

Significance of Mental Detachment: A Study of Cittaviveka in Buddhism

Ashin Candobasa., Prof. Rev. Medagampitiye Wijithadhamma Thero

Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Nugegoda, Western Sri Lanka

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.91100193>

Received: 10 November 2025; Accepted: 20 November 2025; Published: 05 December 2025

ABSTRACT

The Buddhist doctrine of cittaviveka is one of three forms of viveka – bodily solitude (kāyaviveka), mental solitude (cittaviveka) and seclusion from the substrates of existence or attainment of nibbāna (upadhiviveka) – and is found in Theravada texts, in particular, the notion of mental detachment (cittaviveka) is explicitly described in the Mahā-niddeśa. Among these, cittaviveka is an essential attribute of Buddhist spiritual path represented a stage of inner detachment, in which the mind becomes secluded from obstacles and defilements. Despite previous scholars offered the Buddhist concept of cittaviveka from Buddhist perspective, the Mahā-niddeśa and the Paṭisambhidāmagga viewpoints have received less attention on it. It still remains challenging to clarify about specific levels of mental detachment. For instance, the Atthasālinī (the commentary of Dhammasaṅgaṇī) and the Visuddhimagga cannot provide the satisfied answer to what levels of mental detachment are achieved through it without help of the Mahā-niddeśa and the Paṭisambhidāmagga. The research problem should be based on the following questions: What does cittaviveka truly signify in early Buddhist teachings, and what levels of mental detachment are achieved through it? Therefore, the aim of this paper is to give the reader a clearer answer and more critical analysis of cittaviveka, looking at different levels of mental detachment with special reference to the Mahā-niddeśa and the Paṭisambhidāmagga. The analysis revealed three main spiritual transformative processes: solitude through displacement (tadaṅgaviveka), the temporary suppression of obstacles, the state of absorptions or jhānas (vikkhambhanaviveka) and permanent uprooting of defilements (samucchedaviveka). The method adopted is a textual analysis of Theravāda Pāli sources, including commentarial literatures and related works done by scholars were also incorporated to grasp the actual meaning of the selected term as clearly as possible.

Keywords: Buddhism, citta, cittaviveka, detachment, mind, viveka

INTRODUCTION

A positive psychological transformation related to the true mode of inner detachment has been an essential attribute of Buddhist spiritual path. This notion of mental detachment or the seclusion of the mind is the literal translation of the Pāli term “cittaviveka”, which is usually understood as the state of the detached mind and seclusion of the mind or mental detachment (Nyanaponika, 1952), in which the mind becomes secluded from obstacles and defilements. In fact, it is true to say that the ultimate liberation (nibbāna) in the context of Buddhist thought is achieved by letting go of attachment and defilements (kilesā) such as greed, hatred and delusion.

In this survey, the selected term “cittaviveka” is one of three forms of viveka, the second step of three kinds viveka, classifying into three different stages: bodily solitude (kāyaviveka), mental solitude (cittaviveka) and seclusion from the substrates of existence (upadhiviveka), the attainment of nibbāna (Nd I, 26). While the given three stages of viveka could be inseparably interrelated and each stage signifies a deeper level of mental seclusion, progressing toward spiritual liberation, my interest throughout this paper is to investigate the significance of the detached mind (cittaviveka) as “inner detachment” or “the psychological renunciation” at different levels of mental development.

Although previous scholars have examined the Buddhist concept of *cittaviveka* to some extent, there has been no detailed investigation of *cittaviveka* and its significance in Buddhist religious practice. The present approach to the concept of *cittaviveka* differs significantly from previous interpretations by exploring *cittaviveka* as different levels of mental detachment. Therefore, I take the concept of *cittaviveka* as not confined to solitude through displacement (*tadaṅgaviveka*) and the temporary suppression of obstacles, the state of absorptions or *jhānas* (*vikkhambhanaviveka*) but as permanent uprooting of defilements (*samucchedaviveka*). The purpose of present work is to examine the role of the detached mind and how it operates in different stages of mental and spiritual development based on Theravada Pāli sources.

METHOD OF STUDY

The current study was a textual study based on Theravada texts. Analytical methods were used in this paper which allowed a deeper understanding of mental detachment. I have used the electronic edition of the *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka* (Version 4.0) as my primary source, which is based on the printed edition prepared during the Sixth Buddhist Council held in Myanmar in 1956. In addition, I have consulted alternative readings preserved in the Pāli Text Society's Roman-script editions to ensure textual accuracy and comparative reliability. For secondary sources, the relevant research works contributed by scholars in the context of mental solitude, such as books, journals, articles, published dissertations, newspapers, and websites as much as available based on Theravada Buddhism were used. Since my primary aim here is to explore the significance of mental detachment (*cittaviveka*) in Buddhism, data collection and data analysis were from the *Mahā-niddeśa*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, the *Atthasālinī* (the commentary of *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*) and the *Visuddhimagga*. According to the *Atthasālinī* (the commentary of *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*), the notion of mental seclusion takes place in the section of *paṭhamajjhāna* of *Rūpāvacarakusalavaṇṇanā*, in which the Pāli formulas “*vivicceva kāmehi*” and “*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*” are used in other to express the entering of the first *jhāna*. Furthermore, the *Visuddhimagga* defines mental detachment as seclusion of unwholesome states (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*). It is the attainment of absorption through the removal of the five mental hindrances, and at this stage, the mental obstacles are temporarily repressed in consequence of the entering of first *Jhāna*. However, this paper aims to explore the difference experience of mental detachment from mundane level to supramundane level. The results are expected to contribute to different levels of mental detachment: solitude through displacement (*tadaṅgaviveka*), the temporary suppression of obstacles, the state of absorptions or *jhānas* (*vikkhambhanaviveka*) and permanent uprooting of defilements (*samucchedaviveka*) as found in the *Mahā-niddeśa*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While the Pāli term for solitude is *viveka*, as we discussed earlier, which is used in the commentaries of the Buddhaghosa to refer to both as physical and psychological solitude, the early Buddhist discourses most prominently emphasize that solitude is much deeper – more the matter of psychological, ethical and spiritual solitude – than that of physical and social isolation (Premasiri, 2008, p. 10). What was wrapped by such descriptions appears to have been grasped a certain quality of being alone, the solitude of the mind, in which it includes non-grasping to sensual desires, seclusion of unwholesome thoughts or mental hindrances and seclusion of defilements.

This suggests that the Buddhist view on solitude is not about the act of withdrawing society, but about developing a sense of freedom from strongly clinging to sense-pleasure, all views, rites-and-rituals and self-doctrine, growing psychological solitude as one finds a space for fulfillment of inner peace rather than an external seclusion. It is clear that the idea of the term “*cittaviveka*”, according to the Theravada Pāli commentaries, has been suggested in sense of “the mind of detachment” or “mental solitude”, making sense of the more specific purpose for which solitude is as the practical, psychological and spiritual context of Buddhism. In this instance, Nāṇānanda's comment on mental solitude is a quite rational choice of this discussion. In this case, he explains thus:

The true ideal is depicted as a “solitude” of mind, gained by giving up everything belonging to the past and the future and by disciplining well the desire-and-lust for one's present modes of personality (Nāṇānanda, 1973, p. 6).

The above account shows that the true solitude is attained through letting go of attachment to both past and future, allowing the mind to be naturally happy at present moment and enhancing the mind as a positive position on relishing the delight of awakening. It can be seen that letting go of mental impurities or defilements through cultivating the noble path is the paramount importance of early Buddhist discourses.

Why mental solitude holds more important than physical solitude is necessarily regarded in this context to be aware of the nature of solitude and its function as a search for the path to awakening. As to this, the three similes are found in the Mahāsaccaka-sutta of Majjhima Nikāya (M I, 240). This discourse describes that an idea connected to the first two similes is based on inappropriate principle, for example, it cannot be burned if a wet piece of wood still remains in water and even after being removed from the water, but the wood is also still wet. Only third kind of wood, a dried wood which kept far from the water, is appropriate to produce a fire. In the same way, an exploration with reference to these similes mentioned above shows that for practitioner who engaging the practice of solitude needs to be detached from clinging to sensual desire (Analayo, 2010, p. 143).

Etymology and Usages of Viveka

The Pāli word “viveka” has a very deep and profound meaning, more emphasizing on the spiritual quality of loneliness rather than singleness (Buddhadāsa, 1990) and as a positive sense it is always associated with cultivating one’s mental progress. In early Buddhism, the notion of viveka – which means bodily and mentally seclusion – is very much valued. A discourse of the Aguttara-nikāya clearly states that the teachings of the Buddha are meant for those who love living in a secluded life instead of enjoying in company (A IV, 229). It allows us to understand that, as per the same collection, the true teaching of the Buddha is that whatever promotes is promoting seclusion rather than company (A IV, 280).

In addition to this, the term “viveka” can be understood as the absence of attachment or non-attachment, as defined in the Pāli literature, making sense of the more specific and a practical application for the spiritual and psychological context of Buddhism that it is connected to the stage of the noble path and the awakening factors. For the spiritual purpose, as already mentioned, the use of viveka can be applied in both levels such as the highest spiritual purpose as to a result of spiritual seclusion and ordinary level, at work and home.

In the Pāli language, the word “viveka” comes from “vi+vic,” which literally means detachment, loneliness, separation, seclusion, solitude, singleness (of heart), and discrimination (of thought) (PED, 708; Harris, 1997, p. 6). According to the Mahā-niddesa, the Pāli term “viveka” has three primary levels, such as physical seclusion (kāyaviveka), mental seclusion (cittaviveka) which is accomplished by distancing oneself from sensory pleasures (temporary solitude by suppression) and solitude from substrates (Nd I, 27), which refers to Nibbāna (upadhiviveka) where the three unwholesome roots such as lust, hatred and delusion are completely eradicated by attainment of Arahantship. (Bodhi, 2005, p. 364). As to this, the Buddha has distinguished between two types of seclusion: physical and psychological. Physical seclusion refers to a state in which nothing physically disturbs us, while psychological solitude involves removing one’s mind from negative thoughts and emotions (S II, 282; V, 67).

In addition, Analayo, one of the prominent Buddhist scholars, has studied the word “viveka” in reference to various Buddhist discourses. He defines “viveka” as “seclusion,” considering that it is an essential feature of early Buddhism (Analayo, 2010, p. 139). The notion of solitude practice has been studied by Walt Opie (Walt Opie, 2022, p. 6). According to Opie, the only being alone in a quiet place does not guarantee to emerge mental isolation, suggesting that the fundamental teaching of moral purification is needed in it. In fact, Buddhist solitude practice mentioned in the Bhayabherava-sutta shows that absence of morality in such practice may be extremely difficult and may not lead to much mental isolation (M I, 17-24). In Buddhism, for a righteous life is regarded ethical value considering as a basic foundation (Y. Karunadasa, 2015, p. 96).

The analysis of solitude highlighted by Ñāṇānanda shows that the true solitude practice has the purpose of reducing attachment, not just for the only being alone. Buddhadāsa (1990) observes another interesting definition on viveka. He further mentioned the term “viveka” as utmost singleness, utmost oneness and utmost solitude. He further highlights that the solitude practice involves both the deepest spiritual level and family life, which means it can be practiced for spiritual progress, as well as for the purpose of focus on something such as study

or work. According to Harris (1997), the term “viveka” primarily means to be apart, distant, alone, and detached. He has compared it to the early Buddhist monastic tradition, which is based on the idea that leaving the house to become a monk for spiritual purpose. (agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajati).

Viveka and Pahāna in Buddhism

The Buddhist notion of viveka is often presented together with the three kinds of abandoning or overcoming (pahāna), namely, letting go by suppression (vikkhambhana-pahāna), displacement (tadaṅga-pahāna) and cutting off (samuccheda-pahāna) (Gethin, 2001, p. 49). According to Prof. Sumanapala (2022), well-known as one of the Buddhist scholars in Sri Lanka, the three types of pahāna can be referred to as threefold therapeutic system for mental purification. In the course of his work, he states that tadaṅga-pahāna, which is referred to morality, has to do with temporarily resolving psychological problems through transforming behavioral patterns, vikkhambhana-pahāna referred to concentration is linked to long-term mental problem solving through suppressing defilements (craving, etc.) and samuccheda-pahāna or wisdom is associated with fully resolving mental problems by purging the mind of all false notions.

According to the Buddhist Dictionary (Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines by Nyanaponika 1952), there are the five kinds of pahāna: overcoming through suppression (vikkhambhana-pahāna), that is, temporarily stopping of the five obstacles while the absorptions are occurred, overcoming by the opposite (tadaṅga-pahāna), overcoming by destruction (samuccheda-pahāna), overcoming by tranquillization (patipassaddhi-pahāna), overcoming by escape (nissarana-pahāna). The Paṭisambhidāmaggaṃ clarifies them as follows:

Vikkhambhanappahānaṅca nīvaraṇānaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ bhāvayato; tadaṅgappahānaṅca diṭṭhigatānaṃ nibbedhabhāgiyaṃ samādhiṃ bhāvayato; samucchedappahānaṅca lokuttaraṃ khayagāmiyamaṃ bhāvayato; patipassaddhippahānaṅca phalakkhaṇaṃ; nissaraṇappahānaṅca nirodho nibbānaṃ (Paṭi I, 27).

There is abandoning of the hindrances by suppression in one who develops the first jhana; abandoning of (wrong) views by substitution of opposites in one who develops concentration partaking of penetration; abandoning (of defilements) by cutting off in one who develops the supramundane path leading to the destruction (of defilement); abandoning (of the effort of development) by tranquillization at the moment of fruition (of the path); abandoning by escaping is cessation, nibbana. (Ñāṇamoli, 2009, p. 27-28)

As discussed above, among the five types of pahāna, the first one is overcoming by repression, which is referred to the process of temporarily reducing negative thoughts, such as the five mental hindrances (nīvaraṇa) through the development of concentration (samādhi), in the same way that a pot sank into water covered with moss pushes the moss to side. The second is overcoming by the opposite. In this level unwholesome states can be temporarily lifted by listening to or reading Dhamma and doing good things, similar to how a lit light chases away the night’s darkness, in this manner, by identifying the mental and physical phenomena, the personality-belief (sakkāyadiṭṭhi) is crushed. The third is when fetters and other evil things are fully destroyed by the knowledge of the noble path, resembling a tree is ruined by lightning, this type of pahāna is known as overcoming by destruction. The fourth is referred to as overcoming by tranquillization, which occurs when the fetters are permanently vanished and calmed. The last one, the overcoming by escape, is precisely referred to nibbāna or the extinction (Nyanaponika, 1956, p. 105).

Analysis of Cittaviveka

The Pāli term “cittaviveka” is a compound word which can be divided into two parts: “citta” (“mind” or “consciousness”) and “viveka” (detachment, loneliness, separation, seclusion, solitude, singleness of heart, and discrimination of thought) (PED, 708). The Buddhist doctrine of “cittaviveka”, as we find it the Pāli discourses, is usually understood as the state of the detached mind and seclusion of the mind or mental detachment (Nyanaponika, 1952), in which the mind becomes secluded from obstacles and defilements (kilesā) such as greed, hatred, and delusion. It signifies not merely external seclusion, but an internal one associated with accomplishment of concentration (samādhi) and insight (vipassanā).

From Buddhist perspective the term “cittaviveka” is one of three forms of viveka, the second step of three kinds viveka, classifying into three different stages: bodily solitude (kāyaviveka), mental solitude (cittaviveka) and seclusion from the substrates of existence (upadhiviveka), the attainment of nibbāna (Nd I, 26). While all three forms of viveka mentioned here are interconnected and each stage signifies a deeper level of mental seclusion toward spiritual liberation, a specific focus to be clarified in this paper is to investigate the second form of “cittaviveka” as “inner detachment” or “the psychological renunciation” at different levels of mental development. In this connection, the basic forms of cittaviveka, as defined in the Mahā-niddesa, are as follows:

Pathamam jhanam samapannassa nivaranehi cittamvivittam hoti ... Anagamissa anusahagata kamaraga samyojana patighanusaya tadekatthehi ca kilesehi cittam vivittamhoti. Arahato ruparaga aruparaga mana unddhacca avijjaya mananusaya bhavaraganusaya avijjanusaya tadekatthehi ca kilesehi bahiddha ca sabbanimittehi cittam vivittam hoti ayam cittaviveko (Nd I, 26).

It is the mind [heart] that, separated from the hindrances, has attained the first dhyana; ... of the non-returner, separated from the refined form of fetter of lust for sense-desire, the refined form of the fetter of sense-impingement, from the latent tendency towards them, and from the defilements associated with them; the mind of the arhat, separated from lust for form existence, from lust for formless existence, from conceit, from restlessness, from ignorance, from the latent tendency of conceit, from the latent tendency of becoming, the latent tendency of ignorance, from the defilements associated with them, and from all external signs (Piya Tan, 2005).

The foregoing passage regarding cittaviveka (the inner detachment), as we quoted from Buddhist discourses, indicates clearly that the seclusion of the mind (cittaviveka) is connected to different levels of mental development and mental detachment, including both of the temporary suppression of obstacles, the state of absorptions or jhānas (vikkhambhanaviveka) and permanent uprooting of defilements (samucchedaviveka) as step-by-step instructions of the Buddhist transformative path.

In addition, the notion of mental detachment (cittaviveka), as defined in the Visuddhimagga, refers to seclusion of unwholesome states (vivicca akusalehi dhammehi). It is the attainment of absorption through the removal of the five mental hindrances, and at this stage, the mental obstacles are temporarily repressed in consequence of the entering of first Jhāna (Vism 140-145). In the Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), Ñāṇamoli mentions thus:

Quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unprofitable things he enters upon and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought with happiness and bliss born of seclusion (Ñāṇamoli, 2010, p. 133; Vibh 245).

The same idea seems to be expressed in Abhidhamma literature, particularly in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Vibhaṅga. According to the Atthasālinī (the commentary of Dhammasaṅgaṇī), the notion of mental seclusion takes place in the section of paṭhamajjhāna of Rūpāvacarakusalavaṇṇanā, in which the Pāli formulas “viviceva kāmehi” and “vivicca akusalehi dhammehi” are used in other to express the entering of the first jhāna (DhsA 164-166). Here the phrase “viviceva kāmehi” has been seen as “secluded from sensual pleasure” and the translation for the Pāli phrase “vivicca akusalehi dhammehi” is referred to “secluded from unwholesome states,” that is, either the obstacles are vanished or the factors of jhāna become separated from the obstacles. What has been highlighted at this point is that the idea of mental detachment marks the track from the temporary suppression of defilements to permanent uprooting of defilements.

Some Foundations of Psychological Perfections

Early Buddhist discourses consider the foundations of spiritual perfection that the practitioner should follow such requirements in order to achieve the ultimate goal of Buddhism. As to this, I quoted some qualities from Buddhist discourses in the following manner:

1. parisuddhakāyakammantā the purity of bodily conduct,

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 2. parisuddhavacīkammantā | the purity of vocal conduct, |
| 3. parisuddhamanokammantā | the purity of mental conduct, |
| 4. parisuddhājīvā | the purity of livelihood, |
| 5. anabhijjhālū | not covetous, |
| 6. mettacittā | with a mind of loving-kindness, |
| 7. vīgatathinamiddhā | free from sloth-torpor, |
| 8. vūpasantacittā | mentally appeased, |
| 9. tiṇṇavicikicchā | gone beyond doubts, |
| 10. anattukkaṃsakā aparavambhī | not elevating himself and not disparaging others, |
| 11. vīgatalomahaṃsā | free from horripilation, |
| 12. appicchā | contented ('wishing little'), |
| 13. āraddhavīriyā | having energy mobilized, |
| 14. upaṭṭhitassatī | having mindfulness abiding, |
| 15. samādhisampannā | endowed with equipoise and |
| 16. paññāsampannā | endowed with wisdom (M I, 17-24). |

The sutta has explicated the matter on a solitary spiritual life and the momentous qualities to be accomplished in such practice. It shows that if someone goes to a remote forest place with the absence of such kinds of qualities we have discussed earlier, he or she seems to be confronted by unwholesome fear and dread in that solitude.

The possibility of psychological transformation by practicing solitude has been described in the Mahāsuññata-sutta of Majjhima-nikāya (M III, 110). The discourse draws attention to reasonably impossible and possible to alone dweller for mental solitude; a practitioner who delights in solitude rather than interacting with socializing is practically able to come into contact with the bliss of inner happiness. But one who does not enjoy much of his or her time in seclusion is quite difficult for psychological transformation. As to this the Buddha's declaration should be quoted in this context:

Indeed, Ānanda, it is quite impossible that a mendicant who enjoys company will enter and remain in the freedom of heart—either that which is temporary and pleasant, or that which is irreversible and unshakable. But it is possible that a mendicant who lives alone, withdrawn from the group will enter and remain in the freedom of heart—either that which is temporary and pleasant, or that which is irreversible and unshakable (M III, 110-118; Sujato, 2018).

As said by above account, the deeper psychological achievement is possible for a practitioner who delights in a remote place by cutting off from desiring to outward things. While living in seclusion could make us easier and more convenient to find real solitude – psychological and spiritual solitude, the development of internal freedom or true solitude does not mean denying physical things or physically withdrawing from society.

Tadaṅgaviveka: Solitude through Displacement

The Pāli word “tadaṅgaviveka” basically means solitude through displacement. It often represented together with two characteristics, namely, the momentary abandoning of unwholesome thoughts and an enriching of

wholesome thoughts. This shows that the concept known as *tadaṅgaviveka* occurs when wholesome states momentarily give way to unwholesome states. This analysis is found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*:

tadaṅgaviveko ca diṭṭhigatānaṃ nibbedhabhāgiyaṃ samādhiṃ bhāvayato (*Paṭis II*, 219–224).

Seclusion by substitution of opposites is seclusion of the recourse to wrong view in one developing concentration partaking of penetration (*Ñāṇamoli*, 2009, p. 392).

Indeed, it is possible to define the term “*tadaṅgaviveka*” as a transient measure, however, when it maintains consistently, it can bring into an advantageous habit that leads to our spiritual growth. In addition, the term “*tadaṅgaviveka*” has the meaning of that the temporarily abstaining from unwholesome deeds (*akusala-kamma*) such as killing (*pāṇātipāta*), stealing (*adinnādāna*), following the wrong path of livelihood (*micchājīva*) and it has the capacity to periodically purge defilements (*kilesā*). As matter of fact, “*tadaṅgaviveka*” is used in the Pāli discourses in other to explain the term “*tadaṅga-nibbāna*.” Although this is acknowledged in the Buddhist texts as a type of *tadaṅga-nibbāna*, it is not assumed to represent the actual state of *nibbāna*.

Vikkhambhanaviveka: Mental Detachment as Temporary Suppression

The primary concern to be emphasised here is the state of mental detachment, specified as temporary removal of unwholesome mind (*vikkhambhanaviveka*). The analysis of mental detachment (*cittaviveka*) as temporary suppression of unwholesome states, according to the *Mahā-niddeśa*, involves the step-by-step mental development of all the absorptions (*rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara jhāna*) (*Nd I*, 27). Although there is a wealth of material in early Buddhist discourses dealing with all the absorptions, we are not looking at all details in this paper. What we would be considering is the seclusion of mental hindrances as temporary suppression.

In the characterization of first *jhāna*, mental solitude (*cittaviveka*) is set apart from mental destruction, indicating letting go of five mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) through the attainment of *jhāna* or the power of meditative concentration (*Nd I*, 27). This kind of mental detachment, however, must not be signified as complete eradication of defilements in Buddhist spiritual transformative process. The point is that though hindrances are inactive, they persist as latent tendencies within the mental continuum and can re-emerge whenever the appropriate conditions arise. Having understood this explanation, the state of detached mind where the five mental hindrances – *kāmacchanda* (sensual desire), *byāpāda* (ill-will or aversion), *thīna-middha* (sloth and torpor), *uddhacca-kukkucca* (restlessness and remorse), and *vicikicchā* (sceptical doubt) – are said to be temporarily inactive as a result of strong concentration (*samādhi*), especially in the *jhānas*.

Here the notion of *vikkhambhanaviveka*, as mentioned in the Pāli literatures, can be defined as the solitude by suppression, since the mental impediments and defilements are temporarily repressed, particularly in the entering of first *jhāna*. In other to get a clear idea as to *vikkhambhanaviveka*, it has been mentioned in the path of discrimination (*Paṭisambhidāmagga*): “seclusion by suppression is seclusion of the hindrances in one developing the first *jhāna*” (*Ñāṇamoli*, 2009, p. 392). At this point, “*Vikkhambhanaviveka*” pertains to the state of absorption or *jhāna*, the suppression of defilements through tranquility, the temporary preventing of the influence of hindrances (*Vikkhambhanaviveko ca nīvaraṇānaṃ paṭhamajjhānaṃ bhāvayato*) (*Paṭis II*, 219–224) This is natural and acceptable in this context that one can reach the state of absorption (*jhāna*) by overcoming the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*).

In Buddhism, the five mental hindrances can be seen as the roadblocks because they can block one’s mental progress. In the practical sense, the achieving of both full concentration (*appanāsamādhi*) and access concentration (*upācārasamādhi*) is free from hindrances. As already mentioned, in sense of *vikkhambhanaviveka*, it will be noticed that the state of being free from obstacles is temporarily suppressed, as long as it persists as the *jhāna* state.

the *paṭisallāna-sutta* and *Samādhi-sutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* state that when *samādhi* is developed as the result of a still mind, one can perceive the true nature of our body-mind presence, that is, the experience of a certain degree of spiritual freedom and the true understanding on nature of the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness) (*S V*, 414; *S III*, 13).

In fact, the canonical description of the first jhāna within meditative practice illustrates the process of training the mind to withdraw from its habitual reactions to sensory input and to cultivate heightened awareness and equanimity. This state is characterized as “zest and happiness born of solitude” (vivekaja-pīti-sukha), indicating the joy that arises from relinquishing attachment to “the world,” namely the five physical sense stimuli and associated thoughts (Gethin, 2001, p. 165).

Samucchedaviveka: Mental Detachment as Permanent Uprooting of Defilements

The Buddhist doctrine of “samucchedaviveka” literally means solitude through cutting off (samucchedaviveko ca lokuttaram khayagāmmaggam bhāvayato (Ñānamoli, 2009, p. 392; Paṭis II, 219–224). It is associated with entering one of the four supermundane paths as a result of the complete extinction of certain fetters of existence (saṃyojana), which is also used to describe a noble person (ariya-puggala) who has attained the supramundane path by destroying all influxes and the relinquishing fetters (Nyanaponika, 1980, p. 139). In this connection, the Pāli term “samucchedaviveka” is a compound word which can be divided into two parts: samuccheda (sam+uccheda) and viveka. Here samuccheda means cutting off, abolishing, extinction of defilement by destruction and giving up (M I, 360). Samuccheda, also known as samucchedakicca in the Pāli, is thought to serve the function of allowing one to reach the level of samucchedaviveka or to obtain the state of peace where defilement is completely destroyed with the power of path knowledge. Noticeably, this analysis shows that, Samucchedaviveka, then, can be understood as implying that defilements are eradicated by the power of path knowledge (arahatta-magga).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This work examined the significance of “cittaviveka” (mental detachment) as different levels of mental detachment in the Buddhist path to nibbāna or liberation, highlighting the essential qualities required for spiritual fulfillment. We started with the different levels of “viveka” such as bodily solitude (kāyaviveka), mental solitude (cittaviveka) and seclusion from the substrates of existence or attainment of nibbāna (upadhiviveka) as found in the Mahā-niddeśa. The examination and evaluation of these three common views revealed that they are in fact indispensable and interdependent facets of Buddhist path. Next, as my main contribution in this paper, we examined mental detachment (cittaviveka) as threefold transformative system, namely, solitude through displacement (tadaṅgaviveka), the temporary suppression of obstacles (vikkhambhanaviveka) and permanent uprooting of defilements (samucchedaviveka) as the process of step-by-step mental purification. The analysis concludes that, based on textual evidence of the Mahā-niddeśa and the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the notion of mental detachment (cittaviveka) can be used in different levels of mental detachment, from temporary suppression of obstacles to permanent uprooting of defilements.

The evidence analyzed above recommends that here remain several important issues that have not been fully explored in this study. For instance, the term “viveka” occurs in many places of Theravada texts and defines it as different levels of viveka. Examples should be included: how does the cultivation of cittaviveka relate to another two terms: bodily solitude (kāyaviveka) and seclusion from the substrates of existence (upadhiviveka), and can mental detachment (cittaviveka) alone directly lead to the ultimate goal of Buddhism? A detailed examination of these issues would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how mental detachment functions within Buddhist practice.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|-------------------|
| A | Aṅguttara Nikāya |
| DhsA | The Atthasālinī |
| M | Majjhima Nikāya |
| Md | Mahāniddeśa I |
| Paṭis | Paṭisambhidāmagga |

| | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| S | Samyutta Nikāya |
| Vism | The Visuddhi-magga of Buddhagosa |
| Vibh | The Vibhaṅga |

REFERENCES

Primary Sources

1. Aṅguttara-nikāya Vol. I (Ed.). (1961). Richard Morris, The Rev. M.A. London: PTS.
2. Aṅguttara-nikāya Vol. III, IV, V (Ed.). (1979-1958). Hardy, Prof. E. London: PTS.
3. Dhammasaṅganī Aṭṭhakathā (Aṭṭhasālinī). Muller, E. (Ed.). (1979). London: PTS.
4. Mijjhimanikāya Vol. III (Ed.). (1984-1951). Trenckner, V. & Chalmers, Robert. London: PTS.
5. Mijjhimanikāya Vol I-III (Ed.). (1977). Robert Chalmers, C.B. London: PTS.
6. Mahāniddeśa Vol. I-II (Ed.). (1978). De La Vallee Poussin & Thomas, E.J. London: PTS.
7. Paṭisambhidāmagga Vol. I-II (Ed.). (1979). Arnold C. Taylor, M.A. London: PTS.
8. Samyutta Nikāya Vol. I (Ed). M.L. Feer. London: PTS.
9. Visuddhimagga (Ed.). (1975). C.A.E., Rhys Davids. London: PTS.
10. Vibhaṅga (Ed.). (2003). Rhys Davids, Mrs. London: PTS.

Secondary Sources

1. Analayo, Bhikkhu. (2010). From grasping to emptiness: Excursions into the thought-world of the Pāli discourses II. Buddhist Association of the U.S.
2. Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Trans.). (2000). The connected discourses of the Buddha: A new translation of the Samyutta Nikāya (Vols. 1–2). Wisdom Publications.
3. Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Trans.). (2012). The numerical discourses of the Buddha (Aṅguttara Nikāya). Wisdom Publications.
4. Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (2005). In the Buddha's words: An anthology of discourses from the Pāli Canon. Wisdom Publications.
5. Buddhādāsa, Bhikkhu. (1990). Solitude (Viveka): A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh. Liberation Park.
6. Gethin, R. M. L. (1992). The Buddhist path to awakening. Oneworld Publications.
7. Gunaratana, Henepola. (1988). The jhānas in Theravāda Buddhist meditation. Buddhist Publication Society.
8. Harris, Elizabeth J. A. (1997). Detachment and compassion in early Buddhism. Buddhist Publication Society.
9. Horner, I. B. (Trans.). (1954). The collection of middle length sayings: Majjhima Nikāya. Pali Text Society.
10. Karunadasa, Y. (2015). Early Buddhist teachings: The middle position in theory and practice. Centre of Buddhist Studies.
11. Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (Trans.). (2009). The path of discrimination. Pali Text Society.
12. Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (Trans.). (2010). The path of purification (Visuddhimagga). Buddhist Publication Society.
13. Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, & Bodhi, Bhikkhu (Trans.). (2001). The middle length discourses of the Buddha: A new translation of the Majjhima Nikāya. Buddhist Publication Society.
14. Ñāṇananda, Bhikkhu. (1984). Ideal solitude: An exposition on the Bhaddekaratta Sutta. Buddhist Publication Society.
15. Nyanatiloka. (1952). Buddhist dictionary: Manual of Buddhist terms and doctrines. Buddhist Publication Society.
16. Opie, W. (2022). The value of seclusion. Insight Journal. <https://www.insightmeditationcenter.org>.
17. Premasiri, P. D. (2008). The philosophy of the Aṭṭhakavagga. Buddhist Publication Society.
18. Seelananda, Bhikkhu T. (1997). Upādāna and anupādāna: A study based on early Buddhist discourses. Paramita International Buddhist Centre.

19. Sumanapala, G. (2022). Buddhist psychology, psychotherapy & counseling. Colour Creations Private Limited.
20. Sujato, B. (2018). SuttaCentral: A new translation of the Pali texts. <https://suttacentral.net>