

emergency brake will certainly not lead to actual progress in one's journey, it has its proper place in order to avoid an accident.

A noteworthy difference between the *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna Sutta* and its Chinese parallel occurs at the very end, where the Pāli version concludes its description of mastery over thoughts by indicating that in this way an end of *dukkha* has been reached and craving has been eradicated, *acchecchi taṇhaṃ ... antam-akāsi dukkhassa* (*M. I*, 122). In the otherwise similar Chinese conclusion, this statement is not found at all (*T. I*, 589a8). Closer inspection of the Pāli passage brings to light a grammatical inconsistency, in that the overcoming of craving etc. are formulated in the past tense, whereas the earlier described mastery over one's thought is in the future tense (*yaṃ vitakkaṃ ākaṅkhissati, taṃ vitakkaṃ vitakkesati*). For the removal of craving to stand in a meaningful relation to mastery over thought, the use of the tenses should be in the opposite way. This suggests that the ending of the Pāli version may have suffered from some error during oral transmission.

In fact, mastery over unwholesome thoughts on its own would not suffice for reaching awakening, for which a more extended training of the mind through the development of insight and tranquility is required. Mastery over unwholesome thought, for whose development the *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna Sutta* offers a graded series of five methods, stands in its proper place as what provides the necessary foundation for the path that will eventually ripen in liberation.

Anālayo

References

- 1 *T.* stands for the Taishō edition.
- 2 The Chinese version at *T. I*, 588a14 instead speaks of a carpenter drawing a straight line on a piece of wood and then cutting the wood straight.

VIVĀDA stands for "quarrel" and "disputation". The causes that lead to quarrel and disputation are analysed in several discourses. One such analysis lists altogether six roots of disputation, *vivādamūlāni* (*D. III*, 246; *M. II*, 245 and *A. III*, 334). According to these six roots of disputation, quarrelling can arise when someone is

angry and scornful; or else when someone is hypocritical and malicious; envious and mean; cunning and crafty; with evil desires and wrong views; or when someone stubbornly and dogmatically clings to his or her own view.

An example for the last case can be found in the *Bahavedaniya Sutta*, which reports two disciples of the Buddha unable to come to an agreement on how many types of feeling the Buddha had taught. When informed of how each of them had insisted on his particular interpretation, the Buddha clarified that both were correct in as much as he had taught both ways of reckoning feelings. At the same time, both disciples were wrong in that they had dogmatically insisted on their particular interpretation instead of acknowledging the appropriateness of the presentation made by the other, an attitude that was bound to lead to conflict, litigation and disputation, *vivāda* (*M. I*, 398).

Disagreements or even misrepresentations of the teachings have a considerable potential of leading to disputation (*A. V*, 77). *Vinaya* matters could also lead to *vivāda*, such as when a monk declares that an offence is not an offence, or presents what indeed is not an offence as an offence, or else when the seriousness of a particular offence is being misrepresented (*A. V*, 78).

The degree to which *Vinaya* matters can lead to quarrel can be seen in the case of the monks from Kosambī, where a relatively minor offence committed by a monk led to such strife among the local monastic community that even a personal intervention by the Buddha was unable to settle the matter (*Vin. I*, 337ff). According to the *Kosambiya Sutta*, the Buddha pointed out that for the Kosambī monks to quarrel in this way was for their own detriment as well as for the detriment of others, enjoining them to instead dwell with loving kindness by way of body, speech and mind towards each other (*M. I*, 321). In addition to loving kindness, generosity in sharing one's material gains, maintenance of flawless moral conduct and noble view are factors that conduce to living together in harmony and peace.

A discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* further expands on this topic. This discourse also takes its occasion from a group of monks that had been engaged in quarrelling and disputation. Rebuking them for their unbecoming conduct, the Buddha recommended several qualities that lead to communal harmony (*A. V*, 89).

These comprise various good qualities of a monk such as being virtuous, learned, energetic, content, mindful and wise. In addition to these, communal harmony will be fostered if a monk associates with good friends, is easy to speak to, feels inspired by the teachings and is capable at things to be done for the sake of his companions in the holy life.

The contrast set in these discourses between quarrelling and living together in harmony recurs in another discourse, which distinguishes a harmonious assembly, *samaggā parisā*, from a discordant assembly, *vaggā parisā* (A. I, 70). The discordant assembly is one that engages in disputing and quarrelling, "stabbing at each other with verbal daggers", *aññamaññaṃ mukhasatthihi vitudentā viharanti*. This expression quite vividly brings out the difference between quarrelling and plain criticism, in that *vivāda* is an expression of anger and often accompanied by a wish to harm or hurt the other.

Thus to avoid *vivāda* does not imply mere quietism. According to a discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha quite explicitly indicated that he did not recommend to just totally refrain from criticism of others. Instead, one should criticize on those occasions where this is appropriate (A. II, 101). According to the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, if someone speaks dispraise of the Buddha, the *Dhamma* or the community, a disciple of the Buddha should stay free from anger and at the same time point out as untrue what is untrue, *abhūtaṃ abhūtaṃ nibbeṭhetabbaṃ* (D. I, 3). The importance of criticism at the proper time is also reflected in the *Pavāraṇā* regulation, where a formal occasion is set apart when the members of a monastic community will invite each other for criticism (Vin. I, 159). According to the background story to this regulation, a group of monk had made a vow of silence in the deluded belief that to spend the rainy season retreat in this way will be the best way of avoiding *vivāda*. The Buddha compared this to the behaviour of dumb sheep. This makes it clear that, even though the Buddha was very much in favour of seclusion and silence (see TUNHĪBHĀVA and VIVEKA), he considered criticism at the proper time as an important aspect of the path to liberation.

Vivāda, however, should certainly be avoided. The early Buddhist disdain for *vivāda* finds its expression in a *pācittiya* regulation that even makes it an offence if a monk eavesdrops on other monks that are engaged

in *vivāda* (Vin. IV, 150). A discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* then lists the dire results that await a monk who causes quarrel and strife in the community. Such a monk will be obstructed in his meditative development and lose what he has already reached, his reputation will suffer, he will pass away in a confused state of mind and be reborn in an inferior condition (A. III, 252).

The *Pāsādika Sutta* and the *Sāmagāma Sutta* report that after the death of their leader, quarrel and disputation had arisen among the Jains (D. III, 117 and M. II, 243). The *Saṅgīti Sutta* takes its occasion from the same event, which motivated Sāriputta to deliver an outline of central elements of the Buddha's teaching in the hope of averting similar quarrel in the Buddhist community (D. III, 210).

While quarrel and litigation among laity arise mainly on account of sensual pleasures (M. I, 86), *vivāda* among recluses has its most prominent cause in views (A. I, 66). The *Pasura Sutta* depicts how some recluses would hold up their view and dispute with others, claiming that 'this is truth', *ditṭhiṃ uggayha vivādiyanti*, 'idam eva saccaṃ' ti ca vādiyanti (Sn. 832). From the Buddha's perspective, however, one should not take part in such disputes, as it will not lead to purity, *na vivālayetha, na hi tena suddhiṃ* (Sn. 830). That is, at least from an early Buddhist perspective, disputing and debating is not a tool for progress on the path, but rather an obstruction.

Disputation and debate always involves an attempt to win, to subdue the opponent in order to win applause (Sn. 826). Those who lose will be upset and dejected (Sn. 827), those who win will be exited and fall prey to conceit (Sn. 829). Disputing inevitably involves holding things as dear, *piyā pahūtā kalahā vivādā* (Sn. 863), and therefore obstructs progress to freedom from bondage. Hence one should leave all debating and disputing behind, as no advantage will be gained from it (Sn. 828).

A discourse in the *Udāna* illustrates the predicament of *vivāda* among recluses with the famous simile of the blind men and the elephant (Ud. 68). Just as the blind men ended up quarrelling in defence of their respective opinions about the nature of an elephant, opinions based on their having only touched different parts of the elephant, without being able to see it in its entirety, so too recluses engaged in quarrel

and disputations about their respective views are simply blind.

In contrast to such blindness as a cause of disputatiousness, the Buddha had nothing to debate with the world, it was only the world that was trying to debate with him, *nāhaṃ ... lokena vivadāmi, loka ca mayā vivadati* (S. III, 138). The same discourse illustrates the Buddha's aloofness from disputation with the help of the imagery of a lotus that, though born in water, rises above it. In short, one who is liberated will not enter into any dispute, *vimutto na vivādam eti* (Sn. 877).

*Sakaṃ hi dhammaṃ pariṇuṇṇam āhu
aññassa dhammaṃ pana hīnam āhu,
evam pi viggayha vivādiyanti
sakaṃ sakaṃ sammutim āhu saccaṃ.
Calling their own doctrine superior,
And the doctrine of others inferior,
Quarrelling in this way they dispute
Calling their own opinion 'truth'. (Sn. 904)*

*Ekaṃ hi saccaṃ na dutiyam atthi,
yasmim pajā no vivade pajānaṃ.
The truth is one, there is no second,
A person who knows this would not dispute (Sn.
884).*

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VIVEKA, "seclusion", sometimes also referred to as *paviveka*, is highly esteemed in early Buddhism. According to the eight thoughts of a superior man, *mahāpurisavitakka*, the Buddha's teaching is for one who is secluded, not for one who delights in company, *pavivittassāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo saṅgaṇikārāmassa* (A. IV, 229). Whatever leads to seclusion instead of company should be considered categorically as the true teaching of the Buddha, *pavivekāya saṃvattanti no saṅgaṇikāya ... ekaṃsena ... dhāreyyāsi 'eso dhammo, eso vinayo etaṃ satthu sāsanaṃ'* (A. IV, 280). The emphasis given in these statements to a secluded life style has its poetic counterpart in the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*, which offers a touching depiction of the beauty of a solitary life (Sn. 35-75).¹

The *Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta* reports that some of the Buddha's disciples would only come to join the community every fortnight for the recital of the

pātimokkha (M. II, 9). Monks who live secluded and encourage others in the same quality are praiseworthy indeed (A. V, 130). The wish for seclusion is the proper rationale for dwelling in a forest (A. III, 219). A verse in the *Sutta Nipāta* emphatically instructs that one should dwell in seclusion, which is [reckoned] supreme among noble ones, *vivekaṃ yeva sikkhetha, etad ariyānam uttamaṃ* (Sn. 822). Even just to talk about seclusion is commendable, since such a topic for conversation will lead onwards to the final goal (M. III, 115).

Hence a monk who does not dwell in solitude, *paṭisallāna*, nor praises such dwelling, had little chance in early Buddhism of being liked and respected by his companions (A. V, 166). Even for a monk in higher training seclusion is important, since if he is engaged in many activities and neglects seclusion, decline is to be expected of him (A. III, 116). Particularly blameworthy is neglect of seclusion when one's teacher is devoted to a secluded living style. Such blame applies to elder disciples as well as younger ones, in that they do not emulate the example set by their teacher (M. I, 14).

To set an example was in fact a prominent reason why the Buddha would live in seclusion himself, in addition to the pleasure he found in secluded dwelling (M. I, 23 and A. I, 60). The discourses report that after his awakening the Buddha still went regularly on solitary retreat, at times for two weeks (*Vin.* III, 68; S. V, 12 and S. V, 320), and at other times even for a period of three months (*Vin.* III, 230; S. V, 13 and S. V, 325).² Other discourses indicate that distinguished visitors were not allowed to approach the Buddha even when he was only in his daily retreat (*D.* I, 151 and *D.* II, 270).

If the Buddha felt being too crowded in by disciples and visitors, he would simply walk off on his own to stay somewhere else in solitude and seclusion (*Ud.* 41). A similar action would also be undertaken by some of his senior disciples, who on one occasion left even without taking their leave of the Buddha in order to avoid a crowd of visitors that had come to see the Buddha (A. V, 133). On being later informed about their departure, the Buddha wholeheartedly approved of their action.

The secluded living style of the Buddha was a natural expression of his realization, so much so that

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