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Dvaya Sutta 1

Paṭhama Dvaya Sutta The 1st Dyad Discourse | S 35.92
 Theme: The sense-faculties and their respective objects
 Translated and annotated by Piya Tan ©2021

1 Sutta summary

The Dvaya Sutta 1 (S 35.92) is a very short text stating how each of the 6 sense-faculties interacts with their own object.

2 Sutta significance

2.1 The Dvaya Sutta 1 (S 35.92) seems incomplete in itself. In fact, its structure and contents are similar to those of **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), which seems to be a full blown version of it, that is, as a 6 sense-base teaching.¹ The Sabba Sutta describes **the “12 sense-bases”** (*dvādas’āyatana*)—the 6 internal sense-bases (*ajjhattik’āyatana*) (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and 6 external sense-bases (form, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought) (*bāhir’āyatana*) to be the totality of our experiences.²

2.2 SENSING, PERCEPTION AND CONCEPTION

2.2.1 The Dvaya Sutta 1 also serves as an introduction to **the Dvaya Sutta 2** (S 35.93), a rare presentation that integrates the 6 sense-base model and the 5-aggregate model. The purpose of this integrated model is to highlight the role of **the mind**, as not only functioning behind our physical sense-experiences (seeing, etc), but also with what often happens following that.

With a sensing experience (seeing, etc—when “contacted,” when the sense-faculty, its subject and consciousness meet), “one feels ... one intends ... one perceives”—these are, respectively, the aggregates of **feeling**, of **formations** and of **perception**, which are three of the 5 aggregates. This is the essence of the Dvaya Sutta 2.³

2.2.2 The mind can, on its own, from memories of sense-experiences, create or imagine its own ideas, and project them onto external realities. **The Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18), for example, describes how a sense-experience (contact) leads to feeling, perceiving, thinking and mental proliferating, that is, a “proliferation of conception and perception” (*papañca,saññā,saṅkhā*), a flooding of conceptions and perceptions in our mind.⁴

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¹ S 35.23/4:15 (SD 7.1).

² See SD 57.39 (2.1.1).

³ See S 35.93 (SD 57.39).

⁴ M 18,16/1:111 f (SD 6.14). See SD 57.39 (2.2.1.2).

Dvaya Sutta 1

The 1st Dyad Discourse

S 35.92

2 “Bhikshus, I will teach you **the dyad**. Listen to it.

“And what, bhikshus, is the dyad?

3 The eye and forms, the ear and sounds, the nose and odours, the tongue and tastes, the body and touches, the mind and thoughts.

This, bhikshus, is called the dyad.

4 If anyone, bhikshus, should speak thus:

‘Having rejected this dyad, I shall make known another dyad’—that would be a mere empty boast on his part. If he was questioned, he would not be able to reply and, further, he would meet with vexation.

5 What is the reason for this? Because, bhikshus, it would not be within his domain.”⁵

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⁵ *Yathā taṃ bhikkhave avisayasmiṃ*. As at **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1. Comy: Beings are surely vexed when it is not within their domain. Just as it is not within one’s domain to cross over a deep body of water while carrying a stone place on one’s head, or to drag the sun and the moon off their courses, so that one would only meet with vexation in attempting so; even so, one would be vexed when one attempts what is not within one’s domain. (SA:-Be 3:5,12-15; SA:Ee2:358,9-14)