

Transcript 1

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Class # 1 Space is not an unconditioned dharma like time, matter and consciousness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch/PfrJZ5sqEZA>

00: 01: 39. 300 Dear respected Thay, dear brothers and sisters,

00: 02: 05. 020 [The seeds of the seeds of the mind are the seeds of the mind.]

00: 02: 11. 340 Where did the sheets end up? Okay.

00: 02: 16. 720 Welcome, sisters.

00: 02: 32. 040 Can everyone hear clearly? No.

00: 02: 34. 840 Is that better?

00: 02: 45. 100 Testing, one, two, three.

00: 02: 49. 540 It's clear?

00: 02: 52. 040 Breathing in, I know I'm breathing in.

00: 02: 55. 300 (Chinese)

00: 02: 58. 620 Not yet.

00: 03: 01. 580 (Louder.) - Louder, huh? Okay.

00: 03: 04. 460 Breathing in, I know I'm breathing in. Breathing out, I know I'm breathing out.

00: 03: 11. 420 Yeah? Okay.

00: 03: 14. 020 So, dear respected Thay, do you want to say something?

00: 03: 21. 220 2006, 2007. I had spent time going into a text called the wheel of the different schools

00: 03: 50. 640 in the school's commentary.

00: 03: 52. 960 It discussed the different tenets of the early schools of Buddhism.

00: 03: 58. 960 This is in India,

00: 04: 02. 480 around the time of the Common Era, the beginning of the Common Era.

00: 04: 09. 080 They are around, you know.

00: 04: 19. 360 I don't know exactly how many schools of Buddhism there were.

00: 04: 23. 460 Is that okay?

00: 04: 26. 420 But what we have recorded is that there are at least 18 schools of mainstream,

00: 04: 33. 520 we call mainstream now schools of Buddhism.

00: 04: 37. 620 Some of them

00: 04: 44. 740 They got their name mainly just because of the geographic region in which they were.

00: 04: 49. 880 Some of them perhaps because of some teacher.

00: 04: 53. 480 And some of them because of a certain doctrine that they held to,

00: 05: 02. 680 like the Sarvāstivāda.

00: 05: 05. 440 For example, they believe that all phenomena exist

00: 05: 12. 480 not only in the present, but also in the future as well as in the past.

00: 05: 16. 940 The school became known as the Sarvāstivāda.

00: 05: 21. 780 Sarvāsti means it always exists, whether in the present, the future, or the past.

00: 05: 29. 280 There is a school called the Pūḍkalavāda, which is the school

00: 05: 35. 180 that says although we don't have a self in the five skandhas,

00: 05: 41. 080 there is something that can be called a personality or a person.

00: 05: 45. 540 There are different schools of Buddhism

00: 05: 51. 880 that we will not go into in too much detail here.

00: 05: 56. 540 But after that teaching, Thay went into the different schools of Buddhism,

00: 06: 01. 740 then he kind of pointed the arrow back towards Plum Village, towards ourselves,

00: 06: 08. 540 I want to ask, what are the teachings that we have learned over the years in Plum Village

00: 06: 14. 940 by looking deeply into these early schools of Buddhism,

00: 06: 20. 360 as well as from the benefit of the development of the Mahayana

00: 06: 24. 900 as it spread through monasteries in India, and then was brought to China,

00: 06: 30. 340 and later to Tibet as well, and all of East Asia.

00: 06: 34. 700 So, by looking at early Buddhism through the lens of the Mahayana,

00: 06: 41. 100 we get a deeper insight into how we practice

00: 06: 46. 600 in the Plum Village tradition in the present moment.

00: 06: 50. 300 In addition to benefiting from the wisdom and insight of Mahayana teachings,

00: 07: 00. 060 we can also benefit from the study of science, especially in the West.

00: 07: 06. 660 So by looking into the nature of reality,

00: 07: 11. 360 and understanding physics, understanding biology,

00: 07: 16. 360 understanding the science of the mind, psychology,

00: 07: 21. 860 we can also get insight.

00: 07: 26. 260 And it is very clear that in our tradition of Buddhism we are not dogmatic.

00: 07: 31. 620 So if there is some insight that we can get, whether through our own practice,

00: 07: 37. 460 or whether through an insight from the study of science,

00: 07: 41. 620 or whatever else, if that helps us to be free,

00: 07: 47. 060 and to transform our suffering,

00: 07: 51. 540 then we can incorporate that into the Plum Village tradition.

00: 07: 55. 340 It's impossible. We don't come at it from a dogmatic point of view.

00: 07: 59. 940 Like, this is the way, and that is the right way, and it cannot change.

00: 08: 04. 920 But what we should rather focus on is whether or not it helps us to be free.

00: 08: 12. 900 Whether that teaching helps us to transform our suffering.

00: 08: 20. 440 Thay then went ahead and taught these 40 tenets over the next couple of years.

00: 08: 28. 560 But especially in the year 2006 to 2007, that winter retreat.

00: 08: 37. 640 Then it was published as a book, I think in 2013, finally, in Vietnamese.

00: 08: 48. 400 in 2014.

00: 08: 50. 400 The book in Vietnamese is called 'Looking at Vulture's Peak',

00: 08: 55. 100 'A Plum Village Looks at Vulture's Peak'.

00: 08: 58. 500 The book before it, which was about looking at the schools of Buddhism,

00: 09: 03. 700 was called 'The Path to Vulture's Peak'.

00: 09: 07. 900 This volume, which is 'Plum Village Insight',

00: 09: 15. 700 The film is called 'Plum Village looks at Vulture's Peak'.

00: 09: 19. 600 Vulture's Peak is a mountain in Rajagriha, in India.

00: 09: 31. 000 It is only -

00: 09: 34. 240 I don't know exactly, but you can walk in a day or two from Bodh Gaya to Rajagriha.

00: 09: 43. 840 Now it's called Rajgir, for sure.

00: 09: 49. 600 We went there with Thay in 2008.

00: 09: 54. 080 That was a place where the Buddha loved to climb the mountain,

00: 09: 57. 520 just like here at Deer Park, we like to go up to Escondido Rock,

00: 10: 01. 280 or the Breakfast Rock, and sit in the morning and enjoy the sunrise,

00: 10: 06. 120 and drink tea, and eat a light breakfast.

00: 10: 11. 880 Also, the Buddha, he enjoyed going up the Vulture's Peak

00: 10: 16. 080 to watch the sunrise or the sunset.

00: 10: 19. 820 In 2008, we got to go with Thay up onto Vulture's Peak

00: 10: 29. 880 and spend the whole day.

00: 10: 33. 380 Thay invited the whole delegation that was traveling

00: 10: 39. 080 On Thay's last trip to India, he said,

00: 10: 43. 300 "Even if you need to go to the bathroom, you can do it in the bushes,

00: 10: 48. 940 because there is no toilet at the bushes peak. It is very wild. "

00: 10: 54. 820 So we walked up before sunrise with Thay.

00: 11: 01. 060 And then you can sit there on one side of the top of the mountain,

00: 11: 08. 520 You can sit and look out and see the sun rising in the east.

00: 11: 12. 260 And then on the other side, you can sit in the afternoon and watch the sun set.

00: 11: 18. 320 Thay brought a hammock and set up the hammock and just spent the whole day there.

00: 11: 24. 840 I remember Sister Gin Diem was singing to Thay that day.

00: 11: 29. 680 She was attending Thay.

00: 11: 33. 520 So Thay really wanted us to go and enjoy Vulture's Peak

00: 11: 38. 660 in the way that the Buddha enjoyed being on Vulture's Peak.

00: 11: 43. 100 We also performed a transmission of the five mindfulness trainings,

00: 11: 50. 180 and the 14 mindfulness trainings on the top of Vulture's Peak.

00: 11: 55. 780 Thay shaved our head again, a little bit, not the whole thing.

00: 12: 01. 180 We went up in Thay,

00: 12: 03. 780 ran the razor over.

00: 12: 08. 240 If we wanted to, Thay would do that.

00: 12: 11. 420 We went up to renew our aspiration.

00: 12: 14. 780 So Vulture Peak has a very deep significance in the Buddhist tradition

00: 12: 19. 780 as an aspiration of the highest teachings of the Buddha.

00: 12: 24. 180 Many sutras were taught there.

00: 12: 29. 980 and it was set away from some of the other teaching areas of the Buddha,

00: 12: 36. 100 like the bamboo grove, which was more in a kind of nearby the town.

00: 12: 41. 060 So at the vulture's peak, to go up there to hear the Buddha,

00: 12: 45. 060 you had to bring your food and go for the day. It's not a short trip.

00: 12: 49. 980 So in my own insight from that experience,

00: 12: 57. 100 It's a place where the Buddha liked to go for refuge.

00: 13: 02. 720 Of course, he took refuge in nirvana, in the unconditioned.

00: 13: 10. 360 But I think he also liked to just go up and enjoy the mountain, just like we do here.

00: 13: 16. 040 So by calling the book on the 40 tenets, 'The Plum Village Looking at Butcher's Peak',

00: 13: 24. 640 Actually, when we, as Thay's continuation,

00: 13: 29. 780 as part of the Plum Village tradition,

00: 13: 35. 800 when we look at Vulture's Peak, it means we look at the Buddha,

00: 13: 39. 640 the place the Buddha enjoyed being and teaching in our heart.

00: 13: 44. 920 What do we see? What kind of teachings do we see?

00: 13: 50. 280 I produced these 40 tenets.

00: 13: 54. 480 One brother mentioned to me,

00: 14: 00. 000 "Could we continue to learn the 40 tenets? "

00: 14: 02. 780 We started it a few years ago.

00: 14: 05. 280 I think we had three or four classes, something like that.

00: 14: 09. 080 Brother Minh Nghiem was not yet a monk.

00: 14: 12. 160 And Brother Minh Ngoc.

00: 14: 17. 240 I said, 'Sure, I'll be happy to continue. '

00: 14: 20. 600 And really, the spirit is that we do it together.

00: 14: 24. 040 It's nourishing for me as well as for all of us to look into these teachings.

00: 14: 32. 700 So I printed them out, so everyone has a copy.

00: 14: 38. 940 And also, I promised to speak slowly for the sisters, so they can learn English.

00: 14: 45. 840 because they will also be giving English Dharma talks very soon,

00: 14: 51. 840 so they need to learn.

00: 14: 54. 900 So I apologize if I promise to speak clearly and slowly.

00: 15: 03. 640 Because we have experts in the English language here as well.

00: 15: 12. 440 to share for everyone.

00: 15: 16. 880 So, okay.

00: 15: 21. 760 Maybe we can listen to the sound of the bell.

00: 15: 37. 440 (Full bell)

00: 15: 38. 620 (Bell)

00: 15: 59. 080 (bell tolling)

00: 16: 01. 660 [bell]

00: 16: 08. 660 [meditation bell]

00: 16: 13. 660 [meditation bell]

00: 16: 39. 060 This is the first tenet.

00: 16: 42. 760 Space is not an unconditioned dharma.

00: 16: 55. 240 [Silence]

00: 17: 04. 240 [dharma]

00: 17: 27. 300 In the Buddhist teachings, we use the word 'dharma' in various ways.

00: 17: 34. 700 In this sense, it means phenomena, or phenomenon, singular.

00: 17: 41. 500 Anything is a dharma. This pen is a dharma.

00: 17: 45. 860 Electricity, light, is a dharma.

00: 17: 50. 300 Anything can be -

00: 17: 53. 300 that manifests, that causes some kind of perception,

00: 17: 57. 840 whether we perceive it or not, is a dharma.

00: 18: 01. 940 Whether we perceive it through the eye, the ear, the nose, tongue, body, or mind,

00: 18: 09. 500 these are all dharmas.

00: 18: 12. 540 In many schools of Buddhism,

00: 18: 20. 520 We accept very easily that, for example, this table is conditioned.

00: 18: 26. 920 If I take it apart, or if I take a hammer and I smash it, it can break.

00: 18: 34. 720 Even the plastic over time can break down,

00: 18: 38. 580 although it takes a long time for plastic to break down,

00: 18: 42. 320 but it is also impermanent.

00: 18: 44. 820 So all the elements that make up this table are impermanent.

00: 18: 49. 780 It's all about due to conditions, and it's subject to falling apart,

00: 18: 56. 380 for those conditions to disassociate themselves, to become something else.

00: 19: 01. 980 So it's very easy for us to accept.

00: 19: 05. 980 It's easy for us to accept that the water in the cup of tea

00: 19: 09. 640 is also a conditioned phenomenon.

00: 19: 12. 840 We know that now it manifests as liquid water,

00: 19: 17. 580 If we lower the temperature, it can freeze into ice and become solid.

00: 19: 22. 640 If we boil it, then it can turn into water vapor

00: 19: 27. 860 and go into the air and become a cloud.

00: 19: 31. 100 So the water is also conditioned.

00: 19: 35. 460 We can go back even farther and look at the components of water.

00: 19: 41. 800 It is H₂O.

00: 19: 45. 980 We know that the very earliest stars,

00: 19: 49. 440 some of which still we can detect,

00: 19: 54. 140 even some of them in the Milky Way, in our neighborhood galaxy,

00: 19: 59. 300 are very, they are called low metallic stars.

00: 20: 04. 180 They don't even have elements like oxygen,

00: 20: 07. 740 only mainly hydrogen and helium.

00: 20: 10. 940 So they are from very early on, the oldest stars in the universe

00: 20: 15. 260 long before the heavier elements like oxygen were even composed.

00: 20: 21. 520 So we know that even the oxygen is conditioned.

00: 20: 28. 460 And even the hydrogen, the simplest atom,

00: 20: 33. 920 just one proton, one electron, is also a conditioned element

00: 20: 44. 020 we can separate that electron from the proton,

00: 20: 48. 620 and have the electron go spinning off, and just have a proton.

00: 20: 54. 800 Even now, we go deeper into the proton, we know that protons have not always existed.

00: 21: 00. 620 Through the science we can see that in the early

00: 21: 04. 300 milliseconds of the Big Bang, there were not even hydrogen,

00: 21: 11. 660 We are not even protons yet.

00: 21: 14. 580 So all we can see, actually, even the constituent elements of water are conditioned.

00: 21: 22. 200 So this is not for the purpose of knowledge, but it is for the purpose of deep looking,

00: 21: 29. 520 to see that everything is impermanent.

00: 21: 34. 660 The Buddha said, just moments before he went into a party in Ibana,

00: 21: 42. 100 that all things are conditioned.

00: 21: 45. 440 All conditioned things are impermanent.

00: 21: 51. 660 And strive diligently in your practice.

00: 21: 56. 940 So that theme of impermanence is always there as a concentration

00: 22: 03. 000 to help us to see that this body is not me,

00: 22: 07. 700 these feelings are not me, these perceptions are not me.

00: 22: 11. 640 Then we are free.

00: 22: 14. 160 We don't feel caught in our attachments anymore,

00: 22: 17. 640 because we know that it's useless to be attached.

00: 22: 21. 120 Actually, we cannot grab on to things because they are always changing.

00: 22: 25. 680 So,

00: 22: 31. 020 When the early teachers, the continuation of the Buddha,

00: 22: 37. 820 started to look at all these teachings,

00: 22: 41. 420 they started to divide them up into things that are conditioned

00: 22: 46. 900 and things that are unconditioned.

00: 22: 49. 480 Because the Buddha said many times that, for example, nirvana is unconditioned.

00: 22: 58. 280 He said, if it were not for the unconditioned nature of dharma,

00: 23: 03. 080 there would not be freedom from the conditioned.

00: 23: 06. 280 That is the core of our practice,

00: 23: 09. 680 how to become free from the conditioning.

00: 23: 12. 680 Because the conditioned things, we try to grab onto them as being permanent.

00: 23: 18. 280 And that contributes to so much of the suffering that we experience in our lives.

00: 23: 26. 880 And they found that not only was nirvana unconditioned,

00: 23: 30. 880 but they also looked and they said that the space in which things manifest,

00: 23: 37. 880 so not the cup and not the water, but the space in which the cup manifests,

00: 23: 45. 080 that is also unconditioned. It's an unconditional phenomena.

00: 23: 56. 400 So, tied through his deep looking, as well as with the insights we have from science,

00: 24: 03. 140 we know that actually space is also a conditioned phenomenon.

00: 24: 09. 580 So there are different ways to look at it.

00: 24: 13. 740 One way is to look at it from the point of view of conventional designation.

00: 24: 19. 220 So space in the sense of something that we call space.

00: 24: 25. 180 is obviously conditioned, right?

00: 24: 29. 580 Because it is just a designation.

00: 24: 33. 820 We describe it as something that is the absence of -

00: 24: 38. 640 It is the container within which things manifest.

00: 24: 43. 360 But anything that we point to as being something,

00: 24: 48. 880 is something that is occupying space and not space itself.

00: 24: 53. 040 The space itself is just a conventional designation

00: 24: 56. 300 to describe the container, you might say, in which things are placed.

00: 25: 01. 340 That bell is not occupying the same space as where I am standing.

00: 25: 08. 740 So that you know right away that I am not in the bell, and the bell is not in me.

00: 25: 14. 980 We are not mutually obstructing each other.

00: 25: 17. 780 So space is a word we use as a conventional designation

00: 25: 22. 160 to describe this situation that I am not occupying the same space as the bell.

00: 25: 29. 700 Or if we are walking around.

00: 25: 34. 600 I like to do the exercise where we are like atoms, and we walk around.

00: 25: 40. 960 Sometimes when we get very hot, we walk very quickly.

00: 25: 44. 440 And when we are cold, we slow down. Has anyone ever done that?

00: 25: 48. 060 It is very fun.

00: 25: 50. 020 of people walking around you.

00: 25: 54. 240 Or if you've ever been to Grand Central Station in New York City.

00: 25: 59. 880 Has anyone ever been to Grand Central?

00: 26: 03. 540 You notice that there are many entrances and there are many exits.

00: 26: 07. 960 When people are walking through it, the way the building is designed,

00: 26: 12. 060 somebody who is over here is going over there, or they are going over here,

00: 26: 18. 200 The light that came in over here is going over there.

00: 26: 21. 240 So in the middle, people have to kind of mesh with each other.

00: 26: 27. 000 And yet, somehow it all happens magically without people bumping into one another.

00: 26: 33. 920 That's because they have a sense of space.

00: 26: 36. 800 There is a kind of proprioception, a sense of how much space the body occupies.

00: 26: 42. 480 Then we have a natural sense of mindfulness,

00: 26: 45. 880 We don't have to practice mindfulness.

00: 26: 48. 800 We also herd animals as human beings.

00: 26: 53. 820 We are very sensitive to moving in the herd in a way that we don't bump into each other.

00: 26: 59. 660 In that sense, it is very clear that space is a conditioned dharma.

00: 27: 06. 120 It is just a conventional designation.

00: 27: 08. 720 It is a way of describing the fact that we don't mutually obstruct one another

00: 27: 13. 560 space.

00: 27: 15. 560 Thay likes to use the image of a flower arrangement.

00: 27: 23. 640 I don't know which sister arranges the flowers.

00: 27: 30. 720 Each flower occupies its space. We don't try to just bunch them all together.

00: 27: 37. 400 So they look crowded, but we know how to arrange

00: 27: 42. 440 the flowers in a way that they each contribute their beauty,

00: 27: 47. 440 but they are not obstructing one another.

00: 27: 50. 640 That's another image of space.

00: 27: 53. 640 Clearly, we can see that that's a conditioned dharma, this sense of space.

00: 27: 59. 240 But with the insight of the relativity,

00: 28: 05. 040 we also know that at a deeper level, at a physical level,

00: 28: 11. 040 that we call space is actually also conditioned.

00: 28: 15. 500 So, if we think of space as -

00: 28: 22. 940 Again, this is just an image,

00: 28: 25. 640 and we have a very massive body.

00: 28: 29. 820 Of course, space is three-dimensional.

00: 28: 38. 980 We can go up, down, we can go across.

00: 28: 42. 720 We can go length, height, and width, in three directions.

00: 28: 51. 680 But in order to conceptualize space, here we just draw it as a two-dimensional plane,

00: 28: 59. 680 because it is hard to draw it in three dimensions.

00: 29: 05. 320 and you have a massive body like the sun or a star.

00: 29: 10. 460 But actually, any body, even the tiniest atom,

00: 29: 14. 900 because of the force of gravity,

00: 29: 18. 900 it will - I don't know if I'll be able to draw this -

00: 29: 23. 120 it will start to

00: 29: 26. 760 to bend.

00: 29: 32. 700 [distorting]

00: 29: 34. 700 It is almost like,

00: 29: 43. 100 you should have a piece of cloth and you put a ball in it, a metal ball,

00: 29: 48. 060 and it distorts the piece of cloth.

00: 29: 50. 640 The gravity is actually pulling,

00: 29: 53. 640 it is actually distorting the very fabric of space,

00: 29: 57. 640 what they call a space-time continuum.

00: 30: 01. 000 Now, we've discovered that there are actually even waves in that space-time continuum

00: 30: 08. 660 called gravitational waves.

00: 30: 11. 320 Recently, they've built two sensors.

00: 30: 15. 400 I think one of them is near Seattle, and the other one is somewhere in the deep south.

00: 30: 20. 200 They have to be in an L shape.

00: 30: 22. 800 I think, what was it, like five years ago, four years ago,

00: 30: 26. 300 they actually detected the first gravitational wave.

00: 30: 30. 000 That means that there is a really massive body,

00: 30: 35. 140 there is a ripple of gravitational force.

00: 30: 39. 580 It means like a supernova,

00: 30: 42. 900 where suddenly a very massive body explodes,

00: 30: 47. 780 and the mass that is distorting the space-time continuum

00: 30: 52. 380 is ejected off in millions of miles in every direction.

00: 30: 57. 580 So that causes an actual kind of ripple

00: 31: 02. 340 to pass through the continuum of space.

00: 31: 07. 380 And we can detect it now, when that happens.

00: 31: 11. 840 They found ways to - I forget the details how they do it.

00: 31: 15. 840 I remember that you need to have two sensors in different points on the Earth,

00: 31: 20. 580 and then compare the results.

00: 31: 22. 980 And then through doing that, you can detect this ripple

00: 31: 26. 780 and through the fabric of space.

00: 31: 29. 160 Obviously, if space has waves going through it,

00: 31: 33. 180 just like water that we learned is conditioned,

00: 31: 37. 680 we know that space is also conditioned.

00: 31: 41. 680 Thay also invites us to look into the relationship between space and time,

00: 31: 49. 260 which we also learn from the Avatamsaka Sutra, but also from Einstein.

00: 31: 56. 680 So the insight that actually space and time

00: 32: 01. 100 are both the manifestations of one, the same thing.

00: 32: 05. 120 They are not like separate.

00: 32: 07. 920 So as we move through time,

00: 32: 12. 480 time is one way of describing movement through the same continuum

00: 32: 19. 980 that we speak of as moving through space.

00: 32: 26. 440 So we now look at time as actually a fourth dimension,

00: 32: 32. 960 already from a hundred years ago, from Einstein.

00: 32: 37. 900 So that time itself is also a condition.

00: 32: 43. 220 We only experience this present moment,

00: 32: 48. 700 and what we think of as the future is just a present moment,

00: 32: 54. 080 which is because of our memory and the continuity of consciousness,

00: 33: 00. 380 we experience always moving as if we are moving forward.

00: 33: 05. 180 Especially we have clocks, and they are going around,

00: 33: 10. 740 and they seem to be progressing in a linear way,

00: 33: 13. 880 not a circular way, but a linear way from the past into the future.

00: 33: 20. 200 Actually, all we really have is the present moment.

00: 33: 24. 420 That's all there really is.

00: 33: 26. 600 And then memories about the past, impressions that we've had,

00: 33: 30. 160 that stay in consciousness.

00: 33: 32. 240 Whatever is in the future is just the functioning of our nervous system

00: 33: 36. 560 in anticipation based on the conditions that we have observed.

00: 33: 40. 760 We observe in the present moment, and what we have observed in the past,

00: 33: 45. 120 we try to predict what will happen in the future.

00: 33: 49. 960 So it is actually not there.

00: 33: 52. 620 So this whole concept of time is actually,

00: 33: 57. 600 when we look deeply at it, it is conditioned, it is based on our consciousness.

00: 34: 03. 500 What we talk about as time is also a conventional designation,

00: 34: 10. 300 and it is also a conditioned dharma.

00: 34: 14. 699 This is the insight of the first tenet,

00: 34: 18. 760 we can no longer naively talk about space as being an unconditioned dharma.

00: 34: 24. 659 It is also conditioned.

00: 34: 27. 820 It manifests together with -

00: 34: 36. 820 [How does space relate to consciousness?]

00: 34: 40. 300 Yeah, that's the next one.

00: 34: 43. 500 [space]

00: 34: 48. 139 So Bhāgavatamātā asks, how does space relate to consciousness?

00: 34: 53. 360 Let me just fill in the rest of the tenet.

00: 34: 58. 740 [2. Manifest the space of the mind]

00: 35: 03. 540 Space manifests together

00: 35: 25. 300 as truth, time,

00: 35: 31. 680 matter, and consciousness.

00: 35: 41. 040 [2. Manifest the space of the mind]

00: 35: 51. 140 [time]

00: 35: 55. 140 We can look at time from the perspective of consciousness.

00: 36: 10. 000 We can also look at space from the perspective of consciousness.

00: 36: 19. 860 The concentration on impermanence, for example,

00: 36: 23. 260 is what helps us to be free from attachment to ideas about time.

00: 36: 31. 260 And the insight of non-self is the insight which helps us

00: 36: 39. 080 to be free from ideas and attachment in our consciousness with regards to space.

00: 36: 49. 400 So,

00: 36: 50. 980 time as a conditioned dharma,

00: 36: 59. 940 when we suffer, because for example, we wish that we were

00: 37: 14. 260 at that time when we were very young,

00: 37: 18. 900 I remember a moment when we just felt so happy.

00: 37: 21. 840 We were so free. We were with our family.

00: 37: 25. 200 Maybe not all of us, maybe we were happy in our family.

00: 37: 28. 800 But you can see one moment when -

00: 37: 31. 660 I always look back to my childhood, growing up in my house.

00: 37: 37. 480 Maybe it would be a summer day, and we were on a river, a kind of lake.

00: 37: 42. 200 It just seemed like everything was so wonderful.

00: 37: 46. 340 It was nice outside, I could go swimming,

00: 37: 49. 940 beautiful nature all around, forest.

00: 37: 54. 140 I know that there were times before I learned meditation,

00: 38: 01. 020 and even when I learned meditation,

00: 38: 03. 620 when I would wish to go back to that time

00: 38: 06. 500 where everything seemed very happy and joyful, when I was suffering.

00: 38: 10. 860 So there was an attachment to time,

00: 38: 15. 140 attachment to my memory of time past.

00: 38: 19. 140 So without the antidote, without the way of becoming free from attachment to time

00: 38: 27. 240 as a conditioned dharma, I suffer.

00: 38: 31. 240 But with the concentration on impermanence, then I become free.

00: 38: 36. 140 So time is linked to the practice of impermanence.

00: 38: 42. 440 [unconditionedness]

00: 38: 46. 020 We could say the concentration on impermanence

00: 38: 54. 140 is how we touch the unconditioned in time.

00: 39: 01. 980 So we become free from the conditioned aspects of time.

00: 39: 09. 820 We will see that in the second tenet.

00: 39: 13. 460 Because already when we get to the second tenet,

00: 39: 16. 420 we see that Thay then says, in the historical dimension,

00: 39: 19. 780 all dharmas are conditioned, but in the ultimate dimension,

00: 39: 23. 140 all dharmas are unconditioned.

00: 39: 25. 380 So even we are saying now that space is not an unconditioned dharma,

00: 39: 29. 140 but in the sense of the ultimate, all dharmas are unconditioned.

00: 39: 34. 580 You did a really good job of describing condition.

00: 39: 38. 780 Conditional phenomena are things that can be broken down.

00: 39: 43. 880 Can you talk a little more about the defined unconditionals?

00: 39: 50. 980 Yes. Okay.

00: 39: 52. 780 And maybe an example.

00: 39: 54. 580 Okay.

00: 39: 56. 180 But let me finish with Brother Dalai's question first.

00: 40: 00. 480 My brother, Phap Buu, asked to go and to describe with examples the unconditioned.

00: 40: 08. 380 Okay. But I will continue with the -

00: 40: 13. 180 So in terms of space,

00: 40: 16. 580 we talk about non-self.

00: 40: 27. 580 [that all things are empty of the separate self.]

00: 40: 33. 480 It means that there is nothing essential

00: 40: 38. 340 that all things are empty of the separate self.

00: 40: 47. 840 The teaching on non-self is not a teaching on negation.

00: 40: 52. 420 It doesn't mean that what we perceive is not real, is non-existent.

00: 41: 00. 180 But it means that there is nothing permanent.

00: 41: 06. 580 There is nothing that can be by itself alone,

00: 41: 11. 620 that is anywhere in space,

00: 41: 15. 360 whether in ourselves, or in another person,

00: 41: 19. 580 or some higher being like God, or something.

00: 41: 23. 980 Anything we imagine, some place where things suddenly are permanent,

00: 41: 28. 480 like heaven, where it is eternal.

00: 41: 31. 580 But actually, everywhere in space has the quality of being empty of a separate self.

00: 41: 39. 680 That is not for the purpose of just declaring

00: 41: 47. 380 It's not like taking a philosophical stance,

00: 41: 52. 680 or declaring an objective nature of things,

00: 41: 59. 280 but it's for the purpose of practice,

00: 42: 03. 980 for the purpose of being free from attachment.

00: 42: 07. 540 Normally, we think, 'If I could only go to -

00: 42: 14. 780 I don't know why it comes to mind, but Disneyland.

00: 42: 17. 860 Now we are in the pandemic.

00: 42: 20. 400 Some of us, we just say,

00: 42: 22. 320 'If I could only go out to a restaurant and enjoy my favorite Indian food.

00: 42: 27. 100 Or if I could only go to see my family, or whatever it is. '

00: 42: 35. 380 We are not happy where we are, and we want to go somewhere else.

00: 42: 41. 780 We think, 'If we are there, we will be happy. '

00: 42: 44. 860 That is an attachment to a sense of place, a sense of place in space.

00: 42: 50. 560 Here, I suffer. If I go over there, I will be happy.

00: 42: 55. 040 There is a sense of suffering that comes about from

00: 43: 10. 080 Our body occupies space.

00: 43: 13. 360 We look at our body and we think, 'Oh, I am too fat. I am too short. I am too skinny. '

00: 43: 20. 980 And we suffer because of the form of our body that it takes in space.

00: 43: 30. 680 So then, when we look with the eyes of non-self,

00: 43: 34. 060 we see that everything in the body is just a manifestation of condition.

00: 43: 38. 280 It is also conditioned, and it is also something we don't need to suffer about,

00: 43: 45. 100 because we know that it is impermanent, and it will not always be like this.

00: 43: 50. 600 Now the body is there, and then it will disappear,

00: 43: 54. 940 but if we are not attached, we don't need to suffer about it.

00: 44: 02. 960 If we talk about what is an unconditioned dharma,

00: 44: 09. 480 what I do in my own practice is to notice

00: 44: 16. 680 that anything that I can perceive,

00: 44: 21. 720 that gives rise to a perception, is already conditioned.

00: 44: 29. 920 If it has some quality, some color, some sound, some smell, even some concept,

00: 44: 37. 320 then it is already conditioned.

00: 44: 44. 660 This is a very subtle part of meditation practice,

00: 44: 51. 720 because there are parts in us, there are feelings in us,

00: 44: 55. 220 and sometimes we might label that feeling and say,

00: 44: 58. 520 as unconditioned.

00: 45: 00. 620 Then you actually are mistakenly labelling something that is conditioned

00: 45: 05. 800 as something that is unconditioned, a certain feeling.

00: 45: 10. 220 There are many times when the Buddha,

00: 45: 14. 580 he could not put a word to describe nirvana.

00: 45: 20. 400 He could not put a color.

00: 45: 22. 960 Every word he felt was insufficient.

00: 45: 26. 360 that is insufficient to describe the unconditioned.

00: 45: 30. 100 Even the unconditioned is sufficient.

00: 45: 32. 760 Because to understand the unconditioned,

00: 45: 36. 400 we only have the conditioned as an example with which to understand the unconditioned.

00: 45: 41. 720 So every example will ultimately be inadequate.

00: 45: 45. 560 Because it is not something that can be expressed in words,

00: 45: 49. 760 it is not something that can be expressed,

00: 45: 52. 660 It can be in space, or it can be located in time.

00: 45: 56. 060 Is that clear?

00: 46: 00. 900 Any example will ultimately fail, because the unconditioned -

00: 46: 07. 420 Because any example will finally be conditioned.

00: 46: 11. 780 But an example that Thay likes to use just to illustrate it,

00: 46: 16. 280 and again, it is just a model.

00: 46: 19. 260 When I drew this fabric of the space-time continuum, it is just a model.

00: 46: 26. 760 Actually, science proceeds using images or models of an atom,

00: 46: 33. 000 of the solar system that we can comprehend.

00: 46: 37. 260 But that is only a concept.

00: 46: 39. 360 It is only a model to help us to grasp a deeper reality,

00: 46: 43. 260 Ultimately, we can't model because it is there in the fabric of reality.

00: 46: 53. 660 It is not something that you can just make a model of.

00: 46: 59. 660 But Thay used the example of the wave in the water.

00: 47: 04. 260 And we will keep coming back to that.

00: 47: 09. 720 You can think of a wave that is going over the ocean, like here in the beach.

00: 47: 16. 280 And each wave is going up and going down.

00: 47: 22. 440 It is like the phenomena that we experience.

00: 47: 27. 140 Like Brother Min Luk is sitting there, and he is a manifestation.

00: 47: 31. 600 He is like a wave on the surface of reality.

00: 47: 38. 860 and so is Brother Minh-Yung, and so are the flowers on the altar,

00: 47: 43. 400 so is the light in this room.

00: 47: 45. 600 Everything that we can perceive is a manifestation, like the waves on the water.

00: 47: 50. 560 We suffer because we as a wave, and as we perceive other waves, other things,

00: 47: 57. 600 other phenomena, and we also look in ourselves and we see we are composite,

00: 48: 02. 600 we are made up of all kinds of different phenomena

00: 48: 07. 000 and manifesting at the same time,

00: 48: 10. 420 that all of these are changing,

00: 48: 16. 380 are always subject to birth and death.

00: 48: 21. 040 So it seems like there is no safe place anywhere.

00: 48: 26. 060 Because the body is not safe.

00: 48: 29. 040 If I get attached to my body looking like this, or my hands looking like this,

00: 48: 33. 880 or feelings being like this, or perceptions being like they are,

00: 48: 37. 880 then I will suffer when they are no longer like that.

00: 48: 41. 480 Just like the wave, when it goes down,

00: 48: 44. 780 maybe when it is up, it looks down in the trough between the waves,

00: 48: 50. 880 and it fears what it will be like if it goes down like that.

00: 48: 56. 380 And it wants to stay up at the top of the crest of the wave forever.

00: 49: 01. 780 When we are happy, when our life is going very well,

00: 49: 05. 740 then we are like that, we are up high, everything is great.

00: 49: 09. 720 And then some suffering comes.

00: 49: 12. 480 It is in our nature, in the wave, to then go down also.

00: 49: 16. 700 And then we look back.

00: 49: 20. 540 If we don't know this insight of impermanence,

00: 49: 26. 220 that our nature is to go up and down,

00: 49: 31. 120 If we want it to die, then we suffer.

00: 49: 34. 860 So the way that Thay proposes for the wave to practice,

00: 49: 42. 200 to be free from that suffering, is to see that its nature is water.

00: 49: 46. 840 Whether it is up, whether it is down, it is still water.

00: 49: 53. 960 It is the ground of its very manifestation.

00: 50: 00. 320 So, maybe we already start to go into the second tenet.

00: 50: 06. 620 It is not here yet, in the second.

00: 50: 22. 700 But we can talk about -

00: 50: 26. 260 (Bang)

00: 50: 28. 600 We can talk about, in that sense,

00: 50: 33. 180 that the phenomenon, that the unconditioned is the ground of the conditioned.

00: 50: 40. 720 Is that clear?

00: 50: 46. 000 I mean, I know, Phap Bu knows already.

00: 50: 49. 540 You are giving me a hard time.

00: 50: 52. 340 No, I'm joking.

00: 50: 56. 340 Because this has really helped me to understand.

00: 51: 00. 800 Because I find that metaphor of the wave in the water very helpful.

00: 51: 09. 240 It is not for the purpose of just having a philosophy.

00: 51: 14. 620 It is an image, actually, Thay did not come up with that image.

00: 51: 19. 540 It is a very old one in the Buddhist tradition

00: 51: 23. 520 of understanding the unconditioned.

00: 51: 26. 980 Because again, these are all just images that we're trying to use

00: 51: 31. 260 to bring us in the direction of understanding, of touching,

00: 51: 35. 840 of realizing the unconditioned.

00: 51: 39. 060 When finally, it's not something that you can grasp on to.

00: 51: 42. 860 Ultimately, it defies any kind of word or designation, any kind of model.

00: 51: 50. 460 you can get rid of the wave in the water idea.

00: 51: 54. 920 Because, again, any metaphor, you can say,

00: 51: 59. 200 'But you just told me that water is a conditioned dharma.

00: 52: 02. 500 And now you're saying that water is unconditioned. '

00: 52: 05. 240 But then you missed the point, because it's a metaphor.

00: 52: 08. 340 And if we take the metaphor as to help us to see the dharma,

00: 52: 12. 340 it's not for the purpose of describing absolute reality.

00: 52: 18. 740 This is very fundamental to any way of studying these 40 tenets,

00: 52: 28. 040 or understanding Thay's teaching.

00: 52: 31. 040 The purpose of the teaching is not to describe reality.

00: 52: 35. 940 A lot of what we do in what you might call

00: 52: 43. 840 the scientific materialist approach to understanding,

00: 52: 49. 440 is to try to create a description of reality.

00: 52: 55. 040 So words are describing as closely as possible the actual situation of reality.

00: 53: 02. 040 But from the point of view of practice, we know that that can never be realized.

00: 53: 10. 140 Words themselves are just metaphors. They are just models.

00: 53: 15. 200 We cannot possibly use words to describe reality.

00: 53: 20. 540 It cannot happen.

00: 53: 24. 100 A lot of the suffering comes about in scientific discoveries

00: 53: 30. 360 when we use words to describe something,

00: 53: 34. 060 but actually, we find out that they are inadequate.

00: 53: 37. 460 and contributes to ignorance.

00: 53: 40. 660 So we have to, as scientists and also as practitioners,

00: 53: 44. 400 we have to be able to be free,

00: 53: 47. 400 not to get caught in those traps that are created by the words.

00: 53: 52. 060 And know, just when we are sitting in the morning,

00: 53: 56. 260 following our breath, not having our mind dwell anywhere,

00: 54: 00. 360 that is already a deep realization.

00: 54: 05. 260 You don't need to practice for many lifetimes to touch that.

00: 54: 09. 460 You can quiet your mind and you can touch this at any moment.

00: 54: 14. 460 That's Thay's invitation to us, is that nirvana is in the here and now.

00: 54: 19. 060 Don't put it somewhere else in space, or time.

00: 54: 24. 460 In the Buddhist tradition, we have been caught in that trap for many centuries,

00: 54: 33. 340 Meaning that, in the time of the Buddha, there were many awakened ones,

00: 54: 38. 580 there were many arhats, perfected ones.

00: 54: 41. 740 But now we are in the time of the semblance dharma,

00: 54: 45. 920 or whatever, the ending age of the dharma.

00: 54: 49. 000 We can no longer touch nirvana.

00: 54: 51. 600 That was something that happened long ago in the past, in time.

00: 54: 56. 080 If we want to touch nirvana, we have to practice for many lifetimes,

00: 55: 00. 880 and die and be reborn, and die and perfect our practice.

00: 55: 04. 980 And finally, sometime long into the future, we will touch nirvana.

00: 55: 10. 320 Thay is saying that is a very wrong understanding of the Buddha's teaching.

00: 55: 16. 460 That is like, 'I am just going to enjoy my life as a monk.

00: 55: 21. 020 I just have a nice room, nice bed,
nice food,

00: 55: 26. 960 I'll just quietly practice to touch
nirvana maybe, I don't know,

00: 55: 31. 800 in 20 lifetimes or 100 lifetimes.

00: 55: 35. 120 And then the monks and nuns, they
become very lazy.

00: 55: 38. 680 Well, I think the monks become lazy,
the nuns practice very diligently, of course.

00: 55: 43. 520 But the monks become very -

00: 55: 46. 520 That kind of thinking

00: 55: 52. 160 It can make us very relaxed, like very
lazy.

00: 55: 56. 920 It is not that when we practice, we
should be like, 'Argh! '

00: 56: 03. 860 But rather, we should have the
bodhicitta, the mind of awakening,

00: 56: 09. 300 to see that it is possible not to suffer.

00: 56: 14. 120 It is possible to be free from suffering.

00: 56: 18. 440 we continue to follow our
conditioned thinking.

00: 56: 22. 640 So, we have to see that
consciousness is also contributing to space and time.

00: 56: 34. 040 That there is no understanding of
time that is possible without consciousness.

00: 56: 46. 080 That is something that I think only
now some scientists are beginning to understand.

00: 56: 54. 820 When we go deeply into
neuroscience and science of the mind,

00: 57: 00. 460 we see that actually, just like in
quantum physics,

00: 57: 05. 020 we want to locate the subatomic
particle at the same time that we know its velocity.

00: 57: 15. 280 Actually, by knowing its location, by
observing its location,

00: 57: 22. 060 by being the one whose
consciousness is perceiving that subatomic particle,

00: 57: 31. 640 already we can no longer know what
its velocity is.

00: 57: 36. 280 And that works.

00: 57: 42. 920 That's part of the reason we have
computers,

00: 57: 45. 840 we have all kinds of technology

00: 57: 49. 440 which is dependent on this
understanding of quantum mechanics.

00: 57: 53. 240 It doesn't seem to jive at all with a
classical understanding of science,

00: 57: 58. 240 like a Newtonian understanding
where physical objects occupy a space,

00: 58: 02. 840 and they have a velocity, and those
things can both be known.

00: 58: 08. 840 The insight is that actually the
observer,

00: 58: 12. 340 the aspect of observation changes the
observed.

00: 58: 17. 840 So space, and in the same way,
space and time,

00: 58: 24. 780 at a quantum level, are dependent on
consciousness.

00: 58: 30. 540 Consciousness, the observer, is
affecting what is observed.

00: 58: 38. 080 There is an insight already for many
centuries in the Buddhist tradition

00: 58: 42. 860 that ultimately subject depends on
the object.

00: 58: 46. 820 And they are conditioned.

00: 58: 51. 340 You cannot have a subject by itself
alone without the object.

00: 58: 56. 860 They co-arise with one another.

00: 58: 59. 800 When the subject disappears, it no
longer manifests,

00: 59: 05. 120 and the object also no longer is
there.

00: 59: 08. 200 So we can only talk about time and
space

00: 59: 11. 900 with a sense of awareness of space,
and awareness of time.

00: 59: 20. 060 In that way, they are conditioned.

00: 59: 23. 120 They said it manifests together with
time, matter and consciousness.

00: 59: 33. 020 Matter is not separate from space.

00: 59: 36. 240 So the old understanding Thay is updating in the Buddhist tradition

00: 59: 43. 560 is that matter is conditioned, but space is unconditioned.

00: 59: 48. 760 Thay says, 'No, space is also conditioned.

00: 59: 52. 360 It manifests together with matter, time and consciousness.

00: 59: 56. 360 We cannot separate them out. They inter-are. '

01: 00: 02. 140 That is the teaching of the Avatamsaka Sutra,

01: 00: 05. 800 the one is in the all, and the all is in the one.

01: 00: 09. 260 By looking and understanding, for example, the nature of quantum mechanics,

01: 00: 14. 340 the nature of subatomic particles,

01: 00: 17. 180 then we understand how it is that the sun continues to generate heat and light.

01: 00: 24. 960 Before that, we didn't know.

01: 00: 28. 780 and they were burning some fuel.

01: 00: 31. 600 Back in the 19th century,

01: 00: 34. 360 one scientist predicted that the sun has only been around for, I can't remember,

01: 00: 39. 400 something like a million years or something, or even less,

01: 00: 44. 400 like tens of thousands of years.

01: 00: 47. 400 And that it would probably burn out and run out of fuel

01: 00: 51. 600 in, I don't know, tens or hundreds of thousands of years in the future.

01: 00: 56. 960 Because they didn't understand at a subatomic level,

01: 01: 00. 900 it took actually looking into the very tiniest particles like electrons

01: 01: 05. 920 and shooting them through slits,

01: 01: 08. 520 and understanding how they function before we could understand

01: 01: 12. 160 how is it that the sun is generating all this energy.

01: 01: 15. 720 That is a very concrete manifestation of the insight of the one is in the all,

01: 01: 21. 920 and the all is in the one.

01: 01: 24. 460 into the smallest things we actually see the largest things,

01: 01: 29. 960 like a star, or the nature of the Big Bang.

01: 01: 34. 260 We can look and study the red shift in the light that is traveling through the universe,

01: 01: 43. 060 and know that the universe is moving outwards,

01: 01: 46. 360 and by that we can determine that at some point it was everything in one singularity.

01: 01: 52. 660 We don't know what happened before then.

01: 01: 55. 360 Now, many more scientists are saying that actually, we cannot call that a beginning.

01: 02: 00. 760 They are getting closer to the insight of Buddhism,

01: 02: 04. 360 which is that all this is happening since beginningless time.

01: 02: 08. 860 Even the Big Bang, the singularity, we cannot call that a beginning.

01: 02: 14. 360 But we cannot see, we are not able to see past that.

01: 02: 19. 360 So we say, 'Well, that must be the beginning. '

01: 02: 22. 360 the lack of our understanding, the lack of our perception.

01: 02: 26. 260 That is a limit, because we are limited in our capacity to perceive.

01: 02: 32. 760 So, I hope this helps.

01: 02: 37. 720 I think there could be more than this, but this is my -

01: 02: 43. 160 How I practice with this tenet, and how I understand Thay's transmitting through it.

01: 02: 51. 560 So,

01: 02: 53. 560 it's 8. 40. I don't know if there are any other questions about anything.

01: 03: 02. 760 Or if I covered the questions that were asked sufficiently.

01: 03: 11. 880 (Chuckles)

01: 03: 13. 800 Kenny told me a few years ago that when you guys give talks,

01: 03: 28. 420 you need to have time for questions at the end.

01: 03: 31. 620 So I said, "Okay, I'll train myself. "

01: 03: 39. 200 So you can reflect on it, and then next week,

01: 03: 43. 200 if there is something that is not clear,

01: 03: 46. 220 or maybe you get a new insight as well from some part of this,

01: 03: 50. 600 then please bring it to the next class, and we can look into it.

01: 03: 55. 540 So maybe I'll stop there, just with the first tenet.

01: 04: 00. 300 Please, if you can bring this sheet to class next week,

01: 04: 08. 540 I'm going to keep printing off copies.

01: 04: 10. 940 If there are any other sisters who are interested, please let them know.

01: 04: 14. 940 Was it announced in clarity? Or no?

01: 04: 17. 940 Kind of.

01: 04: 21. 020 Okay.

01: 04: 23. 220 Do the sisters have a copy of Mang Mai?

01: 04: 28. 660 Yeah, you have?

01: 04: 31. 300 It's good to read over it.

01: 04: 33. 900 I'm sorry that we don't have the English one yet.

01: 04: 37. 300 I'm trying to be -

01: 04: 41. 760 Because I know that we're working on the book,

01: 04: 46. 140 when Sister Lhagnim is working on the book.

01: 04: 50. 040 I'll see if we can have something

01: 04: 56. 600 also for the English speakers to look into.

01: 05: 01. 580 Thank you so much for coming.