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Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta

The Discourse on the Cultivation of the Faculties | M 152

Theme: How to master the senses and awaken

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006

1 Comparative study

1.1 The Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta, as the title suggests, is on how to restrain and cultivate the sense-faculties for the sake of spiritual liberation. The Sutta is recorded as being taught in a *mukhelu* forest at **Kajaṅgalā**.¹ The DPPN says that Kajaṅgalā could have been the town of Punda, vardhana or Puṇḍra, vardhana mentioned in the Divyāvadāna (Divy 21 f).²

The Avadāna, śataka (Avdś 2:41)³ calls it Kacaṅgala. Xuanzang,⁴ identifies Kajaṅgalā as the 羯朱唄祇羅國 (*jié zhū wà chí luó guó*),⁵ that it is about 2000 li (660 mi = 1062 km) in circumference, and located about 400 li⁶ (about 133 mi = 214 km) east of 瞻波國 (*zhān bō guó*) (Champa), and that “going from this country [Kajaṅgala] eastward, and crossing the Ganges, after about 600 li we come to the kingdom of [奔那伐彈那國 *bēn nà fá tán nà guó*, ie Puṇḍra, vardhana].”⁷

1.2 The Sutta has a Saṃyukta Āgama parallel in Chinese translation,⁸ and parts of it have been preserved in Sanskrit fragments.⁹ Both the Pali and the Āgama versions give a similar description of how the

¹ Se *Kajjaṅgalā*. Se has *veḷuvane* for *mukhelu, vane*. V 1:197 and A 10.28/5:54a mention a bamboo grove (*veḷu, vana*) at Kajaṅgala, indicating that it formed the eastern boundary of the Middle Country. The Skt fragment in SHT VI 1226 fol 22Vc reads *i[ṅga]lāyā[m]*.

² *The Divyāvadāna: A collection of early Buddhist legends*, edd EB Cowell & RA Neil. Cambridge, 1886. *Divyāvadānam*, ed PL Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1959.

³ French tr Leon Feer, *Avadana-çataka: Cent Legends Bouddhiques*. Paris, 1891. Skt ed JS Speyer, *Avadāna-Śataka: A Century of edifying tales belonging to the Hīnayāna*, 1902-1908 & in Vaidya, 1958:192,10.

⁴ *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World* 大唐西域記 *Dàtáng Xīyùjì*, by Xuanzang (596-664), tr Samuel Beal, London, 1884, 2:193 & n. See online: <http://www.archive.org/details/siyukibuddhistre01hsuoft>; & <http://www.archive.org/details/siyukibuddhistre02hsuoft>. See also Alexander Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India* [London, 1871], 2nd ed 1924:723.

⁵ Beal transcribes this as *Kie-chu-hoh-khi-lo*, but actually renders it as “Kajūghira or Kajiṅghara,” and in his fn says: “In a note we are told that the common pronunciation of this country is ‘*Kie-ching-kie-lo*.’ M V de St Martin (*Mémoire*, 1857-1858:387) notices that in the Mahābharata there is a country Kajiṅgha named among the people of Eastern India; also in the Sinhalese Chronicles a town called Kajaṅghêlê-Niyaṅgamê, in the eastern region of Jambu, dvīpa. There is also a village called Kajéri marked in Rennell’s map, just 92 miles (460 *li*) from Champā.” (Beal 1884 2:193 n17; see foll n).

⁶ *Li*, traditional 里 *lǐ*, modern 哩 *lǐ*, about ⅓ mi (0.48 km), but varies with length of *chi* 呎 (“foot”). A *chi* varies throughout China down the ages from 11-15.8 ins (0.28-4 m). Fortunately, measurements remained stable over the Qin and Han periods, and an inscribed bronze standard measure, dated 9 CE, was discovered in 1924 at the Imperial Palace in Beijing. This has allowed accurate conversions to modern measurements. The Han *chi* is 0.231 m (9.095 in). On the basis of this lucky discovery, Homer H Dubs calculated the *li* to be 415.8 m (*The History of the Former Han Dynasty by Pan Ku*, vol 3, Ithaca, NY, 1955:160 n7). See also Ency Brit 15th ed 17:733 f, Table 5, under *chang, chi [ch’ih]*, and *li*.

⁷ *Si-yu-ki* (tr Beal 1884) 2:193 f.

⁸ SĀ 282 = T2.78a-79a, which has 迦微伽羅, 牟真鄰陀林 *jiā wēi jiā luó, mù zhēn lín tuó lín* as its location, identified by the Foguang and Taishō ed as referring to Kajaṅgala, Mukhelu, forest.

⁹ Waldschmidt et al (ed), *Sanskrihandshriften aus den Turfanfunden* (SHT) VI 1226 fol 22Vc-24Vc (1989:33 f) which has preserved several short sections of the Sutta.

brahmin youth Uttara, on being asked regarding his teacher's instruction, says that it is that of refraining from seeing forms with the eye, and hearing sounds with the ear. In both versions, the Buddha remarks that in that case the blind and the deaf would be accomplished practitioners.¹⁰

2 Pārāsariya and Uttara

2.1 Dhammapāla, in his Thera,gāthā Commentary, identifies Pārāsariya with Pārāpariya (taking the former as a variant reading for the latter): *Pārāpariyassâ ti Pārāpara,gottassa. Pārāsariyassâ ti pi paṭhan ti, "Pārāpariyassa means of the Pārāpara gotra. It is also read as Pārāsariyassa"* (ThaA 3:20). The elder Pārāpara's verses are at **Tha 726-746**. Some editions (such as the Burmese) have the reading Pārācariya. K R Norman, in his note on Tha 116, says that names with -s- must be correct "because the gotra name in Skt was *Parāśara* (MW)."¹¹

2.2 According to the **Pārāpariya Thera,gāthā**, the monk Pārāpariya, while in solitary retreat, reflects that guarding the faculties would benefit his spiritual life (726-729), and also reflects on the dangers of not doing so (730-735); he reflects on the body (736-737); a woman's body (738-739); on vigilance (740-743); the peg simile (744);¹² cultivating the five faculties and attaining happiness (745-746).

2.3 Another set of **Pārāpariya Thera,gāthā** are found at Tha 920-948. However, this Pārāpariya (if he is the same as Uttara's teacher), survived the Buddha. For, at one point, he complains how the conduct of the monks then "seems different from when the world's refuge, the best of men, was alive" (Tha 921). According to Samanera Bodhesako, in *Beginnings: The Pali Suttas*, this Pārāpariya is probably one of "the second generation disciples" (1984:52).

2.4 Dhammapāla actually states that the Buddha, considering Pārāpariya's disposition (*tassa ajjhāsayam oloketvā*), teaches him the Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta (ThaA 3:18). Hearing it, his faith is aroused and he goes forth. Having memorized the teaching, he reflects on the senses (*āyatana*) with insight, he becomes an arhat in due course (ThaA 3:18). Malalasekera, however, notes,¹³

The only connection between the Sutta and this summary is identity of subject, nor identity of treatment. Perhaps Pārāpariya's musings were only prompted by the sutta and were independent of its actual words. (DPPN: Indriyabhāvanā Sutta)

2.5 It is possible, says Malalasekera, that the brahmin youth, **Uttara**, Pārāsariya's pupil, is the same brahmin youth (*māṇava*) of the **Pāyasi Sutta** (D 23).¹⁴ When Pāyāsi¹⁵ is converted by Kumāra Kassapa,

¹⁰ However, while §2 (M 3:298,17) the Buddha mentions the blind (*andha*) and the deaf (*badhira*), SĀ 282 = T78-b1 merely refers to the blind, 盲者 *mángzhě*, while the case of the deaf, 聾者 *lóngzhě*, according to SĀ 282 = T2.-78b4 was brought up by Ānanda. Another difference is that §2 (M 3:298,21) describes Uttara silent dismay on hearing the Buddha's reply, which is not mentioned in SĀ 282.

¹¹ "MW" is Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Norman also qu J Brough, *Early Brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara*, Cambridge,1953:174 ff, and adds "The name is also found in Pāli with -s-, eg J 2:202, M 3:298" (Tha:N 149 n116).

¹² Same as the first simile of **Vitakka,saṅghāna S** (M 20,3/1:119), SD 1.6.

¹³ See also ThaA:RD 295 n1.

¹⁴ DPPN: Uttara 6.

¹⁵ He is a *rājāñña* (Skt *rājanya*), a member of the warrior class. *Rājanya* was the ancient name for the kshatriya (*khattiya*, Skt *kṣatriya*) class.

he institutes almsgiving for everyone, but the gifts consist merely of such things as gruel, food scraps and coarse robes.

Uttara, overseer of the almsgiving, speaks sarcastically of Pāyāsi's generosity, and on being challenged by Pāyāsi by what should be done, Uttara gives gladly and with his own hands excellent foods and garments. As a result, after death, while Pāyāsi is reborn only in the empty Serissaka Vimāna of the heaven of the four great kings (Cātum, mahā, rājika),¹⁶ Uttara goes to the heaven of the 33 (Tāvātimsa).¹⁷

3 Sutta summary

3.1 The Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta opens with a visit by the brahmin youth, Uttara, resident pupil of Pāsārasīya, who, when asked by the Buddha, says that his teacher claims that one is spiritually developed by not seeing things and not hearing sounds. The Buddha retorts that if that were the case, the blind and the dumb would automatically be spiritually developed! [§1-2].

The import of the Buddha's answer is that spiritual development should not be misconstrued as the suppression of the senses, but as the guarding of the sense-doors (*indriyesu gutta-dvāra*)¹⁸ (against wholesome perceptions) or sense-restraint (*indriya, saṁvara*)¹⁹ for the sake of mental focus. This teaching can be succinctly stated as follows:

Look less,	see more;
Hear less,	listen more;
Smell less,	breathe more;
Eat less,	taste more;
Touch less,	feel more;
Think less,	watch more.

The senses are the only “tools” we have for working towards spiritual liberation. They become “tools” when we begin to understand their true nature and cultivate them. On Ānanda's invitation, the Buddha then expounds the supreme cultivation of the faculties [§3].

3.2 The teaching proper comprises three main parts. In the first part, the Buddha teaches how an ordinary unawakened practitioner (“a monk”)—here meaning any meditator²⁰—should cultivate his faculties, with a simile for each faculty [§§4-9]. The second part deals with the cultivation of the faculties by the learner on the path (*sekha pāṭipada*), which deals with the five perceptions [§10]. The third part is on the adept (*asekha*), that is, one who has developed his faculties, that is, the arhat [§11-16]. This section deals with the well known five perceptions [Table 4]. The Sutta closes with the Buddha's familiar admonition that one should meditate for spiritual liberation [§§17-18].

¹⁶ Serissaka Vv (Vv 84/7.10/126-131).

¹⁷ Uttara Vv (Vv 74/6.4/109 f); VvA 297-299.

¹⁸ D 1:63 (DA 1:182), 70; A 2:218, 4:103, 112, 119 f, 175; Sn 413 (+ *susāmvuta*); Pug 24; also *gutt'indriya*, “with guarded senses,” Sn 63 (SnA 116); Nc 230; Vv 30.15; Pv 6.1.32.

¹⁹ D 1:70, 182 = M 1:181 = 269, 346, etc; D 2:281 (DA 735); M 3:2; S 1:54; A 3:138, 387 f, 4:99 = 336, 5:115, 136; (SA 1:251, syn of *tapa*; AA 2:251; KhpA 221 (syn of *saṁyama*); JA 3:404). Cf *indriyāsaṁvara* (lack of sense-restraint), A 4:114, 117, 118, 136.

²⁰ Dīgha Comy: “[H]e said this [“Here, a monk...”] in reference to the state of a monk (*bhikkhu, bhāva*), since one who has entered upon this way [mindfulness practice], whether a deva or a human, is regarded as a monk (*bhikkhu*), in keeping with what is said [in Dh 142].” (DA 3:756 = MA 1:241; see also Kvu:SR 157 f; VbhA 216 f; cf SnA 251).

3.3 For the unawakened, the first part, that is, the training for the ordinary but good worldlings, applies, that is, to whatever feeling that arises, whether it is pleasant, painful or neutral, he examines its momentariness and regard is as being impermanent, as graphically summarized in the following diagram [Table 3a]. Very similar teachings are given in a set of suttas entitled “Nandi-k,khaya,” that is,

(Ajjhatta) Nandi-k,khaya Sutta	S 35.155/4:142	the sense-faculties	SD 12.7
(Bahiddhā) Nandi-k,khaya Sutta	S 35.156/4:142	the sense-objects	SD 12.8

In another sutta, similarly titled, the context is that of the 5 aggregates, that is,

(Khandha) Nandi-k,khaya Sutta 1	S 22.51/3:51	the 5 aggregates	SD 12.9a
(Khandha) Nandi-k,khaya Sutta 2	S 22.52/3:51 f	the 5 aggregates	SD 12.9b

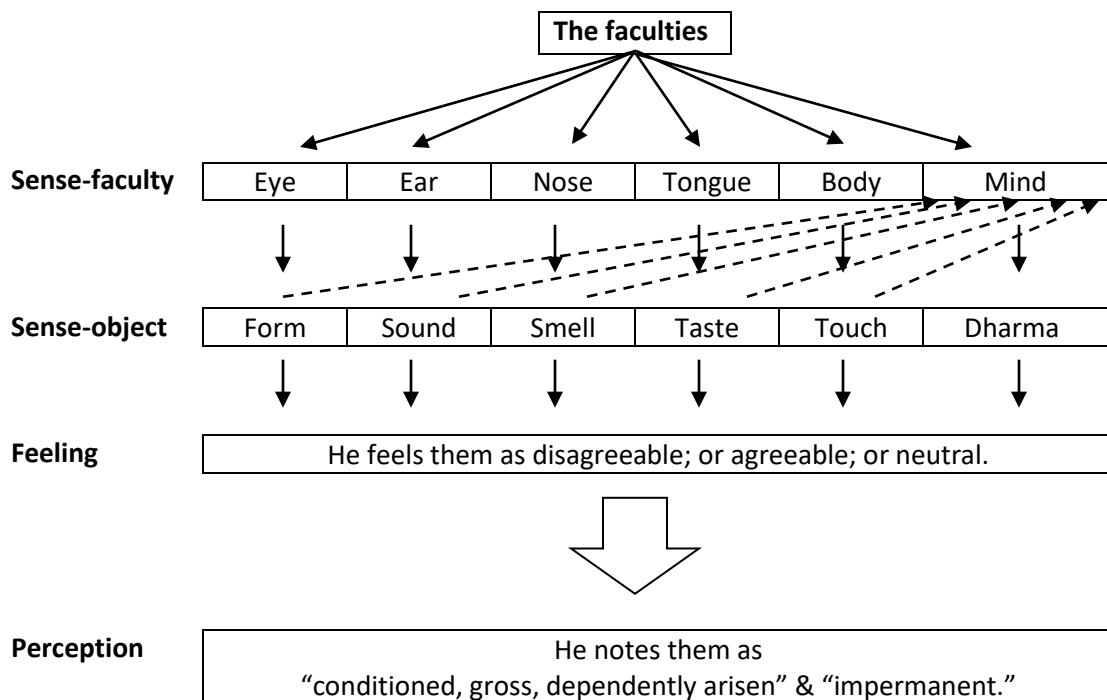


Table 3a. How to cultivate the faculties (for the unawakened)

The practitioner	Feeling	Cultivation of the faculties
(1) <u>The supreme cultivation of the faculties in the noble one's discipline</u> (<i>ariyassa vinaye anuttarā indriya,-bhāvanā</i>): a good worldling	When he (experiences a sense-object) with (the sense-organ), there arises in him the agreeable, the disagreeable, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral].	He notes the sensation, and regards it as “conditioned, gross, and dependently arisen,” and he notes its <u>momentariness</u> or impermanence. [§§4-9]
(2) <u>The learner on the path</u> (<i>sekho pāṭipado</i>): the streamwinner, once-returner, or non-returner		“He is troubled, ashamed, <u>disgusted</u> ” by the sensation (whether they are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral). [§10]
(3) <u>The noble one accomplished in the cultivation of the faculties</u> (<i>ariyo bhāvito indriya,-bhāvanā</i>): the adept or arhat		He is a master of <u>the 5 perceptions</u> , applying them “as he wishes.” ²¹ [§§11-16]

Table 3b. Summary of the Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta teaching.

4 Sutta highlights

4.1 THE BUDDHA'S RESPONSE

4.1.1 The Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta opens with Uttara's statement that his teacher Pārāsariya teaches that by “cultivation of the faculties” is meant not seeing forms with the eye, and not hearing sounds with the ear [§2a]. The Buddha understandably retorts that, in that case, a blind person or a deaf person would be of developed faculty [§2b]. The Sutta then proceeds with the Buddha's teachings on the cultivation of the faculties, indeed, the most elaborate of such teachings found in the Canon.

4.1.2 Here, the “cultivation of the faculties” (*indriya bhāvanā*) refers to a higher training than that entailed by “sense-restraint” (*indriya,samvara*). A definition of sense-restraint is given in **the Mahā Assa-pura Sutta** (39):

Bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus:

“We will **guard the sense-doors**. On (experiencing a sense-object) with (the sense-organ), we do not grasp at any sign or detail by which—if we were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of (the sense-organ)—evil, unwholesome qualities such as covetousness and displeasure²² might assail us.”
(M 39,8/1:273), SD 10.13

²¹ Here the 5 perceptions are powers accomplished in the arhat. Elsewhere, the Buddha teaches them to his unawakened disciples as a way to overcome the three unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion). See §11n.

²² “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā,domanassam*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that covetousness and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be

4.1.3 Here, “**sign**” (*nimitta*) refers to the immediate outward appearance, “the distinguishing feature by which one recognizes or remembers something,”²³ which would also include general appearance, whether attractive or repulsive. It literally means how one “measures out” (*nimmināti*) something. “Sign” is here contrasted with “**detail**” or “**particular**” (*anuvyañjana*). Of one who restrains his senses it is said, “He does not seize at the sign” (*na nimitta-g, gāhi*) of an object.²⁴

4.1.4 In terms of perception, this “sign” (*nimitta*) is “related to the first evaluation of the raw sense data, because of which the object appears to be, for example, ‘beautiful’ (*subha, nimitta*) or ‘irritating’ (*paṭigha, nimitta*), which then usually leads to subsequent evaluations and mental reactions.”²⁵ The Commentaries say that “**sign**” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda, rāga, vasena*) or on account of one’s view (*diṭṭhi, matta, vasena*); “**features**” (*anuvyañjanā*) here refers to finding delight by grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc).²⁶

4.1.5 The difference between the cultivation of the faculties and the restraint of the senses is well explained in this note in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*:

The expression “the development of the faculties” (*indriya, bhāvanā*) properly signifies the development of *the mind* in responding to the objects experienced through the sense faculties. The more rudimentary aspect of this practice, the restraint of the sense faculties (*indriya, saṁvara*), involves controlling the mind in such a way that one does not grasp at the “signs and features” of things, their distinctive attractive and repulsive attributes. The development of the faculties carries this process of control through to the point where, by an act of will, one can immediately set up insight even in the course of sense perception. At the highest level one acquires the ability to radically transform the subjective significance of perceptual objects

overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On **abhijjhā, domanassa**, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba** or **Pubb’eva Sambodha S**: “Monks, before my awakening, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... ‘Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the wretchedness (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world.’” (A 1:258/3.101, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

²³ Analayo 2003:225. For example, **Potaliya S** (M 54.3/1:360) refers to the outer aspect of being a householder, or at **V 3:15. The Raṭṭhapāla S** (M 82) relates how a slave woman, in a similar manner, recognizes monk who was the former son of her master, returning after a long absence, by “the characteristic features of his hand, his feet, and his voice.” (M 82.18/2:62)

²⁴ D 2.64/1:70 = D:RD 1:80n; M 33.7/1:221, 38.35/1:269; Vism 1.53-59/20-23.

²⁵ Analayo 2003:225 f. In **Nīvaraṇa, pahāna Vaggo** (A 1:3), sensual desire arises due to unwise attention to the “sign of beauty,” (A 1.2.1/1:3) and aversion arises due to the “sign of repulsion” (A 1.2.2/1:3). **The Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43) explains that greed, hate and delusion are each a “maker of signs” (*nimitta, karaṇa*) (M 43.37/1:298), ie, they ascribe a false significance to things as being impermanent, pleasurable, self, or beautiful (ie in terms of the 4 perversions, *vipallāsa*, A 2:52; Pm 2:80; Bodhi 1980:4, 25 n27.). **The Uddesa Vibhaṅga S** (M 138) describes how when consciousness follows the sign, it becomes “tied and shackled by the gratification derived in the sign,” and thereby becomes fettered to the sign (M 138.10/3:225). It is also possible that a grasping at a “sign” may be followed by various types of thought that could be regarded as “association” (**Vitakka Saṅṭhāna S**, M 20.3/1:119).

²⁶ D 3:249; A 1:256, 3:319, 375 f, 4:33, 418 f; J 1:420; Pm 1:60, 91 f, 164, 170, 2:39, 64; Vbh 193 f; Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhSA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74.

themselves, making them appear in a mode that is the very opposite of the way they are normally apprehended. (M:ÑB 1365 n1352; Pali normalized)

4.2 SOME KEY TERMS

4.2.1 The main theme of the Sutta is this refrain that runs in all the six sections of “the practitioner’s cultivation of the faculties,” that is, in connection with each of the six sense-experiences:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen. And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.’ [§4-9]

Every sense-experiences is said to be conditioned (*saṅkhata*), gross (*oḷārika*) and dependently arisen (*paṭicca,samuppanna*).

4.2.2 “**Conditioned**” (*saṅkhata*) means constructed in the sense of momentarily arising and ceasing, dependent on causes and effects, in a potentially ceaseless cycle, and this encompasses all existence. Only nirvana is “unconditioned” (*asaṅkhata*) or unconstructed, as it is without beginning or end.

Firstly, a sense-experience is constructed in the sense that it results from the “contact” (*phassa*) of sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness.²⁷ Secondly, we “construct” our sense-experience, we “make sense” of things, depending on how conscious we are or how we “cognize” (*viññāṇa*) and how we interpret these events or “recognize” them.²⁸ In short, we construct our world, or rather world-view, through our senses.²⁹

4.2.3 The term “**gross**” (*oḷārika*, Skt *audārika*) is a secondary derivation from *uḷāra* (“great, lofty, noble, distinguished”), and has different usages:³⁰

Size:	“large, extensive, comprehensive”
Number:	“numerous”
Weight (fig):	“important”
Substance:	“massive, solid”
Breath:	“heavy”
Sound:	“loud, high-pitched”
Form:	“physical, corporeal, tangible, demonstrable”
Perception:	“manifest, clear”
Abstract:	“gross, coarse, crude,” hence “ordinary,” “simplistic (of crude acts)”
Negative:	“improper, mean, vulgar, obscene”
Gravity:	“severe, serious”
Antonyms:	“medium, middling” (<i>majjhima</i>); “fine, refined, delicate, subtle” (<i>sukhuma, sukhumaka</i>)

4.2.4 The term “gross” is part of “the totality formula”—“whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near”³¹—and is explained in detail in **the Vibhaṅga**, and briefly in **the Visuddhi,magga**, as follows:

²⁷ For a discussion, see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18.16/1:111 f) + SD 6.14 (4).

²⁸ On *saññā*, see SD 17.4.

²⁹ For a discussion, see **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1 & **Lujjati Loka S** (S 35.116), SD 7.3.

³⁰ See CPD sv for refs.

“internal”	=	physical sense-organs;
“external”	=	physical sense-objects;
“gross”	=	that which impinges (the physical internal and external senses, with touch = earth, wind, fire);
“subtle”	=	that which does not impinge (mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness, and water);
“inferior”	=	undesirable physical sense-objects (form, sound, smell, taste, and touch);
“superior”	=	desirable physical sense-objects (form etc);
“far”	=	subtle objects (“difficult to penetrate”);
“near”	=	gross objects (“easy to penetrate”). (Vbh 1-13; Vism 14.73/450 f; Abhs 6.7)

4.2.5 In the commentarial tradition (including the Abhidhamma), “**gross**” (*oḷārika*) refers to the nature of the five physical senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body), while “**subtle**” (*sukhuma*)³² refers to the nature of the mind. The physical senses are said to be “impinged on” while mind does not function that way.

4.2.6 However, all the Pali editions have the same reading—*tañ ca kho sañkhatam oḷārikam paṭicca, samuppannam*—even for the passage on the mind-faculty:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen. And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.’ [§9]

4.2.7 Evidently, this shows that there is no such distinction in the Canon. However, the discrepancy is only apparent, not a real one. That is, if we understand that gross refers to *all* sense-impingements, while subtle refers to *mental conceptions* of such otherwise physical sensations. “Gross” then refers to the “bare” sense-experiences, while “subtle” refers to *mind-made experiences*.³³ As such, the distinction is not made in the Suttas, or that it is implicit, but it is made explicit in the commentarial traditions.

4.2.8 The sense-experiences are also said to be “dependently arisen” (*paṭicca, samuppanna*), that is, when the right conditions are present, the experience arises; conversely, when the conditions, or any of them, is missing, the experience ceases. **Analyo**, in his *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization*, notes that this as an example where the dependent arising formula is used in a manner “that is not related to past or future lives” (2003:109), that is, it describes a present-moment or single-moment experience.³⁴

4.2.8 Reflecting on the sense-experiences as being “conditioned, gross, dependently arisen” is said to make one “peaceful” and “sublime,” that is, bring on equanimity. “**Peaceful**” (*santa*) here refers both to the attainment of dhyana or at least a sense of profound inner peace for the practitioner or the learner; the arhat enjoys the peaceful state (*santa, pada*), that is, nirvana itself. The Dīgha Commentary says that

³¹ See **Anatta, lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59/3:66-68), SD 1.2 & **(Dve) Khandha S** (S 22.48/3:47 f), SD 17.1a.

³² The opposite of *oḷārika* is actually mentioned in the next phrase as *pañīta* (sublime): see below.

³³ This is in fact the teaching of “sense-impression” (*paṭigha, samphassa*)—ie the “gross”—and “conceptual-impression: (*adhivacana, samphassa*)—ie the “subtle”: see **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 15.19), SD 5.17(5). Cf Dh 1-2.

³⁴ See **Dependent arising** = SD 5.16.

nirvana is “peaceful” because all the fevers of passion are cooled there, or it brings about a peaceful mental state [because it teaches one to look within].³⁵

4.2.9 “Sublime” (*paṇīta*), also “superior, fine, exquisite,” is the opposite of *oḷārika*, mentioned earlier [§§4-9], and is the past participle of *pa* (“out”) + *neti* (“he leads”). Literally, *paṇīta* means “brought out, brought to, applied, executed; used in reference to punishment, eg *paṇeti daṇḍam*. Figuratively, “(applied) brought out or forth, (made) high, raised, exalted, lofty, excellent (synonymous with *sukhuma*); often in reference to food: “heaped up, plentiful, abundant.” In fact, the Dīgha Commentary says that “sublime” (*paṇīta*) like one’s tasting of delicious food: one cannot get enough of it [in other words, the Dharma or nirvana can only be personally experienced].³⁶

4.2.10 *Paṇīta* is synonymous with *uttama* (DA 1:109, 171), *uḷāra* (PvA 25, 228), or *atula* (PvA 110); and its antonym is *hīna* (low)³⁷ or *lūkha* (coarse) (S 2:153; VvA 64).³⁸ Here, *paṇīta* is also synonymous with *sukhuma*, and both are the antonyms of *oḷārika* (“gross,” that is, the impingement of the five physical senses), that is, *the sense-experiences as mind-objects (dhamma)*. Not reacting to these mind-objects by way of liking or disliking, they are “**peaceful**” (*santa*), and as such, they are **equanimous** (*upekkha* or, according to the Commentaries, *majjhatta*).

5 The Sutta similes

5.1 THE SIMILES

Often similes are taken as reinforcing or clarifying (in a figurative way) the import of what is stated in a *Dhamma* way, that is, a direct teaching. However, in the Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta, each of the six similes of the practitioner’s cultivation of the faculties [§§4-9] contains direct teachings in their own right, that is, they point to the impermanence and momentariness of the sense-experiences.

The cultivation of the faculties is in fact essentially a perception of impermanence (*anicca, saññā*). **The Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta** (M 152) shows how fleeting a sense-experience is—how rapidly they arise and fade away—as evident from these similes:³⁹

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) seeing a form with the eye | opening and shutting the eye; |
| (2) hearing a sound with the ear | a strong man snapping his fingers; |
| (3) smelling a smell with the nose | raindrops on a slightly sloping lotus leaf; |
| (4) tasting a taste with the tongue | a strong man easily spits; |
| (5) sensing a touch with the body | a strong man flexing or bending his arm; |
| (6) cognizing a mind-object with the mind | a few drops of water falling on a red-hot iron pan. |

The simile for seeing a form with the eye (1) refers, in modern terms, to “in the blink of an eye.” Simile (2), having to do with sound, as such, employs the finger-snap. The smell simile (3) alludes to the fragrance of the Indian lotus. The tongue simile (4), despite its mundaneness, or because of it, drives home the momentariness of taste: it comes and goes just as quickly. The body simile (5) shows the strong man’s ease of movement, an action easily and quickly done without much thought. The mind

³⁵ DA 1:99 f, 2:464. Here the term is applied in a larger context (stock phrase): see SD 25.3(28.1).

³⁶ DA 1:99 f, 2:464. Here the term is applied in a larger context (stock phrase): see SD 25.3(28.1).

³⁷ D 3:215; A 3:349, 5:140; Vism 11.

³⁸ See PED: *paṇīta* for other refs.

³⁹ See **Araka Sutta** (A 22.70), SD 16.17 (4).

simile (6) understandably is the most complex: the iron pan heated all day long represents the worldly mind, and the water-drops its thoughts.

5.2 THE TRAINING

The Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta mentions three categories of practitioners: the unawakened practitioner, the saint on the path, and the adept. The training for the first two is clearly laid out. In the first category—that of **the unawakened practitioner**—the training comprises of reflecting on the impermanence and momentariness of the sense-experiences [§§4-9]. As evident from such teachings as those of **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1), one may perceive impermanence (that is, practice the perception of impermanence, *anicca,saññā*) is either of two ways:

- | | |
|--|--|
| through <u>faith</u> (<i>saddhā</i>) | constantly reflecting on the characteristic of impermanence in all existence, noticing its pattern, or |
| through <u>wisdom</u> (<i>paññā</i>) | that is, listening and learning the Dharma, and through constant reflection on the universality of impermanence. |

In either case, when the practitioner become truly mindful of impermanence, especially through the profoundly still mental moments, he will gain insight into the true nature of things, and become a stream-winner in this life itself, if not surely at the last breath.⁴⁰ This training section is in fact the most elaborate of the three, attesting to its importance.

The second training section deals with **the learner** or saint on the path (*sekha pātipada*). The learner observes a sense-experience, whether the ensuing feeling is agreeable, disagreeable or neutral, and his response is described thus:

He is troubled, ashamed, disgusted⁴¹ by the agreeable that has arisen, by the disagreeable that has arisen, by the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral] that has arisen.
[§10]

This is the experience of revulsion (*nibbidā*), in that, the saint of the path has developed enough wisdom to understand the true nature of sense-experiences (that is, their impermanence and unsatisfactoriness) so that they are no more tricked by them into craving or clinging. This “revulsion” is a powerful feeling, such as that of a burnt child’s dreading the fire, but it is a wise loathing of worldliness.

An unawakened practitioner, being still a worldling, thick with defilements, would have great difficulty knowing what “revulsion” really is. For the world-affirming person, revulsion is as non-existent as a horned hare; the world-weary, having faced failure and frustration, may perceive revulsion the way a one-eye cow sees the world: he keeps going in circles. Understandably, the worldling practitioner has to work on being aware of *the impermanence of existence*.

The “training” of **the adept** (*asekha*) or arhat is an interesting one. The Sutta says that the “noble one of developed faculties” (*ariya bhāvit’indriya*), “if he wishes” (*sace ākaṅkhati*) may cultivate any of the five perceptions [§11]. He knows just what to do with regard to whatever state confronts him, whether it is attractive (“unrepulsive,” *appaṭikkūla*) or unattractive (“repulsive,” *paṭikkūla*). Two significant points should be noted here. Firstly, the arhat’s actions are spontaneous, that is, not rooted

⁴⁰ (Anicca) Cakkhu S (S 25.1/3:225), SD 16.7.

⁴¹ See §10a fn on this phrase.

in greed, hate or delusion, and he does not measure others (that is, he has no conceit, *māna*).⁴² Secondly, feelings (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral; pain, tiredness, etc) do arise in the arhat, but he always knows them as they really are, and as such lets them come, lets them go, just as a mirror reflects an image but is in no way affected by it.⁴³

5 The 5 perceptions

A key teaching in **the Indriya Bhāvanā Sutta** is that of the five perceptions (*pañca saññā*) [§§11-16], an important set of meditation strategies, especially of the saints, mentioned in all the five Collections (*pañca nikāya*), namely:

Sampasādanīya Sutta ⁴⁴	D 28.18/3:112 f	SD 14.14.
Indriya,bhāvanā Sutta ⁴⁵	M 152.11-16/3:301 f	SD 17.13.
Metta,sahagata Sutta ⁴⁶	S 46.54/5:120	SD 10.11.
Rahogata Sutta 1	S 52.1/5:295	SD 12.17.
Padīpōpama Sutta	S 54.8/5:317 f	SD 62.2
Tikaṇḍaki Sutta	A 5.144/3:169 f	SD 2.12.
Paṭisambhidā,magga	Pm 2:212 f (<i>Iddhi,kathā</i>)	SD 27.5a (4.5.6)
Visuddhi,magga	Vism 12.36-38/381 f	

⁴² One sees the natural goodness of the arhat in that he does not even have the notions of “great vehicle” (*mahāyāna*) or “low vehicle” (*hīna,yāna*), terms that clearly reflect complexes of superiority, inferiority and equality.

⁴³ See **Sal,āyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137), where the Buddha speaks of the 3 “foundations of mindfulness” (*ti satipaṭṭhāna*), concerning how he, as a teacher, feels for his students, but is unaffected by such feelings (M 137/3:-216-222), SD 29.5.

⁴⁴ It calls them “the power of the noble ones” (*ariy’iddhi*), or, more fully, “powers that are influx-free, free from acquisition, noble” (*iddhi anāsavā anupadhikā ariyā*); and these powers are declared by Sāriputta (in praise of the Buddha) to be “unsurpassable” (*anuttariya*) by others. (D 28,18/3:112 f), SD 14.14.

⁴⁵ The Sutta calls the arhat a “noble one with cultivated faculties” (*ariya bhāvit’indriya*), where *bhāvit’indriya* refers to the mastery of these 5 perceptions.

⁴⁶ Also called **Halidda,vasana S**.

The teachings of the 5 perceptions may be summarized as follows:

<i>If he wishes thus: 'May I dwell</i>	Perception	Method
(1) perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' [ie a <u>disagreeable object</u> (eg a hostile person),]	he dwells perceiving the <u>unrepulsive</u> therein.	He either pervades it with <u>loving-kindness</u> or regards it as <u>physical elements</u> .
(2) perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' [ie an <u>agreeable object</u> (eg a sensually attractive person),]	he dwells perceiving the <u>repulsive</u> therein.	He either pervades it with <u>the thought of foulness</u> or regards it as being <u>impermanent</u> .
(3) perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,' [ie <u>both disagreeable and agreeable objects</u>]	he dwells perceiving the <u>unrepulsive</u> therein.	He either pervades both with <u>lovingkindness</u> or regards both as <u>physical elements</u> .
(4) perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,' [ie <u>both agreeable and disagreeable objects</u>]	he dwells perceiving the <u>repulsive</u> therein.	He pervades both with <u>the thought of foulness</u> or regards both as <u>impermanent</u> .
(5) rejecting both the unrepulsive and the repulsive, and dwells in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,' [ie <u>avoiding both disagreeable and agreeable objects</u>]	he dwells therein <u>equanimously</u> , mindful and fully aware.	He is neither glad nor sad, but abides in <u>equanimity</u> towards that, mindful and fully aware.

Table 4. The 5 perceptions [§§11-16]. See further **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144/3:169 f), SD 1.12.

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Indriya,bhāvanā Sutta

The Discourse on the Cultivation of the Faculties

M 152

1 Thus have I heard.

The brahmin youth Uttara

At one time the Blessed One stayed in a mukhelu forest⁴⁷ near Kajaṅgalā.⁴⁸

2 Then the brahmin youth Uttara, resident pupil of Pārāsariya,⁴⁹ went up to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side.

2.1 The Blessed One then said this to him:

“Uttara, does the brahmin Pārāsariya teach his disciples the cultivation of the faculties?”

“Master Gotama, the brahmin Pārāsariya does teach his disciples the cultivation of the faculties.”

“And how, Uttara, does the brahmin Pārāsariya teach his disciples the cultivation of the faculties?”

2.2 “Here, master Gotama, one does not see forms with the eye, one does not hear sounds with the ear. This is how, master Gotama, the brahmin Pārāsariya teaches his disciples the cultivation of the faculties.”

The Buddha’s reply

2.3 “In that case, Uttara, according to what the brahmin Pārāsariya says, the blind would be one with developed faculty, the deaf would be one with developed faculty. For, Uttara, the blind sees no form with the eye, the deaf hears no sounds with the ear!”

2.4 When this was said, the brahmin youth Uttara, resident pupil of Pārāsariya, sat silent, dismayed, his shoulders drooping, hanging his head, glum, unable to speak [at a loss for words].⁵⁰

3 Then, the Blessed One, knowing that the brahmin youth Uttara, resident pupil of Pārāsariya, is silent, dismayed, his shoulders drooping, hanging his head, downcast, at a loss for words, addressed the venerable Ānanda:

⁴⁷ PTS, Be *mukhelu,vane*; Ce *muñcelu,vane* and *mūkhelu,vane*; Se *veḷuvane*, a bamboo grove (*veḷu,vana*) at Kajaṅgala is the location for V 1:197 and A 10.28/5:54, indicating that Kajaṅgala formed the eastern boundary of the Middle Country. MA:Be has *Suveḷuvane*. The words *mukhelu*, *muñcelu*, *veḷu* (bamboo) and *suveḷu* are presumably all names of trees or plants, since Comy states: *mukhelu nāma ekā rukkhā,jāti* (MA 5:107). See foll n.

⁴⁸ Se *Kajaṅgalā*. The Skt fragment in SHT VI 1226 fol 22Vc reads *i[nṅa]lāyā[m]*. An Avadāna,śataka take in Speyer, 1909:41,5 & in Vaidya, 1958:192,10, mentions a forest grove (*vana,ṣaṇḍa*) called Kacaṅgalā. See Intro (1).

⁴⁹ On *Uttara* & *Pārāsariya*, see **Pāyāsi S** (D 23), SD 39.4 (3.1).

⁵⁰ *Tuṅhī,bhūtaṃ maṅku,bhūtaṃ patta-k,khandhaṃ adho,mukhaṃ pajjhāyantaṃ appaṭibhānaṃ viditvā*, M 1:132,-34 = 234,4 = 258,31 = 2:154,27 = 3:298,23 ≈ A 3:57,13 (*dukkhīṃ dummanāṃ patta-k,khandhaṃ +*). **Tuṅhī,bhūto +**, D 3:53,22 = M 1:132,30 (= Comy: *kiñci paṭibhānaṃ apassanto chinna,paṭibhāṇo*, lit “not seeing any wit, wit uprooted,” ie at one’s wit’s ends, at a loss) = 234,2 (= Comy: *uttaraṃ apassanto*, “not seeing a refutation [not knowing how to answer]”) = 258,29 = 2:154,25 = 3:187,18 = 208,22 = M 3:298,21 = S 1:124,12 = A 1:186,29 ≈ A 3:57,11 (*dukkhī dummano patta-k,khandho +*). **3 pl nisidimsu tuṅhī,bhūtā +**, V 3:162,4 = 2:78,24 ≈ D 3:57,13 = A 5:188,18. See **Satta Vassa S** (S 4.24,13 n), SD 36.5.

3.2 “Ānanda, the brahmin Pārāsariya teaches his disciples the cultivation of the faculties in one way, but in the noble one’s discipline, the supreme cultivation of the faculties is taught in a different way.”

3.3 “Now is the time for the Blessed One, now is the time for the Well-gone [Sugata], that the Blessed One [299] should teach the supreme cultivation of the faculties in the noble one’s discipline! Having heard the Blessed One, the monks will remember it.”

“Then, listen, Ānanda, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One in assent.

3.4 The Blessed One said this:

THE PRACTITIONER’S CULTIVATION OF THE FACULTIES

The supreme cultivation of the eye-faculty

4 (1) “Now, Ānanda, what is supreme cultivation of the faculties in the noble one’s discipline?”⁵¹

4.2 Here, Ānanda, when a monk sees a **form** with the eye, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral]⁵² arises.

4.3 He understands thus:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen.

4.4 And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen⁵³—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.⁵⁴

4.5 The agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established.⁵⁵

4.6 Ānanda, just as a person with good eyesight were to shut his eyes and then open them, or were to open his eyes and then shut them:

4.7 even so, Ānanda, regarding anything whatsoever, the agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily.

4.8 In the noble one’s discipline, Ānanda, this is called the supreme cultivation of the faculties regarding forms cognizable by the eye.⁵⁶

⁵¹ *Katham pan’ānanda ariyasa vinaye anuttarā indriya, bhāvanā hoti*, lit “But, Ānanda, how is the supreme cultivation of the faculties in the noble one’s discipline?”

⁵² Comy says that when a desirable (*iṭṭhe*) object comes within the range of the sense-organ, an agreeable state (*manāpa*) arises; when an undesirable (*aniṭṭhe*) object appears, a disagreeable state (*amanāpa*) arises; and when a neutral (*majjhata*) object arises, a state that is both agreeable and disagreeable (*manāpāmānāpa*) arises (MA 5:107). “It should be noted that though these three terms are ordinarily used to qualify the sense objects, here they also seem to signify the subtle states of liking, aversion, and dull indifference that arise due to the influence of the underlying tendencies” (M:ÑB 1366 n1354). An agreeable object arouses lust (*rajjiturū*), the disagreeable arouses hate (*dussiturū*), and the neutral arouses both as well as delusion (*muyhiturū*) (MA 5:107; MAṬ:Be 2:440). Where the term *manāpāmānāpa* appears alone, it usu simply means the 2 kinds of feelings (agreeable and disagreeable), as in **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62,13-17/1:423 f), SD 3.11.

⁵³ See (4.2) above.

⁵⁴ Cf **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62), where the Buddha teaches Rāhula the 5 element-like meditations to attain impartiality or equanimity (M 62,13-17/1:423 f = SD 3.11).

⁵⁵ Comy: This is the equanimity of insight (*vipassan’upekkhā*). The monk does not allow his mind to be overcome by lust, hate or delusion, but comprehends the object and sets up insight in the neutral state (MA 5:107), meaning that he enters into equanimity regarding formations (*saṅkhār’upekkhā*) (MAṬ:Be 2:440). On *saṅkhār’upekkhā*, a particular stage of insight knowledge, see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1(11), on the 7 purifications, & Vism 21.61-66/656-657.

The supreme cultivation of the ear-faculty

5 (2) Furthermore, Ānanda, when a monk hears a **sound** with the ear, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

5.2 He understands thus:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen.

5.3 And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.’

5.4 The agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established.

5.5 Ānanda, just as a strong person were to snap his fingers without any trouble:

5.6 even so, Ānanda, regarding anything whatsoever, the agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily.

5.7 In the noble one’s discipline, Ānanda, this is called the supreme cultivation of the faculties regarding sounds cognizable by the ear.

The supreme cultivation of the nose-faculty

6 (3) Furthermore, Ānanda, when a monk smells a **smell** with the nose, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

6.2 He understands thus:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen.

6.3 And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.’

6.4 The agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established.

6.5 Ānanda, just as [300] raindrops on a slighty sloping lotus leaf would roll off and not remain there:

6.6 even so, Ānanda, regarding anything whatsoever, the agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily.

6.7 In the noble one’s discipline, Ānanda, this is called the supreme cultivation of the faculties regarding smells cognizable by the nose.

The supreme cultivation of the tongue-faculty

7 (4) Furthermore, Ānanda, when a monk tastes a **taste** with the tongue, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

7.2 He understands thus:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen.

⁵⁶ The supreme cultivation of the faculties is the suppression of lust, etc, arisen through the eye, and the establishment of the equanimity of insight (*vipassan’upekkhā*) (MAṬ:Be 2:440).

7.3 And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.’

7.4 The agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established.

7.5 Ānanda, just as a strong person would without trouble build a gob of spittle at the tongue-tip and spit it out:

7.6 even so, Ānanda, regarding anything whatsoever, the agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily.

7.7 In the noble one’s discipline, Ānanda, this is called the supreme cultivation of the faculties regarding tastes cognizable by the tongue.

The supreme cultivation of the body-faculty

8 (5) Furthermore, Ānanda, when a monk feels a **touch** with the body, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

8.2 He understands thus:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen.

8.3 And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.’

8.4 The agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established.

8.5 Ānanda, just as a strong person would stretch his bent arm, or bend his stretched arm:

8.6 even so, Ānanda, regarding anything whatsoever, the agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily.

8.7 In the noble one’s discipline, Ānanda, this is called the supreme cultivation of the faculties regarding touches cognizable by the body.

The supreme cultivation of the mind-faculty

9 (6) Furthermore, Ānanda, when a monk cognizes a **mind-object** [dharma] with the mind, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

9.2 He understands thus:

‘In me, this agreeable (state) has arisen, this disagreeable (state) has arisen, this agreeable-and-disagreeable (state) has arisen.

9.3 And it is conditioned, gross, dependently arisen—this is peaceful; this is sublime: that is to say, equanimity.’

9.4 The agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established.

9.5 Ānanda, just as a person were to let two or three drops of water drip onto an iron plate heated through the day, slow is the drip but it would quickly vapourize and vanish:⁵⁷

⁵⁷ This simile also occurs in **Laṭutikôpama S** (M 66.16/1:453), also in relation to mental processes.

9.6 even so, Ānanda, regarding anything whatsoever, the agreeable that has arisen, the disagreeable that has arisen, the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen, ceases in him, and equanimity is established just as quickly, just as rapidly, just as easily.

9.7 In the noble one's discipline, Ānanda, this is called the supreme cultivation of the faculties regarding mind-objects cognizable by the mind.

CULTIVATION OF THE FACULTIES IN THE SAINTS

The learner on the path

10 And how, Ānanda, is one a learner on the path?⁵⁸

10.2 Here, Ānanda, when a monk sees a form with the eye, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral] arises.⁵⁹

10.3 He is troubled, ashamed, disgusted⁶⁰ by the agreeable that has arisen, by the disagreeable that has arisen, by the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen.⁶¹

10.4 When he hears a sound with the ear, [301] (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral] arises.

10.5 He is troubled, ashamed, disgusted by the agreeable that has arisen, by the disagreeable that has arisen, by the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen.

10.6 When he smells a smell with the nose, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral] arises.

10.7 He is troubled, ashamed, disgusted by the agreeable that has arisen, by the disagreeable that has arisen, by the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen.

⁵⁸ *Sekho...pātipada* (sometimes wr as *paṭipadā*: see SD 12.14 (2)), where *sekha* means "learner" and *pātipada* is an adj meaning "of the way," ie, one who has entered the noble eightfold path, and bound for awakening, referring to all the saints except the arhat who is an adept (*asekha*). Here PTS & Se give an abridged reading, but Ce gives in full, which I follow. The *sekha pātipada* is the theme of **Sekha S** (M 53/1:353-359), SD 12.14 (2).

⁵⁹ *Idh'ānanda, bhikkhuno cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā uppajjati manāpaṃ, uppajjati amanāpaṃ, uppajjati manāpāmanāpaṃ*. On *manāpāmanāpa*, see §5 ad loc n.

⁶⁰ "Troubled, ashamed, disgusted," *aṭṭiyati harāyati jigucchati*. This is stock: A 1:145; M 1:423 = A 4:374; M 3:300; A 4:435, 5:111 (by all formations); J 2:143, 5:280; V 1:87, 88, 3:68: for ref details, see SD 20.1 (2.3) n. **Aṭṭiyati** ("he is sickened, disgusted, worried, bored, or incommodated (with)") is denom of *aṭṭa* (Skt *ārta*), "hurt, afflicted, tormented, desperate (Sn 694). **Harāyati** is denom of *hiri* (moral shame). **Jigucchati** (Skt *jugutsati*) (he shuns, avoids, loathes, detests, is revulsed at, disgusted with, horrified at) is desid or redupl of √GUP, "to protect." A denominative is a noun or a verb derived from a noun or adjective, eg "man" (a fleet) or "localize." Comy on **Amba,laṭṭhika Rāhulōvāda S** (M 61) glosses *aṭṭiyitabbam* as *aṭṭena pīlitenā bhavitabbam*, "one should be distressed, (feel) harrassed"; *harāyitabbam* = *lajjitabbam*, "one should be ashamed"; *jigucchitabbam* = *gūtham disvā viya jigucchā uppādetabbā*, "one should arouse disgust (in oneself) as if looking at excrement" (MA 3:129). See foll n.

⁶¹ This statement is made of the learner (*sekha*), ie a saint short of an arhat. M:ÑB notes: "Although the *sekha* has already entered upon the way to final deliverance, he is still prone to subtle states of liking, aversion, and dull indifference in regard to sense objects. He experiences these, however, as impediments to his progress, and thus becomes repelled, humiliated, and disgusted by them" (M:ÑB 1366 n1357). In **Kevalāḍḍha S** (D 11), however, the Buddha himself uses these same words in disapproving of psychic manifestations: "I am troubled, ashamed, disgusted (regarding them)" (**aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi**, D 11.5+7/1:213 = SD 1.7). There are 3 ways of understanding such a statement: (1) the Buddha is expressing his perception of sense-experiences in a language best understood by the unawakened, but his attitude is that of true *equanimity*; or (2) that the reciters are simply expressing his disapproval in conventional terms, or (3) it is natural that such sentiments would naturally arise reflecting the occasion, but the saint, knowing them to be impermanent, is unaffected by them, unlike a worldling. See **Nibbidā**, SD 20.1.

10.8 When he tastes a taste with the tongue, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral] arises.

10.9 He is troubled, ashamed, disgusted by the agreeable that has arisen, by the disagreeable that has arisen, by the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen.

10.10 When he feels a touch with the body, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral] arises.

10.11 He is troubled, ashamed, disgusted by the agreeable that has arisen, by the disagreeable that has arisen, by the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen.

10.12 When he cognizes a mind-object with the mind, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

10.13 He is troubled, ashamed, disgusted by the agreeable that has arisen, by the disagreeable that has arisen, by the agreeable-and-disagreeable that has arisen.

10.14 This, Ānanda, is how one is a learner on the path.

CULTIVATION OF THE FACULTIES IN THE ARHAT

The adept

11 And how, Ānanda, is one is an **arya [noble one] of developed faculties?**⁶²

11.2 THE 5 PERCEPTIONS.⁶³ Here, Ānanda, when a monk sees a **form** with the eye, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable [the neutral] arises.⁶⁴

(1) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.⁶⁵

(2) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.⁶⁶

(3) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.⁶⁷

(4) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.⁶⁸

⁶² *Ariyo bhāvit’indriya, bhāvano*. This section refers to the arhat.

⁶³ Here the 5 perceptions are powers accomplished in the arhat. Elsewhere, the Buddha teaches them to his unawakened disciples as a way to overcome the three unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion), ie, in **Metta,-sahagata S** (S 46.54.12-13/S 5:119), SD 10.11 (2) & at **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144.2/3:169 = SD 2.12), where they are explained in some detail. In both cases, however, the sequence of the perceptions is 2, 1, 4, 3, 5. For further details, see **Paṭisambhidā, magga** (Pm 22.26/2:212 f) and Vism 12.36/381 f.

⁶⁴ Since the arhat has destroyed all defilements, incl the latent tendencies (*anusaya*) [SD 6.14 (5)], the agreeable, etc “must be understood simply as the feelings that arise through contact with sense objects, and not as the subtle traces of liking, aversion, and indifference relevant to the preceding passage.” (M:NB 1366 n1359)

⁶⁵ *So sace ākaṅkhati: paṭikkūle appaṭikkūla, saññī vihareyyan ti. Appaṭikkūla, saññī tattha viharati*. In the case of an agreeable object (eg a hostile person), he either pervades it with lovingkindness or regards it as physical elements. (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f)

⁶⁶ *Sace ākaṅkhati: appaṭikkūle paṭikkūla, saññī vihareyyan ti. Paṭikkūla, saññī tattha viharati*. In the case of a disagreeable object (eg a sensually attractive person), he either pervades it with the thought of foulness or regards it as impermanent. (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f)

⁶⁷ *Sace ākaṅkhati: paṭikkūle ca appaṭikkūle ca appaṭikkūla, saññī vihareyyan ti. Appaṭikkūla, saññī tattha viharati*. He pervades both disagreeable and agreeable objects with lovingkindness or regards both as physical elements.

(5) If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell rejecting both the unrepulsive and the repulsive, and dwell in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,' he dwells therein equanimously, mindful and fully aware.⁶⁹

12 Furthermore, Ānanda, when he hears **a sound** with the ear, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

(1) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(2) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

(3) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(4) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

13 When he smells **a smell** with the nose, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

(1) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(2) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

(3) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(4) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

14 When he tastes **a taste** with the tongue, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

(1) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(2) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

(3) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(4) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

15 When he feels **a touch** with the body, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

⁶⁸ *Sace ākaṅkhati: appaṭikkūle ca paṭikkūle ca paṭikkūla,saññī vihareyyan ti. Paṭikkūla,saññī tattha viharati.* Here, PTS ed repeats *Sace ākaṅkhati: appaṭikkūle ca paṭikkūle ca paṭikkūle ca paṭikkūla,saññī vihareyyan ti paṭikkūla,-saññī tattha viharati*, of which one should be deleted. He pervades both agreeable and disagreeable objects with the thought of foulness or regards them as impermanent; thus one perceives both as repulsive. (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f)

⁶⁹ *Sace ākaṅkhati: paṭikkūlaṃ ca appaṭikkūlaṃ ca tadūbhayaṃ abhinivajjetvā upekkhako vihareyyaṃ sato sampajāno ti. Upekkhako tattha viharati sato sampajāno. Avoiding both disagreeable and agreeable objects,* having seen a form with the eyes, heard a sound with the ears, smelt smells with the nose, tasted tastes with the tongue, felt a touch with the body, cognized a mind-object with the mind, one is neither glad nor sad, but abides in equanimity towards that, mindful and fully aware. (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f)

(1) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.

(2) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

(3) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.

(4) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

16 When he cognizes a **mind-object** with the mind, (in him) the agreeable arises, the disagreeable arises, the agreeable-and-disagreeable arises.

(1) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.

(2) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

(3) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.

(4) If he wishes thus, ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,’ he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

(5) If he wishes thus, **[302]** ‘May I dwell rejecting both the unrepulsive and the repulsive, and dwell in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,’ he dwells therein equanimously, mindful and fully aware.

16.2 This, Ānanda, is how one is an arya of developed faculties.

Conclusion

17 Thus, Ānanda, the supreme cultivation of the faculties in the noble one’s discipline has been shown by me. The learner on the path has been shown by me. The arya of developed faculties has been shown by me.

18 Ānanda, whatever a teacher should do out of compassion for the good of disciples, for the sake of their welfare, this has been done to you by me.

18.2 These, Ānanda, are the foot of trees;⁷⁰ these are empty houses.⁷¹ Meditate,⁷² Ānanda! Be not heedless! Regret not later!

This is our instruction to you.”⁷³

⁷⁰ “Those are the foot of trees,” *etāni rukkha,mūlāni*. “Foot” here is an adv, like “bottom,” and as such always singular. Bodhi curiously has “the feet of trees” here (S:B 1372).

⁷¹ Sometimes rendered as “empty place.”

⁷² “Meditate!” *jhāyatha*, lit “cultivate *jhāna*” (M 1:45, 118; S 4:133, 4:359, 361, 362, 368, 373; A 3:87, 89, 4:139, 392). Syn *bhāvētha* (2nd pl), “cultivate!” as in *samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha, samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathā,bhūtam pajānāti* (S 3.13; 4:80x2, 4:143, 4:144, 5:414x2; A 3:24x2); *bhāvētha...ānāpāna,satiṇ ti* (S 5:315); *bhāvētha...maraṇa-s,satiṇ ti* (A 3:304, 4:317)

⁷³ These 2 closing paras are stock: **Sallekha S** (M 8,18/1:46), SD 51.8; **Dvedhā,vitakka S** (M 19,27/1:118), SD 61.1; **Āneñja,sappāya S** (M 106,15/2:266 f), SD 85.13; **Indriya,bhāvanā S** (M 152,18/3:302), SD 17.13; (**Nava Purāṇa Kamma S** (S 35.146/4:133), SD 4.12; **Kāya S** (S 43.1/4:359), SD 12.21(1); & all suttas in the same **Asaṅkhata Saṁyutta** (S 43.2-44/4:360-373); **Bhikkhuṇ’upassaya S** (S 47.10/5:157), SD 24.2; **Dhamma,vihārī S 1** (A 5.73/3:87), SD 44.4; **Dhamma,vihārī S 2** (A 5.74/3:89), SD 44.5; **Araka S** (A 7.70,4/4:139), SD 16.17; cf **Mahā Palobhana J** (J 507). The sentence “regret not later” (*mā pacchā vippaṭisārino ahuvattha*), in the second para, also occurs at **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.19+20/ 2:147, 16,6.5/2:155 ×3, the Buddha’s last words) = **Kusinārā S** (A 4.76/2:79 f); **Devatā S** (A 9.19/4:392), SD 57.14; cf **Mahā Palobhana J** (J 507). For comy, see MA 1:195 f; SA 3:111 f, 266 f.

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