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(Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Suttā 1-3

The Indriya Discourses on the Arhat

SD 56.21a  (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 1 The 1st (Joy Faculty) Discourse on Analysis | S 48.36/5:209
SD 56.21b  (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 2 The 2nd (Joy Faculty) Discourse on Analysis | S 48.37/5:209 f
SD 56.21c  (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 3 The 3rd (Joy Faculty) Discourse on Analysis | S 48.38/5:210 f
Theme: Analyses of the 5 feeling faculties
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2020

1 Introduction

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARIES AND SIGNIFICANCE

All the 3 (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Suttas (S 48.36+37+38) deal with the 5 feeling faculties—those of pleasure, pain, joy, displeasure and equanimity. While the triad of similar suttas with the prefix “Sukh’in-driya” (the feeling faculties) in SD 56.20 deal with the need to fully understand these faculties, the triad here in SD 56.21 deal with their “analysis” (vibhaṅga), as their titles suggest.

The 1st, the (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 1 (S 48.36), SD 56.21a, gives a basic analysis of the 5 feeling faculties. In other words, these faculties are first simply listed, and are then defined in an analytical manner. The translation here is a repeat since it has already been translated as SD 17.3(4.4).

The 2nd, the (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 2 (S 48.37), SD 56b, has the same passages as S 48.36 (and S 48.38). The only difference is that it has an extra closing paragraph [§8 f], which tells us about the 3 root feelings: pleasant feeling, painful feeling and neutral feeling (stated as “neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling”).

The 3rd, the (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 3 (S 48.38), SD 56c, has the same passages as S 48.36 (and S 48.37). The only difference is that, like the preceding S 48.37, it has an extra closing paragraph which tells us about the 3 root feelings and how they become 5 [§8 f]: 2 bodily pleasant feelings and 2 mentally painful feelings, but only 1 neutral feeling [2].

2 The 5 kinds of feelings and equanimity

2.1 According to the Abhidhamma, all bodily feelings, that is, feelings arising through bodily sensitivity (kaya-p, pasāda), are either pleasant or painful; there is no neutral feeling based on bodily sensitivity. Hence, the Commentary explains bodily equanimity as feeling arisen based on the other 4 senses, the eye, ear, nose and tongue.¹

2.2 The word upokkho, often translated as “equanimity,” has 2 main senses. In relation to feeling, it denotes neutral feeling (adukkha-m-asukhā vedanā), feeling that is neither painful nor pleasant. As a mental quality, however, it denotes mental neutrality, impartiality or balance of mind (called tatra, majjhattā in the Abhidhamma, which assigns it to the saṅkhāra-k, khandha). In this sense, it occurs as the 4th divine abode (impartiality towards beings), as the 7th awakening-factor (equanimity or mental equipoise), and as a quality of the meditative mind of the 3rd and 4th dhyanas.²

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¹ On the lack of a bodily neutral feeling, see also SD 56.20 (2.2.2.5).
² For details on the different types of upokkho, see Vism 4.156-170/160-162.

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SD 56.21a  
(Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 1  
The 1st (Joy Faculty) Discourse on Analysis | S 48.36/5:209  
S 5.4.6 Saṁyutta Nikāya 5, Mahāvagga 4, Indriya Saṁyutta 4, Sukh’indriya Vagga 6  
Theme: Brief analysis of the 5 feeling faculties

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

   (1) The pleasure faculty;  
   (2) the pain faculty [physical pain];  
   (3) the joy faculty;  
   (4) the displeasure faculty [mental pain];  
   (5) the equanimity faculty.

3 And what, bhikshus, is the pleasure faculty? Whatever bodily pleasure there is, whatever bodily comfort,³ the pleasant, comfortable feeling born of body-contact: this, monks, is called the pleasure faculty.

4 And what, bhikshus, is the pain faculty? Whatever bodily pain there is, whatever bodily discomfort, the painful uncomfortable feeling born of body-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the pain faculty.

5 And what, bhikshus, is the joy faculty? Whatever mental pleasure there is, whatever mental comfort, the pleasant comfortable feeling born of mind-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the joy faculty.

6 And what, bhikshus, is the displeasure faculty? Whatever mental pain there is, whatever mental discomfort, the painful uncomfortable feeling born of mind-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the displeasure faculty.

7 And what, bhikshus, is the equanimity faculty? Whatever feeling there is, whether bodily or mental, that is neither comfortable nor uncomfortable: this, bhikshus, is called the equanimity faculty.⁵

8 These, bhikshus, are the 5 faculties.”

Chakkam

³ “Bodily comfort,” kāyikāṁ sātaṁ. Comy: “Bodily” means based on bodily sensitivity (kaya-p, pasāda, vatthuka) [foll n]; “comfort” is synonymous with “(physical) pleasure” and means “sweet” (madhura). (MA 2:368,3; SA 3:241,9 f; PmA 2:519,32 f).

⁴ “Body-contact” (kāya, samphassa) is any kind of bodily reaction in term of the 4 the elements. Earth is felt as solidity, hardness, softness, roughness, smoothness; water is cohesiveness (compactness of solids, magnetism, etc); fire is temperature (heat, coldness, etc), metabolism, bodily change and decay; and wind is motion, gaseousness, etc. For an Abhidhamma analysis, see Abhidhamma-attha, saṅgaha ch 6 :: Abhs:BRS VI, esp 235-240.

⁵ On the equanimity faculty, see (2).

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SD 56.21b  (Sukh‘indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 2
The 2nd (Joy Faculty) Discourse on Analysis | S 48.37/5:209 f = SD 17.3(4.4)  
S 5.4.4.7 Saṁyutta Nikāya 5, Mahāvagga 4, Indriya Saṁyutta 4, Sukh‘indriya Vagga 7
Theme: The 3 root feelings

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

(1) The pleasure faculty; sukh‘indriya
(2) the pain faculty [physical pain]; dukkh‘indriya
(3) the joy faculty; somanass‘indriya
(4) the displeasure faculty [mental pain]; domanass‘indriya
(5) the equanimity faculty.
upekkh‘indriya

3 And what, bhikshus, is the pleasure faculty? Whatever bodily pleasure there is, whatever bodily comfort, the pleasant, comfortable feeling born of body-contact: this, monks, is called the pleasure faculty.

4 And what, bhikshus, is the pain faculty? Whatever bodily pain there is, whatever bodily discomfort, the painful uncomfortable feeling born of body-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the pain faculty.

5 And what, bhikshus, is the joy faculty? Whatever mental pleasure there is, whatever mental comfort, the pleasant comfortable feeling born of mind-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the joy faculty.

6 And what, bhikshus, is the displeasure faculty? Whatever mental pain there is, whatever mental discomfort, the painful uncomfortable feeling born of mind-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the displeasure faculty.

7 And what, bhikshus, is the equanimity faculty? Whatever feeling there is, whether bodily or mental, that is neither comfortable nor uncomfortable: this, bhikshus, is called the equanimity faculty. [210]

THE 3 FEELINGS

8 Therein, bhikshus, the pleasure faculty and the joy faculty should be seen as pleasant feeling. The pain faculty and the displeasure faculty should be seen as painful feeling. The equanimity faculty should be seen as neither-painful nor pleasant feeling.

9 These, bhikshus, are the 5 faculties.”

Sattamāṁ

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7 On “body-contact” (kāya, samphassa), see [§3] n.
8 On the equanimity faculty, see (2).

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SD 56.21c  (Sukh’indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 3

The 3rd (Joy Faculty) Discourse on Analysis | S 48.38/5:210 f

S 5.4.4.8 Saṁyutta Nikāya 5, Mahāvagga 4, Indriya Saṁyutta 4, Sukh’indriya Vagga 8

Theme: The 3 feelings, the 5 feelings

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

(1) The pleasure faculty; sukh’indriya
(2) the pain faculty [physical pain]; dukkha’indriya
(3) the joy faculty; somanass’indriya
(4) the displeasure faculty [mental pain]; domanass’indriya
(5) the equanimity faculty. upekkha’indriya

3 And what, bhikshus, is the pleasure faculty?
Whatever bodily pleasure there is, whatever bodily comfort,⁹ the pleasant, comfortable feeling born of body-contact:¹⁰ this, monks, is called the pleasure faculty.

4 And what, bhikshus, is the pain faculty?
Whatever bodily pain there is, whatever bodily discomfort, the painful uncomfortable feeling born of body-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the pain faculty.

5 And what, bhikshus, is the joy faculty?
Whatever mental pleasure there is, whatever mental comfort, the pleasant comfortable feeling born of mind-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the joy faculty. [211]

6 And what, bhikshus, is the displeasure faculty?
Whatever mental pain there is, whatever mental discomfort, the painful uncomfortable feeling born of mind-contact: this, bhikshus, is called the displeasure faculty.

7 And what, bhikshus, is the equanimity faculty?
Whatever feeling there is, whether bodily or mental, that is neither comfortable nor uncomfortable: this, bhikshus, is called the equanimity faculty.

THE 3 FEELINGS

8 Therein, bhikshus, the pleasure faculty and the joy faculty should be seen to be pleasant feeling. The pain faculty and the displeasure faculty should be seen to be painful feeling. The equanimity faculty should be seen to be neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.¹¹

9 Thus, bhikshus, in a manner of speaking, these 5 faculties, having been 5, become 3; and having been 3, become 5."¹²

— Aṭṭhamaṁ —

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¹⁰ On “body-contact” (kāya,samphassa), see [§3] n.
¹¹ On the nature of neutral feeling, see (2).
¹² Iti kho bhikkhave imāni pañc’indriyāni pañca huvā tīni honti, tīni huvā pañca honti pariyāyenāti. On “in a manner of speaking” (pariyāyena), see SD 56.11 (3.1).