

“Whatever diverse precious Jewels there be in this universe there is no Jewel equal to the Dhamma. By this truth let me be prosperous.”

8. *“Yañkiñci ratanaṃ loke-vijjati vividhā puthū  
Ratanaṃ Saṅgha- samaṃ natthi - tasmā sotthi  
bhavantu me”.*

“Whatever diverse precious Jewels there be in this universe-there is no jewel equal to the Saṅgha. By this truth let me be prosperous.”

9. *“Natthi me saraṇaṃ aṇṇaṃ-buddho me saraṇaṃ  
varaṃ  
Etena saccavajjena-hotu me jayamaṅgalaṃ”.*

There is no other refuge to me. Buddha is my matchless refuge. By these true words may joyous victory be mine”.

10. *“Natthi me saraṇaṃ aṇṇaṃ-dhammo me  
saraṇaṃ varaṃ  
Etena saccavajjena-hotu me jayamaṅgalaṃ”.*

There is no other refuge to me. The Dhamma is my matchless refuge. By these true words may joyous victory be mine!”

11. *“Natthi me saraṇaṃ aṇṇaṃ-Saṅgho me  
saraṇaṃ varaṃ  
Etena saccavajjena-hotu me jayamaṅgalaṃ”.*

There is no other refuge to me. Saṅgha is my matchless refuge. By these true words may joyous victory be mine!”

12. *Bhavatu sabbamaṅgalaṃ-rakkhantu  
sabbadevatā  
Sabbabuddhānu bhāvena-sadā sotthi bhavantu  
me.”*

May all blessings be to me. May all gods protect me. By the power of all the Buddhas may happiness ever be mine”

13. *Bhavatu sabbamaṅgalaṃ-rakkhantu  
sabbadevatā  
Sabbadhammānu bhāvena-sadā sotthi bhavantu  
me.”*

May all blessings be to me. May all gods protect me. By the power of all the Dhammas may happiness ever be mine”

14. *Bhavatu sabbamaṅgalaṃ-rakkhantu  
sabbadevatā  
Sabbasaṅghānu bhāvena-sadā sotthi bhavantu  
me.”*

“May all blessings be to me. May all gods protect me. By the power of all the Disciples may happiness ever be mine”

Sāmaṇeri Suvimālee

**RATHAVINĪTA SUTTA**, the ‘discourse on the relay of chariots’, is the twenty-fourth discourse in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (M. I, 145). Two Chinese versions of this discourse are extant, occurring as the ninth discourse in the *Madhyama Āgama* (Taishō I. 429c) and as the tenth discourse in the thirty-ninth chapter of the *Ekottara Āgama* (Taishō II. 733c). Though a number of differences can be found, the main thrust of the two Chinese versions corresponds to the Pāli discourse.

The *Rathavinīta Sutta* begins with Sāriputta overhearing some monks speaking the praises of Puṇṇa Mantāniputta to the Buddha. When on a later occasion Puṇṇa Mantāniputta came to visit the Buddha, Sāriputta went to meet Puṇṇa in order to test out the latter’s wisdom. Without revealing his identity, Sāriputta asked Puṇṇa if any out of a set of seven stages of purification were the aim of living the holy life under the Buddha. Puṇṇa denied, explaining that none of them was the final goal, though each of them was required to reach that goal.

For the sake of further clarification, Puṇṇa came out with the simile of the relay of chariots after which the *Rathavinīta Sutta* takes its title. According to this simile king Pasenadi had some urgent matter to settle at Sāketa, a town over forty miles distant from Sāvathī. In order to quickly cover this distance, he used seven chariots in sequence. Just as each out of this relay of chariots was for the purpose of reaching Sāketa, Puṇṇa explained, so each of the seven stages of purifications mentioned by Sāriputta were only the means to reach the final goal.

The *Rathavināta Sutta* takes its significance from these seven stages of purification, which form the scaffolding for the *Visuddhimagga*, a work of almost paradigmatic importance in the *Theravāda* tradition. These seven stages of purification are:

- (1) Purification of morality (*sīlavisuddhi*)
- (2) Purification of the mind (*cittavisuddhi*)
- (3) Purification of view (*diṭṭhivissuddhi*)
- (4) Purification by overcoming doubt (*kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi*)
- (5) Purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmaggañāṇadassanavisuddhi*)
- (6) Purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadāñāṇadassanavisuddhi*)
- (7) Purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassanavisuddhi*)

The *Rathavināta Sutta* itself does not provide further explanations of these seven stages. According to *Buddhaghosa's* treatment in the *Visuddhimagga*, the first two stages of purification represent the development of morality and concentration. Purification of view and purification by overcoming doubt cover the development of insight into the nature of mind and matter and into conditionality. The next two purifications correspond to the more mature stages of insight into the impermanent and therefore unsatisfactory and self-less nature of phenomena, while the last stage, purification of knowledge and vision, corresponds to the four levels of awakening.

In the Pāli discourses, this set of seven stages of purification occurs only once again, as part of a set of altogether nine purifications in the *Dasuttara Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (*D.* III, 288). The terminology used for the seven stages in this discourse is the same as in the *Rathavināta Sutta*, a difference being that while the latter speaks in each case simply of 'purification' (*visuddhi*), the *Dasuttara Sutta* additionally qualifies each as a 'factor of exertion for purity' (*pārisuddhi-padhāniyaṅga*). The eighth and ninth stage of purification found in the *Dasuttara Sutta* are purification of 'wisdom' (*paññā*) and of 'liberation' (*vimutti*).

The expression 'factor of exertion for purity' (*pārisuddhi-padhāniyaṅga*) recurs in the *Sāpugiyā*

*Sutta* (*A.* II, 195). According to this discourse, to undertake the precepts corresponds to 'purity of morality', to develop the four *jhānas* to 'purity of the mind', insight into the four noble truths to 'purity of view' and the eradication of all mental defilements to 'purity of liberation'.

'Purity of view' in terms of knowing the four noble truths 'as they really are' (*yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*) suggests that such purity is attained with stream-entry. With stream-entry the fetter of personality view (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) has been eradicated and from this moment on the noble disciple, who has had a direct experience of the four noble truths 'as they really are', is firmly endowed with right view.

When one applies this explanation to the scheme of seven purifications, however, it becomes clear that the implications of 'purity' (*pārisuddhi*) go beyond the implications of 'purification' (*visuddhi*). Though the stages 'purification of view', 'purification by overcoming doubt' and 'purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path' bring to mind the three fetters to be eradicated with stream-entry (personality view, doubt, and clinging to rules and vows), these three fetters are eradicated simultaneously, at the moment of stream-entry itself (*A.* I, 242 and *Sn.* 231). In contrast, the stages of purification follow each other in a temporal sequence, just as the chariots in the simile given by Puṇṇa. Hence 'purification of view' cannot represent the right view gained with stream-entry, as doubt is only overcome with the next stage of purification.

Several of the seven stages of purification recur elsewhere in the discourses. Purification of morality occurs on its own (*A.* II, 200) and also together with purification of view (*D.* III, 214 and *A.* I, 95), yet these instances do not provide further information on these purifications. The fourth stage of purification can be found in the *Udāna* (*Ud.* 60), which reports the monk Kaṅkhārevata reviewing his 'purification of overcoming doubt' while seated in meditation.

'Knowledge and vision of path and not-path', though not as a 'purification', occurs in the *Kāḷi Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (*A.* V, 47) as insight into the nature of deep stages of concentration attained through *kaṣiṇa* meditation, in terms of the inherent danger

(*ādinava*) of such attainments and in terms of what goes beyond (*nissaraṇa*) them.

Coming to the last of the seven stages, 'purification by knowledge and vision' should according to the *Visuddhimagga's* interpretation include the attainment of all four levels of awakening (*Vism.* 672). Though the explanations provided by Buddhaghosa in regard to the earlier stages of purification fit with the information found about them in the discourses, in regard to this last stage his presentation may seem less convincing.

The Pāli expression 'knowledge and vision' does at times indeed represent the gain of full awakening, such as in the case of the Buddha's own insight into the four noble truths, described by him in the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* as being 'thoroughly purified' (*S. V, 423: suvisuddha*). The same expression 'knowledge and vision' can however also connote realizations of lesser import. Among others it may refer to insight into the distinction between the material body and consciousness (*D. I, 76*), to telepathy (*D. II, 216*), to knowing the past and the future (*D. III, 134*), or to internal meditative visions of light (*A. IV, 302*). These instances indicate that the expression 'knowledge and vision' can cover a variety of different realizations and does not necessarily imply the realization of *Nibbāna*.

Judging from its usage in the *Mahāsāropama* and the *Cūlasāropama Suttas*, 'knowledge and vision' as a stage of the path still falls short of full awakening, being only stage that immediately precedes and leads up to liberation (*M. I, 195* and *M. I, 202*). These two discourses are of particular relevance in the present context, since they are concerned with the same issue that also forms the central topic of the *Rathavinīta Sutta*: the goal of living the holy life. All three discourses agree that the achievement of knowledge and vision should not be mistaken for the final goal.

Though 'knowledge and vision' constitutes the final stage of purification mentioned in the *Rathavinīta Sutta*, the same 'knowledge and vision' forms only an intermediate stage in the scheme of nine purifications found in the *Dasuttara Sutta*. The *Dasuttara Sutta* speaks of purification of 'liberation' only with the ninth stage, indicating that only at this stage the

culmination point of the process of purification has been reached. This scheme of nine purifications could well be at the background of *Sāriputta's* questions in the *Rathavinīta Sutta*, the whole purpose of which was to test out *Puṇṇa's* wisdom by presenting him with stages of purification that still fall short of the final goal. In reply to these questions, *Puṇṇa* explained that the seventh stage of purification is still affected by clinging (*sa-upādāna*) and thus should not be considered the final goal.

The *Rathavinīta Sutta* concludes with *Sāriputta* revealing his identity to *Puṇṇa* and the two monks praising each other's wisdom in posing subtle questions and replying to them appropriately.

Anālayo

**RATNAGIRI VIHĀRA**, A monastery complex located on the crest of Jaipur mountains in Orissa (ancient kingdom of Oḍiṣva), India. This Monastery, dating from the 5th century A.C. and built during the reign of *Buddhapakṣa* (identified with the Gupta emperor *Narasimhagupta Bālāditya*) flourished till the 12th Century A.C. as a famous centre of Buddhism in that region. Tibetan historian, *Tāranātha* mentions that in this *vihāra* were kept three sets of *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna* texts and there were around 500 monks residing in it (*N. K. Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa, Calcutta 1958, p. vii*). It was looked upon as an important religious and philosophical academy, which drew intellectual monks and students from distant regions. However, towards the end of the 13th century A.C., it suffered at the hands of the Muslim invaders and was abandoned.

Though it is evident that both the *Hīnayāna* and the *Mahāyāna* sects co-existed in this monastery at its inception, by and by *Mahāyānism* gained grounds and finally it became a centre noted for spiritual inspiration and lively pursuit of the *Kālacakra-tantra* (*Debla Mitra, Buddhist monuments, Calcutta, 1980, p. 226*). Recent excavations at the site yielded hoards of ruins including a main stūpa, two exquisite quadrangular monasteries, a single-winged monastery, temples, a large number of small stūpas, myriads of images of Buddha, *Dhyāni-Buddhas* and other *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* deities.

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