The Essence of Ethic in Practice of Bodily Seclusion (Kāyaviveka): A Buddhist Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Although there have been several traditional interpretations to the notion of bodily seclusion (kāyaviveka) in original sources, research on the notion of physical solitude from Buddhist ethical perspective lacks a detailed study of the subject. A common view of a lone dweller is to find a suitable place for spiritual practice where nothing is physically disturbing the practitioners. It is temporarily or occasionally practices of live alone in order to focus on an appearance of the natural of reality. However, the practice of bodily seclusion (kāyaviveka) with the absent of ethic can have challenges in Buddhist spiritual practice. It is found that early Buddhist discourses report the three processes of mental training, namely, Sila, Samadhi, and panna. The Sila is considered fundamental prerequisite or the first phase of Dhamma practice. The objective of this paper is to explore the challenges in practice of bodily seclusion, looking at how it connects to the nature of Buddhist ethics in the context of withdrawing from desirable things and entering to secluded dwelling. This paper argues that the only practice of bodily seclusion is insufficient if a practitioner ignores the purification of morality which required in the practice of physical seclusion in order to achieve spiritual seclusion. The current study is qualitative research. Collecting data and data analysis regarding the relevant context was from Theravada texts, Pali Canon and its commentaries, and sub-commentaries.

Keywords: Bodily Seclusion, Buddhism Ethic, Kāyaviveka, Seclusion INTRODUCTION

The present discussion is predominantly logical in that it seeks to understand what it means to be bodily seclusion and how it serves as a state of condition concerning the appearance of spiritual quality, as it is applied today, tracing in an attitude of the early Theravada tradition toward the procedure of the practice of bodily seclusion. It is appropriate for individuals who delight in renunciation (Uda-a, 231; Masefield 1995, 588). The Buddhist practice of physical solitude, as a liberation-seeker, a solitary person who has no desire delights in an isolated place and finds the beauty of solitary life in the forest, should date back to the early phases of the Buddha's reign, the earliest period of the commencement of the Buddhist monasticism during the time of the Buddha. To become a detached person, choosing a suitable place for meditation and living alone by withdrawing from external factors can be considered the most discussed fact that has been occurring in several Buddhist literatures (S II 282). It is rationally and possibly a prerequisite that one enters a secluded life with good morality for arising spirituality (Wijayaratne 1990, 116). While we examine the early Buddhist discourses, what we find is there were substantial figures, recorded concrete illustrations, of the bodily seclusion practice as the spiritual seekers were entering the forest or the Buddhist monastic community.

A discourse of Majjhima Nikāya (M I, 17-24) reports that ethic and solitude practice always go together, with the absent of ethic the physical withdrawal can yield spiritual solitude. The Pavelka-sutta (A I, 240) states that the one who is living in a moral life and separated from immorality. Here it is demonstrated by the Buddha in the Udumbarikasīhanāda-sutta that, if the physical withdrawal (kāyaviveka) is not connected to the development of moral virtues and insight through meditation, a solitary person who clings to solitude could become boastful, irresponsible, seeking attention, and dishonest (D III, 36). Another facet of the same issue regarding to being alone can be found in the Bhaddāli-sutta of Majjhima-nikāya (M I, 438).

In certainty, the seclusion practice without proper planning (if there is a lack of morality) can be highly challenging and may not result in much mental seclusion or peace of mind. It is evident that in the

Bhāyabherava Sutta, where a brahman challenges the Buddha, saying, "Master Gotama, remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest are challenging to endure, seclusion is tough to maintain and enjoying in solitude is hard to do." It shows that if someone goes to a remote forest place with the absence of morality, he evokes unwholesome fear and dread in that solitude.

In emphasizing the coherent evidence of the Buddhist notion of kāyaviveka, the practice of being alone as to a way of life has been undoubtedly recognized in the early Buddhist discourses. In fact, according to the Buddhist historical records, one's choosing a lonely mendicant lifestyle, relinquishing material belongings, and withdrawing from household life or family life were all highly appreciated. In this connection, the Upali-sutta of Anuttara Nikāya (A V, 201) describes that it is not easy for a person living at home to deal with achieving a completely full and pure spiritual life. The Buddhist monastic members, the Buddhist Saṅgha community, were also traditionally grounded in going forth from the household life to homelessness (agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajati) with the purpose of more focusing on spiritual efforts.

The objective of this paper was to investigate the challenges in practice of bodily seclusion, looking at how it connects to the nature of Buddhist ethics in the context of withdrawing from desirable things and entering to secluded dwelling. This research also provided the practical method of bodily solitude to the practitioner, as applied in early Buddhism and encouraged by the Buddha. In order to accomplish the goal of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the concept of bodily seclusion (kāyaviveka) in Buddhism?
2. What are the ethical aspects of bodily seclusion? Material and Method

The current study is qualitative research. Collecting data and data analysis regarding the relevant context was from Theravada texts. In this regard, to complete the study, Pali Canon, commentaries and sub-commentaries concerning bodily seclusion were analyzed as primary sources. Moreover, in order to cover the study of the present context, the relevant authoritative books, journals, articles, published dissertations, newspapers, and websites were used as secondary sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The central point that we will discuss in this paper is the importance of morality in practice of bodily seclusion within Theravada Buddhism. Traditionally, if we inspect early Buddhist discourses very carefully, we can find that the three aspects of training, namely, Sila, Samadhi and panna are reported as the process of mental training regarding the path leading to nibbana. As Buddhism provides a systematic approach in mental training, the Sila is considered the basic preparation or the beginning stage of Dhamma practice that provides the right conditions for spiritual solitude.

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Ye hi Vo Ariya parisuddhājīvā araññavanapatthāni pantāni senāsanāni paṭisevanti tacamahac aññataro'ti. Etamahaṁ, brāhmaṇa, parisuddhājīvataṁ attain sampassamānoBhaiyya pallomamāpādiṁ araññe vihārāya (M I, 17–24).

I resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest as one of the noble ones with livelihood purified.' Seeing in myself this purity of livelihood, I found great solace in dwelling in the forest (Bodhi 2009).

As the Buddha responded to a brahman with regard to solitary practice, being physically alone can be quite challenging to accomplish it when one's mind is influenced by unwholesome states and negative thoughts or mental hindrances. Evidently, it can be seen that morality and a well-concentrated mind has been regarded as the requisite of the Buddhist spiritual seclusion (Am I,17–24; Altamaha, brahmana, parisuddhakāyakammataṁ attain sampassamāno Bhaiyya pallomamāpādiṁ araññe vihārāya). Hence, with the flavour of solitude, one can taste the essence of peace and free from evil and unaffected by flaws, relishing the sweetness of realistic awareness (Dhp, verse 205; Sn 257; Vadivukarasi pita, rasaṁ upasamassa ca; Niddaro Hoti nippāpo, dhammapītirasaṁ pivaṁ).

Textual Interpretation of Kāyaviveka

The Buddhist notion of kāyaviveka (physical seclusion) carries a deep and profound meaning in the Buddhist tradition, entailing the absence of both material possessions and mental impurities. This means that the idea of being alone is the habit of moving alone, eating, sleeping, etc. As a solitary way of living, the practice of bodily seclusion (kāyaviveka) is non-attachment or detachment. As pointed out in the various discourses, what truly the bodily seclusion here is that it is the absence of alluring sensual objects. Being isolated from sensual objects, one can practice the bodily seclusion by abiding in the forest, cemetery, on top of a hill, and under a tree, such places are mentioned in early Buddhism to be the best place for mental cultivation (Nd I, 26). In this sense, the following details are mentioned in the Methanides:

What is the solitude of the body? Here, a monk abides in solitude when he resorts to a solitary lodging, such as a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a gorge, a mountain cave, a cemetery, a remote forest, the open air, or a heap of straw, abiding in physical solitude. He travels alone, stands alone, sits alone, makes his bed alone, enters the village for alms round alone, returns alone, seats himself in a hidden place alone, does his pacing up and down (for exercise or meditation) alone, and he wanders, dwells, moves about, deports himself, proceeds, protects himself, sustains himself, maintains himself, alone. This is the solitude of the body (Piya Tan 2005).

It is clear from that the Buddha and his followers spent a great deal of time in remote places, such as forests. However, it ought to be mentioned that the pursuit of truth is not limited to forests; in fact, it also exists within each of us and even can be found in the crowded areas. The maintaining real and actual seclusion, which includes both physical and mental seclusion, is important for understanding the nature of reality.

From Buddhist perspective, living simply (kāyaviveka) can result in a great deal of physical isolation when it associates with the spiritual purpose. In this respect, the Pali term "dhungar" can also be understood as a set of necessary preparations for a straightforward way of living, which might include decreasing one's properties, it generally relates to simplicity, or building self-sufficiency. In the Buddhist tradition, dhungar practice is not extreme; rather, it is a simple practice that enables the mind purification, an essential precondition for the growth of concentration. Additionally, it could reduce unnecessary barriers, including an abundance of food, multiple outfits to maintain, the disturbance of populated areas and a wide range of attachments. In order to achieve a high level of physical seclusion, we should practice dharana which is defined in early Buddhism as carefully and gently adhering to Sila (moral teachings), and then nothing is physically bothering us. Clearly, there is no fear of material possessions when life is simple (Asanga 2020). Thus, as previously mentioned, bodily seclusion (kāyaviveka) is defined as leading a simple life that leads to mental solitude.

METHOD FOR PRACTICE OF BODILY SECLUSION

The Buddha's advice related to the matter of how to practice physical seclusion (kāyaviveka) successfully by putting it into a deep and profound practice in Buddhism has been valued and used in relation to mental

training based on the purity of morality to isolate from attachment. A common view of a lone dweller, as described various Buddhist discourses, is to find a suitable place for spiritual practice where nothing is physically disturbing the practitioners. It is temporarily or occasionally a practice of moving alone in order to focus on an appearance of the natural of reality. However, the practice of bodily seclusion (kāyaviveka) as Buddhist way of a lone dweller, according early Buddhist discourses, represents as the path to non-attachment or detachment, since a practitioner encourages it in morally right ways. Collins said that although bodily being alone was acceptable, it was by no means a regular condition (Collins 1988, 107). As has been heighted in the numerous Buddhist discourses, what the practice of bodily seclusion here actually refers to is the absence of alluring sensual objects. As to finding real solitude, The Buddha says to Ananda that he has found a method to live among the people: However, Ananda, there is this abiding discovered by the Tathagatas: to enter and abide in voidness by giving not attention to all signs. If, while the Tathagatas is abiding thus, he is visited by bhikkhus or bhikkhunīs, by men and women lay followers…, he invariably talks to them in a way concerned with dismissing them (uyyojaniya) (M II, 111; Bodhi, 2009).

Early Buddhist discourses provide the basic instruction in the practice of a lone dweller that one who delights in the bodily seclusion can choose by abiding in the forest, cemetery, on top of a hill, and under a tree for mental cultivation (Nd I, 26). In the Buddhist sense, there are two kinds of lifestyle such as living in the forest and studying Dhamma and choosing forest lifestyle for meditation is a part of both lifestyles, according to Lance Cousins (2009, 44). The Buddhist practice of a lone dweller is actually a method for relaxing the mind-body and for achievement on a deeper understanding of who we are and the world around us, endorsing for inner peace and self-awareness. The point described in this way should be understood that the Buddhist practice of *kāyaviveka* functions as the precursor to development of inner peace with the need of provided an ethical foundation and has long been acknowledged as a valuable practice.

Furthermore, in the Dutiyaaññatarabhikkhu-sutta of Saṁyutta Nikāya (III, 37) where the Buddha has described the crucial requisites of an alone dweller after a certain monk requested that if the Buddha would give him a particular way of practice in staying alone, he, as a lone dweller, might practice meditation. In this sutta, the Buddha' advice to that certain monk is to relinquish clinging to something and embrace on the Dhamma he taught as an alone dweller with the aim of renouncing latent tendency (anusaya) towards something (An IV, 9). While choosing a secluded lifestyle was praised by the Buddha, organizing in community was the Buddha's natural inclination Wijayaratne (1990, 111). In fact, Buddhism considers the equilibrium of internal silence (Horner 1936, 148).

A similar example related an issue on the practice of a lone dweller can be seen in the Daraga-sutta of Samyukta-nikāya (S I, 472). In this discourse, the advice given by the Buddha to those who live in the secluded areas is that if monks staying in such places might face dreadful, unpleasant emotion and thought worried by something dangerous, should recollect the supreme qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma revealed by the Buddha, and the Sangha who follow the path taught by the Buddha, and then these kinds of negative thoughts will be disappeared. As to the advice given by the Buddha, we should understand what behind the Buddha's advice about how to deal with issue connected with the practice of a lone dweller in Buddhism was clearly focused on spiritual seclusion instead of physical withdrawing.

Dwelling Alone and Its Challenging in Buddhist Practice

The primary concern to be heighted in this discussion is the challenging in practice of bodily seclusion, looking at how it is connected to the nature of Buddhist ethics in the context of withdrawing from desirable things and entering to secluded dwelling. In analyzing the present context, the relevant sources connected to the challenging of living in an isolated place and how to deal with the facing difficulties of a lone dweller as a solitary person are based on early Buddhist discourses. In Theravada tradition we understand that the teachings of the historical Buddha have only one taste, the taste of liberation (vimutti-rasa) (Asanga 2020, 3), and clearly consider the matter of seclusion from pleasurable objects and finally seclusion of defilements.

Considering the primary purpose of the current discussion, we should now turn to what is actually the practice of living alone and its challenging in Buddhism. The Buddhist way of living alone has been described as groundwork for mental seclusion and accepted as a valuable practice in early Buddhist teachings, yet it has

challenging and struggling for some practitioner in order to gain a real state of spiritual solitude. This can be understood that a spiritual-seeker who entering into secluded place as alone dweller, according to early Buddhist discourses, must need some quality such as ethical preparation served in Buddhist practice as the fundamental aspect of the teachings of the Buddha. As Buddhism understands, the emergence of mental solitude (cittaviveka) does not come from simply living alone. In fact, a secluded mind is achieved by cultivating and developing mental quality, in which the mind is freed from mental hindrances, suggesting that to emerge mental solitude the fundamental teaching of moral purification is needed in physical solitude.

According to the Theranāmaka-sutta of Sanyukta Nikāya, the Buddhist way of solitary life has been described as a way of mindfully living – purposely awareness of body, mind, and living in the present moment in order to create a feeling of calm. It is, as the Buddha has described in the discourse, by leaving behind the past, future and dwelling in the present moment without craving to something (S II, 283). Accordingly, it gives us a clear idea that living in seclusion serves as a foundation for developing mental seclusion. However, the only physical seclusion is insufficient since it neglects the basic stage of morality, which means the Buddhist notion of being alone is associated with a positive sense of spiritual progress.

Further information on staying in seclusion connected to challenging facing a lone dweller can be collected from the Upali-sutta of Aṇguttara-nikāyas. In this discourse Venerable Upali approached to the Buddha and requested for staying in seclusion that his mind was leaning forward living in remote places, a long way from town or city, and the jungle. As to this, the Buddha's reply to Upali shows that entering into remote places and jungle are not what you thought; it can be difficult and challenging to find mental solitude if a practitioner lacks Samadhi and the purity of mind-body. The Pali passages described in the same discourse are as follows:

Durabhisambhavāni hi Kho, Upali, araññavanapatthāni pantāni senāsanāni. Durabhisambhavāni hi Kho durabhisambhavāni Kho Dukkaraṁ pavivekaṁ durabhiramaṁ. Ekatte haranti maññe mano vanāni samādhiṁ alabhamānassa bhikkhuno (A V, 201).

Upali, remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest are challenging. It's hard to maintain seclusion and hard to find joy in it. Staying alone, the forests seem to rob the mind of a mendicant who isn't immersed in Samadhi (Sujata, 2018).

According to the Pali passages described above, the way of solitude practices that early Buddhist discourses look at the appearance of mental solitude (cittaviveka) is not succeeded in simply living alone, although it is highly esteemed in Buddhist religious practice. In fact, the emerging mental solitude is done with cultivating moral actions in body, speech, mind and concentration, in which the mind is freed from mental hindrances, signifying that to be emerged mental solitude in such living alone the basic training of moral cleansing and Samadhi is practically needed in the practice of physical solitude.

The Importance of Morality in Practice of Bodily Seclusion

The central point that will be addressed here is the importance of morality in practice of bodily seclusion within Theravada Buddhism. Traditionally, if we inspect early Buddhist discourses very carefully, we can find that the three aspects of training, namely, Sila, Samadhi and panna are reported as the process of mental training regarding the path leading to nibbana. As Buddhism provides a systematic approach in mental training, the Sila is considered the basic preparation or the beginning stage of Dhamma practice that provides the right conditions for spiritual solitude (A III, 201).

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In certainty, the seclusion practice without proper planning (if there is a lack of morality) can be highly challenging and may not result in much mental seclusion or peace of mind. It is evident that in the Bhāyabherava Sutta, where a brahman challenges the Buddha, saying, "Master Gotama, remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest are challenging to endure, seclusion is tough to maintain and enjoying in solitude is hard to do." It shows that if someone goes to a remote forest place with the absence of morality, he evokes unwholesome fear and dread in that solitude. To this challenge raised by a brahman, the Buddha replies:

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As the Buddha responded to a brahman with regard to solitary practice, being physically alone can be quite challenging to accomplish it when one's mind is influenced by unwholesome states and negative thoughts or mental hindrances. Evidently, it can be seen that morality and a well-concentrated mind has been regarded as the requisite of the Buddhist spiritual seclusion (Am I, 17–24). Hence, with the flavour of solitude, one can taste the essence of peace and free from evil and unaffected by flaws, relishing the sweetness of realistic awareness (Dhp, verse 205; Sn 257).

Physical Solitude Conducive to Mental Solitude

It is obvious that the practice of physical solitude and silence, as already explained, serves as the groundwork for the growth of mental solitude. In this case, what we can understand is that both physical and mental solitude are linked in the scriptures to delight in desire lessness (nekkhamābhirata) (An IV, 224; Bodhi, 2012). Indeed, as a discourse in the Saṃyutta-nikāya reminds out, only the physical solitude is insufficient. In this case, a monk who leads a highly lonely life should also strive for mental isolation by leaving behind the past and future and dwelling in the present without any desires (S II, 283). A set of three similes in the Mahāsaccaka-sutta explores the necessity to combine physical solitude with mental detachment (M I, 240). In this sense, the desire for bodily disengagement from sensuality corresponds to the need to remove the wood from the water. However, just as the wood must be dry, the mind must be free of ideas of pleasure. It is to be said that having physically subjugated without even being psychologically subdued is the difference between someone who lives alone and nevertheless amuses impure ideas (An II, 137).

According to the teachings the Buddha, one should live physically, as well as mentally withdraw to gain knowledge. Such seclusion is frequently mentioned in descriptions of a monk who, after receiving a mysterious instruction from the Buddha, withdraws and lives alone in order to achieve enlightenment (S III, 36). Since one who lives in solitude will know things as they actually are, the Buddha's followers are exhorted to engage in such solitary practice. The Dhamma is said to be realized by the enlightened individually, or each for themselves, which may very well be the circumstance in this (D II, 93). It is mentioned in Dhammapada thus: One, who is free from tension and evil, after tasting the flavors of seclusion and tranquility, enjoys the delightful flavor of the Dhamma (Dhp, 205)

It is to be noted here that isolation from unsavory actions by virtue of behavior is the initial of them. Getting to the appropriate vision follows next, which leads to solitude from the faulty perspective. Isolation from influxes achieved by full emancipation is the third stage of seclusion. An arahant's focus on seclusion is the best way to demonstrate their complete isolation from defilements according to this concept.

The practicing bodily seclusion (kāyaviveka) is the first level of three kinds of seclusion which explicated by the Buddha in his teachings. As the very basis, the Buddha laid special attention on seclusion, for it is the gateway to enlightenment and nibbana. In the early stages of Dhamma practice, physical isolated in a quiet area is crucial for personal practice. In this case, a retreat's protected environment is necessary for concentration states to occur. It is still possible to access the insight that results from the purity the mind. It gives us a clear idea that one of the Buddha's foremost disciples, Sāriputta, says that mental and physical

seclusion are both necessary for enlightenment, and that physical seclusion assisted to foster these circumstances. In fact, as it is noted in a discourse in the Saṃyutta-nikāya, physical solitude alone is insufficient. In accordance with this discourse, a monk who leads a highly solitary life should also strive for mental solitude by letting go of the past and future and being in the present without desire (S II, 283; Atalaya 2010). Ultimately, it is this ability to see things "as they really are" that lies at the heart of seclusion (S III, 15). In this case, Catherine explained seclusion in her discussion of "focused and fearless" with the following remarks:

"Seclusion" does not imply repression or denial; it is not a state of alienation, loneliness, or division. The seclusion that supports a meditation practice is rooted in wisdom and clarity. Knowing what leads to suffering, you wisely choose a path that leads to happiness (Catherine 2008, 13).

Catherine further highlighted that three types of seclusion are mentioned in Buddhist teachings: (1) physical aloneness, which is felt when we withdraw from complicated social dynamics; (2) mental seclusion, which refers to the mind's aloofness while it is immersed in jhana, which signifies a separation from unwholesome states and sensory pleasures; and (3) liberation which is defined as detachment from the causes of suffering. This suggests that conceptual proliferations have been put on hold. The distractions and activities that occupy everyday life can be temporarily separated by physical seclusion, but genuine exterior simplicity entails more than giving up material belongings. It is a procedure that frees the heart from the duties and responsibilities that personality depends on. When we are able to schedule a spiritual retreat, it is crucial to maximize the experience by organizing our daily lives before entering the stillness (Catherine 2008, 13).

When we are truly able to drop our preoccupations with the world, supported by bodily and mental seclusion, then it becomes possible to develop the key insights often described in early Buddhist texts, especially seeing the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and impersonal nature of all conditioned things. Seeing this can potentially lead us to stop chasing these fleeting experiences, to abandon craving and let go of attachments, and perhaps with the right conditions, to discover the peace of liberation or nibbana. On the basis of this, the Buddha's secluded lifestyle seems to be a natural outgrowth of his realization. In fact, his mind was involved in peace and in seclusion (Iti. 31). In this context, what is of crucial importance to remember here is that, as given in many discourses, the path of the crowd is the way of Samsara, this kāyaviveka, such physical seclusion serves as the foundation for the emergence of mental seclusion, or cittaviveka, which is the progressive departure from the Samsara that feeds the outward Samsara. Hence, one can only really encounter the Dhamma in its immediate form in isolation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this research, we have discussed the notion of bodily solitude practice by reviewing the necessary foundations of ethic as a condition for the practical uses of kāyaviveka and how it could be used to advance one's spirituality. The central point that has been discussed in this paper was the practical method of bodily solitude, in which the importance of morality and Samadhi has been used as the basic foundation in order to achieve spiritual solitude. It suggested that for spiritual seclusion one has to do with the keeping of the body and speech steadily in moral virtue. The bodily solitude practice has been considered a vital role in seeking inner awareness, directed to be freed from attachment to attractive sensuous objects. The evidence analyzed above recommended that the bodily seclusion and mental seclusion are interrelated as the way of Buddhist spiritual progress. This paper has been examined the impact of practicing bodily solitude that leads to spiritual stages of ultimate seclusion, the progress of insight knowledge – which is dwelling in dethatched life.

Abbreviations

A Aṅguttaranikāya
Ap The Apadana
D Dīghanikāya
Dhp Dhammapada
It Itivuttaka
M Majjhima Nikāya

Nd Mahāniddesa
Patis Paṭisambhidāmagga
S Saṃyutta Nikāya
Sn Sutta Napata
Thag Thera Gatha
Ud Udana
Vbh The Vibhaṅga
Vin Vinaya Piṭaka
Vism The Visuddhi-magga of Buddhaghosa

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