

# Freedom *from* Suffering



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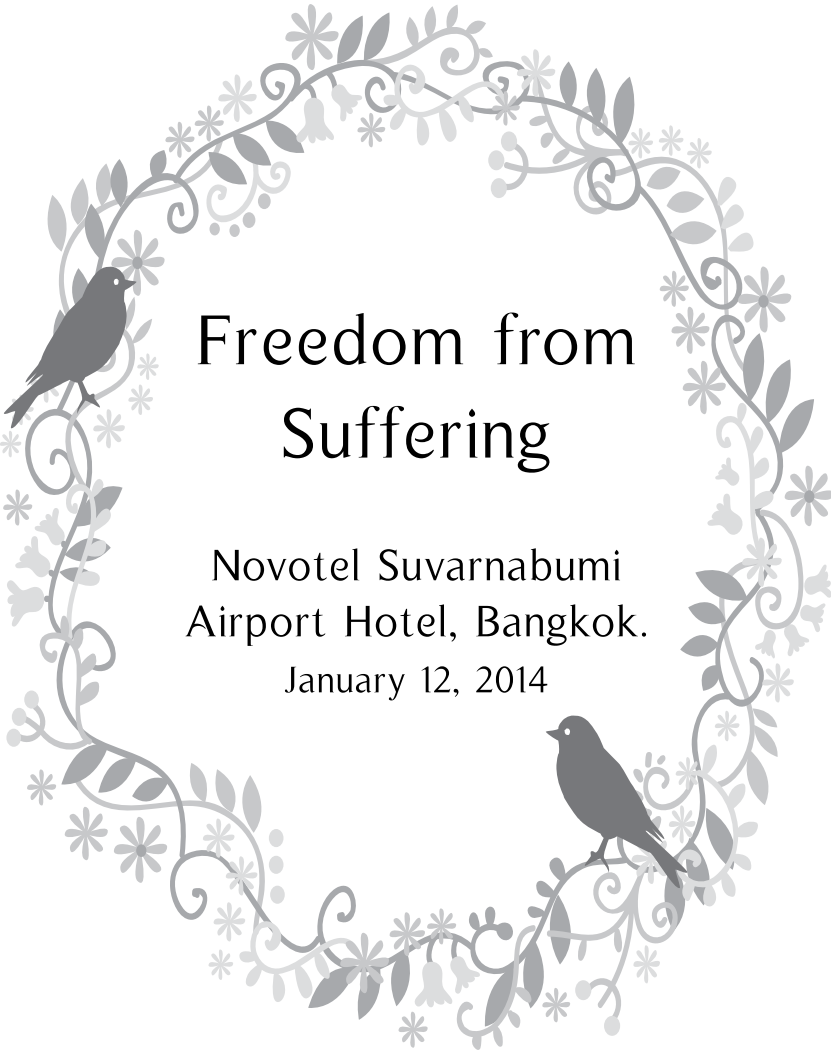
# Freedom *from* Suffering

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# Freedom from Suffering

Novotel Suvarnabumi  
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January 12, 2014

Welcome everyone.

We study the Dhamma so that we can free ourselves from suffering. The highest goal in our practice is to free our mind from suffering; otherwise, we are drowning in suffering for all time. All of those who have never had the fortune to listen to the Buddha's teachings are stuck in suffering forever. The most we can do is relieve suffering from time to time. For example, when we are hungry, we go to eat to relieve the suffering of the hunger or when we are sick, we take medicine to relieve the symptoms. But to truly release from suffering once and for all, we have to rely on the Buddha's teachings. When we truly understand the Dhamma within our heart then we free ourselves from suffering.

This is something we can do in this lifetime. It is not about being a good person and giving

charity, and hoping that eventually one day or one lifetime we will be able to free ourselves. That is an inferior path. The Buddha's teachings are truly special and amazing. They can release us from suffering right here right now in this moment. It is in this life that we have to free ourselves from suffering. Let us not have any expectations of future lives being any better than this one. We have to be good from right here and now. How do we know if we are really going to have future lifetimes and what are they going to be like? We may have heard from the Buddha that future lifetimes actually exist, but if we have not seen the evidence ourselves then our heart really doesn't understand it or accept it. Waiting for future lifetimes is not very useful and also works with things that are hard to believe. The amazing thing about the Buddha's teachings is that if we practice in accordance with the Dhamma, we can have a life right here and now, with no

suffering at all. At minimum, we can have less suffering, and less and less all the time.

For those of us here, who have practiced with my guidance for a while now, how many of us feel like suffering has lessened significantly? Please raise our hands. Now for everyone else, when we take a look at the number of hands in the air, we can see that it is possible to free our mind from suffering. When we may not become an arahant, one who has completely freed his mind from suffering, but level by level, we can see suffering be released from our heart. When our suffering lessens, we gain faith. We can become confident that the Buddha's teachings are able to take people with silly thoughts, silly beliefs, and develop their minds to a higher state.

The Buddha taught that if we have not seen the Four Noble Truths, then we will continue in the cycle of birth and death and will not be



able to free our minds from suffering. The Four Noble Truths are the highest teachings of the Buddha. If we truly understand The Four Noble Truths, the mind will free itself from Samsara, the endless cycle of birth and death. Some people through their meditation are able to remember their past life times. Some people can remember just one or two lives. Some can remember many. Sometimes people in their meditation are able to see that after someone dies they move into another realm and they are able to see where it is when they have gone. People who have these abilities are able to see and know that the cycle of birth and death goes on and on and on. And in any lifetime where we did not have the opportunity to come into contact with the Buddha's teachings, we will feel that that lifetime was a lonesome one. We will feel like life did not have any true direction. We didn't know what the purpose of life is.

We don't really know what it is that we should do in our life. We are born and then we see people go to school and learn so we go to school and learn, then we see them go to work then we follow them to work as well. Others have a family and we decide to have a family. Others then have children so we follow them and do so too. In the end they die and we die too, That's all our life ends up being. But any lifetime which we have enough merit and fortune to come into contact with the Buddha's teachings, life will have a purpose. We will know why it is that we are born. Our life will not be a nonsensical one. Our life will have a true purpose to release our minds from suffering. Even if we are not completely able to release our mind from suffering, we will at least get closer to doing so bit by bit. We will be able to bring our mind to a higher place level by level until one day we become crystal clear in the Four Noble Truths.

Most of us listening here are those who have listened to me quite a bit and have been practicing the Dhamma. There are many of us here who are able to separate out the aggregates or the aspects of body and mind. So, I'm going to speak today about the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths are the highest teaching of the Buddha that the enlightened ones see the truths of. The Four Noble Truths are what allow a regular ordinary person to become an enlightened being. The Four Noble Truths are comprised of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering. Have we all heard this before? Usually when we think of the first Noble Truth, suffering, we think that being born, getting old, getting sick, and dying -- those are what suffering mean. But that is not what's meant by suffering. Or perhaps being away from the things that we love is suffering, or being

confronted with things that we don't like is suffering. Or we practice something or hope for something, and then we don't get it. All those things are of course suffering, but really those are just symptoms of suffering. As the Buddha said, in summary, the things that are truly suffering are the five aggregates that comprise our body and our mind.

The first aggregate is body. The symptoms of having a body are: getting old, getting sick, and dying. The second aggregate is feeling or vedana. The third aggregate is sanya or memory; identification and classification. The fourth aggregate is sankhara, mental formations or fabrications such as wholesome and unwholesome states of mind. The fifth aggregate is vinyana or consciousness. We often just call it the mind, the bare awareness or knowing of objects through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the body.

These five aggregates are suffering itself. Our duty with respect to suffering is to know suffering, not to eliminate suffering. In our hearts we want to eliminate suffering, right? But the Buddha did not teach us to eliminate suffering. He taught us to know suffering. Suffering is a consequence; we can't eliminate a consequence. We have to eliminate the cause of the consequence. The cause of suffering is desire, so all we can do about suffering is to know it, but the cause of suffering we can eliminate.

Let's all try to understand: that which is suffering is the five aggregates, or put more easily, our body and our mind. Those are suffering proper. All of us who are practicing as ordinary people or even those of us that have enlightened but not fully enlightened to level of arahant yet; we will see that the body is happy or feeling pleasant sometimes and unhappy or feeling

unpleasant another times. Can we see that? The body is feeling good at times and not good at others. If we still feel that the body is a happy thing at times, and an unhappy thing at times, that means that we haven't understood the Noble Truth of suffering regarding the body. The truth is the body is nothing but suffering. Sometimes it is suffering a lot and sometimes it is only suffering a little bit. Whenever there is just a little bit of suffering in the body, we mistakenly think that is happy. The truth is that suffering is oppressing the body in every moment. Our bodies are in the state of stress, decay and deterioration at all times.

Even breathing in and breathing out are suffering. Sitting is suffering. Standing is suffering. Even lying down is suffering. Let's all start to breathe in and keep breathing. We mustn't breathe out. Is it suffering? It only takes a moment

and we start to suffer. When we feel suffering, what should we do? Of course we need to breathe out to relieve the suffering. So, breathing in is to relieve suffering of breathing out, and breathing out is to relieve suffering of breathing in. There is suffering in each in and out breath.

Sometimes there is a lot of suffering and sometimes there is just a little bit. Those without any mindfulness and without wisdom will believe that life is a happy thing. Like when we are young, a child or a teenager, we will believe that having the body is a happy thing. When we are old, we feel like our body is very suffering thing. We start to have difficulty controlling our own body. It doesn't work like it used to. The truth is the body has always been suffering, but we couldn't see it. When we are finally able to see clearly and truly that the body is nothing but suffering, the mind will release attachment utterly and completely to the body.

When the body is old, it is the body's business. The mind will not suffer along with it. When the body has aches and pains that is the body's business. The mind will not suffer along with the pains and when the body dies, the mind doesn't suffer along with it. Suffering will be able to affect the body, but it won't be able to affect the mind.

The Buddha taught that when we get hit by one arrow, we feel it got hit by two. When the body is suffering, the mind suffers along with it as well. When the body gets old for example, the heart also suffers along with that fact. How about when we get our first gray hair? How do we feel about that? Are we happy? How about our first wrinkle? We feel bad about it right? We try to fight against it, but when we have lots of wrinkles we just let it go. See? Suffering is oppressing



the body all of the time. But, if we still feel that the body can be a happy thing, we continuously resist this suffering. We don't want this body to have suffering. When we feel this way, our heart will suffer along with it. But, if our heart is intelligent, has wisdom, and sees the truth that the body is suffering in and of itself.

The body is not something good or anything special. It is not anything worth attaching to. Breathing out is suffering, breathing in is suffering. Seeing in this way, if the body is old then what is it that old? Suffering is old. When the body is in pain, what is in pain? Suffering is in pain. When the body dies, who is it that is dying? Suffering is dying. If suffering dies, then who cares? Let it die. When the truth is understood then our heart doesn't waver in these situations. So, no matter what happens in

the body, if we have the wisdom that the body is suffering, it doesn't matter what happens to the body, the heart will not suffer along with it.

Everything we do in our lives, we are doing it because we love happiness and we dislike suffering. We are trying to not suffer and be happy. Many people study very hard and get many degrees because they feel that if they do so they feel their life will be in a higher level and they will be happier. Even if we are a doctor, we will suffer. There are even doctors that are suffering so much then they kill themselves.

There are so many examples of people who engage in higher learning and are unhappy.

Some people think that if they have a lot of money, they will be very happy. Is this true?

No, they don't really have happiness. How about if we are famous? Or have a high rank or status like a high level government official, a minister, or a prime minister. Nobody gets to be a prime minister forever, eventually we have to leave the position or even sometimes we die before the end of term.

Everything we seek, whether it be money and assets, fame and status, we are doing it all in the hopes that it will bring happiness. The same is true when we want a family or to win the affections of a specific someone. But such happiness is short-lived and soon enough, the happiness vanishes. It's like a woman that marries a man that is so good to her. In fact he's so good to people, that he soon finds a mistress to be good to as well. The happiness in this case disappears, when we want to be the only one. Sometimes we think that if we have a child then we'll be happy, after we've married.

And we want to have a beautiful child. We forgot to look in the mirror! Where will the kid get these good looks from? Similarly, we want the child to be intelligent too! Let's look at ourselves and be realistic. We can't guarantee the child will turn out how we like. And even if the child ends up being a good person, we will still suffer out of concern for its health and safety. Will he or she have shady friends or take drugs? And so many other concerns. So all these things that we pursue in the interest of happiness, the truth is, there is suffering lurking in all of them.

Our duty with regards to suffering, then, is to become aware of it. Let's come to see that there isn't anything in the world that can bring lasting happiness. Let's study suffering. Let's be aware of the body; be aware of the in and out-breath. This is for those who are fond of body awareness. To know suffering, is to know

the body. Those who don't like body awareness, can be aware of the mind. There are only body and mind to be aware of because these are what comprise the five aggregates that are suffering. Can we see that we here still believe that the body and mind are happy sometimes, and suffering only sometimes? If we still believe that happiness is possible through this body and mind, we will pursue it indefinitely. But if we see that happiness and suffering are temporary things, they will not fool us anymore.

When we see the Dhamma, we see that everything, including happiness and unhappiness, are temporary phenomena. Everything comes in and then falls away, and there is nothing we can do about it. Watch the way it all works, watch the truth of it. Feelings pleasant or unpleasant occur in the body and in the heart. In the body, we appear to be comfortable and then we are not,

over and over again. When we have a closer look, we'll see that the body is always suffering, just sometimes more than other times. If a pain disappears, the body is suffering less, but is still suffering. The discomfort is suffering, impermanent and not under control. We can ask the body to not experience discomfort, pain or illness, but it won't listen. We can't prevent it. The mind is the same. It is able to experience both pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

Have we ever had a body that feels pleasant, but the mind does not? Our body may be healthy in all aspects and feel great, but our mind still suffers. Let's then have a look at reality. Our duty with respect to suffering, to happiness and unhappiness, is to know them. When we know them, we see the truth of suffering with regards to them just as we see in the body. The truth of the body is that it is always under stress.

The truth of the comfort and discomfort of the body is that they are never still. Pleasant feelings don't stay long and then disappear. They are impermanent and are not under our power. We can order our body to feel good, but it won't abide. And unpleasant feelings inevitably occur and we can't prevent them from coming. The fact that we have no power, no command of our feelings is the truth of non-self. We don't have the power to control the arising and falling of phenomena. If we observe the truth of body and mind often, we will see that they are impermanent, suffering and non-self.

The body is changing all of the time, under stress all of the time. The pleasant and unpleasant feelings come and go all of the time and are not under control. Memory cannot be controlled either. Sometimes we can remember things and sometimes we can't, right? A friend

we haven't seen in a while, we may only remember his last name, and forget his first! The name doesn't come to us. Sound familiar? Or how about this: we can only remember the name of his father! In the old days, kids were remembered by the name of the father.

We can't control our memories. How about wholesome and unwholesome mental states? Like when we feel angry, could we have prohibited the anger from arising? Who here has intended to not get angry, and then sure enough, we still do. Can we see this? Or we may try not to love someone, but we can't help ourself. Have we ever gone to the mall and told ourselves we'll just look and won't buy anything? We do! We don't even bring money as a precaution, but we happened to bring the credit card!



The formations in the mind such as greed, anger and delusion are not things we can prohibit from arising. Let's observe that anger is temporary, greed is temporary, and delusion is temporary. A restless mind is temporary and so is a sad one. Let's see the truth of all the mind's formations, mental states and emotions. It fabricates quality states, unscrupulous states, all kinds of states!

For example, we wake up in the morning and think that today we intended to go listen to a Dhamma talk. Some people weren't able to make it. Before they went to bed, they intended to come. However, upon awaking, they just rolled over and went back to sleep. They couldn't get out of bed. Especially on Sundays, they don't want to wake up early. They try to convince themselves to get up but don't have the energy. At first they formulate a positive mental

state – one that wishes to listen to Dhamma. But then, the good state loses out to the bad state – laziness! Some people get up and travel hours to come listen to my talks, and then when they are listening for a while, they want to go back home! The desire to listen to a talk comes up temporarily and then falls away. When we go traveling, we want to see this and that tourist site, and then when we are there, we start feeling bored and want to go home. Or even we just go shopping and then we want to go home. This is because our mental formations are changing all the time.

We may have no intention to be greedy, but greed can still come up. The same is true for anger, sadness or a restless mind. The mind is forming states all day and all night. The only exception is when we are in deep sleep when there are no wholesome or unwholesome states

being created and the mind is neutral. Otherwise, there are formations of mind happening constantly. Between wholesome and unwholesome mental states, which arise more easily? Who says wholesome? Who says unwholesome?

It appears we haven't listened to the Buddha's teachings! The Buddha taught that good people create good mental states easily. And bad people create bad states easily. Good and kind people have difficulty creating unwholesome states. So if we think we create negative states more easily, can we figure out what that means about us? As a whole, what side would we say we stand on? It is difficult for kind people to manifest unkind states. A kind person has a very difficult time lying, for example. He doesn't have any idea how to lie or cheat. If he sees someone drop her wallet, he could never keep it for himself.

Mental fabrications arise out of habit. The mind will fabricate in the ways that it is used to. If we are used to harming people, then the mind will fabricate harmful mental states. If we are used to being loving and kind, then those are the states most often created in the mind.

However, no matter if our minds fabricate kind or unkind states, each state is a temporary one. A good state, like wanting to listen to the Dhamma, comes up and then falls away. If I keep talking and talking, eventually we won't want to listen anymore. We'll want to go home. It lasts only temporarily. The same is true for bad mental states. When we are children and we are angry at a friend, we decide we'll be angry at them forever and ever. Nevermind forever, in just a few minutes we are friendly with them again!

Sometimes we are sad and crying. And with the tears still on our face, we start to laugh. Can

we see? The mind states, or mental formations and fabrications, are changing all of the time. The mind itself is also changing all of the time. One moment it is looking, the next it is listening and the next it is thinking. When we are watching television, normally we think that the eyes are watching, the ears are listening, and the mind is thinking all at the same time. But the truth is that they are working one at a time. In the moment that we are watching, we are not listening. In the moment that we are listening, we are not thinking. In the moment we are thinking, we are not watching or listening. This is why when we are reading a book, and our mind wanders off the story into other thoughts, we don't know what we just read. I'm sure we've experienced this. Our eyes are staring at the pages, but we have no idea what we are looking at when we are lost in thought. So the mind is arising and falling very quickly with each object in its awareness, one at a time. When it arises at the

eye, it doesn't arise at the ear. When it arises at the ear to hear, it doesn't arise at the eye or in thought.

Some people love to go to restaurants, with the most delicious food, great music and beautiful servers. They spend heaps of money to consume it all at once. Such people are not true Buddhists. True Buddhists will see this as a big waste of money. When we are listening to the band, and we put a forkful of this scrumptious food in our mouth, we don't even taste it. If we are watching the beautiful women walking around, we could eat a whole plate of food without being conscious of it. What a waste! We intended to gain pleasure through the good music, delicious flavours and beautiful views, and we can only be aware of one at a time! When we are listening to music, we aren't able to register the flavor of our food. The mind has to switch up between each, and we get busy

doing one, we miss out on the others.

Let's notice that the mind that goes to see is temporary. The mind that listens is temporary. And the mind that thinks is temporary. All kinds of mind are temporary. A happy mind is temporary. A suffering mind is temporary. A good mind is temporary. A greedy, angry or deluded mind is temporary. Let's observe the truth of the five aggregates, or more easily put, of our body and mind. The body exhibits the truth that it is always under oppression by suffering. The mind and its mental and emotional states are all impermanent and out of control. Whether happy, unhappy, good or bad, whether we remember something or can't, whether the mind moves to see, to hear or to think, we can't prevent any of it.

Let's test this out. There is a Buddha statue here. Let's all take a good look at the Buddha.

Let's just keep looking and no thinking is allowed...

Now, are there thoughts? Of course, there are! We can't prevent it. Let's stop trying. and stop looking! We don't want to burn a hole in the Buddha!

Can we see? Even though we fully intend to just look, our minds still move to think. We can't prevent this mind from thinking. We can't prevent it from going to look. We can't prevent it from going to listen. The components of seeing are the form, the eyes, light, and when met with the attention towards seeing, seeing will occur. These are things that are not under our power to control.

Knowing within this body and this mind, or knowing within the five aggregates that comprises them, is called knowing suffering. The Buddha summarized that the five aggregates are suffering proper. The body and mind are suffering



proper. Knowing suffering persistently, one day we will see the truth with crystal clarity that this body and this mind are not good or special things. All desire will be disposed of. If we take a look at all the wants and desires we have, we'll see that they all come down to wanting this body and this mind to experience happiness, to be free of suffering.

Why is it that we want a spouse? Do we want one so that we can suffer? Of course, not. We want a partner in the hopes that we'll be happy. If we feel upset and decide to drink, are we doing it to feel bad? No, we are hoping it brings contentment, and will give us some relief from our suffering. All the things we do, stemming from our desires, are in the interest of running towards happiness and away from suffering.

Wanting arises, and it is the force that brings about struggle and turbulence in our heart.

However, when we finally see that the body and mind are suffering, fully and completely, that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not a self, that they can't be controlled, all attachment to them will be broken.

When the body is no longer attached to, when the body is old or sick, it is the body's business. When the mind is no longer attached to, if the mind is suffering, the heart does not weaver at all. Suffering cannot make its way in.

We practice until all desire is totally eliminated. There are many ways to try to do this. Most people get rid of wanting, by obliging it. When we want to eat, we eat, and the wanting disappears. We want to sleep, so we sleep, and the wanting goes away. Whatever we want, we buy it and the wanting it vanishes. This method of obliging the wants resolves the immediate problem, but wanting just comes back! When

a new want comes up, we suffer again. Some people try to resist wanting as a way to eliminate it. They reject desire continuously. When they want to eat, they don't eat. When they want to sleep, they don't. They think that if they torture themselves like this the wanting will eventually fizzle out for good. This doesn't work. The Buddha did not teach us to do this. He tried it for many years, torturing his body in the hopes it will free him from the power of desire, and it didn't work.

Wise people will end desire by way of wisdom, by seeing clearly that this body and mind are nothing but suffering. This is how to completely end the wanting, because if there is full knowledge that the body and the mind are nothing but suffering, there will be no desire for their happiness. If the body is suffering proper, then how could it ever be happy? The body is suffering, so it isn't possible for it to be happy.

Those with the highest wisdom, have full understanding of the truth that the mind is suffering proper. When we see with crystal clarity that the mind is suffering, there will be no desire for the mind to be happy. It can't be happy; it is a futile desire because it is suffering itself!

It is like wanting fire to not be hot. Fire's function is to be hot! When we see clearly that the five aggregates or body and mind are impermanent, unsatisfactory and not a self, wanting will never arise again. The very moment that we know the truth of suffering will be the very same moment that the cause of suffering, desire, will be eliminated from our mind completely. That moment, where desire is eliminated, the cessation of suffering is attained. It is nirvana, the state of liberation from desire.

When we know suffering, we eliminate its cause at that very moment. When we eliminate the cause, we attain cessation. When we know suffering, eliminate the cause and attain session, that moment is the moment of the noble path. The Four Noble Truths all occur at once, in the same moment. It is the moment that the mind steps out of the world. The moment that suffering is known, desire has utterly ended and nirvana, the desireless state, is experienced. This is the moment of the noble path.

So, from now on, our duty is to frequently see and know suffering. Let's see it often. How shall we know suffering? Knowing suffering is knowing the truth of body and mind, right? To know the truth of body and mind, firstly, we must not forget our body and mind. People in this world have a body, but always forget that they do; and have a mind, and forget that too.

We all know what the mind wandering is, right? When our mind wanders, we have a body but we forget so. Have we ever been bitten by a mosquito while our mind is wandering? Do we know we got bitten? The mosquito fills its belly with so much of our blood that it can barely fly, and we have no idea until we get itchy later! So we see that when our mind wanders off, we forget about the body we have and we forget about the mind we have: the mind is happy and we have no clue, the mind is unhappy and we have no clue, or kind or mean and we have no clue.

The news these days is always upsetting. But when we watch it, what do we know? We know the news. Do we know that we are feeling upset? No, we don't. We forget to know ourselves. When watching, we have a body and we forget we do, and have a mind and forget we do.

The first condition for watching the body and mind, so that we can know suffering, is to not forget about our body and our mind. We have to be aware. Becoming aware is the starting point for our Dhamma practice. Let's learn to be aware and not wander away.

But being aware doesn't mean to force awareness. Some people exercise too much control. For example, they go to pick up a water glass, and do it so slowly, hoping that they will not lose awareness. Truthfully, reaching for the glass slowly, their minds can go to think twenty times, but they have no idea that it has. They are not aware. Walking slowly in meditation, the mind goes off to think constantly. Each time the mind goes off to think, we forget ourself. We forget our body and mind when we are thinking. We forget our body and mind when we are looking at something. We forget our body and mind when we are

engaged in listening. Whenever we are engaged in thinking or any sense, we are not aware. We forget ourself. Awareness and forgetting ourself are opposites.

Wandering away, forgetting ourselves is the main enemy of Dhamma practitioners. So let's not wander out of awareness for long. Can we prevent wandering off? No. The mind is used to wandering, so it will. But let's not wander for long. Let's come back to awareness of body and mind often. To start off, we choose an object of awareness to assist us in this.

Who here would like to attain nirvana? Is there anyone? Who here would like to just attain the first level of enlightenment, stream-enterer, and not completely attain nirvana? For whom is stream-entry is sufficient? Is there anyone who wants to cultivate the perfections of mind and be a Buddha in the distant future? Who has no



interest in any of this and is content to be reborn in hell? (laughter)

If we want to attain enlightenment at any stage, it occurs in this body and this mind. There is nowhere else we will find them. These special things aren't in a temple. They are not in monkhood. They are in ourself. We search for these special things within only ourself. The way to begin the practice is to become aware of oneself. This is the opposite of being unaware, or forgetting oneself. When we do this, we must not force the awareness. Forcing causes stress. Holding focus like this... We can't really keep awareness anyway. Going slowly is just pretending to have complete awareness. The mind will stray anyway.

We have to try to practice by picking a meditation object. If we wish to attain nirvana, but are lazy, and prefer to sleep all day, we

have no chance. Or if we give charity and listen to my talks and hope for nirvana, again, if we don't practice, there is no chance. If we genuinely want nirvana, the fruit of the path, or even want to be a truly good or happy person, we have to invest in ourself. This investment doesn't cost money. It is about cultivating awareness.

Everyday, let's pick a meditation object that our mind is content with. Whoever likes repeating "Buddho", should repeat it. Whoever likes watching the breath, should watch it. Whoever is content with the rising and falling of the abdomen, then practice that. Whoever likes walking meditation, should walk. Whoever likes praying and chanting, should do that. But no matter what we choose, whether it be any of what I mentioned or anything else, we use it in order to know what the mind does.

For example, when repeating “Buddho, Buddho...” and the mind wanders off, we become aware that it has. Then we “Buddho, Buddho...” and the mind focuses in on emptiness. We become aware that it has done so. Or we watch the breath in order to see the mind. When we watch the breath and the mind strays to think, we become aware that it strayed. When we breathe and the mind has focused in on the breath and becomes still, then we know that too. When the mind focuses in on the breath, it will move down toward the air. When the mind moves down it is not the separate observer. If we watch the abdomen, again, we watch the mind. If the mind goes to think, we know so. If the mind slides down to focus on the abdomen, we know so.

In summary, we pick a meditation object and then watch the mind that moves around. The mind moves around all the time. A moment ago I

asked us to take a look at the Buddha statue, and our minds moved to think, right? That's what it does! So we pick an object and then watch the mind move. Eventually, when the mind just begins to move we will know so quickly. Then we will be aware of ourself. The mind won't slip away.

There are two ways that the mind can be aware and not slip away. In the first way, the mind is normal and natural. This is the best way, accomplished by seeing the mind move and stray. So we pick an object and watch it do this. Each time we see the mind move away, it will come back to ourself, without forcing it.

The other way is forcing awareness. This way doesn't work at all. The mind will be under stress and dull. Meditators that do this are common, and say they are aware all the time. I will make the face for you... See? I'm constantly aware, but in an artificial way.

Children have one advantage over Dhamma practitioners. They don't have an ego that suppresses or edits feelings. Children's emotions and moods are genuine. One moment they are glad, the next upset, the next happy and the next suffering. Their tears are still not dry from crying, and they start laughing again. Kids emotions are changing all of the time. They don't interfere or control their minds. They don't force their minds or bodies and let them work freely. But the problem with kids is they lack mindfulness. Kids don't know at all what their body or mind is doing.

The good thing about practitioners is we have this mindfulness. We feel what the body and mind are doing. However, we have altered our minds, making them unnatural. Let's channel the soul of a child then. Let's not be phony, pretending to be nicer or kinder than we are. Let's

just walk how we always walk. There is no need to walk in any special technique. Let's sit how we sit. Can we meditate in this position? Or like this? (Luangpor slouches and reclines) Sure we can!

Some people raise their hands and feet in different ways. According to the late Master Phud, if we know how to practice correctly, then even meditating in a headstand, like a yoga posture, is fine. The issue is awareness, without controlling. If we are controlling, our mind will be constricted. Almost every practitioner who is doing it incorrectly, is forcing him or herself in some way and creating stress. The body is stiff and rigid and so is the mind, unlike a normal human being. Wear the heart of a child and then have mindfulness. Children don't have mindfulness. From now on, when our body moves, we feel it. When the mind moves we feel it.

When the mind strays and we know so, we will be aware in the right way. If we force our mind to be aware, it will be stressed, dull and unnatural. We should not do this. Stressed and rigid is the way of self torture. So let's just know, just feel, only feel. The term watching the mind has become popular, but what is meant is to feel the mind, not watch it. We feel what our mind is doing. We feel what our body is doing. We will be aware with practice, by choosing an object and feeling the mind stray from it. We don't prevent it from straying and we don't pull it back. If we pull it back, the mind will feel tight. Instead, the mind strays and we know so, again and again. Practicing this often, whenever the mind wanders, it will become aware on its own, automatically.

Regular people can do this. I was a regular guy too and I could be aware. Masters at the time would call me the knower. What did I know? I was

aware of myself. I didn't know anything special, the winning lottery numbers or anything like that! I knew my body and mind. In this world, no one is aware of their body and mind. Each is lost, forgetting their body and forgetting their mind. From now on, let's become aware often.

Choose a meditation object, and know when the mind strays. It is hard to know the mind when we don't have an object. The mind will wander too long – from morning to night. If we have an object, we won't stray for too long. We'll come back to the object. It is our assistant.

Once we are able to be aware we move to the second step: seeing the truth of the body and mind. In order to see the truth of the body and mind, we cannot interfere with or force the body and mind. We let the body do what it does and the mind do what it does, and we follow it up with regular mindfulness that sees what they did.



The body breathes out, and we feel it. The body breathes in, and we feel it. What do we feel? We feel the body breathing, not us. It is not us breathing ever again. The body stands, walks, sits and lies down, and the mind is the observer. The body is not us ever again. And we feel in the mind. The phenomena are not permanent. They are changing all of the time. Pleasant feelings are temporary. Unpleasant feelings are temporary. Greed, anger and delusion are all temporary. Pleasant feelings aren't us; they are things that the mind knows. Unpleasant feelings aren't us; they are things the mind knows. Greed, anger and delusion are not us; they are things the mind knows. Nothing that arises is us. After that, we see even the mind that knows isn't us. It isn't under our command. We tell it to be aware, and it wanders off. We tell it not to be angry, and it gets angry. We tell it to not be greedy, and it gets greedy. We tell it to be happy, and it doesn't oblige. It is all uncontrollable

and unpreventable phenomena. This is the practice of vipassana. This is walking the path of wisdom.

Seeing the body as it is, and seeing the mind as it is, we see their three characteristics. The more we see the truth, the more our heart relaxes out of its attachment to body and mind. When the truth of the body is seen, we release attachment to the body. When we see the truth of the mind, we release attachment to the mind. It is a step by step process. First, we will let go of the body because it is an easier thing to do. Even if we are practitioners that observe the mind and not the body, we will let go of the body first and the mind later. The mind is very subtle. Some say it is a special thing of a spiritual essence, which is very hard to let go of. But if we practice correctly, seeing and knowing the truth of the mind, one day we will see that the mind is not anything great or special. And the mind will be released.

Master Dune said seeing suffering with crystal clarity is the noble path. More specifically, it is the path to arahantship, to the realization of nirvana. Seeing suffering with crystal clarity, is seeing the mind. Because it is the mind that is suffering. When we see the mind as suffering, it does not matter what realm or state the mind decides to move to or settle in, it is all suffering. Birth as an angel is suffering. Birth as a godly deity is also suffering. When wisdom is strong, it sees that all realms are suffering because the mind is suffering itself. It doesn't matter where the mind is planted or seeded. When it grows to be a tree, coming from a suffering seed, the whole tree is one of suffering. The mind is the seed of suffering. From it is born a body and mind, which inevitably suffer.

When wisdom reaches full fruition, the seed of suffering, the mind as we know it, is destroyed.

After that, the mind transforms into something else. It can be called the consciousness element, completely pure. Not a mind that we are familiar with. It something to learn about later on after we have enlightened to the third stage as the non-returner. It will be our job to destroy the observer mind.

For now, let me summarize our job. First, let's keep the moral precepts. Then, we practice to become aware of body and mind. Let's not let the mind wander off for long. The way to practice this is to choose an object and see the mind that gets lost in thought. The mind will become aware. From there, we watch the truth of the body and mind regularly. Let's not interfere with them, or try to control them. That's too forced. It is stressful and tense. If we lose awareness, however, that is too lax. Just being aware is the middle way. Feel the body and mind as they are frequently.

So let's keep the precepts, become aware, and see the truth of the body and the truth of the mind. Then, the noble path to enlightenment will happen on its own. What we want will occur. If we don't practice and just want enlightenment, then all we get is the wanting! Wanting nirvana gets us nowhere. It doesn't matter if we ask holy ones to bless us and grant our wishes, we have no chance at nirvana in this way. We have to work for it. Buddhism is not for those who beg and plead. It is a religion of practice and self-reliance. We get out what we put in.

That's enough for today. I have spoke my standard length of 45 minutes.

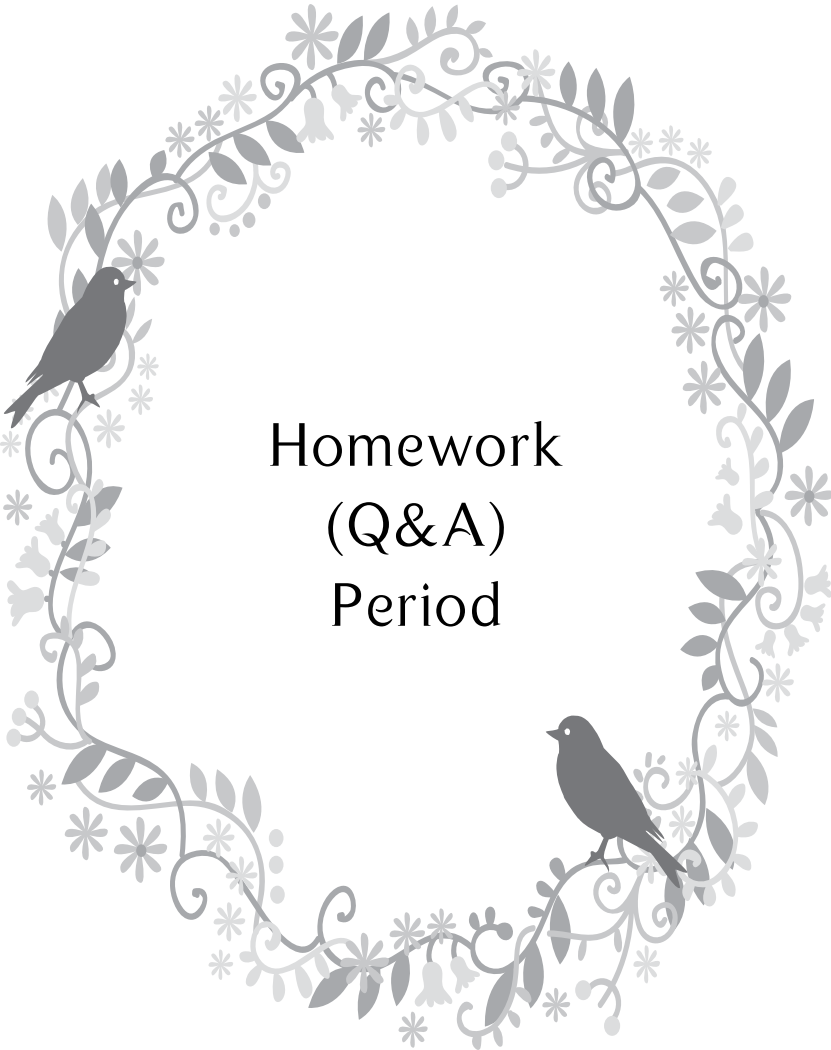
Who feels happy now? Raise your hand. A moment ago we were happy, but we were lost in thought and didn't know we were happy. Can we see that? Let's just come to know in this way.



However, let's not focus in on the happiness and just know in a relaxed way.

It's time for some of you to report on your homework now.





Homework  
(Q&A)  
Period

**Student 1:** I've been learning according to your teachings for about five years. I can have mindfulness at times, seeing the body and mind, but not so clearly and I feel that my samadhi isn't so great. This year I intend to become more disciplined with my practice, and improve my concentration. I am not able to sustain periods of being the observer.

**Luangpor:** Good. We have to know what our strengths and weaknesses are. We then see them and choose a meditation object that is an appropriate one for us. In your case, you aren't established as the observer enough, the mind is too busy, and doesn't have enough power. Find the right meditation object, and don't choose one because others have chosen it. Use what works for you.

There are two types of samadhi: one to be calm and the other to be the observer. To be



calm, settle the mind into an object that it is content to be with continuously. It must be a wholesome object, a good quality object like a mantra, the breath or chanting. Choose whichever the mind is happy with. To be the observer, see the mind leave the meditation object again and again. The best thing to do is practice both types of samadhi, one for a rest and the other to use for wisdom practice.

Can you see that you are interfering with the mind now?

**Student 1:** I don't see this clearly.

**Luangpor:** Can you feel that your mind is more still than is normal?

**Student 1:** Yes, I feel that.

**Luangpor:** This is because you are applying force.

Know that you are forcing.

**Student 2:** I am nervous, but I'm not so concerned about it. Lately when states arise, they don't bother me. Also, I'm not able to see the mind being sent out.

**Luangpor:** Is your mind in its normal and natural state now? Is this how it usually is?

**Student 2:** I'm a bit hazy and it is often like this.

**Luangpor:** You have created this state out of holding your mind fixed. Think of your mind when you were a child, bouncing around and cheerful. This is how we need to be. Now your mind is more natural and how it needs to be. A moment ago, your mind was being held still. In that stillness, there won't be any impurities of the mind to see. There will just be that haze. Remain cheerful.

**Student 2:** If I'm cheerful, but still am a bit uninspired, is that ok?

**Luangpor:** The reason you feel uninspired is because you are holding the mind still. Whatever happens there is not much reaction, because the mind is being interfered with. Can you see if there any stillness remaining?

**Student 2:** Right now it's a bit cheerful.

**Luangpor:** Let it loose and be cheerful. Just be sure to keep the moral precepts. Ah yes! Like that! Can you feel it is brighter now?

**Student 2:** Yes

**Luangpor:** Otherwise, it is just motionless and you get nowhere. A haze will come over you. Yes, like this. Can you feel happiness has arisen?

**Student 2:** I can. But I can't see the mind be sent out. Is that ok?

**Luangpor:** Now you went off into thought. When you were going to ask me something, your mind came to me and then went into thought. Know so. You don't have to see everything. Just relax and when the body and mind move, just come to feel what they do regularly. Don't force the mind still. You are starting to do it again.

**Student 2:** Must I have a main object to watch?

**Luangpor:** Yes, you should. Use whatever you feel relaxed and content with. Don't make the mind still.

Many people don't understand when I teach people early on. They think I don't teach people to do meditation. Actually there are three kinds of meditation. The first kind is incorrect

meditation, where there is no mindfulness, where delusion and haze comes in. We must stop doing that kind. The second kind is bringing the mind to an object for a rest. The third kind is to achieve the observer mind. This is the most vital kind. It is used for wisdom practice. The first is delusion meditation or incorrect meditation. The second is calmness meditation: one mind and one object, content being together. It's called object-contemplation, for samatha. The third kind is called characteristic-contemplation. The mind is the observer, seeing the Three Characteristics of physical and mental phenomena. The mind and body separate from one another and we see the Three Characteristics. This observer state of mind is necessary for enlightenment to occur. It is essential to practice this.

**Student 3:** I am confused about your teachings to not follow our defilements, but yet not interfere. For example, I do calmness meditation and then

I notice that I've been tensing my leg. So then I relax my leg. A few minutes later, I notice it is tense again. Then I realize that by relaxing it, I'm interfering.

**Luangpor:** Not interfering means being impartial to extremes. Have you ever seen a ship anchored in the middle of the river? Water passes by it on either side. The boat and the river are not in any conflict. The boat is not pulled along by the water, and the water isn't held back by the boat. Being pushed by the water is the extreme of following our every defilement and desire. Stopping the flow of water is the extreme of exercising control, blocking or altering the flow. Instead, see things as they are. See things come and go. Don't bother them. For example, when anger arises, our duty is to know so. Usually when it arises, we want it to go away. We try to find a way to get rid of it. This is interfering. But if suffering

arises, and it totally takes us over, then we are too weak and falling under the spell of impurities. The middle way is to know it as it is.

The root of your tension is greed. You want to practice and be good at it, and you didn't see that. If you see the root, you won't be tense. See the root of the tension instead of trying to resolve the tension here and there. Whenever we don't see the root, then we attempt to resolve its symptoms. At least it is better than creating a chronic physical issue.

**Student 3:** Sometimes this happens not in meditation, but when I'm driving. The leg I'm not using gets tense.

**Luangpor:** The root is the mind. The mind orders the body. Stress arises in the mind first and then it oppresses the body. Know what the mind is

doing regularly, and in the future there won't be any more stress. If there is no mental stress, there will be no physical tension. The body can't do anything on its own. The mind places the orders.

**Student 4:** Namaste.

**Luangpor:** Are you nervous?

**Student 4:** Very much so.

**Luangpor:** Yes, take some deep breaths like we are in a flower garden now. Can you speak yet? Can you sense the body is smiling? If you can't speak, let me teach you instead. Can you feel that the body and mind are two different things?

**Student 4:** Sometimes.

**Luangpor:** Pleasant and unpleasant feelings are not the mind. Greed, anger and delusion are not



the mind. Have you seen these things?

**Student 4:** Yes, I have.

**Luangpor:** You are able to separate the aggregates. Once we are able to do that, see each aggregate working by itself. Have you noticed that the body is breathing and the mind is the observer? Pleasant and unpleasant feelings, good and bad mind states are all things that the mind sees and knows are not the mind itself. Nothing is us. There are just things that are known by the mind. Once the mind knows something, it disappears. Take a look and see there is no us. Even the mind itself, one moment it is aware and the next it is lost in thought. Is this the case with you? Good. If we are always aware then there is something wrong. Aware and then lost is much better. Like now, did you just get lost?

**Student 4:** Yes, I did.

**Luangpor:** Lost doing what?

**Student 5:** Lost thinking.

**Luangpor:** Lost thinking. Take a look and see that it is not us. See that it is not under anyone's control. That which is known is not us. And the mind is uncontrollable, changing states all of the time. Well done.

**Student 6:** I have been learning the Dhamma under you for a quite a few years. However, I have worked too hard. I have mindfulness and am able to separate the aggregates, but my mind is not the separate observer. At work sometimes, I recognize that I'm lost in thought, listen to others, then see the mind fabricate and create anger. A few times, I've seen the anger not get mixed in as part of me.

**Luangpor:** Yes. Sometimes we see the defilements are one thing and the mind is another, disconnected from each other. The defilements don't come out of thin air. There is contact with a sense object, then thinking, and anger comes afterward. The anger comes from a cause. We are not to prevent this. We just see the defilements come and go, without judging them. Can you see these things aren't under control?

**Student 6:** Yes, I see that.

**Luangpor:** You see non-self clearly. See this non-self, out of control quality often.

**Student 6:** Am I still on the correct path?

**Luangpor:** Are you keeping the moral precepts? Are you aware sometimes? Are you seeing the aggregates and seeing them demonstrate the

Three Characteristics? If you do any or all of these, then you are on the path.

**Student 6:** I see the Three Characteristics but I'm not impartial to them.

**Luangpor:** Then know that you are not impartial. I think you have your answer if you are on the path or not? You have morality, concentration and wisdom. Where other than on the path could you be?

**Student 6:** Can you recommend what to do next?

**Luangpor:** Your mind is too busy and outward. Do some samatha for a rest and then see the mind moving out to think from there. Don't stop it from moving, just see it and your mind will achieve correct concentration, as the observer.

Right now, you need to do calming meditation.  
The mind is too restless.

Lay people have two main weaknesses in their practice. One is they lack frequency of practice, and the other is they lack concentration. Though some people try to practice all night long. That doesn't work either. Usually that way is stressful and creates haze and dullness – it lacks energy and concentration. Meditation is required that has mindfulness, and alert awareness of body and mind. It is relaxed, content and the mind is bright and light. A stressful mind is ineffective.

**Student 7:** This is the first time I've sent in my homework to you.

**Luangpor:** Can you see that you have changed? It is easy to see who is studying with me. Your faces are brighter than ordinary people. You can

look in the mirror and see that your face used to be wrinkled and sagging and now it looks fresh and new.

**Student 7:** I practice observing my body and mind and I have more mindfulness.

**Luangpor:** Keep practicing. You are doing it correctly.

We aren't practicing to be happy. We aren't practicing to be peaceful. We aren't practicing to be good. Happiness, peace and goodness are all temporary phenomena. We practice to see the truth of body and mind. When we see the truth of them, we can release from them, and then what remains? A happiness, peace and goodness that lasts.

**Student 8:** I...

**Luangpor:** You are nervous.

**Student 8:** (nervous laugh) Yes, I am. Around the new year I was so glad when I saw on [www.dhamma.com](http://www.dhamma.com) that you will be coming here. I feel that just hearing your voice brings more power to my practice.

**Luangpor:** Your mind is intuitive. But if it is able to pick up on good energy, then it is able to pick up on bad energy as well.

**Student 8:** Yes, and it makes me anxious.

**Luangpor:** And your mind moves out.

**Student 8:** I have a problem. You say to just watch, but I can't just watch. I want to know, in the Four Noble Truths, we are to know suffering and eliminate its cause. If we are just knowing, then that isn't eliminating. Am I right?

**Luangpor:** No. We know suffering, and when we understand it with crystal clarity, the elimination will happen on its own.

**Student 8:** Automatically?

**Luangpor:** Automatically. The cessation of suffering will happen automatically at that moment where the Noble Path reaches fruition, automatically. Your task now is to practice along the Path, but it isn't the real Noble Path. The Path to take is morality, concentration and wisdom. We practice these and when the time is ripe, the mind will enter deep concentration and it will know suffering, eliminate the cause, realize cessation, and achieve the Path all in the same moment. The mind will do this on its own. For now, don't think about eliminating the cause.

So what is our duty? The Buddha said the two practices of the utmost importance



are samatha and vipassana. When our mind is sufficiently calm, then we train to achieve the observer mind and use it for vipassana: to see the truth of body and mind frequently. This is the work we must do. Practicing vipassana is practicing to know suffering. However, we will only truly know suffering in the moment of the Noble Path. For now, we practice knowing suffering, knowing the body and mind with correct samadhi.

**Student 8:** So that's all?

**Luangpor:** Notice your mind. It is sad. Aversion interferes easily.

**Student 8:** Yes.

**Luangpor:** Don't hate that. Resisting any state that arises causes aversion. The mind will be unhappy. Know whatever phenomena arises in the present in a relaxed way. Don't hold expectations.

Aversion is interfering now.

**Student 8:** Thank you.

**Student 9:** Recently, conditions in my life have made me irritable. The story goes around and around in my head.

**Luangpor:** We can't prohibit this. What the mind thinks is not something we can control. It's not only you that gets angry. The whole country is angry. We are creating a hell in our country. Anger is the emotion of Hell. Suppose we on the side that disagrees with government. Then we should oppose it and uphold our legal rights. But if we are Buddhists, we have to be careful to not lose our mindfulness and morality when we do so. It is not immoral to go to protests, but it is immoral to shout angrily. The most important aspect is to guard our mind. All sides are very emotional in

political unrest. We won't act out of emotion. We will use our brain and reason. If there reason to dismiss the government, then we do it. If it is appropriate to stabilize the government, then we do it. But we don't break our moral code in the process. Lately there is so much unwholesome and unfortunate news. Listening to my talks is a wholesome alternative!

**Student 9:** When the microphone was coming toward me, I got so anxious.

**Luangpor:** We can't prohibit this. Can you see this? We can't stop it from coming, so just know it as it is. If we keep watching we'll see that anxiety comes up and then goes away. We don't feel it all the time. Can you see that it is not the same amount of anxiety now as before? When the microphone was close, you were quite anxious, but as soon as you held it the anxiety decreased.

Sometimes, the longer we hold it, the less we are willing to let go of it!

Send in your homework.

**Student 9:** I listened a talk of yours on CD and you said that when memory and feeling arise, mental fabrication comes next. I see this clearly.

**Luangpor:** Right. Can you see that we can't stop this process? Whenever we are able to accept that we can't control it, that means we understand it. So we bring the mind to learning the truth frequently, and in the end, it will see that things just arise from causes and conditions. This cause brings that effect. We can't control it. We keep seeing this over and over. But if the mind is really unhappy then we do calmness practice. If it is thinking too much, then we practice to make it more stable.

**Student 10:** When I started practicing I felt so happy. But now, the happiness is pretty much gone.

**Luangpor:** That's normal. When you started learning with me, I showed you how to become the observer and you become aware of yourself. This is what is meant by practicing samadhi. When you have such awareness, happiness keeps arising all day long. But let's not get stuck at that point. We achieve this observer mind so that we can bring it to learn the truth. The truth of what? The truth of body and mind. And what is the truth of body and mind? They are suffering. Therefore, what we will see at that point is nothing but suffering. Can you see that mild and severe suffering are rotating around and around all the time? We see the truth repeatedly until we become dispassionate. We are dispassionate until we let go of attachment. We let go of attachment and then are liberated.

This is the path of the enlightened ones. It is not unusual when we train under my advisement to feel happiness and joy coming up often for no apparent reason. This is for beginners who first achieve samadhi. Once we achieve samadhi, it is then time for wisdom practice. Wisdom practice could also be called learning suffering.

I met a master once named Luangpu Khum Pun. At the time I was only practicing samatha. Luangpu advised metaphorically, “We set out on a journey to a distant paradise. However, on our journey we come across a big tree with lots of cool shade, and decide to settle there and not journey forth.” Such is the happiness of samatha or calmness meditation. If we get up from the tree, the journey is difficult with high winds and a hot sun. There will be struggle on the way to the promised land, which is Nirvana in this analogy.

**Student 10:** I feel there is movement at the centre of my chest. I'm also interfering, not impartial.

**Luangpor:** Correct. This is why I always say, “Have the mindfulness that sees the body and mind as they really are, as a separate and impartial observer.” In Dhamma practice, once it becomes subtle and more advanced, all that is left is movement and shifting at the centre of the chest. We don't even know what phenomena are arising, whether greed, anger, delusion, good or bad states, or pleasant or unpleasant feelings. What remains is that something arises, and that something is of the nature to fall away. We don't even know what that something is! Keep watching and you'll see that suffering is all there is. But if the movement at the chest becomes too tiring to handle at any point, do some calmness practice. Repeat “Buddho”. Think of the Buddha. Take a rest and don't watch the movement at the chest.

Rest temporarily, and once you feel sufficiently happy, calm and fresh again, you can resume watching the mind and you'll have successfully evaded that tiring period.

**Student 10:** Many months ago you recommended me to practice calmness. I've meditated on my in and out-breath every day since. But lately, meditation has been making me dreamy and floaty. I'm not sure how to fix this.

**Luangpor:** Do some meditation now for me to see... Just forget I'm here and practice... Can you keep your eyes open? The Buddha didn't teach to close your eyes. Once you are sufficiently peaceful, the eyes will close on their own. Sometimes if we start by closing our eyes, we'll create a sleepy mindset. When our mindfulness doesn't see it in time and we'll drop into sleep. The Buddha taught "A yogi sits down folding



his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore.”

Nowhere does it say to close your eyes. Breathe with awareness... Start over. Say this to yourself as you meditate “Breathing out with awareness. Breathing in with awareness.” What you are doing now is too forceful and will create stiffness. Be aware in a relaxed and comfortable way: breathing out relaxed and aware. Breathing in, we are relaxed and aware. You are starting to get dreamy already. Can you see it? The mind lacks mindfulness; it didn’t see the dreaminess when it began. Try to practice with your eyes open, breathe and be aware. Your mindfulness will become stronger.

**Student 10:** Is there anything else you can recommend?

**Luangpor:** Correct your meditation periods. If your mind has no energy, you won't be able to continue wisdom practice. You have developed quite a lot. Seeing the movement at the chest is a subtle stage of the practice. You will need assistance from the power of samadhi more than ever. But I don't mean the samadhi where we are calm and lack mindfulness. Breathe, and stay aware and alert. Practice this every day, and you'll gain energy. Sometimes, the mind will enter a deep rest state. When we have our eyes open, they'll close by themselves. Sometimes our body and the entire world disappear in our experience. All that is left is the mind in complete alert awareness. When the mind comes out of this samadhi, the tiring movement at the chest will no longer be an issue.

**Student 10:** I feel I lack loving-kindness in a big way.

**Luangpor:** So practice it. Pray for all sentient beings to be happy. You may want to start with yourself! You are a sentient being too, don't forget!

**Student 11:** I am not really aware and seem to enjoy the world too much. When I meditate on the breath I just get sleepy. So I decided to start running and find it a bit better, but it's tiring. Not to mention the aches and pains!

**Luangpor:** The Buddha never talked about running meditation! It sounds exhausting. Who wants to run for an hour? Do you know why you fall asleep easily in your meditation? Because you are tired from your daily life. Your mind is too busy and over-exerted. It needs a rest. Once you get around to meditating, you don't have any energy, and fall asleep. Instead, wake up a bit early in the morning and meditate then.

Wake up at four in the morning, nice and fresh...  
Hey! Why the disgusted look on your face?  
(laughter)

Have you ever seen a star when it is about to fall from the sky? In the big city, we don't have an open sky and barely see the light of stars. All we have is the light of electricity. What a pity. Wake up a bit early and practice when you are fresh. If four is too early, then wake up at five. Go to sleep earlier. Those who don't sleep until late, sleep through the morning. Humans were designed to be daytime animals. We don't have night vision and such things. City folk, however, have altered their behavior to be nocturnal. Some of us don't go to bed until 1 or 2 am. We sleep through the morning, missing the nicest and freshest part of the day. If at all possible, gradually alter your sleep habits so that you go to sleep and wake earlier.

**Student 11:** Is there anything else I should do?

**Luangpor:** Practice loving-kindness for all beings. Start by repeating the phrase, “May all beings be happy.” Soon the heart will oblige. When we see beings that are struggling, we’ll have so much love and compassion. We’ll see that all beings, including humans are riddled with suffering. Those who lack loving-kindness, only see their own suffering. They don’t see the pains of others. When we see the suffering of others and start to have compassion, loving-kindness will follow automatically.

**Student 11:** I’m easily angered.

**Luangpor:** I’ve said that current of anger is ruling the world right now. Certainly, it is easy to see lately in Thailand. Loving-kindness has depleted.

**Student 12:** I’ve been following your teachings for a few years. As you say, at the beginning I felt

so happy practicing all day long. But then I started to see and know myself more clearly. I am a bad person, more and more frequently.

**Luangpor:** You are not bad more frequently. You are just seeing it more frequently! We don't become a worse person when we practice Dhamma! Why on earth would we practice then? We see ourself more clearly. Before practicing we think we are great. When we argue we are always in the right and won't see ourself as wrong. But once when we practice, we start to see that it is all about ego.

In your daily life, is your mind usually as it is now?

**Student 12:** Now, I'm a bit nervous.

**Luangpor:** Are you interfering with it?

**Student 12:** Yes.

**Luangpor:** If you can see this, then your practice is fine. Let your mind be natural in your daily life and have the mindfulness that is aware of mental behaviour. Don't stare at the mind in advance to see what happens. The principles of the practice are as follows: 1) Before seeing phenomena, don't stand guard and wait for them. Let the feeling come first, and then know that it has. If we watch in advance the mind will be too still and empty. So don't do it. 2) When seeing phenomena, see them from a distance. Don't move in towards them. See as if it is an outsider looking in. 3) After seeing a phenomenon of body or mind, don't interfere with it. For example, if the mind has an impurity, just know it and don't interfere. That way we will see the truth that the impurity arose out of its causes, and it disappears when those causes are gone;

that we have no say or command over this. Keep practicing, but be careful of watching in advance. You are still doing this.

**Student 13:** I still feel like my mind is too still. You warned me of this before.

**Luangpor:** Is your mind avoiding suffering?

**Student 13:** Well, when phenomena arise I know that they do. But the mind is impassible towards things.

**Luangpor:** That's not what we want. It is ok if that happens temporarily, but that's not what we're after. The reality is that feelings are changing all the time. If we are impassive, it means we are holding ourself together somehow. There, you are doing it now!

**Student 13:** Oh, I see. I do this often.



**Luangpor:** It is wrong to do this. The mind is used to doing it, addicted to holding itself together. It is a way to flee from harm, to avoid suffering.

**Student 13:** And it is doing this by itself?

**Luangpor:** Yes, because the mind is afraid to suffer. So it is hiding, keeping itself still. It could stay like this all day, but it is a bit dull. Be brave... There! You have come out of this state now.

**Student 13:** Could this problem also be a result of sending my mind out often?

**Luangpor:** Practice samatha sometimes. The mind will be cool and calm, and have more energy. Your mind lacks energy.

**Student 13:** For samatha, can I practice watching the mind go off to think repeatedly?

**Luangpor:** In your case right now, you should rest. Let your mind come to a rest with an object that makes it content. Breathe and be happy doing so.

**Student 13:** That makes me fall asleep.

**Luangpor:** It sleeps because it is tired. It is weak. A weak mind sleeps as soon as we do meditation. Don't resist it. Let it rest. Let it sleep. When you wake up, then continue meditating.

This isn't the vipassana insight of dispassionateness towards phenomena. When it is genuine dispassion, sometimes the mind will also sleep during meditation. In your case, however, it is not the insight of dispassion. It is aversion to suffering. It is avoiding suffering.

Choose an object and practice samatha. You could choose loving-kindness if you like.

But don't force a current of kindness out. Start off by just thinking about loving-kindness. Repeat the phrases like "May all beings be happy..." until the heart becomes calm and gentle, and a current of loving-kindness energy will flow out naturally. A heart that is filled with loving-kindness is bright and its power flows out wide and vast. There should be no stress or forceful attempts.


Loving-kindness practice is most suitable for those with stress deep inside. When such people watch the in and out-breath, they tend to get even more stressed, forcing and suppressing their mind. However, loving-kindness makes them let go of the tension within. The mind will relax and expand, and loving energy will naturally flow out from the heart. Once the heart has expanded and is aware and awake, it becomes easy to continue our wisdom practice.

Become friendly with everything. The word loving-kindness is synonymous with friendliness. Also the name of the famed Bodhisattva Maitreya has the same meaning.

That is all for today.

Blessings to everyone. And as I send you blessings, use it as an opportunity to meditate peacefully, and share your blessings with all beings.





About Venerable  
“Luangpor”  
Pramote Pamojjo

Venerable “Luangpor” Pramote is a monk residing in Sriracha, Chonburi, Thailand. He is the abbot of Suan Santidham Temple, which translates to The Sanctuary for Peaceful Dhamma. He is rapidly gaining popularity, being one of the most effective teachers of Dhamma in Thailand. He manages to relate the Buddha’s teachings on meditation and Dhamma practice towards spiritual enlightenment (nirvana) in ways that are easy to understand and are appropriate for our modern, fast-paced society.

He teaches the Dhamma to avid practitioners looking to truly understand the middle way and to progress in their practice. Bangkok residents set out on an hour and a half drive in the darkness of the early morning to arrive before sunrise and line up outside his temple to get a good seat to listen to his teachings, express their concerns regarding their own practice and receive individual advice – a custom that has been coined “submitting their

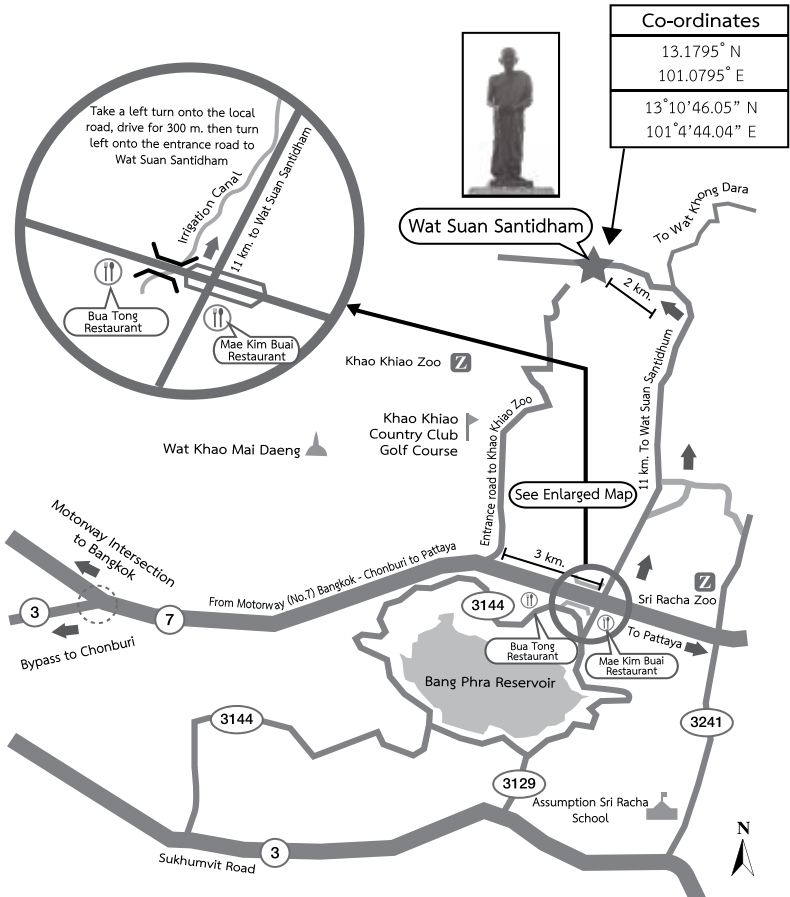
homework” for the headmaster to fine-tune or modify.

He travels tirelessly around Thailand and abroad, teaching and helping to wake up people’s minds. It is quickly becoming one of the biggest Buddhist enlightenment movements in recent times.

Luangpor Pramote became a monk in 2001 at the age of 48 after being an efficacious meditator and avid Dhamma practitioner as a layman since he was seven years old. He has had many teachers along the way, but considers himself primarily a disciple of Venerable Grandfather Dune, from North Eastern Thailand’s forest monk lineage of Master Mun Bhūridatto.



# Map to Wat Suan Santidham



Direction from Bangkok, from the Motorway intersection to Pattaya, drive for approximately 13 km. upon seeing Bua Tong Restaurant's sign on the right, take the left lane and cross an irrigation canal bridge, then take an immediate left turn onto the local road. Continue for approximately 300 m. then turn left onto the entrance road to Wat Suan Santidham.

Wat Suan Santidham  
 Located at Amphoe Sri Racha, Chonburi Province  
 Dhamma Talk Time : 7.30 - 10.00 hr.  
 Please check schedule of Dhamma Talk by Luangor Pramote Pamojjo at Wat Suan Santidham  
 and at other locations on Dhamma Calendar's webpage at [www.dhamma.com/calendar](http://www.dhamma.com/calendar)  
 or call phone no. 08-1557-9878.

For updated map, please visit [www.dhamma.com/map](http://www.dhamma.com/map)