

MORNING TALK, 15 OCTOBER 2026 · DO NOT LOSE TO YOUR OWN HEART

Do the outer work and do not neglect the work within · Ajahn Jayapaṇṇo (จายปาณโณ ภิกขุ), Sakon Nakhon · Translated from the Thai · with the teacher's blessing, sādhu

[00:00] Today, the first matter is the rice, the dry food and part of the donations that we are taking for the Sangha's Dhamma tour (the monks of the province visit the districts in turn). This is a custom the Sangha keeps up. The monks of Sakon Nakhon go round from district to district, and now it is our district's turn. We support it as far as our means allow.

[00:33] Second: today we should be able to close the maintenance work, the repair of the dwellings and the pouring of this concrete floor. The electrical system will have to wait for now, because the budget is not enough. We do what causes and conditions allow. However much we have, that much we do. A lot of money has already been spent. Yom Phiphat and Yom Sukanya (two lay supporters), that is already more than a hundred thousand, (others) fifty thousand each, thirty thousand each, ten thousand each, and there are many more of those.

[01:16] Is it enough? Building a monastery never ends. It just goes on and on. This gets finished, and that breaks. That gets finished, and it starts all over again. Because that is the nature of things: all that is compounded (saṅkhāra, here: all conditioned things), whether living or lifeless (whether a mind dwells in it or not), decays with time. What we can do, what we have the strength for, we do. What is beyond our strength, whose time has not yet come, we have to set aside for now. Put the priorities in the right order.

[01:51] Life is not easy, but it is not hard either, if we understand how to manage our own mind. What is hard and troublesome is only our own heart, it struggles. The outer work we do, but the inner work we must not drop. Do plenty of inner work: the inner duty, the duty of looking after yourself.

[02:25] Most of the time we are still stuck in pondering and deliberating, stuck in thinking and examining (vitakka and vicāra, initial and sustained thought). We cannot let go of thinking and examining. As long as we are stuck there, no joy (pīti) arises, no happiness, we do not reach concentration (samādhi), we are still running about. So keep training, train mindfulness (sati) until it catches (the arising thought) in time. Thinking and examining, pondering and deliberating, they are simply there. But once we catch them in time, we can let them go, lay them down and no longer be stuck in them.

[03:04] Mindfulness is the most important thing of all. If we do not train it, it does not come in time. At the very least, when we train mindfulness: at the moment of contact (of the senses) we do not catch (the reaction that follows) in time, but we should catch it in time when it begins to ripple (in the mind, like water rippling). At the moment of receiving you do not catch it, it has already arisen. But mindfulness should keep watch and catch it in time at the moment it is about to go out. The eye sees, and (the reaction) goes out through the mouth. The ear hears, and it goes out through the mouth. We think, and it goes out through the mouth. (Mindfulness) is not in time. That is why we must have mindfulness that keeps watch and restrains.

[03:55] We do not see the feeling (vedanā), and it builds up craving (taṇhā) and clinging (upādāna) in the stream of dependent arising (paṭiccasamuppāda: when this is, that comes; when this ceases, that ceases). This is exactly the point (the feeling) we are talking about here. If one did not practise here, there would be no knowing where else to practise. If there is no mindfulness that catches things in time, you can practise as strictly as you like, until you nearly die: you get only the form, only the outer work. The inner work does not arise, because the mindfulness that keeps watch and restrains is not in time. And so one goes astray.

[04:26] Today, most people have gone astray. Nothing but clever people these days. The monks are clever, the laypeople are clever. Nothing but people who know the Dhamma. So why are they still quarrelling and squabbling?

Why do they still put the ego forward, still boast that they are right, that they are good, that they are better than others? Because their knowing is deluded (mixed with being lost).

[04:56] What we must restrain above all is our own heart. If someone is good, rejoice with him. If someone is not good, there is no need to trample on him as well. Keep your heart so that it stays good. A heart that feeds on bad things is itself not good. The badness is in our own heart, not in him. It is our own heart that goes poking about for dirt and filth and loads it onto itself. It is not wise in choosing.

[05:32] We must learn to choose wisely, to become familiar with what is good and fine. Like the bee that goes looking for nectar from the flowers: however far it is, it flies there, because it is of use. Not like the fly that buries itself in a carcass. This heart of ours desires only what is bad, because inside there sits a bad view.

[06:01] Coarse, people are these days, coarse and hard in the heart. But with monks it is the same. When giving a Dhamma talk, when speaking about the Dhamma, the words are chosen to please the laypeople. That is the coarseness of today. The Dhamma teachers of today, I do not want to use the word "vulgar", they are coarse and uncouth. And people like it. If someone says "I" and "you" in gutter language (Thai has polite and crude forms of these words), they like it. If he curses, they like it, it satisfies them. But it does no good.

[06:39] For the Buddha was one of sweet speech, one skilled in speaking. But people today do not listen when someone speaks well. If he curses, they like it, they praise him. Whoever can curse well these days is instantly an arahant (a fully awakened one). Whichever monk can thoroughly curse others (his fellow monks) is instantly an arahant. And people praise him and flatter him. Their hearts have grown coarse and hard, so they like coarse things. Like the fly: it loves to settle on carcasses, on rotten and foul things, and lays its eggs in them, and from that its brood arises.

[07:21] There are only a few left who truly strive for themselves, truly for liberation, truly for the Dhamma of the Master (the Buddha). So the current will swallow us if we are not brave enough: brave, bold and resolute in living and practising according to Dhamma and Vinaya (the teaching and the monastic rule), according to the Buddha's teaching. That does not mean we have to make enemies of the whole world. We have to use wisdom (paññā). Not think that we alone know, we alone are clever, we alone are good. That will not do.

[08:02] There is no need to look at anyone. Whether someone is good or not is none of our business. Restrain your own heart so that it stays good. Make body, speech and mind into virtue (sīla), stand firm in virtue, hold it with mindfulness, and concentration arises, so that wisdom arises which knows things as they really are. Virtue, concentration, wisdom: this is not only for monks, but for everyone, layperson or monk.

[08:38] When we have mindfulness that keeps watch and restrains, that looks and catches things in time, then we at least see the rippling, even if we are not in time at the contact (of the senses). Then (the reaction) does not go outward, not into speech, not into the eyes, not into the face, not into action. So one becomes someone who causes no harm, no danger, no enmity, who makes no enemies. First one becomes someone free of fault, who cuts off the faults that keep one in the round (of birth and death). Only that leads to becoming someone free of suffering, free of tension, stress and suffering (dukkha). As long as one still creates kamma (cause and effect) that carries fault, one is not free from suffering anyway.

[09:20] This is it. The Buddha's teaching is something we take and practise ourselves. It is not something to carry around to judge and measure (others) with. Knowing: it is not hard to know the Buddha's teaching, there are plenty of books. Understand that knowledge well, and then practise. Make that understanding correct. Only then do you see the true result. You do not have to be clever, not good, not better than anyone. But you can let everything go.

[10:00] The Dhamma: (whoever) clings to it and holds on to it is within the system of rules (and not beyond it). Do what causes and conditions call for. Do it, then let it go. Once let go, it is empty. If there is constantly an ego, a self, then it is suffering without end. So the mindfulness we train, we train on ourselves, not on others. Keep watch and restrain yourselves well.

[10:25] Thinking, pondering, deliberating arises. Pondering, that is perception (saññā): something comes to mind. In ordinary language, something comes to mind. If we see in time, "now something has come to mind", then we do not go on thinking. Because thinking relies on things coming to mind. Kamma (cause and effect) is the source (of what comes to mind), old kamma brings it forth, that is perception. Thinking is what the mind creates (saṅkhāra): it is already inclining, already shaping, it has already arisen. If we see it in time, then something comes to mind, but we do not think it further. Then (the mind) is free of all that it creates (visaṅkhāra). It lets go, lets go of pondering, lets go of deliberating.

[11:14] This heart then leads to joy (pīti). Joy leads to happiness, to contentment, the happiness that comes from calm. Not worldly happiness, which gets lost in the pleasures of the world, pleasures dyed and intoxicated by defilements (kilesa) and craving. But a happiness without anything that disturbs: a heart that is calm and still. A happiness that nothing can compare with. There is no happiness equal to calm.

[11:53] If we do not have mindfulness that looks and catches things in time like this, we stay stuck in our own thoughts and ideas, and our actions run the same way. Then where are we going to study the Dhamma? We know all the books but cannot apply them. Then it is of no use. All knowledge is only there for us to take and teach ourselves with. Nobody can teach us. Even the Buddha cannot teach us. Because in the end (the heart) believes only itself. It is its own judge, who says what is wrong and what is right, because it believes its own view.

[12:33] But we rely on the Buddha's teaching, we live and practise by it, so that correct view arises, until we go beyond that view. That is, we no longer cling to that view, no longer stuck in clinging to views (diṭṭhupādāna), no more clinging to any view, clean of views (diṭṭhi). When there is no view, there is no thinking. Then we are free of what the mind creates, of fashioning and fabricating. That (the heart) still thinks is because there is still a view. It sees something and gets lost in "good" or "not good". If it gets lost in "good", it thinks on, more comes to mind, it is pleased. If it sees "not good", it gets angry, hates, rejects. It does not yet see that this thing is simply the way it is.

[13:26] So. We come inward and look at our heart, at our mind. Keep watch and restrain. Whatever anyone says about us, let him. Even if it (what is said) comes as fragrant as a flower, there is nothing there. Even if the body were made of gold, there is nothing there. It is not us (no self). It is not him.

[13:48] Therefore, first of all we have mindfulness that watches over our mouth. If it is not in time, people hurt each other easily. We mean well, but it shoots out, the spear that shoots from the mouth, and it hurts this one and that one. Like hammering in a nail: it pierces the listener's heart. Even if you pull the nail out again, even if you have apologised, the scar remains. So do not hurt one another with the mouth, with speech that is not kind speech (piyavācā), that brings no benefit and no good.

[14:33] Even if we mean well, we must be wise in admonishing and in instructing. Not making ourselves, our own temperament, the standard, that will not do. So: mindfulness that keeps watch and restrains. Look well at your heart, at your mind, carry it carefully. Whoever still aspires to merit (puñña, the good one accumulates) and to what is wholesome, let him strive for it. Train this mind to become familiar with what is good and fine. And know this: if it gets involved with bad things, then the ground of the mind is not good. Do not behave like Māra (temptation) and then go about claiming you are something special. Nothing but good people these days, who find fault with others. They find fault with others and consider themselves good.

[15:26] The Dhamma the Buddha taught is not a tool for hurting one another. Dhamma and Vinaya (the teaching and the monastic rule) are not a weapon for killing one another. They are a practice that each person takes as a frame and a guideline for polishing himself. Not carrying the knowledge you have gained around to hurt this one and that one. Look inward at your heart. When it thinks something bad, do we see it? If we look and catch it in time like this, then that bad thinking stops. The action stops, the bad words stop.

[16:05] Even if it still arises, that is, we are not in time at the contact but we see the rippling, and mindfulness catches it in time, then it does not go out. It creates no danger, no enmity. Whatever comes in, even if it is a fire thrown at

us: when we catch it in time, it is like a fire thrown into water. It goes out. It ends with us. We need not create any enmity or danger. Do not create enmity, do not create kamma (cause and effect). Let it end right here. It ends with us. It need not end with anyone else.

[16:49] Even if someone curses us or speaks ill of us, we need not retaliate. (If) we are not what he says, we need not get angry. (And if) he says it and we are as he says, then it is the truth, and there is no reason at all to be angry with him. It is no matter, no occasion, no business of ours at all. Life is not long. Do not waste time hating anyone or loving anyone. Do not waste time liking, do not waste time loathing. Loosen the bonds of the heart so that it becomes free, free from everything it clings to and binds itself with.

[17:32] So if we do not keep watch and restrain, if we cannot protect our heart, we are not yet free from Māra's snare (the snare of temptation). "Whoever guards the mind is freed from Māra's snare" (from the Dhammapada). Of the Dhamma the Buddha teaches, you do not need to know much. Know just as much as we can take up and practise. Do not know too much. You get stuck in knowing, lost in knowing, and then you show off your knowledge and proclaim it everywhere to no purpose.

[18:11] These days the monk's robe has become the logo of influencers. With this robe people make a name for themselves, make themselves popular. Do not be marketing monks. (Such monks) see that presumptuous, offensive, insolent talk satisfies people, so they do it. Wanting to collect popularity points like that is of no use. So look after yourselves well. The laypeople likewise. When you live together, do not clash with one another. Live in such a way that you cause no harm from the start. Be able to yield.

[18:56] On the true battlefield, the battlefield with one's own ego (attā), the loser is the winner. The one who yields is the winner, is the strong one. So we must look, so that we do not lose to our own heart. Losing to the whole world does not matter. But do not lose to your own heart. This is it. Search out your heart, then keep watch, restrain and look, so that (mindfulness) catches things in time. This one mind, this heart is what goes astray.

[19:32] So if we do not come inward and look right here, then living another hundred years has no meaning. One just waits for the day of death. One grows old like a beef cow (that only puts on flesh), but without wisdom. One does not grow old in knowledge, old in understanding, old in virtue and Dhamma. So look well. Whether someone is good or bad is not our duty. Look after yourself, keep your own heart well. Create no evil in your heart. If there is no evil in the heart, no evil arises in the body, and there is no evil in speech either. Because all of that comes out of our heart, out of our mind.

[20:19] The other way round: when you do good and fine things, the good must come out of the heart, out of the mind. Only then is it good without hidden motives. With good intention, with goodwill, speaking well, acting well, it develops in a good direction. How far each one gets is a matter of each person's causes and conditions. The conditions are not the same for everyone. So do not make yourself the standard by which you measure others, and do not make others the standard by which you measure yourself.

[21:06] Study the Buddha's teaching well. Day by day, in everything we do, look until you see it. Do not come without mindfulness. When you come to the monastery, do not come without mindfulness, do not come without wisdom. Do not come in the deluded idea that merit (puñña) can be scooped up here, measured out, raked in and shovelled up. Come with knowledge and correct understanding. Whoever comes to the monastery should feel at ease. Whoever comes to the monastery should hear something that leads him to train himself. Hear the Dhamma, practise often, then the mind becomes familiar with it and takes pleasure in it. Good listening is listening with a heart that stays neutral. Along that path wisdom arises, the wisdom that comes from hearing (sutamayapaññā).

[21:58] Everything is already Dhamma, if we see it as Dhamma, that is, if it comes from the heart, from the mind. If the heart is Dhamma, then a gust of wind, a grain of sand, a flash of light, all of it is Dhamma. Because Dhamma is the truth, the truth of things as they are. When we know and understand this, it (the heart) does not go astray. Then there is no "we", then there is no clinging to things. They run according to their causes and conditions, just as they

run. No "we" that goes in and names them "good" by convention (sammuti). No "we" that goes in and names them "bad". Look inward at your heart.

[22:44] So the essential thing to say here is this: the Dhamma belongs to the person who has mindfulness, not to the person who is forgetful. This inner work we all drop, and we focus only on the outer work, to satisfy our wants, to satisfy our own craving. If we are good then, it is by the force of craving, not good through wisdom. Good through craving, through the desire that reaches out for things. That is why it is far from the words "free from suffering". Absorbed and intoxicated, that is how we live today.

[23:26] Turn back and look inward at your heart. Look often, carry it carefully often. Do not let the mind run off and feed on outer things. It has lost its home. It is like a vagrant, with no house, no shelter, and so it suffers, lives in misery and hardship, has no house, no roof. This heart here, which has not yet died, is still looking for a place to be born (again). It is a wanderer in search of birth (a sambhavesī), with no fixed place, a hungry ghost (peta, a restless being without a home): it does not know where it lives.

[24:08] Then we bring (the mind) to its place, the place where it belongs: to the body, to this body of ours. When mindfulness goes along, it carries the mind carefully step by step, (the mind) aware of itself in every posture, moving to and fro, with mindfulness as its support. Because in the end the practice lies with mindfulness and wisdom. The noble path (ariyamagga), condensed, is just mindfulness and wisdom. And finally one goes beyond mindfulness, beyond wisdom. All things are not-self (anattā). It (the mind) lets everything go: lets go of right, lets go of wrong, lets go of good, lets go of bad, lets go of happiness, lets go of suffering, lets go of gaining, lets go of losing, lets go of having, lets go of being, and goes beyond the world.

[24:59] What comes in pairs (gain and loss, happiness and suffering), the things in pairs, that is the world, the worldly (lokiyadhamma). (From there it goes) towards what goes beyond the world (lokuttaradhamma), what is one, above the world. That depends on the mindfulness we train. Each person's temperament, and the means each one uses to train, may differ. That is not the measure. Whatever temperament you have, train that way. If the heart flourishes with a practice, then do that practice. Do what suits you (sappāya), wherever you are, so that it grows.

[25:40] Understand the Buddha's teaching correctly. Make yourself the laboratory. Take this body and this mind as the laboratory, the room for practice (a play on the Thai word for laboratory). Practising Dhamma means practising on this body and this mind, nowhere else. Care for it and train it, and delusion gradually fades away, and wisdom gradually arises.

[26:14] Mindfulness. This one thing: mindfulness. It is the true friend. Mindfulness is the support, the true friend that walks along on the correct path. With mindfulness and wisdom, they lead us out of delusion, out of all suffering. In the end nothing is a "something". Search through everything, and it is empty, emptiness (suññatā): empty of the (self) that steps in and gives things their importance.

[26:50] For this morning I leave you just this small thing: have mindfulness and keep your heart. However that may be, I rejoice with you all (anumodanā), in the outer work and the inner work. They support one another. May our living and practising, our actions, be the cause and condition for us to come near to and reach the teaching of the Master (the Buddha), which will lead us all, each and every one, out of suffering.