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(Class #5) It Is Possible to Touch Nirvana in the Present Moment

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00:01:22.847 Dear respected Thay, dear brothers,
dear sisters,

00:01:32.087 I was reflecting a bit on teaching the Dharma.

00:01:36.143 Can you hear?

00:01:39.819 I was reflecting on what it is to teach the Dharma,

00:01:49.012 When we look back at the Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree,

00:01:53.791 he made the declaration to sit under that tree

00:02:00.061 and not get up until he had woken up to the nature of things.

00:02:08.613 So he wasn't trying to develop a style,

00:02:13.192 or become a very eloquent person.

00:02:16.231 He was not trying to make himself up to be somebody important,

00:02:22.812 so that he could make a lot of money, or become famous or powerful.

00:02:29.741 Nobody knew that he was doing it, we talk about it today,

00:02:34.123 but here he was alone by himself,

00:02:36.732 forgotten by the world, forgotten by his parents.

00:02:40.079 They felt that he had left behind his true calling as a leader in the community.

00:02:53.275 I think we sometimes

00:02:58.128 make the Buddha superhuman.

00:03:01.222 We forget that he is also a human being like us,

00:03:04.471 that he also suffered to be away from his family.

00:03:08.349 He often questioned himself, 'What am I doing here?

00:03:11.829 Why am I off in the woods walking around with a bunch of half-naked ascetics

00:03:19.588 trying to figure out the meaning of life?

00:03:22.832 Is this all just a waste of my time?'

00:03:28.630 But fortunately, even though I think he had those thoughts,

00:03:34.889 those doubts,

00:03:36.784 he continued on his path. There is something in every day,

00:03:41.478 every moment,

00:03:46.245 that woke him up to joy,

00:03:48.718 that woke him up to some spark of life that he was discovering.

00:03:55.798 And I invite us today to get in touch with that spark of life within us

00:04:02.394 that has been transmitted to us.

00:04:05.575 It is very helpful to look back on our ancestors,

00:04:09.171 on our parents, our mother, our father.

00:04:16.132 We have blood ancestors, we also have spiritual ancestors,

00:04:20.343 like the Buddha.

00:04:22.452 For some of us, it might be Jesus Christ, Muhammad, Moses,

00:04:29.045 or a spiritual teacher from our tribe, from our community.

00:04:44.767 All of those teachers have, in some way, let go of themselves.

00:04:55.341 If they really get in touch with the true awakening,

00:05:02.082 they somehow have let go of their ego, their need to have a title, or a position,

00:05:08.518 to be respected. Even just to be remembered.

00:05:14.102 I think it is in the old Kadampa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism,

00:05:21.909 they have a saying which I like very much, which is,

00:05:24.936 'Imagine the end of your life in a dark cave.

00:05:28.371 It is cold, it is wet and nobody knows you are there.

00:05:32.463 That is the place of setting out on your practice.'

00:05:38.944 Of course, that is not our Plum Village tradition.

00:05:42.275 But I find it helpful,

00:05:44.987 because many of us imagine that when we die,

00:05:50.384 when this this body ceases to function in its usual way,

00:05:57.376 and starts to have

00:06:01.171 the bacteria taking over, our heart stops beating, our breath stops,

00:06:06.217 many of us believe that it will be very peaceful.

00:06:12.802 We will have good relationships with our family, our friends,

00:06:17.337 our spiritual brothers and sisters on the path.

00:06:21.871 But that is only an idea.

00:06:24.500 The reality is that many people die in tremendous pain,

00:06:29.763 from sickness, physical sickness but also deep mental suffering.

00:06:39.646 Suffering from their relationships to others,

00:06:42.833 suffering from relationship to themselves,

00:06:45.557 suffering because they can't cope with their mind.

00:06:53.670 So that is what that saying helps me to touch.

00:06:58.551 If I get caught in an idea of some kind of happy death,

00:07:04.907 where at the end of my life everything is fulfilled,

00:07:10.055 that will make me suffer even more

00:07:13.096 when at that moment it doesn't go as expected.

00:07:19.622 Actually, we are dying in every moment.

00:07:22.522 Every moment things are happening not according to our expectation.

00:07:29.498 Friends, family, die.

00:07:32.980 People who are dear to us, we are separated from them.

00:07:37.675 People we don't get along with,

00:07:40.234 sometimes we have to live in a room with them.

00:07:44.453 Sometimes we have to live in the same monastery,

00:07:50.796 and we have trouble communicating with that brother or that sister.

00:07:57.355 I really like to lower my expectations.

00:08:02.499 I think Thay Phap Dung,

00:08:06.545 that is a phrase he likes to use in his practice.

00:08:11.169 We have our expectations, lower them.

00:08:15.101 Then, whatever comes is like a gift from the universe.

00:08:19.897 So the Buddha,

00:08:23.174 when he continued to lower his expectations

00:08:26.374 of the way things were around him,

00:08:29.303 like he was getting really lousy food begging from door to door.

00:08:33.477 He would get wet in the rain storm.

00:08:36.823 He sometimes had to sleep in the mud.

00:08:41.101 From the outside, it would look like a pretty miserable life.

00:08:46.064 If we saw somebody here at Deer Park come along,

00:08:49.384 just walking through the forest, even though we are monks and nuns,

00:08:53.213 we would probably wonder, who is this person?

00:08:56.607 And somebody, maybe, would call the police.

00:09:00.554 And yet, the Buddha was living like that.

00:09:05.429 Because in him he was getting peace, he was getting joy, he was getting somewhere.

00:09:11.689 It was not completely realized,

00:09:15.012 but he felt that he was touching something,

00:09:19.186 and that something, he called nirvana.

00:09:29.092 We have been talking a lot about nirvana.

00:09:34.407 [nirvāṇa]

00:09:40.585 Sometimes we translate it as extinction.

00:09:44.039 We learned about how the Buddha used the image of a flame,

00:09:51.075 and nirvana is when the flame goes out, there is no longer fuel.

00:09:55.950 We can think of the flame as our passion, our desire, our afflictions.

00:10:01.012 As practitioners, we are learning how to recognize what is the fuel for that fire,

00:10:06.680 and how to remove it.

00:10:08.713 And the Buddha had the insight that what we consume

00:10:12.158 through our eyes, our ears, our nose, tongue, body, and mind,

00:10:16.372 that is the fuel

00:10:19.951 for our afflictions.

00:10:22.865 So it doesn't mean we have to stop seeing, stop hearing, stop tasting, stop smelling,

00:10:29.438 but it is how we see, how we hear,

00:10:33.403 what relationship do we have with our perceptions,

00:10:37.415 what goes on in the mind when we perceive things.

00:10:41.195 Do we start to grasp towards them.

00:10:43.726 We talked about grasping, upadana,

00:10:46.870 and how we grasp at the five skandhas of our body,

00:10:49.920 feelings, perceptions, mental formation and consciousness.

00:10:53.799 We think, 'This is me, this is mine, this is myself.'

00:10:57.062 That is the fuel for our suffering.

00:11:00.390 Physical pain, that is a part of life.

00:11:03.604 But the suffering that comes from grasping at

00:11:06.548 our feelings, our perceptions and so forth,

00:11:09.448 that is the fuel that leads to afflictions.

00:11:13.391 Nirvana is

00:11:15.877 what we touch when we remove that fuel.

00:11:20.836 So today, we are on the -

00:11:24.916 After going through teaching about the conditioned and unconditioned dharmas,

00:11:30.659 learning about the historical dimension of the phenomenal world

00:11:35.206 and the ultimate dimension, which is unconditioned,

00:11:39.980 we are learning about nirvana, the unconditioned and its nature,

00:11:45.760 and how we have come to understand nirvana

00:11:50.623 through Plum Village practice.

00:11:53.284 This is the teaching of our teacher, Thay.

00:11:58.446 His insight into nirvana.

00:12:02.892 And we learned that nirvana is nirvana.

00:12:05.790 There does not need to be nirvana with residue and nirvana without residue.

00:12:10.468 This is a bit of a side track in the history of Buddhism

00:12:16.360 that we talk about different kinds of nirvana.

00:12:19.277 Already we know that nirvana is something

00:12:21.958 that ultimately can't have any quality, any flavor, any smell,

00:12:26.244 anything that can be ascribed to it.

00:12:31.496 And that even the sign,even the word
nirvana, of course,

00:12:34.893 is a phenomenon, is not nirvana itself.

00:12:39.553 That is something, hopefully,we'll go
into a bit more today,

00:12:43.366 the relationship between the signand
the nature of things.

00:12:51.876 We are on the fifth tenet.

00:13:20.029 It is possible to touch nirvanain the
present moment.

00:13:32.465 [5 It is possible to touch nirvāṇain the
present moment]

00:13:45.281 This is causefor great joy and
celebration.

00:13:49.806 Because imagine if it were not
possibleto touch nirvana in the present moment,

00:13:54.160 when all we have is the present
moment.

00:14:00.261 So it is a great happiness we can
touchnirvana in the present moment.

00:14:05.504 We can just take a moment,

00:14:08.356 and I invite youto come back to your
breathing,

00:14:12.390 come back to your body,

00:14:18.051 let go of all your ideas about
nirvana,all your ideas about practice,

00:14:23.358 your ideas about

00:14:26.613 what this teaching will be about today.

00:14:31.869 Questions you may have,what am I
doing here?

00:14:35.382 Just let go of everything.

00:14:38.808 Thinking is not necessary for living,not
necessary for breathing.

00:14:46.144 So don't suppress your thinking, but
justbring all your attention to your in-breath,

00:14:54.003 and your out-breath.

00:15:13.678 You've noticed thatthere's still feeling
in the body.

00:15:19.355 I am aware of the contactmy feet make
with the floor,

00:15:23.285 my shoulders, my back.

00:15:27.251 It is not a very painful feeling,a little bit
of pleasant feeling,

00:15:33.422 coming from being aware of my
breath.

00:15:36.078 My body relax.

00:15:40.855 But don't grasp it,I don't grasp any of
those feelings.

00:15:48.648 Anytime I notice myself, my
attention,trying to stick to one thing,

00:15:53.042 I just let it relax and let go. Just be.

00:16:00.760 But gently directing ittowards the
breathing.

00:16:03.995 Anytime I notice I get lost,I get carried
away

00:16:08.824 in thinking about the future,regrets
about the past.

00:16:16.117 Any feeling, any perception,

00:16:19.763 any emotion, mental
formation,consciousness.

00:16:23.409 Any kind of sound, sight, smell,taste,
physical sensation,

00:16:35.896 just be with the wondrous existenceof
this present moment.

00:16:57.173 We can listen to the sound of the bell.

00:17:07.377 (Bell)

00:17:27.695 You can open your eyes.

00:17:31.907 It is safer to do this sitting downthan
standing up

00:17:36.090 if you're not used to the practice,

00:17:39.420 because sometimesyou can lose your
balance.

00:17:43.017 I am very aware as I let go,

00:17:46.046 that I am also letting go of my
tendency to balance my body.

00:17:49.456 But if I am standing stably enough -

00:17:51.857 And in fact, we know

00:17:53.821 there's some sutras where
Shariputragoes through deep meditation standing up.

00:18:00.064 Usually we tend to have an image of Buddhist meditation

00:18:03.577 as something we do sitting down,

00:18:05.910 but in the Plum Village practice,

00:18:08.305 we know we can go deeply into the present moment

00:18:13.034 whether we are sitting, whether we are walking,

00:18:15.835 whether we are standing, whether we are lying down in deep relaxation.

00:18:21.010 But the sitting meditation posture is more stable.

00:18:26.754 Standing sometimes -

00:18:37.610 Let's come back to the image.

00:18:42.136 I am using speech as a form of visualization.

00:18:49.475 We are visualizing the Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree.

00:18:53.143 You might have a slightly different image than I have.

00:18:57.171 But that's fine.

00:18:59.719 He has made this determination, to wake up.

00:19:03.944 He's had a glimpse of nirvana.

00:19:07.861 But he keeps looking, as we just did,

00:19:11.733 at all these conditioned phenomena in his body,

00:19:15.253 and how he continues to get stuck

00:19:18.865 in reminiscing about the past, maybe nostalgia for his parents,

00:19:23.444 his family, his one son.

00:19:27.773 Yearning for some past situation whether it was happiness.

00:19:35.095 And he is able to stop grasping at that,

00:19:38.479 because he knows that

00:19:40.207 that's not going to bring him happiness, grabbing on to those memories.

00:19:44.805 And he started to see how that the more he goes into himself,

00:19:50.731 the more that he understands the nature of his mind.

00:19:55.588 It is not, interestingly enough, that he goes seeking someone

00:20:00.805 to tell him what's going on in his mind.

00:20:05.402 At first, he does that.

00:20:07.677 Just like all of us, we come to the monastery,

00:20:11.504 and we are looking to be free, we are looking to be happy.

00:20:15.138 And we need help. We are looking for advice how to do it.

00:20:22.748 So we come and we live with our brothers and sisters.

00:20:26.294 Or maybe on a retreat with other practitioners.

00:20:30.823 We do what they're doing.

00:20:33.739 We walk the way they walk, we talk the way they talk,

00:20:37.583 and we feel more joy, we feel more peace.

00:20:40.513 In Dharma sharing, we listen to them share their insight.

00:20:44.637 In the same way, the Buddha

00:20:46.987 went to at least two communities that we are aware of.

00:20:50.416 But probably more.

00:20:52.084 And he studied with masters, or students of masters,

00:20:55.431 and he went to learn the methods of meditation.

00:21:00.091 But he wasn't satisfied.

00:21:03.254 He was able to master their meditation practice

00:21:10.192 to the extent that the leader of each of those two communities

00:21:15.275 invited him

00:21:18.839 to co-lead the community with them.

00:21:21.460 They were so impressed with his peace, his calm,

00:21:24.782 his ability to abide happily in the present moment.

00:21:32.776 I remember one of our Dharma teachers, Shantum Seth.

00:21:37.399 Before I ordained, I went on a retreat

00:21:42.229 in Stone Hill College, outside of Boston,

00:21:47.972 in 2003.

00:21:51.202 Dharmacharya Shantum Seth,

00:21:54.366 who leads wonderful pilgrimage to the Bodhi Tree, in India,

00:21:59.080 he was giving a presentation, he said, 'Just imagine,

00:22:02.107 if somebody came to a retreat with Thay and by the end of the retreat,

00:22:06.306 Thay invites him to come up and say, 'Please, go lead this retreat with me.'

00:22:11.616 I remember being very like, wow!

00:22:17.096 Even part of me, because I was young, and a bit brash, I said,

00:22:20.857 'Yes! I am going to practice like that!

00:22:23.502 Maybe Thay will invite me up and say,

00:22:26.212 Please, I see you, you're so realized in your meditation practice.

00:22:29.831 why don't you come up and lead this retreat?

00:22:32.892 I have not attained what you have attained.'

00:22:35.539 There was some part of me in that, I was in my 20s.

00:22:38.756 But I didn't really think that.

00:22:41.553 But it impressed on me

00:22:46.364 just how marvelous and serious the Buddha practiced.

00:22:51.915 He really impressed people even before his awakening under the Bodhi Tree.

00:22:59.883 He already had a way of bearing himself, a way of talking,

00:23:04.896 a way of being that impressed upon those around him.

00:23:10.638 His deep deep intention to wake up, to understand his own mind,

00:23:15.810 to understand the Dharma.

00:23:19.844 That is something that always inspires me.

00:23:26.254 And I try to remember it when I am in the monastery.

00:23:29.596 Because we all get lazy, and -

00:23:32.855 We want to read this, or see some video, or -

00:23:38.125 And that is normal.

00:23:41.381 We are also human and we are affected

00:23:45.688 by all the things to consume that we have available today.

00:23:52.285 We know, in our teaching we don't look at things as being good or bad,

00:23:56.253 but rather we try to look and see how are we relating

00:23:59.188 to those things that we are consuming.

00:24:01.676 How do we relate to the images that come in

00:24:04.202 through our eyes, our ears, and so forth.

00:24:06.821 That is the real essence.

00:24:09.268 In the Plum Village way, we don't try to cut off

00:24:15.173 all of those sense stores and try to put you

00:24:19.586 in a kind of vacuum chamber of sense deprivation

00:24:25.745 to try to just put you in there and get enlightenment.

00:24:29.008 You probably go mad

00:24:31.746 and end up in a mental hospital.

00:24:35.191 Instead, we do it together, as a sangha,

00:24:40.368 and we know that some of us,

00:24:43.500 we have very good seeds that we've received from our ancestors,

00:24:49.942 from our spiritual ancestors,from our blood ancestors.

00:24:53.589 Those seeds have not ripened yet,

00:24:57.719 and for some of us they have ripened in certain areas.

00:25:01.013 So we also practice not to become jealous or try to compare ourselves

00:25:06.101 with each other, but rather to see that

00:25:11.007 the conditions are quite different.

00:25:14.043 We come from different backgrounds, different cultures.

00:25:17.290 That is all just at the level of the historical dimension.

00:25:21.220 And neither do we have to

00:25:24.059 put on the robe of a monk or a nun

00:25:27.343 to start the path.

00:25:31.073 But actually, we can start wherever we are,

00:25:33.800 whether we have hair, whether we don't have hair,

00:25:36.894 whether we are a long-term practitioner, or just came for the weekend,

00:25:42.626 whether we are a monk or a nun for 20 years,

00:25:47.335 whether we are the abbot or the abbess,

00:25:50.302 whether we are just the brother who does the compost.

00:25:54.043 It is all just a skillful means.

00:25:56.765 Anything that we do in the monastery is just at the level of science.

00:26:03.957 What is important is whether we grasp onto that,

00:26:07.803 whether we are really attached to those signs.

00:26:11.162 And the way we know is when afflictions arise.

00:26:14.946 We talked about already that nirvana is

00:26:18.700 the cessation of delusion and the afflictions.

00:26:26.751 It is not the cessation of the five skandhas.

00:26:30.130 And cessation can happen and then the affliction comes back.

00:26:34.743 We don't want to make absolute the words that we use to describe the teachings.

00:26:41.466 Like, cessation is permanent forever!

00:26:47.092 But rather it is something that we can experience in the present moment,

00:26:52.657 like probably now, most of us are not angry.

00:26:57.469 That means there is a cessation of anger. It is like that.

00:27:01.249 It doesn't mean that the conditions for anger,

00:27:04.596 some of them, are still not there in your consciousness.

00:27:08.142 There is still the seed of anger.

00:27:11.874 But it is not being -

00:27:14.035 There are not sufficient conditions that have come together

00:27:17.341 for anger to manifest in the present moment.

00:27:19.962 That is what means that the anger is not manifested.

00:27:23.392 So it is the cessation of anger.

00:27:26.739 And with the four practices of right diligence -

00:27:37.294 We have the practice of right diligence.

00:27:41.755 [right diligence]

00:28:01.085 So those

00:28:05.066 afflictions which have already arisen,

00:28:07.941 we know how to invite them to go back down.

00:28:29.988 Or we can say unwholesome

00:28:33.083 [1. arisen unwholesome M.F. ↓]

00:28:42.293 mental formations go back down.

00:28:50.333 We learned in the model of the mind

00:28:55.741 that we can talk about the mind consciousness,

00:28:59.922 those things that we can see right now in the present moment in our mind,

00:29:04.088 and store consciousness,

00:29:06.251 those things which we don't touch, we don't see directly manifesting.

00:29:10.352 But we know that the seed of anger is there, the seed of mindfulness is there,

00:29:15.179 in the collective, the alaya consciousness,

00:29:20.392 which has an individual aspect, but also a collective aspect.

00:29:26.253 And those individual and collective aspects interpenetrate.

00:29:31.740 A beautiful image is a one of a candle,

00:29:38.152 and many candles all together.

00:29:42.683 A candle illuminates itself as well as the space around it.

00:29:47.208 And when you put it together with many candles,

00:29:49.991 it contributes to the greater light.

00:29:52.891 So the individual and the collective are not separated.

00:29:57.237 The store consciousness operates - At the individual level, we have -

00:30:02.096 In us we have conditions for anger.

00:30:06.527 We hear something, we have a perception,

00:30:10.224 somebody says something about us that is not very nice,

00:30:14.086 and then that waters the seed of anger in our store consciousness.

00:30:17.749 So it comes up and manifests as a mental formation

00:30:22.441 in our mind consciousness.

00:30:25.274 If we want to touch nirvana in the present moment,

00:30:31.797 we need to learn how to remove

00:30:34.414 the conditions that are allowing the anger to manifest in the mind consciousness.

00:30:39.496 So we learn how to not grasp onto that perception,

00:30:44.996 that idea, those words that somebody said.

00:30:53.119 Most of us suffer because of our perception

00:30:56.220 about other people's perceptions about us.

00:30:59.715 One of the great things to master, as a practitioner,

00:31:03.587 is not to be carried away by our own perceptions

00:31:09.855 of how other people perceive us.

00:31:13.568 If you can do that, nirvana is very easy to touch.

00:31:20.725 We are social beings.

00:31:23.841 Human beings we care about how others feel about us.

00:31:29.552 So we are always looking to see,

00:31:33.790 do they like me? Do they not like me?

00:31:37.810 And the reality is usually mixed.

00:31:40.922 You like somebody to a certain degree,

00:31:45.419 but not too much.

00:31:47.716 Generally speaking, for everyone it's like that.

00:31:53.272 But as an individual, when somebody says something that is rejecting

00:31:57.772 and you want to be liked by that person, you suffer so much.

00:32:01.698 Also, when you dislike somebody, and you feel like they are trying

00:32:07.462 to force themselves on you, and be around you all the time,

00:32:12.724 you get very annoyed, and you want to go away.

00:32:15.887 So that is suffering.

00:32:19.117 Many times in the four noble truths, we talk about

00:32:24.192 suffering coming about from being separated from those who we love,

00:32:30.198 and then being forced to be together with those that we find unpleasant.

00:32:36.632 But the reality is,

00:32:38.761 it is not that there are only those groups of people that we love

00:32:42.108 and those groups of people that we don't love,

00:32:44.929 but actually,

00:32:46.603 sometimes we love the same people and sometimes we don't love.

00:32:50.000 Especially those ones we are closest to us we have the strongest feelings sometimes

00:32:54.463 of anger and hatred, right? That is a reality

00:32:57.660 at least as I experience it.

00:33:01.088 So looking into our perceptions

00:33:04.383 and seeing how we can continue to be joyful, continue to be happy,

00:33:09.026 even when somebody speaks to us with anger,

00:33:11.751 speaks to us with words of hate.

00:33:13.925 That is a way of knowing, it is a litmus test for knowing

00:33:16.905 where you are with your practice.

00:33:19.118 When somebody starts yelling, and screaming at you, and berating you,

00:33:22.865 and saying this and that.

00:33:24.998 And you can continue to smile.

00:33:28.210 And really in yourself you are not caught in those words,

00:33:31.504 that is a very good way to know when you are practicing well.

00:33:36.268 That is why many practitioners they will go out and into the world.

00:33:41.723 And they come to the retreat center to practice, to gain the solidity.

00:33:47.723 But then when we go out,

00:33:49.502 like as monks and nuns we go out to lead a retreat.

00:33:52.014 And we have to work together.

00:33:54.387 And there are moments of misunderstanding.

00:33:57.583 I want to do it this way,

00:33:59.630 'We always do it your way!'

00:34:01.908 And then we suffer.

00:34:03.626 Those are the moments like, aha!

00:34:05.935 What happened to the nirvana

00:34:08.139 that you seem to have touched in your life up in the monastery?

00:34:13.428 It seems to have evaporated.

00:34:15.830 Maybe it wasn't nirvana really.

00:34:18.552 It is still just a conditioned phenomenon.

00:34:21.232 You are still dependent on many conditions.

00:34:23.873 And that is normal, of course.

00:34:25.886 We need to eat, to breathe air.

00:34:27.985 It is very difficult to touch nirvana if somebody is strangling you.

00:34:32.531 I don't say it is impossible, but it is difficult.

00:34:35.377 If you can't breathe, if you're starving to death,

00:34:38.338 if you're dehydrated and so forth.

00:34:42.320 There are basic conditions, things that we need.

00:34:45.183 We need very stable temperature,

00:34:48.063 very narrow range of temperature.

00:34:50.811 I think if you're living on Mars, you freeze very quickly.

00:34:54.053 Even if you had air to breathe.

00:34:57.751 And if you are too close to the sun, you burn up.

00:35:00.650 So in this moment we are on Mother Earth,

00:35:05.212 in this thin layer of atmosphere,
00:35:08.959 thanks to the magnetic,
00:35:14.053 what we call the magnetosphere of the Earth.
00:35:19.190 You have these -
00:35:20.963 The core of the Earth is made of mostly iron.
00:35:24.571 It is a very dense in the center,
00:35:28.501 and around it is molten iron, and it is spinning around inside of us,
00:35:32.717 inside of the Earth not inside of us.
00:35:37.911 Thanks to that iron core of the Earth, it creates a magnetic -
00:35:45.371 magnetosphere, magnetic field on the Earth.
00:35:49.200 That magnetic field actually protects us from a lot of the dangerous solar wind
00:35:53.776 and other -
00:36:04.248 Things that can hurt us, right? From the sun.
00:36:09.194 This are all the wondrous things of Mother Earth that allow us to be here.
00:36:13.188 We cannot be alive without these things.
00:36:15.983 We do have conditions that we need in order to live.
00:36:25.012 We recognize that.
00:36:28.952 But do we need to be liked?
00:36:34.135 Yes, of course.
00:36:36.394 As we grow up, because we are a social being.
00:36:40.041 The most painful thing,
00:36:42.210 one of the most painful things as a human being is to be ostracized,
00:36:45.939 to be cut off from the community.
00:36:48.285 We know, as monastics, when we break one of our major precepts
00:36:53.316 we can no longer live in communion with the community.

00:36:56.811 That is the most severe thing that can happen to us in our life as a monk or nun.
00:37:05.003 So we have to be very diligent.
00:37:08.083 And practice the precepts well.
00:37:12.905 The reason for that is that the monastery is a place of refuge.
00:37:17.148 And if people want to come and take refuge here in the monastery,
00:37:21.216 they need to know it is a safe place.
00:37:23.915 And they know it is safe because the monks and nuns practice the precepts.
00:37:28.040 So they feel like I can come and I can be at ease here,
00:37:31.477 I don't have to put on all the stress and worry of my daily life, to worry about
00:37:37.569 somebody trying to take me out on a date,
00:37:44.827 or somebody tried to abuse me,
00:37:48.003 or try to hurt me in some way, or steal from me, or something like that.
00:37:54.185 That is why we create this kind of cradle in the monastery,
00:37:58.676 these good conditions for others to come and practice.
00:38:03.474 But as we become more solid there, we need to stand on our own two feet.
00:38:09.318 As monks and nuns, we stay in the monastery,
00:38:11.946 but we also travel to lead retreats.
00:38:14.513 We have a chance to really put our practice to the test.
00:38:22.237 Sometimes when we're not yet ready,
00:38:25.519 but we're too ambitious, we go out on our own.
00:38:31.076 And many of us find that we lose our practice,
00:38:37.059 because we get carried away by the collective energy
00:38:40.386 of people who are not practicing in society,

00:38:44.245 or drinking,
00:38:46.559 who are in a sexual relationship.
00:38:50.543 But as monks and nuns, we know that
00:38:53.214 we are putting that aside in order to go
deeper in our spiritual path.
00:39:00.248 We will not accept anything except
00:39:06.309 touching nirvana in the present
moment.
00:39:09.321 So we easily start to let things go.
00:39:12.501 As novices, as aspirants, we come
in and we still have a lot of habits.
00:39:19.395 The elder brothers and sisters tell us,
'Okay, do this, do that.'
00:39:25.338 And we feel so frustrated.
00:39:28.670 'Why do they always tell me what to
do? I am a grown person!
00:39:32.231 They tell me like my mom and my dad
00:39:35.092 when I was a kid! They treat me like a
kid again!
00:39:37.906 Don't they see that I am an advanced
spiritual practitioner?'
00:39:41.838 And we feel indignant.
00:39:44.257 We have many reasons
00:39:47.216 to say that that elder brother, that elder
sister is not practicing correctly.
00:39:53.577 How dare she tell me how to behave!
00:39:58.238 And we may be right.
00:40:00.468 But that is the best time to practice.
00:40:05.753 Because ultimately, she may be
right, she may not be right,
00:40:09.527 he may be right, he may not be right,
00:40:11.940 but how we respond to the situation is
really where our practice is at.
00:40:16.935 Are we able to hold that suffering?
00:40:20.196 Are we able to let go of the perception?
00:40:23.122 Are we able to allow for understanding
and compassion to arise

00:40:27.101 to that person who has said that
thing, or have that perception about us,
00:40:32.528 and just be with it, even though it
seems like inside you're screaming.
00:40:40.404 You want to yell out and say, 'This is
not fair!
00:40:43.762 How dare you treat me like this!'
00:40:47.438 And this is not suppression.
00:40:49.477 We're not talking about
suppression, we're saying about letting go.
00:40:54.583 Thầy Ngộ Không recently gave a talk on
letting go.
00:40:59.317 So when these afflictions arise, like
anger,
00:41:04.695 we know how to let go of the
perceptions that are feeding that mental formation.
00:41:12.253 We let go of our idea about ourself.
00:41:15.600 Because that person who says that
thing,
00:41:18.196 they say we are like that, or they treat
us like that.
00:41:22.441 So we think, 'How dare he! How dare
he treat me like that!'
00:41:29.030 And we suffer so much.
00:41:31.534 But if we let go of our idea about
ourself, there is no suffering.
00:41:36.962 It is only because we have an
idea about ourselves and we're warring with
00:41:41.949 that concept of ourselves,
00:41:46.210 we cannot accept that it has
been imposed upon us by another person,
00:41:51.711 that we suffer.
00:41:54.343 But as soon as we let go,
00:41:56.822 and we just smile,
00:41:58.974 we become a teacher, we become a
part-time buddha.
00:42:02.984 So touching nirvana in the
present moment is to become a part-time buddha.
00:42:10.754 With continuous practice, it becomes
more and more present.

00:42:16.118 It becomes easier.

00:42:19.182 Deeper, deeper afflictions
sometimes they have a chance to come up.

00:42:25.825 'Wow! I thought I was suffering
before, but now this, oh my god!

00:42:30.454 Whoa! That is like major suffering!'

00:42:35.343 I was speaking in Californian there.

00:42:43.008 Can you be with it? Can you just be
like,

00:42:45.681 'Wow! That's so much suffering!'

00:42:48.568 And you lock yourself in your room
and you don't want to go talk to anybody.

00:42:54.488 But being with that, can you be with it?

00:42:57.491 Then you pick up a book, or you pick
up something to read,

00:43:02.182 'This is too much suffering, I just
have to read this book for a while.'

00:43:07.827 Or whatever.

00:43:14.124 That is where you are at, so you know.

00:43:17.372 'Okay, it is just too much. I'm going to
put my attention somewhere else.'

00:43:21.620 That can be a skillful means.

00:43:24.872 We have the practice of appropriate
attention.

00:43:29.754 We practice right diligence by

00:43:35.462 knowing where is the appropriate
place to put our attention.

00:43:53.714 [manaskāra]

00:44:00.216 'Attention' in Sanskrit can be
written 'manaskāra' or 'manasikāra'.

00:44:06.863 It literally means, 'kāra' is 'to act, to
do.'

00:44:10.513 And 'manas' is 'the mind.'

00:44:12.862 So it is directing the mind to
do something in a certain direction.

00:44:18.888 So we talk about 'yoniso'

00:44:22.577 [yoniso]

00:44:24.940 manaskāra, 'yoniso' means
'appropriate'.

00:44:29.135 It is the kind of attention that will stop
feeding the mental formation,

00:44:40.038 the unpleasant or unwholesome mental
formation.

00:44:43.920 So we can translate it as 'appropriate
attention'.

00:44:53.211 [appropriate attention]

00:45:08.104 'Attention' is one of the universal
mental formations.

00:45:12.402 Anytime a moment of consciousness is
there, attention is present.

00:45:16.736 That is very helpful to know,

00:45:19.832 because if you are caught in your
thinking,

00:45:22.342 you feel carried away by your thinking,

00:45:24.789 and you know that thinking,

00:45:27.092 for a moment of thought to occur, it
requires attention.

00:45:32.070 If attention is not there, the thought
does not manifest.

00:45:36.913 Usually we feel like we're just being
carried away

00:45:39.803 by an unending stream of thought.

00:45:42.009 And we have little or no control over
those thoughts.

00:45:45.872 We feel like we have control, but
actually,

00:45:48.537 because of what we have been
reading, what we have been watching,

00:45:52.098 how we have been consuming things,

00:45:54.274 those thoughts are actually
being affected by collective consciousness,

00:45:58.626 the media, our conversations, people
around us.

00:46:02.836 We think of ourselves as
individuals, but actually we are -

00:46:09.119 When we step back,

00:46:11.457 it is like we are looking down on a
colony of ants.

00:46:18.005 You look from a distance.

00:46:20.137 It is like when from the night time
herewe look across to the 15,

00:46:27.382 and you see all the carsgoing back and
forth,

00:46:30.274 and you think, 'Where are those people
going?'

00:46:33.193 Some of them are going north,some of
them are going south,

00:46:36.507 all day long! North and south!

00:46:38.870 It looks like a bunch of ants.

00:46:40.870 and we can sit here as monks and
nuns,

00:46:43.334 and think, 'We have arrived,we are
home in the here and the now.

00:46:46.845 Look at all those peoplegoing back and
forth like ants.'

00:46:50.076 We can feel quite proud.

00:46:52.007 But then, we ourselves,if you step
back,

00:46:54.722 in the monastery we go to this
activity,we go to that activity.

00:46:58.300 And yet we think, 'Oh, I am like this,I
am like that.'

00:47:01.679 But when we look back,it's more or
less like ants.

00:47:05.858 We are going around just likeeveryone
else in some way, shape, or form.

00:47:11.266 We are also in the historical
dimension.

00:47:14.401 This body is a phenomenon,
these feelings are phenomena, and so forth.

00:47:22.093 The other day, I was up on Cougar
Pass.

00:47:25.840 Actually the trail coming offof Cougar
Pass to the green water tank.

00:47:30.930 And I saw all these ants in a line.

00:47:35.545 Many thousands of ants!

00:47:38.992 I like to follow the line.

00:47:41.256 Where are they going?Where are they
coming from?

00:47:44.085 They were crossing the path very
slowly.

00:47:47.117 There are many kinds of antsall over
the world,

00:47:50.181 tens of thousands of species of ants.

00:47:53.508 But this ant was walking so slowly,and
it was just at sunset,

00:47:57.622 just after sunset, at dusk.

00:48:02.149 So I followed the ants one way,

00:48:07.055 because I saw the antsthe way they
were going,

00:48:10.141 and they hada little white larvae of the
ants.

00:48:19.531 They were going into a holeon one
side of the path.

00:48:22.487 So I followed them backabout 10
meters.

00:48:25.475 And I found thatthere was another
hole.

00:48:28.046 And it seemed likethey were carrying
the eggs,

00:48:30.887 the larva, from the one holeand then
moving to another one.

00:48:34.810 I don't know why.

00:48:36.641 Who decided, 'We're going to move'?

00:48:38.955 Today, it is today, okay guys,changing
rooms!

00:48:42.218 We are going across the path!

00:48:45.080 Who knows how they came up with
this?

00:48:48.246 I am not an expert on ants,

00:48:50.723 but I was watching.

00:48:52.822 Wow! He is carrying the larvaeand
going back,

00:48:55.667 and then carrying the larvaeand going
back.

00:48:58.501 That is why I have this image of

00:49:00.694 I like to step back from human
beingsand see myself like from -

00:49:04.193 Oh! He is just like another ant walking around.

00:49:06.883 How does he get that idea?

00:49:11.266 So in the phenomenal world, we are going back and forth,

00:49:14.717 and we are getting carried by a collective,

00:49:20.460 just as the ants.

00:49:22.707 They know through the scent. When they come to an ant,

00:49:26.099 there are chemical pheromones that they're able to detect.

00:49:31.123 They touch each other with their antennae

00:49:34.751 and they get some information

00:49:37.222 about where that ant is going or where they have come from

00:49:40.466 and so that they are able to continue.

00:49:43.016 Now we know that it is almost like a brain,

00:49:48.533 a kind of a larger nervous system which occurs at the communal level.

00:49:55.568 That is what we call collective consciousness,

00:49:58.278 and we also experience that as human beings.

00:50:01.876 It is a collective consciousness,

00:50:04.525 all those candles with their combined light.

00:50:09.554 So if we are not careful,

00:50:11.766 then we are just carried away

00:50:15.244 by the reinforcement we get from the media, from the news,

00:50:19.249 from movies, from books, films, and music.

00:50:23.363 They penetrate our consciousness.

00:50:26.053 They have been perhaps penetrating our consciousness

00:50:29.015 since we were very young.

00:50:37.771 And actually what we think of as ourselves

00:50:40.730 is sometimes just an aggregate of all the things we've consumed

00:50:45.019 in our family, in the media.

00:50:48.338 Now many of us are born into the world of the Internet.

00:50:55.874 I remember the world before the Internet.

00:50:58.773 It feels like a world before a dream.

00:51:04.236 A time when there wasn't

00:51:07.295 this instantaneous access to all the world's information

00:51:11.087 every time you sit down at a computer.

00:51:19.606 It is very powerful

00:51:21.339 how all these people entering data

00:51:28.197 and making it available to others

00:51:30.900 is changing the way we think, the way we do things.

00:51:36.078 Appropriate attention is knowing how to put our attention on things

00:51:43.520 that nourish joy, bring peace.

00:51:48.065 Because the more peaceful, the more joyful we are,

00:51:51.094 the easier it is to touch nirvana.

00:51:54.491 We can always touch nirvana in the present moment,

00:51:57.373 but when we are carried away by a strong emotion,

00:52:00.935 it's more difficult,

00:52:03.582 it's often more difficult, because we are in so much pain.

00:52:08.910 Often times we are continuing to feed that pain through our thinking.

00:52:17.895 But if we know that, as I said, *manaskāra* is a necessary condition,

00:52:23.195 it is called a universal mental formation

00:52:26.574 because it is always there when a moment of consciousness is present.

00:52:34.284 We know that if we take our attention away from our thinking,

00:52:38.658 the thought no longer has enough conditions to manifest.

00:52:42.441 That is a very important insight.

00:52:45.321 That is how you know how to change what you're putting your attention on.

00:52:52.747 We call it 'changing the peg'.

00:52:55.628 In this hall we don't have pegs,

00:52:59.387 but sometimes, in some of our halls in Plum Village

00:53:02.620 we have the old style of a wooden peg that would join two beams.

00:53:13.093 You put a hole in one beam and then in the other,

00:53:16.118 and you drive the peg through and that holds the piece of wood together.

00:53:20.585 The way to replace a rotten peg is to take a new one

00:53:24.763 and then drive it right in,

00:53:26.860 and then the old one is pushed out on the other side.

00:53:34.237 When we have inappropriate attention,

00:53:37.601 which is *ayoniso manaskāra*,

00:53:45.935 [*ayoniso m...*]

00:53:50.754 inappropriate attention,

00:53:53.967 [*inappropriate attention*]

00:54:08.816 then we suffer.

00:54:11.176 It is easy to know you have pain that comes from the mind.

00:54:17.004 You are suffering. It means that you are feeling somehow

00:54:20.853 an affliction, an unwholesome mental formation.

00:54:24.566 By changing the peg,

00:54:27.248 we remove our attention from that thought that is causing us to suffer.

00:54:32.941 And we change it to something that brings us joy.

00:54:36.288 For example, we bring our attention to our breathing.

00:54:39.983 When our attention is fully on our breath,

00:54:43.971 there are not sufficient conditions for a thought to manifest.

00:54:52.043 That is stopping our thinking.

00:54:55.651 When we know and we master the art of stopping our thinking,

00:54:59.767 then it becomes easier to touch nirvana.

00:55:04.742 Because although we think our thoughts are neutral,

00:55:09.086 they usually have a subtle tone,

00:55:12.233 a kind of fragrance called '*vāsanā*'.

00:55:17.974 Running out of space.

00:55:20.161 *Vasana*.

00:55:22.283 In this class we are going to use Sanskrit terms for fun.

00:55:26.260 [*vāsanā*]

00:55:28.753 *Vāsanā*. A kind of fragrance.

00:55:32.269 Everything has a tone.

00:55:34.712 Every thought, although it may seem neutral, in some way

00:55:41.941 it can be leading to something that we want or something that we don't want.

00:55:47.256 Something that we want to hold on to, have more of,

00:55:50.905 or something that we want to push away.

00:55:54.028 It is very helpful when you have a thought to look and see more deeply.

00:55:58.861 Is this a thought of something that I want?

00:56:01.770 Or is it something that I want to push away?

00:56:05.527 When we think about ourselves and we ascribe qualities to ourselves,

00:56:10.759 then often those things,

00:56:14.150 they may be things that are positive, that we want to have.

00:56:19.103 But for some of us sometimes it may also be things

00:56:22.921 that are very painful, things that we don't like about ourselves.

00:56:27.282 We actually loathe ourselves. A kind of self-hatred.

00:56:35.754 So in either case, the thought has a tone.

00:56:39.248 That is a kind of perfume.

00:56:47.527 [perfume]

00:56:50.208 You can translate 'vāsanā' as 'perfume'.

00:56:53.063 That thought perfume the seeds in our store consciousness.

00:56:57.384 It has a quality of strengthening or weakening the seeds.

00:57:03.988 It can strengthen our anger.

00:57:08.605 Just that low level thinking throughout the day, self-criticism, judgment,

00:57:16.461 is slowly making that seed of anger bigger, and bigger, and bigger,

00:57:21.521 and stronger, and stronger.

00:57:23.420 So that in a moment, somebody says something -

00:57:26.618 When they say that thing that is not so kind, not so gentle,

00:57:30.329 then the mental formation comes up and explodes,

00:57:33.812 we are carried away by a strong emotion.

00:57:36.373 And we think it is because that person said that thing,

00:57:40.070 when all along we have been watering the seed of fear, watering the seed of anger

00:57:44.899 day in day out, hour after hour, second after second.

00:57:48.662 And yet we think that one last condition,

00:57:52.725 which is the thing that she said or that he said,

00:57:56.537 that that is the cause of my anger. 'How dare you say that!'

00:58:00.248 I am so angry because of what - It's your fault!'

00:58:04.478 We point a finger.

00:58:06.337 Be careful when you start pointing fingers.

00:58:09.437 Usually that means you are caught in a wrong perception.

00:58:15.715 Great diligence means looking the way out is in,

00:58:19.048 we look into our own mind and we notice

00:58:21.644 the fuel to those affliction.

00:58:26.056 Because we know if we're able to remove the fuel,

00:58:29.835 by inviting the arisen unwholesome mental formation

00:58:34.076 to go back down into store consciousness,

00:58:37.043 then we no longer continue to perfume,

00:58:40.836 to affect the quality of the seed in our store consciousness.

00:58:48.180 And the anger, the jealousy, the sadness becomes weaker.

00:58:53.536 So next time when it comes up, it's not so strong.

00:58:59.523 We are able to also invite the seed of mindfulness to come up

00:59:03.104 and embrace that mental formation.

00:59:07.522 Mindfulness has a quality of helping us to see

00:59:11.034 what are the things that are feeding,

00:59:13.653 what is the nutriment, what is the fuel

00:59:17.688 that is feeding the affliction.

00:59:20.447 So, arisen unwholesome mental formation, how they go back down,

00:59:23.997 how to keep the unwholesome,I am going to abbreviate,

00:59:31.487 unwholesome mental formation

00:59:34.619 [2. keep U. M. F. ↓]

00:59:38.022 from manifesting.You want to keep it down.

00:59:41.160 Again this is not suppression.

00:59:43.511 It means you don't wantto feed the fire.

00:59:46.309 You are removing the nutrimento so that the unwholesome mental formation -

00:59:55.077 Maybe we can use a minus sign.

00:59:59.690 [2. keep - M. F. ↓]

01:00:05.599 We have an unwholesome mental formation.

01:00:09.689 We want to learn how to, next time, not to allow that mental formation to manifest.

01:00:15.057 So we don't say that thing

01:00:18.330 that retort, that clever way of getting back

01:00:22.071 at the person who has caused us pain

01:00:24.980 in our belief that that person, what they said, what they've done,

01:00:28.864 their perception about us is the cause of our pain.

01:00:32.094 We try to inflict pain back on them and we think,

01:00:35.123 by doing that then we solve the situation.

01:00:37.783 But we only continue to feed more flames of anger.

01:00:41.006 The situation can become a conflagration which consumes the entire relationship

01:00:46.744 then we have a lot of time to go through the ashes that remain after the fire

01:00:50.974 to try to rebuild some semblance of understanding.

01:00:59.205 So better, we don't say that thing, we don't do that thing.

01:01:03.027 we know how to change the peg,

01:01:07.819 or Thay says, change the CD.

01:01:10.131 But we don't have CDs anymore.

01:01:12.233 Maybe change the playlist. That is the new one.

01:01:15.374 Go to a different playlist.

01:01:17.527 You have the playlist which waters the seeds of sadness,

01:01:20.572 you have the playlist which waters the seed of anger,

01:01:23.239 a playlist that waters the seed of romantic love.

01:01:26.679 And you change it to one that waters seeds of joy, water seeds of peace

01:01:31.446 water seeds of calm, of understanding, instead.

01:01:38.054 Inappropriate attention becomes appropriate attention

01:01:44.021 by changing the playlist.

01:01:47.791 And then, there is

01:01:54.592 we invite

01:01:59.600 the wholesome,

01:02:03.529 [3. invite + M. F. ↑]

01:02:07.020 positive mental formations,

01:02:10.522 to come up

01:02:12.582 from store consciousness to manifest in mind consciousness.

01:02:16.998 Joy!

01:02:20.046 We get in touch with the joy of being alive.

01:02:22.741 We are still alive. I have a body.

01:02:25.139 I can move my arms, I have eyes, I can see millions of colors.

01:02:28.824 I can breathe in and out on my own power.

01:02:33.334 It is wonderful!

01:02:35.449 I can walk, I can go for a walk in nature.

01:02:39.497 I can sit with a beloved one, I can do so many wonderful things.

01:02:48.111 It is a joy! That is a joy!

01:02:51.048 Even if there is pain, even if there is suffering, you can touch joy.

01:02:55.156 We train ourselves, with right diligence,

01:02:59.091 to moment to moment invite the positive mental formations to come up.

01:03:06.890 There are many ways to do it.

01:03:13.291 But all of them involve appropriate attention.

01:03:20.384 As monastics, we don't have much money.

01:03:23.376 We just have a little bit of pocket money. We don't have many things.

01:03:27.213 That is because we want to slowly

01:03:32.235 stop the illusion that having things, having money, brings us happiness.

01:03:37.923 So we train ourselves to let go of our things, our objects.

01:03:42.017 At first it's difficult, because we have been trained,

01:03:45.446 we have grown up to think that happiness comes and having things.

01:03:49.670 But with time, we see that actually,

01:03:56.369 that our happiness comes from how we are paying attention.

01:04:00.734 What we are paying attention to, what is the object of our attention.

01:04:05.472 Now it has become more obvious than ever

01:04:08.957 how valuable your attention is.

01:04:12.946 Facebook, Twitter, newspapers on the Internet,

01:04:19.240 they are all just trying to get your attention.

01:04:23.087 Just a few seconds of your attention.

01:04:25.986 They are desperately looking for your attention.

01:04:29.468 Because they want to water seeds in your consciousness

01:04:33.411 to buy that thing, to keep looking at their website,

01:04:37.727 so that you become an addict to that social network,

01:04:42.810 so that you continue to look for happiness

01:04:46.058 in what people put on the social network.

01:04:49.156 You identify with certain people, your friends, the ones you follow.

01:04:54.616 So that is your attention.

01:04:58.199 And they got it.

01:05:00.715 Even as monks and nuns, we have attention,

01:05:03.228 though we don't have much money, fortunately,

01:05:06.403 because you get your attention

01:05:09.636 and then quickly you start paying for more of that thing.

01:05:15.981 But even just our attention is valuable. So we have the precept

01:05:20.860

01:05:25.517 We live in the rooms together.

01:05:28.169 So in the times of the day when we have the Internet,

01:05:31.164 we are there with our roommate.

01:05:33.630 If we are in the office, we use it together.

01:05:37.216 That is because we want to cultivate appropriate attention,

01:05:40.574 because we all know, we accept that we get carried away,

01:05:44.790 that our attention is being grabbed.

01:05:47.535 There are super computers vying for your attention.

01:05:50.866 If you think you can win, think again.

01:05:55.393 They have tested the algorithms on millions of people,

01:06:00.955 billions of people some of them.

01:06:03.408 And they know.

01:06:05.384 But because you think you are different, you think you are an individual,

01:06:09.403 you think you are in control, but that's the whole point.

01:06:12.544 you need to feel like you're in control,

01:06:15.105 when, in fact, the machine knows what you like and it knows what to feed you.

01:06:20.050 It is not that is bad, because that's what it's just been trained to do.

01:06:24.761 It has been trained by millions and millions of people

01:06:28.049 using that website, using that social network,

01:06:31.022 using that -YouTube.

01:06:33.655 I think you are watching this on YouTube.

01:06:36.819 Sorry, I don't know if this video will get banned on YouTube

01:06:40.365 if I say something.

01:06:45.161 Be careful!

01:06:47.208 Be careful about the videos on the side of the screen next to this one.

01:06:53.983 Okay. And then,

01:06:58.277 how can we attend to things in such a way

01:07:03.619 that the mental formation, the positive mental formation

01:07:08.567 stays up in our mind consciousness for a long time?

01:07:13.891 [4. + M. F. stays]

01:07:22.865 How did the Buddha touch nirvana sitting under the Bodhi Tree?

01:07:26.586 It is because he had learned how to train his mind

01:07:29.868 to invite the positive mental formations to come up and stay for a long time.

01:07:34.509 That is a conditioned phenomenon, training your mind

01:07:38.692 to bring up the positive mental formations like joy, like mindfulness,

01:07:46.849 like concentration, insight.

01:07:50.959 That is conditioning.

01:07:53.458 But that good conditioning, that appropriate attention

01:07:58.069 brings about conditions

01:08:01.035 that allow us to touch the unconditioned.

01:08:05.529 That is the point.

01:08:07.511 By training ourselves day in and day out

01:08:10.475 to be joyful,

01:08:14.004 to experience peace, experience calm, less anxiety, less fear,

01:08:19.562 we invite the unwholesome mental formations down,

01:08:22.970 less anger, less jealousy,

01:08:25.892 then our mind is not rigid, it is not caught in its ideas,

01:08:35.542 it is not caught in a dogma, in an ideology, in a belief system,

01:08:40.725 and it is not carried away by our perceptions.

01:08:44.256 Our perceptions of what other people perceive about us,

01:08:47.465 our perceptions about what we perceive

01:08:50.216 that other people perceive about what they perceive about us.

01:08:53.746 None of that. The hook is no longer able to hook us,

01:08:58.136 because there is nothing to grasp onto,

01:09:00.805 because we are not caught up in our ideas

01:09:04.435 about this is me, this is mine, this is myself.

01:09:07.591 It just goes through.

01:09:09.673 It is like our arm moving through the air, it cannot be impeded easily.

01:09:14.435 But when it is a bunch of brambles, like in the chaparral,

01:09:17.970 and you try to move through the chaparral you get caught.

01:09:21.247 Your robe is stuck

01:09:23.779 and it is very difficult to move.

01:09:26.518 So that when our mind is caught in inappropriate attention,

01:09:29.971 it becomes like the brambles and the chaparral,

01:09:33.269 and it is very difficult to move through.

01:09:36.234 But when our mind is calm, we know how to generate peace,

01:09:41.711 generate joy, generate mindfulness, generate concentration,

01:09:48.287 have understanding,

01:09:51.968 then it is not difficult to touch nirvana in the present moment.

01:09:56.876 So we make use of the historical dimension to touch the ultimate dimension.

01:10:02.945 That is the essence of Buddhism.

01:10:06.048 The Dharma. What we teach.

01:10:08.547 Words, that is just -Thay says is like sugar cane.

01:10:18.573 If you have ever eaten sugar cane, you have to know how to eat the sugar cane.

01:10:23.482 You tear it off with your teeth,

01:10:29.866 you chew on the fibers

01:10:34.687 to get the sweet juice from the sugar cane out,

01:10:39.120 and then you don't continue to chew on the fibers, right?

01:10:42.540 Try to swallow them, but you spit them out.

01:10:45.223 Maybe not everyone has eaten sugar cane,

01:10:48.565 but I had many times the chance to in Vietnam

01:10:51.502 and other southeast Asian countries.

01:10:54.517 I love so much sugar cane.

01:10:57.014 Thay talked about the Dharma like sugar cane.

01:11:00.562 When we get the teachings, like on right diligence,

01:11:04.829 we need to know

01:11:08.501 how to extract the sugar and spit out the fibers.

01:11:14.015 if we get caught in the form of the Dharma, in the words,

01:11:18.466 that is like the fiber.

01:11:21.235 Once you get the sweet juice, you spit out the fibers.

01:11:26.129 We need to treat the Dharma like that.

01:11:28.561 Last time I used the metaphor of the raft.

01:11:32.925 But this is another metaphor that I think Thay invented,

01:11:36.502 I don't know where he got it from. I like it.

01:11:39.533 The Dharma is like a sugar cane.

01:11:41.837 You chew on it to get the sweetness, and you spit out the fibers.

01:11:49.249 That way you don't get caught.

01:11:51.887 Somebody who tries to chew and swallow the fibers,

01:11:54.893 they will start coughing and feel very uncomfortable,

01:11:58.054 because they cannot digest it.

01:12:01.295 That is a not the correct way.

01:12:05.086 We don't grasp the Dharma like that.

01:12:07.663 The Dharma is there for us to touch nirvana, get the sweet.

01:12:12.403 And then, we can let go of it.

01:12:16.298 Okay. so we covered the fifth tenet today.

01:12:22.186 It is possible, this is so important.

01:12:28.975 Don't waste your life thinking that you cannot touch nirvana.

01:12:54.264 (Bell)

01:12:57.690 (Bell)

01:13:19.388 (Bell)

01:13:42.439 (Bell)