

SN 54.6 Ariṭṭha Sutta

The Discourse to Ariṭṭha

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

At Sāvattṭhi. There the Blessed One said, “Monks, do you practice mindfulness of breathing?”

When this was said Venerable Ariṭṭha said to the Blessed One, “Bhante, I practice mindfulness of breathing.”

“Ariṭṭha, how do you practice mindfulness of breathing?”

“Bhante, when I have abandoned interest in sensuality related to the past, when I am free of interest in sensuality related to the future, and when I have thoroughly removed aversive perceptions towards both internal and external phenomena, I inhale mindfully and I exhale mindfully. Bhante, that is how I practice mindfulness of breathing.”

“Ariṭṭha, that is mindfulness of breathing; I do not say that it is not. However, Ariṭṭha, there is a detailed, complete practice of mindfulness of breathing. Listen to this and carefully pay attention; I will speak.”

“Yes, Bhante,” Venerable Ariṭṭha replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

“Ariṭṭha, what is the detailed, complete practice of mindfulness of breathing? Here, Ariṭṭha, a monk who has gone to the wilderness, or the foot of a tree, or to an empty building sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body upright, and establishes mindfulness. He inhales mindfully, he exhales mindfully.

“Inhaling a long breath, one knows, ‘I am inhaling a long breath.’

“Exhaling a long breath, one knows, ‘I am exhaling a long breath.’

“Inhaling a short breath, one knows, ‘I am inhaling a short breath.’

“Exhaling a short breath, one knows, ‘I am exhaling a short breath.’

“One trains, ‘I will inhale experiencing¹ the whole body.’

“One trains, ‘I will exhale experiencing the whole body.’

“One trains, ‘I will inhale calming physical activity.’

“One trains, ‘I will exhale calming physical activity.’

“One trains, ‘I will inhale experiencing euphoria².’

“One trains, ‘I will exhale experiencing euphoria.’

“One trains, ‘I will inhale experiencing happiness³.’

“One trains, ‘I will exhale experiencing happiness.’

“One trains, ‘I will inhale experiencing mental activity.’

“One trains, ‘I will exhale experiencing mental activity.’

“One trains, ‘I will inhale calming mental activity.’

“One trains, ‘I will exhale calming mental activity.’

1 *Paṭisaṃvedī*. The prefixes indicate completely experiencing.

2 *Pīti*. Rapture, bliss, joy.

3 *Sukha*. Or “pleasure.”

“One trains, ‘I will inhale experiencing the mind.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale experiencing the mind.’
“One trains, ‘I will inhale gladdening the mind.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale gladdening the mind.’
“One trains, ‘I will inhale concentrating the mind.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale concentrating the mind.’
“One trains, ‘I will inhale freeing the mind.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale freeing the mind.’

“One trains, ‘I will inhale perceiving impermanence.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale perceiving impermanence.’
“One trains, ‘I will inhale perceiving fading⁴.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale perceiving fading.’
“One trains, ‘I will inhale perceiving cessation.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale perceiving cessation.’
“One trains, ‘I will inhale perceiving relinquishment.’
“One trains, ‘I will exhale perceiving relinquishment.’

“Ariṭṭha, this is the detailed, complete practice of mindfulness of breathing.”

4 *Virāga*. In this context, it appears to mean the perception of insubstantiality, which is an advanced stage in the meditation on impermanence.