AN 3.93 — Paviveka Sutta (Seclusion)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

92a. Paviveka Sutta (Seclusion) Bhikkhus, there are these three types of seclusion practiced by the wandering ascetics of other sects. What three?

Seclusion in regards to the robes; seclusion in regards to alms food; and seclusion in regards to dwellings.

a. Here, Bhikkhus, for the wandering ascetics of other sects, seclusion as it relates to robes is seen as having to do with wearing robes made from hemp, from coarse cloth interwoven with hemp, robes made from shrouds that at one time corpses were wrapped and laid in, robes made of tree bark, antelope hide, strips of antelope hide, strips of wood and owls' wings. In addition, they wear robes made of grass, blankets made of head hair, animal hair, and horses' tail. This is the seclusion in regards to robes, as followed by the wandering ascetics of other sects.

b. Next, Bhikkhus, for the wandering ascetics of other sects, seclusion as it relates to alms food is seen as having to do with eating only vegetables and greens, millets, raw rice, a kind of dark rice, a kind of water plant, finely broken rice, rice foam, sesame flour, grass, cow dung, roots and fruits from the forest and whatever is picked from the ground. This is the seclusion in regards to alms food, as followed by the wandering ascetics of other sects.

c. Further, Bhikkhus, for the wandering ascetics of other sects, seclusion as it relates to dwelling is seen as having to do with living only in forests, next the roots of trees, cemeteries, forest paths, open spaces, on a heap of straw, or in a hay stack. This is the seclusion in regards to dwelling, as followed by the wandering ascetics of other sects.

These, therefore, are the three types of seclusion followed by the wandering ascetics of other sects.

But, Bhikkhus, in This Dhamma and Discipline, there are instead these different three seclusions followed by the Bhikkhu.

And what are these three?

a. Here, Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhu lives with virtue, abandons the immoral lifestyle, and thus dwells secluded and free from a non-virtuous or immoral life.

b. The Bhikkhu is one of Right View, as he has abandoned wrong views entirely, and dwells secluded and free from wrong views.

c. The Bhikkhu is one who has destroyed the contaminants (āsavas), who has abandoned the contaminants, and dwells secluded and free from the contaminants.

Now Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu lives with virtue, having abandoned the non-virtuous and immoral lifestyle, and dwells secluded and free from it; when the Bhikkhu is of Right View, having abandoned wrong views entirely, and dwells secluded and free from wrong views; and when the Bhikkhu has destroyed the contaminants, and having abandoned the contaminants, he dwells secluded and free from them; then, he is called the Bhikkhu who has attained the highest, who has reached the very core, and in his purity, he is established in that which is the foremost essential.

Bhikkhus, these are the three seclusions for the Bhikkhus in This Dhamma and Discipline.

Imagine a farmer, Bhikkhus, whose field of rice has ripened successfully, where he would quickly work to harvest his crops by cutting, collecting, and carrying them away into a heap to be threshed. Then, by piling them up, he quickly crushes them, while shaking out the straw and throwing it away, along with its chaff that is allowed to get blown away. And afterwards, he would quickly carry them away to be pounded and then husked, leaving only the pure essence of the grain. In this manner, the farmer is able to attain the core, the foremost of his crops, the pure essence of whatever he has cultivated.

Similarly, Bhikkhus, when the Bhikkhu lives with virtue, having abandoned the non-virtuous and immoral lifestyle, and dwells secluded and free from it; when the Bhikkhu is of Right View, having abandoned wrong views entirely, and dwells secluded and free from wrong views; and when the Bhikkhu has destroyed the contaminants, and having abandoned the contaminants, he dwells secluded and free from them; then, he is called the Bhikkhu who has attained the highest, who has reached the very core, and in his purity, he is established in that which is the foremost essential.