

THE TEACHING IN TWELVE SENTENCES · WORD CARDS

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WHAT THIS PAGE IS FOR

This page explains the teaching so that someone with no background at all understands it on first reading. It stands beside the translated talks, not inside them: in the transcript only the teacher speaks; here are the explanations of his words. The Pali stands in brackets. Whoever skips it loses nothing.

Three tests apply to every sentence:

- **Daily life.** The sentence contains something one can do or observe.
- **Verb before noun.** The teaching describes what happens. “Holding on” can be seen in oneself; “attachment” cannot.
- **Fidelity.** Every image comes from the teacher's talks or from the discourses of the Buddha. Nothing has been invented.

THE TEACHING IN TWELVE SENTENCES

The basic rule is: when this is there, that comes. When this stops, that stops (paṭiccasamuppāda, dependent arising). The twelve sentences show what “this” and “that” are.

1. I do not see how it really is: that everything changes, that none of it is me (avijjā, not knowing).
2. Because I do not see this, the mind creates: it repeats feeling and thinking until what it has created looks like a solid world (saṅkhāra).
3. In this created world something is noticed: seen, heard, thought (viññāṇa, consciousness).
4. Where there is noticing, mind and body are there together: a body, and that which feels it, names it and wants something (nāma-rūpa, mind and body).
5. Six bridges stand open: eye and sight, ear and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and touch, mind and thought (saḷāyatana, sense bridges).
6. Something comes across a bridge. It strikes me (phassa, contact).
7. In the same moment a feeling is there: pleasant, unpleasant, or neither (vedanā, feeling).
— here the chain can be cut —
8. Out of the feeling comes wanting: more of this, or away with it (taṇhā, craving).
9. Out of the wanting comes holding on. I no longer let it go, and it no longer lets me go (upādāna, clinging).
10. Out of the holding on comes someone I now am: the offended one, the one in love, the one who is right (bhava, becoming).
11. This someone steps forward, speaks, acts (jāti, birth).
12. And what steps forward passes away again, with sorrow, lament and pain (jarā-maraṇa, ageing and death).

Where the chain stops

In the lived moment the chain can be stopped at one place only: between sentence 7 and sentence 8, at feeling (19.9., 06:22). Whoever is present in that moment and notices “now it pleases, now it displeases” finds that no wanting grows out of the feeling. Without wanting there is no holding on, and without holding on there is no one who suffers.

The image for this, which the teacher takes from Buddhādāsa, is the vine (19.9., 21:55): you cut it through in the middle. It bears its flowers and fruit at the tip, and nothing arrives there any more.

In daily life: someone says something sharp. Before I answer, I notice: “unpleasant”. Nothing more is needed. Whoever has noticed the feeling as a feeling answers differently.

WORD CARDS 1: THE CHAIN

Each card says what the word means in the talk, and what one can observe with it in daily life. The images come from the talks of Ajahn Jayapaṇṇo; the date of the talk and the timestamp in the video are given (19.9. = evening talk of 19 September 2026, 23.9. = morning talk of 23 September 2026).

Word in the talk	What it means	In daily life
dependent arising <i>paṭiccasamuppāda</i>	One thing arises because the other is there. When this is there, that comes; when this stops, that stops. The teacher calls it a wheel that turns. Only a mindfulness that is quick enough can stop it (19.9., 01:05).	<i>What was there just before this mood came?</i>
not knowing <i>avijjā</i>	Not seeing how it is. The fish lives in water and does not know water; whoever lives in suffering does not know suffering (19.9., 04:15).	<i>When did I first notice today that I was tense? And how long had I been so already?</i>
what the mind creates <i>saṅkhāra</i>	The mind creates. It repeats feeling and thinking until what it has created looks like a world and like a self. The images that appear in meditation, too, are something the mind itself has created (19.9., 12:26).	<i>Which story about this person am I telling myself for the hundredth time?</i>
mind and body <i>nāma-rūpa</i>	A body, and that which feels it, names it and wants something. The teacher says: you put down the body and therefore see the mind; you put down form and therefore see the mental side (19.9., 05:47).	<i>Which part of this is body right now, and which part is what talks about it?</i>
sense bridges <i>āyatana</i>	The place where outside and inside connect, so that knowing arises. Six pairs: eye and sight, ear and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and touch, mind and thought. Across these bridges the world walks into the mind.	<i>Across which bridge is something coming in right now?</i>
contact <i>phassa</i>	Something comes across a sense bridge and strikes. There is a wave (19.9., 16:07).	<i>What has just struck me: a sound, a glance, a thought?</i>
feeling <i>vedanā</i>	Pleasant, unpleasant, or neither. Not yet an emotion, only this first sign. The unpleasant is what one sees most clearly; the pleasant is refined, and one is still glad to hold on to it (19.9., 09:06, 09:47). This is where the chain can be cut.	<i>Right now: pleasant or unpleasant?</i>
craving <i>taṇhā</i>	Wanting to have, or wanting to be rid of. One sees only the appeal, not the harm (19.9., 10:08).	<i>What do I want to have right now? What do I want to be rid of?</i>

Word in the talk	What it means	In daily life
clinging <i>upādāna</i>	Holding on. One holds on even to anger, because there is a pleasure in it; that is why one cannot get rid of it (19.9., 14:19).	<i>What am I holding on to right now, although it hurts?</i>
becoming <i>bhava</i>	Becoming someone: the offended one, the winner, the one who is right. Where no becoming is built up, consciousness has no place to live (19.9., 23:01).	<i>Who have I just become in this quarrel?</i>
tension, stress and suffering <i>dukkha</i>	Not only the pain of body and mind, but this: it does not hold. What is impermanent cannot carry weight, and what cannot carry weight is not me (19.9., 07:29, 21:17). In the talk the short form “suffering” is mostly used.	<i>What am I relying on right now that is certain to change?</i>

WORD CARDS 2: THE PRACTICE

Word in the talk	What it means	In daily life
mindfulness, presence of mind <i>sati</i>	Remembering that one is here, and noticing in time. The opposite is not distraction but being beside oneself: blind with rage, losing one's head.	<i>Am I here right now? When was I last gone?</i>
the four foundations of mindfulness <i>satipaṭṭhāna</i>	Four places where mindfulness lives: body, feeling, mind, and what happens in the mind. Mindfulness of breathing, the four foundations and the seven factors of awakening are, the teacher says, one and the same thing; the names only say how complete mindfulness already is (19.9., 00:00, 00:38).	<i>Where is my attention right now: with the body, the feeling, the mood, a thought?</i>
to recognise in time รู้เท่าทัน	Noticing it while it is coming up, not an hour later. Mindfulness dams the stream (19.9., 02:16).	<i>Did I notice the anger before I sent the e-mail, or afterwards?</i>
concentration <i>samādhi</i>	A mind that stands firm and does not let itself be pulled away through eye and ear. It knows everything, but it runs after nothing (19.9., 20:07, 20:40).	<i>Stay with one thing for ten breaths. How often did I run off?</i>
correct <i>sammā</i>	Done in such a way that it works. Concentration is correct only when presence of mind is there with it (19.9., 08:33). Whoever merely stares is practising wrongly.	<i>Am I concentrated and present, or merely gritting my teeth?</i>
mindfulness of breathing <i>ānāpānasati</i>	Being aware of oneself while breathing in and while breathing out. The breath is the real path for walking meditation: in and out. Māra (temptation) cannot see it (19.9., 09:06, 33:11, 34:07).	<i>Three breaths at the traffic light, in the lift, before the phone call.</i>

Word in the talk	What it means	In daily life
calm and insight <i>samatha · vipassanā</i>	First make the mind calm, then see how it is. You begin with calm before you go on to insight; you need calm as the ground in any case (19.9., 00:38).	<i>Am I calm enough to see anything at all?</i>
the seven factors of awakening <i>bojjhaṅga</i>	What grows as mindfulness becomes complete: mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, coming to rest, concentration, equanimity. At this stage it is no longer called happiness but coming to rest: the body comes to rest, and the mind comes to rest with it (19.9., 28:18).	<i>What has already become quieter by itself today?</i>
what knows and what is known, the knower	What knows and what is known are two different things. The feeling is there, but it is not “I feel” (19.9., 16:41). There is no “knower”, there is only knowing; whoever searches for or creates a knower knows in a deluded way (23.9., 00:42).	<i>“There is anger” instead of “I am angry”. Does that make a difference?</i>
images that appear in sitting <i>nimitta</i>	Bodies of light, crystals, heaven, hell, voices: all of it comes from perception, from places one has been before; it is something the mind creates (23.9., 15:00, 15:44). It has no importance; whoever sees it returns to the breath (23.9., 16:48, 18:23).	<i>When an image or a thought rises while sitting: do I follow it, or do I return to the breath?</i>
deep concentration <i>jhāna</i>	A seeing by staring, not yet insight-knowledge (ñāṇa); it existed before the Buddha (23.9., 09:00, 11:47). With its power one can hold anger down, but like a bent branch it springs back as soon as the power gives out (23.9., 22:46).	<i>Do I merely hold my anger down, or do I see it coming?</i>
just knowing <i>รู้เฉย ๆ</i>	Knowing without running after it and without judging. What comes is known; nothing more (19.9., 18:38, 20:45).	<i>Hear a sound without finding it good or bad.</i>

WORD CARDS 3: WHAT BINDS AND WHAT FREES

Word in the talk	What it means	In daily life
lost <i>หลง</i>	The word the teacher attaches to everything: lost in getting, in having, in being, in happiness, in suffering. What is there is there because one is lost; if one is not lost, there is nothing at all (23.9., 38:45). Even knowing can be a way of being lost: deluded knowing (23.9., 00:42).	<i>What am I lost in right now: getting, having, being right?</i>
the first and the second noble fruit <i>sotāpanna · sakadāgāmi</i>	The Buddha’s mirror of the Dhamma: whoever has reached the first stage of awakening no longer gets angry, but still knows irritation, regret and longing. When the irritation too comes to an end, the second stage is reached (23.9., 23:20).	<i>When something annoys me today: does it turn into anger, or does it stay at irritation?</i>

Word in the talk	What it means	In daily life
the five aggregates <i>khandha</i>	What “I” is put together from: body, feeling, perception, what the mind creates, consciousness. None of them is me (19.9., 19:04).	<i>What hurts right now: is it the body, the feeling, or the story about it?</i>
impermanence • not-self <i>anicca • anattā</i>	It grows old and decays, it cannot stay, it changes. Whatever is impermanent is suffering. Whatever is suffering is not-self: not me (19.9., 07:29).	<i>What about me has stayed the same since yesterday?</i>
view of self <i>sakkāya-diṭṭhi</i>	The fixed assumption that this body is me. Giving it up does not mean throwing the body away. Only the view that this body is me comes to an end (19.9., 05:00).	<i>When the back hurts: “my back hurts”, or “I am a wreck”?</i>
appeal and harm <i>assāda • ādīnava</i>	Every thing has a side that lures and a side that costs. As long as one is lost in the appeal and does not see the harm, one does not really shake it off (19.9., 10:08).	<i>What is luring me right now? And what is it costing me?</i>
what has been pickling in the mind <i>āsava • anusaya</i>	What has been pickling and fermenting in the mind, and tendencies that lie sleeping deep down. They come within reach only when mindfulness follows the chain backwards, from feeling back to not knowing (19.9., 22:45, 27:14).	<i>Which reaction of mine is so old that I take it for my character?</i>
clinging to rules and rituals <i>sīlabbata-parāmāsa</i>	Taking the form for the thing itself: blaming others because they do not practise, attend the service or chant as we do (19.9., 30:37, 31:09).	<i>Whom am I judging by their form right now?</i>
Māra (temptation) <i>Māra</i>	Everything that lures one away from the practice. Whoever walks up and down in the breath, in and out, cannot be seen by Māra (19.9., 34:07).	<i>What is luring me away from the breath right now?</i>

TO TAKE WITH YOU

1. Look at what is there right now.
2. Notice the sign: pleasant or unpleasant.
3. Stay with the feeling for one second, before the wanting comes.
4. Return to the breath as often as you remember.

The teacher ends the talk like this: you need not be good at it, need not be good, need not be better than anyone. To be aware of yourself is enough (19.9., 36:36).

Translated for meaning, in plain English. Talk and transcript: schwoerer.com/talks/19092026/