

EVENING TALK OF 19 SEPTEMBER 2026 – ENGLISH

How Suffering Arises and Where to End It · Ajahn Jayapañño (จายนฺโณ ภิกขุ), Sakon Nakhon · Evening talk of 19 September 2026 · English translation · Translated from the Thai, close to the spoken word · round brackets: Pali terms and short explanations added by the translator

[00:00] Dhamma greetings this evening; let us sit down and talk. We come back and go over the four foundations of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) once more. With mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasati) the principle is to make the mind calm at the beginning (samatha). But the full explanation of its sixteen steps includes the four foundations of mindfulness and the seven factors of awakening (bojjhaṅga) as well. All these different names are distinguished by how complete mindfulness (sati), presence of mind, has become, and by the differing points of the practice.

[00:38] So when we speak of mindfulness of breathing and then come to the four foundations of mindfulness or the seven factors of awakening, we are talking about one and the same thing. You begin with calm before you go on to insight (vipassanā); you need calm as the ground in any case. The mind is still and balanced, mindful, remembering and knowing. It is all connected.

[01:05] Now, about the four foundations of mindfulness and the stopping of the wheel of arising. That wheel is dependent arising (paṭiccasamuppāda: one thing arises because another is there). If mindfulness is not yet quick enough at this level, the turning wheel cannot be stopped, the wheel of arising cannot yet be destroyed. That is why it takes a trained mindfulness, a presence of mind that stays in the body. That is the firm base, the great foundation.

[01:38] Now when our mindfulness becomes more complete, when it stays in the body and contact (phassa) arises, when something strikes (the eye or the ear), then feeling (vedanā) arises, liking or disliking arises. Right here: if mindfulness, the knowing that remembers to be present, is there in time, it sees the mind stir as liking comes up. It sees the liking that comes up, and it sees the disliking that comes up. It sees: here the mind is already liking, here it is already disliking.

[02:16] Mindfulness is what dams the stream. You are not carried along by the turning wheel, and so the wheel is destroyed. Cutting the cycle (vaṭṭa), cutting it here. So if we look carefully, are mindful and know the moment it arises, when liking arises, when disliking arises, and our mindfulness catches it in time, then the liking or disliking fades and loosens its grip.

[02:46] This very thing connects with the four noble truths. Tension, stress and suffering (dukkha), in short: suffering, is something that has to be known, and known mindfully; only then do you see suffering. Once you know it mindfully and keep looking, you see that its origin (samudaya), the cause suffering comes from, is something to be given up. You get to know the result so that you can trace it back to its cause.

[03:18] So the Dhamma (the Buddha's teaching) all fits together. It only depends on the angle from which the teachers present it, but it is the same thing. Real study has to get onto exactly this road, the noble path. Only then do you see the Dhamma, see the truth.

[03:38] Otherwise you go astray. What you have only taken in through the ear and the eye is only what has been memorised, remembered knowledge (saññā). Even though you know it, you still cannot let go, because your knowing is still deluded (there is still an «I» mixed into it). The understanding we think we have is still lost in our thinking, lost in what is remembered, in perception, lost in what the mind creates (saṅkhāra, fabrication).

[04:15] Like the fish that lives in water: it is so lost in water that it does not know water. Someone who lives in suffering does not know suffering, having never stopped to look at it. That is how it is. So our training in mindfulness is there to let an understanding of how things really are arise. We are not talking about the wrong kind of concentration (micchā-samādhi). It is concentration (samādhi) in the way the Buddha taught it, namely developing

the four foundations of mindfulness. That makes it correct concentration: correct mindfulness leads to correct concentration.

[05:00] So if our mindfulness is complete and catches things in time, if mindfulness becomes more complete and wisdom ripens, then take form (the body) among the five aggregates (khandha): clinging (upādāna) to form comes to an end, or, put differently, the firm assumption that this body is me. In the language of the texts one might say: the view of self (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) is given up, that is, the view that this body is me. Not that you throw the body away. But the view that this body is me is exhausted, is finished.

[05:47] You put the body down and so you see the mind; you put form down and so you see the mental side (nāma). On the mental side our mindfulness is fully established, and something strikes the ear, the eye, the sense bridges. Because the six sense bridges (saḷāyatana) are still there, the inner and the outer, there is contact. And with that we are right in the middle of studying dependent arising.

[06:22] With ignorance (avijjā) as the condition the mind starts creating (saṅkhāra, fabrication); from that comes consciousness; from that, mind and body (nāma-rūpa); from that, the six sense bridges; from that, contact; from that, feeling. This is where we look, this is where we cut. Here is where it has to be cut, then you have caught it in time. If you catch feeling in time, craving (taṇhā) does not arise. With no craving there is no clinging, there is no becoming (bhava: turning into someone) and no birth. So it stops, the wheel of arising stops. It goes no further, because mindfulness has woken up and knows. Once one has woken up to knowing, the knowing is no longer deluded.

[07:01] Deluded knowing arises because one is lost: lost in being born, lost in dying, lost in gaining, lost in losing, lost in having, lost in being, lost in pleasure, lost in pain. The word «lost» is in all of it. So, about knowing suffering: before you can get out of suffering, you first have to speak of knowing it. Otherwise you are lost in suffering, the way the fish is lost in water and does not know water.

[07:29] Suffering (dukkha: tension, stress and suffering) in this sense is that which is impermanent. Whatever is impermanent is suffering. The meaning of the word suffering is: it grows old and decays, it cannot stay as it is, it does not last, it changes. Looked at another way, it means the same as impermanence (anicca). Whatever is impermanent is suffering. Whatever is suffering is not-self (anattā), that is: not me, not my self.

[08:14] So when we train mindfulness a great deal, we begin by training it to stay in the body. And there is only one way to arrive at correct mindfulness: to develop mindfulness of breathing first, at the beginning. That is why concentration has to go together with mindfulness; only then is it correct concentration.

[08:39] Whatever we begin with, whatever disc we stare at as a meditation object (kasiṇa), in the end we have to leave all of that behind, because those things are only preliminaries. The words people repeat silently in meditation are a way of preparing this mind too, so that it stays with one single thing, that is, stands firm with one single thing and does not wander off outside.

[09:06] But the way for mindfulness to become complete and stay in the body is the practice of being aware of yourself with the breathing: aware when breathing in, aware when breathing out. There is remembering, there is clear comprehension (sampajañña), there is mindfulness. When we are mindful like this and something strikes, contact arises, feeling arises, then what is clearest is the painful kind of feeling, that is, all the disliking.

[09:47] Pleasure, though, is delicate, it is subtle. Even when you see it, you still do not grow weary of it. You are still glad to hold on to it, glad to say that pleasure is pleasure. So what can be seen clearly and given up quickly first is the painful side, because you see the harm in it.

[10:08] But on the side we regard as pleasant, we are still lost in its appeal (assāda), in what is good about it. That is why it is called the appeal of the senses (kāmaguṇa). As long as you are still lost in the appeal and do not see the harm (ādinava), you do not really shake it off. As long as you do not yet know the suffering in what is suffering, you

do not grow weary of it, and the desire for it does not loosen. This is what we chant: *atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā*, «then one grows weary of suffering; this is the path to purity».

[10:44] So the real practice is developing mindfulness, a mindfulness that stays in the body. As soon as you see disliking come up, you catch it in time. If mindful knowing is there, wisdom arises that is able to calm that anger (*dosa*). It does not go any further: no insults, no looking daggers at each other, no lashing out with hand or body. Without mindfulness and wisdom that catch it in time, it cannot be calmed.

[11:23] So what we call patience and restraint has to be patience and restraint with wisdom. At the beginning we rely on holding it down with mindfulness and catching it in time. Then the wisdom arises to let go of that anger. Or, to put it more correctly still: when mindfulness catches that anger in time, it fades. That is *virāga*, fading, *virāga*. The cause of arising is extinguished right here.

[11:55] The four foundations of mindfulness: mindfulness that stays in the body. At the beginning you study in the body, you get to know the body thoroughly. You keep contemplating the body within the body (which means the breath), constantly, regularly. That is: as soon as you remember, you come back to knowing the breath. This breath is the inner body.

[12:26] The body within the body, the inner body, is the breath. But some meditators mistakenly think: you sit down, images appear (*nimitta*), you see yourself transparent, see yourself as crystal, see yourself as this and that and the other. That is not the body within the body. Seeing the skeleton as clear crystal is not it either. That is something the mind itself has created (*citta-saṅkhāra*).

[12:55] The body within the body that the Buddha spoke of means the breath. To keep contemplating the body within the body is to develop mindfulness so that it becomes more complete. It lets wisdom arise, clear seeing on the basis of the body, of form. If you practise like this, by doing it often, the holding on to «this body is me» will gradually loosen, loosen, loosen.

[13:35] So the way we turn inward to study is a way that leads out of delusion, which is the root of suffering. That is how it is: when there is mindfulness that catches it in time and you can give it up right at feeling, then there is no craving, no clinging, no becoming, no birth.

[13:58] Now when mindfulness becomes more complete, starting from feeling, you see the feeling within the feeling: inside the liking and the disliking there is an inner feeling, being pleased or displeased. So even when you are angry at someone, there is still a relish, a pleasure in the anger. That is why you cannot give it up. We do not see it. One is resentful, hateful, vengeful, full of ill will, bears a grudge, and does not notice that one is the one who is suffering.

[14:37] That is what delusion is like, and so it does not let go. But this mindfulness: when mindfulness arises, delusion disappears. When presence of mind is there, the knowing that remembers, it disappears. So the one thing we have to do a lot of is developing mindfulness. Bring mindfulness to maturity, so that the faculty of mindfulness (*satindriya*) ripens.

[15:07] When the faculty of mindfulness is ripe, the faculty of concentration (*samādhindriya*), a fine and delicate concentration, goes with it. Mindfulness, concentration and wisdom are together, they lean on one another. So if it is weak in any one of them, it is not complete. They have to be in balance, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom. It is just like cooking: the seasoning has to be just right, only then is the taste rounded. Only then is there keenness (*chanda*), enjoyment of practising.

[15:55] So when you see the feeling within the feeling, catch it in time and mindfulness becomes more complete, then, when something strikes, there is an impact, there is a ripple. Mindfulness and wisdom separate the knowing, that which registers the ripple, from the feeling itself. You do not get lost in it, do not lose yourself in clinging to the feeling. Feeling arises, the feeling is known, but you do not lose yourself in clinging to it.

[16:39] Seeing this again and again, you see two different things. There is that which knows, the one doing the knowing: that is the mind (citta); for now we still call it mind. And there is that which is known, whatever the mind is occupied with: feeling, perception, what the mind creates. Now one gradually pulls out of the delusion about the knowing. It is not «I know», it is just knowing, but not «I know». If there is no delusion, it is not «I know».

[17:22] Body, feeling, mind. Feeling and mind, that which knows and that which is known, do not mix. So feeling gradually loses its importance, you no longer give it any value. Do you see? It gets lighter, feeling gets lighter and lighter. And now that which went out to know things turns back and knows itself.

[18:01] That is how Luang Pho Yai Somphop (a revered teacher) once put it: there are three kinds of knowing. Knowing when ..., in the dialect Luang Pho Somphop speaks; knowing when you think; knowing when you know. This «knowing when you know» is the mind that has woken up to knowing. Once its knowing is no longer deluded, it really sees what the truth is like, what the Dhamma is like. Dhamma is the truth.

[18:38] It is a knowing that does not pass through the process of thinking. It sees clearly without having to think. It does not judge. It only does its job of knowing. Once it is free of deluded knowing, it is no longer mind (no someone who knows). It is merely the knowing element, that is, consciousness (viññāṇa, the fifth of the five aggregates). Now they are stripped off, the five aggregates: form, feeling, perception, fabrication, consciousness. They are not me, they are not-self. That is the course the study takes.

[19:19] So we rely on the strength of mindfulness and wisdom. Buddhism is purely a matter of wisdom, not a matter of miracles and mysteries. The Dhamma the Buddha taught is laid open and challenges the wise, those with wisdom, to test it. So the saying «if you don't believe in it, at least don't mock it» (said in Thailand of spirits and the supernatural) cannot be applied to Buddhism. Because real Buddhism means testing until you see the thing clearly, and only then making up your mind, only then deciding whether you believe it or not, whether it is so or not. You have to know it with wisdom.

[20:07] So whether we sit with eyes closed, whether we walk, whatever we do: that is outward form, that is outer posture. But concentration is the mind that stands firm. A mind that stands firm is concentration. It does not sway, it does not flow along with what strikes it. It does not leave its base, that is, it is not dragged off through the ear, through the eye. That is called concentration: a mind that stands firm.

[20:40] That does not mean it has to be still in the sense of knowing nothing. It knows everything, but it just knows. It does not go out looking for things to know. Whatever arises, it knows; it has no wish to go looking. So it only does its job of just knowing. It is neither stupid nor clever; when there is no cause, there is nothing for it to know. Consciousness too is impermanent. Form is impermanent, feeling is impermanent, perception is impermanent, fabrication is impermanent, consciousness is impermanent, the five aggregates are impermanent.

[21:17] Precisely because they are impermanent they are called dukkha: tension, stress and suffering, in the sense of the noble truth of suffering. Its meaning is: that which is impermanent, not the pain of body and mind we see in front of us. Impermanence: that is the real meaning of suffering. That is why the Buddha said: it is only suffering that arises, only suffering that passes away. Because there is nothing else; apart from suffering there is nothing at all. And lost as we are, we grab at it. It is precisely because of delusion that one grabs.

[21:55] Ignorance, craving, clinging: this is where the wheel of arising gets broken, the stream of arising (the cut is made at feeling, before craving and clinging follow). This is the place where we can actually step in and cut. It can be calmed and held back. You train mindfulness so that it catches things in time. As Luang Pu Buddhādāsa (a revered Thai teacher) compared it: developing the four foundations of mindfulness, where you turn to feeling, know it and catch it in time, is like cutting a creeper in the middle. If you cut out its middle, it can bear neither flower nor fruit. Because it flowers and fruits on its branches and twigs, at its tip.

[22:45] When we cut in the middle, sever it in the middle, no new becoming (bhava) takes shape (you no longer turn into anyone). That stops the cause of arising. Once the cause of arising is stopped, no becoming takes shape. When

there is no becoming for it to stand on, consciousness has nowhere to live. Now as our mindfulness becomes more complete, it now runs in reverse (paṭiloma: back along the chain of dependent arising, from feeling to ignorance). Only here do you begin to destroy what has been pickling and fermenting in the mind (āśava), and the tendencies that lie sleeping deep down (anusaya). If you do not turn inward this way, they cannot be given up.

[23:33] That is how it is: in studying the Buddha's teaching you have to practise correctly. But sitting, standing, walking, lying down, whether slow or fast, that is no yardstick to judge by. So we cannot make ourselves the standard for other people. You cannot compare one with another. Or, to put it correctly: do not meddle with others. Do not second-guess them. Do not wish them to be like us. Look after yourself well. Develop a lot of mindfulness.

[24:20] For someone newly training, watching the breath is hard. This is where it is hard, the hardest of all. The hardest thing in the training is the beginning. If you do not have enough patience, enough determination, you naturally give up the effort, because it is no fun at all. Watching the breath until it settles into its groove, that is very hard. But once you know how, it is comfortable. Training mindfulness is comfortable once you know how.

[24:58] The suffering you used to have, all the stories we used to carry around: you learn to set something down now and then, to put something aside. Suffering that used to be as big as a mountain becomes as light as a termite mound. The difference is enormous. For the ordinary person (puthujjana), suffering is like Mount Sumeru. But once you get to this point, enter the noble path, up to the first noble fruit (the first stage of awakening), then of what used to be as big as Mount Sumeru there remains as much as a termite mound, as much as a fist, and it goes on shrinking step by step. There is no comparison at all.

[25:42] When you see it like this, you want to bow to the Buddha with your head right down to the ground, to bow truly with mind and heart. To bow to his kindness, that he took the trouble to point the way for foolish people like us, so that we might see the bright road. You are deeply moved by the Buddha's goodness, which is beyond compare. And you want to repay it, in gratitude (kataññū) towards the Buddha, in gratitude towards this teaching, without any hesitation or doubt. You could say: you would even be willing to die for it. You hand over the body and offer up your life, truly, to dedicate it to the Teacher (the Buddha), truly, out of awareness of this very goodness. The Buddha's goodness to us is great.

[26:32] So if we turn inward and study here, we will see the suffering in our mind fade away. We may not be able to say it, to explain it properly. But the suffering, the struggling, gets lighter. We know nothing at all, but the mind is at ease. It does not pick quarrels, it does not trade blows with anyone. People outside may look and think you are a fool. But it is a fool who does not suffer. It is the clever ones who suffer, because they do not recognise that they themselves are fools.

[27:14] So in the course of practice this means: turning inward and first, at the beginning, cutting the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra), that is, destroying this wheel first. Only then can you go back in reverse order, study in reverse, follow it backwards and get to its root to destroy it, which is ignorance. And now we run through it from yet another angle.

[27:45] Mindfulness becomes more complete, you are endowed with mindfulness. In the verses on the seven factors of awakening (he recites the Pali verses and explains them): bojjaṅgo satisaṅkhāto, this is being endowed with mindfulness at all times. Dhammānaṃ vicayo tathā, you keep investigating things. Practising like that is making an effort, that is energy (vīriya). That brings joy (pīti), a heart that is full, and develops further into coming to rest (passaddhi).

[28:18] Now it is no longer happiness (sukha). Before, in deep concentration (jhāna), we speak of pīti and sukha (joy and happiness), something refined; the meaning is different. In the seven factors of awakening the word is passaddhi, coming to rest. The body comes to rest, the mind comes to rest with it. Bojjaṅgā ca tathāpare, samādhupekkha: it is concentration, it is equanimity (upekkhā).

[28:55] Do you see? If we go back and look at the verses on the seven factors of awakening: bojjaṅgo satisaṅkhāto, dhammānaṃ vicayo tathā, vīriyaṃ pīti passaddhi, bojjaṅgā ca tathāpare, samādupekkhabojjaṅgā, sattete sabbadassinā (mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, rest, concentration and equanimity: these seven, taught by the one who sees all). There you find the words muninā sammadakkhātā, bhāvitā bahulikatā (well taught by the Sage; developed and practised much). Bahulī, bahulī, bahu, bahu means: to make it more, more and more. Abhiññāya: for a knowing that keeps deepening, until it is complete, sambodhāya, for awakening, and so it leads nibbānāya, to Nibbāna.

[29:46] Nibbāna means: nothing arises. (It is usually translated as «going out», like a flame.) Turn that translation around. «It goes out, and whatever could go out is finished»: that is the simple way of putting it. But the real meaning is: nothing arises. It is free of everything the mind creates (visaṅkhāra), it is not something the mind has created (saṅkhāra).

[30:12] So in practice it is not hard. We simply make it fuller and rounder. Whether you watch films, listen to music or whatever, nobody holds that against you. That is not the yardstick. Sometimes the eye looks and the ear listens, but what the mind is thinking, nobody knows but us. It depends on what each person's inner practice (bhāvanā) is like.

[30:37] So we should not find fault with anyone. We should not look at someone and say, that one does not practise, does not attend the morning and evening service, does not chant. One has nothing to do with the other. These things are merely accessories, side points. Yet nowadays we make them the heart of the matter, until it turns into clinging to the outward form of practice. Because whoever does not follow the form we have always clung to, we find fault with and criticise as not practising.

[31:09] That is how it is, because we have got lost in clinging to principles and to outward forms. And that is nothing other than sīlabbata-parāmāsa, clinging to rules and rituals. So: develop mindfulness, let knowing grow. When it is fully attained, it only does its job of just knowing. Or, in the words one might use for it: merely knowing.

[31:39] As for the angles from which he taught, the Buddha taught according to the temperament of the listeners. As with Bāhiya: him he taught to see this world as something empty. From another angle he taught the matted-hair ascetics (jaṭila) that the sense bridges are something burning, in the Fire Sermon (Ādittapariyāya Sutta), so that they could understand it easily. Because the matted-hair ascetics had worshipped fire before; they were familiar with heat.

[32:18] So we have to find out about ourselves first, not run stubbornly after the teachers without looking at ourselves. Nowadays, for the most part, we cling to the outward form of the teachers, we get stuck on it. Because even if the teachers practised well, did it, saw it clearly: if we imitate them in everything, that does not mean we get it all.

[32:43] Sometimes disciples imitate their teachers, even the way of speaking, the way of walking, the throat-clearing and coughing. They memorise everything, copy everything, and still nothing comes of it. And that is not only true today. Even one who walked behind the Buddha holding the hem of his robe did not become like the Buddha. There was such a one. I no longer remember the name, I don't know what he was called.

[33:11] So the way the Buddha taught us to walk, pointed out for us to walk, is to turn inward. Walking meditation is exercise for the body. If you sit for long it gets stiff and aches. You have to change posture as well, stand, walk, sit, lie down; that is just how the body is. But the real walking path (the track monks pace up and down in walking meditation): here it walks in and walks out (the breath), here it goes back and forth. That is the walking path the Buddha walked.

[33:46] There is no need to build a walking path, to strew stones, strew gravel, strew sand. Who built a walking path for the Buddha? Nowadays people want to show that a monastery is a practice monastery, so there has to be a walking path in front of the hut, like this and like that and like that. That is fine too, if you build it and then walk on it, and do not build it merely to show off.

[34:07] But the real walking path is the breath. Right in here is where you walk up and down. Māra (temptation) cannot see it. You walk back and forth in here, in and out, in and out, aware of yourself in here. The faculties of the mind (indriya) and the inner practice ripen. Because when the faculty of mindfulness is complete, the faculty of concentration and the faculty of wisdom (paññindriya) follow.

[34:32] So let us not get lost in outward forms. Come back and study yourself. Form (the body), feeling, perception, fabrication, consciousness: these are the subjects we study. If you see the body clearly, without hesitation or doubt, there is nothing in it you would have to hold on to. It has lost its value. Once you know it thoroughly, it has lost its value. No more doubt. So you really have to turn inward and look.

[35:09] As for the mental side, feeling, perception, fabrication, consciousness: they are merely elements. There is nothing there, there is no me, there is nothing at all. It (this knowing) is not boxed in by the frame of right and wrong. It stands above right and above wrong, above good and above bad, above cause and above effect, above suffering and above happiness. It stands above the world, is free of the world, is no longer ruled by it. So it is free.

[35:49] So set your mind on doing it well. Develop mindfulness. If it is not there in time, if you drift off, never mind. That is perfectly ordinary. And then you let it become more complete bit by bit, step by step. Keep practising gradually.

[36:06] As for the things that appear while you sit in meditation, the various images and visions: they are merely things you have to walk past, nothing more. It is merely illusion (māyā), nothing more. It is nothing to take seriously as real. You see it, and that is all. There is nothing more to it. So do not hold on to it. Whatever you know, whatever you see, do not hold on to it. Just know. There is no need to carry it around.

[36:36] You do not have to be good at it, you do not have to be good, you do not have to be better than anyone. Simply being aware of yourself is enough. That is what I would like to leave with you this evening; I went back and went over it again for you.

[36:51] Finally, I rejoice (anumodanā) in every resolve to practise. Even though we have no set form here in which everyone must walk in line one behind the other like soldiers, like little ducks, we each still look after ourselves. Whatever we talk about with one another, let it be with mindfulness, with presence of mind. For this evening I will leave it at that. Blessings to you.