

Mindfulness with Breathing (Ānāpānasati), Part 7 of 8

SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE ĀNĀPĀNASATI

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhadāsa gave regular lectures during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. All Ajahn's teachings are now available on:

www.suanmokkh.org,

<https://soundcloud.com/buddhadasa> and

<https://www.youtube.com/@buddhadasabhikkhu7829>.

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email to: suanmokkh_bangkok@bia.or.th.

Today we will be giving a summary of the entire practice of *ānāpānasati*. We will go through and summarize what has been discussed so far in the previous talks. So today we will summarize the characteristics of the sixteen steps, the purpose, benefits and usefulness of these sixteen steps and then the method and way of practice to realize the benefits of these sixteen steps. Please pay close and careful attention so that you will understand the essentials of this practice in order to continue practicing it correctly, in order to realize the benefits which come with the correct practice of mindfulness of breathing. Please don't forget that what we're talking about is something natural. This whole business of *ānāpānasati* has to do with nature. It's completely natural. Never forget this.

In this natural process we need to understand four different aspects of nature: the *kaya* or bodies, *vedanā* – feelings, *citta* – the heart-mind, and Dhamma – truth and reality. We're studying nature in these four aspects and please understand the word "nature" in the Buddhist sense. In the West nature is often opposed to man. Nature's set off for man to conquer or destroy as man sees fit. But the way the Buddha taught, man is just a part of nature and so there is no distinction between nature and man. Everything about us is just another aspect of nature. So in *ānāpānasati* we study these four aspects of nature. We study them in order to be able to use them. When these things are understood, then they can be used in a way that will bring benefits and usefulness to life. Throughout these talks we've discussed controlling these various things. We talked controlling the breathing, controlling the feelings. In reality it is impossible to have any kind of absolute control over any of these things because they're just these natural phenomena. There is nothing we can absolutely control them but in relative terms we can talk about using them, controlling them within certain limits. So there is a truth, some truth in talking about relative control. So in

understanding these things, we learn how to use them in order to derive benefits from them, in order to live life correctly.

The first thing that is studied in the practice of mindfulness of breathing is the *kaya* or bodies or the body. The body is studied for reasons which we have already explained. We'll just go through a few of them quickly. The body is the foundation for the mind. Without the body, there would be no *citta*. So the body is a necessary component of life. And as it fulfils this necessary position in life, it needs to be understood. So in this first group of steps, the first tetrad, we studied the body – the *kaya*. Especially, we studied the breathing because in the breathing there is something very worth knowing and understanding. There is a lot of very useful knowledge which we can find within the breathing. So in these first steps, we learn how to calm the body, to get some control over the body. This is very useful, and we do this by controlling the breathing. Doing this has a variety of benefits. For example, if we're angry, we can learn how to let go of this anger, to dispel that anger by breathing long and then the anger will go away. We can learn to do this through the practice of mindfulness of breathing. Or if the mind is all caught up and agitated by some idea or a train of thought, the mind can free itself from that agitation intention by breathing with long breathing. By breathing long and gentle and peaceful, then the mind can free itself from this disturbing and anxious thought. So in this way, the breathing can be used to change moods and emotions. And this is something we discovered in the first tetrad. Not only that, breathing long and peacefully and gently is very useful for good health. The more gentle and deep and long our breath, the more healthy the body will be. So studying the breathing and learning how to have control over the breathing bring a variety of benefits, not just physical benefits regarding the body itself but also benefits related to the mind. This emphasizes once again that body and mind are interrelated.

Now the *vedanā* which we usually translate the feelings, if you aren't acquainted with these things, then you won't think that they are of any importance whatsoever. You'll think that they're no big deal. But in reality, the *vedanā* are of the highest importance to human being or to all beings because the *vedanā* are what make the world spin round. The *vedanā* turn the world. The meaning of this is that everything we do is chasing after or running away from pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Almost all of our activities, there are either pleasant feelings drawing us, calling us, attracting us or unpleasant feelings which we are running away from, trying to get free of. So these feelings are constantly spinning us around, turning this way and turning that way because of the feelings. And then this turning of ourselves the way the *vedanā* spin us around, this is what turns the world. All the things happening in the world are because of individuals like us trying to get certain kinds of feelings and get rid of other kinds of feelings. All the material progress that we've been experiencing is a result of the attempt to indulging in various *vedanā* or hiding from other kinds of *vedanā*. And all the arts and all the agitation and everything is rooted in the *vedanā* and the power the *vedanā* have over the human mind. So we can say that these feelings turn the world. They make the world spin. They show their great importance. If the *vedanā* have this kind of power and influence over us in this way, then we may begin to see the need to get some control over the situation. As it is now the *vedanā*, these feelings dominate us. They possess us. They overwhelm us. This is the state of the world where the feelings of human beings or creatures are dominating the world, motivating all our behaviors. So we begin to see the need to get some control over this situation and can get ourselves out from under this slavery to pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

This is true also for animals. We can see that even in animals, they are trying to acquire certain pleasures. They're walking around. They're flying around looking for various pleasures and avoiding doing what they can to get rid of unpleasant feelings. You can see that not only in the human world but in the world of animals is spun around by the feelings. This is also true of all the various realms and worlds that they're caught up in the feelings. The problem with us is that these feelings are bound up in ignorance. There is not a full and complete understanding of them which allows us to be free of them. All the feelings are rooted in and accompanied by ignorance and then this leads to desire, to craving and all the defiled activity that we see being enacted around us. So the the feelings have this incredibly powerful influence upon ourselves, animals, the world, just about everything. So we need to get some perspective on this. You can see that even in yourselves in coming here to Suan Mokkh. Why did you come here? Isn't it true that you came here in order to get some kind of feelings, either you're looking for certain kinds of pleasant feelings, the peace and quiet of a monastery or the joy of meditation or else trying to get away from some of the agitation or tension or suffering in the world – that one way or another you came to Suan Mokkh because of these feelings? So we can see on all these different levels what a powerful impact the feelings have. And so in the second tetrad of *ānāpānasati*, we study these feelings in order to develop some freedom, to get out from under their control.

As with many things that we talk about in Dhamma, there are two kinds of *vedanā* – wise *vedanā* and ignorant *vedanā*. When there is sense contact – the meeting between sense organ, sense object and sense consciousness – when these three come together, there is what we call 'sense contact' or 'sense experience.' The mind always reacts to sense experience. If there is no wisdom present, then that reaction is foolish and ignorant because knowledge and wisdom is lacking. However, if there is wisdom present, then the reaction to the sense experience will be wise. This reaction is what we call '*vedanā*.' With wise *vedanā*, no problems will arrive. But with foolish *vedanā*, a variety of problems will ensue. When there is foolish *vedanā* which is based in ignorance, this will lead to craving, to an ignorant kind of desire. When there is wise *vedanā* or wise feeling which is not a defiled kind of feeling which we're most accustomed to, then there will arise wanting also. But it will be a kind of wanting that is based in wisdom and knowledge and so that wanting we can call 'wise wanting.' Please notice this distinction, it is very important.

There's a distinction between wise wanting or wise desire and ignorant wanting or ignorant desire. There's a big difference which you need to be aware of. When there is ignorant feeling, then there will be ignorant desire or craving, thirst, hunger which sends us searching all over the world in order to satisfy that craving. And we can see this foolish craving leading to all sorts of things. We have cravings to things like to go to the moon and we spend millions and millions of dollars to develop fancy equipment in order to send a few people to the moon and do a few little scientific experiments. But because that craving can never be satisfied, going to the moon isn't enough. So there is always craving for more, farther, higher, better. So this craving is always sending the human species running round and round. It's endless. There is no end to this craving because craving can never be satisfied. But when there is wise one, then there is wisdom and knowledge about the conditions, and one knows the limits which one is working in. And so the wanting is always in the realm of possibility and there's always the understanding that things may not work out the way we thought they might. So there can be wise wanting which is always balanced and does not lead to problems. So feelings which lead to these different kinds of wanting which are the cause of all our problems and *dukkha* are very important. Learning how to control these feelings so that they are wise instead of foolish is an incredibly powerful tool in

living a life of freedom and peace. So you can begin to see the importance and the benefits that arise out of understanding and being able to master the feelings.

You're all aware and have been for quite a while of the importance of the mind or the heart – the *citta*. When we talk about the mind, we have three different words we use depending on the function of mind which is being performed. There is the word '*citta*' which is used when there is thinking taking place. So we say the *citta* is what thinks. Then there is what we call '*mano*.' *Mano* is when there is the perceptions and sensitivities and awareness of things. The feeling or knowing of things – this is called '*mano*.' And then there is the third is *viññāna* which is the bear sensory consciousness involved in all sense experience in any seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, etc. There is a bear level of mental consciousness or sensory consciousness involved and that we call '*viññāna*.' So when we talk about the *citta*, we can talk about these three aspects of thinking, awareness and sensitivity, and then sensory consciousness – *citta*, *mano* and *viññāna*.

The mind having this central role in life must be understood as well as the other things we discussed, and it has to be kept under control. If the mind is not restrained and trained to act in accordance with nature, then all sorts of problems will follow. So it's absolutely necessary to understand and train the mind. The mind that gets out of control will get into all kinds of problems which will lead to conflict and strife in the world. But through training the mind, it is possible to find peace within oneself and in the world. In fact, the mind is so crucial that we can say without the mind there is no world. There is no way of knowing that the world exists or knowing anything about the world without the mind. So for us the world only exists because of the mind. It's because of the mind, things exist. We could not even know of our bodies without the mind. So this points out the mind's importance. So it must be kept in balance and under control in a wise way so as to remain free of *dukkha*.

Now we come to the fourth tetrad – the tetrad which deals with Dhamma or truth. There are two basic things in when we talk about truth, we need to know the truth about everything that has to do with ourselves, everything that makes up ourselves and everything that is related or comes into contact with ourselves. All these things need to be known. In knowing these things that make up ourselves and our lives, we need to know two kinds of truth. These two kinds of truth can be divided up into the truth of phenomena and the truth of noumena, noumena, I'm not sure, n-o-u-m-e-n-a, noumena, noumenon. He insists that it be singular. So there are these two kinds of truth. The truth of phenomena is the truth of compounded things of *saṅkhāra* which we've discussed a few times. The truth of phenomena, of compounded things is that they are all impermanent. In realizing this truth of compounded things, then we learn not to attach to phenomena. In seeing that all phenomena are impermanent, then we learn to not attach to them, and these phenomena do not become a source of *dukkha*. As this is understood and understanding the truth of *aniccā*, impermanence, and learning not to attach to phenomena, then we begin to see the truth of noumenon, of the truth of the thing which is un compounded. There is just one un compounded thing and so we need to see the truth of this un compounded thing. This un compounded thing has the truth of *niccā* – permanence. All compounded things are impermanent but the noumenon – the un compounded thing, the non-compounded thing – is permanent. Seeing this truth is to see the truth of Nibbāna. So in talking about the fourth tetrad of Dhamma, the essence is seeing the truth of *aniccā* – impermanence – to the degree that one begins to let go of attachment and realizes the truth of *niccā* – permanence – of the non-compounded, the unconditioned which is Nibbāna.

So these are the four things, the four secrets of nature which need to be studied and understood in the practice of *ānāpānasati*: the secret of the body, the feelings, the mind, and the truth. This is the benefit of practicing *ānāpānasati* – coming to realize this truth. There are further benefits as well. In practicing *ānāpāna*, we will train and develop what I like to call ‘the four comrades in Dhamma.’ This is a name I came up with on my own. You won’t find it in the scripture. When I talk about these four comrades in Dhamma, I mean *sati*, *pañña*, *sampajañña*, and *samādhi*. *Sati* – mindfulness, heedfulness, *pañña* – wisdom, *sampajañña* – wisdom in action and *samādhi* – the mind which has one pinnacle or peak as its object. By practicing mindfulness of breathing, these four comrades are developed and then they can be used to live in this world. No matter whether we are inside a monastery or outside, we’re all living in the world. There is really no meaning to the words the ‘real’ world if you apply it to just part of the world. It’s all real or it’s all unreal both inside and outside. Wherever we are, we’re in the world and we must use these four comrades to live. Even inside the monastery, you can make foolish mistakes and create all kinds of problems for yourself. This is true outside as well. So this distinction is no longer valid. No matter where we are, we’re in the world and we must use these four Dhamma comrades in order to live correctly in the world.

The way these are used is that in every experience of life, in every sense experience, every time there is seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or thinking or feeling, when any of these different kinds of sense experience arise, there must be *sati* at that experience. There must be mindfulness of that experience. If mindfulness is quick enough to be there at that point of contact, then mindfulness will bring wisdom. It will go and retrieve wisdom that we have stored throughout our lives and wisdom that we have filled up through proper meditation practice. When this wisdom is brought to the specific experience or specific situation which is unfolding at this very moment, then that wisdom or *pañña* transforms into *sampajañña* – wisdom in action. There’s a difference between the general stored wisdom which we all have and the wisdom which is applied to deal with the specific situation. So *sati* retrieve wisdom and then it is applied as wisdom in action. And then the fourth comrade, *samādhi*, provides the energy and strength to back up these other three comrades so that the necessary work is done successfully. When all four of these comrades are developed sufficiently so that they are strong enough and quick enough, then all these experiences of life can be dealt with by these four comrades and then no problems will arise in life. So this is another benefit of mindfulness of breathing – that these four Dhamma comrades are developed in order that they can be used in every moment of our daily life.

The next benefit has to do with what is called ‘*paṭiccasamuppāda*’ or which is usually translated ‘Dependent Origination.’ Dependent Origination is often a very complex theory which is generally misunderstood especially by Western scholars. This very complicated theory can cause a lot of problems if we only take it as theory because there are all sorts of variations in details and subtleties to study. But when it is applied, the practice of Dependent Origination is exquisitely simple, very simple. So one needn’t get lost in all the theory and explanation. This Dependent Origination, for those of you who aren’t very familiar with it, is basically the causal arising of suffering, of *dukkha* through a series of causes. Each cause is dependent on a previous cause. There arises or there originates suffering. So this is called ‘Dependent Origination.’ There are many different variations on this theme and then reverses of it and various other possibilities. So Dependent Origination is essentially the causal conditioning of *dukkha*.

In practice, it all boils down, though, to just one thing and that is at the moment of sense contact or phassa; when the eyes see the form – when the eyes see a tree, and then consciousness or *viññāṇa* comes in, when these three come together, there is sense contact. Then there is seeing. There is the sensory experience of seeing. The same thing happens with the other sense organs the ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Whenever there is phassa – contact of this sort, sense experience – *sati* must be there. It must be quick enough and strong enough to be right at that moment of contact. If *sati* is there at the moment of contact, then that contact will not lead to ignorant feeling, and the ignorant feeling will not lead to craving and the craving will not lead to attachment and so on, in the conditioning of *dukkha*. This is the practice of this theory that is called ‘Dependent Origination.’ For *sati* to be on time, fast enough and strong enough to catch each of those sensory contacts, *sati* develops through the practice of mindfulness of breathing so that it is quick enough. And then *sati* cuts through this flow of Dependent Origination of *dukkha*. *Sati* stops it at the point of contact and there’s no ignorance which leads to *dukkha*. And so this process of Dependent Origination is stopped. This is the third benefit of mindfulness of breathing – that *sati* is trained to the degree where it can stop the flow of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, of Dependent Origination.

The next benefit of the practice of *ānāpānasati* is that it gives us the ability to practice according to the Four Noble Truth – the *ariya-sacca*. Everybody has heard of it before – the Four Noble Truth. And the essence of them is that *taṇhā* – craving or ignorant desire is the cause of *dukkha*. The end of that craving is the end of *dukkha*. This is the essence of the Four Noble Truth. Through the practice of mindfulness of breathing, *sati* – mindfulness – is quick enough and strong enough to prevent the arising of craving. When craving does not arise or when craving has been ended, then *dukkha* does not arise. This is how to practice the Four Noble Truth to stop the arising, to prevent the arising of craving, and then *dukkha* does not arise also. So this is done when there is *sati* at the moment of sense contact and that sense contact is wise and there is no ignorant feeling which conditions ignorant craving. So *dukkha* does not arise. This is the next further benefit of the practice of mindfulness of breathing.

The next benefit of *ānāpānasati* is that we will have the Triple Gem of Buddhism or the three refuges of Buddhism. The Triple Gem is the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. These Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha are the three refuges that we find safety in. Many people think the way to have these three refuges is to say a few chants and bow down to a monk or images, and then one has taken these three refuges. That’s a very shallow meaning for them.

Through the practice of *ānāpānasati*, one can truly have these three gems, the three refuges, because the essence of these three of each of them is purity, brightness and tranquility — in Thai ‘sa-aad’ – cleanliness or purity, ‘sa-wang’ – brightness, radiant and ‘sa-ngob’ – calmness or tranquility. These three qualities are the essence of the Buddha, of the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. Through the practice of mindfulness of breathing, the mind develops these three qualities of purity, brilliance and tranquility. This is the meaning of the Buddha. The Buddha was the one who practiced until discovering the mind – the Buddha mind that is pure, bright and calm. And in discovering the Buddha mind, the Buddha discovered Dhamma – truth. That truth is pure, bright and tranquil. And then there is the Saṅgha – those followers of the Buddha, the people who have come after the Buddha and practice according to the Buddha’s advice and in doing so discovered the mind that is pure, bright and tranquil. Through *ānāpānasati* when it is fully practiced and successfully completed, then the mind is trained and developed and awakened to this purity, brightness and calmness. This was described when we explain the last step of *virāga*

– fading away of attachment, *nirodha* – the cessation of attachment, and *paṭinissagga* – the throwing back of all the things we’ve attached to, the returning of them to nature. So these three Gems can be obtained through the practice of *ānāpānasati* by discovering and realizing the mind – that is the true meaning of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. The mind that is pure and clean, bright and radiant and tranquil.

And now the next benefit of the practice of *ānāpānasati* is that to this practice, we are also practicing the most fundamental principle of Buddhism. The most basic and fundamental teaching of Buddhism can be stated as *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*. *Sīla* is virtue or right conduct, right behavior in body, speech and mind; *samādhi* – concentration and mental development, and *paññā* – wisdom. This is the fundamental principle of Buddhism. When *ānāpānasati* has been practiced successfully, then these three factors of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* are present and are fulfilled. When there is the right intention, the wise wanting to practice *ānāpānasati*, that is the meaning of *sīla* – right intention. With that right intention to practice *ānāpānasati*, then there will be the meditation and concentration that is *samādhi* and following upon that, there will arrive wisdom – *paññā*. So in practicing *ānāpānasati* correctly, these three factors which make up the basic most fundamental principle of Buddhism will be complete. And so this is another of the benefits of *ānāpānasati* that in practicing it, the most important teaching of Buddhism is also being practiced in real life at the exact same time.

When we speak in a summarized way, we can talk about *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*. When we speak in more detail, we can also talk about what it’s called ‘the Seven *Bojjhanga*’ or ‘the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.’ The Buddha said that when the sixteen steps of *ānāpānasati* are fully practiced and perfected, then the four foundations of mindfulness are perfected. These four foundations are contemplation of the body, contemplation of the feeling, contemplation of the *citta*, and contemplation of Dhamma, which we’ve talked about throughout this talk. When these four foundations of mindfulness are perfected, the Buddha said that the Seven Factors of Enlightenment are perfected. To talk about these Seven Factors of Enlightenment in detail will take a few hours and we don’t have that much time. So we’re just going to point out the essence of the matter and if you want you can look into these things on your own.

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment, when these are perfected, bring about enlightenment. Once these seven are perfected, enlightenment is assured. And so the full practice of the sixteen steps of *ānāpānasati* leads to the perfection of these Seven Factors of Enlightenment and then it is inevitable that enlightenment will follow. These Seven Factors of Enlightenment begin with *sati* – the *sati* factor of enlightenment. And then it is followed with *dhammavicaya* – the investigation of Dhamma, and then *virīya* – effort or the energy factor of enlightenment, then *pīti* – the contentment factor of enlightenment, *passaddhi* – the tranquility factor of enlightenment, *samādhi* – the concentration factor of enlightenment, and then *upekkhā* – the equanimity factor of enlightenment. These seven factors are developed through the completion of *ānāpānasati* and then enlightenment is assured.

So the most positive benefit of the practice of mindfulness of breathing is Nibbāna. The meaning of Nibbāna is coolness and this coolness can be achieved through the practice of *ānāpānasati*. There are a few different kinds of Nibbāna which we will distinguish, and all of these can be obtained or be realized through the practice of *ānāpānasati*. One kind of Nibbāna is the *samāhita* Nibbāna or temporary Nibbāna. It’s a coolness that occurs for a short period of time now and again when the defilements have cooled down. When defilements have cooled down, then there is this temporary kind of Nibbāna. An aspect of temporary Nibbāna, we can call coincidental

Nibbāna. And because this coincidence Nibbāna can arise for a short period of time, the practice of *ānāpānasati* prevents the arising of any defilement. And so in those brief moments or maybe many moments, there is Nibbāna. It's still a temporary kind of Nibbāna. The first kind of Nibbāna arises coincidentally. The second kind is when some causes such as *ānāpānasati* prevents the arising of defilements. These are the two kinds of temporary Nibbāna. We can call these a taste of Nibbāna or a sample. These are foretaste of the real Nibbāna. Now these kinds of Nibbāna you need to be aware of or you need to see is something that happens here and now. It has nothing to do with die. You don't have to die to experience Nibbāna. Nibbāna can be experienced here and now and *ānāpānasati* helps this in experiencing the temporary kind of Nibbāna. When the fires of the defilements, of greed, anger, delusion, fear, worry, selfishness, etc, when all these fires cool down, then there is the coolness of Nibbāna. It may be only temporary but it's very worthwhile and you can have a taste of this while practicing *ānāpānasati*. As these temporary Nibbānas are understood, they can be lengthened, and they can occur more often. And in this way, all these temporary Nibbānas can be perfected into total Nibbāna or full Nibbāna. Full Nibbāna is the complete end of all *dukkha*, the complete end of all defilements and all attachment. This can also be achieved through the practice, or the practice of *ānāpānasati* can lead to this. So this is the highest benefit of *ānāpānasati* – Nibbāna. And it is Nibbāna which you do not have to die to realize. It can be realized here and now in this very life.

Let's make sure we all understand this word, 'Nibbāna,' correctly. First of all, it has nothing to do with death. Nibbāna is not in any way connected with death. There is another word, *parinibbāna*. This is used for the death of an enlightened being. When an enlightened being dies, that we call 'parinibbāna.' But an enlightened being is already achieved Nibbāna while still alive. And then the death of an enlightened being is called 'parinibbāna.' But Nibbāna without the 'pari' in front is completely unrelated to death. Be very clear about this one common misunderstanding.

Second, the word Nibbāna means coolness and this word, coolness, can be used in a variety of ways, from a very crude level to most highest sublime level of the total Nibbāna of an enlightened being. This word, Nibbāna, can be applied to physical material, such as if we take a hot coal of burning red hot amber out of a fire and then we leave it aside and then it slowly cools down until it stops glowing and it's no longer hot, then we can say that that amber or charcoal has Nibbāna. It is gone from hotness to coolness. So we can say it has Nibbāna. Or if we go to a restaurant and order soup. They bring the soup, and it is too hot to eat. Then we leave it on the table, and it cools down. When it is cool enough to eat, we say that the soup has Nibbāna. We can apply the word Nibbāna to animals. Take wild animals, such as an elephant which is captured in the forest. It is brought in and trained and domesticated. And after a period of training, the former wild elephant is now very tame and peaceful. So we can say the elephant has Nibbāna. So the word Nibbāna can be applied to animals as well. We can also apply it to humans in the sense that someone who has a nice house, a good family, enough clothes, enough food, a good job. They live in a peaceful community. Their health is good. Somebody in a condition like this can be said to have realized Nibbāna. But this is an incomplete relative physical material kind of Nibbāna. It's not the Nibbāna of the mind or the spirit. It's only a physical example of Nibbāna.

So the word 'Nibbāna' has these different levels of meaning, from the purely physical meaning of a red hot charcoal that cools down or to wild animals being tamed or human beings who live a cool comfortable life. These are incomplete lesser meanings of the word 'Nibbāna.' But the

highest meaning of the word ‘Nibbāna’ is the coolness of the mind – the mind where all the fires of selfishness, of defilement, of greed, anger, fear, worry, delusion and the jealousy – for all these fires of attachment have died away. There is nothing but coolness. This is the highest kind of Nibbāna. So through the practice of *ānāpānasati*, we can realize coolness here and now – the Nibbāna that is here and now.

There are many other benefits of the practice of *ānāpānasati*. It would take us hours to discuss them all which is probably more than you can listen to, and maybe more than our strength allows. So I’ll just bring up one more advantage of the practice *ānāpānasati*. Through this practice you will know your last breath which means you can know the moment that you will die. This doesn’t mean that you can choose the moment of death. It just means that because of studying the breath for so long and understanding the breathing so well that when the deterioration of the body has reached the point where there is going to be death, one will be aware of that, one will know one’s moment of death. So this is the last advantage which we will mention of the practice of mindfulness of breathing.

The last point we will make is that the Buddha said very clearly that “I was enlightened while practicing *ānāpānasati*.” The Buddha made this very powerful testimonial for *ānāpānasati* and said that he was practicing mindfulness of breathing when he was enlightened. The Buddha became the Buddha through the practice of mindfulness of breathing. This is what he was doing that allowed him to be enlightened. So the Buddha said that this is the best or so he recommends this practice to sentient beings. He advises us all to use this practice for the welfare of ourselves and others, to the welfare of everyone. This is the best way of practicing that exists. There is no better way to practice the Dhamma than the practice of mindfulness of breathing. So for this reason, the Buddha has made this teaching available to us and we have done our best to share it with you.

So this ends our series of talks discussing *ānāpānasati*. We will end today’s meeting at this time. Thank you for listening.

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