

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHnE4AVvaUU&list=PLm9_3psBwxqPvtI6Wj8x8OhVDIMwoda_i&index=21&pp=iAQB0gcjCYcKAYcqIYzv&themeRefresh=1

Tenet 21: "As a human being, you have the capacity to become a Buddha. As a Buddha, you continue to be a human being."

1. Manifestation-Only Teaching and the Nature of Mind

In the Manifestation-Only (Vijñaptimātra) teachings:

- The mind has a portion that manifests moment by moment as consciousness.
- What we experience is a continual arising of subject and object together.
- Practice is the work of penetrating delusion.

The aim of practice:

- Remove the veil of wrong perception.
- Directly experience what is happening in:
 - Body
 - Feelings
 - Perceptions
 - Mental formations
 - Consciousness

Awakening is not adding something new; it is removing distortion.

2. The Six Sense Bases and Attachment

Traditionally, Buddhism speaks of six sense bases:

- Sight
- Sound
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch
- Mind-objects

Modern science recognises more, such as proprioception and balance. However, the Buddha emphasised the senses we most easily cling to or resist.

Our habit:

- Chasing pleasant objects.
- Resisting unpleasant objects.
- Constructing identity around sensory experience.

The path is not suppression of the senses but freedom from compulsive attachment.

3. Chan Practice: "What Is This?"

From the Watou lineage of Chan:

The practice question:

"What is this?"

Applications:

- Sadness — what is this?
- Anger — what is this?
- Jealousy — what is this?
- Even pleasure — apple pie — what is this?

This cultivates:

- Wonder
- Openness
- Curiosity
- Non-judgement

It interrupts habitual naming and solidifying.

It allows direct encounter without story.

4. Subject and Object Inter-Are

When anger manifests:

- We usually say: "I am recognising my anger."
- But in reality, subject and object arise together.

When anger appears as object:

- The perceiving "I" appears simultaneously as subject.

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They inter-are.

Neither exists independently.

This insight undermines:

- Fixed self-view.
- The idea of a separate observer controlling experience.

Awareness and its object are co-arising manifestations.

5. Feeding or Transforming Anger

When anger manifests, we have options.

We can:

- Attend to it.
- Think about it.
- Build a narrative.
- Justify it.
- Replay it.

This feeds and enlarges it.

Or we can:

- Return to the breath.
- Return to the steps.
- Notice neutral bodily sensations.

Returning to the breath:

- Waters mindfulness.
- Breaks the cycle of narrative.
- Stops feeding anger with further thought.

Practice is not suppression; it is redirecting attention skilfully.

6. Extraction Culture and Collective Conditioning

For centuries, human culture, especially within empires, has been organised around extraction:

- From the Earth.
- From labour.
- From communities.
- From other beings.

This conditioning persists.

We now live inside systems of extraction so normalised that we do not know how to stop.

This collective pattern also operates psychologically.

7. Taking What Is Not Given — Emotionally

Without awareness, we extract emotionally:

- Entering a joyful room and draining it with anger.
- Taking others' attention.
- Demanding emotional labour.

This too is a form of taking what is not given.

The precept extends beyond material theft.

It includes energetic and emotional extraction.

Awakening requires:

- Sensitivity to the impact of our presence.
- Responsibility for the energy we bring into shared space.

8. The Twenty-First Tenet

The Tenet states:

- As a human being, you have the capacity to become a Buddha.
- As a Buddha, you continue to be a human being.

Implications:

- Buddhahood is not supernatural.
- It is not reserved for mythic figures.
- It is the full flowering of human potential.

And:

- Awakening does not remove humanity.
- It deepens and clarifies it.

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Because of this, countless Buddhas are possible.

9. The Buddha's Hesitation

After awakening, the Buddha hesitated to teach.
Why?

- He foresaw misunderstanding.
- He knew the teaching could be distorted.

As a human being, he discovered:

- Suffering exists.
- Suffering has a cause.
- The cause can be removed.
- There is a path leading to freedom.

He did not awaken as a god.

He awakened as a human being.

This makes the path universal.

10. Transmission Through Sangha

A reflection from Maple Forest Monastery in 2001:

- Thầy was not physically present.
- Yet his students radiated:
 - Peace
 - Compassion
 - Awakening

The Buddha's presence was felt in the Sangha.

This demonstrated:

- Transmission is real.
- Awakening is not individual possession.
- It is embodied collectively.

The Buddha can be encountered in the community.

11. One Buddha Is Not Enough

Thầy taught:

- One Buddha is not enough for our times.
- We need many Buddhas.

In Plum Village:

- We are helping each other become Buddhas.

Radical insight:

- You are already a Buddha.
- You only need to let go of the perception that you are not.

Delusion is the veil.

Awakening is its removal.

12. Practice and Store Consciousness

Suggested practice:

- Read *Old Path White Clouds* slowly.
- One short chapter at a time.

Purpose:

- Allow insight to seep into store consciousness.
- Nourish seeds of awakening gently.

Transmission happens gradually.

Seeds are watered through repeated contact with wholesome teachings.

13. Core Integration

This Tenet unites several insights:

- Mind is manifestation-only.
- Subject and object inter-are.
- Afflictions grow when fed.
- Attention is transformative.
- Extraction is both systemic and psychological.

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- Buddhahood is human possibility.

To become a Buddha:

- Remove wrong perceptions.
- Stop feeding afflictions.
- Cultivate wonder.
- Live ethically in community.
- Recognise interbeing with all beings.

To be a Buddha:

- Remain fully human.
- Embody compassion and clarity.
- Help others recognise their own capacity.

Countless Buddhas are possible because awakening is not owned.

It is the flowering of human life when delusion falls away.