# MN 131 — Bhaddekaratta Sutta: The Discourse on the Ideal Lover of Solitude

English translation by Bhikkhu Ñananananda.

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## Text

Editor's note: An extensive discussion of this sutta may be found in Ideal Solitude: An Exposition on the Bhaddekaratta Sutta by the translator.

Thus have I heard: At one time the Exalted one was living at Saavatthi in the Jeta Grove, Anaathapi.n.dika's monastery. There he addressed the monks thus: "Monks." "Revered one," the monks answered the Exalted One in assent. The Exalted one spoke thus "Monks, I shall preach to you the summary and the exposition of the Ideal Lover of Solitude. Listen and give attention. I shall speak." "Even so, revered sir," the monks answered the Exalted One in assent. The Exalted One said this:

Let one not trace back the past Or yearn for the future-yet-to-come. That which is past is left behind Unattained is the "yet-to-come." But that which is present he discerns — With

insight as and when it comes. The Immovable — the-non-irritable. In that state should the wise one grow Today itself should one bestir Tomorrow death may come — who knows? For no bargain can we strike With Death who has his mighty hosts. But one who dwells thus ardently By day, by night, untiringly Him the Tranquil Sage has called The Ideal Lover of Solitude.

"And how, monks, does one trace back the past? He thinks: 'I was of such form in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of such feeling in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of such perception in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of such formations in the past' and brings delight to bear on them. He thinks: 'I was of such consciousness in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one traces back the past.

"And how, monks, does one not trace back the past? He thinks: 'I was of such form in the past' but brings no delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of such feeling... of such perception... of such formations...'... He thinks: 'I was of such consciousness in the past' but brings no delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one does not trace back the past.

"And how, monks, does one yearn for the future? He thinks: 'I may have such form in the future' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I may have such feeling... such perception... such formations...'... He thinks: 'I may have such consciousness in the future' and brings delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one yearns for the future.

"And how, monks, does one not yearn for the future? He thinks: 'I may have such form in the future' but brings no delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I may have such feeling... such perception... such formations...'... He thinks: 'I may have such consciousness in the future' but brings no delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one does not yearn for the future.

"And how is one drawn into present things? Herein, monks, an uninstructed ordinary man who takes no account of the Noble Ones, is unskilled in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, untrained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, taking no account of the good men, unskilled in the Dhamma of the good men, untrained in the Dhamma of the good men, looks upon form as self, or self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form. He looks upon feeling as self, or self as possessed of feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling. He looks upon perception as self, or self as possessed of perception, or perception as in self, or self as in perception. He looks upon formations as self, or self as possessed of formations, or formations as in self, or self as in formations. He looks upon consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how, monks, one is drawn into present things.

"And how, monks, is one not drawn into present things? Herein, monks, an instructed Noble disciple who takes into account the Noble Ones, skilled in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, trained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, taking into account the good men, skilled in the Dhamma of the good men, trained in the Dhamma of the good men, does not look upon form as self, or self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form. He does not look upon feeling as self... He does not look upon perception as self... He does not

look upon formations as self... He does not look upon consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how, monks, one is not drawn into present things.

Let one not trace back the past Or yearn for the future-yet-to-come. That which is past is left behind Unattained is the "yet-to-come." But that which is present he discerns — With insight as and when it comes. The Immovable — the-non-irritable. In that state should the wise one grow Today itself should one bestir Tomorrow death may come — who knows? For no bargain can we strike With Death who has his mighty hosts. But one who dwells thus ardently By day, by night, untiringly Him the Tranquil Sage has called The Ideal Lover of Solitude.

So it was with reference to this that it was said:  "Monks, I shall preach to you the summary and the exposition of the Ideal Lover of Solitude."

Thus spoke the Exalted One, Delighted, those monks rejoiced in what the Exalted One had said.