

BUDDHISM AS A STRONGHOLD  
OF FREE THINKING?

Social, Ethical and Philosophical  
Dimensions of Buddhism

Edited by  
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LIVING IN SECLUSION AND FACING FEAR –  
 THE EKOTTARIKA-ĀGAMA COUNTERPART TO  
 THE BHAYABHERAVA-SUTTA\*

Anālayo

Succo secessus bibito  
 et succo tranquillitatis gustato  
 terroris et peccati expers fit  
 jucundum religionis succum bibens.<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The present paper provides an annotated translation of a discourse from the Chinese *Ekottarika-āgama* that parallels the *Bhayabherava-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. Central themes taken up in the two discourses are the difficulties of dwelling in seclusion and how to face the arising of fear.

## Introduction

Judging from the picture that emerges from a perusal of the early discourses, dwelling in seclusion appears to have been a highly esteemed practice in the thought-world of early Bud-

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\* I am indebted to Rod Bucknell, Ken Su and Giuliana Martini for comments on a draft of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> Dhṛp 205, rendered into Latin by Fausböll 1855/1974, 37; for an English translation see the end of the article.

dhism.<sup>2</sup> The theme of a secluded way of life is a recurrent topic in the *Sutta-nipāta*, where especially the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* stands out for its poetic portrayal of the beauty of a solitary lifestyle.<sup>3</sup>

The same topic is, however, also prominent elsewhere in the Pāli Nikāyas. Thus according to the *Mahāsuññata-sutta* and its Chinese and Tibetan parallels, for example, one of the rare occasions when the Buddha admonished his personal attendant Ānanda was related to the need of avoiding excessive socializing. The different versions of this discourse agree that the Buddha warned against foregoing seclusion for the sake of company, as this will prevent the development of concentration and the attainment of liberation.<sup>4</sup> In the same vein, according to the

<sup>2</sup> The actual practice of seclusion comes up in a circumstantial description in the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* and its parallel, which report that some of the Buddha's disciples would join the community only once a fortnight: MN 77 MN II 8,28: "there are disciples of mine who are forest dwellers ... they join the community [only] every half-month", *santi kho pana me ... sāvakā āraññakā* (B<sup>c</sup>: *āraññikā*) ... *te anvaddhamāsaṃ* (S<sup>c</sup>: *anvaddha*<sup>o</sup>) *saṃghamajjhe* (C<sup>o</sup> and S<sup>c</sup>: *saṅgha*<sup>o</sup>) *osaranti*. MĀ 207 at T I 783a16: "some disciples of mine might join the community [only] once every half-month", 或我弟子過半月一入衆; for a full translation of MĀ 207 cf. Anālayo 2009a.

<sup>3</sup> Sn 35-75, with a Gāndhārī counterpart in Salomon 2000, 105-112, and another parallel in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882, 357,18 - 359,15; cf. also the *Divyāvadāna* in Cowell 1886: 294,13. On the significance of the expression *khaggavisāṇa* cf. Jones 1949/1973, 250 note 1; Edgerton 1953/1998, 202 s.v. *khadga-viṣāṇa*; Jayawickrama 1977, 22-23; Norman 1996/2001; Schmithausen 1999, 233 note 13; Salomon 2000, 10-14; Wright 2001, 3-5 and Caillat 2003, 38.

<sup>4</sup> According to MN 122 at MN III 110,24, attaining the happiness of deeper concentration and temporary or perpetual liberation is only possible for a monk who, instead of socializing, "dwells alone and withdrawn from company", *eko gaṇasmā vūpakaṭṭho viharati*. MĀ 191 at T I 738a28 describes such a monk as one who, instead of delighting in company, "always delights in staying alone in remote areas", 常樂獨住遠離處者. The Tibetan version in Skilling 1994, 196,12 similarly speaks of a monk who, instead of delighting in

eight thoughts of a great man, recorded in a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and a range of parallels, the Buddha's teaching is for one who dwells in seclusion, not for one who delights in company.<sup>5</sup>

A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, together with counterparts in the two main *Samyukta-āgama* collections extant in Chinese, presents joining the monastic community as an option for those who do not find solace in seclusion.<sup>6</sup> This conveys

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company, “dwells alone apart from company”, *tshogs las gcig pu logs shig na gnas pa*.

<sup>5</sup> AN 8.30 at AN IV 229,1: “this Dharma is for one who is secluded, this Dharma is not for one who takes pleasure in socializing”, *pavivittassāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo saṅgaṇīkārāmassa*. MĀ 74 at T I 540c24: “the path [manifests] from being secluded, not by delighting in congregation, not by staying in congregation, [the path] is not attained by those who associate with congregations”, 道從遠離，非樂聚會，非住聚會，非合聚會得。T 46 at T I 835c17: “the path of the Dharma is [to stay] in hidden away areas, delight in company is not the path”, 道法隱處，樂眾非道。EĀ 42.6 at T II 754a21: “this Dharma is reached by one who properly dwells in seclusion, it is not reached by one who stays among the crowds”, 此法應閑居者之所行，非在憤鬧之所行。A similarly emphatic statement can be found in AN 8.53 at AN IV 280,26 (cf. also Vin II 259,3), according to which whatever leads to seclusion instead of company should categorically be considered as the teaching and discipline taught by the Buddha, *ime dhammā ... pavivekāya saṃvattanti no saṅgaṇīkāya ... ekamsena ... dhāreyyāsi: 'eso dhammo, eso vinayo etaṃ satthu sāsanaṃ'*ti. Hudson 1976, 103 sums up: “only by solitude ... can one truly approach the Dhamma in its immediacy”; cf. also Anālayo 2009b on various aspects of seclusion, *viveka*.

<sup>6</sup> SN 6.13 at SN I 154,15: “resort to remote lodgings, move towards freedom from the fetters; [but] if one does not find satisfaction therein, [then] dwell in the community, protected and mindful”, *sevetha pantāni senāsanāni* (S<sup>c</sup>: *sayanāsanāni*), *careyya saṃyojana-vippamokkhā* (C<sup>c</sup>: *saññyojana*<sup>o</sup>), *sa ce ratim nādhigacchaye* (B<sup>c</sup>, C<sup>c</sup> and S<sup>c</sup>: *nādhigaccheyya*) *tattha, saṅghe* (B<sup>c</sup>: *saṃghe*) *vase rakkhitatto satimā* (B<sup>c</sup> and C<sup>c</sup>: *satīmā*). SĀ 1191 at T II 322c24: “practice approaching remote lodgings, eradicate and discard all defilements; [but] if one does not delight in forest dwellings, [then] join the community,

almost the impression as if living in the monastic community is considered something of a second-rate alternative. Though community life was certainly valued in early Buddhist thought, nevertheless, as a verse in the *Sutta-nīpāta* proclaims, to train oneself in [dwelling in] seclusion is [reckoned] supreme among noble ones.<sup>7</sup>

Several discourses report that the Buddha himself still went on solitary retreats, which on occasion apparently lasted for a period of two or even three months.<sup>8</sup> According to the *Udumbarika-(sīhanāda)-sutta* and its parallels, a secluded life style is in fact characteristic of all those who have reached awakening.<sup>9</sup>

protecting oneself”, 習近邊床座，斷除諸煩惱，若不樂空閑，入衆自攝護 (adopting the variant 床 instead of 林). SĀ<sup>2</sup> 104 at TII 411a11: “being endowed with application to [dwelling] in quiet places one should eradicate the fetters and bondages; [but] if one is not able to delight and rejoice therein, one should return to stay amidst the community”, 處靜有敷具，應斷於結縛，若不能愛樂，還應住僧中. On the gradual transition from a wandering life spent mainly in forests and seclusion to a more settled and urban life style during the subsequent development of the Buddhist monastic community cf. Dutt 1962, 53-57; Olivelle 1974, 37-38; Holt 1981/1999, 30-32; and Panabokke 1993, 17-41. Nevertheless, the forest life apparently remained an important factor throughout Buddhist history, thus Ray 1994, 251-292 highlights the importance of the forest life for the early Mahāyāna, while Carrithers 1983 offers an account of the revival of the forest life in modern day Theravāda. Durt 1991, 6 relates “the tendency of Indian monks to settle in urban monasteries more than in forests” to the circumstance that “the development of Indian Buddhism was connected with the expansion of an urban and mercantile civilization”.

<sup>7</sup> Sn 822: *vivekaṃ yeva sikkhetha, etad ariyānam uttamaṃ*.

<sup>8</sup> SN 54.11 at SN V 325,19 reports that the Buddha went on a retreat for three months (for other references to the Buddha retiring for a period of similar duration cf. SN 45.12 at SN V 13,8 and Vin III 230,3), whereas the parallel SĀ 807 at T II 207a9 speaks of two months. The *Saṅghabhedavastu* in Gnoli 1978, 204,4 also records an occasion when the Buddha went on a retreat for three months.

<sup>9</sup> DN 25 at DN III 54,11 (B<sup>c</sup>, C<sup>c</sup> and S<sup>c</sup> have the title *Udumbarika-sutta*, whereas E<sup>c</sup> reads *Udumbarika-sīhanāda-sutta*) DĀ 8 at T I

The discourses indicate that the Buddha not only enjoyed being by himself, but also practiced seclusion as a way of setting an example for others. The role of the Buddha in this respect is highlighted in the *Bhayabherava-sutta* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel, in which the theme of seclusion and the example set by the Buddha form a recurrent theme.<sup>10</sup>

The *Bhayabherava-sutta*, found as the fourth discourse in the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>11</sup> has as its counterpart the first discourse in the thirty-first chapter of the *Ekottarika-āgama*.<sup>12</sup> The *Ekottarika-āgama* extant in Chinese appears to be the result of a translation undertaken during the period 384-385 of the present era by Zhu Fonian (竺佛念), based on what probably was a Prakrit original of so far undetermined school affiliation transmitted by Dharmanandin.<sup>13</sup> Besides this complete parallel in Chinese translation, sections of a version of this discourse have also been preserved in the form of Sanskrit fragments.<sup>14</sup>

49a20; T 11 at T I 225c18; MĀ 104 at T I 595a24.

<sup>10</sup> MN 4 at MN I 23,34 explains that the two reasons for the Buddha's dwelling in seclusion are: "seeing a pleasant abiding here and now for myself and out of compassion for later generations", *attano ca diṭṭhadhammasukhavihāraṃ sampassamāno pacchimañ ca janataṃ anukampamāno* (cf. also the similar statement in AN 2.3.9 at AN I 60,ult.). EĀ 31.1 at T II 666c24: "dwelling in secluded places [provides a suitable] way of living for myself and at the same time [serves] to deliver incalculable [numbers of] sentient beings", 又自遊閑居之處, 兼度衆生不可稱計.

<sup>11</sup> MN 4 at MN I 16,14 to 24,9.

<sup>12</sup> EĀ 31.1 at T II 665b17 to T II 667a3, sections of which have already been translated by Bareau 1963, 37-39 and 68.

<sup>13</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the somewhat complex issue of the translators and school affiliation of this collection cf. Anālayo 2009c; on the language of the original Waldschmidt 1980, 137 comments that the *Ekottarika-āgama* was translated "from some Middle Indic or mixed dialect of Prakrit with Sanskrit elements".

<sup>14</sup> SHT I 164c+g in Waldschmidt 1965, 93 (identified by Schlingloff 1967, 421); SHT IV 32 folio 33-41 in Sander 1980, 130-34; SHT IV 165 folio 15-16 in Sander 1980, 190f; SHT IV 500 folio 4 in Sander

## Translation<sup>15</sup>

On the Higher [Mind]<sup>16</sup>

1. [I] heard like this. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, the park [given by] Anāthapiṇḍika.

2. At that time, the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi approached the Blessed One, exchanged greetings and sat down to one side. Then the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi said to the Blessed One: “To stay in secluded dwellings, caves and [solitary] places [can] be very unpleasant, going by oneself to stay alone and apply the mind is very difficult.”<sup>17</sup>

The Blessed One said: “It is like this, Brahmin, as you said, [to stay in] secluded dwellings, caves and [solitary] places [can]

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1980, 222; and SHT IX 2401 in Bechert 2004, 195. A reference to the present discourse as the (*bhaya*)[*bh*]*airavaparyāye* can be found in SHT I 36 A2 in Waldschmidt 1965, 27 and in SHT IV 36 V2 in Sander 1980, 259.

<sup>15</sup> For ease of comparison I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Bhayabherava-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005, 102-7. For the same reason, I employ Pāli terminology (except for anglicized terms like ‘Dharma’ or ‘Nirvana’), without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the *Ekottarika-āgama*.

<sup>16</sup> The summary verse at T II 673c11 refers to EĀ 31.1 as “higher”, 增上, which I take to be an abbreviation of 增上之心, the “higher mind” (equivalent to *adhicitta*), mentioned in EĀ 31.1 at T II 666b21, hence my reconstruction of the title as “On the Higher [Mind]”. MN 4 instead has the title “Discourse on Fear and Dread”, *Bhayabherava-sutta*.

<sup>17</sup> In MN 4 at MN I 16,20 the Brahmin first takes up the topic of the Buddha’s role in regard to his disciples and only after that turns to the difficulties of dwelling in seclusion. MN 4 also does not mention caves and differs in so far as at MN I 16,ult. the Brahmin concludes that “one would think the forests will rob a monk, who has not attained concentration, of his mind”, *haranti maññe mano vanāni samādhim alabhamānassa bhikkhuno*.



be very unpleasant, going by oneself to stay alone and apply the mind is very difficult.

3. Thus in the past, at the time when I had not yet completed the path to Buddhahood and was still practising as a bodhisattva, I regularly reflected like this: ‘To stay in secluded dwellings,<sup>18</sup> caves and [solitary] places [can] be very unpleasant, going by oneself to stay alone and apply the mind is very difficult’.”

The Brahmin said to the Buddha: “Suppose there are sons of good family, who out of firm faith leave the household life to train in the path, [among them] the recluse Gotama at present acts as a superior leader, being of much benefit by giving these types of beginners encouragement and guidance.”

The Blessed One said: “It is like this, Brahmin, as you said, for whatever sons of good family, who out of firm faith leave the household life to train in the path, I act as a superior leader, being of much benefit by giving these types of beginners encouragement and guidance [665c], since on seeing me they all arouse a sense of discomfiture and [thereon] approach secluded dwellings, caves and [solitary] places amidst mountains or marshes.<sup>19</sup>

4. At the time [when I was still a bodhisattva], I then had the following reflection: ‘Any recluses or Brahmins whose bodily conduct is impure and who withdraw to secluded dwellings and solitary places with impure bodily conduct, their efforts are in vain, their practice is not genuine, [they will experience] fear as well as evil and unwholesome states.<sup>20</sup> But I now withdraw into

<sup>18</sup> Adopting the variant 居 instead of 靜, in accordance with the two earlier instances of this phrase.

<sup>19</sup> The second part of this passage, beginning with “since on seeing me ...”, is without a counterpart in MN 4. The point this passage makes appears to be the arousing of *samvega* in the disciples on seeing the example set by the Buddha; on *samvega* cf. also Coomaraswamy 1943.

<sup>20</sup> MN 4 at MN I 17,14 only mentions the manifestation of unwholesome fear and dread as a consequence of withdrawing into seclusion

secluded dwellings and [solitary] places with a bodily conduct that is not impure. To withdraw into secluded and quiet places with any impure bodily conduct is not found in me. Thus my bodily conduct is pure now. For arahants who have purity of bodily conduct and who delight in secluded dwellings, caves and [solitary] places, I act as a supreme leader.<sup>21</sup> Like this, Brahmin, seeing in myself such purity of bodily conduct, I delight in living in secluded dwelling places, [experiencing] increasing joy.

5-7. At the time [when I was still a bodhisattva], I then had the following reflection: ‘Any recluses or Brahmins, whose mental conduct is impure,<sup>22</sup> or whose livelihood is impure, and who withdraw into secluded dwellings and solitary places, even though they practice like this, yet [their practice] is not genuine, [as] they are filled with all [kinds] of evil and unwholesome

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with impure bodily conduct, without referring to the vanity of such efforts and the lack of genuineness of such practice.

<sup>21</sup> Instead of highlighting the Buddha’s role as a leader among arahants of pure bodily conduct, MN 4 at MN I 17,17 points out that the Buddha is one among noble ones of pure bodily conduct (who withdraw into seclusion), *ye hi vo ariyā parisuddhakāyakkammantā ... tesam abhaṃ aññatamo* (B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup>: *aññataro*).

<sup>22</sup> While in the present passage EĀ 31.1 at T II 665c11 only mentions mental conduct, its subsequent exposition also covers verbal conduct (the counterpart to the present passage in MN 4 at MN I 17,23 already refers to impurity of verbal conduct, *aparisuddhavacīkammanta*). Such irregularities are a common feature of *Ekottarika-āgama* discourses, evident right away in the next line of EĀ 31.1 at T II 665c12, where the earlier mentioned fear as a consequence of resorting to seclusion with impure conduct is no longer found (though fear would be implicit in the general reference to “evil and unwholesome states”). Zürcher 1991, 288 explains that in early translations in general “there is a strong tendency to avoid the monotonous effect of ... verbatim repetition ... by introducing a certain amount of diversification and irregularity”, as a result of which “in the same translated scripture we often find various alternative forms and longer or shorter versions of the same cliché”.

states. That is not found in me. Thus my bodily, verbal and mental conduct, as well as my livelihood, are pure now. Whatever recluses or Brahmins,<sup>23</sup> who have bodily, verbal and mental purity, as well as purity of livelihood, they delight in staying in seclusion and in dwelling with purity in [solitary] places. That is the case with me. Thus I now have purity of bodily, verbal and mental conduct, as well as purity of livelihood. For whatever arahants that have bodily, verbal and mental purity, as well as purity of livelihood, and who delight in staying in seclusion and in quiet places, I act as a superior leader.’ Like this, Brahmin, given that I have bodily, verbal and mental purity, as well as purity of livelihood, when staying in seclusion and in quiet places I [experience] increasing joy.

14.<sup>24</sup> At the time [when I was still a bodhisattva], I then had the following reflection: ‘[Some] so-called recluses or Brahmins are much affected by fear and dread. [When] they stay in seclusion and in quiet places, at that time they then [experience] fear and dread, evil and unwholesome states. But I now am never affected by fear when staying in solitary seclusion and quiet places.’ [Whereas some] so-called recluses or Brahmins have a mind [filled with] fear and dread [when] staying in secluded and quiet places,<sup>25</sup> in me that is not found. Thus I now never have fear and dread. I enjoy staying in secluded and quiet places. Whatever fear and dread [may arise] in the mind while staying

<sup>23</sup> Adopting a variant that adds 諸 before 有.

<sup>24</sup> MN 4 at MN I 17,32 (§§ 8-12 in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005, 103) lists mental obstructions corresponding to the five hindrances as causes for the arising of fear when withdrawing into seclusion, with *abhijjhālu kāmesu tibbasārāga* as first, *uddhata avūpasantacitta* (C°: *avūpasanta*°) as fourth and *kañkhī vecikicchī* (B° and S°: *vicikicchī*) as fifth, thus not employing the standard terms used in enumerations of the five hindrances. These five mental obstructions are without a counterpart in EĀ 31.1. Next MN 4 at MN I 19,3 (§ 13 in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005, 103) refers to self-praise, mentioned in EĀ 31.1 at T II 665c28 after fear (§ 14).

<sup>25</sup> Adopting the variant 者 instead of 謂.

in secluded dwellings, that is not found in me.<sup>26</sup> Thus I am already free from such suffering and misery,<sup>27</sup> no longer being affected in the same way [as those recluses and Brahmins]. Like this, Brahmin, having seen this benefit of being without fear, I [experience] increasing joy.

13. Any recluses or Brahmins who denigrate others and [unduly] exalt themselves, even though they stay in secluded dwellings and [solitary] places, yet they have impure perceptions.<sup>28</sup> But I, Brahmin, do not denigrate others [666a], nor do I [unduly] exalt myself. Any [undue] self-exaltation or denigration of others is not found in me. Thus, because I am now without arrogance, I act as a superior leader for noble beings who are without arrogance. Having seen this benefit, I [experience] increasing joy.

15. Any recluses [and Brahmins], who seek for material benefits, cannot bring themselves to rest.<sup>29</sup> But I now am without any seeking for material benefits. Thus I am one without seeking now, who is contented on his own.<sup>30</sup> For those who are contented on their own, I act as a superior leader. Having seen this benefit, I [experience] increasing joy.

<sup>26</sup> Adopting a variant that adds 有 after 我.

<sup>27</sup> Adopting the variant 已 instead of 以.

<sup>28</sup> MN 4 at MN I 19,5 does not refer to impure perceptions, instead of which it mentions – as is the case throughout its exposition – the problem of unwholesome fear and dread.

<sup>29</sup> MN 4 at MN I 19,21 does not draw out the repercussions of being desirous of material gains (or of honour and fame, also mentioned in MN 4). The commentary on the present passage, Ps I 117,5, records an entertaining story of a monk who went to stay in a cemetery so as to become known as an undertaker of ascetic practices and thereby acquire material gains (dwelling in a cemetery, described in detail in Vism 76,15, occurs in different listings of ascetic practices, for surveys of such listings cf. Bapat 1937, Dantinne 1991, 24-30 and Ray 1994, 293-323). After it had become dark, a ruminating ox so frightened him that he spent the whole night without getting any rest, a tale thus illustrating the theme of lack of rest also mentioned in EĀ 31.1.

<sup>30</sup> Adopting the variant 自 instead of 同.

16. Any recluses or Brahmins, whose minds are lazy, will not be energetic [when] frequenting secluded and quiet places. That is not found in me. Thus I now have a mind full of vigour. Therefore among noble ones who are not lazy, who have a mind full of vigour, I act as a superior leader. Having seen this benefit in myself, I [experience] increasing joy.

17. At the time [when I was still a bodhisattva], I moreover had the following reflection: ‘Any recluses or Brahmins who are often forgetful and who dwell in secluded places,<sup>31</sup> even though they practice like this, yet, they will be possessed of evil and unwholesome states. But I now am free from forgetfulness. Again, Brahmin, to be one who is forgetful, that is not found in me. For those noble ones who are not forgetful, I act as a superior leader.’ Having now seen this benefit, I [experience] increasing joy when staying in secluded dwelling places.

18. At the time [when I was still a bodhisattva], I moreover had the following reflection: ‘Any recluses or Brahmins whose mind is scattered and not concentrated, they will then be possessed of evil and unwholesome states and take part in evil practices. But my mind now is totally free from being scattered, [I] am constantly with a one-pointed mind. Any scattered mind and lack of concentration is not found in me. Thus I have constantly a one-pointed mind. For noble ones with unified and concentrated mind, I act as a superior leader.’ Having now seen this benefit,<sup>32</sup> if I dwell in secluded quiet places I [experience] increasing joy.

19. At the time [when I was still a bodhisattva] I moreover had the following reflection: ‘Any recluses or Brahmins who are ignorant and dull, like a herd of sheep,<sup>33</sup> those men will then be possessed of evil and unwholesome states. That is not found in

<sup>31</sup> MN 4 at MN I 20,1 mentions being “forgetful”, *mutṭhassati*, and “without clear comprehension”, *asampajāna*.

<sup>32</sup> Adopting a variant that adds 義 after 此.

<sup>33</sup> The comparison with a herd of sheep is not found in MN 4.

me. I now am constantly endowed with wisdom, I have no ignorance. Staying in secluded dwellings and being endowed with conduct like this, that is found in me. I now have accomplished wisdom. For those noble beings who have accomplished wisdom, I act as a superior leader.’ Having now seen this benefit, if I stay in secluded dwellings I [experience] increasing joy.

20. While I was staying in secluded dwellings,<sup>34</sup> if the branch of a tree broke, [or] a bird or an animal ran by, at that time I had the following thought: ‘This is [what causes] great fear in a forest’ [666b]. Then again I had the following thought: ‘If fear comes, I should seek a means to prevent it coming again.’

If fear and dread came while I was walking, then at that time I did not sit or lie down, determining to discard that fear and dread, and [only] afterwards sitting down. Suppose fear and dread came when I was standing, then at that time I did not walk or sit down, determining to discard that fear and dread, and [only] afterwards sitting down. If fear and dread came at the time when I was sitting, [then] I did not walk, determining to discard that fear and dread, and [only] afterwards walking.<sup>35</sup> If fear and dread came when I was lying down, then at that time I did not walk or even sit up, determining to discard that fear and dread,<sup>36</sup> and [only] afterwards sitting up.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> MN 4 at MN I 20,27 speaks of going on purpose to *cetiya*s on auspicious nights (on which cf. Dietz 1997) in order to experience fear. According to von Simson 1995, 172, “the powers of nature and the sacredness of place and time are as unimportant in the Buddhist doctrine as are the year myths and fertility rites”. Thus this specification in MN 4 strikes an unfamiliar note (though it needs to be kept in mind that it refers to the Buddha’s pre-awakening experiences). In contrast, the presentation in EĀ 31.1 at T II 666a28 is quite straightforward and suffices for the continuity of the discourse, in that the arising of fear caused by the noise of animals may happen at any secluded place, without needing to seek for it on specific nights at specific places.

<sup>35</sup> Adopting the variant 行 instead of 坐.

<sup>36</sup> Adopting a variant without 使.

<sup>37</sup> Adopting the variant 坐 instead of 臥.

21. Brahmin, you should know: Whatever recluses and Brahmins who throughout day and night do not understand the path of the Dharma, I now declare that those men are thoroughly deluded.<sup>38</sup> But I, Brahmin, throughout day and night understand the path of the Dharma, having an energetic mind that is not deceived.

22-23. With a mind that is not scattered, with a constantly one-pointed mind, free from perceptions of sensual desire, with [directed] awareness and [continuous] observation, remaining with mindfulness and rapture,<sup>39</sup> being happy,<sup>40</sup> I dwelled in the first absorption. This, Brahmin, is reckoned the first [higher state of] mind that for me constitutes a condition of happiness here and now.<sup>41</sup>

24. Discarding [directed] awareness and [continuous] observation, with internal joy and rapture, with a one-pointed mind that is free from [directed] awareness and observation, concentrated, mindful and rapturous,<sup>42</sup> I dwelled in the second absorption. This, Brahmin, is reckoned the second [higher state of] mind that leads to obtaining happiness here and now.

<sup>38</sup> MN 4 at MN I 21,20 instead speaks of recluses and Brahmins who mistake night for day and day for night (cf. also SHT IV 32 folio 37 V2 in Sander 1980, 131), for a discussion of this difference cf. Anālayo 2005, 2-3.

<sup>39</sup> Adopting the variant 待 instead of 持.

<sup>40</sup> MN 4 at MN I 21,35 qualifies the happiness and rapture experienced with the first absorption as “born of seclusion”, *vivekaja*.

<sup>41</sup> This specification, which relates the development of absorption to the recurrent theme of dwelling in joy (as a result of withdrawing into seclusion), is without a counterpart in MN 4. A recurrent reference in the Sanskrit fragments to *sparsāvihāra* suggests that the Sanskrit version had a specification similar to EĀ 31.1, cf. SHT IV 165 folio 15 V8 and R1 in Sander 1980, 190 and SHT IX 2401 Vd in Bechert 2004, 195.

<sup>42</sup> MN 4 at MN I 21,ult. qualifies the second absorption as a mental condition of “inner confidence/serenity”, *ajjhatta sampasāda*.

25. Seeing and knowing within myself the absence of any desirous attention, aware of bodily pleasure, as is wished by noble ones,<sup>43</sup> guarding mindfulness and happiness, I dwelled in the third absorption. This, Brahmin, is reckoned the third [higher state of] mind [that leads to obtaining happiness here and now].

26. Again, having left behind pleasure and pain, being without any delight or sadness, free from pleasure and pain, guarding mindfulness and purity, I dwelled in the fourth absorption. This is reckoned, Brahmin, the fourth higher [state of] mind, with awareness and knowledge proceeding on their own in accordance with the mind.<sup>44</sup>

27. Then, while staying in a secluded dwelling and being in the possession of these four higher [states of] mind, with this concentrated mind, flawlessly pure, free from fettering influences, having obtained fearlessness, I cognised my former lives during countless aeons. At that time I recollected my former lives: One birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, aeons of arising and dissolution, in all their details, [recollecting that]: ‘I formerly arose there, with such a given name, such a family name, partaking of food like this, experiencing pleasure and pain like this, passing away from there I was reborn here, dying here I was reborn there’ – from beginning to end I completely understood the causes and conditions.<sup>45</sup>

28. Brahmin, you should know that during the first period of the night I attained this first [higher] knowledge [666c], dis-

<sup>43</sup> According to MN 4 at MN I 22,4, noble ones describe this state as a dwelling in happiness with mindfulness and equanimity.

<sup>44</sup> This sentence is without a counterpart in MN 4.

<sup>45</sup> A reference to causes and conditions is not found in MN 4. According to the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1977, 118,11, the pre-awakening knowledge of recollecting his past lives indeed stimulated the future Buddha’s investigation of the causes underlying the process of rebirth.



carding ignorance and no longer [being subject] to obscurity, with a mind that delights in dwelling in seclusion and that knows and is aware on its own.<sup>46</sup>

29. Again, relying on this concentrated mind, with its flawlessness and freedom from fettering influences, a mind that is rightly concentrated and has obtained fearlessness, [I] moreover came to know the arising and passing away of beings. With the divine eye I moreover saw beings of various types being born and passing away, of pleasant or unpleasant appearance, with good or bad destinies, good-looking or ugly, in accordance with their wholesome or evil conduct, I thoroughly knew them all in detail [thus]: Whatever living beings have undertaken evil bodily, verbal or mental conduct, have slandered noble ones and been continuously of wrong view, partaking [in conduct] that accords with wrong view, with the destruction of the body at death they are reborn in hell. Whatever living beings have undertaken wholesome bodily, verbal or mental conduct, who have not slandered noble ones and continuously been of right view, partaking [in conduct] that accords with right view, with the destruction of the body at death they are reborn in a higher heavenly realm. Thus with the divine eye that is flawless and purified I saw beings of various types being born and passing away, of pleasant or unpleasant appearance, with good or bad destinies, being good-looking or ugly, in accordance with their former conduct, I knew them all thoroughly.

30. Brahmin, you should know that during the middle period of the night I attained this second [higher] knowledge, no longer [being subject] to obscurity, with a mind that delights in secluded dwellings and that knows and is aware on its own.

31. Again, relying on this concentrated mind, with its flawless purity and freedom from fettering influences, a state of mind

<sup>46</sup> This specification, which relates each of the higher knowledges to the main theme of joyfully dwelling in seclusion, is without a counterpart in MN 4.

that has reached concentration and has obtained fearlessness, I attained the destruction of the mental influxes. I knew *dukkha* as it really is, not falsely.<sup>47</sup>

32. Then, at that time, when I attained this type of mental condition, the mind attained liberation from the influx of sensuality, from the influx of existence and from the influx of ignorance. By attaining liberation I attained knowledge of liberation, knowing as it really is that: ‘Birth and death have been destroyed, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there will be no more coming to [any] womb.’

33. This, Brahmin, is reckoned the third [higher] knowledge that I attained in the last period of the night, no longer [being subject] to obscuration.

34. How is it, Brahmin, do you have this type of thought: ‘The Tathāgata [still] has sensuality, ill-will and ignorance in his mind? Without having eradicated these he stays in secluded dwelling places?’ Brahmin, you should not see it like this. Thus the Tathāgata now has discarded all influxes forever, he continually delights in secluded dwellings and not in the company of men. Because I have now seen two benefits,<sup>48</sup> I delight in secluded dwellings and [solitary] places. What two? Dwelling in secluded places [provides a suitable] way of living for myself

<sup>47</sup> EĀ 31.1 at T II 666c16: 知此苦如實不虛, whereas MN 4 at MN I 23,14 applies the full scheme of the four noble truths to *dukkha* and to the influxes (*āsava*). Nakamura 2000, 211 holds that the lack of a reference to the four noble truths indicates that their occurrence in MN 4 “must be a later addition”. In view of the centrality in the early teachings of the scheme of the four noble truths this seems less probable (on the epithet “noble” in this context cf. Norman 1984, Norman 1990/1993 and Anālayo 2006). A more plausible explanation would be to assume that the passage in EĀ 31.1 is an abbreviation of the full statement and thus has only preserved the first part corresponding to *idaṃ dukkhan’ti yathābhūtaṃ abbhāññāsim*.

<sup>48</sup> Adopting a variant that adds 二 after 此.

and at the same time [serves] to deliver incalculable [numbers of] sentient beings.”<sup>49</sup>

35. At that time, the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi said to the Buddha: “Out of compassion for living beings you [are willing to] deliver them all.”<sup>50</sup> The Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi further said to the Buddha: “Enough, Blessed One, enough, what has been said suffices, just as if something crooked had been straightened up,<sup>51</sup> [as if] someone who had gone astray had found the [right] path, [as if] a blind person had obtained eyes,<sup>52</sup> as if seeing a light in the darkness, like this the recluse Gotama has taught the Dharma with innumerable expedient means [667a]. I now go for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma and the community, and from now on take on myself to observe the five precepts of no more killing beings [etc.], having become a lay disciple.”<sup>53</sup>

At that time the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi, having heard what the Buddha said, was delighted and received it respectfully.

<sup>49</sup> See above note 10.

<sup>50</sup> A reference to delivering all beings is not found in MN 4.

<sup>51</sup> Adopting the variant 伸 instead of 申.

<sup>52</sup> The image of a blind person regaining eye-sight is not found in MN 4.

<sup>53</sup> MN 4 at MN I 24,7 also reports that he took refuge, though notably SHT IV 32 folio 41 R3-4 in Sander 1980, 134 gives the impression as if the Sanskrit version did not record his taking of refuge (in fact the editors *ibid.* remark that “damit endet, abweichend vom Pāli, wo Jāṇussoṇi Laienanhänger wird, das Bhayabhairavasūtra”). A number of other Pāli discourses also report that the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi took refuge, cf. MN 27 at MN I 184,16; SN 12.47 at SN II 77,1; AN 2.2.7 at AN I 57,15; AN 3.55 at AN I 159,21; AN 3.59 at AN I 168,7; AN 4.184 at AN II 176,5; AN 6.52 at AN III 364,3; AN 7.47 at AN IV 56,18; AN 10.119 at AN V 236,1; AN 10.167 at AN V 251,24; and AN 10.177 at AN V 273,13. Tsuchida 1991, 77 comments that this “warns us against using the canonical narratives as ... historical sources without due critical considerations”.

## Comparison

From the perspective of the main theme of the *Bhayabherava-sutta* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel, a noteworthy difference can be found in the respective introductory sections.<sup>54</sup> Though the parallel versions agree on the two main points made by the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi, they differ on the sequence in which he presents them.

According to the *Bhayabherava-sutta*, Jāṇussoṇi begins by referring to the Buddha's role as a guide for his disciples, after which the Brahmin takes up the topic of the difficulties when living in seclusion. On reading the Pāli account, these two points appear like two separate ideas.

In the *Ekottarika-āgama* account, however, Jāṇussoṇi first turns to the difficulties of living in seclusion and then proceeds to the Buddha's role in providing guidance and encouragement to his disciples. In reply, the Buddha then explains that it is precisely due to seeing his secluded lifestyle that his disciples get inspired to resort to secluded dwellings themselves. In this way, in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version a relationship between the two statements emerges: The disciples face the difficulties of living in seclusion because they are inspired by the example set for them by the Buddha.<sup>55</sup>

The perspective that the *Ekottarika-āgama* version provides in this way suits the remainder of both discourses well, where the autobiographical account of the Buddha's own practice of seclusion and consequent attainment of absorption and libera-

<sup>54</sup> Lack of space does not allow a more detailed study of differences between the two versions, some of which will be examined in my forthcoming comparative study of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, scheduled for publication in 2011.

<sup>55</sup> That fear was indeed considered a problem can be deduced from the *Ākaṅkheyya-sutta* and its parallels, where absence of fear occurs among a range of wishes a monk might have, MN 6 at MN I 33,26, AN 10.71 at AN V 132,17 and MĀ 105 at T I 596a3.

tion fills out in detail what makes him a guide and inspiration for his disciples.

Another difference germane to the same theme occurs in relation to the contrast made in both versions between recluses or Brahmins who retire into seclusion without having established the required level of purity, compared to the Buddha's way of dwelling in solitude. While the *Bhayabherava-sutta* keeps reiterating that lack of purity or the presence of mental defilements will result in the experience of unwholesome fear and dread, the *Ekottarika-āgama* version is less consistent in this respect. Here the Pāli version brings out a central theme with more clarity, namely the fearfulness of seclusion.<sup>56</sup>

Yet another difference can be found in relation to the Buddha's attainment of the four absorptions, which the *Ekottarika-āgama* version presents as his experience of happiness here and now, thus linking them more closely to the main theme of the joy that can result from dwelling in seclusion.<sup>57</sup> The same difference recurs in relation to the three higher knowledges, where the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse again makes a point of indicating that their attainment comes about in a mind that has reached fearlessness and that delights in dwelling in seclusion.<sup>58</sup>

Keeping in mind the complementary perspectives provided by the parallel versions in each of these instances helps to get a clearer grasp of the central message of the discourse. Following the *Ekottarika-āgama* version's introductory account, the topic the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi had on his mind would have been the fearfulness of dwelling in seclusion. The continuity of the discourse then reveals the Buddha's role as a source of guidance

<sup>56</sup> To appreciate the significance of this topic, it needs to be kept in mind that from an ancient Indian perspective – as reflected in early Buddhist texts – nature is often seen as dangerous and threatening, cf. Boucher 2008, 54 and Schmithausen 1991, 29 and 1997, 24.

<sup>57</sup> See above note 41.

<sup>58</sup> See above note 46.

that inspires his disciples to brave this fearful condition,<sup>59</sup> a role taken up again at the end of both versions, when the Buddha points out that one of the two reasons for his secluded lifestyle is to provide an example to be emulated.

Another factor that counters fear – treated in detail in both versions – is purity of conduct,<sup>60</sup> together with purity of the mind by overcoming a whole host of mental defilements.<sup>61</sup> The basic point made in this way is that fear often can be a reflection of the condition of one's own mind. Where the presence of defilements or even of misconduct will naturally evoke fear on any possible occasion, to the degree to which purification has

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<sup>59</sup> The role of recollecting the Buddha as a source of fearlessness is also prominent in the *Dhajagga-sutta* and its parallels: SN 11.3 at SN I 219,27; SĀ 980 at T II 254c19; SĀ 981 at T II 255a26; EĀ 24.1 at T II 615a17; for Sanskrit parallels cf. Waldschmidt 1932, 47, Waldschmidt 1959/1967, 379, Sander 1987, 137, SHT VII 1687A in Bechert 1995, 96; Wille 2006, 118; for Tibetan parallels cf. Skilling 1994, 268,7 and 292,1, for parallels found as *sūtra* quotations cf. the survey in Skilling 1997, 403f. Harrison 1992/1993, 218 comments that the *Dhajagga-sutta* shows that “as a specific remedy against fear when meditating in wild and solitary places ... the practice of *buddhānussati* must have assumed quite early on the nature of an apotropaic technique”.

<sup>60</sup> The importance of a foundation in proper conduct for being able to dwell in seclusion is highlighted in the *Bhaddāli-sutta* and its parallel, MN 65 at MN I 440,17 and MĀ 194 at T I 747c6.

<sup>61</sup> For a survey of these cf. Weerasinghe 1997, 615f. Though this does indicate the need for a certain degree of maturity in order to be able to withdraw into seclusion (cf. also AN 10.99 at AN V 202,4 and Ud 4.1 at Ud 35,18), it is noteworthy that in AN 5.114 at AN III 138,27 already new monks (*nava acirapabbajita*) are encouraged to withdraw into seclusion in forests. In fact Vin I 92,22 makes 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. Thus the need for some degree of maturity before withdrawing into seclusion does not appear to imply that dwelling in seclusion is only meant for the few whose task has nearly been completed.

been undertaken, fear will be less prone to manifest. A mind at peace within, resting in ethical blamelessness and the removal of mental defilements, will find joy instead of fear in solitude.

Besides internal factors, however, external factors can also cause the arising of fear. In such a case, both versions recommend facing fear as and when it occurs. The two discourses make it clear that this requires remaining in whatever posture one is when fear arises. Thus, instead of reacting to what has caused the fear, one faces the mental condition of fear itself. This brings into play a key factor of mindfulness practice described in similar ways in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its *Madhyama-āgama* counterpart, where the task of mindfulness is to remain aware of the presence of a defilement or hindrance in the mind.<sup>62</sup>

By in this way facing fear when it arises and continuing to purify the mind, the joy of seclusion will eventually culminate in the intense forms of happiness and bliss to be experienced through the absorptions and the supreme happiness of liberation. In this way, the *Bhayaabherava-sutta* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel throw into relief the importance of living in seclusion and facing fear as essential ingredients of the path to awakening.

“Having savoured the taste of seclusion,  
The taste of [inner] peace,  
[One] is free from anxiety and evil,  
Savouring the joyful taste of the Dharma.”<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> MN 10 at MN I 60,11 (= DN 22 at DN II 300,10) and MĀ 98 at T I 584a24. Another parallel, EĀ 12.1 at T II 568a9, merely lists the five hindrances without giving detailed instructions. For a study of these discourses cf. Kuan 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Dhṛ 205 (cf. also Sn 257): *paṇivekarasaṃ pītvā* (B<sup>c</sup>: *pitvā*), *rasaṃ upasamassa ca, niddaro hoti nippāpo, dhammapīṭirasaṃ pivaṃ* (C<sup>c</sup>: *pibaṃ*), which has a counterpart in *Udāna(-varga)* verse 28.5 in Bernhard 1965, 355: *pravivekarasaṃ jñātvā, rasaṃ copasamasya vai, nirjvaro bhavati niṣpāpo, dharmapīṭirasaṃ piban*, trsl. in Hahn 2007,

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101 as “hat er den Geschmack der Abgeschiedenheit gekostet und kennt er den Geschmack der Abgeklärtheit, wird fieberfrei, wer ohne Bosheit ist, wenn er den Saft der Freude an der Lehre trinkt”. The Chinese parallels in T 212 at T IV 742c10 and T 213 at T IV 792a25 read: 解知念待味, 思惟休息義, 無熱無飢想, 當服於法味, trsl. in Willemen 1978, 125 as “when one has realized the flavour of seclusion, and reflects on the meaningfulness of calmness, when one has no fever, no notion of hunger, he will drink the flavour of the law”. The Tibetan parallel in Beckh 1911, 98 or Zongtse 1990, 288 reads: *legs par nyer zhi'i ro dang ni, rab tu dben pa'i ro shes pa, rims nad med cing sdig med la, chos la dga' ba'i ro dag 'thung*; trsl. in Rockhill 1883/1975, 133 as “he (the elect) knows the sweetness of perfect peace, the sweetness of solitude; free from disease, without sin, he drinks the sweetness of delighting in the law” (similarly trsl. in Iyer 1986, 331); while Sparham 1983/1986, 140 renders the same as “tasting the excellent flavour, of peace and complete detachment, plagues and evil are no more: the taste of liking dharma is imbibed”.



## Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
B <sup>e</sup>	Burmese edition
C <sup>e</sup>	Ceylonese edition
CBETA	Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
E <sup>e</sup>	PTS edition
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
S <sup>e</sup>	Siamese edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ <sup>2</sup>	‘other’ <i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
SHT	Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
T	Taishō (CBETA)
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>

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