AN 4.162 — AN 4:162 (Modes of Practice) in Detail | Vitthāra Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

(Modes of Practice) in Detail

Vitthāra Sutta (AN 4:162)

“Monks, there are these four modes of practice. Which four? Painful practice with slow intuition, painful practice with quick intuition, pleasant practice with slow intuition, & pleasant practice with quick intuition.

“And which is painful practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally of an intensely passionate nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of passion. Or he is normally of an intensely aversive nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of aversion. Or he is normally of an intensely deluded

nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his—the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment—appear weakly. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy1 that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with slow intuition.

“And which is painful practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally of an intensely passionate nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of passion. Or he is normally of an intensely aversive nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of aversion. Or he is normally of an intensely deluded nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his—the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment—appear intensely. Because of their intensity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with quick intuition.

“And which is pleasant practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally not of an intensely passionate nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of passion. Or he is normally not of an intensely aversive nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of aversion. Or he is normally not of an intensely deluded nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his—the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment—appear weakly. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with slow intuition.

“And which is pleasant practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally not of an intensely passionate nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of passion. Or he is normally not of an intensely aversive nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of aversion. Or he is normally not of an intensely deluded nature. He does not perpetually experience pain & distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his—the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment—appear intensely. Because of their intensity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with quick intuition.

“These are the four modes of practice.”

Note

1. According to the Commentary, this means the concentration forming the path. This is apparently a reference to this passage in Sn 2:1:

What the excellent Awakened One extolled as pure

and called the concentration

of unmediated knowing:

No equal to that concentration can be found.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Dhamma.

By this truth may there be well-being.