

# Bahu,vedanīya Sutta

The Discourse on the Many Kinds of Feeling

M 59/1:396-400 =

**Pañcak'aṅga Sutta**

S 36.19/4:223-228

Theme: Models of truth and true happiness

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## 1 Pañcak'aṅga

Pañcak'aṅga is the carpenter of Pasenadi, the rajah of Kosala, and is a devout follower of the Buddha who loves Dharma discussion.<sup>1</sup> Buddhaghosa says that Pañcak'aṅga is so named ("Five-Tools") because he carries with him a carpenter's five tools, namely, an adze (*vāsī,pharasu*), a chisel (*nikhādāna*), a ruler or measuring stick (*daṇḍa*), a hammer (*muggara*), and a blackened thread (*kāla,sutta*). He glosses "carpenter" (*thapati*) as "senior builder" (*vaddhakī,jetta*, MA 3:114; SA 3:79)

A famous disagreement between the monk Udāyī and Pañcak'aṅga is recorded in **the Bahu,vedanīya Sutta** (M 59) and **the Pañcak'aṅga Sutta** (S 22.57) in almost identical words. Ānanda overhears the conversation and reports it to the Buddha, who explains the nature of his teaching on feelings.<sup>2</sup> Udāyī here is identified as "the wise elder Udāyī" (*paṇḍita udāyī-t,thera*, MA 3:114).<sup>3</sup>

On another occasion, recorded in **the Samaṇa,maṇḍikā Sutta** (M 78), Pañcak'aṅga relates to the Buddha the conversation he has had with the wanderer Uggāhamāna Samaṇa,maṇḍikā,putta, and the Buddha admonishes him.<sup>4</sup>

The Anuruddha Sutta (M 127) preserves a discussion between the monks Anuruddha and Abhiya Kaccāna, which occurs in Pañcak'aṅga's house. The discussion opens with a question by Pañcak'aṅga himself.<sup>5</sup>

## 2 Sets of feeling

2.1 A high point of the Bahu,vedanīya Sutta is when the Buddha declares that he teaches the Dharma concerning feelings "in a relative manner" or as "a means of instruction" (*pariyāyena*),<sup>6</sup> that is, in various sets or models [§9], in the following ways:<sup>7</sup>

Two kinds	bodily and mental feelings <sup>8</sup>	S 36.19.4/4:223 (Pañcak'aṅga); <sup>9</sup>
Three kinds	pleasant, painful and neutral	S 36.19.4/4:223 (Udāyī); <sup>10</sup>
Five kinds	bodily pleasure, mental joy, bodily pain, mental pain, equanimity	S 48.35/5:207-209; <sup>11</sup>
Six kinds	those of the 6 senses	S 36.22/4:232;
18 kinds	the 18 kinds of mental exploration:	

<sup>1</sup> See eg **Samaṇa,maṇḍika S** (M 78.3/2:23) = SD 18.9.

<sup>2</sup> M 59/1:396-400 = S 36.19/4:223-228 = SD 30.1.

<sup>3</sup> On other monks named Udāyī, see (**Anussati**) **Udāyī S** (A 6.29) = SD 24.8 Intro (1).

<sup>4</sup> M 78/2:22-29 = sd 18.9.

<sup>5</sup> M 127/3:144-152 = 54.10.

<sup>6</sup> Comy explains *pariyāya* as "cause" (*kāraṇa*), without elaboration. (MA 3:114)

<sup>7</sup> MA 3: 114. For details, see **Vedanā** = SD 17.3 (4).

<sup>8</sup> Or, less commonly, the 2 kinds mentioned by Pañcak'aṅga [§4].

<sup>9</sup> = **Pañcak'aṅga S** (S 36.19.9/4:224 f) = SD 30.1; also S 4:231.

<sup>10</sup> See also S 4:232.

<sup>11</sup> See also S 4:232.

	the 6 senses × (joy, distress, equanimity)	M 137.8/3:217;
36 kinds	the 6 kinds × (joy, distress, equanimity) × (household life, renunciation)	M 137.9-15/3:217-219; A 2:212;
108 kinds	the 36 kinds × (past, present, future)	S 36.22/4:231-233.

The very brief (**Saṅkhitta**) **Ti Vedanā Sutta** (S 36.30) briefly lists the three kinds of feeling.<sup>12</sup> The **Suddhika Nirāmsa Sutta** (S 36.31) deals with carnal pleasure (those of the five cords of sense-pleasure) and spiritual happiness (the dhyanas).<sup>13</sup> All the above different sets of feeling are listed and defined in the **Aṭṭha,sata Sutta** (S 36.22).<sup>14</sup>

2.2 The Saṃyutta Commentary explains that from the fourth dhyana onwards, *neutral feeling is present in all these meditative states*. But this neutral feeling, too, is called “pleasure” (*sukha*), on account of its being “peaceful and sublime” (*santa paṇīta*).

What arises by way of the five cords of sense-pleasure and by way of the eight attainments is called “felt pleasure” (*vedayita,sukha*). The cessation of perception and feeling is “unfelt pleasure” (*avedayita,-sukha*). Hence, whether the pleasure is felt or unfelt, both are still pleasure in the sense of their *being free from suffering* (MA 3:115; SA 3:79).

In the (**Sāriputta**) **Nibbāna Sutta** (A 9.34), Sāriputta exults: “Nirvana is happiness, avuso; nirvana is happiness, indeed!” The monk Udāyī then asks: “How can there be happiness when there is no feeling?” Sāriputta replies: “Just this, avuso, that there is no feeling therein, is happiness!”<sup>15</sup> The rest of that discourse may also be compared with the Bahu,vedanīya Sutta.

### 3 Relatively speaking

3.1 Models of teachings and truth. The Bahu,vedanīya Sutta is a remarkable religious and cultural document of the nature of open learning and communication: that there is more than one way of making a statement. More specifically, different models can be used to express a teaching or truth. As such teachings and truths are relative (*pariyāya*),<sup>16</sup> there is no point in disagreeing or quarrelling over them.

As an example, we have here the case of **feelings** (*vedanā*), which can be spoken of as being a set of two, three, five, eight, 36, or 108, depending on how they are classified [2.1]. The best model is the one that helps us understand the nature of feeling best, at our level of understanding. Having understand one model, we should go on to examine another model, so that we have a broader perspective of the teaching or truth.

At times, a particular model can at once clearly reveal the teaching or truth. This one model, then, is the key to all other teaching models or truth models. They are like variations on a musical theme. When even one model is well understood, we have a beautiful understanding of the rest in due course. And this understanding is not so much of *knowing*, as it is of *joy*. The joy arises from the understanding that we have arisen out of ignorance.

3.2 Ever greater happiness. The second part of the Bahu,vedanīya Sutta is about levels of pleasure or happiness. The lowest and most common level is that of the pleasure of the physical senses [§11]. In the **Laṭukikôpama Sutta** (M 66), the Buddha reminds us of the worldliness of such pleasures, thus:

Udāyī, the pleasure and joy that arise from these five cords of sense-pleasure are called sense-pleasure that is a vile pleasure, a vulgar pleasure, an ignoble pleasure, not to be engaged in, not to be cultivated, not to be developed—I say of this happiness that *it is to be feared*.

(M 66.19/1:454) = SD 28.11

<sup>12</sup> S 36.30/4:235.

<sup>13</sup> S 36.31/4:235-237.

<sup>14</sup> All these models are explained in **Aṭṭha,sata S** (S 36.22/4:231 f)

<sup>15</sup> *Etad eva khv-ettha āvuso sukham, yad ettha n’atthi vedayitan ti*, A 9.34/4:414-418. On nirvana as happiness, see also (**Na Dukkha**) **Nibbāna S** (A 6.101/3:442 f).

<sup>16</sup> See **Pariyāya Nippariyāya** = SD 68.2.

There are higher, less hazardous pleasures, that is, those of the dhyanas [§§12-15], and even more profoundly exquisite are the pleasures of the formless attainments: these are *not* to be feared [§§16-19]. However, although these pleasures are subtler and nobler than those of the senses, they are all still *mind-made* and, as such, *impermanent*. In the **Laṭukikôpama Sutta** (M 66), the Buddha exhorts us to transcend them until spiritual liberation is attained. As long as spiritual liberation has not been attained, such pleasures, even the most religious or sublime, are fetters, that is, they hold us back to the cycle of life and death.<sup>17</sup>

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## The Discourse on the Many Kinds of Feelings

### M 59/1:396-400

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's park, in Jeta's grove, near Sāvaththī.

#### Pañcak'aṅga disagrees with Udāyī

2a Then the carpenter Pañcak'aṅga approached the venerable Udāyī, saluted him, and sat down at one side.

2b Seated thus at one side, the carpenter Pañcak'aṅga said this to the venerable Udāyī:

3a "Bhante Udāyī, how many kinds of feeling have been spoken of by the Blessed One?"

"Householder,<sup>18</sup> *three kinds of feeling* have been spoken of by the Blessed One: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, neither pleasant nor painful feeling. [397] These are the three kinds of feeling that have been spoken of by the Blessed One."

3b When this was spoken, the carpenter Pañcak'aṅga said this to the venerable Udāyī:

"Bhante Udāyī, three kinds of feelings have *not* been spoken of by the Blessed One.

*Two kinds of feeling* have been spoken by the Blessed One, that is, pleasant feeling and painful feeling. Regarding the feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful, bhante, the Blessed One has spoken that it is in peaceful and sublime pleasure."<sup>19</sup>

3c For the second time, the venerable Udāyī said this to the carpenter Pañcak'aṅga,

"Householder, three kinds of feeling have been spoken of by the Blessed One: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, neither pleasant nor painful feeling. These are the three kinds of feeling that have been spoken of by the Blessed One."

For the second time, the carpenter Pañcak'aṅga said this to the venerable Udāyī: [S 4:224]

"Bhante Udāyī, three kinds of feelings have not been spoken of by the Blessed One.

*Two kinds of feeling* have been spoken by the Blessed One, that is, pleasant feeling and painful feeling. Regarding the feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful, bhante, the Blessed One has spoken that it is in peaceful, sublime pleasure."

3d For the third time, the venerable Udāyī said this to the carpenter Pañcak'aṅga,

<sup>17</sup> M 66.20-34/1:454-456 = SD 28.11.

<sup>18</sup> Pañcak'aṅga is addressed so (*gahapati*) throughout here; but in **Pañcak'aṅga S** (S 36.19), he is addressed as "carpenter" (*thapati*) (S 36.19/4:223 f) = SD 30.1.

<sup>19</sup> SA says that from the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana upwards, there is neutral (neither pleasant nor painful) feeling is called "happiness" (or pleasure) by way of being peaceful and sublime (*sāpi sant'aṭṭhena paṇī'aṭṭhena ca sukhan ti vuttā*) (SA 3:79).

“Householder, three kinds of feeling have been spoken of by the Blessed One: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, neither pleasant nor painful feeling. These are the three kinds of feeling that have been spoken of by the Blessed One.”

For the third time, the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga said this to the venerable Udāyī:

“Bhante Udāyī, the three kinds of feelings have not been spoken of by the Blessed One.

The two kinds of feeling have been spoken by the Blessed One, that is, pleasant feeling and painful feeling. Regarding the feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful, bhante, the Blessed One has spoken that it is in peaceful, sublime pleasure.”

3e Neither was the elder Udāyī able to convince the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga, nor was the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga able to convince the elder Udāyī.

### The Buddha speaks of teaching models

4a Now the venerable Ānanda heard this conversation between the venerable Udāyī and the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga.

4b Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side.

Seated thus at one side, the venerable Ānanda reported the whole conversation between the venerable Udāyī and the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga to the Blessed One.

5a “Ānanda, true indeed is the formula of the monk Udāyī that the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga did not approve of. And true, too, Ānanda, is the formula of the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga that the monk Udāyī did not approve of

Ānanda, two kinds of feeling, relatively speaking [by way of instructing],<sup>20</sup> [398] have been spoken of by me.

Three kinds of feeling, too, relatively speaking, have been spoken of by me.

Five kinds of feeling, too, relatively speaking, have been spoken of by me.

Six kinds of feeling, too, relatively speaking, have been spoken of by me.

Eighteen kinds of feeling, too, relatively speaking, have been spoken of by me.

Thirty-six kinds of feeling, too, relatively speaking, have been spoken of by me. [S 4:225]

One hundred and eight kinds of feeling, too, relatively speaking, have been spoken of by me.

Thus, Ānanda, has the Dharma been shown by me in a relative manner.<sup>21</sup>

### Advantage of relative teachings

5b Ānanda, when the Dharma is thus shown by me *in a relative manner*, it may be expected that there are those who would not approve of, nor allow, nor rejoice in what is well said, well spoken, by others, such that they would become contentious, quarrelsome, disputatious, and dwell stabbing one another with sharp tongues [verbal daggers].<sup>22</sup>

But, Ānanda, the Dharma has thus been shown by me in a relative manner.

Ānanda, when the Dharma has been shown thus by me in a relative manner, it may be expected that there are those who would approve of, or allow, or rejoice in what is well said, well spoken, by others, such that they would dwell in concord, rejoicing in one another, without disputing, blending like milk and water, looking at one another with loving eyes.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> “Relatively speaking” (*pariyāyena*): see *Pariyāya Nippariyāya* = SD 68.2.

<sup>21</sup> All these models are explained in *Aṭṭha,sata S* (S 36.22/4:231 f)

<sup>22</sup> *Evam pariyāya,desite kho, ānanda, mayā dhamme ye aññam-aññassa subhāsitaṃ sulapitaṃ, na samanumaññissanti, na samanujānissanti, na samanumodissanti, tesam etaṃ pāṭikaṅkham— bhaṇḍana,jātā kalaha,jātā vivādā,-pannā aññam-aññam mukha,sattīhi vitudantā viharissantī ti.* On “sharp tongues,” see *Nānā Titthiya S 2* (U 6.4/66-69); cf *Kalaha Vivāda S* (Sn 4.11/862-877).

<sup>23</sup> *Evam pariyāya,desite kho, ānanda, mayā dhamme ye aññam-aññassa subhāsitaṃ sulapitaṃ samanumaññissanti samanujānissanti samanumodissanti, tesam etaṃ pāṭikaṅkham—samaggā sammodamānā avivadamānā khīrō-dakī,bhūtā aññam-aññam piya,cakkhūhi sampassantā viharissantī ti.* For a more elaborate context, see *Dhamma,-cetiya S* (M 89.11/2:120 f) = SD 64.10.

### The cords of sense-pleasures

6 Ānanda, there are these five cords of sense-pleasure.<sup>24</sup>

What are the five?<sup>25</sup>

- (1) Forms cognizable by the eye  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.
- (2) Sounds cognizable by the ear  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.
- (3) Smells cognizable by the nose  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.
- (4) Tastes cognizable by the tongue  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust.
- (5) Touches cognizable by the body  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sensual desire, arousing lust.

These, Ānanda, are five cords of sense-pleasure.

Ānanda, the pleasure and joy that arise dependent on these five cords of sense-pleasure—this is called sensual pleasure.<sup>26</sup>

### Greater joy than this: the form dhyanas

7a (1) THE FIRST DHYANA. There are those who would say, ‘This (sense-pleasure) is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’<sup>27</sup> but I do not grant them this. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

7b Here, Ānanda, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, attains and dwells in the first dhyana that is *accompanied by applied thought and sustained thought, with zest and joy born of seclusion*.<sup>28</sup>

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.<sup>29</sup>

8a (2) THE SECOND DHYANA. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. [S 4:399] What is the reason for this? [399]

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

<sup>24</sup> “Five cords of sensual pleasure” (*pañca kāma,guṇa*): as in **Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 13.7/1:85) = SD 6.9; **Vammika S** (M 29.46/1:114) = SD 28.13; also M 1:92, 454; see Intro (3.2) above.

<sup>25</sup> *Yam kho, ānanda, ime pañca kāma,guṇe paṭicca uppajjati sukham somanassam— idam vuccati kāma,sukham*. As at D 1:245; M 1:85, 92, 226, 3:234; A 3:411. Def as “gratification of desire” (*kamānam assāda*) at **Cūḷa Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 14.6/1:92) = SD 4.7; also at **Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 13.7-15/1:85-88) = SD 6.9. The “five cords of sensual pleasure” are so called because they are the *objects* of the 5 physical senses: V 1:3, 17, 225, 293, 3:111; D 1:172, 2:243, 3:60, 238; M 1:47; S 1:9, 132; A 3.411.3 ff; Dh 48, 415; Sn 436; Tha 254; J 3:466, 4:172, 173, 469. 6:127; Ap 547; Nm 1; Vbh 256; Mvst 3.417.2; MA 1:199, 131, 2:261). See also **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122.14/3:114) = SD 11.4.

<sup>26</sup> For a similar comparison, see **Laṭukikôpama S** (M 66), where such pleasures are said to be worldly and hazardous. (M 66.18-19/1:454) = SD 28.11. See Intro (3.2).

<sup>27</sup> *Etap paramam sattā sukham somanassam paṭisamvedentī ti*.

<sup>28</sup> These are the dhyana factors: *vitakka vicāra pīti sukhasa ek’aggatā*, respectively.

<sup>29</sup> *Idam kho, ānanda, etamhā sukhā aññam sukham abhikkantatarāñ ca pañītatarāñ ca*. Cf **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36.31/1:247) = SD 1.12 & 49.4.



8b Here, Ānanda, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, attains and dwells in the second dhyana, *free from applied thought and sustained thought, with zest and happiness born of concentration.*<sup>30</sup>

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.

9a (3) THE THIRD DHYANA. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

9b Here, Ānanda, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, attains and dwells in the third dhyana, *of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’*

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.

10a (4) THE FOURTH DHYANA. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

10b Here, Ānanda, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, attains and dwells in the fourth dhyana, *that is neither pleasant nor painful, with a mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.*<sup>31</sup>

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.

### Greater joy than this: the formless attainments

11a (1) THE FIRST FORMLESS ATTAINMENT. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. [S 4:227] What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

11b Here, Ānanda, a monk, by completely transcending the perceptions of form, with the disappearance the perceptions of sense-reaction,<sup>32</sup> with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘Space is infinite,’ he attains and dwells in the sphere of infinite space.

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.

<sup>30</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṃhī, bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In Ariya, pariyesanā S (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate). See **Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.2/4:263 f) = SD 24.12.

<sup>31</sup> Vbh 245, Vism 4.183/165. **MA**: says that by speaking of neutral feeling of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana as a kind of feeling, the Buddha is implicitly endorsing Pañcak’āṅga’s view (MA 3:114 f). **SA**: From the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana upwards, there is neutral (neither pleasant nor painful) feeling, called “happiness” (or pleasure) in that it is peaceful and sublime (*sāpi sant’atthena pañī’t’atthena ca sukhan ti vuttā*) (SA 3:79). See Intro (2.2) & also **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.83/1:75) = SD 8.10.

<sup>32</sup> “Perceptions of sense-reaction,” *pañiḅha, saññā*, also “sensory impact” (M:ÑB 267), “resistance-perception, reflex-perception” (BDict), said to be absent in the formless dhyanas. This is one of those terms that are only used contextually. See Vibh 245, §262; Vism 10.12-16.

12a (2) THE SECOND FORMLESS ATTAINMENT. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

12b Here, Ānanda, a monk, by completely transcending the sphere of infinite space, aware that ‘Consciousness is infinite,’ he attains and dwells in the sphere of infinite consciousness.

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.

13a (3) THE THIRD FORMLESS ATTAINMENT. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

13b Here, Ānanda, a monk, by completely transcending the sphere of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘There is nothing,’ he attains and dwells in the sphere of nothingness.

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness. [400]

14a (4) THE FOURTH FORMLESS ATTAINMENT. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

14b Here, Ānanda, a monk, by completely transcending the sphere of nothingness, he attains and dwells in the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

This happiness, [S 4:228] Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.

### A greater joy than this: the cessation of perception and feeling

15a ATTAINMENT OF CESSATION. There are those who would say, ‘This is the supreme pleasure and joy that beings experience,’ but I do not grant them this. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, there is another kind of happiness more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness.

And what, Ānanda, is that other kind of happiness that is more excellent and more sublime than that other happiness?

15b Here, Ānanda, a monk, by completely transcending the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he attains and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling.<sup>33</sup>

This happiness, Ānanda, is more excellent and more sublime than the other happiness.

<sup>33</sup> SA: “The cessation of perception and feeling” (*saññā, vedayita nirodha*) is called happiness in the sense that it is unfelt happiness (or happiness of non-feeling) (*avedayita, sukha*). As such, “felt happiness” (*vedayita, sukha*) arises by way of the cords of sense-pleasure and the eight attainments, while cessation is called “unfelt happiness.” Whether it is felt or not, it is exclusively happiness by way of the absence of suffering (*niddukkha, bhāva*) (SA 3:79). To gain the attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*), as it is also called, it is absolutely necessary to perfectly master all the 8 dhyanas as well as the previous attainment of non-return or arhathood. Comys say that this state may last for 7 days or even longer (MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163). Immediately at the arising of the state, however, there arises in the non-returned, the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi, phala*), and in the arhat, the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta, phala*) (PmA 1:41, 321). Only an arhat or a non-returned can experience this cessation (A 5.166/ 3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/708). On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainments (Vism 708). See *Satta, dhātu S* (S 14.11/2:150 f); *Ariya, pariyesanā S* (M 26.42/1:175) = SD 1.11 Intro (4.1); *Sappurisa S* (M 113) = SD 23.7 Intro (2); also *Animitta Ceto, samādhi Pañha S* (S 40.9/4:268 f) = SD 24.19.

### Happiness is the absence of pain

16 Ānanda, it is possible that wanderers of other sects would speak thus,  
‘The recluse Gotama speaks of the cessation of perception and feeling, and declares that it is happiness. What is that? How is that?’

Ānanda, when the wanderers of other sects speak thus, they should be told,  
‘The Blessed One, avuso, does not declare a state as being happiness only with regard to pleasant feeling. But rather, avuso, wherever happiness is found, in whatever way, the Tathagata declares that as happiness.’<sup>34</sup>

The Blessed One said this. The venerable Ānanda, with joyful heart, approved of the Blessed One’s word.<sup>35</sup>

— evaṃ —

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<sup>34</sup> *Yattha yattha, āvuso, sukhaṃ upalabbhati, yaḥim yaḥim, taṃ taṃ tathāgato sukhasmiṃ paññapetī ti.* Comys: Whether the happiness found is felt or unfelt, the Tathagata declares whatever is without suffering as happiness (MA 3:115; SA 3:79).

<sup>35</sup> This closing line is omitted in **Pañcak’āṅga S** (S 36.19.21/4:228) = SD 30.1.