

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 paripuṇṇaṃ āhu
aññassa dhammaṃ pana hīnaṃ 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,
yasmiṃ pajā no vivade pajānaṃ.*

The truth is one, there is no second,
A person who knows this would not dispute (Sn.
884).

Anālayo

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 saṅgaṇikāramassa* (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 *Mahāsakuludāyi 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, etaṃ ariyānaṃ 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

the two thoughts a *Tathāgata* frequently has in his mind are thoughts of peace and of seclusion (*It.* 31). In fact, to live a secluded life style is, according to the *Udumbarikasīhanāda Sutta*, a characteristic of all those who have reached awakening (*D.* III, 54).

Yet, to dwell in seclusion is not an easy task, and one who is bereft of concentration will not be fit for this life style (*A.* V, 202), just as a small animal is not fit to imitate the behaviour of an elephant. The *Bhayabherava Sutta* lists several other qualities that will make it difficult to live in seclusion, such as lack of moral purity, or else being under the influence of the five hindrances or of other unwholesome mental states (*M.* I, 17). What appears to be implicit in these passages is made explicit in a discourse in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, which indicates that to live in community is only a second-rate alternative, recommended to those who do not find solace in seclusion.³ Thus dwelling in seclusion is an expression of having reached some degree of maturity in one's practice of the path. Such maturity can, however, arise at a rather early stage in one's practice. The *Vinaya* recognizes this, as it gives a special allowance for a newly ordained monk to be exempted from the otherwise obligatory need to live in dependence on a teacher if he finds solace in living in seclusion in a remote forest dwelling (*Vin.* I, 92).

Seclusion also comes up in the context of a simile that employs various parts of an elephant to represent praiseworthy qualities. Here seclusion is represented by the elephant's tail (*A.* III, 346). The commentary explains that just as the tail of an elephant will keep off flies, so seclusion will keep off contacts with laity or other wanderers (*AA.* III, 373). In another imagery that takes up the parts of a war chariot, seclusion is one of the weapons of this chariot, together with the absence of ill-will and harmlessness (*S.* V, 6). According to a verse in the *Theragāthā*, living alone in the seclusion of a forest, as praised by the Buddha, is very pleasant indeed, once before and behind no one else is found (*Th.* 537-538).

For one who does not delight in seclusion, it will be impossible to come to grips with the mind and develop concentration (*A.* III, 423). The *Mahāsuññata Sutta* clarifies that delight in company will obstruct experiencing the happiness of seclusion, which the commentary explains to intend the happiness that is secluded from sensuality (*M.* III, 110 and *MA.* IV, 158). Such seclusion from sensuality, *vivicc' eva*

kāmehi, is a necessary condition for attaining *jhāna*. In fact, the happiness experienced through *jhāna* attainment is none other than the happiness of seclusion, *pavivekasukha* (*M.* I, 454). The theme of seclusion comes up also in relation to the practice of insight, as the factors of awakening should be developed in dependence on seclusion, *vivekanissita*, in order to lead to liberation (*M.* III, 88).

In this way, bodily seclusion builds up the basis for developing mental seclusion. In fact, as a discourse in the *Samyutta Nikāya* points out, bodily seclusion alone does not suffice. According to this discourse, a monk who lives a very solitary life should also make an effort at mental solitude by leaving behind past and future, and by dwelling free from desire in the present (*S.* II, 283). The need to supplement bodily seclusion with mental seclusion is also the theme of a set of three similes in the *Mahāaccaka Sutta* (*M.* I, 240). This set of similes employs the imagery of a piece of wood that cannot be used to kindle a fire as long as the wood is still wet. This holds true when the wood is still lying in water, but also when the wood has been taken out of the water but is still wet. Only a piece of wood that has become dry is fit for the fire. Here the need for bodily withdrawal from sensuality corresponds to the need of taking the wood out of the water. Yet, just as the wood also needs to be dry, so too, the mind needs to withdraw from thoughts related to sensuality. As a discourse in the *Anguttara Nikāya* points out, one who lives in secluded spot but still entertains unwholesome thoughts is only bodily subdued, but lacks being mentally subdued (*A.* II, 137).

Hence based on having heard the teachings, one should dwell bodily as well as mentally withdrawn in order to develop wisdom (*A.* IV, 152). Such withdrawal is a recurrent feature in the description of a monk who, after having received an enigmatic teaching from the Buddha, dwells alone and withdrawn, *eko vūpakaṭṭho*, and thereby reaches liberation (e.g. *S.* III, 36). The Buddha would encourage his disciples to undertake such secluded practice, for the simple reason that one who lives in seclusion will come to know things as they truly are (*S.* III, 15 or *S.* IV, 80). The things to be known as they truly are while dwelling in seclusion are the impermanent nature of the five aggregates or the six senses. In this way, practice in seclusion will lead to coming to know the true nature of oneself.

It could well be for the same reason that the *Dhamma* is said to be realized by the wise each for themselves, that is, singly, *paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi* (e.g. *D.* II, 93). "The way of the crowd is the way of *saṃsāra* ... against the centripetal attraction of *saṃsāra* ... a tangent directly away from the enveloping vortex into calmness ... this is *kāyaviveka*". Such bodily seclusion then is the basis for developing mental seclusion, "*cittaviveka* ... that gradual journey [away] from the *saṃsāra* within that fuels the outer" *saṃsāra*. Hence "only by solitude ... can one truly approach the *Dhamma* in its immediacy".⁴ With liberation, then, the highest level of seclusion in early Buddhism is reached, when the mind attains perpetual seclusion from defilements.

A survey of different types of seclusion can be found in a discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, which distinguishes between three levels of *vivekā* (*A.* I, 241). The first of these is seclusion from unwholesome deeds through virtuous conduct. Next comes seclusion from wrong view through attainment of right view. The third level of seclusion, then, is seclusion from the influxes through final liberation. For an *arahant*, to be intent on seclusion will then be the most appropriate expression of his or her total seclusion from defilements, *khīṇāsavo ... khayā rāgassa vītarāgattā pavivekādhimutto hoti, khayā dosassa ... khayā mohassa vītamohattā pavivekādhimutto hoti* (*A.* III, 377).

According to an explanation given in the *Niddesa*, three progressive levels of seclusion could be distinguished (*Nd.* I, 140). The first and most basic level is bodily seclusion, *kāyaviveka*, through living alone and in a secluded place. Based on bodily seclusion, *cittaviveka* as mental seclusion can be developed by abandoning the mental hindrances and attaining *jhāna*. The third level then is *upadhiviveka*, seclusion from substrata in the sense of seclusion from defilements and the aggregates of clinging,⁵ a level of seclusion attained with final liberation.

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* offers a more detailed breakdown of the type of seclusion to be experienced with breakthrough to liberating insight. This work lists altogether five types of *viveka* applicable to each factor of the eightfold noble path (*Ps.* II, 220). These five types of *viveka* cover seclusion by suppression; seclusion by [substitution] of opposites; seclusion

by cutting off; seclusion by tranquillization; and seclusion as escape. Here seclusion by suppression, *vikkhambhanaviveka*, stands for the suppression of the five hindrances. Seclusion by [substitution] of opposites, *tadaṅgaviveka*, refers to the substitution of wrong path factors through their right counterparts. Seclusion by cutting off, *samucchadaviveka*, represents the cutting off of defilements through the supramundane path. Seclusion by tranquillization, *paṭippassadhiviveka*, refers to the tranquillization experienced with the supramundane fruit. Finally seclusion as release, *nissaraṇaviveka*, stands for *Nibbāna* itself.

*Pavivekarasaṃ pitvā,
rasaṃ upasamassa ca
niddaro hoti nippāpo
Dhammapīṭirasaṃ pivāṃ.*

Having savoured the taste of seclusion,
And the taste of [inner] peace,
[One who] is free from anxiety and evil,
Savours the joyful taste of the *Dhamma* (*Dhp.*
205 or *Sn.* 257).

Anālayo

References

- 1 A Gāndhārī fragment version of this discourse can be found in Salomon: *A Gāndhārī Version of the Rhinoceros Sūtra*, Seattle 2000.
- 2 Cf. also the *Saṅghabhedavastu* in Gnoli: *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu*, Rome, 2, 1978: 204.
- 3 *S.* I, 154: "Dwell in remote lodgings, practice for freedom from the fetters, [but] if one does not find satisfaction therein, [then] dwell in the community, protected and mindful", *sevetha pantāni senāsanāni, careyya saṃyojanavippamokkhā, sace ratīṃ nādhigacchaye tattha, saṅghe vase rakkhitato satimā*.
- 4 Hudson: "Note on Solitude/Inwardness", *Pali Buddhist Review*, I.1, 1976: 103-104.
- 5 A somewhat different sense of *upadhiviveka* can be found at *M.* I, 435, where it stands for seclusion from sensuality as a pre-condition for attaining the first *jhāna*.

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