

9

(Indriya) Saṅkhitta Suttā 1-3

The 1st-3rd Discourses (on the Faculties) in Brief | S 48.12-14
 Theme: The 5 faculties in brief, their differences, their fulfilment
 Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2009, 2020

1 The 5 faculties in brief

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 BRIEF

This SD chapter, SD 56.9, discusses the following 3 related suttas that list **the 5 spiritual faculties** (*pañc'indriya*) in brief (*saṅkhitta*), as follows: [1.1.0.1]

(1) (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 1	S 48.12/5:200	the faculties in brief: the 4 saints	SD 56.9a
(2) (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 2	S 48.13/5:200	difference in faculties among persons	SD 56.9b
(3) (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 3	S 48.14/5:201	the potency of the faculties	SD 56.9c

2 Sutta significance

2.1 (INDRIYA) SAṅKHITTA SUTTA 1 (S 48.12), SD 56.9a

2.1.1 The (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 1, the 1st discourse (on the faculties) in brief, as the title suggests, only lists the 5 faculties [§2], followed by a list of *the arhat, the non-returned, the once-returned, the streamwinner, the truth-follower and the faith-follower* [§3]. These are the 6 individuals on the path of awakening in a descending order of those whose faculties are “weaker than” (*modu, tara*) the previous individuals.

2.1.2 The purpose for this arrangement clearly reflects the nature of **the oral tradition** of sutta training. The 5 faculties are first listed and defined in **the (Indriya) Paṭilābha Sutta** (S 48.11), SD 56.8, the 1st sutta of the Mudutara Chapter. The pentad is then repeated for each of the Chapter’s 10 suttas.¹ This is an effective learning technique in a system that did not put any sutta teaching into writing.

2.1.3 In our modern **scribal tradition** of education, where written and printed words dominate our discourse, we may be tempted to abbreviate such a list or teaching, assuming that we have remembered or will remember what they exactly are. This is a fatally bad habit which compels us to skim through the passage, and then, almost immediately, to forget about them. What is not seen is not read: *out of sight, out of mind!*

While teaching, a sutta teacher may, of course, refer to such list or stock passage—which is always *present* in print for immediate reference and remembering. Even then, there is a far more important reason for keeping the full list of teachings and laying out the sutta stock passages *in full*. They are meant for **reflection**, so that we can *hear* them for reflecting on, and for them to serve as the bases for *connecting* with other teachings that we have learned or mastered.

Another good way to *reflect* on the sutta teachings is to **read** them *reflectively* as puja or as part of a puja. Or, we may record such passages, or carefully read them, as a brief reflection, a preamble to a sit-

¹ See SD 56.8 (1.1.0).

ting meditation, especially as a “**recollection of the Dharma**” (*dhammânussati*). Since we already *know* these teachings, we now feel its meaning and let this connect with other teachings we have learned that lie latent in our mind. When **joy** or **peace** arise, we *smile* inwardly at it, and let it pervade our being for the duration of the meditation. This is a vital way of “living the Dharma.”

2.2 (INDRIYA) SAṅKHITTA SUTTA 2 (S 48.13)

2.2.1 The (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 2, the 2nd discourse (on the faculties) in brief, as the title suggests, builds on what we have learned in the 1st sutta of the same name. It actually repeats exactly what Sutta 1 says, and adds the last paragraph [§4] that says the following (paraphrased):

Due to differences in **the faculties**, there are different kinds of fruits on the path of awakening. These fruits on the path comprise different kinds of persons or noble individuals (or saints) beginning with the arhat (the highest, with all his spiritual faculties accomplished), and lastly the faith-follower who is only strong in *faith*.

2.2.2 All the 3 (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Suttas (S 48.13-15) list the following 4 noble individuals or saints in their 3rd paragraph: *the arhat, the non-returner, the once-returner and the streamwinner*. The respective strengths of their faculties are in that descending order, with the arhat as fully accomplished in them, and the streamwinner, either being fulfilled in wisdom or in faith [2.3.3].

We will examine **the 4 individuals** more closely in our study of the (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 3 (S 48.13), to how they gain their respective states in terms of breaking the mental fetters (*saṃyojana*). [2.3.2.3].

2.3 (INDRIYA) SAṅKHITTA SUTTA 3 (S 48.13)

The (Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 3, the 3rd discourse (on the faculties) in brief, mostly keeps to the template of the first 2 Suttas “in brief” (S 48.11+12). Only the 4th paragraph is different: it reiterates that whether the faculties are fulfilled fully or in part, they will bear fruit—we will free ourself as a true individual of the path. The faculties are “not barren” (*avañjha*).

2.3.2 Breaking the fetters

2.3.2.1 A more detailed way of describing each of these 4 individuals or saints is by way of how they have broken the 10 mental fetters: the 5 lower fetters hold us up in the sense world, while the higher fetters keep us reborn in the form world and the formless worlds. **The arhat** (*arahata*) has broken *all* the 10 fetters: he is free of the sense world, the form world and the formless worlds. **The non-returner** (*anāgāmi*) has destroyed all the 5 lower fetters, and is only reborn in the pure abodes (the highest of the form worlds).² **The once-returner** (*sakad-āgāmi*) has broken the first 3 fetters and weakened the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala, mūla*) of lust, hate and delusion.³ **The streamwinner** (*sotāpanna*) has broken the first 3 fetters, and will attain arhathood, that is, full awakening, within 7 lives at the most.

2.3.2.2 With the breaking of **the 3 fetters** (*ti, saṃyojana*)—those of self-identity view, of spiritual doubt and of attachment to rituals and vows—we begin our pilgrim’s irreversible progress up the path of awakening. The mind that is free of these 3 fetters is no more caught in the madding crowd of worldlings:

² On the non-returner, see SD 10.16 (13).

³ The 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala, mūla*) are lust (*rāga*) or greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*): **Mūla S** (A 3.69), SD 18.2; also SD 4.14 (1).

he is an *emotionally independent* individual who is truly self-reliant in keeping with the Buddha’s instructions.⁴

Of such a true individual, **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1) declares:

“He has gone beyond the plane of the worldlings. He is descending into the plane of true individuals; descending into the certainty of rightness [the fixed course to rightness].⁵

He is incapable of doing any intentional deed by which he might be reborn in hell, or in the animal birth, or in the preta realm.

He is incapable of dying without having attained the fruit of streamwinning.⁶

(S 25.1/3:225), SD 16.7

2.3.2.3 The 10 fetters

The 5 lower fetters (*oram, bhāgiya saṃyojana*) [SD 50.11]

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| (1) <u>self-identity view</u> | <u>sakkāya, ditṭhi</u> |
| (2) <u>spiritual doubt</u> | <u>vicikicchā</u> |
| (3) <u>attachment to rituals and vows</u> | <u>sīla-b. bata, parāmāsa</u> |
| (4) sensual lust | <i>kāma, rāga</i> |
| (5) repulsion | <i>paṭigha</i> ⁷ |

The 5 higher fetters (*uddham, bhāgiya saṃyojana*) [SD 50.12]

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| (6) lust for form existence | <i>rūpa, rāga</i> |
| (7) lust for formless existence | <i>arūpa, rāga</i> |
| (8) conceit | <i>māna</i> |
| (9) restlessness | <i>uddhacca</i> |
| (10) ignorance | <i>avijjā</i> |

The 3 fetters (underscored), overcome by the streamwinner and the once-returned (lust, hate and delusion are weakened).

The 5 lower fetters, overcome by the non-returned.

The 5 higher fetters, overcome by the arhat.

Table 2.3.2.3 The 10 fetters and sainthood⁸

2.3.3 The faith-follower and the truth-follower

2.3.3.1 According to the Sutta’s Commentary, both **the truth-follower** (*dhammānusārī*) and **the faith-follower** (*saddhā’anusārī*) are simply 2 kinds of streamwinners of the path (*dve pi sotāpatti, magga, puggala, vasena*), meaning that they are *streamwinners-to-be*, who are strong either in the wisdom faculty or the faith faculty. On account of their aspiration and practice, they are bound for streamwinning in this life itself, certainly to attain it at the moment of dying, as declared by the Buddha in **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1).⁹

⁴ For details, see SD 50.11 (2.4). Also see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

⁵ *Sammatta, niyāmaṃ*, ie, attain the noble eightfold path heading for spiritual freedom and awakening.

⁶ *Abhabbo taṃ kammaṃ kātuṃ yaṃ kammaṃ katvā nirayaṃ vā tiracchāna, yonim vā petti, visayaṃ vā uppajjeya. Abhabbo ca tāva kālaṃ kātuṃ yāva na sotāpatti, phalaṃ sacchikaroti.* This is the Sutta’s key statement and clearly refers to what, after the Buddha’s time, is referred to as a “lesser streamwinner” (*cūla, sotāpanna, culla, sotāpanna, cullaka, sotāpanna*). See **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3(6).

⁷ In some places, *paṭigha* is replaced by ill will (*vyāpāda*).

⁸ Also at SD 50.11 (Diag 2.2.2).

⁹ S 25.1 (SD 16.7).

2.3.3.2 The 2 individuals—the faith-follower and the truth-follower—are described as follows in **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1):

Bhikkhus, one who has faith thus, who *firmly believes* these truths [is convinced of these truths], is called a **faith-follower**.¹⁰

Bhikkhus, one who *accepts* these truths after just some pondering over them with wisdom thus,¹¹ is called a **truth-follower**.

2.3.3.3 The same Sutta (S 25.1) also succinctly describes the distinction between **the dhammānusāri** and **the saddhā'nusāri**. The Commentary adds that the path of the *dhammānusāri* is “sharp” (*tikkha*) [sagacious], his knowledge occurs heroically (*sūra*) [brilliantly]. He cuts off his defilements effortlessly, like one cutting a plantain trunk with a sharp knife. The path of the *saddhā'nusāri* is not so sharp, nor does his knowledge occur so heroically. He cuts off his defilements with some effort, like one cutting a plantain trunk with a dull knife. (SA 3:235,15-21)

2.4 RELATED SUTTAS

In all these suttas, we also see the usage of the word “partly” (*padesa*) [S 48.14,4].

2.4.1 “Fully” (*paripura*)

2.4.1.1 The term “fully” (*paripūra*) is highlighted by **the (indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 3** (S 48.14) which states that the practitioner who “fulfils them fully succeeds” (*paripūram paripūrakāri ārādheti*) while “one who partly fulfils them partly succeeds” (*padesaṃ padesa,kāri ārādheti*). The Commentary explains that one who “fulfils them” (*paripūra,kāri*), who practises fully the path of arhathood, “succeeds fully” (*paripūrati arādheti*), that is, achieves the fruit of arhathood (as a non-learner, *asekha*).

On the other hand, one who “fulfils them partly” (*padesa,kāri*), who practises the 3 lower paths, “succeeds partly” (*padesaṃ padesa,kāri ārādheti ...*) that is, attains only one of the 3 lower fruits (as a learner, *sekha*, becoming a non-learner, a once-learner or a streamwinner). [2.4.1]

2.4.2 “Partly” (*padesa*)

2.4.2.1 The term “partially” (*padesa*) is highlighted in a number of suttas, such as **the (Satipaṭṭhāna) Padesa Sutta** (S 47.26). Those who have only “partly cultivated” (*padesaṃ bhāvitattā*) the 4 focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), go on to become “learners” (*sekha*), that is, streamwinners, once-learners and non-learners.¹²

The closely related subsequent text, **the (Satipaṭṭhāna) Samatta Sutta** (S 47.27), states how those who “fully cultivated” (*samattaṃ bhāvitattā*) the 4 focuses of mindfulness will become “non-learners” (*asekha*), that is, adepts, or arhats.¹³ The 4 satipaṭṭhanas, then, are an effective means of gaining awakening at any level.

¹⁰ *Yo bhikkhave ime dhamme evaṃ saddahati adhimuccati, ayaṃ vuccati saddhā'nusāri okkanto sammatta,niyāmaṃ sappurisa,bhūmiṃ okkanto vītivatto puthujjana,bhūmiṃ.* On the streamwinner's faith, see **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3 (5).

¹¹ *Yassa kho bhikkhave ime dhammā evaṃ paññāya mattaso nijjhānaṃ khamanti.*

¹² S 47.26/5:174 f (SD 107.18).

¹³ S 47.27/5:175 (SD 107.19).

2.4.2.2 Those who “partly” fulfil the training of the path become “learners,” that is, saints of the path, short of being an arhat. This is what **the Sekha Uddesa Sutta 1** (also called **Sikkhā Sutta 1**) (A 3.85) says.¹⁴

One “fully accomplished in moral virtue, but gains only limited concentration, gains only little wisdom” (*sīlesu paripūra, kārī hoti samādhismim mattaso, kārī paññāya mattaso, kārī*), with the breaking of the 3 fetters, becomes **a streamwinner**. Further, with the diminishing of lust, hate and delusion, he goes on to become **a once-returned**.

One “fully accomplished in moral virtue, fully accomplished in concentration, but gains only limited wisdom” (*sīlesu paripūra, kārī hoti samādhismim paripūra, kārī paññāya mattaso, kārī*), with the destruction of the 5 lower fetters, becomes **a non-returned**.

One “fully accomplished in moral virtue, concentration and wisdom” (*sīlesu paripūra, kārī hoti samādhismim paripūra, kārī paññāya paripūra, kārī*), with the destruction of the mental influxes (*āsava-k, kha-ya*)—that is, the destruction of the 5 higher fetters—becomes **an arhat**.

“Thus, bhikkhus, those who train partially gain partial result, those who train fully gain full results. These training-rules are not fruitless, I say!” (*Iti kho bhikkhave padesaṃ padesa, kārī ārādheti paripūraṃ paripūra, kārī avajjhāni [vī avajjhānī] tv-evāhaṃ bhikkhve sikkhāpadāni vadāmi*). The other 2 Sekha Uddesa Suttas 2+3 (A 3.86+87), too, end with these very same words.¹⁵

— — —

¹⁴ A 3.85/1:231 f, (SD 3.3(2)).

¹⁵ A 3.86/1:234,7-9 (SD 80.13); A 3.87/1:235,11-13 (SD 80.14).

SD 56.9a**(Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 1****The 1st Discourse (on the Faculties) in Brief**

S 48.12/5:200

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**. *Arahata*

If they are weaker than¹⁶ that, one is **a non-returner**;¹⁷
 if still weaker, **a once-returner**;
 if still weaker, **a streamwinner**;
 if still weaker, **a truth-follower**;¹⁸
 if still weaker, **a faith-follower**.”

anāgāmī
sakad-āgāmī
sotāpanna
dhammānusāri
saddhā'nusāri

evam

¹⁶ See foll n. Comy: Weaker “by way of those faculties” (*tehi indriyehi*) (SA 3:234,25).

¹⁷ *Tato mudutarehi anāgāmi hoti*. On the non-returner, see **(Indriya) Vitthāra S 1** (S 48.15,3.2), SD 56.10a.

¹⁸ On the difference between the *dhammānusāri* and the *saddhā'nusāri*, see [2.3.3].

SD 56.9b**(Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 2****The 2nd Discourse (on the Faculties) in Brief**

S 48.13/5:200 (Differences in the 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.

<p>3 One who has completed and fulfilled these 5 faculties is If they are weaker than that, one is if still weaker, if still weaker, if still weaker, if still weaker,</p>	<p><u>an arhat.</u> a non-returner; a once-returner; a streamwinner; a truth-follower; a faith-follower. [S2]</p>
--	--

4 Thus, bhikshus, due to a difference in faculties there is a difference in fruits; due to a *difference in fruits*,¹⁹ there is a difference in persons.²⁰ [2.2.1] [201]

evaṃ

¹⁹ All MSS except Ee read *phala, vemattatā*. Only Ee has *wr bala, vemattatā*. Comy glosses *phala, vemattatā* as an instrumental, “by a variety of fruitions” (*phala, nānattena*, SA 3:235,31).

²⁰ *Iti kho bhikkhave indriya, vemattatā phala, vemattatā hoti, phala, vemattatā puggala, vemattatā.*

SD 56.9c**(Indriya) Saṅkhitta Sutta 3****The 3rd Discourse (on the Faculties) in Brief**

S 48.14/5:201 (Fulfilment of the 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.

If they are weaker than that, one is
if still weaker,
if still weaker,
if still weaker,
if still weaker,

a non-returner;
a once-returner;
a streamwinner;
a truth-follower;
a faith-follower. [§2]

4 Thus, bhikshus, one who fulfils them fully succeeds; one who partly fulfils them partly succeeds. The 5 faculties, bhikshus, are not barren, I say.”²¹ [2.3.1]

evaṃ

200616 200623 200906

²¹ *Iti kho bhikkhave paripūraṃ paripūrakārī ārādheti, padesaṃ padesa, kārī ārādheti, avañjhān’itv-evāhaṃ bhikkhave pañc’indriyāni vadāmi. Avañjhān’itv-evāhaṃ = avañjhāni iti eva ahaṃ. On “partly” (padesa): [2.4].*