

SN 54.3 – Suddhika-sutta, “A Plain Teaching”

The instruction in brief

Anāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā.

suddhika <i>adj</i> : 1. connected with purification, cleaning; 2. pure, simple; orthodox, schematised; justified (PED) āna <i>n</i> : breathing in, breath inhaled apāna <i>n</i> : the vital air which goes downwards; the out-breath; respiration (DOP) – ānāpāna : breathing in and out – ānāpāna-sati : intentness of mind on one’s breathing in and out (DOP)	bhikkhati : to beg for alms bhikkhu : almsman, Buddhist monk – <i>voc. pl.</i> bhikkhave bhāveti [<i>causative</i> of bhavati]: to beget, produce, increase, cultivate, develop – <i>pp.</i> bhāvita: developed bahulī <i>adj</i> : “to make much of,” i.e. to practice, in compounds: – bahulikaroti : to take up seriously, practice, devote oneself to – <i>pp.</i> bahulikata: practised frequently	bhavati : to become, be, exist (DOP) – hoti : is mahā- (in cpds) <i>adj</i> : great: big, important – <i>acc.</i> mahantaṃ used as <i>adv</i> : very much, greatly phala <i>n, m</i> : fruit; the edible product of a plant, esp. a tree (DOP) ānisaṃsa <i>m, n</i> : profit, advantage; benefit, blessing (+loc) in (DOP)
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Awareness of breathing, when it is developed and practised much, yields much fruit and gives many benefits.

The instruction in full

Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati kathaṃ bahulikatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā?

How then is awareness of breathing developed and practised much, so that it yields much fruit and gives many benefits?

Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araṇṇagato vā, rukkhamaṭṭhagato vā, suññāgārāgato vā, nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujum kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetvā. So satova assasati, satova passasati.

kathaṃ : how? idha : here, in this connection araṇṇa <i>n</i> : wilderness; forest, jungle, the wild (DOP) – araṇṇa-gata: gone to the forest (<i>pp.</i> of gacchati) (PED) rukkha : tree mūla : root suñña <i>adj</i> : 1. empty, uninhabited, 2. empty, devoid of reality, unsubstantial agāra , āgāra <i>n</i> : a house; the household life (DOP) nisīdati : to sit down, be seated pallaṅka : 1. sitting cross-legged 2. a divan, couch	ābhujati : to bend in, bend down (esp. in the pallaṅka posture); twist (DOP) – pallaṅkaṃ ābhujati : to bend (the legs) crosswise (PED) uju <i>adj</i> : going in a straight direction; straight, direct; upright, honest, right; straightforward – <i>ujum</i> <i>adv</i> : in a straight line, straight on, straight; in the right manner (DOP) paṇidhati : to put forth, apply, intend, aspire to – <i>gerund</i> : paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ <i>adv</i> : in front, before; in the phrase parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetva: ‘set up one’s memory in front’, ‘set one’s mindfulness alert’ (PED) – round the face, before the face, near, present (to serve) (DOP)	upaṭṭhapi (<i>caus.</i> of upaṭṭhahati): to bring near, provide; procure, fetch; make serve or attend, employ, cause to appear, bring about (DOP) so : he sata <i>adj</i> : aware, conscious (past ptc. of sarati: to remember) – being aware of sense objects in a particular way, i.e. devoid of any emotional and/or intellectual content (Wynne OBM 72) – <i>nom.</i> sato – understand as “dispassionate mindfulness or awareness” (GH) satova = sato + eva: that very awareness, just awareness ...
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When a meditator has gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut, they sit down, crossing the legs, making the back straight, and bringing mindful awareness to the fore. With that mindful awareness one breathes in, with that mindful awareness one breathes out.

Diḥhaṃ vā assasanto ‘diḥhaṃ assasāmi’ ti pajānāti, diḥhaṃ vā passasanto ‘diḥhaṃ passasāmi’ ti pajānāti; rassaṃ vā assasanto ‘rassaṃ assasāmi’ ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto ‘rassaṃ passasāmi’ ti pajānāti; ‘sabba-kāya-paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi’ ti sikkhati, ‘sabba-kāya-paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi’ ti sikkhati; ‘passambhayaṃ kāya-saṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi’ ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ kāya-saṅkhāraṃ passasissāmi’ ti sikkhati.

diḥha <i>adj</i> : long (in space or time); tall assasati , assasati: 1. to breathe, breathe in, breathe on, breathe heavily; 2. to recover one’s breath, revive, take courage, be comforted; 3. to put one’s confidence in (DOP) passasati : to breath (out), breathe hard, hiss pajānāti : to know, understand, find out (DOP) rassa <i>adj</i> : short sabba <i>adj</i> : whole, entire; all, every (PED) kāya : the body (DOP) – kāya refers to ‘the experiencer of sensation and feeling’ (c.f. PED)	kāya able to experience through its senses and so possess consciousness (Kuan 2008) paṭisaṃvedeti : to experience, feel, be aware of – <i>pp.</i> paṭisaṃvedita <i>adj</i> : experienced, felt (DOP) paṭisaṃvedī(n) <i>adj</i> : experiencing, being aware of (DOP) assasati : 1. to breathe, breathe in ... (DOP) passasati : to breathe (out) (DOP) sikkhati : to learn, train oneself passambhati : to calm down, become still; is allayed; is annulled (DOP)	saṅkāra <i>m</i> : the conditions or essential properties for a given process or result [see next page] kāya-saṅkāra : a bodily motive force, physical motion (DOP) – a volitional activity of the body; (Nyanatiloka) – “bodily formation” sometimes as bodily action in general, not just the breath (Anālayo SDP 132)
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1. When breathing in a deep breath one knows, “I’m breathing in a deep breath;” when breathing out a deep breath one knows, “I’m breathing out a deep breath.”

2. When breathing in a shallow breath one knows, “I’m breathing in a shallow breath;” when breathing out a shallow breath one knows, “I’m breathing out a shallow breath.”

3. One trains oneself, “Experiencing the whole body I’ll breathe in;” one trains oneself “Experiencing the whole body I’ll breathe out.

4. One trains oneself, “Stilling reactive bodily movements I’ll breathe in;” one trains oneself, “Stilling reactive bodily movements I’ll breathe out.”

‘Pīti-paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘pīti-paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘sukha-paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘sukha-paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘citta-saṅkhāra-paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘citta-saṅkhāra-paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘passambhayaṃ citta-saṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ citta-saṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati.

<p>pīti <i>f</i>: joy, pleasure (DOP) – rapture, euphoria, ecstasy, delight ... perhaps the best English word is “glee” – primarily a physical sensation that sweeps you powerfully into an altered state (Brasington RC 25) – five “grades” of joy are distinguished: slight sense of interest, momentary joy, flood of joy, ecstasy/thrilling emotion, rapture/suffusing joy (PED) – translate as “enhanced bodily sensations” (GH) sukha <i>n</i>: happiness, well-being, ease</p>	<p>citta <i>n</i>: – 1. the process of thinking, thinking, thought, thoughts; intention; state of mind(DOP) – the heart (psychologically), i.e. the centre & focus of ones emotional nature as well as that intellectual element ... i.e. thought – nearly always <i>sg.</i> = heart; <i>pl.</i> = thoughts (PED) – translate as “heart-and-mind” (GH) – citta itself primarily has the passive meaning of one’s ‘state of mind’ ... an abstract qualitative indication of the moral and cognitive condition of a human being at any given time. (Hamilton I+E 114)</p>	<p>saṅkāra <i>m</i>: the conditions or essential properties for a given process or result – anything formed (saṅkhata) and conditioned, including everything in the world (BD) – can denote both a process, and the result of that process (c.f. construction, building), hence ‘formation’ may be appropriate – ‘inclinations’, the stance we assume towards experience, patterns of habitual behaviour repeatedly prompted by encounters with the world, self-reinforcing, colouring the rest of our experience (Batchelor) citta-saṅkāra <i>m</i>: the conditions or inclinations of heart-and-mind (GH)</p>
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5. One trains oneself, “Experiencing enhanced bodily sensations I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “Experiencing enhanced bodily sensations I’ll breathe out.”

6. One trains oneself, “Experiencing well-being I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “Experiencing well-being I’ll breathe out.”

7. One trains oneself, “Experiencing reactive movements of heart-and-mind I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “Experiencing reactive movements of heart-and-mind I’ll breathe out.”

8. One trains oneself, “Stilling reactive movements of heart-and-mind I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “Stilling reactive movements of heart-and-mind I’ll breathe out.”

‘Citta-paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘citta-paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati.

<p>abhippamodayati: to please, make glad (<i>trans.</i> +<i>acc.</i>) – <i>pres. ptc.</i> abhippamodaya (DOP, PED) [pamodati]: to rejoice, enjoy, be delighted, be glad or satisfied]</p>	<p>samādahati (saṃ+ādahati): to put together, <i>jotiṃ</i> <i>s.</i> to kindle a fire; <i>cittaṃ</i> <i>s.</i> to compose the mind, concentrate – <i>pres. ptc.</i> samādahaṃ (PED)</p>	<p>ādahati: to place on, fix, settle, establish; kindle (esp. the sacred fire); accept, receive; add (fuel to fire) (DOP) vimuccati: to be released, free (of passion)</p>
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9. One trains oneself, “Experiencing heart-and-mind I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “Experiencing heart-and-mind I’ll breathe out.”

10. One trains oneself, “[With a contented] heart-and-mind I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “[With a contented] heart-and-mind I’ll breathe out.”

11. One trains oneself, “[With a composed heart and a collected mind] I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “[With a composed heart and a collected mind] I’ll breathe out.”

12. One trains oneself, “Freeing [With a liberated] heart-and-mind I’ll breathe in;”
one trains oneself, “Freeing [With a liberated] heart-and-mind I’ll breathe out.”

‘Aniccānupassī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘aniccānupassī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘virāgānupassī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘virāgānupassī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘nirodhānupassī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘nirodhānupassī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati;
‘paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati, ‘paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī’*ti* sikkhati.

<p>anicca <i>adj</i>: impermanent; not enduring; transient; not invariable; <i>adv</i> (-aṃ): not always; occasionally; <i>n</i>: what is impermanent; impermanence (DOP nicca)</p>	<p>anupassī(n) <i>adj</i>: looking for, observing, considering (DOP) [contemplating] rāga: passion, lust, desire (PED) virāga: absence of rāga (passion), dispassionateness, absence of desire (PED)</p>	<p>nirodha <i>m</i>: 1. ceasing, cessation; being no more; stopping, shutting off (DOP) paṭinissagga <i>m</i>: giving up, letting go, renouncing (DOP) – paṭinissaggānupassī(n) <i>adj</i>: considering, contemplating, giving up, letting go (DOP)</p>
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13. One trains oneself, “Observing change I’ll breathe in;” one trains oneself, “Observing change I’ll breathe out.”
14. One trains oneself, “Observing dispassion I’ll breathe in;” one trains oneself, “Observing dispassion I’ll breathe out.”
15. One trains oneself, “Observing endings I’ll breathe in;” one trains oneself, “Observing endings I’ll breathe out.”
16. One trains oneself, “Observing letting-go I’ll breathe in;” one trains oneself, “Observing letting-go I’ll breathe out.”

Conclusion: The instruction in brief repeated

Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evaṃ bahuḷikatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamsā’ti.

When awareness of breathing is developed and made much of in this way, it yields much fruit and gives many benefits.