

A Guide to the Parsing of Pāli

In parsing a sentence in Pāli we break it down into syllables.

- 1) In Pāli syllables are made with a vowel or a consonant followed by a vowel
- 2) There are open and closed syllables.
- 3) An open syllable is one in which the syllable ends in a vowel (it is light in weight).
- 4) A closed syllable ends in either a consonant or a niggahīta (ṁ) (it is heavy in weight).

In what follows: kh, gh, ch, jh, ṭh, ḍh, th, dh, ph, bh, ḷh, are aspirates and considered to be single consonants

When parsing Pāli sentences there are a few rules to abide by:

- 1) a syllable followed by another vowel or by a single consonant is open and divided after the vowel, e.g. **mā-tā-pi-tu-u-paṭ-ṭhā**-naṁ, **vi-ha-ra-ti**
- 2) a syllable followed by a double consonant is closed and divided after the first consonant, e.g. **añ-ña-ta-rā**, **sā-vat**-thi-yam
- 3) niggahīta (ṁ) is always joined to the previous vowel and the syllable is closed, e.g. **taṁ**, **e-vaṁ**, **su-taṁ**

Example: Mahāmaṅgalasuttam

evaṃ me sutam:

e-vaṃ me su-taṃ:

ekam samayaṃ bhagavā

e-kaṃ sa-ma-yaṃ bha-ga-vā

sāvattthiyaṃ viharati jetavane

sā-vat-thi-yaṃ vi-ha-ra-ti je-ta-va-ne

anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme.

a-nā-tha-piṇ-ḍi-kas-sa ā-rā-me.

atha kho aññatarā devatā

a-tha kho añ-ñā-ta-rā de-va-tā

abhikkantāya rattiya,

a-bhik-kan-tā-ya rat-ti-yā,

abhikkantavaṇṇā kevalakappam

a-bhik-kan-ta-vaṇ-ṇā ke-va-la-kap-paṃ

jetavanam obhāsetvā, yena bhagavā

je-ta-va-naṃ o-bhā-se-tvā, ye-na bha-ga-vā

tenupasaṅkami, upasaṅkamtivā

te-nu-pa-saṅ-ka-mi, u-pa-saṅ-ka-mi-tvā

bhagavantam abhivādetvā

bha-ga-van-taṃ a-bhi-vā-de-tvā

ekam-antam aṭṭhāsi.

e-ka-man-taṃ aṭ-ṭhā-si.

ekam-antam ṭhitā kho sā devatā

e-ka-man-taṃ ṭhi-tā kho sā de-va-tā

bhagavantam gāthāya ajjhabhāsi:

bha-ga-van-taṃ gā-thā-ya aj-jha-bhā-si:

“bahū devā manussā ca
“ba-hū de-vā ma-nus-sā ca

maṅgalāni acintayum
maṅ-ga-lā-ni a-cin-ta-yum

ākaṅkhamānā sotthānam:
ā-kaṅ-kha-mā-nā sot-thā-nam:

brūhi maṅgalam-uttamaṃ.” [1]
brū-hi maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.”

“asevanā ca bālānam,
“a-se-va-nā ca bā-lā-nam,

paṇḍitānañ-ca sevanā
paṇ-ḍi-tā-nañ-ca se-va-nā

pūjā ca pūjanīyānam:
pū-jā ca pū-ja-nī-yā-nam:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [2]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

paṭirūpadesavāso ca,
pa-ṭi-rū-pa-de-sa-vā-so ca,

pubbe ca katapuññatā
pub-be ca ka-ta-puñ-ña-tā

attasammāpaṇidhi ca:
at-ta-sam-mā-pa-ṇi-dhi ca:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [3]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

bāhusaccañ-ca sippañ-ca,
bā-hu-sac-cañ-ca sip-pañ-ca,

vinayo ca susikkhito,
vi-na-yo ca su-sik-khi-to,

subhāsītā ca yā vācā:
su-bhā-si-tā ca yā vā-cā:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [4]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

mātāpitu-upaṭṭhānaṃ,
mā-tā-pi-tu-u-paṭ-ṭhā-naṃ,

puttadārassa saṅgaho,
put-ta-dā-ras-sa saṅ-ga-ho,

anākulā ca kammantā:
a-nā-ku-lā ca kam-man-tā:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [5]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

dānañ-ca dhammacariyā ca,
dā-nañ-ca dham-ma-ca-ri-yā ca,

ñātakānañ-ca saṅgaho,
ñā-ta-kā-nañ-ca saṅ-ga-ho,

anavajjāni kammāni:
a-na-vaj-jā-ni kam-mā-ni:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [6]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

ārati virati pāpā,
ā-ra-ti vi-ra-ti pā-pā,

majjapānā ca saññamo,
maj-ja-pā-nā ca sañ-ñā-mo,

appamādo ca dhammesu:
ap-pa-mā-do ca dham-me-su:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [7]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

gāravo ca nivāto ca,
gā-ra-vo ca ni-vā-to ca,

santuṭṭhī ca kataññutā,
san-tuṭ-ṭhī ca ka-tañ-ñu-tā,

kālena dhammasavaṇaṃ:
kā-le-na dham-ma-sa-va-ṇaṃ:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [8]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

khantī ca sovacassatā,
khan-tī ca so-va-cas-sa-tā,

samaṇānañ-ca dassanaṃ,
sa-ma-ṇā-nañ-ca das-sa-naṃ,

kālena dhammasākacchā:
kā-le-na dham-ma-sā-kac-chā:

etaṃ maṅgalam-uttamaṃ. [9]
e-taṃ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-maṃ.

tapo ca brahmacariyañ-ca,
ta-po ca brah-ma-ca-ri-yañ-ca,

ariyasaccānadassanañ,
a-ri-ya-sac-cā-na-das-sa-nañ,

nibbānasacchikiriyā ca:
nib-bā-na-sac-chi-ki-ri-yā ca:

etañ maṅgalam-uttamañ. [10]
e-tañ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-mañ.

phuṭṭhassa lokadhammehi,
phuṭ-ṭhas-sa lo-ka-dham-me-hi,

cittañ yassa na kampati,
cit-tañ yas-sa na kam-pa-ti,

asokañ virajañ khemañ:
a-so-kañ vi-ra-jañ khe-mañ:

etañ maṅgalam-uttamañ. [11]
e-tañ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-mañ.

etādisāni katvāna,
e-tā-di-sā-ni kat-vā-na,

sabbattha-m-aparājitā,
sab-bat-tha-ma-pa-rā-ji-tā,

sabbattha sotthiñ gacchanti:
sab-bat-tha sot-thiñ gac-cha-ti:

tañ tesañ maṅgalam-uttaman.”-ti [12]
tañ te-sañ maṅ-ga-la-mut-ta-man.”-ti