

MORNING TALK OF 29 SEPTEMBER 2026 · LOOK AT YOURSELF, NOT AT OTHERS

A Mango Does Not Turn Sweet on Command · Ajahn Jayapañño (ชยปณฺโญ ภิกขุ), Sakon Nakhon · translated from the Thai · with the teacher's blessing, sādhu

[00:00] This morning the sky is overcast. The rainy season is ending; there is a lot of fog this morning. That shows the cold season is drawing near. What happens is a cause, and it announces what is coming. The present is the cause of the future; things arise from what we do now (kamma, cause and effect). So let us keep on accumulating good kamma (good causes). That is very important.

[00:46] It is worrying. The Buddhists themselves neglect learning. Whatever anyone says, they believe it all. From time to time there is news: monks quarrelling with laypeople, things like that. These are stories that need not be stories, if each person knew his own role and duty. Even when a fault occurs: if we don't add to it, it simply stops there.

[01:19] You see the news and feel sad and sobered. People go to the monastery, and once they are there, their ego (attā) grows. The story about the Luang Pu (an elder monk) that was in the news, people have probably seen it. We don't understand each other's role and duty. Women, laypeople, laywomen (sīkā) go to the monastery and don't know their own role. You can't blame the laypeople, because the monks don't tell them. No need to ask who is wrong and who is right. Both sides are wrong.

[02:00] And such an event undermines the faith and trust of the people who are touched by it, who get to hear such news. The question is: when news like this comes out, does it benefit Buddhism? If you really wish Buddhism well, then when there is news, look at it: does it bring benefit or does it bring harm?

[02:32] That is how it is. Everyone wishes for what is good. Laypeople come to the monastery and want good monks. But a person can only be as good as he is able to be; each one's causes and conditions reach only so far. Don't take the standard of the arahants (those who have reached the goal) and of the Buddha to judge ordinary monks (puthujjana). I am not saying this to take anyone's side. But conduct and practice go step by step, according to each person's strength. You cannot apply the standard of those who have already reached the goal.

[03:14] If you talk with university knowledge to kindergarten children, will they understand? But the graduate, too, once went to kindergarten. Each stage of life has its own role and duty. Why do we take it so deadly seriously? Because of not understanding, that is all.

[03:40] There is a lot of this today: the social media, the various promoters. When negative news about the religion comes up, people take an interest, so it gets embellished and spread around, in the hope of gain, without considering whether that news benefits or harms the religion as an institution.

[04:10] We don't look (at ourselves). Nothing but clever people, all these influencers. If you are that clever, then ordain and devote yourself to the practice in earnest. As soon as a layperson talks a little Dhamma (the teaching), everyone runs after him. If he were really that good, he could ordain (become a monk). If ordaining were not good, the Buddha would not have ordained.

[04:32] When something is unfitting, improper, we don't need to broadcast it and stir up trouble. We know well: if we don't do it ourselves, nobody will do it for us. But having done it, why trumpet it through the media for everyone to see? That is simply not understanding anything. Boasting that one is doing good, that one is diligent and hard-working. And what did the Buddha ask us to be diligent about?

[04:59] Soon everyone (every monk) will just be like a dove that people keep so that it coos for them. Nothing behind it. That is how far Buddhism has strayed already. But the temple committees (the laypeople who run the monastery)

are the same. They go in and out of the monastery to seek advantages for themselves. It is hard these days, because people don't understand their role and duty. Whatever they don't like, they call bad.

[05:36] This is our role: we have a duty. For laypeople the basic training begins with giving (dāna). But here each one goes astray in his own way. Nothing but clever people, nothing but good people. The monks are clever, the laypeople are clever. Then they chant the Bāhuṃ (the verses of victory) until they nearly drop, and don't know what it means.

[06:09] People talk, people gossip. But today the laypeople are cleverer than the Buddha, cleverer than the Dhamma and the Vinaya (the teaching and the monks' rules). "Throw (the monk) out, I don't want him." They can do that, because it is the laypeople who bring the food. But what does it achieve? The Buddha never chased anyone away. He gave everyone the chance to improve. And a person can only be as good as his wisdom reaches.

[06:43] Those who have gone to the monastery for a long time eventually go astray and think themselves excellent. "I'm a mountain of merit, after all." How can anyone think like that? And the monks are not the employees of the laypeople, to be hired when the time comes to sit and chant and perform ceremonies. All of that destroys the foundation of the Dhamma and the Vinaya. The monks are no better: they squabble because they were not invited to a ceremony.

[07:28] In the Buddha's time there were no such incidents. Much of the chanting did not exist. Whoever ordained, he (the Buddha) sent him to train himself, to purify his own mind, to be calm, restrained and watchful. The laypeople saw that. When someone practises well, it inspires confidence (pasāda). Then they come, support him, look after him, hear the Dhamma, and wisdom and faith (saddhā) follow.

[08:03] But now the laypeople hold their good deeds over the monks. So the monk ends up indebted to the laypeople. If he doesn't do what they want, he fears their talk. Whatever people say, let them say it. Whether someone praises or blames makes no difference at all, if we stand firm on the foundation of the Dhamma and the Vinaya.

[08:32] The religion (sāsana) exists only as long as the teaching is visible in it. If the teaching is no longer there, the teaching of the Master (the Buddha), what are we going to call Buddhism? The Buddha image? The monks' huts, the halls? The places, the people? None of that can be called religion. Because the word for religion, sāsana (also sāsani), means nothing other than "teaching".

[09:07] The real religion is the teaching of the Buddha. Not the monks, not the Buddha image, not the monastery, not the ordination hall. And not a set of beliefs either. Buddhism is founded on the truth. So you cannot measure it by belief. You have to turn inward and search for the truth, so that wisdom arises.

[09:31] We Buddhists lack reflection; we don't use wisdom when we go to the monastery. Our faith is blind faith. Wherever faith arises, people believe without opening their eyes and ears. They are drunk on faith, drunk on merit (puñña). And so there is tension, stress and suffering (dukkha).

[09:57] The monks are no different. They compete: who is better, who gets more. Some are attached to gifts and honours, some are attached to things. All of it runs under the power of the defilements (kilesa). That is the opposite of what the Buddha taught, the opposite of the Master's teaching. You go to the monastery in order to let go. You live as a monk in order to let go. Not in order to get something.

[10:34] You see it in many places in the news, in many reports: monks and laypeople quarrelling. And the journalists don't just report these days. They make news and they sell news. It is a business. They don't consider whether it does good or harm.

[10:59] Admonishing one another according to the Dhamma and the Vinaya is not the same as publicly exposing the offences and faults of others. When monks talk among themselves about the Vinaya, that is none of the laypeople's business. But the laypeople today are so clever that they talk about the monks' Vinaya. Anyone can talk, anyone can

know. But can you do it? Come and try to practise. Talking and doing are not the same. Sweat (from doing) and saliva (from talking) mean very different things.

[11:31] Knowing, yes, you can do that. But don't use that knowledge to destroy Buddhism. You who study Buddhism: take the knowledge you have gained and use it to support the religion, to protect it, to foster it, so that it spreads far and wide. Not to use that knowledge to destroy Buddhism itself. If you really mean well and know so much, then ordain.

[12:06] But everything bad gets washed into the monastery and becomes the monastery's burden. And then people want only what is good. But it (becoming good) starts from what is not good. Before someone becomes good, it takes time. You don't walk in, ordain, and become good on the spot. So why not bring the good people in to ordain? The good people who are so good outside, why don't they come and ordain and help to make it good? Or are they only good at cursing others?

[12:41] That exists in every society. Those who are cleverer than the monks never come to the monastery. They stand outside and know better than the monks inside. Why? Because each one holds on to his own view (diṭṭhi). A lot of ego, a big self. Nothing but egos colliding. Each one alone is right.

[13:11] We are not the centre of the universe, around which everything has to revolve. We are not the axis of the world. We are only a tiny fragment for a short time. So don't think yourself important. There is nothing special about us. Without us the world stays as it is. So we are nothing important at all.

[13:46] Drop the ego, put down conceit (māna). Take out the wrong view and set it straight. Know your own duty: the limits of how we present ourselves, the limits of how we conduct ourselves. Today everything is blurred. Laypeople practise the Dhamma and don't know their limits. They come to stay at the monastery, keep the eight precepts, shave their heads and behave as if they were monks. That's how it is.

[14:28] And not only that, the monks themselves are muddling everything up these days. Take the story of the novice who can recite the Pāṭimokkha (the monastic rules) by heart. That is a good thing. But it is not something to be publicised. Because the Vinaya, the Pāṭimokkha, is the affair of the ordained, not of those who are not fully ordained (anupasampanna). And a novice is not one of the ordained (he is not yet fully ordained).

[14:55] You see, we don't understand, and we praise away: "How good, how clever!" But the question is: according to the Dhamma, is it proper, is it right? We lack care when we believe things. We lack care because we don't even know how far our role and duty reach. Today the laypeople set the direction; they teach the monks: "Luang Por (Venerable Father, form of address for a monk), you have to do it this way and that." Nobody knows any more who is whose teacher.

[15:30] That is why everything is muddled up in Buddhism today. Soon the monks in the monastery will be no more than the temple dogs. Why? Because people's view has changed. Coming to the monastery is like a burden. They don't come out of faith. It keeps falling apart, and in the end only the yellow robe remains as the symbol of the monk.

[15:59] But the way of life is changing. The ordained behave like laypeople, and the laypeople try to carry themselves like the ordained. All these clever people, especially the ceremony leaders, the "Chans" (lay ritual masters) and "Thits" (former monks). They want to teach the monks. If you are so clever, why did you take off the robe (leave the order)?

[16:28] Our Buddhism is not an easy matter. It is not something we may let go to waste. It is everyone's business. If we wish Buddhism well, we must help to preserve it, to guard it and protect it. Help to remove what is bad from it, each according to his duty. And the duty is: to learn your own role, and to practise it.

[16:59] It won't be long before we die, one after the other. Don't take it so seriously. Those who love die. Those who hate die. Sooner or later we have to die anyway. Why hold on to so much? In everything that happens there is someone in the wrong and someone in the right. But if you can forgive, it is over. If, once it is settled who is right, one still refuses to forgive, the story drags on and on and creates danger and enmity between people.

[17:30] Forgiving is not a hard thing. And it is a gift that brings great blessing. But we can't bring ourselves to give it. We take offence, we hold grudges, we bind anger and vengefulness to ourselves and keep resentment in the heart. What good does that do? Turn back and look at your heart: when you see such news about the religion, is the mind good or bad? Don't destroy yourself by gloating over it.

[18:06] If a monk is bad, the result of his bad deed is the monk's affair, not the laypeople's. But if the laypeople do bad, the bad result falls back on the laypeople themselves. Nobody can do anything on someone else's behalf. Understand: before a person becomes good, he has to go through training. When someone resolves to come and train himself, give him the chance. He is not good yet, but he is trying. That is better than not trying.

[18:40] It goes step by step. Don't want something good too quickly. Freshly ordained, a monk is not yet an arahant. You have to understand this: reality, what is fitting, what is proper. So don't take the Buddha's standard to judge newly ordained monks. Don't take the standard of a Chao Khun (a high-ranking monk) to judge the old village monks out in the countryside. The circumstances, the causes and conditions of each person are different. Not being good does not mean he doesn't want to be good. He is trying, and that is as far as it reaches. What do we want to force?

[19:25] A mango that is not yet ripe is naturally sour. You can't order it to be sweet. It won't turn sweet on command. But if we care for it together and tend it, then that mango, which was once sour, will become sweet with time and with its development, when it ripens. To force a young mango to taste sweet, how could that be done? That is what we don't understand.

[19:56] We meddle too much in other people's affairs. Turn back and busy yourselves much more with your own affairs; look at yourselves much more. Then the religion will endure: when we understand the teaching and can practise it. Not: knowing, but unable to do it. That is of no use. Someone has a belly full of knowledge, but only in the mouth, and can't teach himself. Laypeople and monks alike.

[20:33] The Buddha taught the Dhamma so that we use it to refine ourselves. Not to refine others. Not to lecture others, but to teach ourselves. Take giving (dāna): the purpose of giving is to give away, to let go. We keep doing it and watch our mind, our heart as we do. Little by little we grind and polish ourselves: we train in letting go, train in putting down, train in releasing, train in giving, train in self-sacrifice.

[21:06] The precepts (sīla): restraint of body, speech and mind. Their purpose is that no harm and no enmity arise. Not in order to get something. But as soon as someone keeps a few precepts, he becomes strict, carries his precepts around with him and must not let them drop. We don't know what kind of precepts these are. Having precepts and using the precepts to hurt others: where are the precepts in that? The precepts (sīla) mean not to harm. If you still harm, how can that be keeping the precepts?

[21:40] So it goes from the precepts to mental cultivation (bhāvanā), the training of the mind. Little by little, gently. We do it according to our strength. Little by little we tend the mind. As far as we can develop our mind, that is how far it goes. It has nothing to do with others. But our own affairs we don't attend to; we are only busy with others: that one should be good like this, this one should be good like that. And are you good yet yourself? Before you say the other person is not good: are you yourself perfectly good already? If we are not yet a hundred percent good, then don't judge anyone as not good.

[22:24] So look carefully. As the monk Buddhадāsa said: "If he has some bad in him, leave it be. Take the good that he has; that is of use to the world and worth seeing. And the bad in him, you don't need to know." Because knowing about what is bad does not make our mind good. Keep company only with what is good and beautiful. That is the way of the wise.

[22:53] Like the bee that seeks the nectar in the flowers. However far away it is, the bee is not discouraged. And however close a carcass lies, the bee pays it no attention and doesn't touch it. The wise take from the world only what is useful, and leave what is harmful. Because there is nothing to be had from it.

[23:20] But we consume news that is neither good nor beautiful and get used to it. It clouds our mind without our noticing. And then we call ourselves people of merit, people of the temple. If that is how you go to the monastery, you might as well not go. If nobody else says it, I will: whoever goes and makes trouble for the monastery need not go. Whoever goes should cause no trouble, should not create problems for the monastery. The same goes for the monks: whoever is there and makes trouble need not stay. It is nothing more than that.

[23:57] How much of the teaching is in our heart? A true Buddhist must have a heart of kindness (*mettā*) as his foundation. He must have goodwill, compassion (*karuṇā*) for one another. It is this kindness that holds up the world, that supports it so that it lives in peace and happiness. If there is no kindness in the heart, ordaining is meaningless, and going to the monastery every day is meaningless too.

[24:34] Our mind has not been trained and set right, so it doesn't understand this. The longer someone goes to the monastery, the more he imagines he is important. He manages and organises everything until he no longer sees his own role. And the monks with the shaved heads sitting in the monastery don't know their duty either, and let the laypeople run the monastery. That is how it is today. And then come the media, the news, the trends; people attack one another, everything is in uproar, and it all drifts with the stream of the world.

[25:12] We are now standing in the middle of a battlefield, in the middle of a war, the war of propaganda. If we are not clever enough, we die on this battlefield, we die in this battle, and we don't get out alive. So we need armour to protect ourselves: mindfulness (*sati*). And we need a weapon to defeat the enemy: wisdom (*paññā*).

[25:45] Everything comes together here. Every practice ends in mindfulness, concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom. It cannot lead anywhere else. You don't need to know what the Brahma world is like, what the heavens *Tāvatiṃsa* and *Tusita* are like, what heaven is like, what hell is like. No need to know. Be aware of yourself; that is enough. Whoever is aware of himself has made it, because he no longer goes astray. That is all it is about.

[26:17] Train mindfulness so that it is awake and catches things in time. For mindfulness, presence of mind (*sati*), is wakefulness in the world. Mindfulness is the dam against the stream. Mindfulness is a quality of great benefit; it is wholesome. Mindfulness is the peak of the wholesome. Without mindfulness there is no wisdom. Everything comes back to this.

[26:43] In the end one understands: all things are by nature just as they are. Nobody owns anything. As soon as selfishness is gone, the self diminishes. Then craving (*taṇhā*) diminishes, contact (*phassa*) diminishes, kamma (cause and effect) diminishes. Where the "I" ends, kamma ends. The view "this is me, that is the other", this "I" and "the other", that is delusion. If there is no "I", there is no "other" either.

[27:29] So how are we going to live the life that remains? How to live without the heart suffering? Think about it, take it to heart. For the Dhamma is the tool for destroying tension, stress and suffering (*dukkha*). It is a purgative against suffering. Whoever learns the Dhamma, his suffering must become less. Not: suffering because he knows. So what is known must be brought into practice, and not merely known and memorised (*saññā*).

[28:02] And then people talk about it, attack one another, create a stir, make money. There is a lot of that today: crazy people coming out and talking Dhamma, monks and laypeople alike, all jumbled up, each in a different direction. Why? They are crazy, they are deranged, their perception distorted (*vipallāsa*). The fashion of miracle-workers is arising, the fashion of the enlightened. There are staged arahants these days. Noble ones (awakened ones) by fashion, noble ones by promotion, arahants ripened with gas.

[28:40] They have the colour, but not the taste. Like a mango picked unripe and ripened with gas: it turns yellow, but it is not sweet; it is sour. Sourer even than the green mango. These fake noble ones can deceive you worse than ordinary monks.

[29:00] So whatever you believe, whatever you listen to, examine it well, on the basis of reason, and compare it with the teaching of the Buddha: does it go in the same direction? If that is difficult, there is a simple rule for checking. The Buddha said: whatever leads to taking in, that is not it, that is wrong. Taking in is the origin (samudaya, the origin of suffering). Whatever leads to giving away, that is the Dhamma to be practised. That is the path (magga).

[29:38] That is all there is to it. Raise your hand, close it into a fist (taking) and open it again (giving): there you already see Dhamma and non-Dhamma. Give away or take? Take in or put out? Only that. There is nothing complicated about it. Giving away, renunciation (cāga), makes the heart light. In the end it breaks free from the defilements that weigh it down, and the mind rises higher and higher.

[30:13] This is a simple practice: be mindful, keep watch, look at our mind, at our heart. Only that. No language is needed. You need no language, no words, no formalities to talk about it. Look at your heart in the present; don't look at others. See the fading (virāga), see the arising, see the ceasing. Little by little you understand what its nature (the heart's nature) is. That is mental cultivation (bhāvanā), the training of the mind.

[30:48] Don't believe anyone. Because belief alone, faith alone, cannot end suffering. If faith is not joined with wisdom, it goes astray. Only wisdom can end tension, stress and suffering: the wisdom that sees clearly how things really are.

[31:09] "Buddha" means the state of being awake. Buddhism is the teaching of the one who is awake. That is the real religion: the foundation of the Dhamma and the Vinaya. And that is something we must bring into practice ourselves. Not: learn it, and then go looking for faults in others. Know how to use it properly.

[31:44] A sharp sword in the hand of a royal officer protects against killing and protects property. The same sharp sword in the hand of a robber is used to kill and to rob others of their possessions. So too with knowledge: if you don't know how to use it, it does harm. Don't get lost in knowledge, don't get drunk on books, don't be obsessed with scholarship, don't cling to principles until you can no longer see the truth.

[32:19] Turn back and look at your mind, at your heart, and keep watch over yourself. News arises, it exists, that is the way of the world. The media are boiling over right now. Don't drift along with the news. Whatever happens, don't let it enter your heart and become suffering there. Guard your heart well.

[32:42] For this morning I rejoice once again (anumodanā) in the resolve of all of you who wish the religion well. Keep helping to look after the religion and to hold it up.