

# Light on Pāli Pronunciation

*from* Niruttidīpanī  
Light on Grammar

by

Ledi Sayadaw

translated by

Anandajoti Bhikkhu

## Preface

The Niruttidīpanī by Ledi Sayadaw is an alternative explanation of the aphorisms of a grammar by the Sri Lankan scholar Ven Moggallāna,<sup>1</sup> who flourished around the 12th century, the standard explanation being contained in the Moggallānabyākaraṇaṃ itself.

Sayadaw's book appears to have been one of his early works and is well over 500 pages long in the Burmese edition, and it is therefore a major contribution to our understanding of the language, especially in its medieval manifestation.<sup>2</sup>

Here I am only translating the first eight of the explanations, those which deal with the sound-system and pronunciation in Pāli. In addition to the text and translation I have also added in tables and explanatory notes wherever I felt it was necessary or helpful in understanding the original text.

There are a number of obscurities in the original text, which I am not sure I have understood completely, so if anyone has any corrections or further explanations I would be happy to receive them.

The work arose out of a request by Ven. Khemaratana, who was giving a workshop on the Pronunciation of Pāli, and wanted some authoritative material illustrating the subject.

Anandajoti Bhikkhu  
October 2011

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<sup>1</sup> He founded one of the main schools of Pāli grammatical explanation; the first being the school of Ven. Kaccāyana, most probably also a Sri Lankan; and the third being that of Aggavaṃsa, a Burmese.

<sup>2</sup> It is generally agreed that the school follows the Sanskrit grammarians and is also based on the more developed language of the Medieval period. The virtue of Ven. Aggavaṃsa's grammar, Saddanīti, on the other hand, lies in the fact that it deals with the Canonical language.

*Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa*  
*Reverence to him, the Gracious One, the Worthy One, the Perfect Sambuddha*

**Niruttidīpanīpāṭho**  
**The Text of Light on Grammar**

**Ganthārambho**  
**The Commencement of the Book**

**Caturāsītisahassa-Dhammakkhandhāpabhaṅkarā**  
The Sun (who taught) the eighty-four thousand Teachings

**Lokamhi yassa jotanti, nantavaṇṇapabhassarā, [1]**  
Which shine in the world, the endless resplendent lustre,

**Anantavaṇṇaṃ Sambuddhaṃ – vande niruttipāraguṃ.**  
The endless lustrous Sambuddha – I worship as one who has mastered grammar.

**Saddhammañ-cassa Saṅghañ-ca visuddhavaṇṇabhājanaṃ. [2]**  
And also the True Teaching and the Community who share in the pure lustre.

**Moggallāno mahāñāṇī, niruttāraññakesarī,**  
Moggallāna, of great knowledge, the lion in the forest of grammar,

**Nadibyākaraṇaṃ nādaṃ Sogatāraññabyāpanaṃ. [3]**  
Roared the roar of grammar pervading the Fortunate One's forest.

**Tassatthaṃ dīpayissāmi, nānārāsīm vibhājayaṃ,**  
I will throw light on the meaning of that (grammar), in various collections and divisions,

**Ogāyha saddasatthāni navaṅgaṃ Satthusāsanā-ti. [4]**  
After going deeply into the teachers' words (concerning) the nine parts<sup>3</sup> of the Teacher's Dispensation.

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<sup>3</sup> The Teaching of the Buddha was traditionally divided into nine parts: *Suttaṃ* (Discourses), *Geyyaṃ* (Mixed Prose and Verse), *Veyyākaraṇaṃ* (Expositions), *Gāthā* (Verses), *Udānaṃ* (Exalted Utterances), *Itivuttakaṃ* (Thus-Saids), *Jātakaṃ* (Birth-Stories), *Abbhutadhammaṃ* (Wonderful Things) and *Vedallaṃ* (Catecheses).

# Sandhikaṇḍo

## The Section on (Euphonic) Junction

### Saññārāsi

#### The Collection of Terms

### Garusaññārāsi

#### The Collection of Important Terms

**Vaṇṇo, saro, savaṇṇo, dīgho, rasso, byañjano, vaggio, niggahītaṃ.**  
Sound, vowel, the similar-vowel, long, short, consonant, group, (pure) nasal.

#### 1. A-ādayo titālisaṃ vaṇṇā.

Beginning with *a* there are forty-three sounds.

**A-ādayo bindantā,**

From *a* to the (pure) nasal,<sup>4</sup>

**tecattālīsakkharā vaṇṇā nāma honti:**

there are surely forty-three letters (and) sounds:

a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	et	e	ot	o
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa					
ca	cha	ja	jha	ṅa					
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa					
ta	tha	da	dha	na					
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma					
ya	ra	la	va	sa	ha	ḷa	am		

**Atthaṃ vaṇṇenti pakāsentī ti vaṇṇā akkharā ti ca vuccanti,**

The meaning is explained, made manifest, therefore *vaṇṇa* and *akkhara* are said.<sup>5</sup>

**Nāmapaññattirūpattā nakkharan-ti,**

The forms of names and designations are not perishable,

**khayavayaṃ na gacchantī ti akkharā,**

it is said *akkhara* do not go to decay and destruction,

**nāmagottaṃ na jīratī ti hi vuttaṃ.**

it is therefore said that names do not fade.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Bindu* = *niggahīta*, written as *am* below.

<sup>5</sup> The verb *vaṇṇeti* is indeed a denominative from the word *vaṇṇa*; but it seems Sayadaw is also making a connection between *pakāsati* (from *pa+kās*) and *akkhara* (from *a+kṣara*), which is a rather fanciful etymology. He employs similar devices below, which are quite impossible to translate into English.

<sup>6</sup> The word *akkhara* is made up of the prefix *a* = *non* and *khara* = *perishable*. There is a belief in late Theravāda philosophy that Sayadaw upheld, that three things are eternal: *paññatti* (*designations*, another word for *nāma*, *names* here), *ākāsa* (*space*) and *Nibbāna*. This is not in keeping with the earliest texts though, where only the latter is eternal.

## 2. Dasādo sarā.

There are ten vowels at the beginning.

a ā i ī u ū et e ot o

**Tesu vaṇṇesu ādimhi dasa vaṇṇā sarā nāma honti.**

Beginning with these sounds there are ten sounds known as vowels.

**Sayam-eva laddhasarūpā hutvā rājanti virocantī ti sarā.**

With their own forms by themselves they shine, they blaze forth, therefore *sara* is said.<sup>7</sup>

## 3. Dve dve savaṇṇā.

The similar-vowels come in groups of two.

**Tesu saresu dve dvesarā savaṇṇā nāma honti:**

In these vowels there are groups of two vowels that are known as similar-vowels:

**a ā a-vaṇṇo, i ī i-vaṇṇo, u ū u-vaṇṇo, et e et-vaṇṇo, ot o ot-vaṇṇo.**

*a* and *ā* are *a*-sounds, *i* and *ī* are *i*-sounds, *u* and *ū* are *u*-sounds, short *e* and *e* are *et*-sounds,<sup>8</sup> short *ot* and *o* are *o*-sounds.

**Samāno vaṇṇo suti etesan-ti savaṇṇā sarūpā ti ca vuccanti,**

Through these sounds having the same tone, similar-vowels, similar form, is said,

**samānam rūpam suti etesan-ti sarūpā.**

these have the same form and tone, therefore they have the same form.

## 4. Pubbo rasso.

The former (vowels) are short (i.e. *a*, *i*, *u*, *et*, *ot*).

**Dvīsu dvīsu savaṇṇesu yo yo pubbo hoti so so rasso nāma hoti.**

In the succession of the groups of two similar-vowels whichever comes first is known as short.

**Rassena kālena vattabbā ti rassā,**

Because of taking a short time to speak it is therefore short,

**rassakālo nāma akkhidalānam ummisananimmisanasamakālo.**

a short time is known to be the time it takes to blink.

**Tattha, et ot iti dve ekapadasamyoge pare kvaci labbhanti:**

Herein, (describing) short *e* and short *o*, these two are sometimes found in a word before a conjunct (as in):

**Eṭṭhi, seṭṭho, oṭṭho, sotthi.**

**Ekapadasamyoge ti kim?**

Why is *in a word (before a) conjunct* said?

<sup>7</sup> This appears to be an attempt to derive the word *sara* from *sa* meaning *self* and *rāj* meaning *ruler*, perhaps ‘*able to stand by themselves*’ (i.e. without consonants) is what is intended.

<sup>8</sup> The *-t* at the end of *et* and *ot*, are symbols in Pāli grammar indicating that the vowel is short.

**Padantarasaṃyoge pare rassā mā hontū ti:**

It will not be short before a conjunct at the end of a word (as in):

**Mam ce tvaṃ nikhaṇaṃ vane (Jā 2.22)**  
**Putto tyāhaṃ Mahārāja (Jā 1.7)<sup>9</sup>**

**Kvacī ti kiṃ?**

Why is *sometimes* said?

**Ekapadasaṃyoge pi vaggantesu vā ya-ra-la-vesu vā paresu rassā mā hontū ti:**

It will not be short in a conjunct in a word where (it stands before) one of the (nasals) at the end of a group, or before *ya ra la* and *va* (as in):

**Enti, senti, eyya, bhāseyya, meṇḍo, soṇḍo.<sup>10</sup>**

**5. Paro dīgho.**

The latter (vowels) are long (i.e. *ā, ī, ū, e, o*).

**Dvīsu dvīsu savaṇṇesu yo yo paro hoti so so dīgho nāma hoti.**

In the groups of two similar-vowels those which come at the end are known as long.

**Dīghena kālena vattabbā ti dīghā,**

Because of taking a long time to speak it is called long,

**dīghakālo nāma rassehi diguṇakālo.**

a long time is known to be twice as long as the short (vowels).

**6. Kādayo byañjanā.**

*Ka* and so on are consonants.

**Tesu vaṇṇesu kādayo bindantā, vaṇṇā byañjanā nāma honti.**

In the sounds from *ka* to the (pure) nasal, these are known as consonant sounds.

**Atthaṃ byañjayantī ti byañjanā.**

They are said to indicate the meaning, (therefore they are) *byañjana*.

**Te pana suddhā addhamattikā,**

By themselves they are half a measure,

**rassayuttā diyaddhamattikā,**

together with a short (vowel) they are two half measures,

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<sup>9</sup> Here Sayadaw is saying *-e* in *ce* in the first sentence, and *-o* in *putto* in the second retain their length, even though they are positioned before conjuncts, because they are at the end of a word, see the next note.

<sup>10</sup> Modern grammarians do not agree with this. Wilhelm Geiger (A Pāli Grammar, PTS edition, §2.1 Note 1), writes: “The vowels *e* and *o* are of medium length; in closed syllables they are short and in open syllables they are long.” K R Norman in his note on this does not disagree. Ven. Buddhadatta (The New Pali Course, II.1) concurs: “It is to be noted that *e* and *o* are to be pronounced short before double or conjunct consonants (as in *khettam*, *bhonto*, etc.)” Here, the example *bhonto* which he gives goes against Ledi Sayadaw's explanation. We are unable to determine this from metrical examples as they would both be heavy metrically.

**dīghayuttā tiyaddhamattikā.**

together with a long (vowel) they are three half measures.

**7. Pañcapanākā vaggā.**

There are five pentads in the groups.

ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa	= kavaggo
ca	cha	ja	jha	ṅa	= cavaggo
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	= ṭavaggo
ta	tha	da	dha	na	= tavaggo
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma	= pavaggo

**Tesu byañjanesu kādim-antā**

In the consonants beginning with *ka* until the end

**pañcabyañjanapañcakā vaggā nāma honti.**

there are five pentad consonants which are known as groups.

**Kādi pañcako kavaggo, cādi ca-vaggo,**

The pentad beginning with *ka* is *ka*-group, beginning with *ca* is *ca*-group,

**ṭādi ṭa-vaggo, tādi ta-vaggo, pādi pa-vaggo.**

beginning with *ṭa* is *ṭa*-group, beginning with *ta* is *ta*-group, beginning with *pa* is *pa*-group.

**Sesā avaggā ti siddham.**

The rest (i.e. *ya ra la va sa ha ḷa*) are ungrouped.

**Vañṇuddese ekaṭṭhānikānaṃ byañjanānaṃ**

In the recitation of the consonant sounds belonging to one position

**vagge samūhe niyuttā ti vaggā.**

they are ordered into an aggregate of groups, therefore they are *groups*.

**8. Bindu niggahītaṃ.**

The dot (mark indicates) the nasal.<sup>11</sup>

**Ante bindumatto vaṅṇo niggahītaṃ nāma.**

The sound with only a dot at the end is known as the (pure) nasal.<sup>12</sup>

**Niggayha gayhati uccāriyatī ti niggahītaṃ.**

Being pronounced while restraining (the sound to the nose)<sup>13</sup> it is the (pure) nasal.

***Garusaññārāsī Niṭṭhito***

*The Collection of Important Terms is Finished*

<sup>11</sup> This refers to the way the (pure) nasal is written in Burmese (and other Indian languages generally), with a dot or *bindu*.

<sup>12</sup> Sometimes the *bindu* is written in place of the proper nasal sound (*ṅ, ṅ̄, ṇ, n, m*), but when written at the end of a word it is the (pure) nasal.

<sup>13</sup> It means restraining the sound from going out of the mouth so that it only goes out through the nose.

# Byañjanavuttirāsi

## The Consonant Usage Collection

**Ṭhānaṃ karaṇaṃ payatanaṃ.**  
Position, articulation and effort.

[Ṭhānaṃ]  
[1. Position]

**Cha ṭhānāni: kaṇṭhaṭṭhānaṃ, tāluṭṭhānaṃ, muddhaṭṭhānaṃ,**  
Six positions: the guttural, the palatal, the cerebral,

**dantaṭṭhānaṃ, oṭṭhaṭṭhānaṃ, nāsikaṭṭhānaṃ.**  
the dental, the labial, the nasal.<sup>14</sup>

**Tesu byattaṃ vadantena:**  
In those who are experienced when they speak (Pāḷi):

**yattha akkhan-ti vuccati, taṃ kaṇṭhaṭṭhānaṃ;**  
where (the word) *akkha* is said, that is the guttural;

**yattha icchan-ti, taṃ tāluṭṭhānaṃ;**  
where *iccha* (is said), that is the palatal;

**yattha raṭṭhan-ti, taṃ muddhaṭṭhānaṃ;**  
where *raṭṭha* (is said), that is the cerebral;

**yattha satthan-ti, taṃ dantaṭṭhānaṃ;**  
where *sattha* (is said), that is the dental;

**yattha pupphan-ti vuccati, taṃ oṭṭhaṭṭhānaṃ;**  
where *puppha* (is said), that is the labial;

**nāsapadeso nāsikaṭṭhānaṃ.**  
in the region of the nose is the nasal.

**Katthaci pana uraṭṭhānaṃ, siraṭṭhānaṃ, jivhāmūlaṭṭhānan-ti pi āgataṃ:**  
But some also come at the position of the chest, the head and at the root of the tongue:

**tattha siraṭṭhānaṃ nāma muddhaṭṭhānam-eva,**  
herein, (those) at the position of the head are called cerebrals,

**jivhāmūlaṭṭhānaṃ pana sabbavaṇṇānaṃ sādharmaṇan-ti vadanti.**  
it is said that all the vowels in general are (pronounced) at the root of the tongue.

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<sup>14</sup> It will be noticed that this is a very logical arrangement of the sounds by the place of articulation.

[Karaṇam]  
[2. Articulation]

**Karaṇam catubbidham:**

There are four ways of articulation:

**jivhāmūlam, jivhopaggaṃ, jivhaggaṃ, sakaṭṭhānan-ti.**

at the root of the tongue, near the tip of the tongue, at the tip of the tongue, and in its own position.<sup>15</sup>

**Payatanam catubbidham: samvutaṃ, vivaṭam, phuṭṭham, isamphuṭṭhan-ti.**

There are four types of effort: closed, open, with contact, with slight contact.

**Tattha karaṇānam sakasakaṭṭhānehi saddhimsamvaraṇādiko**

Herein, for those (four ways of) articulation through their very own position, being with restraint and so on,

**visesākāro samvutādi nāma.**

they are known by their special attribute as *closed*, etc.

**Tattha, kaṇṭhapadesānam aññamaññaṃ saṅghaṭṭanena uppannā:**

Herein, in contact with the region of the throat arise:

**a-vaṇṇa, ka-vagga, ha-kārā, kaṇṭhajā nāma.**

the *a*-sound, the *ka*-group (*ka kha ga gha ṇa*), and the *ha*-character, known as *gutturals*.

**Tālumhi jivhāmajjhasaṅghaṭṭanena uppannā:**

On the palate, with the tongue making contact midway arise:

**i-vaṇṇa, ca-vagga, ya-kārā, tālujā nāma.**

the *i*-sound, the *ca*-group (*ca cha ja jha ṇa*) and the *ya*-character, known as *palatals*.

**Mukhabbhantaramuddhamhi jivhopaggasaṅghaṭṭanena uppannā:**

With near the tip of the tongue in contact with the roof of the mouth on the inside arise:

**ṭa-vagga, ra-ḷa-kārā muddhajā nāma.**

the *ṭa*-group (*ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa*), *ra*- and *ḷa*-characters, known as *cerebrals*.

**Upāri dantapantiyaṃ jivhaggasaṅghaṭṭanena uppannā:**

With the tip of the tongue in contact with the line of the teeth arise:

**ta-vagga, la-sa-kārā dantajā nāma.**

the *ta*-group (*ta tha da dha ṇa*), and the *la*- and *sa*-characters, known as *dentals*.

**Oṭṭhadvayasaṅghaṭṭanena uppannā:**

In contact with both lips arise:

**u-vaṇṇa, pa-vaggā oṭṭhajā nāma.**

*u*-sound, *pa*-group (*pa pha ba bha ma*), known as *labials*.

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<sup>15</sup> I.e. according to the position of its own group, for instance *na* is pronounced in the position of the dentals, etc.

### **Niggahītaṃ nāsikajaṃ nāma.**

Arising in the nose is the (pure) *nasal*.

### **Pañcavaggantā pana nāsikaṭṭhāne pi sakaṭṭhāne pi jāyanti.**

The end (sound) of the five groups are nasals produced in their own position.

ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa	= gutturals
ca	cha	ja	jha	ṅa	= palatals
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	= cerebrals
ta	tha	da	dha	na	= dentals
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma	= labials
				am	= (pure) nasal

### **E-kāro kaṇṭhatālujo.**

The *e*-character is (a diphthong) produced with the throat and the palate.

### **O-kāro kaṇṭhoṭṭhajo.**

The *o*-character is (a diphthong) produced with the throat and lips.

### **Va-kāro dantoṭṭhajo.**

*Va*-character is produced with the teeth and lips.

### **Api ca i-vaṇṇ-u-vaṇṇā kaṇṭhe pi jāyanti yeva.**

Also *i*-vowel and *u*-vowel arise in the throat.

### **Yadā ha-kāro vaggantehi vā ya, ra, la, vehi vā yutto hoti, tadā urajo ti vadanti.**

When *ha*-character is used together with the groups, or together with *ya ra la* then they are said to be *chest-born* (for example):

Pañho, tuṅhi, nhāto, vimhito, gayhate, vulhate, avhānaṃ.

### **Kaṇṭhaṃ saṃvaritvā uccārito a-kāro saṃvuto nāma.**

The *a*-character is pronounced after having restricted the throat, and is known as *closed*.

### **Sakasakaṭṭhāna karaṇāni vivaritvā uccāritā sesasarā ca,**

The rest of the vowels are pronounced according to their own positions with open articulation,

### **sa-ha-kārā ca vivaṭṭā nāma.**

(together with) *sa* and *ha*-characters they are known as *open* (*i, u, et, e, ot, o, sa and ha*).

### **Tāni yeva gālhaṃ phusāpetvā uccāritā pañcavaggā, phuṭṭhā nāma.**

The five groups are pronounced after making close contact, and are known as having *contact*.

### **Thokaṃ phusāpetvā uccāritā ya-ra-la-vā, īsaṃphuṭṭhā nāma.**

*Ya ra la* and *va* are pronounced after making a little contact, and are known as having *slight contact*.

### **Tattha oṭṭhajesu tāva pa-vaggaṃ vadantānaṃ**

Herein, when with the lips the *pa*-group (*pa pha ba bha ma*) is spoken

### **oṭṭhadvayassa gālhaṃ phusanāṃ icchitabbaṃ.**

the two lips should have strong contact.

### **Kasmā? Phuṭṭhapayatānikattā pa-vaggassa.**

Why? *Pa*-group is made with an effort at contact.

**U-vaṇṇaṃ vadantānaṃ pana oṭṭhadvayassa vivaraṇaṃ icchitabbaṃ.**  
But the *u*-vowel when spoken should have both the lips open.

**Kasmā? Vivaṭapayatanikattā u-vaṇṇassa.**  
Why? The *u*-vowel is made with an effort at (keeping the lips) open.

**Esa nayo sesesu sabbesū ti.**  
This is the method in all the rest.

**Cūḷaniruttiyaṃ pana sabbe rassasarā saṃvutā nāma,**  
But in the *Cūḷanirutti*<sup>16</sup> it is said all the short vowels are known as *closed*,

**sabbe dīghasarā vivaṭā nāmā ti vuttaṃ,**  
all the long vowels are known as *open*,

**tathā Saddasāratthajālīniyaṃ katthaci Sakkaṭaganthe ca.**  
and so in the *Saddasāratthajālīni*<sup>17</sup> and some of the Sanskrit books.

**Idaṃ yuttataraṃ.**  
(But) this is the more suitable.<sup>18</sup>

**Aññaṭṭhānikabyañjanehi**  
Regarding the consonants in the other positions

**yuttā sarā attano ṭhānakaraṇāni jahantā pi,**  
the vowels that are connected are left in their own articulation-positions,

**payatanaṃ na jahanti.**  
but the effort is not given up.

**[Payatanaṃ]**  
[3. Effort]

**Tasmā nānāvaṇṇānaṃ saṃsagge payatanaṃ saṃsaggabhedo pi veditabbo ti:**  
After that in connection with the various sounds the analysis of effort should be understood in this way:

**tattha, suṇātu me ti vadanto,**  
herein, when *suṇātu me* is said,

**yadi ṇā-kāraṃ jivhaggena dantaṭṭhāne katvā vadeyya,**  
if the *-ṇā*-character is spoken with the tip of the tongue positioned on the teeth,

**dantajo nā-kāro eva bhaveyya.**  
it will be the *-nā*-character, a dental.

**Tu-kāraṇ-ca jivhopaggena muddhaṭṭhāne katvā vadeyya,**  
(If) the *-tu*-sound (in *suṇātu*) is spoken near the tip of the tongue on the roof (of the mouth),

<sup>16</sup> A grammar by Ven. Yamaka in the Kaccāyanapiṭaka.

<sup>17</sup> A grammar by Ven. Nāgita.

<sup>18</sup> It means the Sayadaw feels the description he has given is more suitable than in the other books he mentions.

**muddhajo ṭu-kāro eva bhaveyya.**

it will be *-ṭu*-character, a cerebral.

**Evañ-ca sati akkharavipatti nāma siyā.**

Thus, in this there will surely be a wrong letter (and sound).

**Esa nayo sesesu muddhajangantjesu.**

This is the method for the rest of the cerebrals and the dentals.

**Tasmā, kammavācamā sāventehi,**

Therefore, with the declarations of the legal action,<sup>19</sup>

**nāma ṭhāna-karaṇa-payatanesu suṭṭhu kusalehi bhavitabban-ti.**

the position, articulation and effort should surely be made skilfully.<sup>20</sup>

**Sithilāñ-ca dhanitāñ-ca, dīgham, rassam, garum, lahum,**

Unvoiced and voiced, long, short, heavy, light,

**niggahītam vimuttañ-ca sambandhañ-ca vavatthitam.**

the restrained, the free, the conjunct and the separated.

**Mudunā vacīpayogena vattabbā vaggapaṭhama-tatiya-pañcamā sithilā nāma.**

The first in the group, the third and the fifth should be spoken with soft application, and are known as *unvoiced*.<sup>21</sup>

**Thaddhena vacīpayogena vattabbā vaggadutiya-catutthā dhanitā nāma.**

The second and fourth in the group should be spoken with firm application, and are known as *voiced*.<sup>22</sup>

**Dīgha-rassā pubbe vuttā.**

*Long* and *short* are as described previously.

**Dīghā ceva samyogapubbā ca niggahītantā ca garukā nāma,**

Long (vowels), conjunct (consonants) and those with the (pure) nasal at the end are known as *heavy*,

**sesā lahukā nāma.**

the rest are known as *light*.<sup>23</sup>

**Yathā saddasahito vāto mukhachiddena bahi anikkhamma nāsasotābhimukho hoti,**

Just as air and sound with an open mouth doesn't go out through the nostrils,

**tathā mukham avivaṭam katvā vattabham, byañjanam niggahītam nāma.**

so you should speak without having opened the mouth, this is known as the (*pure*) nasal consonant.

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<sup>19</sup> These are the legal actions made by Buddhist monastics sitting in session.

<sup>20</sup> Otherwise the legal action may be considered invalid.

<sup>21</sup> Or, unaspirated: *ka ga ṇa; ca ja ṇa*, etc.

<sup>22</sup> These are what we otherwise call aspirates, as in *kha, gha; cha, jha*, etc.

<sup>23</sup> Heavy and light are not the same as long and short, as a short may become heavy if followed by a consonant cluster or a (pure) nasal. This distinction is important for the prosody of the texts.

**Tena yuttāni sabbayañjanāni niggahītan-tāni nāma,**

All the consonants connected with that are known as *restrained*,

**sesā vimuttā nāma.**

the rest are known as *free*.

**Padasandhivasena vattabbaṃ sambandhaṃ nāma.**

That which is spoken on account of word junction is known as *conjunct*.

**Padacchedaṃ katvā vattabbaṃ vavatthitaṃ nāma.**

That which is spoken after splitting the words is known as *separated*.

***Byañjanavuttirāsi Niṭṭhito.***

*The Consonant Usage Collection is Finished*