

**A discourse on**

# **MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA**

**by**

**The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw  
of  
Burma**



**Translated by U Htin Fatt (Maung Htin)**

Buddhasāsanā Nuggaha Organization

Mahāsi Thāthana Yeikthā

Rangoon

A DISCOURSE

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A DISCOURSE  
ON  
MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

(Delivered on the 8th. waning of Wāgaung, 1338 B.E.)

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INTRODUCTION

Mālukyaputta Sutta supplies us with the fundamental knowledge about the principles and practice of Vipassanā, insight-meditation. It has been incorporated in the Pāli Canon as Saṃyutta Nikāya, and the twenty-four stanzas given in it can also be found in Vīsati Nipāta of Thera Gāthā. It was preached by Buddha at the request of bhikkhu Mālukyaputta, the son of a female devotee by the name of Malukya, or Mālunkya, if we go according to the Ceylonese Texts. His request is in the following words.

*Sādhu me bhante bhagavā saṅkhittena dhammaṁ detesu. Yamahaṁ bhagavato dhammaṁ sutvā eko vnpakattho appamatto ātāpi p. hitatto vihareyaṁ.*

Reverend Sir! I stand to be benefited by your preaching of the Dhamma in brief. Having heard its essence I will abide in it in solitude, practising it with vigilance, right exertion and singleness of purpose.



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In effect Mālukyaputta was asking the Blessed One to prescribe for him succinctly any of the subjects of meditation, *kammaṭṭhāna*, as he was bent on practising it in the right way in a quiet place. Solitude is very essential for meditation, for it rewards one with *samādhi*, power of concentration, which may be disturbed if one lives in company with others. But when one can hardly hope to get it, one should mind one's own business while others theirs. Under such circumstances it will do well for one if one does not speak to them or even look at what others are doing, fixing the mind on the dhamma.

### APPAMATTO

In the Text the word, *appamatto*, occurs. It means "vigilant." This is also very important. Yogis who meditate in this Yeikthā may be ordinarily held to be vigilant, never forgetting for a moment that they are striving after the realization of the dhamma. When they see an object they note it with vigilance. When they hear, when they smell, when they taste, when they touch or when they think, they are always mindful of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or thinking. Their slightest behaviour or movement never goes unnoticed or unobserved. They keep their minds alert, never allowing forgetfulness to get the better of them.



## ĀTĀPI

The Text also mentions *ātāpī* the root meaning of which is to heat up. When one is fired with enthusiasm, *ātāpī* may be said to be at work feverishly. Heat causes the evaporation of water or moisture. Enthusiasm causes the evaporation of all *kilesā*, a collective term for all kinds of defilements. No flies can hover around a piece of red-hot iron. Defilements may be compared to flies and enthusiasm to red-hot iron. Where enthusiasm is wanting, defilements gain entry into the inner self via the six sense-doors and torment ordinary folks who fail to note the phenomena of arising and passing away of all conditioned things. Defilements have no place for a meditating yogi. In the scriptures wetness is attributed to *kilesā*. When meditational exertions take place with the utmost zeal and enthusiasm, it disappears leaving one's mind absolutely dry and clean.

## FOUR RIGHT EXERTIONS

There are four categories of right exertion called *sammappadhāna*.

(1) Firstly, there is exertion to prevent unwholesome actions that have not arisen from arising. Its application is for the purpose of preventive action comparable to that taken by medical and health personnel in their campaigns against contagious diseases. As you are wont



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to encounter evil in your everyday life, you must be wary of contact with it and take especial care to prevent yourself from being contaminated by it.

(2) Secondly, there is exertion to prevent unwholesome actions that have already arisen from arising again. This is to deter evil from recurring. Besides, we must exert ourselves to have nothing to do with *anusayas* or inclinations towards *kilesā*, for, even though you can avoid evil for the moment, if you still have predispositions to it, you may be overpowered by it in the long run. The act of seeing or hearing prompts the arising of inclinations for sense-objects and such inclinations are known as *arammanānusayas*, which are the root causes of *kilesā*. With the meditating yogi they are incompatible. When he treads the Path all prototypes of *kilesā* called *santānānusaya* that infest the inner self cease altogether.

(3) Thirdly there is exertion for the accomplishment of wholesome actions which have not yet been taken up. If you have not done good as yet do it now *Kusala dhammas*, good deeds, must be acquired through the practice of charitableness, morality and mental culture. I urge you especially to practise insight-meditation if you have not as yet done it. If you are doing it with a mind to *vipassanā ñāṇa*, insight-knowledge, continue doing it till the Path is attained.



## PAHITATTO

(4) Lastly there is exertion for the development of accumulated wholesome actions till the Path is trodden. Usually a yogi is accomplished in all these four kinds of exertions to safeguard himself from committing evil, avoiding the recurrence of it, acquiring merit where he has not yet acquired it and developing it when it has been acquired.

## PAHITATTO

Old writers usually render the word, *pahitatto*, as "with a mind despatched to Nibbāna." Taking it in its literal sense, some would like to put forward the proposition that there is no need for a yogi to practise the dhamma once he has despatched his mind to the concept of Nibbāna. This is contrary to the tenets of Buddhist teaching expounded in the Texts. What the word connotes is exertion in the practice regardless of life and limb in the effort, fixing the mind on the Path, the Fruition and Nibbāna. This agrees with the commentaries on *Sīlakkhandha Sutta* regarding the subject of mental culture.

## BUDDHA'S ADMONITION

Buddha acceded to Mālukiya-putta's request saying:

How now, Mālukiya-putta! What shall I say to other bhikkhus when you are thus making this request? You are old; you



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have far gone advanced in age; you have reached the last half of the span of human life. Even so you ask for a gist of the dhamma as my admonition!

Buddha's words can both mean reproach and approbation. The old monk had not striven for the dhamma while young. Only when he was one foot in the grave he spoke of abiding in it. If Buddha's admonition were to be taken in that light, Mālukyaputta may be held to have been censored.

But here is Mālukyaputta to lead the life of a recluse in search of truth in spite of his senility. What would young bhikkhus say to it? They should certainly emulate him. In this context it may be interpreted that Buddha was full of praise for him. Today if a young man encounters old men and women striving strenuously for the realization of the dhamma he should follow in their foot-steps.

As Mālukyaputta repeatedly made the request, the Blessed One preached him the fundamentals of the practice of insight-meditation by posing a series of questions which, when answered, could reveal the method relating to vipassanā.

### VIPASSANĀ QUESTION I

*Tam kim maññasi Mālukyaputta. Ye te cakkhu-viññeyya rupā adiṭṭhā adiṭṭhapubbā, na ca passati. Na ca te hoti passeyyanti; atthi te tattha chando vā rago vā pemaṃ vā.*



## VIPASSANA QUESTION I

How do you understand this, Mālukya-putta? Answer me as best you can. There are certain visible objects which you have never previously seen either in the immediate or remote past, or even at the present moment or in the future. Can such objects arouse desire, lust and affection in you?

The *rūpa*, form, which one can see with one's naked eyes are a reality or *paramattha*. But there may also be others which present a verisimilitude of reality to the mind without being real, for instance, objects that appear in one's imagination or dreams. They are all known as *paññatti*, conceptual image. In the Text reference is made of objects in the remote past. They relate to objects of the past existence which are remembered in the present. In Buddha's days there was a woman by the name of Patipūjika, who could recall her past. In her previous existence, her husband was a deva called Mālābāri. She kept on remembering him in the present existence. It was with reference to persons like her that remote past is mentioned in the text.

That man can develop attachment to things dreamt of or imagined is understandable. But no attachment can arise in relation to objects which cannot be dreamt of or imagined. No love develops in man for a woman he has never



thought of or met in his imagination; and the same applies to woman.

To Buddha's question Mālukyaputta replied: "Surely, Reverend Sir, no desire, or lust, or affection can be developed in me for objects which I have never seen in the remote or immediate past, or in the present, or for objects which I can never hope to see in the future."

#### THE STORY OF ANITTHIGANDHA KUMĀRA

In the Dhammapada Commentary there is mentioned a story about Anitthagandha Kumāra in whom love developed for the kind of feminine beauty which he worked up in his mind. This means that if one can visualize an image in one's dreams or thoughts, desire, lust and affection can arise in one's mind. The story goes as follows.

Anitthagandha Kumāra was born in Sāvatti. He was a Brahma in his previous existence. While in the plane of the Brahmas, he was free from the shackles of sensual desire and lust. Reborn a human being, he had no tendency to have anything to do with the opposite sex. When he came of age, his parents told him to marry. But the misogynist refused saying, "I do not want a wife." As the parents insisted him on his taking a wife, he devised a stratagem by which he hoped to evade marriage. He sought the services of sculptors to make a



## THE STORY OF ANITHIGANDHA KUMĀRA

golden image for him of a beautiful girl and, that having been done, he told his parents that he would marry anyone who looked like his golden image. The parents, being rich and capable, hired the services of brahmins to go about the world and search for a bride whose beauty conformed to what their son had conceptualized in his sculpture done in gold.

When the brahmins got to Sāgala City in Madda Kingdom they heard the people talk of the beauty of a sixteen-year-old girl kept in seclusion in a seven-tiered tower. Having traced her, they requested her parents to allow them to assess her beauty; and when she was brought down from the tower, they were amazed by the fact that her beauty far excelled that of the golden image.

The go-betweens then disclosed their true intentions to the parents and asked for the hand of the beauty-queen to be given in marriage to Anithigandha Kumāra. Gaining consent, the emissaries gave the information to the parents of the bridegroom, who, on hearing the news that the bride was more beautiful than the figurine he had caused to be sculptured, was all agog to have her brought to his native town as quickly as possible. This is an instance of the kind of attachment that arises out of one's pure imagination.



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

Sāgala and Sāvatti are more than five or six hundred miles apart; and in those days the system of transportation was very much antiquated. Perhaps she was brought in a horse-drawn carriage. She became utterly exhausted during the journey, and when, unfortunately, she felt ill, she died.

When Anitthigandha Kumāra heard this news, he became sorely distressed for having missed the opportunity even just to see her renowned beauty. He could not eat or sleep. On knowing this Buddha took pity on him and so came to his house during the rounds for alms. The parents respectfully offered meals to Buddha and produced their son before the Enlightened One.

The root of sorrow and anxiety lies in *rāga*, lust, and the five constituents of sensual desires. Explaining this, Buddha said:

*Kāmato jāyate soko;  
Kāmato jāyate bhayaṃ;  
Kāmato vippamuttassa;  
Natthi soko kuto bhayaṃ.*

Because of sensual desires, grief arises and so does fear or anxiety. He who has been released from their dominance know neither grief nor fear.

Having heard this the young man attained to the stage of *sotāpatti magga*, the path of a



stream-winner. Previously he was against women, and thought that he would be able to hoodwink his parents with the impossible. Now that the impossible had been made possible with the discovery of a beauty who surpassed his own creation, attachment grew in him to torment his innocent mind.

MĀLUKYAPUTTA'S ANSWER

Mālukyaputta answered Buddha's question to the effect that no desire, nor lust, nor affection can arise from sense-objects that one has never experienced before, or from those that one is not experiencing for the moment, or from those that one can never hope to experience in the future even in one's imagination. The meditating yogis here in this Yeiktha understand this; but this may be a puzzlement to those who have not had the experience in insight-meditation. In 1313 B. E. I preached Mālukyaputta Sutta in Thaddhamma Thitagu Yeiktha in Bassein, when the Thaddhamma Thitagu Sayadaw's sister was one among the audience. She confessed that she became confused when mention was made of *rūpa* which one had not been seeing or which one had not been able to visualize in the mind. She wondered what sort of *rūpa* that might be. She was an intelligent person but her mind was unreceptive before she had practised insight-meditation. After she had, she became convinced of the truth of the dhamma.



She was so pleased with the discourse that she disseminated the knowledge she gained from what had been preached to other devotees.

But I think every thoughtful person can accept the fact that unseen sense-objects cannot incite *rāga*. Is it possible for you to conceive affection for an individual whom you have never met before? Not only affection, but also hatred cannot arise in such a case. Neither can delusion or wrong views. I have laid down the following aphorisms relating to this subject to aid your memory.

- (1) Where visible objects remain unseen, there *kilesā* ceases by itself.
- (2) Where visible objects are seen, there *kilesā* lies in wait.
- (3) Recollect with mindfulness whatever is seen and dispel *kilesā* that lurks in the mind.
- (4) The question posed by Buddha for Mālukyaputta to answer formulates the work-programme for insight-meditation.

It may now be clear that objects which one has never before encountered cannot bring up desire, lust and affection that arouse *kilesā*. From this statement can be adduced the fact that objects previously seen or known excite *kilesā*. Buddha intended to draw Mālukyaputta's attention to it by formulating the question. But



this is not the end of the matter. He wanted him to know that *kilesā* continues to arise every time the sense-object is recalled. Having seen a picture of someone smiling or scowling, you may recall it to mind, and every time you do it, the smiling or scowling face reappears. At each reappearance your mind reacts to it according to the impression that it creates. In the same way when you recall to mind the objects you have seen, they incite lust, and you become lustful. Anger and delusion may similarly be abused. Failure to note each phenomenon of seeing tends to produce unmindfulness of impermanency and unsubstantiality of conditioned things, when *kilesā* gets stuck to your inner self. If you diligently note it, you will come to the realization that it arises just to get dissolved; and when the nature of *anicca*, impermanency, becomes known, it can no longer torment you.

So whenever you look at a thing note what you see, mindful of its impermanency, giving no chance for *kilesā* to assert. It does not usually reside in your body, but, characteristically, it lies in wait for the opportunity to possess you. If you are mindful of its nature by noting the phenomenon of seeing, you will realize its transience; and it will subside. And your mind will remain unperturbed as if it has never perceived the object.



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And this understanding will enable you to formulate for yourself how best to perform the task of insight-meditation. That is why I say that Buddha's catechism reveals a working plan for vipassanā. Anon you shall hear more about Buddha's questions in regard to ear-object and ear-basis. Meanwhile I shall give you a brief account of insight-meditation exercises as instructed by Buddha.

### *A Brief Work-Programme*

*Ettha ca te Mālukyaputta diṭṭha suta muta viññātesu  
dhammesu diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattam bhavissati;  
sute sutamattam bhavissati.*

*mute mutamattam bhavissati;  
viññāte viññātamattam bhavissati.*

Mālukyaputta! As dhammas are seen, heard, thought or known, just let them be as they are seen, heard, thought or known at the moment. When you see, you just see it; when you hear, you just hear it; when you think, you just think it; and when you know, you just know it.

In the foregoing it has been shown that *kilesā* is denied the opportunity to arise when sense-objects cannot gain entry through the six sense-doors. The question now arises as to how to exert in repelling it when sense-objects do appear at the six sense-doors. Hence Buddha



## THE STREAM OF EYE-CONSCIOUSNESS

lays down the gist of the task of insight-meditation in relation to four modes of seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing. Here it may be noted that sense-fields of smell, taste and touch are included for brevity's sake in the category of *muta* or thought. Meditation on the Three Marks of impermanence, suffering and unsubstantiality centers on the four modes of seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing. These senses and the sense-objects are not "I," not "Mine," not "My ego-entity." The objects just appear for a moment at the sense-doors and the subject just sees or hears them for that moment, and nothing more. This is the gist of the method of meditation.

## THE STREAM OF EYE-CONSCIOUSNESS

Seeing is the phenomenon of contact between the eye-object and the eye-basis which brings about *cakkhuvīññāṇa*, visual consciousness or eye-consciousness which is usually rendered into plain Burmese as ခြေခံ (seeing-knowing) suggesting perception by the eye. Let me begin with the sequences of a thought-process that operates as a visible object presents itself to the eye-basis through the eye-door. Several thought-moments occur in their psychic order in each thought-process. Firstly, when the eye-basis receives the image of the eye-objects, *bhavaṅga* consciousness, life continuum, wakes up and starts working the process of seeing in three



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

thought-moments. This excites *cakkhudvāravājjana*, eye-door consciousness, that turns towards the eye-object. The image that is cast on the eye-basis by the eye-object in this manner is cognized by *cakkhuviññāṇa*, eye-consciousness, which, on its first arising, remains unperturbed by *kilesā*. It is immediately followed by *sampaticchana* which receives or accepts the image. After the acceptance, *santīrana* takes over and investigates it so that *voṭṭhapana* can determine who is who and what is what. Till now, *kilesā*, which has been lying in wait for the opportunity to rear its head, is as yet unable to operate. But as soon as the determining consciousness has made the verdict that the object is agreeable or disagreeable to the senses, affinity or repulsion develops accordingly when *javana*, impulsion, is brought into play. Normally it runs its full course of seven thought-moments. At this stage action is judged according to the moral or immoral tendencies; and now *kilesā* makes its debut as greed, anger and ignorance and shows its true colour. Then the two thought-moments of *tadārammana* occur. This thought-process describes the working of the mind on seeing an object. It is called *vīthi*, the path or course that consciousness takes in establishing itself.

### THE STREAM OF EAR-CONSCIOUSNESS

(All repetitious statements are re-arranged for better understanding and translated, supple-



mented by Nārada therā's explanations on *vithi* and *bhavaṅga*.)

The stream of consciousness that flows when hearing or tasting or smelling or touching or thinking is the same as that explained so far regarding that of eye consciousness. But I shall here review the whole process at the risk of repetition.

*Bhavaṅga* is a state of mind that works during sleep. (The closest English equivalent for it is life continuum, for, it is an essential condition for continued subjective existence). It does not turn itself towards sense-objects contacted in the present existence, but towards sense-objects to which the subject was attached at the time of death—consciousness in his previous existence. It is in contiguity with *paṭisandhi citta*, rebirth-linking consciousness, of the present existence, which is the first and foremost that arises at conception. It is assumed to be arising continuously, but, being passive, it subsides whenever thought-moments of other varieties of consciousness emerge. For instance, when a sense-object enters the stream of consciousness through one of the six sense-doors, *bhavaṅga* is arrested to make room for *dvārāvajjana*, sense-door consciousness, which at once takes up the function of reflection on the nature of the image cast by the sense-object that passes through the sense-doors. Then *cakkhuviññāṇa* or *sotaviññāṇa*



(ear-consciousness), as the case may be, occurs to be followed in its wake by *sampaṭicchāna*, receiving consciousness, which hands over charge of the image to *santīraṇa* that investigates into its nature. On the result of this investigation *voṭṭhapana*, determining consciousness, makes the decision as to who is who or what is what. At the end of this process, *javana*, impulsion, vibrates for seven thought-moments in an effort to deliver, as if it were, the report of the decision to *tadārammana*, registering consciousness or retentive resultant, which vibrates for two thought-moments (when it is running its full cycle) and subsides into *bhavaṅga*; and this subsidence is compared to the state of falling asleep.

When *voṭṭhapana* determines that an object is worthy of affection and love, immoral actions like anger and greed are aroused at the instance of desire for that object. This is the working of the unwholesome *jāvanas*. But this may not always be the case. At times the object may be adjudged repugnant when the subject might become inclined to doing wholesome deeds in order to avoid the consequences of unpleasurable experiences. At other times a beautiful object may be viewed by the subject with compassion and benevolence when moral actions are brought into play. In such cases *jāvanas* lend themselves to morality. It may be noted that there are 14 thought-moments from *avajjana* to



## SEEING ABSTRACT REALITY

*tadārammana*. When sense-objects are weak and not impressionable, the thought-moments of *javana* may end up with only five or six impulses although normally they run to seven.

When the phenomenon of seeing occurs you just see it: do nothing more. The Text says; " *Diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissti*, " (On seeing, let seeing be). The working of the thought-process on hearing or tasting a sense-object is the same as that of seeing. So when the phenomenon of hearing occurs, you just hear it. On hearing, let hearing be; do nothing more. This agrees with the saying: " *Sute sutamattaṃ bhavisati*." You shall hear more about it later, but now I shall deal with the abstract knowledge to be gained from noting eye-objects.

## SEEING ABSTRACT REALITY

When all thought-moments of eye-consciousness, sense-door consciousness, receiving consciousness, investigating consciousness, determining consciousness, impulses and registering consciousness have all done their part in the process of seeing, the abstract reality of the form and shape of the sense-object (or sense impressions) becomes manifest. Here the subject who is looking at the thing has not bent his mind on the concept of masculinity or femininity. At this juncture, *akusala javana*, impulsion towards immoral actions, may, perhaps, take place. But



as it is weak it is unable to cause strong reactions. That is to say, the results of immoral actions may not be so prominent. If, therefore, at this initial stage, when action-results have not yet gathered momentum, you will be able to take note of the object just as you see it, or in other words, just as your eye-cognition occurs. You will then experience the abstract reality of both the subject that sees as well as the object that is seen. The subject is, of course, *nāma* and the object *rūpa*. You have now come face to face with *nāmarūpa* in the *paramattha* (abstract) sense. Thus far you have not yet ruminated in your mind as to the masculinity or femininity of the object you are looking at. It means that you have not yet gone to the length of gaining conceptual knowledge or *paññattī* of what you see. So, at this stage, although it is true that you are seeing a thing, you can leave seeing alone as it is, as you have not started a-thinking. This agrees with the statement: "When you see, just see it."

#### FROM EYE-DOOR TO MIND-DOOR

It is no easy matter to stop short at seeing just as it happens. A beginner will not be able to catch up the thought-moments that make up the thought-process. Not being able to take in the phenomenon instantaneously as it arises, he has to think over the object that appears in his mind's eye if he really wants to



know it. What passes through the mind-door needs normally be identified, but the novice finds difficulty in adjusting his eye-consciousness to the object he is looking at in his efforts to identify it. So he has to fall back upon his mind-consciousness to do some thinking for him relating to what his eye-consciousness has encountered. This is how *vīthi* relating to mind-consciousness arises which may be elaborated as follows. First, *avajjana* sets itself in motion prompting the seven impulsions or *javanas*; that report the findings to two *tadārammanas*. Thus there are now altogether ten thought-moments in this part of the process. But if the sense-object is able to create only weak impressions, *javana* vibrates for less than seven moments. Mind-consciousness may be cut off only after five or six vibrations. When eye-consciousness has done its part, mind-consciousness takes over the former's job; but even then the latter is yet unable to distinguish the visible object into male and female. This stage is still in the realm of *paramattha* as before when eye-consciousness was working. But here note this one difference: whereas eye-consciousness cognizes the visible object of the present moment, mind-consciousness cognizes it as it recedes into the past. That is to say that mind-consciousness has to recall the past image as previously seen by eye-consciousness. Even now the image still remains *paramattha*. It is, therefore, extremely



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difficult for a beginner to be able to note the the visible object as it passes through the first *vīthi* of mind-consciousness.

### THE BIRTH OF CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE

Failure to note with mindfulness the object as it enters the avenue of sense at the first *vīthi* of mind-consciousness prompts the arising of the second *vīthi*. At this stage, *paññatti*, conceptual knowledge regarding the shape and form of the visible object, begins to emerge, which, at the following third *vīthi*, becomes firmly established. The subject is now able to distinguish it into male or female. This clear cognition relates to both form and name. So *rūpa paññatti* and *nāma paññatti* are conceived. This concept comes naturally in quick succession during the second and third *vīthi*; but it is a concept gained through *avijjā*, delusion, which covers up the true nature of things. The commentaries say that delusion has the tendency to hide. *Satipaṭṭhāna*; basic exercise in mindfulness, exhorts a yogi to observe and note every time he sees an object, because such observation and noting enable him to come face to face with *paramattha* reality before delusion works him up with *paññatti* concept. In the beginning, however, he will find it difficult to grasp the reality as he has not mastered enough strength in mindfulness, concentration and understanding. But when these three qualities become firmly



## POṬṬHILA THERA

rooted in him, he will be quick to realize the true nature of things even at the moment of the lapse of the first *vīthi* of eye-consciousness. When he is able to establish himself in *bhaṅga ñāṇa*, knowledge of dissolution, and *sankhārupekkha ñāṇa*, knowledge of equanimity towards conditioned things, he will find that it is not imperative for the stream of mind-consciousness to flow up to *javaṇa*, and that after two or three *voṭṭhapanas* he can realize insight relating to *chaḷaṅgupekkhā vipassanā ñāṇa*, six qualities of equanimity towards all the senses of seeing, hearing, etc. Thus it has been shown in Mūla Paññāsa Commentary; for fuller details please refer to my discourse on Vipassanā Practice.

## POṬṬHILA THERA

At the time of Buddha there was an elder monk named Poṭṭhila who was learned in the Three Baskets of the Law. But as he neglected the practice of mind-culture, Buddha used to chide him calling him Tuccha Poṭṭhila - - vain and useless Poṭṭhila. Realizing his shortcomings in the field of mind-culture, the monk visited the monastery of 30 Arahats in a forest and requested them to prescribe meditation exercises for him. A senior Arahata knew his pride of learning and refused to give him personally any advice, but directed him to approach other Arahats, who, likewise, told him to go to other juniors. So in the end he had only a seven-year



old Arahāt to rely on for the *kammaṭṭhāna* he was seeking.

The young samaṇera told him that he was young and inexperienced; but Poṭṭhila would have none of it. So the former gave him this instruction.

“Reverend Thera! There are six openings in a mound which an iguana makes his home. If you want to catch the animal, close up the five exits of the mound, and wait for it to come out from the last exit. There are six mind-doors through which six sense-objects can enter. If you close five of them and keep the mind-door open, your task will be accomplished.”

What the young Arahāt suggested was for Poṭṭhila not to allow *javana* merely to hang on to the five sense-doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue and touch, but to shut them up and note only the mind-door so that impulsion could lead him on to insight-meditation. This gave the learned monk a clue to the method of vipassanā-practice. When one sees, one must stop at the thought-moment of *votthapana* and note all phenomena with mindfulness. It is the same as saying: When you see, you just see it. Having practised meditation as suggested, Poṭṭhila attained Arahātship.

#### SEIZE THE RIGHT MOMENT

Here one must seize the critical moment when sense-door consciousness first arises. If one



fails to do so one stands to be deluded by conceptual knowledge. If you fail to note seeing as it happens, you shall live in the world of *paññatta*. For easy understanding, let me summarize the four stages of the process that I have explained.

1. First *avajjana* reflects as the object enters the avenue of mind-door consciousness.
2. That moment of reflection constitutes the first *vīthi* which tries to gain cognition through consciousness.
3. Then concept is formed in the next *vīthi*.
4. Finally the nature of the object is known by its name or *paññatti*.

*Nāma* and *rūpa* in the *paramattha* sense can be known through meditation on the nature of the phenomenon as soon as it arises. As one knows instantly what is actually happening, one gains conviction in the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. The following four points should also be noted.

1. Seize the first moment in the act of seeing.
2. Arrest the flow of consciousness at the first *vīthi* (to conform to the requirement of *diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati*.)
3. Differentiate *nāma*, mind, from *rūpa*, matter. (This is knowing the reality that mind as distinct from matter.)



4. Recognize the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

As development of insight-knowledge sets the pace, *rūpa paramattha*, form or matter in the abstract, will be rendered distinguishable from *nāma paramattha*, name or mind in the abstract. At this stage dissolution becomes clearly manifest. Progressively, as *bhaṅga ñāṇa* gets sharpened, the mind is able to appreciate dissolution arising in a state of flux when both the seeing subject and the seen object pass away together at tremendous pace. A yogi contemplating dissolution may even have the feeling of actually seeing mind-consciousness a-fluttering as it resolves into nothingness. The image of dissolution thus created is so hazy that he might have thought something is wrong with his eye-sight. Now that he has gained the experience of seeing how dissolution works, he stands to be benefited by his first-hand knowledge about *anicca*. This knowledge will lead him on to the revelation that what is not permanent is unsatisfactory and unsubstantial as he has virtually no control over his *nāma* and *rūpa*. It is the nature of *nāmarūpa* just to happen. This, indeed, is reality.

If we are mindful of the phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc., according to Buddha's instructions, we may realize that they just occur and nothing more can be said about it. Things just happen.



## ANSWERING A CRITIC

The meditating yogi need not go any further beyond seeing or hearing to examine whether what he has seen or heard is a male or a female. His mind does not dwell on *paññatti* or concepts.

## ANSWERING A CRITIC

Among those not used to contemplation or meditation there are doubting Thomases who question the propriety of noting the phenomenon. Some of them even advance the proposition that the whole process of contemplation is wrong. While at Chauk a man approached me with the criticism that *cakkhuvīññāṇa*, eye-consciousness, fails to recognize the genesis, *upāda*, and dissolution, *bhaṅga*, on the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. It can recognize only the visible object that enters its avenue. It cannot appreciate how that visible object is behaving. His criticism runs on the following lines; "As *cakkhuvīññāṇa* fails to see the visible object actually happening, how can observation and noting it contribute to the knowledge of genesis and dissolution of matter?"

According to the Commentaries and Abhidhamma, *rūpa*, form, comes into being four or five instants of *citta* before the event of eye-consciousness, and dissolves twelve, or at least ten or nine, instants after its subsidence. It is, therefore, correct to say that the eye-consciousness fails to notice the genesis and



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

dissolution of the eye-object at the moment of seeing. But here *sati*, mindfulness or recollection, comes in. It has the ability to recall the genesis and dissolution of the actual phenomenon perceived by the eye-consciousness. According to *sutta desanā*, if the phenomenon is made known by virtue of *sati*, the genesis and dissolution of the sense-object may be said to have been cognized by the eye-consciousness too.

Jhāna Sutta in Aṅguttara Nikāya mentions the fact that, when a yogi arises from *jhānic* trance, he is able to recall the *jhānic citta*, mind, *cetasika*, its concomitant, and *nāma*, aggregate of mind, which he meditated upon during the state of *jhāna*. He was aware of them with perspicacity as if he were observing them actually with his own eye-consciousness. However, the genesis and dissolution of *rūpa* could not be distinctly perceived for he had not concentrated his mind on it during the trance. But when *jhānic citta*, *cetasika* and *nāma* have been clearly understood, the nature of *rūpa* that depends upon *jhāna*, or that arises because of *jhāna*, can be understood by inference.

So on the authority of the same Sutta it may be shown that, when one is noting the phenomenon of seeing, one is aware of the genesis and dissolution of *rūpa* that forms the eye-object and that depends on the eye-consciousness. When a yogi meditates on *rūpa*, he sees



## ANSWERING A CRITIC

its arising and disappearance just as he sees lightning. So it has been said:

Mental formations renew their appearance, and just as they are renewed they perish in much the same way as a flash of lightning appears and disappears.

Now consider that flash of lightning. Who can truly say that he can see its *upāda* and *bhaṅga*, although it is a fact that he sees the whole phenomenon. Certainly he cannot see its beginning nor its end. But actually he sees it happen. To a yogi who possesses *bhaṅga* and *saṅkhārupekkha ñāṇas*, the fact is clear that the eye-object makes its appearance to vanish at the next instant in the same way lightning appears and disappears. This is all the more evident when sounds or tactile sensations form the subjects of meditation. When he realizes the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* through first-hand knowledge of the phenomenon of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, he may be certain that he has acquired vipas-sanā-knowledge.

Furthermore, if he continues to meditate in the way now suggested, *nibbidā ñāṇa*, knowledge of baneful things as disgusting, will be developed in him. When he gets bored with the aggregates, craving will be expelled; and in the



absence of craving, the Noble Path can be reached, when he will become a *sotāpanna*.

*Rūpa* that is cognized by eye-consciousness arises simultaneously with *atīta bhavaṅga*, passive consciousness inherited from the past. It also dissolves simultaneously with the second thought-moment of *tadārammaṇa* during the formation of the thinking-process. It is not, however, possible for one to be directly aware of these two aspects of consciousness called *upāda* and *bhaṅga*. They can be only understood through applied knowledge or *sutamaya*. Learning things at second hand, however, may not contribute to the awakening of insight-knowledge, and consequently to the realization of *nibbidā ñāṇa*. Ordinarily no one can actually say precisely how or in what manner *rūpa* arises whether along with the first, or second, or third aspect of *atīta bhavaṅga*, or dissolves, whether along with the second thought-moment of *tadārammaṇa*, or with the seventh thought-moment of *javana*. If insight-knowledge were to mean strict accuracy in regard to these types of thought-process, a yogi can hardly hope to attain it. But what the Commentaries on Abhidhamma aim at is for the yogi to gain knowledge through applied methods if necessary. Such details do not matter in the practice of insight-meditation. Suffice it to say that it is essential for a meditating yogi to note the phenomenon as it



## MEDITATING ON HEARING, ETC

arises in the same way as he notes the phenomenon of lightning. This agrees with the instruction: Note your going as you go.

## MEDITATING ON HEARING, ETC.

Mālukyaputta undertook to apply mindfulness to the activities of the six senses. If one is constantly mindful, one will just hear what appears on his ear-door, and no more. Now as I am delivering this discourse, you are hearing each sound or syllable of the words that I am uttering. If you concentrate your mind on each syllable that I am pronouncing, you will certainly miss the import and meaning of what I am trying to convey to you. If you just stop short at cognition of the sounds that I make, you will not be able to note them in the *paññatti* way. That is to say you will not be able to form any concept of what you hear. In like manner if you sniff a smell, you just end up with that smell. The stream of consciousness will not flow further than the sense of smell. When you receive tactile sensations and stop short at receiving them, you will just feel that you have touched something or something has touched you, and you will not go beyond that feeling.

In the phenomenon of ideation, too, you will just stop at the point where mind-consciousness arises without proceeding to arrive at formu-



lating concepts. In that case *kilesā* will be denied the opportunity of rearing its head. You shall hear more about it later.

Now let me bring you to mind the passage cited earlier regarding the phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc. "When you see, you just see it; when you hear, you just hear it; when you think, you just think it; and when you know, you just know it." This is insight-meditation put succinctly and it means that when consciousness of sense-objects arises, note the arising so that it just stops there. You may not be able to do so without noting the phenomena with mindfulness. Even when you are trying to note them in this way, it may so happen that your mind deviates from its main objective to investigating whether the object observed is a male or a female, especially when you are just a beginner in meditation. Some would like to assert that, by merely making an introspection into the characteristics of the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, one can render consciousness remain as it is as it arises. Some go so far as to maintain that the mind should be kept as it is when it will automatically stop itself at cognition of things seen or heard. That amounts to saying that the mind should be allowed to go free without any agency to watch over it. This means that mindfulness will be discarded. To such dissenters let me



## BENEFITS OF INSIGHT-KNOWLEDGE

ask this question: How would your mind react to harsh words that grind your ears, or to trash that inflames you, or to physical and mental pain that undermine your equanimity? Without noting the psyche with mindfulness, how can anyone keep it as it is? Let these people judge for themselves the true worth of their own asseverations.

When a yogi meditates constantly on the phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc., he will realize *bhaṅga ñāṇa* which will reveal to him the moment when dissolution occurs. If he abides in that moment, insight-knowledge will be established showering on him its benefits.

## BENEFITS OF INSIGHT-KNOWLEDGE

Such benefits are shown thus:

*Yato kho te Mālukyaputta diṭṭhasutamuta viññātabbesu dhammesu diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati; tato tvaṃ Mālukyaputta na tena.*

Mālukyaputta! If, when you see, you just see it, when you hear, you just hear it, when you think, you just think it, and when you know, you just know it, then you will arrive at the understanding that the objects of sense that you perceive have nothing to do with you.



This means that you can in no way get involved with the sense-objects whenever you perceive them. You wash your hands of *rāga*, lust, *dosa*, anger, and *moha*, delusion, that the sense-objects generate. When you fail to stop short at seeing, hearing, etc., your mind will cling to those passions, and whenever you recall them they will lead you all over again to *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*. Those failing to note the phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc., get heavily involved in sights, sounds, etc., with which they come into contact. Those who have developed *bhāṅga* and *vipassanā ñāṇa* with the practice of meditation realize the nature of the dissolution of both the objects of sense and the mind that takes note of them, and are able to grasp the mind that takes note of them, and are able to grasp the significance of the Three Marks. As sense-objects fail to generate attachment during meditation, no occasion arises for the meditator to recall them; and consequently *kilesā* becomes discarded. Inclination to *kilesā* caused by sense-object is known as *ārammaṇānusaya*.

The Commentaries enjoin a meditator to give a wide berth to unwholesome *jāvanas*. In fact abandoning such kind of impulsion comes naturally to him, for he requires no special effort in shunning evil. When insight-knowledge becomes keen and sharp, *jāvanas* fail to arise as the stream of consciousness flows only up to *voṭṭha-pana* and no more. In other words, subsidence



## INCLINATION TO NIBBĀNA

of the flow of consciousness occurs at the determining stage of *voṭṭhapana*, before impulses can start operating.

Buddha continued:

*Yato tvaṃ Mālukyaputta na tena,  
Tato tvaṃ Mālukyaputta na tattha.*

Mālukyaputta! When you have nothing to do with the sense-objects that you perceive, you will get no foothold on them.

## INCLINATION TO NIBBĀNA

Commentaries on Udāna Kathā elaborate on the word, "foothold." When a yogi loses hold of craving and egoistic views, absolving himself from the ideas of "I," or "Mine," or "My ego-entity," he cannot get rooted in sense-objects. About this Buddha has this to say:

*Yato tvaṃ Mālukyaputta na tattha, tato tvaṃ  
Mālukyaputta neviaha, na huraṃ, na ubhaya-  
mārena, elevanto dukkhassa.*

Mālukyaputta! When you lose your foothold on the objects of sense, your *nāmarūpa* (aggregates of mind and matter) will neither be here in this world, nor there in the other world. And this being not anywhere in both worlds means the end of suffering.

When ego-entity has no standing *nāmarūpa* ceases to exist in all possible worlds either in this or the other world; and this cessation means the end of suffering. It becomes apparent when



the yogi's mind gets inclined to Nibbāna through the realization of the Noble Path. When an Arahāt enters Nibbāna no vestiges of *nāmarūpa* remain. As soon as death consciousness occurs at the time of *parinibbāna*, he achieves *anupadisesa nibbāna*, all strata of existence not remaining. Regarding this the Commentaries say that when a yogi loses his foothold on *rūpa*, he is neither here in the six organs of the senses, nor there in the six sense-doors nor anywhere in the six types of consciousness.

This agrees with the actual experience of the meditating yogi who has acquired *bhaṅga* and *saṅkhārupekkha ñāṇa*. No *kilesā* can arise in him on his realization of the truth of the nature of matter in a state of flux. He takes a highly impersonal and objective view of the sights and sounds that he sees or hears. After that the attainment of *anuloma ñāṇa*, knowledge of adaptation, will qualify him for the higher path. Then he enters the stream of *gotrabhū* consciousness that exalts him to a sublime stage, overcoming the Sense Sphere lineage. On the abandonment of the Sphere of the Senses, he actually realizes Nibbāna.

Regarding this, Milinda Pañhā has this to say:

*Tassa taṃ cittam aparāparam marasikaroto  
pavattam samatikkamitvā appavattam okkamati,  
apavattamanupatto mahārāja sammāpaṭipanno  
nibbānam sacchikarotiti vuccati.*



## A SUMMARY OF THE SUTTA

A yogi, developing mindfulness step by step reaches the stage of non-occurrence (of *nāmarūpa*) having crossed over the stage of continual occurrence. O King! One who has entered the stage of non-occurrence with correct meditational practice may be said to have come face to face with Nibbāna.

## A SUMMARY OF THE SUTTA

The following is a summary of what Buddha taught Mālukyaputta with regard to meditation.

1. When you note with mindfulness what you see, or hear, or think, or know, you remain just conscious of your seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing, and nothing more.
2. If thus, you just see or hear or think or know what you are seeing, hearing, thinking or knowing you shall not get yourself involved in those phenomena.
3. Since you have nothing whatever to do with them, you shall have no foothold on the sense-objects that you perceive.
4. As you have no foothold on them, you are neither here nor there, nor anywhere, and the very fact that you exist nowhere means that you have realized Nibbāna where all sufferings end.

When Mālukyaputta had had the benefit of Buddha's advice, he expressed his satisfaction



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

in 24 stanzas. Saying "Well done, Mālukya-putta!" Buddha elaborated on them himself stanza by stanza, and I shall now make an exposition on them part by part.

### FAILURE TO MEDITATE ON RŪPA WHILE SEEING

1. *Rūpaṃ disvā sati muṭṭhā,  
Piyaṃ nimittaṃ manasi karoto.  
Sārattacitto vedeti,  
tañca ajjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

1. Having seen rūpa, form, one loses mindfulness, and getting absorbed in the charms created by it, one feels the onset of desire that tries to imbibe it.

It is human nature to get attracted to objects that appeal to the senses. You look at a thing because you derive pleasure out of it. At the moment of looking at it you forget the practice of the dhamma. Even a meditating yogi may be moved by visible objects that give pleasurable sensations; and his attention may be diverted from his noble purpose. Those not used to meditational practice would easily give themselves away to alluring *rūpa*. As soon as the concept of beauty and loveliness overpowers them, they will be forgetful of the dhamma. *Rūpa*, therefore, makes one forgetful or unmindful.

A pleasing smile usually gets ingrained in the heart of the subject who sees it. It is



## FAILURE TO MEDITATE ON SEEING

always a pleasure to recall it. He, therefore, keeps remembering it for days, months and years. His mind is now taking in *rūpa* as if trying to ingest or imbibe it.

I am speaking about this reaction to *rūpa* in general terms. Of course there are occasions when a man feels repugnant towards the object that he sees. At times he may be indifferent to it. Whatever be the case, the crux of the matter is that *rūpa* generates various kinds of feelings such as pain, pleasure, greed, anger and the like which bring about kamma-actions, action-results and eventually rounds of suffering.

Suffering brought about by *rūpa* is shown hereunder:

2. *Tassa vaddhanti vedanā,  
anekā rūpasambhavā;  
Abhijjhā ca vihesā ca,  
cittamassūpahaññati.  
Evaṃ ācinato dukkham,  
ārā nibbāna vuccati.*

2. A multitude of passions such as covetousness and rage, springing from *rūpa*, torments him who takes a firm hold of it, with the consequence that his mind becomes burdened with vexation. Nibbāna, therefore; remains far away from him who would carry the load of suffering rather than meditate.



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

All *rūpas* give rise to *vedanā*, feeling or passion. When an agreeable object is presented to an individual, he delights in it; but it is after all *sukha vedanā*. When a repugnant object is presented to him, he feels miserable, and that is *dukkha vedanā*. Such *vedanās* are the cause of vexation that torments him. If he sees a beautiful object, desire to possess it arises in him. He will get annoyed if he thinks that some one is thwarting his wishes to acquire it. Such dispositions of the mind are the results of the working of greed and anger. They worry him, and so he is forever busily engaged in malevolent activities against people whom he thinks are opposing him in the fulfilment of his desires. Prompted by greed and anger, he becomes almost worn out in his efforts to counter the opposition of his adversaries, real or imaginary.

Most people are not used to mindfulness throughout their lives. For them a change over from an unmindful to a mindful state will be difficult of achievement. One who cannot accept mindfulness will be accepting defilements which bring about the round of suffering. In that case Nibbāna remains far removed from him.

Failure to meditate will deprive one of the knowledge about the Three Marks of *anicca*, etc., inviting *kilesā* to add miseries to suffering, in the same way as adding fuel to the fire.



## MEDITATING ON RŪPA

I give below a summary of these points relating to *rūpa*.

- (A) *Rūpa* engenders tender passions that send mindfulness into oblivion.
- (B) The impassioned mind imbibes *rūpa*.
- (C) *Rūpa* gives rise to feelings of pain and pleasure.
- (D) Conditioned by greed, anger arises causing anxiety and worry.
- (E) He who thus accepts conditions that create suffering will always have suffering as his companion.
- (F) The round of suffering keeps Nibbāna away.

## MEDITATING ON RŪPA BRINGS NIBBĀNA NEAR

The foregoing stanzas paint a darker side of the issue; but I shall also give you the brighter side of it.

3. *Na so rajjati rūpesu,  
rūpaṃ disvā paṭissato;  
Virattacitto vedeti,  
tañca nājjhosa titthati.*

3. Passion remains undeveloped in him who recollects with mindfulness the *rūpa* that he has seen. Thus freed from lust, he refuses to imbibe it.



This stanza reveals the essence of the practice of insight-meditation. It enjoins the yogi to recollect with mindfulness the object he has seen and to meditate on it. From this it is clear that insight-meditation means noting the object that he has actually seen, and not the object that he has not. It can be accomplished only through practical wisdom and not through *sutamaya* or knowledge acquired from hearing what others say.

The Commentaries on Thera Gāthā say that a meditator must try to recollect the eye-object that he perceives as it presents itself through his eye-door to his eye-consciousness being mindful of the four factors of enlightenment or *sampajaññas*, namely, knowing what is beneficial, what is proper, what is objective and what is free from delusion.

Earlier I have told you about the *vīthi* relating to eye-consciousness. What I am speaking about now is the same thing. If you miss noting the process of seeing just as it occurs, try to catch up with the thought-moment of the mind-consciousness. One who can seize that moment and recollect the absolute reality of form or *rūpa paramattha*, may notice the dissolution of both the sense-object and the eye-consciousness at the moment of seeing. When one concentrates only on the act of seeing without thinking over what one has seen, visual



perception will last only for an instant. This agrees with the saying: *Diṭṭhe dhiṭṭhamattam bhavissati*. In that case defilements will have no time to assert themselves. In the absence of defilements lust or craving subsides.

Desire works up *vedanā*, sensations, or passions in this case, which beget craving, *taṇhā*, by means of which the individual embraces *rūpa*. A non-meditator, although fully aware of seeing the object, fails to note it with mindfulness, and he permits craving to arise. But a meditator does not actually see what he sees; and so he gives no chance for desire or craving to arise, for he has always been mindful of the dissolution. In that state, delusion is eliminated and wisdom arises. In the absence of defilements such as craving, kamma-actions, action-results and new becoming cannot be formed. He will be emancipated from suffering. This fact is emphasised in the next stanza.

4. *Yathāssa passato rūpaṃ,  
sevato cāpi vedanaṃ;  
Khīyati nopacīyati,  
evaṃ so caratīssato.  
Evaṃ apacinato dukkhaṃ,  
santike nibbāna vuccati.*

4. Looking at an eye-object, a yogi just sees it and just feels that he sees it, without assimilating *rūpa*, form, cast



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

by it. With him suffering ceases. He should practise meditation in this way; and if he so practises it, he is said to be within sight of Nibbāna.

As the yogi has not been assimilating *rūpa* which he notes with mindfulness, he is not inviting *kilesā* which brings about kamma-actions and action-results.

Commentaries on Thera Gāthā emphasise the fact that "seeing the form (*rūpa*)" means seeing it with the strength of conviction that what one sees is *anicca*, impermanence. Eye-consciousness brings about sensations of seeing which mind-consciousness takes to heart. The mind collects them and stores them up in the same way as a greedy person amasses wealth. The result is the upsurgence of *abhijjhā*, covetousness, one of the manifestations of *kilesā* on which kamma-actions and action-results depend. A meditating yogi refuses to accept eye-consciousness and its consequences in this way. In other words, he abstains from assimilating defilements that lead him to rounds of suffering. Each time he meditates on the phenomenon of seeing, insight-knowledge is developed. Each time insight-knowledge is developed, defilements are discarded. So he is said to be enjoying *tadaṅga nibbāna* - - peaceful bliss attained at the instant when pollution of the mind is eliminated.



## MEDITATING ON RUPA

A meditator, who is living in the world of realities or *paramattha*, will gradually realize insight-knowledge stage by stage. He will proceed from *nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*, knowledge of distinction between mind and matter, to *gotrabhu ñāṇa*, knowledge of higher lineage, through *anuloma ñāṇa*, knowledge of adaptation. According to the sayings of Paṭṭhāna, this will ultimately lead one to the knowledge of the Path and its Fruition. It must be noted that *anuloma ñāṇa* is the highest of the ten stages of insight-knowledge. Aspirants to Nibbāna must, therefore, engage themselves in the practice of vipassanā.

The following is a summary of the points discussed so far.

- i. On recollecting *rūpa* with mindfulness *rāga*, lust is eliminated.
- ii. In the absence of lust or desire, the mind refuses to imbibe *rūpa*.
- iii. Note as soon as one sees and be conscious of seeing.
- iv. If one meditates in that way, the round of suffering will cease.
- v. This is the way for a yogi to practise.
- vi. On the cessation of suffering Nibbāna will come into view.



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

### VIPASSANĀ QUESTION II

Now I shall deal with the second question posed by Buddha for Mālukyaputta to answer.

*Ye te sotaviññāeyyā saddā assutā assutapubbā,  
na ca suṇāsi, na ca te hoti suṇeyyanti, atthi te  
tattha chando vā rago vā pemaṃ vā.*

How do you understand this, Mālukyaputta? Answer me as best you can. There are certain audible objects which you have never heard previously, either in the immediate or remote past, or at the present moment. Neither can you hope to hear them in the future. Can such objects arouse desire, lust and affection in you?

Mālukyaputta replied that no desire or lust or affection could possibly arise out of sounds or voices that one had never heard before in the recent or remote past, or that one had not been hearing at present, or that one could not hope to hear in the future. This answer is appropriate. On hearing a pleasant voice and cognizing the individual who makes it, the hearer develops affection or attachment for the owner of the voice. As attachment is developed *kilesā* is brought into play and the consequences mentioned before follow. If one meditates on hearing, *kilesā* will be kept away. Reference is invited to what I have previously spoken about the phenomenon of seeing.



## PAÑÑATTI AND PARAMATTHA

### PAÑÑATTI AND PARAMATTHA

What has been discussed earlier about the *vīthi* relating to eye-consciousness applies *mutatis mutandis* to the stream of consciousness that I am now talking about; and so I give below the gist of the *vīthi* relating to ear-consciousness.

In the phenomenon of hearing an audible object enters the avenue of the ear-door; and we say that the sound is heard. This is the first *vīthi* relating to ear-consciousness.

Then the ear-consciousness makes due investigation as to the nature of the sound it receives. This is the first *vīthi* relating to mind-consciousness.

In the second *vīthi* of mind-consciousness *nāma*, name, suggested by the sound is cognized.

In the last *vīthi* of mind-consciousness, *paññatti*, concept conveyed by the name given to the sound, is apperceived.

As an object makes the sound, the ear just hears it. If you note this with mindfulness not going beyond it, you call a halt to the process of hearing. The stream of ear-consciousness stops flowing then and there. But if you are unmindful, your mental formations and activities will be brought into play when you may recall the sound you hear and think



over it. That means the stream of mind—consciousness has taken over. Even then, this *vīthi* of mind—consciousness is only aware of the sound. *Paññati*, concept, has not yet formed. If you can note this with mindfulness, your apperception ends here, stopping at the stage of the abstract (*paramattha*) idea of sound. If you fail to call a halt to further mental activities, the second *vīthi* would apperceive the concept of the individual making the sound, and furthermore, the third *vīthi* will proceed to distinguish the sex of the individual, and this will be followed by the development of affinity or repulsion that he instils in your mind. In this way *vīthi* conjures up *kilesā*. It is, therefore, imperative that you meditate on hearing just as you hear. I have summarised these statements as follows:

If you fail to note the phenomenon with mindfulness, you end up with *paññatti* knowledge.

To obtain *paramattha* knowledge the following should be borne in mind.

Note with mindfulness the instant you hear.  
(Note as soon as the *vīthi* of ear—consciousness occurs. Or, failing that, note as soon as the *vīthi* of mind—consciousness occurs).

Stop the flow of the process of thought at hearing. (If you can do this, the second *vīthi* of mind-consciousness cannot arise.



## FAILURE TO MEDITATE ON SADDA

This is in accordance with the saying:  
*Sute Sutamattam bhavissati.*

Then you can distinguish "*nāma*, mind, from *rūpa*, matter. (What you hear is matter at work. When you are noting, mind is at work. Mind and matter are thus distinguished. Both the hearing and the noting appear to dissolve at the next instant.)

In the end you will recognize the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

## FAILURE TO MEDITATE ON SADDA ON HEARING

5. *Saddam sutvā sati muṭṭhā,  
piyam nimittam manasi karoto.  
Sarattacitto vedeti,  
tañca ojkhosa tiṭṭhati.*

5. Having heard *Sadda*, sound, one loses mindfulness, and, getting absorbed in the charms created by it, one feels the onset of desire that tries to imbibe it.

When an audible object presents itself at the ear-door, the hearer tries to appreciate it, generally expecting it to be sweet and agreeable. But it usually tends to induce unwholesome thoughts, speech and actions. While he is paying attention to what he is hearing, he loses mindfulness. Desire arises in him if it is a pleasant sound. He takes in what he hears as if he is ingesting or imbibing it. Whenever he recalls



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

it, desire re-appears and torments him again. The story of Prince Nanda illustrates this point.

### NANDA THERA

Prince Siddhattha and Prince Nanda were half-brothers, the former being born of Mahā Māyā, and the latter of Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī, both being sisters wedded to King Suddhodana. Prince Nanda is four or five days younger. When Mahā Māyā died seven days after the birth of her son, Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī left her own son in the care of royal wet-nurses and brought up Siddhattha breast-feeding him herself.

Prince Siddhattha became Buddha after enlightenment, and came to Rajagaha to spend the first Retreat there. Three days after his arrival King Suddhodana arranged a wedding feast for his second son, Prince Nanda, betrothed to Princess Janapada Kalyāṇī. As Buddha was invited, he came to the palace where he had his meals offered to him. When he was about to return to the monastery, he told Prince Nanda to take his (Buddha's) bowl and come with him. The Prince, out of fear and awe for his elder brother, did as he was told, expecting that Buddha would take back his bowl and discharge him at any time. As he was about to leave the palace, Princess *Janapada Kalyāṇī* called out to him requesting, "My Lord Prince, come back quickly!"



## NANDA THERA

But, once at the monastery, Buddha asked his younger brother if he would become a monk. The Prince had no mind to don the yellow robe, but overwhelmed by awe he said, "Yes." So he was ordained. But he was never happy. So, one day, he complained, "I am not happy in the practice of this noble conduct. I can no longer abide in it. I shall revert to laymanship."

Now it came to the knowledge of Buddha that Nanda Thera was not happy in his monkhood. The Enlightened One, therefore, asked him why. The newly-ordained monk told him that Janapada Kalyāṇī's words calling him to come back soon were ringing in his ears.

Buddha took his younger brother by the hand and led him to a desolate field, recently burnt out by forest fire, and showed him a maimed old hag of a monkey sitting by the side of a smouldering log. From there he went to Tavatimsā, the abode of the first Plane of Devas, and introduced the love-lorn Prince to a bevy of five hundred beauties, all deities. Then Buddha asked for Nanda thera's opinion as to who was beautiful, Princess Janapada or any one of the deities. "Reverend Sir!" he replied, "Janapada Kalyāṇī, when compared to the deities, is very much like that old monkey I saw previously."

"Nanda," said Buddha, "Remain happy as a bhikkhu! I promise you that you shall win



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

one of the beauties you are seeing now.” When the two came back from the abode of the Devas, Nanda Thera became diligent in the practice of priestly conduct in the fond hope that one day he would have his desire for a deity fulfilled.

Now words went round the monastery that Nanda Thera was practising the dhamma with an eye to getting a beautiful deity for a wife. He was likened by his associates to a daily-wage earner, or even a bonded slave, who worked for material benefits. He became greatly mortified. He secluded himself, bent his mind on the object of *kammaṭṭhāna* and with the utmost effort and determination practised meditation till all *kilesās* dried up in his inner self. Ultimately he won the Path and its Fruition and became an Arahāt.

The lesson to be gained from this story is that, before being able to note with mindfulness the sound that one hears, one tends to hear it again and again as one recalls it. Then it gets stuck to the mind. The mind takes in all *vedanā*, sensations, conjured up by *taṇhā*, craving.

6. *Tassa vaddhanti vedanā,*  
*anekā saddasambhavā.*  
*Abhijjhā ca vihesā ca,*  
*citta maṣṣūpahoṇṇati.*  
*Evam acinato dukkham,*  
*Arā Nibbāna vuccati.*



## MEDITATING ON SADDA

6. A multitude of passions such as covetousness or rage, springing from *sadda*, sound, torments him who takes a firm hold of it with the consequence that the mind becomes burdened with vexation. Nibbāna, therefore, remains far away from him who would carry the load of suffering rather than meditate.

This needs no further elucidation as enough has been said about the attitude of mind on seeing, which, in the present context, may be substituted by hearing.

## MEDITATING ON SADDA BRINGS NIBBĀNA NEAR

7. *Na so rajjati saddesu,  
sadda sutvā patissato.  
Virattacitto vedeti,  
tañca najjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

7. Passion remains undeveloped in him who recollects with mindfulness the *sadda* that he has heard. Thus freed from lust, he refuses to imbibe it.

8. *Yathāssa suṇato saddam,  
sevato cāpivedanam.  
Khīyati nopacīyati,  
evam so caratissato.  
Evam apacinato dukkham'  
santike nibbāna vuccati.*

8. Listening to an ear-object, a yogi just hears it and just feels that he hears it,



without assimilating *sadda* created by it. With him suffering ceases. He should practise meditation in that way; and if he so practises it, he is said to be within sight of Nibbāna.

All these stanzas need no further elucidation. What has been said about seeing applies *mulatis mutandis* to hearing, and this also applies to summaries given in the form of aphorisms.

### VIPASSANĀ QUESTION III

Buddha posed the following third question for Mālukiya-putta to answer.

*Ye te ghānaviññeyya gandhā aghāyitā aghāyita-pubbā, na ca ghāyasi, na ca te hoti ghāyeyyanti, atthi te tattha chandho vā rāgo vā pemaṃ vā.*

How do you understand this, Mālukiya-putta? Answer me as best you can. There are certain odorous objects, *gandha*, which you have never smelled previously either in the immediate or remote past, or even at the present moment. Neither can you hope to smell them in the future. Can such objects arouse desire, lust or affection in you?

Mālukiya-putta replied that it was impossible for desire, or lust, or affection to arise out of *gandha* which had never been smelled or which one could never hope to smell in the future.



As desire cannot be developed out of an unknown quality, it is not necessary for a yogi to meditate on it. But those failing to meditate on nose-object and nose-consciousness will remain removed from Nibbāna.

#### FAILURE TO MEDITATE ON GANDHA ON SMELLING

Buddha, satisfied with Mālukyaputta's answer, said, "Sādhu!" and uttered the four stanzas in the same manner as before.

9. *Gandhīm ghatvā satī muṭṭhā,  
piyam nimittam manasikaroto.  
Sarattacitto vedeti,  
tañca ajjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

9. Having smelled *gandha*, odour, one loses mindfulness, and, getting absorbed in the charms created by it, one feels the onset of desire that tries to imbibe it.

Meditating yogis can rarely enjoy fragrant smell. They are mainly concerned with disagreeable odour which they receive with repugnance. Therefore, it is quite usual for them to have a longing for fragrance. This is attachment which makes one forgetful of the dhamma.

10. *Tassa vaddhanti vedanā,  
anekā gandhasambhava.  
Abhijjhā ca vihesā ca,  
citta massūpahaññati.  
Evam acinato dukkham'  
ārā nibbāna vuccati.*



10. A multitude of passions such as covetousness or rage, springing from *gandha*, odour, torments him who takes a firm hold of it with the consequence that the mind becomes burdened with vexation. Nibbāna, therefore, remains far away from him who would carry the load of suffering rather than meditate.

Here, as previously, the emphasis is on the fact that failure to meditate keeps Nibbāna away.

MEDITATING ON GANDHA BRINGS NIBBĀNA NEAR

11. *Na so rajjati gandhesu,  
gandham ghatvā parissato.  
Virattacitto vedeti,  
taṇca nājjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

11. Passion remains undeveloped in him who recollects with mindfulness the *gandha* that he has smelled. Thus freed from lust, he refuses to imbibe it.

12. *Yatthāssa ghāyato gandham,  
sevato cāpi vedanam.  
Khīyati nopacīyati,  
evam so caratissato.  
Evam apacinato dukkhaṃ,  
satike nibbāna vuccati.*

12. Smelling a nose-object, a yogi just gets the smell and just feels that he gets it without assimilating *gandha* created by it.



#### VIPASSANĀ QUESTION IV

With him suffering ceases. He should practise meditation in that way; and if he so practises it, he is said to be within sight of Nibbāna.

To wash your hands of *dukkha*, suffering, note with mindfulness everytime the sense of smell presents itself to your mind. Now I shall go on to the next subject relating to the sense of taste. It will show you how to practise Vipassanā.

#### VIPASSANĀ QUESTION IV

Buddha posed the next question for Mālukya putta to answer.

*Ye te jivhāvlññeyya rasā asāyita, asāyitapubba, na ca sāyasi, na ca te hoti sāyeyyanti, atthi to tattha chando vā rāgo vā pemañ vā.*

How do you understand this, Mālukya-putta? Answer me as best you can. There are certain gustatory objects which you have never tasted previously, either in the immediate or remote past, or even at the present moment. Neither can you hope to taste them in the future. Can such objects arouse desire, or lust, or affection in you?

Here let me make a passing reference to human weakness for pleasures derived from the sense of taste. Those who have never tasted fruits and cakes imported from other countries



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have no desire to eat them since they do not have the experience of enjoying them. But people who know how tasteful they are develop a craving for them. In the scriptures there are many instances of people giving up their lives just to satisfy their palate. Defilements can be dispelled if one meditates on eating or tasting noting the instant when taste just occurs.

### FAILURE TO MEDITATE ON RASA ON TASTING

13. *Rasam bhotvā sati muṭṭhā,  
piyam nimittam manasikarot,  
Sarattacitto vedeti,  
tañca ajjhosa tīṭṭhati.*

13. Having tasted *rasa*, flavour, one loses mindfulness, and getting absorbed in the charms created by it, one feels the onset of desire that tries to imbibe it.

Few ever meditate on eating and taste. Ordinary laymen are not aware of this practice of meditation. Even learned persons do not pay heed to it with the assumption that as one gets the taste of food as it is taken, there is no need to note it with mindfulness. This amounts to being irreverential to the teachings of insight-meditation. Others go so far as to say that meditating on taste is a sheer waste of time. Eating, they say, should be done quickly so that more time can be devoted to meditation.



## VIPASSANĀ QUESTION IV

Majority of the meditating yogis also is guilty of this unmindfulness. Once they fail to note the sense of taste as they take food, they lose mindfulness and become attached to it. And that means they cherish the desire to enjoy pleasure out of eating.

All eatables, therefore, are prepared and cooked so that they are delicious to the taste. When laymen offer food to the monks they take especial care to make it appealing to the palate. This shows how much we give importance to the development of gustatory consciousness.

I remember the observation made by the Sayadaw of Taungwaing Galay Taik Kyaung of Moulmein. Once he preached one of his devotees who offered food to him that it was usual for monks to partake of food offered to them with a sense of mindfulness which negates taste, as if what is delectable is repugnant. This drew a protest from the devotee who said, "Reverend Sir! It is most improper that you should view tasteful objects that I have prepared for your enjoyment as repugnant." It is quite logical for him to say so, because food for the monks are usually prepared by donors so that recipients could eat them with relish. Here the preparation of food to appeal to the sense of taste of those who are going to eat it is the responsibility of the *dayaka*, the donor. For us monks we abide by the principle to regard what



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

is tasteful as repugnant so that defilements cannot take their hold on us.

Priestly conduct, therefore, requires that when monks eat they eat with introspection in accordance with the principles of *paccavekkhanā*, self-examination. Unlike laymen monks take food not for enjoyment, not for indulgence, not for physical development, and not for opulence, but for maintenance of this body, for supporting life, for quenching hunger and thirst and for pursuance of the practice of purity of mind. If one can practise *kammaṭṭhāna* which prescribes concentration on the perception of the impurity of material food, *āhāre paṭikulasañña*, it is all the more to be commended. Regarding this please see Visuddhi Magga. But for our purpose the best would be to go according to Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

14. *Tassa vaddhanti vedanā, anekā rasasambhavā.  
Abkijjhā ca vihesā ca, citta massūpahaññati.  
Evam ācinato dukkham,ārā Nibbāna vuccati.*

14. A multitude of passions such as covetousness and rage, springing from *rasa*, taste, torments him who takes a firm hold of it, with the consequence that the mind becomes burdened with vexation. Nibbāna, therefore, remains far away from him who would carry the load of suffering rather than meditate.



## MEDITATING ON RASA

No elaboration is needed beyond the fact that smell here is substituted by taste.

There are three basic necessities in life—food, clothing and shelter. The whole world is teemed with hungry millions. The search for food is a great burden to them. People go hell for leather to get it. In the struggle for a living one tries to grab what one wants by all manner of means, fair or foul and one's anger is aroused when one encounters competitions or opposition from one's rivals. The result is a troubled mind for everyone. All these stem from the development of desire and attachment on the occasion of failure to meditate, in this case, on taste. When one is overpowered by defilements, one becomes tormented by kamma—actions and action—results that bring about the round of sufferings.

Most people do not care to meditate on food or on eating. It is almost a habit with them to keep food out of his meditating mind. This habit usually hardens. In that case they would be accumulating suffering which burns continually like fire for times to come.

## MEDITATING ON RASA BRINGS NIBBĀNA NEAR

15. *Na so rajjati rasesu,  
Rasaṃ bhotvā patissato.  
Virattacitto vedeti,  
taṇca nājjhosa tiṭṭhati.*



15. Passion remains undeveloped in him who recollects with mindfulness *rasa*, taste, that he has savoured. Thus freed from lust, he refuses to imbibe it.

This is a clear instruction to the yogi to apply insight-meditation to the phenomenon of tongue-consciousness as soon as food has been tasted. It does not say that taste that one has never experienced should be noted with mindfulness. I shall give you an example as to how to meditate on it.

When a monk sits before the table and sees the eatables laid on it, he notes the phenomenon of seeing. As he raises his hand to pick up food, he notes his raising of the hand. As he takes a morsel of food in his hand, he notes that he is taking it. As it is brought towards his mouth, he notes that he is bringing it. As it touches his mouth, he notes the touching. As he opens his mouth, puts the food in it, closes it, brings his hand down, touches the plate with his hands, and in the meanwhile, masticates the food, he notes each of all these proceedings. As his hands move and as he masticates food, he is conscious of the fact that *vāyo*, element of motion, is operating. As his hands touch the hot food, he is aware of the working of *tejo*, element of heat. When he feels sweet or sour on the tongue, he notes the qualities of taste. As he is thus noting all the phenomena



## MEDITATING ON RASA

connected with eating or tasting, he dispels desire, and eventually, lust or *rāga*.

When his concentration gets strengthened, he knows taste only as taste and nothing more. It does not occur to him that a particular dish of chicken curry is delicious. It means that he has abandoned the pleasurable tongue-object; and in this manner he does away with defilements.

The experience of the yogis in this Thathana Yeiktha can bear it out. When a meditator eats, he becomes conscious of the fragrant smell and sweet taste that the food generates. But as soon as he feels that he has come to know of this phenomena the smell, the taste, the nose- and tongue-consciousness and the *citta*, mind that notes the consciousness, dissolve away. Under such circumstances *rāga* has no opportunity to assert itself, for the yogi has cognized taste just as taste and nothing more. Some of the yogis used to say that as they had been noting the phenomena of tasting, they even failed to recognize the kind of flavour that the food gave. This is quite possible. For, in the absence of such defilements as desire and attachment, no pleasure can be derived out of the food that is taken. Where there is no attachment, one does not take a firm hold of *vedanā*, feeling, as if one is going to devour it.



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

16. *Yatthāssa sāyato rasam,  
sevato cāpi vedanam.  
Khīyati nopacīyati,  
evam so caratissoto.  
Evam apacinato dukkham,  
santike nibbāna vuccati.*

16. Tasting a tongue-object, a yogi just gets the taste, and just feels that he gets it without assimilating it. With him suffering ceases. He should practise meditation in that way; and if he so practises it, he is said to be within sight of Nibbāna.

A meditating yogi eats and feels the taste of food like any other individual; but as he denies himself the wherewithal to enjoy that taste, he does not commit either wholesome or unwholesome deeds in relation to taste. It means that taste here cannot bring about formation of Kamma-actions and action-results. Without them no new becoming can arise. And that will be the end of the round of sufferings.

Paṭiccasamuppāda says; *Vedanā paccayā taṇhā* (Feeling begets craving). But as no craving arises when feeling has subsided, *upādāna* clinging, remains unformed. Hence defilements, kamma-actions and action-results become inoperative.

As such causes of suffering are eliminated, a yogi, steadfast in the practice of insight-



## REALIZATION OF THE DHAMMA

meditation, attains to the stage of *tadaṅga Nibbāna* when peace is established for the duration of that elimination. This can eventually lead to the fulfilment of the Noble Path and its Fruition.

### REALIZATION OF THE DHAMMA

Many examples are cited in the Commentaries regarding the attainment of Nibbāna as one meditates on the phenomenon of eating. In Sri Lanka of the olden days, there were built many rest houses where monks on their daily rounds for alms could stop awhile to eat. It was usual for them to have their early morning gruel there, and set out for alms-food in the day coming back again to the same place to have their full meal. Most of them practised insight-meditation while eating and became Arahats. In those days this was the general rule rather than the exception.

In the Commentaries on Puggalapaññatti, the following occurs:

Making strenuous efforts in insight-meditation with the strength of implicit faith in it, an individual can realize the knowledge of the Path and its Fruition while walking, standing, sitting, lying down, or taking light food or heavy meals. No instances exist where he fails to attain wisdom when he so practises it.



I would like to urge you to note in detail the entire process of eating while you eat. If you are having your meals alone, this can be easily done. For each mouthful of food that you take, you may have about sixty incidents worth noting, and if you go on noting them, it may take you about an hour to finish your meals. But when you happen to eat along with others, this may not be possible; but I urge you to try.

VIPASSANĀ QUESTION V

The fifth question put to Mālukyaputta is as follows.

*Ye te kāyaviññeyyā phoṭṭhabbā asaṃphuṭṭhā asaṃphuṭṭhapubbā, na ca phusasi, na ca te hoti phuseyyanti, atthi te tattha chando vā rāgo vā pemaṃ vī.*

How do you understand this, Mālukyaputta? Answer me as best you can. There are certain tangible objects which you have never touched previously, either in the immediate or remote past, or at the present moment. Neither can you hope to touch them in the future. Can such objects arouse desire, or lust, or affection in you?

Mālukyaputta replied this in the negative. This is as it should be. Here it may again be emphasised that no *kilesā* can arise for sense-objects with which one is not familiar. Indige



## VIPASSANA QUESTION V

nous peoples develop no taste for foreign-made dresses which they have never seen before. The same analogy applies to friendship - - one never makes friends with people whom he has never met or seen before.

For most of us seeing or hearing is generally infrequent. We are not seeing or hearing things all the time. Since we are not occupied with eating all the time, tasting is also less frequent. Tactile sensations, however, occur every now and then. They are far more prominent than other sensations. They may be felt even when one is sitting or standing still, or when eating or drinking. So we are always involved with contact, day in and day out. When yogis meditate, they usually meditate more on contact than on any other sense-objects.

The Text says: *Gacchanto vā gacchāmīti pajānāti*.- Know that you are going when you go. When you note the act of walking - - extending legs, raising them up and putting them down, you are conscious of the entire movement connected with the process of walking. That means to say that the knowledge of walking has arisen, in which case let that knowledge remain as it is according to the instruction: *Mute mutamattam bhavissati* - - When you know, let that knowing be. Do not go any further than that. This meditation is on the activities of *vāyo*, element of motion, although at times *tejo*, element of



heat, and *pathavī*, element of hardness, may get automatically involved. But what is to be concentrated upon is *vāyo*.

The Text further goes on to say: *Thito vā thitomhīti pajānāti; nisinno vā nisinnomhīti pajānāti*—Know that you are standing when you stand. Know that are sitting when you sit. Here, too, you are being instructed to note the nature of *vāyo*.

If you are not satisfied with this method, note the activity of *vāyo* by watching the rise and fall of the belly as you are standing, sitting or lying down.

#### WHY MINDFULNESS ON RESPIRATION IS NOT SUGGESTED

In the ten *anussatis* or recollections, *ānāpāna-sati*, concentration on respiration, is included. It is concentration on breathing in and breathing out. Breathing is an act of *vāyo*. It may now be asked why I do not make any suggestion to take up the exercise of breathing in and out. In my own opinion, I agree that *ānāpāna* method could lead to the establishment of *vipassanā ñāṇa*. But it must be noted that Visuddhi Magga puts it in the category of *samatha*, concentration, as distinct from *vipassanā*, insight-meditation, when it enumerates the 14 *kāyānupassanās*, mindfulness of the physical body as follows:



## MINDFULNESS ON RESPIRATION

The three chapters relating to the four postures, the four factors of knowledge and the four methods of fixing the mind on *dhātu*, primary elements, are said to fall under the category of *vipassanā*, insight-meditation.....Whereas the two chapters dealing with mindfulness on respiration and fixing the mind on loathsomeness of the physical body are said to fall under the category of *samatha*, concentration.

Thus it has been clearly and unequivocally stated that *ānāpāna* belongs to *samādhi bhāvanā*, development of concentration, *samādhi kammaṭṭhāna*, exercises in concentration. Therefore, if we advocate breathing exercises we would certainly be open to criticism that we are teaching not *vipassanā* but *samatha kammaṭṭhāna*, in which case we will be unable to make a rebuttal of the charge made without going against the teaching of Visuddhi Magga. But we allow those who would like to take up mindfulness on respiration to have their wish. We impose no restrictions on them.

Paṭisambhidā Magga and Visuddhi Magga are explicit on the point that, when doing breathing exercises, one must concentrate his mind on the nose without letting the mind follow the course of the stream of air breathed in. The object is to enable the meditator to develop *upacāra samādhi*, approximate concentration, and *appanā*



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

*samādhi*, ecstatic concentration, to become enwrapt in *jhāna*. In the practice insight-meditation, there is no restriction that directs the meditator to note only one phenomenon at a stretch. But if we instruct the meditator to note all the phenomena of contact that take place in various parts of the body while breathing in and out, we will again be open to the criticism that we are going against the two authorities that I have cited. These are the reasons why we refrain from encouraging meditators to indulge in *ānāpāna* for insight-meditation.

### MEDITATION ON ABDOMINAL MOVEMENTS CONFORMS TO CANONICAL INSTRUCTIONS

It has been questioned if instructions to meditate on the rising and falling of the abdomen really conform to the requirements of the Pāli Canon. It may be answered in the affirmative on the authority of Sallayatana Vagga Samyutta where it is stated that failure to note the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* that come up at the six sense-doors results in the upsurgence of *kilesā*, while meditating on them brings Nibbāna closer through the realization of the Path and its Fruition with the suppression of *kilesā*. The present Mālukyaputta which I am discussing is also very clear on this point. I shall give reasons in support of the conformity.



## MEDITATION ON RISING AND FALLING

When Satipaṭṭhāna teaching prescribes observing the four *dhātus*, it is advocating the observance of the apparent phenomena created by the four primary elements. Abdominal movements indicate the working of *vāyo* to note which one fixes one's mind on one of the *dhātus* conforming to the requirement of *dhātu manasīkāra*. I prefer using ordinary language to highly technical Pāli terms; and so, instead of saying *vāyo dhātu*, I say the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. My employment of the ordinary conversational language agrees with Buddha's preference to simple speech when he gave the advice: *Gacchamīti pajānāti*. As the yogi's concentration gets strong with the continued practice of insight-meditation, he will come to realize the nature of the element of motion represented by movements of the abdomen.

On the authority of Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and other Suttas in Samyutta Nikāya, we also take it that a meditator should concentrate not only on the four postures usually mentioned in the scriptures but also on other postures or physical behaviour that can be met with in the ordinary course of nature.

If a yogi does not feel satisfied with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, he can try with meditating on sitting as he sits, or on standing as he stands, or on lying down as



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he lies down. But we do not insist a yogi to practise *ānāpāna* as we hold that it goes against statements in Visuddhi Magga and Commentaries on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, which speak of insight-meditation after the attainment to the state of *jhāna* through noting breathing in and breathing out. But we do not deter anybody from practising *ānāpāna*. Now I shall revert to my original theme.

### FAILURE TO MEDIATE ON PHASSA ON TOUCHING

17. *Phassaṃ phussa sati mutthā,  
piyaṃ nimittam manasikaroto.  
Sārattacitto vedeti,  
taṃca ajjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

17. Having touched *phassa*, tangible object, one loses mindfulness, and getting absorbed in the charms created by it, one feels the onset of desire that tries to imbibe it.

Tactile sensations arise everywhere in the physical body. When a living body touches an inanimate object, such sensations arise. When limbs of the body touch one another, the same thing happens. Those are external sensations of touch. Likewise there are internal sensations which usually pass our notice. For instance, we are unaware of the fact that blood comes into contact with muscular tissues imbedded in the body. Those not used to the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* cannot take full note of the external



## MEDITATION ON RISING AND FALLING

senses of touch, let alone the internal. So when you practise meditation loosely, you are liable to be forgetful of the dhamma although you will be remembering the beautiful when you see beauty. It is human nature to hanker after pleasurable sense-objects; and when they are discovered you forget to note the arising and passing away of the aggregates. At times you may feel repugnant to disagreeable sights you see or disturbing sounds you hear. This also makes you to be forgetful of the dhamma.

The five constituents of pleasure invite *kilesā* for all unmindful persons. Our way of living is one of enjoyment of pleasure. When we sleep on soft beds we are pleased with the comfort it gives. Latest fashions in dress give us a feeling of luxury. Even when we are doing the daily constitutional for health we are prone to get delighted with the thought that it is contributing to our body beautiful. All these delights and pleasures are a product of our surroundings which almost worship the five constituents of the senses. They generate *kilesā*. Nibbāna remains far removed from those with a mind of defilements. Hence the following stanza.

18. *Tasa vaddhanti vedanā. anekā phassasambhavā.  
Abijjhā ca vihesā ca, citta massūpahaññati.  
Evam ācinato dukkham, ārā Nibbāna vuccati.*



18. A multitude of passions such as covetousness and rage, springing from *phassa*, contact, torments him who takes a firm hold of it, with the consequence that the mind becomes burdened with vexation. Nibbāna, therefore, remains far away from him who would carry load of suffering rather than to meditate.

All that have been said about seeing, hearing, etc. apply to touching. What may be emphasised as usual is the fact that bowing to the wishes of *kilesa* one accumulates the mass of suffering which keeps one away from the path to Nibbāna.

MEDITATION ON PHASSA BRINGS NIBBĀNA NEAR

19. *Na so rajjati phassesu,  
phassam phussa patissato.  
Virattacitto vedeti,  
taṇca nājjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

19. Passion remains undeveloped in him who recollects with mindfulness *phassa* contact, that he has experienced. Thus freed from lust, he refuses to imbibe it.

In the course of meditating on the phenomenon of standing a yogi may feel tired or stuffy or painful or itchy. These are unpleasant sensations called *dukkha vedanās*. When they appear you must concentrate on the source of uncomfortableness and note in your mind the



## MEDITATION ON PHASSA

nature of tiredness or pain etc. As this constitutes meditating on *dukkha vedanā*, this method is called *vedanupassanā*. When you note heat that is generated, you meditate on *tejo*; and when you feel that you are touching a hard and rough surface, you meditate on *pathavī*. At times you may feel that the element of motion gets merged with the element of heat. You note this also and meditate on it. You may note every physical behaviour that occurs. You may bend or stretch your arms and legs. You may throw your head backwards and forwards. You may shut or open your eyes. You may wink. You may indulge in various kinds of movements as you dress, or as you wash your face, or as you take a bath. Even when you are urinating or evacuating your bowels, you must not forget to note the manifestation of *vāyo*. With practice you may be able to note even speaking as you speak.

Our injunction to note the rise and fall of the belly is for the benefit of beginners in meditation. If he likes he can take up noting the respiration. But in our experience we have come to know that some who began the practice of breathing in and out ended up with meditation on the rise and fall of the belly, and that they did realize the dhamma. We used to instruct the yogi whose powers of concentration have strengthened to extend his method of medita-



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tion to noting all that happen at his six sense-doors.

When *rāga* is abandoned through the practice of mindfulness, you will have no desire to grab *phoṭṭhapha*, tactile sensation, and swallow it up.

20. *Yathāssa phusato phassaṃ,  
sevato capivedanaṃ.*

*Khīyati nopacīyati,  
evaṃ so caratissato.*

*Evam apacīnato dukkhaṃ,  
santike nibbāna vuccati.*

20. On contact with a tangible object, a yogi just touches it and just gets the feeling of touch without assimilating *phassa* created by the touch. With him suffering ceases. He should practise meditation in this manner; and if he so practises it, he is said to be within sight of Nibbāna.

What has been discussed in the foregoing relating to other senses applies in the present case.

### NEGATION OF CORRECT METHOD

Among us there are some dissidents who neither practise the dhamma nor accomodate others practising it. They reject the methods relating to meditation saying that as everybody has been aware of his own physical behaviour, it



## NEGATION OF CORRECT METHOD

is unnecessary for him to note it with mindfulness.

The purpose of meditation is to prevent *kilesā* from arising from the time consciousness occurs in relation to sense-objects that actually come into contact with the sense-base. Meditation on things which have never been seen or heard is excluded. Dissidents, in their attempts to pass strictures on our method of teaching, maintain that noting the rise and fall of the belly is superfluous. This goes against what is prescribed in Mālukiya-putta Sutta or Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Everybody is aware that he breathes. It would be preposterous to say that he should be made to be unaware of his own breathing.

Those who put forward the proposition that one should not meditate on this physical body or parts of it such as head, limbs, abdomen are going dead against Buddha's teaching. Perhaps they do so because they have never experienced insight knowledge. When you see and note *rūpa* reflected by your own body, it perfectly accords with the instruction. *Rūpaṃ disvā patissato* . . Note *rūpa* when you see it. In the same way you must meditate on contact in accordance with the instruction: *Phassaṃ phussa patissato* . . Note contact when you touch. There is nothing in the Pali Canon and their Commentaries to suggest that anyone is to be



deterred from noting his physical behaviour. All sense-bases, sense-objects and sense-consciousness originate in the body, and if we are to be prevented from noting them, it will go against the teaching. Those who advocate such ideas are preaching adhamma.

I give below the method of insight-meditation in brief.

• Note everytime *rūpa* and *nāma* arise. This will lead you to gaining knowledge about their causes and effects. In the end you will recognize the Three Marks of *anicca*, impermanence, *dukkha*, suffering or unsatisfactoriness, and *anatta* unsubstantiality. He who practises in this manner can enter Nibbāna.

Now I shall give you the task laid down by Buddha regarding meditation on mind-objects that cause mind-consciousness to arise.

#### VIPASSANĀ QUESTION VI

*Ye te Manoviññeyya dhamma aviññata aviññataphbba, na ca vijānasi, na ca ta hoti vijāneyyanti, atthi te taṇhā chando vā rāgo va pemaṃ vā.*

How do you understand this, Mālukya-putta? Answer me as best you can. There are certain mind-objects, *dhamma*, which you have never apperceived previously,



## VIPASSANĀ QUESTION VI

either in the immediate or remote past, or even at the present moment. Neither can you hope to apperceive them in the future. Can such *dhammas* arouse desire, lust or affection in you?

As before Mālukyaputta answered this in the negative, and Buddha laid down the task for him to practise insight-meditation. For a summary of what Buddha taught him, please refer to page 14.

### FAILURE TO MEDITATE ON MIND-OBJECT ON THINKING

21. *Dhammaṃ ñatva sati muṭṭhā,  
piyaṃ nimittaṃ manasikarota.  
Sarattacitto vedeti,  
tañca ajjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

21. Having thought of *dhamma*, mind-object, one loses mindfulness, and getting absorbed in the charms created by it, one feels the onset of desire that tries to imbibe it.

Here the term *dhamma* meaning mind-object, is not used in the *paramattha* or abstract sense. It relates to the six bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and heart. It creates the idea of male or female. It embraces the material qualities of life and nutrition. It includes all concepts of humanity or divinity and of animals like cattle, etc., and of things like pots and



pans, and at places like houses. All sense-objects, whether real or imaginary, are *dhammas*. When ordinary individuals see things that exist in nature, they recognize them by concepts as trees, forests and mountains. Those accomplished in *sammasana ñāṇa*, investigating knowledge, and *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, knowledge of arising and dissolution of conditioned things, often see in their mind's eye visions of deities, Arahats and Buddhas, besides seeing real objects in flesh and blood. In whatever way they are seen, the individual who sees them develops attachment or repugance in accordance with his feelings of agreeableness or disagreeableness. Once these *vedanās* arise, he becomes forgetful of the practice of meditation, virtually assimilating, or ingesting, or imbibing what he sees. Then *kilesā* arises. This is explained in the following stanza.

22. *Tassa vaddhanti vedanī,  
anekā dhamma sambhavā.  
Abhijjhā ca vihesā ca,  
citta massūpahaññati.  
Evaṃ ācinato dukkham.  
ārā nibbāna vuccati.*

22. A multitude of passions such as covetousness or rage, springing from *dhamma*, mind-object, torments him who takes a firm hold of it, with the consequence that the mind becomes burdened with



## VIPASSANĀ QUESTION VI

vexation. Nibbāna, therefore, remains far away from him who would carry the load of suffering rather than meditate.

This shows the darker side of the life of a non-meditator. There is a brighter side for the meditating yogis, and this is given in the following stanza.

23. *Na so rajjati dhammesu,  
dhamman ñatva paṭissato.  
Virattacitto vedeti,  
tañca nājjhosa tiṭṭhati.*

23. Passion remains undeveloped in him who recollects with mindfulness the *dhamma*, mind-object, that he has apperceived. Thus freed from lust, he refuses to imbibe it,

Here *dhammas*, or, in other words, *dhamma-rammanas*, mind-objects, are not *paramatthas* but *paññattis*. But mind-consciousness is *paramattha*. It comprises thoughts and ideas created by the mind-object. It appears, and disappears the next moment after its appearance. It is *anicca*, impermanence. When a yogi sees an object in his mind and notes it with mindfulness, it disappears as soon as it has been noted. What actually happens is the disappearance of mind-consciousness that constitutes *nāma*. As the observer is intent upon the object, he loses sight of *citta* or *nāma* created by it. As he



## A DISCOURSE ON MĀLUKYAPUTTA SUTTA

notes it in this manner, no attachment arises in his mind. In other words, mindfulness dispels *rāga*, lust or passion. In such circumstances consciousness just takes place. It does not go beyond that. This is in accordance with the statement: *Viññatam viññānamatta bhavissati* - -When you know, let knowing be. If one fails to meditate on the mind-object, *vedanā*, feeling, arises to incite *kilesā*.

24. *Yathāssa jānato dhammam,  
sevato cāpi vedanam.*

*Khīyati nopacīyatam.  
evam so caratissato.*

*Evam apacinato dukkham,  
santike nibbāna vucceti.*

24. Thinking of a mind-object, a yogi just knows it and just feels that he knows it without assimilating *dhamma* created by it. With him suffering ceases. He should practise meditation in this way; and if he so practises it, he is said to be within sight of Nibbāna.

An idea must be noted as soon as it is formed so that inclination to *kilesa* can have no opportunity to arise. When the round of *kilesa* ceases, other rounds of *kamma*-actions and action-results also cease; and that particular moment of cessation of all kinds of defilements rewards the meditator with peaceful bliss; and



## EPILOGUE

that moment is the moment of *tandaṅga nibbāna*.

Be it noted that Nibbāna is within easy reach of everyone who practises insight-meditation. Conversely, it remains aloof from a non-meditator.

## EPILOGUE

Having uttered the 24 stanzas, Buddha concluded saying;

*Imassa kho Malukyaputta mayā samkhittena bhasitassa evaṃ vitthārena attho daṭṭhabbo.*

I have, Malukyaputta, given you a very succinct account of the method of noting the sense objects, and you must try to understand the wider meaning of it according to the 24 gāthas that have now been explained.

Rejoicing in what Buddha taught, Mālukya-putta, expressed his satisfaction, paid his homage to the Blessed One and departed. Then he retired to a place of solitude, applied himself with mindfulness, zeal and singleness of purpose to the practice of meditation, and, not long after, enjoyed the fruits of the sanctity of *Brahmacariya* (noble conduct), having gained insight on the spot. Now he had come face to face with Truth. For him no new becoming could arise. He had abided in the holiness of the Eightfold Noble Path, having



done all there was to be done, leaving nothing undone. And all this he knew. Now our Mālukyaputta had become an Arāhat.

Once when Buddha was in Sāvattthi for his daily round for alms, he was approached by a monk by the name of Bāhiya Darucīriya who insisted that the Enlightened One prescribe for him a brief religious instruction. Buddha, therefore, advised him to note seeing just as he saw, hearing just as he heard, knowing just as he knew, and thinking just as he thought in relation to sense-objects he encountered. These are his words:

*Diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattam bhavissati; sute sutamattam bhavissati; mute mutamattam bhavissati, viññate viññanamattam bhavissati.*

In this Mālukyaputta,sutta the instructions are the same. And so this method of vipassanā to note with mindfulness every time the phenomena of sight, sound, odour, taste, touch and consciousness occur is far-reaching although very brief. For nearly forty years since 1300 B. E., I have been preaching this sermon for the enlightenment of thousands of devotees relating to the subjects of the Noble Path and its Fruition and of *paccavekkhana ñāṇa*, knowledge on self-examination. I believe many among them have by now come to realize knowledge that can lead them to the Path and its Fruition.



## EPILOGUE

Now I shall wind up this discourse with a wish and a prayer, sharing merits we have performed in relation to charity, morality and mental development to our parents, relatives, and well-wishers present here, to all humanity, to all devas and to all sentient beings in the whole universe. May they rejoice in this *kusala* wholesome actions, and gain happiness both in mind and in body!

Sādhu!

Sādhu!

Sādhu!



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