

Plum Village 40 Tenets, Class 19 transcript.  
The deep cause of ill-being is not just desire

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9X6YJhwaKLS&list=PLm9\\_3psBwxqPvtI6Wj8x8OhVDIMwoda\\_i&index=19](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9X6YJhwaKLS&list=PLm9_3psBwxqPvtI6Wj8x8OhVDIMwoda_i&index=19)

**Thay Phap Luu discusses the 19th Tenet "You should learn to see the Second Noble Truth as the path of the eight wrong practices. The deep cause of ill-being is not just desire."**

For an English translation of the tenets themselves, follow this link: <https://orderofinterbeing.org/2016/07/forty-tenets-of-plum-village/>

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by practice to see how they've helped me to heal or not and so in that spirit has proposed some things which for many of us who've learned about Buddhism we've learned the dharma sometimes it can be quite challenging and that's a that's a good thing that's something that's coming alive and I was like how could I say that or how dare I say that and what I found was that if I let that to come in um and just sit with it I usually found that there was some [Music] attachment

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to a view that was still there in my consciousness and Thay teachings helped me to um remove my attachment to remove my assumptions about the teaching and so that's the spirit of this class is to try to present some innovative and challenging approaches to the Buddhist teachings so that we can heal and transform and become happier so that's the spirit of uh how we approach this class today so we've been talking about the four noble truths and Thay is the insight that

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especially saying clearly that suffering and happiness are not are intimately connected they're not separate matters and so when we reduce the suffering then happiness increases just like when we reduce the darkness light is there automatically you cannot talk about reducing the darkness without the increase of light and noticing that the interconnectedness of suffering and happiness so even in our most difficult moments whether we're experiencing physical pain or mental pain or both that happiness is

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right there because if pain is there then we know happiness is also there and we just need to look at our pain with mindfulness and so today we're talking about the second noble truth in the 19th tenet you should learn to see the second noble truth the second noble truth as the path of the eight wrong practices the deep cause of ill-being is not just desire so might sound a little bit controversial so Thay has presented the four noble truths as an ill being and the ignoble path or the path of

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wrong practices well-being and the noble path and I shared about how in Sanskrit ill-being or suffering is called dukkha and well-being is Sukha so it's clear in Sanskrit that they are related is a something do the beginning part means something painful not good and sue is good so but when we say suffering and happiness in English it's not clear that they're related you might think this is my realm of suffering and in that realm of suffering there is no happiness and this is my realm of

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happiness all the things that make me happy and they don't have anything to do with my suffering and so we spend our lives just trying to get to the realm of happiness as much as possible and trying to ignore or suppress the realm of suffering as much as possible so we try not to go to places that make us suffer to be with people who make us suffer to do things that make us suffer and then we just want to be with people who make us happy to go to places that make us happy and do things that make us happy

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and that's the way most of us live our lives and that's why we're running all the time because we're trying to run away from the realm of suffering to arrive at the realm of happiness and so tal said I don't want my students to live in a place where there is no suffering like a realm of happiness because in a place of no suffering happiness is not possible true happiness is not possible so we need to look in our own lives and see in what ways in my daily life am I constantly running towards a realm of

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happiness instead of looking deeply into my suffering and seeing that happiness is right there it doesn't mean that we get some kind of sick enjoyment out of suffering it means that we look with mindfulness and we see that the seeds of our happiness are right there in our suffering because we understand the roots of our suffering what we've thought or said or done that has brought about that suffering and we know how to learn how to stop saying thinking those things stop saying those things stop doing those

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things and then happiness is there right away we don't need to go somewhere else I remember when I was a young bhikshu and I was asked to go on a trip with one of my older brothers and I was a little bit proud to be asked to go on that trip and I already in my mind I started to have lots of views about what I will do on that trip like I will maybe I will be asked to give a dharma talk I can answer questions in the q a yeah and yeah what I found was that brother um he gave the dharma talks because he was

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a dharma teacher of course and I was a young brother and uh answered most of the questions and had most of the conversations and I was um just expected to invite the bell and maybe sometimes offer a guided sitting meditation and so that's all very normal but in my mind I had created another reality and uh so and because of that other that attachment to that view about how really about how I wanted people to see me I suffered and I suffered in my relationship to my brother and so one night I became so angry

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and he had he had said something but actually the source of my anger was already building for many days so that thing was not such a big deal but I was so angry because I felt uh I I felt not respected and so I was so angry I wanted to we were just starting a retreat and I felt like something came up inside of me like I wanted to go burst into his room because we were staying in separate rooms and just give him a piece of my mind tell her you know how you know how I really felt inside

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to spill out my anger and but I had learned the fourth mindfulness training on happiness and learned not to speak or do anything when anger is present and I was very aware that anger was present sometimes we are not aware and we get mixed up and we're not clear that our motivation is actually anger or despair but I was very clear I was angry and so [Music] I practiced like I'm we're trained to do in the fourth mindfulness training I went and practiced walking meditation and it was in

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nature I was outside and it was dark and I practiced breathing just like we learned in the monastery I breathe in and take maybe two or three steps and then breathing out maybe take three or four steps away of my breath and the contact my feet make with the earth and I was still angry but what I noticed was that I noticed something I hadn't noticed before which was there were spaces in which I felt no anger so there were moments when because of my thinking about what that brother had said or what he

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had done and the clash between how I wanted to be seen and treated and how I felt then that nourished my anger but with mindful walking and really being aware of my body I noticed that there were these spaces sometimes just half a second sometimes it was two or three seconds where I actually felt no anger and so what I somehow decided to do was to figure out how can I grow those spaces like instead of trying to push away my anger what if I could make the spaces where I just didn't feel either happy or sad or angry or anything

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just neutral what if I tried to grow those spaces and so I did that and I really saw how my thinking was nourishing my anger I really observed more clearly than I ever had before that I did have a lot of power over what I thought about I could easily change to think about this or think about that but it was not easy to just choose not to be angry so rather than trying to push away my anger I learned to change as we say change the peg so tal uses the image of in the old time when you had two beams that were crossing you put

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a hole in in one of them and you might have a peg to hold it and lock it into the other beam made of wood and when that wooden peg becomes rotten then the structure of the building can become unsteady and it could be dangerous but if you take the peg out it might fall apart so a good carpenter would learn how to take a new peg and with a hammer put it over the old rotten peg and by hitting the peg the new peg into the same hole they ro they kick out the old rotten peg at the same time that they put the new

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one in so there's no gap you keep the structure intact and that's what we learned to do with our thinking except now tal updated it and said we can practice to change the cd but now we don't have CDs anymore so much some of us remember CDs when we are listening to music and we are listening to that that cd which is always watering the seeds of anger and despair in our mind and we want to listen to something that brings us joy and lightness and we just take out the cd and put a new one in but

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now I think it's a we need to change the playlist because people have a playlist on their phones right and you listen to you have a playlist which is for a certain mood maybe or you know for a certain time when you have friends over or when there are times when you're feeling oh not so happy so you want to have something joyful that brings you a lot of peace and lightness so that's not too difficult to do on our phone but how do we train ourselves to do it with our mind and that's what i

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was doing with growing these spaces between the moments of anger just taking looking at my thinking and seeing the cycle the nourishment that my thought provides to the emotion this hormonal response in my body which is making me feel angry and it's very interesting that [Music] studies have been done on mood states and animals and they find that at least for mammals we and for any animals which we've been able to see kind of mood states what they call rage kind of state of rage and animals

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all animals want to experience it as little as possible usually they experience it when they're cornered or threatened in some way and all animals naturally want to get out of the state of rage as quickly as possible whether by defending themselves or running away and we are like that too but now because of the complexity of our interactions every day and our attitudes towards reading the news things that are going on in the world if we're not careful we may be watering the seed of anger like a like a

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fuse slowly smouldering in our mind watering those seeds of anger of dissatisfaction almost all throughout the day just at a very low level it's not something that's necessarily very strong until that moment that the anger manifests and then if we are mindful we recognize I have been burning that fuse all this time slowly with the thinking so I I came back and I recognized that and I for me it was a huge breakthrough even though ty had been teaching us about it but I hadn't experienced it in

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my body I hadn't actually seen how I'm lighting this fuse which is burning and turning into a flame of anger inside of me so I was able doing walking meditation in the forest to just really see that cycle of thinking nourishing my emotion and then changing my thinking really not focusing on what that brother said and did that was making me angry but rather focusing just on my step focusing on my breath and then something interesting happened I had in this moment uh there arose this um image

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of two possibilities I know there are many possibilities but there are two so one is the one in which I I sabotage the retreat so we come very far to a country where they rarely get monks and nuns to come and [Music] I knew that for many of these people and the retreat was very far out of the city where they lived so they had to drive for many hours to get there and I realized that all the wonderful aspirations of the people who come on this retreat and I got in touch with that energy

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and I thought my goodness I here I am and I cannot heal my relationship with my elder brother and all these people have come to to practice mindfulness to overcome their difficult emotions and I felt a little bit of shame and then I touch the seed of desire the desire I kind of sometimes we call it bodhisattva desire to really overcome my difficult emotion in order to help people to suffer less anyway that that's what was going on inside of me so first there was growing spaces between the emotion of anger and learning how to

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do that by changing my thinking bringing my not necessarily I didn't try to think all these good things about that brother that might have been too far but I just instead brought my attention to my breathing into my step into the present moment and then I call to mind all these people who are coming so far and taking time out and they rarely get a chance they cannot come to Deer Park or Plum Village to practice and if I if I'm very um unpleasant with my brother and I and I don't do what he asks me to do i

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don't invite the bell and so forth and make I I will make the retreat unpleasant for everyone and we will not inspire the people to be happy and joyful so I really saw and I I could feel a tie in me not me Thay but tight reminding me really coming and reminding me saying look people look at you with a robe as a representative of the dharma and so if you are not up to be that representative of the dharma then um you know you you need to come back to your practice take refuge in your breath take refuge

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in your step and learn how to be in harmony that is a yeah hallmark of Plum Village practice how to be in harmony with our brothers and sisters if we can't live in harmony with our brothers and sisters then how do we expect to help others live in harmony with their loved ones with their children with their colleagues so we are not perfect in in Deer Park or in Plum Village and we make each other suffer sometimes but it's much less than outside right we have less material things less

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possession and less possessions and we practice to let go of our views that is the um we have a collective consciousness which is going in the direction of letting go of our view so if we're in a meeting and somebody won't let go of their view then the whole sangha knows it and we breathe that person and we support them to help them let go of their view maybe in that moment they have pride and they can't see that they're stuck on their view but if the sangha collectively has that

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aspiration to let go then we help one another we provide the collective support to let go of our view so that's why in the monastery even though we are very sensitive and when something happens that's a little bit out of harmony we are very affected and we think oh my gosh it's so horrible but I love Thay always reminded us but in the monastery it's not so serious because we know out there how sometimes you know somebody has an affair with another you know whole family can break up the

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children can lose their mother or their father and colleagues sometimes in order to get ahead to get a better position they step on their other colleagues and so forth the very painful things happening but we are lucky in the monastery we don't have titles we're just a monk and you know you know you become a big shoe but if you stick around everyone becomes a big shoe and if you stick around everyone becomes a dharma teacher all you have to do is stay in the sangha so these

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these titles are just for us to practice with not as a kind of um like authority to to hold over our younger brothers and sisters so that's how I practice in that moment I learned to grow the spaces change the playlist bring my attention to my breathing to my step and then in that space arose this aspiration to really be a representative of the dharma even though I know I'm not perfect I have a lot of shortcomings but I can I can in that space of calmness and I can I can practice I can come back to my

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step I can come back to my breath and so instead of bursting into my elder brother's room and giving him a piece of my mind while I was angry I went back to my room and I went to sleep and I woke up the next morning and I was so happy because all those things that I was going to do I didn't do all those scenarios I played through in my mind I woke up with a happy thought that it was it I didn't do it and instead of waking up as this you know thinking oh gosh you know what did I say what did I do and

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having this horrible day where I and my brother ignored each other and you know didn't get along with each other and then the people in the retreat feeling that that whole scenario didn't happen and instead I was you know I practiced to continue to not water the seed of anger it's not like the anger just completely disappeared there were still things but I there's still things that I I was working with and practicing with but at least I was able to do to really be there and invite the bell

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for his Dharma talk to really be there for anything to lead the walking meditation to help people to invite the activity bell for the retreat and I didn't have to force myself it's much more difficult to heal after a moment when we've spoken or done something out of anger than it is to not say or do that thing this is a very important insight I've had in my own practice the energy it takes to heal a relationship after you have said or done something out of anger is so much greater than

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the energy it takes to just not say or do that thing in the first place when you learn that then you learn if you want to really be happy and peaceful it's better just to when you notice anger just don't say or do that thing come back to your breathing come back to your step it's not because brother blue says that or because that's what the buddha says if you really look with mindfulness in your experience you see that the energy that you will expend because eventually especially when we're living in

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community you cannot just make that brother go away or that sister go away because you're angry at them you may live the rest of your monastic life with that brother or that sister we don't know yeah and even if you are very far away from them there will be an obstacle in your mind in relationship to that brother and sister because of things you've said or done so the better way is to not say not do that thing out of anger because the healing process and the reconciliation there's always

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it's never 100 I can say I think it's safe to say there's always some a little bit of pain some residue we can always forgive each other but the experience of being feeling hurt by someone is it stays with us and it's difficult to completely heal that pain I don't say I shouldn't say never it's difficult it takes a lot of effort and it takes both people a lot of practice and deep looking to really heal from a moment of anger and conflict so I always bring that to mind now when I'm

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in a moment and I feel very angry about something because I'm attached to my point of view just really think oh gosh I know I know from experience that it takes so much more energy to work to heal that relationship than it is than it takes just to not say or do that thing in the present moment and then that's a source of happiness right away it doesn't mean we don't we you know sometimes when we talk about not acting or doing something out of anger people say but there's injustice

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there's wrong there's pain and suffering in the world so not acting out of anger doesn't mean there's not pain and suffering and injustice in the world but it means that we you can respond with intelligence you can respond with a calm mind to actually potentially radically transform the situation of injustice transform the situation of suffering in the world if you act out of anger it's very unlikely you are going to change in a deep way getting down at the root of that injustice or that suffering

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so learning to embrace the anger to to see its root and then to learn to keep a calm mind to master your mind that is the practice of the buddha and that is a that comes from a deep desire so when we talk about the second noble truth as the path of the eight wrong practices it helps us to get away from [Music] a what can be a who can be um understood as a very narrow way of looking at the super the second noble truth which is to say you suffer because of your desire it's like a young boy who wants to have an ice cream

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and he knows the ice cream is in the freezer and the father says and the boy is crying and crying daddy why can't I have an ice cream and the daddy tells him you're suffering because of your desire and just what do you think that boy will do you think he will suddenly be happy with the insight that his father has told him if you've worked with children you know that's not going to bring much happiness or transformation and so inside of us we all have that child too so when so when we are suffering and then

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somebody says don't you see it's your desire that's making you suffering and then we feel and so this is ty's insight just say just saying that it's our desire that makes us suffer is not it's not usually very helpful it's true that if we have less desire we will suffer less that is very true so that insight is correct but we also have positive desire we have the desire to help people to suffer less so when we become a monk or a nun or we practice the five mindfulness trainings as a lay

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practitioner we have a positive desire we come up to practice the mindfulness trainings because we want to transform our habit energies and we want to help others to suffer less too and that's a good desire so we should not just label desire as something that we need to get rid of altogether when somebody is caught in a deep depression and this is a um more and more frequent and uh in our world today young people are young people older people are paralyzed with depression and they cannot even get up

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the the desire to get out of bed they're lying there and maybe sometimes so angry at themselves because they cannot physically just even get out of bed the depression is so great and even they beat their chest saying why is it like this and so if we tell that young person who is or that older person that depressed person that they are suffering because of their desire it's difficult to see how that will help so tal says we have to look at the second the causes of suffering

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in terms of these eight wrong practices which are another way of looking at the other side of the opposite side of the eight right practices of the eightfold noble path so already for a few classes we looked at right we have view so in the eightfold noble path we talk about right view and the deep practice of right view is letting go of all views because any kind of view is is kind of like blinders on a horse it's making you look at the situation in a certain way or you can say like colored

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glasses and you put them on and so everything you look you put on rose-colored glasses and so everything you look at is rose colored and so you start to behave as if the world is rose-colored so when we are affected by any affliction whether desire whether anger then we look at the world through angry eyes if we have jealousy we look at the world through the eyes of jealousy and everyone we see has qualities that we want for ourselves and we feel we need to do something to make those people suffer who are

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more talented than we are if we if we are sad then we look at the world through sadness coloured glasses and everything we see is suffering we just see people dying we see the world in the climate crisis we see no possibility for future generations and we to see everything happening in that way and we don't feel joy or happiness so with the practice of right view we learn to take off these classes of sadness take off the glasses of anger take off the glasses of despair and learn to just see things as they are

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notice how we're grasping onto a view so wrong view we can look at all of our views whether a political view whether a preference for this food and not that kind of food for maybe you are someone who keeps your room very tidy and clean and then you have a roommate and they are very messy and you suffer so much because you have the view that your room should be very tidy all these ways of thinking looking at the world are potential sources of suffering when we continue to grasp onto them so it's not just our desire which is

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causing suffering it's also it's our wrong view in the practice of beginning anew many times I've experienced beginning anew with one of my brothers or sisters and [Music] if we both practiced according to the practice of watering the flowers then expressing a regret and then learning to express our perceptions about something they've done that that has hurt us I always feel like I've let go of many wrong views at the end of that beginning a new practice just by listening

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to my brother it doesn't mean that you know we let go completely of all of our views about each other or about ourselves but by the practice of sharing instead of sitting in that anger learning how to share positive things about that person and also expressing the things that we know we've done that have not been so skillful and then sometimes also sharing how what we've experienced even if our perceptions are wrong about that person or what they've said or done we've had a real emotional experience

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and so we want to share that that's a valid thing oftentimes uh in reconciling with someone we get so caught up in like you did that no I didn't yes I did no, I didn't you know and it becomes a intellectual argument or you know trying to dispute the facts and there's no healing that can take place and and I I very much had that mind so I've learned to let go of it and say it's not important it's not so important what the facts are what's important is that my brother has really had an experience

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of suffering or anger despair something like that and something I said or did has in some way contributed to that so that might be a wrong perception um but the experience I can recognize as being valid my brother my sister has not invented that experience that unpleasant feeling that they've had and that's a that's a great realization to really just validate you've really had this experience like I really recognize that rather than trying to defend yourself and say no I didn't say that I didn't

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mean that I didn't do that I didn't intend that but rather just recognizing and validating that person's experience in a genuine way they're saying you know I I see that you're not just doing this just to play some game with me you really have this experience and I want to recognize that that's very helpful because when we argue about the facts actually the person feels like their experience is being invalidated like you don't believe you're trying to invalidate my

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experience of anger or despair that's really happened to me whether or not I've had a wrong perception or not so this is why the practice of letting go of our views is so important not getting caught in you know no it's like this no it's like that no but rather stepping back from that hall and just recognizing what really is which is experience there is experience it's another way of looking at what the buddha said in fact the word Vedana which is usually translated as feeling can also be translated as

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experiences and the first noble truth can also be understood in that way there is experience so our thinking our theories our imagination this is this can be it can go here it can go there illusory but there is this real experience of happiness of suffering and the buddha was helping us to see that in order to heal and understand our mind when we get deep into the teaching we also get the insight that that that suffering that experience is also illusory that is when we go very deep deeply into the Mahayana teaching

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we see that everything is like a foam like a bubble and even our lived experiences if we take them too much to be real we get attached to them and we can get attached to our suffering my suffering my brothers I know emblem village used to say that that's my suffering don't touch my suffering and we grasp onto our suffering and we hold on tight and nobody it makes us who we are suffering and we don't want anyone to take it away and so we suffer even more grasping onto the suffering that we

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won't let go of so that's another kind of wrong view the Mahayana teaching of seeing all things including our suffering as illusory is not for the purpose of negating our suffering but for the purpose of letting go not grasping onto it bringing the light of mindfulness to it to see that there are causes and conditions for that suffering to arise and those causes and conditions proposes that we not just focus on desire as a source of our suffering if we desire less we will suffer less that is

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very clear but it is not always helpful just to say to someone you suffer because you desire sometimes we are able to let go but when we are caught by desire we don't see that it is our wrong view our wrong thinking our wrong actions our wrong speech and so forth which is contributing to that suffering and that can be very helpful because we can let go of the view we might not be able to let go of our desire right away but we can let go of that view ah you have a moment of awakening and you say oh

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actually I don't need that to be happy I don't need to think that way so when we learn for example about the history of the united states and we see that this country is could not be as it is today without the African slaves being brought over to support the economy we see that the condition of this country is not possible without that and so when we see the suffering that happens when George Floyd was murdered last year and we see the connection the root of that suffering we get an enlightenment moment we think

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oh my gosh I don't want to continue this current of racial hatred of white supremacy and so forth we can wake up from that wrong view where we think we need whether we are black whether we are white whether we're asian whatever we identify with or we don't identify as anything we we're able to become free from [Music] the view of better or worse higher or lesser and judging others because they look different rather we get understanding that is a enlightenment moment right letting go of the view

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that you just received from your your friends growing up or from your community or from the institutions or from the movies or from whatever you watch that's built into your collective consciousness it's it's not it's not like everything just disappears right away and you are you have no bias you have no racism you have no sexism but rather it's continually continuously unfolding moments of awakening which come from letting go of grasping of ideas and when our desire is less

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it's easier to do so that is why the Buddhist tradition the buddha focused on desire or craving as a source of our suffering but we need to see that that manifests in many ways and it's in a deeper level it's not just only desire it's also our anger our despair and our wrong which are coming from wrong views our attachment to wrong views so they're all interrelated we can see in anger there's desire because we like I shared in my story I have a reality that I of what I how I want to be seen how I want

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to see myself but my brother is doesn't behave in that way according to my my view and so I suffer and so the anger arises so my desire to be seen in that way is contributing also to the anger but it is not it is not desire alone it is also the seed of anger in me that is transmitted through generations there is despair there is violence there is ignorance just going through and holding on to a view and not seeing things as they are not coming back to the present moment and recognizing ah I'm still a young

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monk I have many things to learn I can see this I don't need to be a dharma teacher I don't need to be the one who does the guided meditation I don't need to be this or that to be happy so this is the insight that comes from [Music] understanding what wrong view is and then letting go learning to usually we can't let go of a view until we recognize it we can let go so view it thought action speech and action body speech and mind so it's really I you know I just I've really benefited

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from seeing how my thinking is feeding my emotion this is really fundamental to transformation to seeing in every moment how this thought is contributing to this emotion sometimes a thought can feed different emotions but when you get good at recognizing ah you think this you think that that's leading to sadness that's leading to anger and it um the more refined and more mindful you I find that I become of my emotions I can see that thought leading to sadness very quickly and so I don't continue to feed that

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thought I learned to come back to my breathing come back to my step it's like a I think I shared before but I if you use the image of an acorn when the acorn puts out its root and its first little leaves if I come along with my foot and I just gently kick that acorn aside that it won't have a chance to manifest into an oak tree it will lose the opportunity or I pick it up and I put it in a plastic cup so with very little effort I can [Music] arrest the development of the oak the acorn into an oak tree

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but if I come to a full grown oak tree which has been there for 30 years it's very difficult for me to to stop the growth of that oak tree I cannot just push it over or you know kick it out of the way it's solid it's there so the same is true of our emotions when we see it in its seed form our anger is very it's very easy to be mindful of it and to change our thought but once anger has grown into a big oak tree in our mind in relationship to somebody who causes us we believe is causing us difficulty

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uh a family member and this the oak tree of our anger is huge and it's really difficult to remove it so we have to practice first a lot of mindful breathing mindful walking maybe we need to come to the monastery many lay friends I heard I signed up to join us for the three month reigns retreat here at Deer Park I think we start on October 17th and I heard maybe 14 or 15 friends are coming to stay they will intend to stay for the whole winter retreat and it made me very happy to hear that because

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that means you recognize there's some kind of oak tree going on and I need to really be take the bath of the big sangha and every day be nourishing good seeds like joy and happiness and building stronger the seed of mindfulness in my consciousness so I can embrace and unlike the case with plants with our emotions we can we can they can go the other way too they can become less and less that's why the buddha also use the image of a fire when you remove the fuel from the fire the fire dies down

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and that is nirvana the cessation of the flames of our afflictions so learning to remove the fuel so when we come maybe there's a huge bonfire going on inside of us or at least the fuel is ready for a big flame to happen and so we know it's very dry it's like the wildfire season right now we're having a backpacking retreat starting on Sunday and two nights ago before I went to bed I got the message from [Music] uh from Kenley that the national forests in California are all closed

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because of um the wildfires in the north of the state and the fire crews from the south had to go up to the north almost all of them to support fighting the fires in the north and so they decided to close all the national forests of California so that people don't go into the mountains and then if there's a fire they have to go and save them so even if it's labour day weekend and many people want to go out into the forest and camp and hike and see the beauty of nature and we had already planned to go to

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mount San Senecito to go backpacking with many lay friends out in nature and practicing mindfulness while camping while walking mindfully and I found out before I went to bed we cannot do that we cannot go to mount Senecito because the fires are raging and the fuel is there it's ready to catch flame and there are not enough just like when we don't have enough mindfulness and inside of us there's a lot of fuel for our anger it's very easy for the fire to take over and burn all over

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within our body and our mind and during that time what we say what we do motivated by that anger can cause so much damage to ourselves and to our loved ones so in the same way mother earth is also has a lot of fuel in the mountains in southern California and the firefighters are mindful of the fact that they don't have enough capacity to fight the fires in the north and a fire on the south if it starts so they learn to okay let's not go into that area let's not have people there

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let us learn to be aware of what our capacity is and [Music] ask people to support us in our practice that's just like in the monastery when we know somebody is making us angry over and over again we can go to that person and ask them to support us as a kind of peace treaty that we commit to with that person not to water the seeds of anger in the other person and so we can support one another so by not going to the mountain we support the firefighters so we decided to change the backpacking trip and we do it here at

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Deer Park and we will go up to Daley ranch and Dixon lake and hike around in daily ranch and maybe camp up on Escondido rock and so we learn to change we learn to be skilful with the situation because we know here we are safer and we will not cause a problem for the firefighters by going into the back country and in the future when the fire risk is less we can still go just like when you are very dry and there's a lot of fuel for anger inside of you know that is not the time maybe to see that person or to go into

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that situation but later on when you are calm you're peaceful you have a lot of joy then you know you are ready to meet that situation to do that thing you have more stability more solidity maybe we can listen to the sound of the bell [Music] so this body speech and mind these aspects of our right or wrong practice and then we have livelihood right effort or diligence mindfulness and concentration so I touched on these last class what is right livelihood what is wrong livelihood if we are living in such a way

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that causes suffering if we are burning fossil fuels as we all are in some way shape or form just by the clothing we are wearing the food we are eating we know that we are emitting Co2 into the atmosphere and that is a kind of um suffering that we are transmitting to the future to future generations so we learn to live more simply on the earth to have a livelihood which is causing less harm so you look and see what is really causing harm 100 years ago we didn't know that burning fossil fuels is causing so much

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harm to the environment now we know but are we able to change our action collectively in response to that insight it's not something we can do at an individual level I mean we can reduce our consumption to some degree but we need to learn how to do it at a collective level so each aspect of the four noble truths has an individual but also a collective aspect so we are contributing to the collective just like a one candle illuminates can illuminate the room to a certain extent but if you have many candles the

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brilliance is much greater but the room full of candles is made up of many individual candles so that is a way of looking at the individual and the collective they're not separate you cannot say that candle is separate from the collective it is contributing to it and [Music] so each of us in the way we live and when we come together in the monastery living together eating together using the car using electricity together then our usage is much less because we can share the space and that is a wisdom from many

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generations of our ancestors learning how to live together in community to live simply so we learn right livelihood by just living together in the monastery if we're at home we can learn how to live you know share with our neighbours you you start to do kind things to our neighbours maybe bring over a pie or some fresh fruit if you have too much of it in the fruit tree in your backyard and then slowly we learn how to rebuild community if the community is strong then the consumption is less because there's happiness

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and we don't need to consume things to buy these things to be happy so if we learn so happiness is very sustainable but running after happiness is not sustainable running after happiness is probably the greatest cause of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on the planet so there's wrong livelihood and right livelihood diligence today we we trust in [Music] and put our faith in scientific inquiry but we don't always know what is the result of our inquiry so we have to look deeply and see do we want to make a bomb

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or do we want to understand how to reduce suffering in the world so we can be very diligent very intelligent and learn ways to make more destructive things for the planet our ability to burn fossil fuels came from insight came from diligence the question is is that effort that's made to learn how to extract the fossil fuels really for the long-term benefit of human beings that is a question we are asking ourselves now it seemed like at first it was but if we look more deeply we see that we are

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changing the very atmosphere of the planet and that is an insight that some of us had maybe 50 years ago or even longer but it didn't seem so important but now because of our addiction to us that source of energy the suffering has become huge and not only the physical suffering but the mental anguish of dealing with the climate crisis is huge previous generations they grew up thinking things are only getting better the health system is getting better people are living longer people are healthier

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they have more freedom and now young people grow up with the possibility that they won't have a beautiful planet to enjoy throughout their lifetimes and that their children may maybe even less so this is uh we cannot say of course we only live maybe 50 years 60 years 80 years 100 years if we're lucky a little bit more than 100 years and so everyone can say well it's not my fault I didn't start burning the fossil fuels but here we are in the situation and we continue to do it so we need to recognize that we are not

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just a separate self just this individual who is born at this state living at this time and say oh those are the ancestors they did they made all those mistakes we can blame it on them and that's we don't get anywhere so we need to look with the eyes of non-self that is right diligence seeing that I'm not this separate self but rather I am part of a continuous flow and I inherit the actions of my ancestors as well but I also inherit because I've encountered the dharma I learned how to

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let go of my views I have the possibility of transforming the situation consuming less learning to have less desire having less suffering and the same is true there can be wrong mindfulness a sniper is very mindful of where they're shooting but is that the kind of mindfulness that brings about transformation and healing so in what way are we using our intelligence to hurt or harm others this can be wrong mindfulness so these are all contributing so what ta wants to do is to see that actually

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there is an ignoble path and that is not just enough to say that ill-being is born from desire and if we get rid of our desire then we are free from suffering we need to look at it as a whole host of afflictions that are brought about by actions which are harmful actions around wrong view wrong thinking wrong speech wrong action wrong livelihood wrong diligence wrong mindfulness wrong concentration to notice that it is this complex interplay of many different kinds of emotions which are all related to our craving

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but not simply reducible to our craving that is a Thay's insight and we can learn to turn around and let go of our views notice when our thinking is nourishing difficult emotions and change it into thinking that what is the seed of mindfulness of joy to say kind things instead of saying hurtful things to do kind things to give a gift to someone without any expectation or to offer to help somebody to wash their dishes or to sit with someone who is suffering who's crying who's hurt

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maybe hold their hand so transforming wrong action into right action that is the noble path it's recognizing that as a living being experience the planet we are constantly doing we are doing in the flesh I have the insight that there's no passivity we use the term active and passive but when you look deeply into your body what can you say is passive everything cells are combusting oxygen that we're breathing in in every moment where is their passivity so actually we are always action we are

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there's no self to speak of but there are processes which are constantly going on and so if we see that we see what we are doing is really we are shaping the direction of the stream of our body of our feelings our perceptions and so forth and so as practitioners of the dharma we learn how to guide the stream skillfully so rather than going in the direction of wrong thinking in the direction of right thinking and so forth so this is uh tai's insight and into the second noble truth how to learn how to

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not to reduce something just to one cause and to see as well that there are positive desires that our aspiration to practice is a positive desire the buddha when he decided to leave the home he's touching a deep deep desire to be free from suffering and that kind of desire is very helpful without that kind of desire we don't go very far at all on our path so thank you for listening and thank you for uh reflecting on this uh teaching of tai on the second noble truth and we will try to announce for those online

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there may be a class next week but during the next month we will be hosting the great precepts transmission ceremony called go to the other shore here at deer park monastery and some of our brothers like brother Minan and our two sisters here Sister Chang Maitang and Tang Livian who just come from village will receive the bhikshuni ordination and so for about a month probably we won't have the 40 tenants class maybe we will have it next week next Wednesday we have the brothers and sisters arriving

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um but otherwise we will announce on the Deer Park website and try to announce as well on the Plum Village website when the class will continue in October so thank you for your practice and I'll finish with three sounds of the bell [Music] do now planning to have the backpacking trip here close to Deer Park if there are any sisters who want to join even you