in freedom himself, he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in freedom; and*  
*accomplished in the knowledge and vision of freedom himself, he speaks to the monks on accomplishment in the knowledge and vision of freedom.*

*He is one who advises, informs, instructs, inspires, rouses, and gladdens fellow brahmacharis’.”*

**3** Now at that time, the venerable Sāriputta was sitting not far from the Blessed One. Then, it occurred to him:

“It is gain for the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta! It is a great gain for the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta that his wise fellow brahmacharis praise him point by point before the Teacher.

Perhaps sometime or other, we might meet the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta; perhaps then we might have some conversation.”

### The Buddha in Sāvattthī

**4** Then, the Blessed One, having stayed at Rājagaha for as long as he pleased, departed on a journey [peregrination] towards Sāvattthī. Journeying in stages, he eventually arrived in Sāvattthī. And there he stayed in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove near Savattthī.

Now the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta heard that the Blessed One had arrived in Sāvattthī and was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove near Savattthī.

**5** Then, the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta, having folded up his bedding,<sup>103</sup> and then taking his bowl and outer robe, departed on a journey to Sāvattthī. Journeying in stages, he eventually arrived in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove near Savattthī.

Having approached the Blessed One, the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta saluted him and then sat down at one side. While the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta was seated thus at one side, the Blessed One instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened him with a Dharma talk.<sup>104</sup>

Then, the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened by the Dharma talk, rejoice in the Blessed One’s word. Then, he rose from his seat, and keeping his right side to the Blessed One, departed to Andhavana [Blind Men’s Forest] for the midday rest.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> “Folded up his bedding,” *sen’āsanaṃ saṃsāmetvā*, here probably refers to tidying up his resting-place (*sayana*), or perhaps the “residence” or “lodging,” which would be a cell-like hut or space of a forest monk. See Pār 4.1.2 = V 3:88; cf Pāc 14, 15 = V 4:39 ff; also V 2:211; qu at MA 2:152.

<sup>104</sup> “Having instructed, ... with a Dharma talk, inspiring them, firing them with enthusiasm and gladdening them,” *dharmiyā kathāya sandassetvā samādapetvā samuttejetvā sampahaṃsetvā*. This action sequence reflects the basic structure of the Buddha’s teaching method: (1) the Dharma is shown (*sandas-setvā*); (2) the listener/s are filled with enthusiasm (*samādapetvā*); (3) they are fired with commitment (*samuttejetvā*); and (4) filled with joy (*sampahaṃsetvā*). The Comys explain that by instructing, the Buddha dispels the listener’s **delusion**; by inspiring him, **heedlessness** is dispelled; by rousing him, **indolence** is dispelled; and by gladdening, brings the practice to a **conclusion**. In short, when we teach Dharma to benefit others, we should do our best to **bring instruction, inspiration, motivation and joy** to the listener (DA 1:300; UA 242; SnA 446). These four qualities are, in fact, the sixth or last of the ideal skills of a Dharma speaker (**Udāyi S**, A 3:184).

## Sāriputta meets Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta

6 Then, a certain monk approached the venerable Sāriputta, and said this to him:

“Avuso Sāriputta, regarding the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta, of whom you have constantly praised: [147] he, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened by the Blessed One’s Dharma talk, and rejoicing in Blessed One’s word, then rose from his seat, and keeping his right side to the Blessed One, departed to Andha,vana [Blind Men’s Forest] for the midday rest.

7 Then, the venerable Sāriputta quickly taking a sitting-mat, followed behind the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta, step for step, keeping his head in sight.<sup>106</sup>

Then, the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta, having plunged into Andha,vana, sat down at the foot of a certain tree for his midday rest.

The venerable Sāriputta, too, having plunged into Andha,vana, sat at the foot of a certain tree for the midday rest.

8 Then, in the evening, the venerable Sāriputta, having emerged from his solitary retreat, approached the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side.

## The 7 stages of purification

8.2 Seated thus at one side, the venerable Sāriputta said this to the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta:

9 “Avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One?”

“Yes, avuso.”

(1) “And is the holy life, lived under the Blessed One, for the sake of the purification of moral virtue?”<sup>107</sup>

“No, avuso.”

(2) “Then, avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of the purification of mind?”<sup>108</sup>

“No, avuso.”

(3) “Then, avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of the purification of views?”

“No, avuso.”

(4) “Then, avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of the purification by overcoming doubt?”<sup>109</sup>

“No, avuso.”

(5) “Then, avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of the purification by knowledge and vision of what is and is not the path?”

“No, avuso.”

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<sup>105</sup> Comy explains that Jeta’s grove was crowded after the meal with kshatriyas, brahmins, etc; so it was impossible to find solitude. But Andha,vana was secluded, a suitable place for spiritual effort. (MA 2:154).

<sup>106</sup> *Atha kho āyasmā sāriputto taramāna,rūpo nisīdanam ādāya āyasmantaṃ puṇṇaṃ mantāṇiputtaṃ piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubandhi sīsānulokī.*

<sup>107</sup> Comy refers to the four purifications (or purities) in moral virtue (*catu pārisuddhi,sīla*) explained at length at Vism 1.42-125/15-44.

<sup>108</sup> On *diṭṭhi,visuddhi* see D 3:214; A 1:95.

<sup>109</sup> See **Revata S** (U 5.7/60), SD 25.15, the only other place in the early texts where it occurs.

(6) “Then, avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of the purification by knowledge and vision of the way?”<sup>110</sup>

“No, avuso.”

(7) “Then, avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of the purification of knowledge and vision?”<sup>111</sup>

“No, avuso.”

THE GOAL OF THE HOLY LIFE IS *NOT* THE 7 PURIFICATIONS

**10** “Avuso, when asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of *the purification of moral virtue*, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of *the purification of mind*, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

“Then, avuso, when asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of *the purification of views*, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of *the purification by overcoming doubt*, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of *the purification by knowledge and vision of what is and is not the path*, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of *the purification by knowledge and vision of the path*, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of *the purification of knowledge and vision*, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

*For the sake of what, then, avuso, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One?”*

“The holy life, avuso, is lived under the Blessed One **[148]** for the sake of final nirvana without clinging.”<sup>112</sup>

## The final nirvana without clinging

**11** “Then, avuso, is *the purification of moral virtue* final nirvana without clinging?”

“No, avuso.”

“Then, avuso, is *the purification of mind* final nirvana without clinging?”

“No, avuso.”

“Then, avuso, is *the purification of views* final nirvana without clinging?”

<sup>110</sup> “The way” (*paṭipadā*), qu at MA 2:115.

<sup>111</sup> These 7 stages of purification (*satta visuddhi*), with two additional factors—the purification through wisdom and through freedom—are also found in **Das’uttara S** (D 34.2.(2)/3:288. See Intro (1.1) above.

<sup>112</sup> Cf S 4:48, 5:29; A 1:44, 4:74, 5:65. Comy says that in the view of those who assert that clinging is due to a condition, final nirvana without clinging means *final nirvana due to no condition*. The unconditioned death-free element has not arisen on account of a condition, so they speak of it as final nirvana without clinging. This is the end, the peak, the goal (*niṭṭha*). (MA 2:156)

“No, avuso.”

“Then, avuso, is *the purification by overcoming doubt* final nirvana without clinging?”

“No, avuso.”

“Then, avuso, is *the purification by knowledge and vision of what is and is not the path* final nirvana without clinging?”

“No, avuso.”

“Then, avuso, is *the purification by knowledge and vision of the path* final nirvana without clinging?”

“No, avuso.”

“Then, avuso, is *the purification of knowledge and vision* final nirvana without clinging?”

“No, avuso.”

“Then, avuso, is *any other state* final nirvana without clinging?”

“No, avuso.”

NONE OF THE 7 PURIFICATIONS IS NIRVANA.

**12** “Avuso, when asked if *the purification of moral virtue* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if *the purification of mind* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if *the purification of views* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if *the purification by overcoming doubt* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if *the purification by knowledge and vision of what is and is not the path* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if *the purification by knowledge and vision of the path* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if *the purification of knowledge and vision* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

Then, avuso, when asked if *any other state* final nirvana without clinging, you replied,

‘No, avuso.’

But how, avuso, should the meaning of what you have said be seen?”

### Nirvana is *without* clinging

**13** “Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification of moral virtue* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification of mind* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification of views* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification by overcoming doubt* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification by knowledge and vision of what is and is not the path* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification by knowledge and vision of the path* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *the purification of knowledge and vision* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.<sup>113</sup>

Avuso, if the Blessed One had declared *any other state* to be final nirvana without clinging, he would be declaring that final nirvana without clinging as still having clinging.

### Punṇa's parable of the relay of 7 chariots

13.2 As such, avuso, I will give you a parable. For, some of the wise here understand the meaning of what is said by way of a parable.<sup>114</sup>

**14** Suppose, avuso, while Pasenadi, the rajah of Kosala, was residing in Sāvattḥi [149] some urgent business were to arise in Sāketa. And between Sāvattḥi and Sāketa, 7 chariots were to be kept ready for him.

Then, avuso, Pasenadi, the rajah of Kosala, leaving the inner palace gate, would mount the 1<sup>st</sup> relay chariot, and by means of the first he would reach the second relay chariot. Leaving the first, he would mount the second relay chariot.

By means of the 2<sup>nd</sup> relay chariot, he would reach the third. Leaving the second relay chariot, he would mount the third.

By means of the 3<sup>rd</sup> relay chariot, he would reach the fourth. Leaving the third relay chariot, he would mount the fourth.

By means of the 4<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, he would reach the fifth. Leaving the fourth relay chariot, he would mount the fifth.

By means of the 5<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, he would reach the sixth. Leaving the fifth relay chariot, he would mount the sixth.

By means of the 6<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, he would reach the seven. Leaving the sixth relay chariot, he would mount the seventh.

By means of the 7<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, he would reach the inner palace gate at Sāketa.

14.2 Then, on reaching the inner palace door, friends and ministers, relatives and blood relations, would ask thus:

<sup>113</sup> See Intro (1.2, 2.3).

<sup>114</sup> *Tena h'āvuso, upamaṃ te karissāmi; upamāya p'idh'ekacce viññū purisā bhāsitaṃ atthaṃ ājānanti.* This is stock: **Pāyāsī S** (D 23,9/2:324); **Ratha Vinīta S** (M 24,14/1:148), SD 28.3, **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,22/-1:295), **Upāli S** (M 56,26/1:384), SD 27.1, **Sandaka S** (M 76,52b/1:523), **Anuruddha S** (M 127,16/3:151); **Naḷakalāpī S** (S 12.67/2:114), **Saññojana S** (S 41.1/4:282), **Uttara,vipatti S** (A 8.8,5/4:163), **Uttiya S** (A 10.95,4/ 5:194); in verse: **Soṇaka J** (J 529/5:255) & **Mahā Narada,kassapa J** (J 544/6:234). Cf **Yamaka S** (S 22.85,38/3:112), SD 21.12. For a more detailed list, see **Myth in Buddhism**, SD 36.1 (2.3).

‘Have you, maharajah, arrived at the inner palace gate by means of these relay chariots’  
How now, avuso, would Pasenadi, the rajah of Kosala, answer if he were to answer correctly?”

#### SĀRIPUTTA’S REFLECTIVE RESPONSE

14.3 “Avuso, if Pasenadi, the rajah of Kosala, were to answer correctly, he would answer thus:

‘Here I was residing in Sāvattḥī, when some urgent business arose in Sāketa. And between Sāvattḥī and Sāketa, 7 chariots were to be kept ready for me.

Then, leaving the inner palace gate, I mounted the 1<sup>st</sup> relay chariot, and by means of the first I reached the second relay chariot. Leaving the first, I mounted the second relay chariot.

By means of the 2<sup>nd</sup> relay chariot, I reached the third. Leaving the second relay chariot, I mounted the third.

By means of the 3<sup>rd</sup> relay chariot, I reached the fourth. Leaving the third relay chariot, I mounted the fourth.

By means of the 4<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, I reached the fifth. Leaving the fourth relay chariot, I mounted the fifth.

By means of the 5<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, I reached the sixth. Leaving the fifth relay chariot, I mounted the sixth.

By means of the 6<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, I reached the seventh. Leaving the sixth relay chariot, I mounted the seventh.

By means of the 7<sup>th</sup> relay chariot, I reached the inner palace gate at Sāketa.’

Avuso, if Pasenadi, the rajah of Kosala, were to answer correctly, he would be answering thus.”

### Puṇṇa reiterates the holy life’s purpose

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 15 “Even so, avuso,<br>the purification of <b>moral virtue</b> itself<br>is for the sake of attaining             | the purification of <b>mind</b> ; <sup>115</sup>                                 |
| the purification of mind itself<br>is for sake of attaining   | the purification of <b>views</b> ;   |
| the purification of views itself<br>is for the sake of attaining  | the purification by <b>overcoming doubt</b> ; [150]                              |
| the purification by overcoming doubt itself<br>is for the sake of attaining                                       | the purification by <b>knowledge and vision of what is and is not the path</b> ; |
| the purification by knowledge and vision of<br>what is and is not the path itself<br>is for the sake of attaining | the purification by <b>knowledge and vision of the path</b> ;                    |
| the purification by knowledge and vision<br>of the path itself is for the sake of attaining                       | the purification of <b>knowledge and vision</b> ;                                |

<sup>115</sup> *Sīla, visuddhi yāvad-eva citta, visuddh’atthā*, alt tr: “the purification of moral virtue is for the purpose as far as the purification of the mind.” Comy: Whatever is the purification of mind, this is the goal (*attha*), this is the peak, this is the culmination of the purification of moral virtue. (MA 2:157)

the purification of knowledge and vision itself  
 is for the sake of attaining **final nirvana** without clinging—  
it is for the sake of the attaining of  
final nirvana without clinging  
 that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One.”

### Spiritual friendship

**16** When this was spoken, the venerable Sāriputta said this to the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta,

“What is the venerable’s name, and how do fellow brahmacharis know the venerable?”<sup>116</sup>

“My name is Puṇṇa, avuso, and fellow brahmacharis know me as Mantāni,putta.”

“It is marvellous, avuso! It is wonderful, avuso! Every profound question has been *answered*, point by point, by the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta as a learned disciple who rightly understands the Teacher’s teaching.

It is a gain for fellow brahmacharis! It is a great gain for fellow brahmacharis that they get to see the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta, that they are able to draw close to him.<sup>117</sup>

Even if we were to carry the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta about on a cushion<sup>118</sup> on the head so that fellow brahmacharis could see and could draw up close to him,<sup>119</sup> it would be a great gain for them. It is a great gain for us, that we get to see, we get to draw up close to the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta!”

**17** When this was spoken, the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta said this to the venerable Sāriputta,

“What is the venerable’s name, and how do fellow brahmacharis know the venerable?”

“My name is Upatissa, avuso, and fellow brahmacharis know me as Sāriputta.”

“Indeed, sir, we did not know that we are consulting the venerable Sāriputta himself, with the disciple *who is like the Teacher himself!*<sup>120</sup>

For, if we had known that it is the venerable Sāriputta himself we would not have spoken so much!

It is marvellous, avuso! It is wonderful Every profound question has been *asked*, point by point, by the venerable Sāriputta as a learned disciple who rightly understands the Teacher’s Teaching.

It is a gain for fellow brahmacharis! It is a great gain for fellow brahmacharis that they get to see the venerable Sāriputta, that they are able to draw close to him.

Even if we were to carry the venerable Sāriputta about on a cushion on the head so that fellow brahmacharis could see and could draw up close to him, **[151]** it would be a great gain

<sup>116</sup> Comy says that Sāriputta already knows Puṇṇa Mantāni,putta, but asks this only by way of greeting, since Puṇṇa has never met Sāriputta before. (MA 2:158)

<sup>117</sup> *Lābhā sabrahmacārīnaṃ, suladdha,lābhā sabrahmacārīnaṃ, ye āyasmantaṃ puṇṇaṃ mantāni,puttaṃ labhanti dassanāya, labhanti payirūpāsanaṃ.* On *payirūpāsana* as part of the 12-stage training, see **Caṅkī S** (M 95,20/2:173), SD 21.15.

<sup>118</sup> Be Ce Ee Se *celaṇḍukena*; Ke *celaṇḍakena*. *Celaṇḍaka* is a Jain ascetic’s loin-cloth. It is likely that the orig reading is lost, and this is a corrupted reading. Comy says that here *cela* means “cloth,” and *aṇḍuka* means “a pillow” (*ettha celaṃ vuccati vattharṃ, aṇḍukaṃ cumbaṭakarṃ*) (MA 2:158).

<sup>119</sup> Comy: Instead of the crowd going about here and there asking for him, they could see him and be able to question him and hear the Dharma. (MA 2:158)

<sup>120</sup> *Satthu,kappa*. Comy glosses as *satthu,sadisena*, and says that there is no higher praise than this for a disciple. (MA 2:159)

for them. It is a great gain for us, that we get to see, we get to draw up close to the venerable Sāriputta!”

Thus it is that the 2 great nagas [dragons] mutually rejoiced in each other’s word.

— evaṃ —

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