

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=207&v=Rns2qi9xqtY&embeds\\_referring\\_euri=https%3A%2F%2Foutubetotranscript.com%2F](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=207&v=Rns2qi9xqtY&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Foutubetotranscript.com%2F)

### **Transcript of Class #13. Right Diligence**

This is a weekly class from Deer Park Monastery on the topic "The 40 Tenets of Plum Village" and it is based on a book called "Plum Village Looks at Vulture's Peak" written by Thich Nhat Hanh. The book describes the essential characteristics of Plum Village practice and teachings. For an English translation of the tenets themselves, follow this link → <http://pvapp.to/40-tenets> In this class Brother Phap Luu discusses the 12th tenet: "Precepts are mindfulness. (Śīla is smṛti). Precepts and mindful manners are concrete expressions of mindfulness."

[00:00:08] So we can begin with three sounds of the bell

[00:02:06] So do you respect the Thay dear noble community today is uh the 7th of July, in the year 2021 and we're in the Ocean of Peace meditation hall, and uh yeah we're very lucky to have many, many of you here this week last week it was uh just the monastics, and also this week we have parallax here so I feel I have to make sure my English sentences are you know fully completed and uh there's no dangling participles!

[00:02:55] Now we're so grateful to have all our friends from parallax here and yeah this has been a class that just started with a few of the brothers who wanted to learn the core of Plum Village teachings and Thay really was compassionate before he could no longer teach he personally oversaw this book being compiled in Vietnamese on these 40 insights that he had developed along with all of us in Plum Village but I think mainly Thay leading the way insights into the Buddhist tradition, especially some areas which are not very clear in terms of how you apply Buddhist teachings into your daily life

[00:03:55] When I first started practicing the dharma in my early twenties, I was getting so much benefit from sitting meditation, and part of me just wanted to consume as much dharma as possible so I would just read the sutras all day long and I would try to work, just enough so that I had enough money to get food and live and so and then I would study and practice and that uh in my early life as a practitioner, that was um most of my day was burying myself in books mainly and there were only just starting to be some teachings online I don't think YouTube was around in 2001.

[00:04:56] So but there were still some monks and nuns that were putting transcripts of talks online and so whatever I could get I wanted to learn from and there's some benefit to that attitude to kind of have this a little bit of insatiability in learning the dharma we shouldn't ever feel like we've really gotten it all usually I find when I start to think that then I become lazy in my practice or you know I think oh I see the book there or I maybe have that intention to go to the monastery but it kind of sits on the shelf maybe for many months many years many decades and that is a trap of knowledge so we get some benefit from the dharma, but we put it on the shelf and we feel like oh I understand that already and then years later when we still we already have a lot of anger or fear and we've been watering that seed for a long time we realized that oh gosh I miss the chance to practice so that is a little bit of a wake-up call we can all look in our lives and see that time I decided to do that instead of practicing did I really feel happier did I really feel more joy and then you maybe you did I don't know but when I looked honestly in my life before I started practicing the five mindfulness trainings before I started regularly practicing city meditation I see that a lot of my days were governed by a strong emotion that came in and out and that affected my relationships the way I talk to my friends the way I talk to my loved ones my family and I didn't recognize the habitual ways of speaking responding to the people that I cared the most about that we're actually bringing about harm and so this class is a fun way to just consume a lot of dharma because we can have a good nutriment and that is a topic of this class the practice of right diligence and how we can nourish the positive seeds in our consciousness so we're on the 13th tenet on right diligence or sometimes we hear is right effort right diligence is to practice mindfulness trainings

[00:09:13] So in the previous classes we learned that Thay had the insight that mindfulness is the practice of the mindfulness trainings and [Music] in the tradition precepts are ways of restraining ourselves from doing certain actions and Thay had this insight to include in the precepts the practice of mindfulness he realized that precepts are mindfulness so aware of the suffering caused by harming beings we make the commitment not to kill not to hurt aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without a deep long-term commitment and to help to reduce the suffering of caused by all kinds of sexual abuse by finding ways to take care of my own sexual energy as well as those help others you know to protect children and those who are victims of sexual abuse so this is uh it brings in our insight so it's not just about like okay I just control my own behaviour, but I actually see that I am not separate from my community and my actions are my true continuation and so when I look into the suffering that's caused by my own actions I'm also looking into the suffering that's caused by society and uh I restrained my actions based on that I remember as a kid I grew up in Connecticut and my dad when he was young he loved to go to the ocean to Cape Cod

## Plum Village 40 tenets – **Transcript of Class #13 Right Diligence**

Transcript 23.09.2025

For Colours of Compassion Study Group

[00:11:18] And in Cape Cod they have very high dunes and so as a kid I learned to run up the dunes sometimes they're like three four stories tall very high dunes, on the ocean side of cape cod and and i'd love to to run and jump and roll down the sand dunes on a stony mountain you cannot do that because you get all bloody and hurt but on the sand dune it's so much fun and then at some point in the late 80s when I was a teenager they started to put signs up and say do not climb on the dunes and I felt very sad about that and I sometimes I still climbed on the dunes because I felt like um they just tell me not to climb on the dunes but I'm going to do it because my joy is more important than than whatever reason they had for telling me not to go on the dunes but when I went back as an adult I noticed that they changed the signs and they had beautiful signs which explained that about the all the different kinds of animals that live on the dunes the kind of grass the sea grass at the top of the dunes and also how our impact affects the erosion on the dunes and then it asks invites us to not well I wouldn't say invite but it allows us to be aware of why we don't climb on the dunes instead of just putting a sign that says do not do not do this and so the original precepts are a bit like that like do not steal do not drink alcohol and so Thay went into...he got the insight why you know why he was asking himself why do we have to practice the precepts he really looked inside himself as a young monk growing up in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and he wanted to question everything about the Buddhist tradition he felt very deeply that the Buddhist tradition had something to offer our world something positive but in order to really speak to people who are engaging in violence drinking alcohol all these things that the precepts tell us not to do he need to he could not just go to them and say do not drink you needed to really go into it and see what is the basis of it and what he discovered after many years was that the basis of the precepts is mindfulness awareness of suffering.

[00:14:12] And so the Plum Village tradition ties very clearly all of our practices to this awareness of suffering the first noble truth so the practice is embedded in the trainings that's why Thay calls it mindfulness trainings instead of precepts so right diligence is to practice the mindfulness trainings and is therefore also mindfulness, [00:15:09] so in the on the path of awakening we talk about there being eight aspects, so we learned to that the basis of our way of looking at things everything within our body our phenomena actually affects everything so we need to start in how we look at the world within us and around us so we need to cultivate right view and mostly our practice of right view is letting go of views, so now nowadays we talk about bias in journalism in our interactions and so we recognize that we are have fear and we have things that have been habituated within us and those have come to us from our ancestors those are seeds that are planted in the way we interact in society we start to observe them as [00:16:40] children and then we adopt certain views like I should behave this way with that person and this way with another person and we don't even notice that they're...

[00:16:51] So we have a lot of wrong perceptions so the path is becoming aware of those wrong perceptions and learning to let go of them and that's why we do it in community because we in community you cannot easily just tell yourself oh I have no bias I have no implicit bias because your brothers and sisters tell you and they give you feedback on something you said or did that was a hurtful like a an aggression or microaggression or something that for them felt very hurtful and so that way you look oh gosh and you come back if you are open if you keep your heart open you don't react with anger but you see oh this is a gift someone is helping me to see or helping my community to see in what ways I'm behaving we are behaving that is not creating an open space creating an openness a place that's safe..

[00:18:04] So that is also the practice of right view so it's not only an individual matter, at all right view but it's learning to let go of ways that we are harming again aware of the suffering, and learning to keep our heart open even in the face of what we may perceive to be violent or danger, so actually these mindfulness, right mindfulness and concentration....

[00:19:00] They correspond to the three trainings that we've been studying smithi, samadhi and prajna so right view is insight prajna is not knowledge it's goes beyond conceptual thinking, so kind of a deeper intuition that is not constructed, and we already talked about mindfulness and concentration, and with right view then our thoughts are helpful kinder more beneficial, and with kind thoughts comes kind speech right, speech and uh, right action

[00:20:16] body speech and mind. So if our view of the world is full of fear and anger then our thoughts are also full of anger in our speech and our actions so sometimes we feel oh I don't have any wrong perceptions my mind is very clear it's very open, and but then something in our speech or something in our actions shows us that there's some anger and so that's the kind of mindfulness spell you think oh many times I've experienced that where I feel very I feel so open I feel very clear I feel like there's no discrimination but then something that I say is something that I do and brother reminds me ah and then that's a way for me to see I still need to practice I still need to go back to the root and see with mindfulness and concentration what kind of harm what kind of way of looking at things is still bringing about harmful thinking harmful speech harmful action and the livelihood.

[00:21:41] So right view right thought right speech right action, right livelihood and right livelihood means that we live in such a way that we are not causing harm so, sometimes the buddha put very simply like if we are a butcher or we are selling weapons or arms, that's clearly a wrong livelihood because those professions will always, be

Plum Village 40 tenets – **Transcript of Class #13 Right Diligence**

Transcript 23.09.2025

For Colours of Compassion Study Group

causing harm to animals or to other people, but it's much greater than that right livelihood is awareness of the suffering caused by maybe the way that I buy products or the the company that I work for does, the company that I work for produce the kind of products that are helping people to be happier, more peaceful like if you're publishing books at parallax you can feel a lot of joy because you, know that every book that comes out can bring joy to other people when, they're in a difficult moment somebody will see the cover of that book and they'll pick it up and something will draw them in they're looking for peace and happiness so then you sleep very well at night...

[00:23:10] Because you have a right livelihood you have a kind of way of living that is actually bringing about peace and happiness so we need to look into our life and see and it's not only about the company that we work for but it's also how we work like how we are living are we peaceful in our office space is it a place of peace do we feel at home there...

[00:23:40] If not what can we do can we have a sitting meditation or can we have the practice of watering flowers like watering the positive flowers and our colleagues, and our um yeah in are we creating a space where people, feel like they there's they don't fear losing their job, or they feel like this is a community a real community maybe I get a salary but the main thing, the reason I'm here is for the community so these are things that we can look at and see and if it doesn't fit then we can change we can go in another direction and maybe we can change the environment of our workplace so that we can practice mindful walking mindful sitting that's what we did here at the monastery

[00:24:41] I mean being a monk or none is should be right livelihood but actually, our teacher discovered that sometimes it was not that sometimes we would get caught as monks and nuns and just chanting like ceremonies in order to get money so we can have a nice temple so we can feel like we are king sitting in our temple and so in we the Buddhist community had a very strong lesson in the 20th century especially in china the monks for many years many with good intentions but they unwittingly had become the landlords who owned all of the fields around the temple and so over many centuries what started out as with humility and...

[00:25:39] begging for food sometimes was perceived and maybe was kind of uh, like being a landlord in the feudal times in the in the form of the peasant people had to work the fields so that the monks had the food to eat so that is one of the dangers of Buddhism you become too settled and you order a lot of things on amazon and when other people are having a lot of difficulty then you have to look again and see is this really right livelihood am I really cultivating joy and peace or am I actually just living a life where other people serve me and do things for me so that is uh and that is why the contact between the monk and the monastics and the lay community..

[00:26:32] is so important because the lay community can also remind the monks and nuns of their simplicity in their livelihood so that's a so right livelihood we should not just assume because we work for a good company or we're in the monastery that we're practicing right livelihood we have to look deeply and see are we creating suffering in the way everything that we do in our thinking our speech and our actions and find ways to be kinder more gentle and so today we're talking about right diligence and so Thay saying right diligence is to practice the mindfulness training and is therefore also mindfulness

[00:27:33] So right mindfulness is right diligence, we cannot separate out one from the other and this is so important because especially as mindfulness has become such a catch-all phrase right for like the company that practices mindfulness recently a very famous company they built a mindfulness booth in their fulfilment centres maybe i'm giving away which company I don't know did you see this picture of the mind mindfulness booth so you you maybe you cannot go to the bathroom but you can go to the mindfulness booth...

[00:28:31] And yeah and I'm sure there was some good intention there, but this is where if we just get caught in a concept of mindfulness then it loses all of its meaning and it only becomes a another way of just feeling good about ourselves or feeling like lke uh hiding under the carpet the suffering that is really there or now we call about we call it spiritual bypassing yeah so we have to look inside and say do are we just creating a mindfulness booth inside of our heart it means uh we maybe we are a long time coming to Deer Park we are a student of Thay we spend a lot of time around the community but we actually when we look into our life we find out that this we just it's just a mindfulness booth when we go to the monastery we step into the booth and we're very mindful but as soon as we go out it's very there's a lot of harshness and anger and so we need to I said mindfulness is not a tool it is a path and that's why the eightfold path this these eight aspects of the pathos inextricable every one of them from mindfulness you cannot just take mindfulness out from right diligence so the buddha taught that right diligence is made of four aspects and the first is that we recognize that in us there are the seeds of anger of despair and we want to do everything we can not to allow those seeds of anger despair resentment jealousy and so forth to come up and manifest in our mind consciousness so we talk about the mind having different aspects and all of us very easily accept that there is anger in me but right now most of us here are not angry so in Buddhist psychology we have a way of talking about that we talk about store consciousness and mind consciousness store consciousness are those [00:31:43] emotions mental formations that are we know that are there but they're not manifesting at this moment

Plum Village 40 tenets – **Transcript of Class #13 Right Diligence**

Transcript 23.09.2025

For Colours of Compassion Study Group

so at this moment I'm not angry

[00:31:55] But I know that there is a seed of anger in me and so you don't see it in the present moment but you know it's there you know from your past experience that when someone says something or does something it might bring about a perception that gives rise that waters that seed in your consciousness and so the seed of anger is there and it is touched by certain conditions and then it comes up as a kind of flower in mind consciousness

[00:32:39] So we learn very quickly to recognize when the seed of anger is manifesting in mind consciousness and then with mindfulness, we know how we've been nourishing that seed so we stop paying attention to that nutriment maybe it's someone's a conversation maybe it's the news maybe it's um, a movie or just something that in our habitual way of thinking that is consistently going and touching that seed of anger and inviting it to come up we have to look honestly and see are we may be attached to our suffering...

[00:33:26] There are certain seeds for example now with the situation of the climate crisis and if we are not careful we can continuously touch the seed of despair in our consciousness over and over again instead of feeling happiness and joy we just say oh the climate crisis, and that doesn't mean the climate crisis is not real but we recognize that if we want to deal with the situation we need to have positive mental formations, we need to recognize the danger recognise how serious it is but not let it water our seed of despair, or anger instead a skilful practitioner knows how to water the seeds of happiness and joy to have energy to respond to the situation with skilfulness so you know that that situation is so painful and will cause so much pain again in the future you see it happening now like the heat dome over the northwest last week many stories around the world we here we are we have good conditions but there are many people who don't have good air conditioning in Seattle and Oregon and they're older they're poor and many people died because of the situation of the changing climate so we're able to look at that situation, and recognize the suffering but not let it touch our seed of anger or despair instead motivate us to do something about the situation what can I do to help with this situation, we can listen to the sound of the bell so when I was a novice monk uh I went with a group of young people, right here at deer park to the tightest old hut and in that conversation that

[00:36:26] They had with us I said uh the young people really strongly wanted to build an organic farm here at deer park and live very simply off the earth and I remember very clearly also having that desire because I lived before being a monk I went to live in an organic farming community in Spain and we just had some bags of rice some wheat and some salt and a few other condiments and the rest of uh the food we grew in the fields like all the vegetables like cabbage and tomatoes and um many carrots and things and for the winter we would put them in cans so that we could eat them throughout the winter and...

[00:37:31] and when I came to live in that community I felt like I discovered the garden of Eden this is the solution to all the world's problems if everyone could just live like this then we would avoid the coming climate crisis but what I learned over a few months was that there was more serious difficulties in the community people who couldn't get along with one another and uh maybe uh this person was sleeping with that other person you know partner and um yeah later I learned that there were some hidden fields where they were growing marijuana anyway there were many things and uh yeah so we have to be really honest and look deeply because underneath there were dynamics and even though it seemed on the surface we were living the perfect life but actually within a few months the community split because of all these dynamics operating in the collective consciousness and that was a great lesson for me when I was about 22-23 because I really thought this is this will save the planet but if we're not able to learn how to live in community even if we know how to do to grow food organically even we eat locally we do everything perfect we like here at deer park we have solar panels for our electricity we've done many things but if there's not harmony amongst the brothers and sisters I don't know what good is it it will become an empty shell I'll tell another story a few years ago I think 2012, 2013 and we were in Thailand, and a lay woman came to us and she loved Thay very much.

[00:39:49] And she knew that her brother had a very large hotel with many he happened to have he loved horses he loved them it's called dressage. I don't know you know what dressages but yeah the horses that walk like this and they hold up their paws and do fancy things, and they had inherited a lot of wealth from their father and he was the eldest and so he had used a lot of that money to you know to because he loved his this sport and he created this whole hotel where people could come and ride the horses and but later in his life he he wanted to um do something for the the situation with the energy production in the world to create a green centre and so he had some buildings built that were totally self-sufficient they had like the latest technology all the heating everything was like top perfect and so we didn't know very much about the situation but a group of the monks and nuns we went there because she felt something was not quite right and she thought maybe her brother would give the centre to Plum Village and we could have a kind of wake up centre there so a few of us went and we stayed there and we went on the tour with him and he showed us around he's quite proud of his horses but also of all the green buildings and he was growing algae and kind of big um open kind of half like tubes cut halfway to generate some kind of biofuel anyway very very interesting things...

Plum Village 40 tenets – **Transcript of Class #13 Right Diligence**

Transcript 23.09.2025

For Colours of Compassion Study Group

[00:42:11] And um and then when we had the dinner after that I remember you know asking him well how do you plan to build a community here because I noticed that there were all the people who were there they were paid workers and he really wanted to create a kind of community around green and solar and all these things and he had hired a very talented engineer to to build many solar panels so that the whole so he could generate electricity not only for his centre but also for uh for many of the houses in the neighbourhood and um and he didn't seem to think that was much of a problem ask him that question oh people will come because they want to you know do green energy but I thought because I really reflected on community in my life what is a real community and hiring people is not a real community and if people come here and live here are they going to have the be able to make decisions are you just going to make all the decisions these are the kinds of things that I asked him but in the end yeah he was very confident that it would work out and so we left but we felt no we cannot uh this would not work as a centre for for wake up and uh about a year or two later I heard that he had taken his own life

[00:43:56] and what I felt um so deeply was this kind of deep sadness that even with the money even with the wealth the power to create everything green everything perfect but without community you cannot get very far so I don't pretend to know what his suffering is but um this was a great kind of teaching if we don't look at the situation that we are in in terms of community in terms of brotherhood and sisterhood siblinghood in terms of how we can take refuge in one another as we each of us takes refuge in our own practice and we even we have solar panels even we eat the everything plant-based we have an organic farm it cannot it will only be a shell what we need is our you know to look deeply in ourselves and ask what are people for

[00:45:12] as Wendell Berry the poet once asked I love that question what are people for it seems like a simple question, we just do stuff right we go to work we get money we produce products that's what people are for right I don't think any of us believe that really deeply in our heart so that is the kind of question and so when we were with those young people with Thay and I had a lot of wisdom I could see Thay wants to encourage the young people but he he gave an answer he said that even we have an organic farm but we don't have brotherhood and sisterhood and it will not, it will not help the situation so Thay, over and over again talked about brotherhood and sisterhood now we say

[00:46:07] siblinghood - but Thay he said brotherhood sisterhood and what he meant was we need to learn how to to take refuge in one another as brothers and sisters to learn to support one another but also to give feedback to one another and not only just the monks and nuns but also, the lay community we need to learn from one another see like how can we generate joy instead of touching the seed of despair when the most serious issues like the climate crisis like social injustice the continuing situation of uh the trauma caused by slavery and the destruction of the indigenous peoples of the Americas

[00:47:02] these these are very real but if we're not careful we cannot do anything to help because we are so much overwhelmed by despair and anger that we we just lash out so Thay wants to help us to bring the same kind of awareness that we bring to the precepts to the most serious issues that we're facing today awareness of the suffering I am determined not to kill not to steal not to harm others but always aware of the suffering and learning to cultivate joy even in the myth of suffering so that is the first and the second practice of right diligence so the first is the unwholesome seeds

[00:48:22] It means seeds of anger despair the kind of emotion that just paralyzes us that make us incapable of helping even us we cannot help ourselves let alone anyone else so we see how the those seeds manifest and they come up in the mind consciousness so we we learn first of all not to allow them to come up and we do that by not feeding them so the on wholesome seeds, we we find ways to keep them in the seed form and store consciousness

[00:49:10] we invite them to just stay down so it's this is it's really important to understand and experiences in your own mind your own practice so a lot of people get confused and they think oh it means you know I should if I get angry. I should suppress my anger and that's the opposite of what asking us to do what the buddha is asking us to do it's kind of like you have a some paper and it's burning and you put a carpet over it but then the carpet starts burning, and it's smouldering underneath you keep the heat inside so this is not the practice of right, diligence this is just throwing a blanket over something and trying to forget about it, or sweeping the dust under the carpet the dust is still there so, the practice of inviting the unwholesome mental formations to stay, down to not manifest in mind consciousness it means we remove the source of nutrient, so just like a fire that's burning you might remove the logs so that the heat is not concentrated in, the centre so that it doesn't continue to blaze but you if you've ever done that you pull, the logs out of the fire and they start to cool down but if you push them close together you keep putting fuel on the fire it gets hotter and hotter so our mental formations are like that they need nutriment and that nutriment often takes the form of our thinking but also our what we see what we hear we touch what we smell all these inputs these sense impressions are watering the seeds in our consciousness

[00:51:26] and so we learn to mindfully consume sense impressions and that's a big part

Plum Village 40 tenets – **Transcript of Class #13 Right Diligence**

Transcript 23.09.2025

For Colours of Compassion Study Group

[00:51:33] of our practice so in the monastery we don't have television now we in the past 20 years we try to find a way to skilfully use the internet because that's a big challenge in in the old time monks and nuns would also get distracted in the monastery but we have more challenges now with the internet so we need to always find new and skilful ways in the monastery to um not let our sense impressions come in that are watering the seeds of anger and despair so we live together in rooms together

[00:52:19] and we have like an office where we we can go to use the internet and so we try to always do it together so that gives us a second body there's other people in the room, and so that already creates a lot more awareness than if we're just alone by ourselves, so these are ways that we've come up with in the monastery and we don't do it perfectly but the spirit is this not to water the seeds the unwholesome seeds in our door consciousness invite them to stay down we don't want to feed them

[00:52:58] and then those unwholesome mental formations, maybe say unwholesome mental formations if they are down there or still seeds when they manifest in mind consciousness we call it a mental formation though everything is a formation a flower is a formation this meditation hall is a formation our body is a formation and every kind of formation needs food to survive so we look to see, in our mental formations mental formation in this class we're learning some Sanskrit for fun

[00:54:36] Samskara it's a mental formation is mine, and samskara is a formation like, the same root as karma action something that's done and some means, together so it's like constructing something forming something mental formation so when the seed is nourished then it can manifest as a mental formation in mind consciousness here in Deer Park it's very dry so a lot of the plants they have to keep their nutrients under the ground in a burrough and even if it's we don't have rain like we haven't had rain for many months but you still see some of the plants today we were going we went for a walk in the mountain and we saw how the mantanita barrel even we cut back some of the branches but it's putting up new green branches even there's no rain

[00:55:52] it's because in the world there's a lot of the nutrient nutrients as well as the water guarded so that it can continue to grow throughout the season of the drought in the same way if we have a very strong resilient seed it means we've watered the seed of anger a lot it becomes very strong a little sapling little baby manzanita that's tiny cannot survive the drought but over many years when it becomes very strong it has the capacity even if you cut all the branches off it will put up new branches so if we've habitually watered the seed of anger over many years it can be like that in our consciousness it has a lot of nutrients, it's quite self-sufficient it knows how to get the nutriment it needs and so only a little bit of more nutriment and it will easily manifest but if we learn how to starve the seed of anger the star of the seed of despair then it's more difficult for them to come up so the unwholesome mental formation we invite them to go back down

[00:57:17] These are unjust mental formations that that have manifested we remove the fuel we invite them to go back down I called this changing the peg so like our tea house up in the brothers hamlet some of the pieces of wood are joined with a peg and that was the old way of an architecture you join two pieces of wood with a peg and sometimes if that peg has gotten rotten it's quite tricky because you need to keep the peg there to keep the wood intact but you want to put a new peg in so to do it you would take a new peg and you bang it with a hammer on top of the old one so while you're putting the new one in you're also removing the old peg and so that is the practice of inviting the seeds the unwholesome mental formations to go back down we can also invite positive mental formations to come up like mindfulness the seed of mindfulness is also something that can be very weak or it can be very strong if we live in an environment where people like mindfulness they like to be mindful of their thinking of their speech or their actions and then that makes the environment can affect the seed in your consciousness in the

[00:59:36] same way if we're in a neighborhood where there's a lot of violence and fear and maybe we don't get enough nutritious food to eat, so we have to go and we learn to steal from the stores and so everything around us is going against cultivating mindfulness and so that also becomes part of our consciousness so the seeds of violence become stronger and it takes maybe more practice

[01:00:09] We need to change our environment to find a place where there's people who know how to cultivate the seed to make it strong like like the burl of the manzanita tree so that it's self-sufficient so that in any situation you can just touch this that seed of mindfulness and it easily will come up maybe you forget sometimes just like we do and you know we walked quickly around the monastery or you know in one moment we maybe you know the shopper here he's he sometimes he spoils the monks and he buys a bags of potato chips and then we can eat the in Plum Village we don't have that we're much more uh like a little bit more poor if there's a bag of potato chips it will disappear very quickly but here in deer park there's a like a place and sometimes he puts potato chips there and then if your seed

[01:01:10] of mindfulness is not very strong you you start you eat one potato chip and then another one and another one and you before you know it you're not mindful anymore you're just putting potato chips in your mouth and you

## Plum Village 40 tenets – **Transcript of Class #13 Right Diligence**

Transcript 23.09.2025

For Colours of Compassion Study Group

like the crunchy flavor the salty flavor and yeah and actually many people have been tested and they do the same thing and that's why the potato chip becomes more crunchy more oily more salty i've been working with dr lillian chung at the harvard school of public health and so she's done many studies around this they try to let people know give the most scientifically based nutrition information

[01:01:58] and a lot of studies have gone into how to make food more crunchy more oily more, salty just so you get in that mindless mood if you were in the you know having to go out into the savannah and dig up a root that tastes like a very like much less sweet carrot it's very difficult to get mindlessly eating it because even though there's nutriment there but it doesn't taste like a potato chip but now we have uh you know processed sugar like access to these processed carbohydrates which our ancestors never our body never evolved to be able to handle and so it's very easy for us to just keep feeding ourselves mindlessly so um so we need to cultivate the seed of mindfulness and invite it to come up when the seed of craving

[01:03:08] for example manifests in mind consciousness because that will allow us to stop embrace our craving I know you're there hello craving we don't have to have like a like it's really not helpful to have this kind of antagonistic relationship with our craving that craving is there for a reason it helped with our survival we needed those nutriment

[01:03:45] and so we needed to have a strong motivation to get to somehow find the nutrient that we needed in order to for us to survive in order to raise a human child takes so much caloric energy 12 years usually for a human child it's unprecedented in the animal world to raise and help feed and a human child and so really we that craving within us is also you know has some basic benefit but the problem is that it takes over our thinking and it takes over our way of acting and then we do things that hurt others because we want more power we want a bonus in our job we want a higher position and it's all rooted in wanting to just have enough food for our children and

[01:04:42] for ourselves so we need mindfulness to come up and say oh hold on what's going on mindfulness helps to interrupt the process of our habits so the third practice of right diligence is to invite the wholesome seeds uh the wholesome mental formations to to come up into our mind consciousness mind consciousness, I often said it's like when you have friends over and to your living room and you want them to stay as long as possible you serve them tea and cookies and then um you do you make you say kind words you water the flowers

[01:06:14] It means you water the you speak about their good qualities so that they stay a long time so that is a the art of right diligence is to learn that seeds like mindfulness like concentration like insight are like good friends that you want to invite up and then the last one to have them stay for a long time so we we invite the wholesome mental formations to stay a long time in mind consciousness and the key that I found about right diligence is that you have to do it yourself

[01:07:38] I always try to find ways to explain it I mean because our mind works in metaphors with words and so we're talking about a process that's going on in our mind so each of us has to look inside and see you know first of all what's going on when a painful mental formation of irritation is manifesting and then you look at it with mindfulness you invite mindfulness up and you say okay i'm going to embrace this mental formation with mindfulness what is in the root of that mental formation what kind of nutriments are coming in just like when we have the flower and it's starting to wilt we need to look and see is there not enough water is there not enough compost we try to understand

[01:08:35] how we can water the seed of mindfulness so it's stronger and also remove the nutriment from our anger or our despair so it's very it's it's this is um goes way beyond uh yeah we should not mistake this practice for apathy so a lot of times now we hear you know you should get angry and be careful like we should be aware of our anger but if we let anger take over it may be that our actions are not actually helping the situation so that's why we we recognize how our perception when we read the news when we hear about some injustice we know that if i'm not careful with my perceptions that will water the seed of anger in me but I see that this there's suffering there I recognize the suffering very clearly and I know that I want to water my seeds

[01:09:48] of joy my seeds of happiness the seeds of mindfulness in order to be able to act in a skilful way what I love about my teacher is how he just kept teaching the dharma and he helped so many people who are doing so much good in the world bringing about so much transformation to be able to deal with the most difficult for you know anger and despair because he himself spelt that despair trying to change the situation of war in Vietnam and he let it overwhelm I mean before he was able to practice this it often

[01:10:30] overwhelmed him and he told us that as a student that despair is the most dangerous mental for one of he said the most dangerous there was one time he was teaching a class of students and he felt overwhelmed with despair about the situation he saw no way out of the violence of the fighting and the war in vietnam but he just he could not tell that to his students he needed to find within himself something that could water their seeds of joy and

Plum Village 40 tenets – **Transcript of Class #13 Right Diligence**

Transcript 23.09.2025

For Colours of Compassion Study Group

happiness so that is a um yeah that's not it's not that Thay was suppressing his anger or being apathetic to the situation of the war but he learned how to water the seeds in the collective consciousness that can bring about hope possibility brotherhood and sisterhood community so that we can in the situation when the wave hits

[01:11:39] we have trust we have a place of refuge that we can go to and not a place of chaos not a place of uh mistrust a place that is not where we don't feel safe um you know personally I take very seriously the situation of the climate like I think we all do and I don't rule out that this society that we are living in may may lose its structure that is very, very likely and every day more likely and so I feel it's so important that we learn to trust ourselves and trust one another and build community in order to have a place that can be a place of refuge and not a place of chaos

[01:12:43] so please uh find it in yourself to practice a dharma, it's very deep these teachings many times since the time of the buddha the Buddhist community has been deeply challenged and the challenges that we face today are also enormous overwhelming but without being able to water the seeds of joy and happiness then it really is a situation of despair so we need to learn how to generate joy even in the midst of chaos like ty said in the boat in the middle of the storm if there's one person who can remain calm peaceful

[01:13:35] then they can affect the collective consciousness they can it's not that there's no storm and that their lives are in danger but he can affect the collective consciousness so that people are able to come back to themselves hold on to the the oar and be able to keep the boat steady enough so that the storm passes and that is uh that is possible and that is what Thay asks us to do and that is why this practice of right diligence is not just an individual matter but it's about each one of us being solid learning to cultivate that capacity I mean I look at myself and I say can I be that person and when I see that there's elements in me that are still you know still there's still anger there's still irritation but I know I still need work I still need everything's perfect but I can you know I can I can help to allow those seeds to become less strong and that if that gives me joy and that gives the greater community joy so somehow I i find myself teaching this over and over again but I i feel every time is there are some things in Buddhist psychology that are very like very interesting and somehow sometimes when we learn about right diligence it seems like oh gosh not this again

[01:15:17] but it's so powerful it's really, it's applied Buddhist psychology so I wish you a successful practice of right diligence and also helping all those out there who have touched the seed of mindfulness in some way to see the deeper path that is there it's not just about being aware of the present moment but it's about bringing up seeds of joy watering the positive mental formations

[01:15:54] and also inviting those seeds that are overwhelming our consciousness like anger and despair to go back down. Thank you for listening

[01:16:06] I'll finish with three sounds