

14

(Indriya) Punabbhava Sutta

The (Indriya) Discourse on Rebirth | S 48.21

Uddāna: **Na-b,bhava Sutta** The Discourse on No (More) Existence

Theme: The Buddha’s awakening by way of mastering the 5 faculties

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1 Sutta significance

1.1 The (Indriya) Punabbhava Sutta (S 48.21) is the 1st sutta of the Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga, the chapter on the 6 sense-faculties [2]. Oddly, the Sutta has nothing to do with the 6 sense-faculties, since it only mentions **the 5 spiritual faculties** (*pañc’indriya*). The Sutta simply states that it is on account of the mastery of the 5 spiritual faculties that Buddha gains full awakening. The probable reason for this is explained in the next section. [1.2]

1.2 CHA-Ḷ-INDRIYA

1.2.1 The phrase, *cha-ḷ-indriya*, “the 6 faculties,” refers to the 6 sense-bases, that is, the 5 physical senses and the mind; that is, the eye-faculty, ear-faculty, nose-faculty, tongue-faculty, body-faculty and mind-faculty. However, none of the first 4 suttas of the Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga feature this sextet, which is only featured in the last 6 suttas of the Vagga, that is, **S 48.25-30**.

1.2.2 It is likely that originally there were only the first 4 miscellaneous suttas (**S 48.21-24**). Over time, the last 6 suttas—all featuring the 6 sense-bases—were added to the Vagga—giving a complement of 10 suttas. The majority set of suttas gave the name to the Vagga: **the Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga**, the chapter on the 6 sense-bases. [2.2]

2 Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga

2.1 CHA-Ḷ-INDRIYA VAGGA

2.1.1 The Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga, the chapter on the 6 faculties (*cha-ḷ-indriya*) [1.1.2], is the 3rd in the Indriya Sāmyutta, the collected teachings on the faculties, in the Mahā,vagga, the great chapter, the closing section of the whole Sāmyutta Nikāya. The Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga is a collection of 10 suttas (**S 48.21-30**) of a miscellaneous nature related to the term “faculty” (*indriya*).

2.1.2 This 3rd Vagga features the following “faculties” (*indriya*):¹

		Suttas
the 6 sense-faculties or sense-bases,	<i>cha-ḷ-indriya</i>	S 48.25-30
the 3 faculties of being, or being triad,	<i>bhava</i>	S 48.22
the 5 spiritual faculties,	<i>pañc’indriya</i>	S 48.21, 24
the 3 principles of knowledge, or knowledge triad.	<i>aññā</i>	S 48.23

¹ These are actually the components of the “22 faculties” (*bāvisat’oindriyāni*), except for the omission of the 5 faculties of feelings (*vedana*), or feeling pentad, which are featured in the foll **ch 4**, on “the pleasant faculty” (*sukh’indriya*), comprising S 48.31-40. [SD 56.16d (***)]

Some details of these teaching sets are as follows:

- **The 6 sense-faculties** (*cha-ḷ-indriya*) are the 5 sense-faculties and the mind [1.1.2]; see: **Indriya Sampanna Sutta** (S 35.153), SD 10.4(4.6).
- **The 3 faculties of being** (*bhava*) or “being triad,” are those of femininity, masculinity and the life-faculty; see: **Jīvit’indriya Sutta** (S 48.22), SD 42.19(1.3.2).
- **The 5 spiritual faculties** (*pañc’indriya*) are those of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom; see: **the (Indriya) Suddhika Sutta** (S 48.6), SD 10.4(1), **the (Saṅkhitta) Sampanna Sutta** (S 48.19), SD 10.4(4.5), **the (Indriya) Daṭṭhabba Sutta** (S 48.8), SD 10.4(1.1.3), and **the Āpaṇa Sutta** (S 48.50), SD 10.4(4.4).
- **The 3 faculties of knowledge** (*aññ’indriya*) or “knowledge triad,” are a foreknowledge of the path, final knowledge itself, and being accomplished in final knowledge; see: **the Aññ’indriya Sutta** (S 48.23), SD SD 42.19(1.5).

For the 10 Suttas of **the Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga**, see (2.2).

2.2 SUTTAS OF THE CHA-Ḷ-INDRIYA VAGGA

The Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga comprises the following titles:

S 5.4.3²		Cha-ḷ-indriya Vagga	
S 5.4.3.1	(S 48.21)	(Indriya) Puna-b,bhava Sutta (on the 5 spiritual faculties)	SD 56.14
S 5.4.3.2	(S 48.22)	Jīvit’indriya Sutta	SD 42.19(1.3.2)
S 5.4.3.3	(S 48.23)	Aññ’indriya Sutta	SD 42.19(1.5)
S 5.4.3.4	(S 48.24)	Eka,bījī Sutta	SD 56.15
S 5.4.3.5	(S 48.25)	(Cha-ḷ-indriya) Suddhika Sutta	SD 42.19(1.1.1)
S 5.4.3.6	(S 48.26)	(Cha-ḷ-indriya) Sotāpanna Sutta	SD 10.16(11.1)
S 5.4.3.7	(S 48.27)	(Cha-ḷ-indriya) Arahanta Sutta 1	SD 56.16
S 5.4.3.8	(S 48.28)	(Cha-ḷ-indriya) Sambuddha Sutta	SD 56.17
S 5.4.3.9	(S 48.29)	(Cha-ḷ-indriya) Samaṇa,brāhmaṇa Sutta 1	SD 56.18
S 5.4.3.10	(S 48.30)	(Cha-ḷ-indriya) Samaṇa,brāhmaṇa Sutta 2	SD 56.19

The titles in **bold** are those that have been translated in this volume, SD 56.

2.3 RELATED SUTTAS

While here in **the (Indriya) Punabbhava Sutta** (S 48.28) the Buddha declares of himself that he has fully understood and mastered the 5 spiritual faculties—those of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom—in **the (Indriya) Samaṇa,brāhmaṇa Suttā 1 & 2**, he declares the same of other practitioners and religionists, those who claim to know or teach religious faith and living. Hence, these 3 suttas should be studied together.

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² This is the traditional sutta numbering, following Be Ce Se.

(Indriya) Punabbhava Sutta³

The (Indriya) Discourse on Rebirth

S 48.21

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.

3 So long, bhikshus, as I did not directly know, as it really is, the arising and the ceasing, the gratification, the danger and the escape [1.2] regarding these **5 faculties**, [204]

I did not claim, bhikshus, to have awakened to the peerless full self-awakening⁴ in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans.

4 But, bhikshus, when I directly knew these 5 faculties, as it really is, *the arising and the ceasing, the gratification, the danger and the escape* regarding these 5 faculties, only then, bhikshus, I claimed to have awakened to the peerless full self-awakening *in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans.*

5 And the knowledge and vision arose in me:

‘**Unshakable is my freedom of mind.** This is my last birth. There is now no more rebirth (for me)!’⁵

— paṭhamam —

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³ Be Ce *puna-b,bhava*; Ee “*na-b,bhavo* [uddāna] or *ñāṇavā*.”

⁴ “(Not) claimed to have awakened to ... ,” Be Ee *abhisambuddho’ti paccaññāsim*; Ce Ke Se *abhisambuddho paccaññāsim*.

⁵ Be *Akuppā me vimutti* [Ce Ee Se *ceto,vimutti*]. *Ayam antimā jāti, n’atthi dāni ounabbhavo’ti*. See SD 4.25 (2.3-2.4). This ending is the same as that of **(Cha-ḷ-indriya) Sambuddha S** (S 48.28), SD 56.17.