



An Analytical Study of Rathavinīta-Sutta in Suttanta Pitaka

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Abstract

Seven steps of purification of knowledge are commonly used to characterize the progression of insight that is attained through vipassanā. The road from the ordinary to the enlightened mind is represented by the sequence of the sixteen levels of insight knowledge (soḷāsañāna), which can be linked to the Tipitaka but do not exist there as such¹. The seven stages of purification (visuddhi), on the other hand, are directly from the suttas. The Visuddhimagga is built upon the stages of insight, knowledge, and purification. The Rathavinīta-sutta of the Majjhimanikāya² describes the seven phases of purification as a metaphor comparing the road to enlightenment to a relay of chariots from one city to another. It is a series of sequential purifications that must be completed in order to reach enlightenment.³ The fourth step of enlightenment, or supramundane route knowledge, is represented by the final stage. The stages of purification (visuddhis) are: Purification of virtue (sīlavisuddhi). Purification of mind (cittavisuddhi). Purification of view (ditthivisuddhi). Purification of (kaākhāvitarāṇavisuddhi) Overcoming doubt. Purification by awareness and perception of the route and the alternative path (maggāmaggañāna-dassanavisuddhi). Purification by knowledge and way-seeing vision. (paṭipadāñānadasana-visuddhi). Purification by knowledge and vision (ñānadassanavisuddhi).

Keywords: Suttanta Pitaka, Rathavinīta-Sutta, Seven purification of Knowledge.

Introduction

The Ratha-vinītaSutta, which outlines the progression from the rigor of discipline to the ultimate goal of nībbāna in seven stages, serves as the foundation for the Visuddhimagga's structure. The Visuddhimagga's content is strikingly similar to that of the Vimūttimaḡga, an earlier treatise. The Vimūttimaḡga 's doctrine is influenced by Theravāda Abhidharma scholasticism, which contains a number of innovations and interpretations not found in the Buddha's early discourses (suttas). Instructions on Theravāda meditation that are not considered canonical are found in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga, such as "ways of guarding the mental image (nīmitta)," which allude to subsequent advancements in Theravāda meditation.

Kasīna meditation, a type of concentration meditation in which the mind is fixed on a (mental) object, is the subject of the Visuddhimagga. In order to prevent counterarguments, Thanissaro Bhikkhu asserts that the text "then attempts to fit all other meditation techniques into the mould of kasīna practice, However, breath meditation does not quite fit the mould, even by its own admission." The Visuddhimagga deviates from the Pāli Canon by emphasizing kasīna-meditation, which is the primary form of meditation there. This exemplifies how the commentaries interpret "jhāna" to mean something quite different from what it does in the Canon.

The Seven Purifications of Knowledge

1. Purification of virtue (sīlavisuddhi)

This stage entails maintaining proper behavior, specifically, upholding moral precepts to the letter, protecting the senses to prevent the emergence of kilesas, or defilements, keeping a proper way of life, and thoughtfully utilizing requirements. Ven. P. A. Payutto translated the defilements into English as follows⁴: lobha: (greed); dosa: (hatred); moha: (delusion); māna: (conceit); dīthi: (erroneous view); vicikicch: (skepticism, unease); Issā: (Envy); Macchāriya: (Scrooge); Thīna-middha: (Sluggishness and Torpor); Uddhacca-Kukuccha: (Restlessness and Regret); (fearlessness).



These three roots lobha, dosa, and moha are usually referred to as the three akūsala roots. Whether one is laid or ordained, as well as the level of one's practice, determine the exact content of the precepts that must be observed at this stage, according to ñāṇārāma. Even though the Visuddhimagga only lists the regulations for monasteries.

2. Purification of Mind (cittavisuddhi)

The first stage, behavioral cleansing, gets one ready for the mental purification that comes from focus. Buddhaghosa devotes about half of the Visuddhimagga chapters three through eleven to this cleansing, identifying and outlining the Samathabhāvanā and the Jhānas in great detail. The five obstacles, or pañcanivāraṇa, are suppressed by the force of meditative focus, and this is the simplest definition of mental cleansing. The obstacles are as follows, with English translations by Ven. P. A. Payutto⁵: kāmaccanda refers to sensual desire, byāpāda refers to ill intent, thina-middha refers to laziness and torpor, uddhacca-kukkucca refers to diversion and regret, flurry and stress, and vicikicchā refers to uncertainty and doubt. Ñāṇārāma three categories of attention that lead to mental purification: momentary focus (khaṇikaSamādhi) Focus your attention (upacāraSamādhi), emphasis on attainment (appanāSamādhi). The second and third are linked to samatha, while the first jhāna is linked to vipassanā.⁶ Access concentration is the period of awareness just before entering jhāna and the absorption that follows.⁷ It is obvious that vipassanā meditation begins properly with the purification of the mind.

3. Purification of View (ditṭhivisuddhi)

with mental purification under control. Through careful consideration of phenomena, or vipassanā, the meditator can pursue insight. Thus, the phases of insight knowledge start to be attained at this point. It states (1) knowledge discriminating nāma from rūpa is gained and (2) the knowledge of cause and condition begins.

4. Purification by Overcoming Doubt (kankhāvitaraṇavisuddhi) :

As the understanding of cause and effect deepens, the meditator attains purification by displacing doubt.

5. Purification through Understanding and Vision of the Right and Wrong Ways (maggāmaggañāḍassanavisuddhi)

(1) The knowledge of arising and dying, (2) The knowledge of comprehension, and (3) the phases of knowledge obtained through this purification. Knowing the flaws in understanding is necessary to comprehend this purification. At this point in the meditation process, attention and concentration levels may be so high that certain illusory experiences take place. The following are some illusory experiences that nāma has translated a meditation participant who experiences.

1 Illumination (obhāsa) either sees or feels light coming from his own body.⁸

2 Knowledge (nāma): Through meditation, one discovers startlingly fresh insights into the meaning of suttas, teachings, and other religious texts.

3 Rapturous delight (pīti): a rush of joy that makes one feel as though they are floating.

4 Calmness (passadhi): a profound state of tranquility in which everything is effortless; mental and physical buoyancy. The sensation of levitation might exist.

5 Bliss (sukha): Supreme joy permeates the body and intellect.

6 Faith (adhimokkha): a strong belief in the triple jewel, the master, and the topic of meditation; fervent excitement; and a strong desire to pass on knowledge to others.⁹

7 Energy (paḍḍaha): high levels of energy without restlessness; capacity for extended periods of meditation.

8 Assurance (upatthana): Regardless of the object of consciousness, mindfulness occurs naturally or automatically.

9 Equanimity (upekkh): The capacity to focus easily on the meditation subject.



10 Attachment (nikanti): the tie that ties the previous nine flaws together.

The Visuddhimagga, Chapter 20, goes into great length about these. These sensations often lead meditators to relax or stop their meditation practice because they make them believe they have reached their goal when in reality, they are still far from it. The insight of that these experiences are detours from the route, that is, are not-path, and that the way to enlightenment is to abandon them, is what is meant by purification.¹⁰

6. Purification through Information and Concept of the Way (Patipadāñānadasanavisuddhi)¹¹.

At this step of purification, the phases of knowledge are arising and passing away, dissolution, appearance as terror, contemplation of danger, contemplation of disenchantment, desire for deliverance contemplation of reflection, and equanimity about formation.¹² The twelfth step of insight knowledge, conformity, emerges on its own once these have fully manifested.¹³ Conformity knowledge integrates earlier learning with accomplishments in order to prepare for what is ahead.

7. Purification by Knowledge and Vision (ñāṇadassanavisuddhi)¹⁴

The four lokūttara routes must be attained in order to complete this cleansing. The levels of understanding are change of lineage (gotarabhūñāṇa), knowledge of the path, knowledge of fruit, and knowledge of reviewing.

These can be thought of as mind moments in the consciousness process known as cittavīthi, where an access (upacāra) moment is followed by a conformity (anūloma) moment that results in a change of lineage (gotarabhū), signifying the drastic departure from lokiya a lokūttara. The identical consciousness process or events with similar nāmes that are portrayed as ushering in jhāna actually leads to the realization of nibbāna rather than jhāna. It should be stressed that these purifications and levels of knowledge are not acquired through some mystical flash or revelation but rather through conscious observation of events as they emerge and go.

The seventh purification (visuddhi), which is related to the meditation process, is referred to as sotāpattiñāṇa, the first knowledge of the road (ñāṇadassana-visuddhi). Knowledge is represented by Ñāṇa, vision by dassana, and purification by visuddhi. If we were headed in the wrong direction, we would turn around at maḅgamagga-ñāṇadassanavisuddhi.

Following thatpaṭapadāñāṇadassanavisudhi the purification of knowledge and vision of the proper practice comes into focus. Because one's experience is in accordance with both the higher and lower stages of insight knowledge at that point, one has gained knowledge of adaptability (anulomañāṇa). Practitioners become sotapaññas once they have acquired the eighth visuddhi. The words "sotāpañña and sotaapañña both refer to streams. The word "sotāpanna" is a stream-enterer. The Noble Eightfold Path's stream is engaged by practitioners once they have acquired sotāpattiñāṇa. You haven't reached purity of knowledge and vision (ñāṇadassanavisuddhi) until that point.¹⁵

Temperaments and Meditation Objects

The meditation subject that best suits each practitioner's temperament should be used. In general, each person has a tendency toward a distinct thing or set of feelings that predominate their mental makeup. These are referred to as Carita, which means defining behavior. Each of the 40 meditation topics is thus appropriate for a particular propensity of the individual. a gluttonous personality (rāgacarita), a disposition of hatred (dosacarta), confused mentality (mohacarita), dependable behaviour (saddhācarita), having a sharp mind (buddhicarita), and Imaginative mindset are the six types of temperament (vitakkacarita). These can be divided into the following three pairs of objects.¹⁶

The first pair is the temperaments of avarice (rāgacarita) and faithfulness (saddhācarita); those who are driven by lust are also likely to have a faith-predominant personality. According to the Visuddhimagga, faith is strong when profitable (kaṃma) arises in one with a greedy disposition



(rāgacarita) due to its unique features being close to those of greed. This is because faith's qualities are similar to those of greed. Because whereas greed is affectionate and not overly austere faith is profitable in a different way. Greed looks for sense desires as its target, whereas trust looks for the unique characteristics of virtue, and so forth. Greed refuses to give up what is detrimental, whereas faith refuses to give up what is advantageous.¹⁷

The smart temperament is the second pair (buddhicarita), which contrasts with the hating temperament (dosacarita), since understanding is powerful when profitable (kamma) arises in a person of the hating temperament because of its unique features being close to those of hatred. On the other hand, hate is unprofitable since it loses interest in and does not hang on to its target, whereas understanding is profitable. Hatred simply looks for imagined faults, but understanding only looks for actual flaws. Hatred is expressed in a way that denigrates living things, whereas understanding is expressed in a way that denigrates structures.

The speculative temperament (vitakkacarita) and the deceived temperament (mohacarita) make up the third pair because when a person with a deluded temperament tries to awaken a profitable state that hasn't yet arisen, because of their particular qualities being close to those of delusion, obstructionist thoughts frequently arise in their mind. For just as hallucination is restless as a result of confusion, so are applied thoughts as a result of considering diverse factors. And just as illusion fluctuates due to superficiality, so too do apply thoughts brought about by simple speculation.

The goal of character division is to identify the meditation topic that will benefit each aspirant the best. Buddhaghosa provides detailed instructions on how to practice the 40 meditational topics (kammaṭṭhāna) in order to achieve complete absorption and focus. The eleven disciplines that the hungry temperament (ragacarita) should practice include mindfulness of the body and the ten types of foulness. The four hues (kasiṇa) and the four divine abidings (brahmavihāra) should come first, then the hateful temperament (dosacarita).

The first six recollections should be practiced by people with the deluded temperament (mohacarita) and the speculative temperament (saddhācarita). These topics, such as the impression of repulsiveness in food, a consciousness of death, peaceful meditation, and understanding of the four components, should be followed by the intellectual temperament (buddhicarita) or intellectual. All temperaments can be accommodated in the remaining kasiṇa and immaterial stages. For those with speculative temperaments, a kasiṇa should be restricted, while for those with deluded temperaments, it should be limitless.

Conclusion

The Visuddhimagga, along with the SatipatthānaSutta, is one of the key works on which the modern vipassanā method and the vipassanā movement itself are founded. However, some modern Theravada scholars and vipassanā teachers have also criticized and denied its focus on kasīna-meditation and its assertion that "dry insight" may be possible.

The Visuddhimagga employs a very distinct paradigm for focus than what is found in the Canon, according to Thanissaro Bhikkhu. A further finding by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana is that there is a distinction between what "the suttas say is not the same as what the Visuddhimagga says they are truly distinct," leading to a split between a [traditional] academic understanding and a practical understanding based on contemplative experience. Gunaratana adds that Buddhaghosa coined a number of important words for meditation that aren't found in the suttas, including "parikkamasamādhi (preparatory concentration), upacarasamādhi (access concentration), and appanasamadhi (absorption concentration)." Gunaratana adds that the suttas, where dhyanais always combined with awareness, do not support Buddhaghosa's focus on kasīna-meditation.

According to Bhikkhu Sujato, the Visuddhimagga's opinions on Buddhist concentration are a "distortion of the Suttas" because they discount the value of jhana. According to this book,



modern practise is also criticised by the Australian monk Shravasti Dhammika. Basing himself on the addendum to the Visuddhimaḡga, he comes to the conclusion that Buddhaghosa did not think that adhering to the practise outlined in the Visuddhimaḡga will actually bring him to Nivana.

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