

# 10

## (Indriya) Vitthāra Suttā 1-3

The 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Discourses (on the Faculties) in Detail | S 48.15-17

Theme: The 5 faculties in detail, their differences, their fulfilment

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2009, 2020

### 1 The faculties in detail

**1.0** NOTE: *Before reading this chapter, it is helpful to first read and understand **the (Indriya) Paṭilābha Sutta** (S 48.11), SD 56.8.*

#### **1.1 THE 3 SUTTAS IN DETAIL**

**1.1.1** This SD chapter, SD 56.10, discusses the following 3 related suttas that list **the 5 spiritual faculties** (*pañc'indriya*) "in detail" (*vitthāra*), as follows [SD 56.8 (1.1.0.1)]:

(1) <b>(Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 1</b>	S 48.15/5:201	the faculties in detail; the arhat, the 5 kinds of non-returners, the learners, and the 2 streamwinners-of-the path	SD 56.10a
(2) <b>(Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 2</b>	S 48.16/5:201	the faculties in detail; <i>the arhat, the 5 kinds of non-returners, the learners, and the 2 streamwinners-of-the path</i> ; difference in faculties among persons	SD 56.10b
(3) <b>(Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 3</b>	S 48.17/5:202	the faculties in detail; <i>the arhat, the 5 kinds of non-returners, the learners, and the 2 streamwinners-of-the path</i> ; the potency of the faculties	SD 56.10c

#### **1.1.2 Similarity and difference**

**1.1.2.1** The structure and contents of these triad of suttas parallel those of the "brief" (*saṅkhitta*) triad [SD 56.9], except that here the 5 kinds of non-returners are mentioned in §3.2 of each sutta. In fact, all the 3 (Indriya) Vitthāra Suttas (S 48.15-17) are identical, including their respective §4, that each gives the same list of the 5 kinds of non-returners [2.1].

**1.1.2.2** While **the (Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 1** (S 48.15) ends with §3, the other 2 (Indriya) Vitthāra Suttas each conclude with a §4 that are unique to the respective suttas. The closing §4 of both the (Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 2+3 parallel exactly with those of the Saṅkhitta Suttas 2+3 respectively, thus:

(Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 1 (S 48.13,4) = (Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 1 (S 48.16,4)

This closing verse speaks of **the differences** in 5 faculties that produce different kinds of noble individuals, thus:

"Thus, bhikshus, due to a difference in **the faculties** there is a difference in **the fruits**; due to *a difference in the fruits* there is a difference among persons."

(Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 1 (S 48.14,4) = (Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 1 (S 48.17,4)

This closing verse speaks of **the potency** of the 5 faculties that produce, whether they are fully cultivated or partly cultivated, resulting in their appropriate fruition on the path, thus:

“Thus, bhikshus, one who fulfils them fully succeeds fully; one who fulfils them partly succeeds partly. The 5 faculties, bhikshus, are not barren, I say.”

## 2 The 5 kinds of non-returners

**2.1** As already noted, the 3 (**Indriya**) **Vitthāra Suttas** (S 48.15-17) are identical in structure and content, differing only in their closing verse (§4). While **S 48.16,4** mentions the significance of the differences in faculties, **S 48.17,4** mentions the potency of these faculties. [1.1.2.2]

**2.2 “The details”** (*vitthāra*), as mentioned in the Sutta titles of S 48.16+17, are found in **§3.2**, respectively. Each identically lists these 5 kinds of non-returners in the ascending order of the strength of their spiritual faculties, thus:

an attainer of nirvana in the interval	<i>antarā, parinibbāyī</i>
an attainer of nirvana upon landing	<i>upahacca, parinibbāyī</i>
an attainer of nirvana without exertion	<i>asañkhāra, parinibbāyī</i>
an attainer of nirvana with exertion	<i>sa, sañkhāra, parinibbāyī</i>
one who is bound upstream, heading for Akaniṭṭha	<i>uddham, soto akaniṭṭha, gāmī</i>

**2.3 The 5 non-returners** is also listed in a similar manner (in the ascending order), in the following Suttas:<sup>1</sup>

<b>Sikkhā Sutta 2</b> (A 3.86,3.2), SD 80.13	the 4 kinds of streamwinners; the 5 kinds of non-returners; the arhat;
<b>Sikkhā Sutta 3</b> (A 3.87,3), SD 80.14	the arhat, the 5 kinds of non-returners, the 4 kinds of streamwinners.

“If he does not attain and penetrate this,<sup>2</sup> with the utter destruction of the 5 lower fetters, he is **an attainer of nirvana in the intermediate state**.

*If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of the 5 lower fetters, he is **an attainer of nirvana upon landing**.*

*If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of the 5 lower fetters, he is **an attainer of nirvana without exertion**.*

*If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of the 5 lower fetters, he is **an attainer of nirvana with exertion**.*

*If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of the 5 lower fetters, he is **one bound upstream, heading for the Akaniṭṭha realm**.*”

Both these Suttas close in the same way declaring thus:

“Thus, bhikshus, those who train partially gain partial results, those who train fully gain full results. These **training-rules** are not fruitless, I say!”<sup>3</sup> (A 3.86,3.2), SD 80.13 = (A 3.87,3), SD 80.14

In the (**Indriya**) **Vitthāra Sutta 3** (S 48.17,4) closing, it is the faculties that are declared not to be “fruitless” (*avañjhāni*).

<sup>1</sup> The 5 kinds of non-returners are also listed in **Eka, bījī S** (S 48.24) + SD 56.15 (1.2.2).

<sup>2</sup> If he does not attain arhathood. *Tam vā pana anabhisambhavam appaṭivijjham*. Comy: “if he does not reach and penetrate that arhathood” (*tam arahattam apāpuṇanto appaṭivijjhanto*) (AA 2:351,21-23).

<sup>3</sup> *Avajjhāni tv-evāham bhikkhave sikkhāpadam vadāmi*.

**SD 56.10a****(Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 1****The 1<sup>st</sup> Discourse (on the Faculties) in Detail**

S 48.15/5:201 (The 5 kinds of non-returners)

2 “Bhikshus, there are these **5 faculties**. What are the five?

- (1) The faculty of faith.
- (2) The faculty of energy.
- (3) The faculty of mindfulness.
- (4) The faculty of concentration.
- (5) The faculty of wisdom.

These are the 5 faculties.

3 One who has completed and fulfilled these 5 faculties is **an arhat**.

3.2 THE 5 KINDS OF NON-RETURNERS<sup>4</sup>

If they are weaker than that, one is an attainer of nirvana in the interval;  
 if still weaker, an attainer of nirvana upon landing;  
 if still weaker, an attainer of nirvana without exertion;  
 if still weaker, an attainer of nirvana with exertion;  
 if still weaker, one who is bound upstream, heading for Akaniṭṭha;

*antarā, parinibbāyī*  
*upahacca, parinibbāyī*  
*asaṅkhāra, parinibbāyī*  
*sa, saṅkhāra, parinibbāyī*  
*uddhaṃ, soto akaniṭṭha, gāmī*

## 3.3 INDIVIDUALS WHO PROGRESSIVELY DEVELOP ON THE PATH

if still weaker, a once-returner;  
 if still weaker, a streamwinner;  
 if still weaker, a truth-follower;  
 if still weaker, a faith-follower.”

evaṃ

<sup>4</sup> On these 5 kinds of non-returners, see **Niṭṭha S** (A 10.63,3), SD 3.3(1.2); SD 2.17 (4-5).

**SD 56.10b****(Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 2****The 2<sup>nd</sup> Discourse (on the Faculties) in Detail**

S 48.16/5:201 (Differences in faculties)

2 “Bhikshus, there are these **5 faculties**. What are the five?

- (1) The faculty of faith.
- (2) The faculty of energy.
- (3) The faculty of mindfulness.
- (4) The faculty of concentration.
- (5) The faculty of wisdom.

These are the 5 faculties.

3 One who has completed and fulfilled these 5 faculties is **an arhat**;

## 3.2 THE 5 KINDS OF NON-RETURNERS

if they are weaker than that,	one is	an attainer of nirvana in the interval;
if still weaker,		an attainer of nirvana upon landing;
if still weaker,		an attainer of nirvana without exertion;
if still weaker,		an attainer of nirvana with exertion;
if still weaker,		one who is bound upstream, heading for Akaniṭṭha;

## 3.3 THE INDIVIDUALS WHO PROGRESSIVELY DEVELOP IN THE PATH

if still weaker,	a once-returner;
if still weaker,	a streamwinner;
if still weaker,	a truth-follower;
if still weaker,	a faith-follower.

4 Thus, bhikshus, due to a difference in the faculties there is a difference in the fruits; due to a difference in the fruits there is a difference among persons.<sup>5</sup> [202]

evaṃ

<sup>5</sup> As in **(Indriya) Saṅkhitta S 2** (S 48.13,4), SD 56.9b. [SD 56.10 (1.1.2.2)]

**SD 56.10c****(Indriya) Vitthāra Sutta 3****The 3<sup>rd</sup> Discourse (on the Faculties) in Detail**

S 48.17/5:202 (Fulfilment of faculties)

**2** “Bhikshus, there are these 5 faculties. What are the five?”

- (1) The faculty of faith.
- (2) The faculty of energy.
- (3) The faculty of mindfulness.
- (4) The faculty of concentration.
- (5) The faculty of wisdom.

These are the 5 faculties.

**3** One who has completed and fulfilled these 5 faculties is **an arhat**.

**3.2 THE 5 KINDS OF NON-RETURNERS**

If they are weaker than that, one is	an attainer of nirvana in the interval;
if still weaker,	an attainer of nirvana upon landing;
if still weaker,	an attainer of nirvana without exertion;
if still weaker,	an attainer of nirvana with exertion;
if still weaker,	one who is bound upstream, heading for Akaniṭṭha;

**3.3**

if still weaker,	a once-returner;
if still weaker,	a streamwinner;
if still weaker,	a truth-follower;
if still weaker,	a faith-follower.

**4** Thus, bhikshus, one who fulfils them fully succeeds fully; one who fulfils them partly succeeds partly. **The 5 faculties**, bhikshus, are not barren [not fruitless], I say.”<sup>6</sup>

evam

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<sup>6</sup> As in **(Indriya) Saṅkhitta S 3** (S 48.14,4), SD 56.9c.