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# (Class #7) Not Born Means Nirvana and It Is  
Awakening to the Truth of the Deathless

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00:00:03. 435 (Bell)

00:00:09. 008 (Bell)

00:00:29. 846 (Bell)

00:00:52. 613 (Bell)

00:01:35. 001 Dear respected Thay, dear brothers  
and sisters,

00:01:43. 449 Can you hear?

00:01:47. 878 Breathing in, I know the sound is still  
low.

00:01:54. 778 Breathing out, I smile to the low  
sound.

00:02:07. 541 Breathing in,

00:02:12. 244 I see the green of the evening,

00:02:16. 849 the dusk settling on the trees around  
the meditation hall.

00:02:40. 474 Now it's muted, now it's unmuted.

00:03:12. 904 Being online you can just enjoy  
yourbreathing, enjoy your sitting,

00:03:20. 820 come back to your body.

00:03:26. 810 Allow the breath to come in and out  
naturally,

00:03:34. 082 like the waves on the ocean.

00:03:40. 852 You don't need to control the breath.

00:03:46. 511 We just recognize this wondrous  
presence

00:03:52. 111 as it moves in and out through our  
nose, our mouth,

00:03:59. 157 our belly rising.

00:04:05. 933 And then gently falling.

00:04:14. 091 It's just like we're sitting on the beach,

00:04:17. 260 watching the waves play on the surface  
of the water.

00:04:39. 413 Again, dear respected Thay, dear  
community,

00:04:43. 919 today is the 5th of May in the year  
2021

00:04:49. 990 and we're still going deeper and  
deeper into the 40 tenets of Plum Village.

00:05:03. 848 Today we're looking into the seventh  
tenet.

00:05:08. 772 But before I share about that,

00:05:12. 262 I want to share a little bit about what  
we did yesterday.

00:05:17. 470 Sister Kinh Nghiem was invited to go

00:05:22. 994 to speak at a ceremony called May  
We Gather in Los Angeles.

00:05:30. 744 And Thay Phap Dung and I went to  
support her.

00:05:35. 700 It was a very beautiful ceremony at a  
Japanese Soto temple in Los Angeles.

00:05:46. 282 Many representatives from different  
Buddhist traditions were there

00:05:54. 832 to commemorate 49 days of the  
killings in Georgia of eight women.

00:06:02. 690 Six of them of Asian descent.

00:06:06. 481 A man with a lot of hatred, anger in  
his heart

00:06:11. 025 he went in and shot those women.

00:06:20. 675 So this is a beautiful ceremony of  
healing,

00:06:24. 247 of bringing the Asian-American  
community together

00:06:27. 647 to speak about the paramitas,

00:06:34. 574 like generosity, morality, precepts,

00:06:41. 670 patience, energy, meditation.

00:06:52. 294 And especially to speak for not only  
those women,

00:06:56. 974 but also others who've been killed

00:07:00. 328 because of their outer form and also  
culture.

00:07:11. 010 To look into the violence

00:07:14. 629 that is still in the collective consciousness very deeply.

00:07:21. 926 And we had a chance

00:07:26. 012 to listen to monks and nuns from many different traditions,

00:07:32. 986 from Korean tradition, from Tibetan tradition,

00:07:37. 966 Sri Lanka, Thailand,

00:07:42. 017 as well as Vietnamese tradition and Japanese tradition

00:07:49. 005 chanting the Heart Sutra,

00:07:53. 093 chanting the Ratana Sutta,

00:07:59. 062 chanting verses of protection,

00:08:05. 755 of peace and transformation.

00:08:17. 614 So I feel it's important

00:08:20. 891 to look into, when we study these deep teachings of Buddhism,

00:08:25. 374 to also recognize

00:08:30. 385 that as a collective we have a long way to go

00:08:34. 138 in how we discriminate, how we, out of our fear of change,

00:08:40. 695 fear of what we don't know,

00:08:44. 099 we can resort to this kind of hatred and violence, violent action.

00:08:52. 556 In that ceremony, they showed a short clip

00:08:56. 807 of the two sons of one of the women who was killed in Georgia.

00:09:06. 033 So painful to listen to these two grown men

00:09:12. 894 who had so much love for their mother,

00:09:16. 959 who taught them respect for others, who taught them

00:09:21. 609 how to not discriminate, how to love others.

00:09:30. 723 And to have her be killed in such an act,

00:09:37. 151 senseless act of violence.

00:09:40. 679 It's very moving.

00:09:55. 461 So it was an invitation for me to also look in my own practice,

00:10:00. 423 and see ways that I still discriminate,

00:10:04. 151 ways that I still,

00:10:08. 935 through the culture I inherit,

00:10:12. 603 through the body that is transmitted by my parents.

00:10:17. 998 And have humility and also patience.

00:10:23. 916 One of the other paramitas, very very important,

00:10:28. 723 paramita or perfection, the perfection of patience.

00:10:40. 061 How to be able to not react

00:10:45. 060 when someone speaks or acts out of anger,

00:10:49. 376 when someone blames.

00:10:53. 370 But to have compassion and patience for that person.

00:11:01. 177 How to really allow them

00:11:08. 200 to have maybe the only compassionate person that they've met in a long time

00:11:16. 340 come into their gaze, come into their being

00:11:24. 009 so their heart can open up, and that hatred, that anger,

00:11:28. 323 will no longer continue to overwhelm them.

00:11:33. 288 This is a deep act of a bodhisattva.

00:11:37. 475 How to cultivate that kind of patience in our practice.

00:11:52. 075 And I do feel deeply that what we're learning in this 40 tenets classes

00:11:59. 728 is helping me

00:12:01. 834 to let go of the grasping of views that lead to judgment, to anger, to prejudice.

00:12:10. 238 I think it's the brilliance of the Buddha.

00:12:15. 030 We often hear the story,

00:12:21. 187 the teaching about teaching a man  
orgiving a man a fish.

00:12:25. 624 Then he has something to eat for  
dinner that day.

00:12:30. 460 But if you teach him how to fish,  
then he can have food for the rest of his life.

00:12:35. 951 Although we are vegetarian, so we  
don't fish.

00:12:40. 804 But I think,

00:12:46. 873 as practitioners,

00:12:50. 382 we learn to go into the deep  
teaching the Buddha offered.

00:12:57. 668 It means that we're not satisfied just  
to have this view or that view about things,

00:13:07. 566 but we want to go deep beyond all  
views and notions.

00:13:12. 970 And be able to, in the present  
moment,

00:13:18. 159 keep our mind in such a way that it is  
luminously open,

00:13:28. 887 and not affected by fear or judgment.

00:13:35. 908 And we know that in the historical  
dimension

00:13:39. 532 there is judgment, there is blame,  
there is violence, there is hatred.

00:13:45. 969 But we have this kind of deep  
aspiration to cultivate patience,

00:13:54. 257 to be able to go beyond just the hatred  
and the anger.

00:14:16. 880 One of the priests who was there, I  
think her name is Christina Moon

00:14:23. 603 from a Rinzai temple in Hawaii,

00:14:32. 663 she started to read the names of the  
women who had been killed in Georgia.

00:14:39. 556 Her voice started to falter and she had  
trouble to say it.

00:14:58. 422 Thay often said anyone who dies, who  
experiences pain,

00:15:06. 295 we also experience that pain, we die a  
little bit.

00:15:13. 190 I remember he shared that when the  
tsunami hit the coast of India,

00:15:20. 320 more than 15 years ago.

00:15:26. 829 That is the heart of compassion, to be  
able to have our heart open,

00:15:32. 358 so that every time we read, we  
hear about the suffering in the world,

00:15:37. 900 we're able to die a little bit,

00:15:43. 021 knowing that this body is  
impermanent,

00:15:46. 240 and we are also subject to sickness, to  
death, that we are also fragile,

00:15:51. 904 that it is a miracle that we continue to  
breathe, we continue to walk

00:15:57. 367 to sleep every day.

00:16:02. 089 And knowing that those women, they  
don't get that chance.

00:16:12. 356 That is dying a little bit.

00:16:15. 253 And as a practitioner, we can hold  
that,

00:16:18. 589 we can learn how to not get carried  
away by feelings of despair about the situation.

00:16:30. 578 So that ceremony felt like a beautiful  
coming together.

00:16:36. 769 I felt very fortunate to be able to be  
there.

00:16:40. 727 It was an act of compassion in  
response to hatred.

00:16:49. 941 And that is really our deep aspiration.

00:16:54. 915 If we can cultivate that capacity  
to respond to hatred, to violence,

00:16:59. 066 with compassion and understanding,  
even if someone is threatening our own life,

00:17:04. 347 even if someone threatens to hurt us  
or harm us in some way.

00:17:14. 753 So as monastics, we have the  
sangha and we're all practicing together.

00:17:22. 540 But we know that it's more difficult  
to practice that kind of bodhisattva path,

00:17:32. 949 a little bit more difficult when we have  
vulnerable ones near us,

00:17:36. 850 like our children,

00:17:40. 473 or our partner, our spouse, it is a little bit more difficult,

00:17:44. 799 because we have such a deep rooted, evolved drive to protect our loved ones,

00:17:56. 002 to protect our partner, to protect our children, especially.

00:18:02. 190 So we make that deep determination to go forth to live the monastic life

00:18:09. 717 knowing that with this body we can practice that kind of non-fear.

00:18:18. 294 And of course, we want to protect all of our brothers and sisters too.

00:18:23. 200 But we know that

00:18:27. 373 we are on the path together, we are all cultivating that kind of non-fear.

00:18:31. 963 And that is for me a great beauty of the monastic path.

00:18:36. 584 I know if I was a father and I had my own children,

00:18:42. 886 it would be more difficult to have that kind of aspiration,

00:18:47. 523 to be able to not be so attached to this body,

00:18:50. 981 that I can let it go at any moment.

00:18:55. 819 It's still difficult as a monk,

00:18:59. 122 it's difficult to really have that kind of non-fear.

00:19:12. 564 In the world that we face now, there are many wonderful things,

00:19:19. 703 but there's a lot of uncertainty.

00:19:28. 565 And going deeply into understanding nirvana like we're doing in this class

00:19:34. 232 can be very helpful.

00:19:36. 536 I really love how Thay has brought nirvana closer to the life of practice.

00:19:50. 177 For so many centuries, so many teachers have put nirvana way out there,

00:19:56. 109 have put the unconditioned, something that is the goal of the practice

00:20:02. 674 but I cannot even begin to consider touching such a thing,

00:20:12. 165 or feeling such a bliss, such an awakening.

00:20:21. 327 So I feel so grateful for Thay.

00:20:26. 572 I remember,

00:20:31. 034 even as a novice, a few years when I was in Upper Hamlet,

00:20:38. 543 I wrote a letter to Thay and I said, Thay, I feel like I can die now.

00:20:43. 438 I feel so happy.

00:20:46. 900 I feel so free. I don't need to -

00:20:53. 244 I felt very joyful.

00:20:57. 156 It was a real feeling of release.

00:21:01. 534 I saw that until that moment I had still a lot of attachment to my body.

00:21:08. 296 That was a momentary thing. Later on, fear came back.

00:21:14. 938 A moment of -

00:21:19. 898 And wanting to protect this body, wanting to

00:21:23. 562 try to be free from harm.

00:21:30. 188 But keeping that aspiration alive,

00:21:37. 679 the invitation of Thay to touch the unconditioned

00:21:41. 920 in every moment through out the days as a very concrete practice

00:21:45. 790 I find it so helpful.

00:21:50. 583 And, as I shared in the other classes, when you do that practice,

00:21:56. 111 you have to be very careful,

00:22:00. 186 because what you think is unconditioned is probably conditioned.

00:22:05. 365 If you're able to think about it, it's already conditioned.

00:22:09. 065 That is a kind of Zen teaching.

00:22:11. 471 So then that opens up a new space and then you go deeper and deeper,

00:22:16. 075 and more of this silence opens up.

00:22:22. 652 And you feel very light, very joyful, very free.

00:22:32. 972 Maybe we can listen to a bell.

00:22:52. 753 (Bell)

00:23:17. 727 Before going on to the seventh tenet,

00:23:23. 190 there was a question from the class two weeks ago.

00:23:31. 997 Thay uses the model of

00:23:42. 303 a horizontal relationship between phenomena,

00:23:49. 896 and the vertical relationship between phenomena and noumena.

00:23:55. 990 Last time we learned about the separate investigation of sign and nature.

00:24:03. 065 A separate investigation of phenomena and noumena.

00:24:24. 060 [separate investigation of sign and nature]

00:24:53. 308 Nature here in the sense of the ultimate,

00:24:58. 357 the unconditioned.

00:25:00. 507 And sign as anything that has a quality.

00:25:05. 516 Form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or object of mind. So thought as well.

00:25:15. 155 And I shared a little bit about

00:25:20. 111 we have, for example, a thought

00:25:26. 211 about an object.

00:25:28. 708 And that is all happening at the horizontal level.

00:25:32. 488 We have a thought and then the object of our thought.

00:25:36. 865 I can think about the flower.

00:25:44. 069 My eyes look at the flower and notice its color, its form, its shape.

00:25:50. 615 So that is a relationship between the phenomenon of my eyes, looking,

00:25:58. 055 and the object.

00:26:00. 338 And Thay uses the image of a horizontal relationship to describe that.

00:26:06. 354 So everything that is happening in the phenomenal world,

00:26:09. 696 anything that has a quality, anything we can perceive

00:26:15. 339 is happening at a horizontal level.

00:26:21. 098 So there was a question, what does the vertical come in?

00:26:29. 058 I thought it might be more helpful to look at it as a plane.

00:27:07. 852 Actually, a plane is not enough.

00:27:13. 045 We can extend it into three dimensions or more,

00:27:17. 292 four dimensions including space and time.

00:27:21. 418 Because it's difficult to draw that on the boards.

00:27:26. 323 So we can just think for the moment of this,

00:27:33. 689 you can look at this as space and this as time.

00:27:40. 947 Space or -I guess we maybe we do it the other way.

00:27:45. 792 It makes more sense.

00:27:52. 315 Time is moving this way,

00:27:59. 958 and then space. Moving around in space.

00:28:12. 525 So the relationship between two phenomena at the same point of time

00:28:17. 653 in different spaces,

00:28:21. 195 and the relationship between phenomena

00:28:24. 546 in the same space at a different point of time.

00:28:29. 340 For example.

00:28:35. 098 And the insight of this way of looking, this is just a way of looking,

00:28:41. 312 is that at every point in time and space

00:28:46. 606 there is

00:28:54. 983 the opportunity to touch the ultimate.

00:28:58. 528 You touch nirvana.

00:29:01. 093 Thay used to say, 'Everything has already been nirvanized since beginningless time.

00:29:06. 983 It's only we need to wake up to recognize that. '

00:29:10. 895 Whatever phenomena is happening -

00:29:16. 939 For example, this body, our very body.

00:29:21. 118 We can touch nirvana.

00:29:24. 481 And Thay goes even farther, he says,

00:29:27. 711 using the example of the wave in the water,

00:29:31. 099 'The wave already is water. It doesn't need to touch anything.

00:29:37. 536 It just needs to wake up to that realization, that it is already water. '

00:29:44. 605 In the same way,

00:29:46. 445 thinking about the relationship between phenomena on a plane,

00:29:52. 537 in this case two dimensions, three dimensions, four dimensions,

00:29:56. 782 including space and time.

00:29:59. 780 But we look into every phenomenon,

00:30:03. 490 anything that is going on and see in there

00:30:07. 821 there is the unconditioned. Its unconditioned nature.

00:30:13. 563 In that way we become free, because we see that what is manifesting

00:30:19. 923 is the result of action.

00:30:25. 901 In the Buddhist tradition we talk about actions of body, speech, and mind.

00:30:35. 274 [3 karmas: body, speech, mind]

00:30:52. 906 The three kinds of karma or action.

00:30:57. 815 And this is a human teaching.

00:31:04. 759 It's for human beings.

00:31:08. 119 Actually, the Dharma is for human beings.

00:31:12. 101 The principles that are there can be experienced by any beings,

00:31:17. 649 even non-living beings.

00:31:22. 013 But the Buddha, when he's teaching us he's teaching us as human beings.

00:31:26. 942 And human beings, we have a body, we have speech, we have a mind.

00:31:32. 619 And that area of activity, our body, our speech and mind,

00:31:39. 829 is within our control.

00:31:43. 841 It's something we can affect.

00:31:46. 837 Now everything that we think, everything that we say, everything that we do

00:31:51. 516 is also the product of our ancestors, of our culture, of our education,

00:31:58. 242 of everything that has brought us to this present moment.

00:32:05. 318 So it's also not us.

00:32:10. 230 It is within our control but it is also -

00:32:14. 589 Anything that we could say is in our control is also the product of

00:32:20. 733 all those things: our cultures, our ancestors.

00:32:24. 945 So when a white mangoes into a massage parlor

00:32:30. 457 and starts shooting an Asian woman,

00:32:36. 351 it's not only about an individual.

00:32:40. 181 It's about the collective, it's about the culture,

00:32:43. 860 it's about understanding, it's about ignorance, about hatred

00:32:50. 837 that has been transmitted and is manifesting in the present moment.

00:32:58. 313 And we have ultimate responsibility

00:33:01. 926 for what we do with our body, speech and mind.

00:33:06. 419 That is the teaching of the Buddha.

00:33:10. 613 We've been handed all of these conditions in our culture by our ancestors,

00:33:18. 360 but what do we do with it?

00:33:20. 890 That is up to us.

00:33:23. 371 And that knowledge can set you free.

00:33:37. 334 So by recognizing that with this body,  
with these feelings, with these perceptions

00:33:43. 663 there is the unconditioned nature,

00:33:48. 503 then we free ourselves from our  
habitual ways of doing things.

00:33:53. 804 We are no longer caught in the cycle,

00:33:56. 518 just running around like a hamster in a  
wheel

00:34:01. 663 with what has been given to us,  
just trying to get a little bit of sustenance

00:34:06. 986 to survive the next moment, the next  
hour, the next day,

00:34:12. 500 but we're able to stop.

00:34:18. 159 Come back to this body, come back to  
our breathing,

00:34:23. 672 recognize and smile to the habits, the  
seeds, the tendencies

00:34:30. 864 that have been handed to us,

00:34:33. 661 that we have also continued to  
nourish by our distraction, by our worry,

00:34:39. 935 by our anxiety, by our fear.

00:34:43. 583 And we just smile to it.

00:34:46. 214 I'm not going to run after you  
anymore.

00:34:51. 176 I want to stand here as a free person.

00:34:59. 849 I want to be in touch with this  
unconditioned nature

00:35:05. 511 which can free me from

00:35:12. 644 the currents of suffering which have  
continued

00:35:17. 534 generation after generation.

00:35:20. 710 And that manifests in my thinking,  
manifests in my speech,

00:35:25. 163 manifests in my bodily actions.

00:35:31. 364 It's wonderful!

00:35:33. 923 There's so much space and freedom.

00:35:37. 990 So for a moment we touch that. We  
see very clearly,

00:35:41. 692 just like the wave. The wave is water.  
You see it clearly.

00:35:47. 741 Then, you come back into the habits,  
the worries, the anxiety.

00:35:57. 280 That is what I mean when I say Thay  
made nirvana something so close.

00:36:06. 355 Thay sometimes says

00:36:15. 807 Thay is a little bit more insatiable than  
the Buddha,

00:36:19. 487 in the sense that he -

00:36:25. 129 I remember one time Thay saying

00:36:27. 612 he wanted to add the three doors of  
liberation

00:36:30. 775 to the 16 steps of mindful breathing.

00:36:34. 855 Thay loved the three doors of  
liberation so much, he felt

00:36:38. 833 he wanted to add them to make 19  
steps of mindful breathing,

00:36:44. 180 with emptiness, signlessness, and  
aimlessness.

00:36:49. 717 It's good to have a little bit of that in  
our practice of the Dharma,

00:36:56. 859 to be wanting to learn more, to open  
more doors,

00:37:01. 792 to not be content to allow the deeper  
teachings

00:37:09. 235 to be put somewhere else far away  
from us,

00:37:14. 176 but to really allow it to come in and  
see I can touch that,

00:37:18. 242 there's something there, there's some  
freedom in me.

00:37:23. 084 There's some joy in me.

00:37:25. 797 I know there's also pain, there's also  
suffering,

00:37:29. 010 there's also misunderstanding,  
judgment, blame,

00:37:32. 923 but there's also joy, there's also  
happiness,

00:37:37. 268 there's also space, there's also the  
unconditioned,

00:37:43. 709 there's also nirvana.

00:37:48. 032 Please, allow that to be possible.

00:37:51. 304 It's just allowing.

00:37:53. 542 It's not a hard work.

00:37:56. 584 It's just stopping and allowing that to come in,

00:38:02. 056 allowing that possibility.

00:38:05. 156 And then finding skillful ways to maintain it.

00:38:11. 755 So what do we do here at the monastery?

00:38:14. 469 We are just creating conditions

00:38:16. 650 to maintain that kind of awareness in every moment.

00:38:22. 694 But even as monastics, we can easily get caught

00:38:25. 889 by the trappings of the good conditions.

00:38:29. 836 Last week we had a monastic retreat.

00:38:32. 383 That's why we could not have the class last week,

00:38:35. 365 because the monastics were nourishing our own sangha body,

00:38:39. 572 our collective sangha body.

00:38:42. 690 We are so fortunate that many local lay sanghas

00:38:46. 554 who were fully vaccinated were able to come up

00:38:49. 565 and serve food, offer food for the monastics.

00:38:52. 589 It's very good food.

00:38:55. 869 I really enjoyed the food, I like the food of my brothers,

00:38:59. 914 there's a lot of love and compassion there,

00:39:02. 460 but I also really like the food that was offered by our lay community.

00:39:08. 169 And I see that if I'm not careful as a monk,

00:39:11. 894 I can get attached to that delicious food.

00:39:20. 863 It can be a very comfortable life as a monk.

00:39:25. 564 And I lose my deep aspiration,

00:39:30. 889 which is to make good use of those conditions.

00:39:35. 068 Now we talk a lot about privilege,

00:39:38. 810 recognizing things like white privilege,

00:39:41. 977 and class privilege and the privilege of the wealthy.

00:39:50. 887 If we have the privilege to have a human body,

00:39:55. 065 then we can benefit from the Dharma, we can learn how to take care of our body,

00:40:01. 525 take care of our speech, take care of our mind.

00:40:05. 198 All of us have some kind of privilege.

00:40:08. 868 If we are privileged enough to be a monastic,

00:40:13. 012 to live in the monastery,

00:40:15. 389 then we don't just enjoy the good food and that's it,

00:40:21. 050 but we see that all this food is being offered to us with love and care

00:40:26. 433 for us to bring about the transformation not only of ourselves,

00:40:30. 843 but of all of our ancestors, who didn't have that opportunity,

00:40:36. 437 who went and worked every day to be able to put food on the table,

00:40:41. 433 to be able to send their children to school,

00:40:44. 262 to be able to travel to the United States

00:40:47. 817 to have what they believed to be a new opportunity, a new chance.

00:40:55. 417 So to live the life of a monk or a nun

00:40:59. 054 there are not enough conditions for them.



00:41:05. 157 But here we are, we have this beautiful meditation hall.

00:41:09. 304 I don't know if our brother over there is with the camera

00:41:14. 797 and we can all enjoy the new installation behind the altar

00:41:23. 272 of Thay's teaching,

00:41:28. 645 just, I think, from this morning or yesterday.

00:41:32. 706 This morning?

00:41:35. 303 'Arrived at home'

00:41:43. 579 We can listen to a bell.

00:41:47. 290 [arrived at home]

00:41:56. 693 (Bell)

00:42:25. 418 So we make good use of the privilege of having a human body

00:42:31. 823 to be able to recognize that

00:42:34. 458 we have already been nirvanized since beginningless time.

00:42:38. 049 Every atom, every cell in our body.

00:42:41. 618 And our practice is to make good use of these conditions

00:42:47. 374 that we have in this lifetime

00:42:50. 491 to be able to touch that,

00:42:52. 658 to bring that in every moment and every second.

00:42:57. 067 And what I find is that I don't complain anymore.

00:43:06. 557 Somebody is calling.

00:43:16. 044 I don't get caught up in my worries so much anymore.

00:43:21. 191 That is a kind of litmus test of the practice.

00:43:24. 306 You see that it's not that you don't have worries, that you don't have anxiety,

00:43:28. 635 but it's less. It's not so strong.

00:43:32. 647 And then, with every day a little bit less, a little bit less.

00:43:36. 309 And suddenly a deep,

00:43:39. 467 a deep habitual tendency is touched.

00:43:43. 303 That seed comes up.

00:43:46. 498 This happens to most of us very often as practitioners.

00:43:50. 898 We think we're doing quite well, things are going well,

00:43:54. 356 we feel at ease, we feel happy in our sitting meditation practice,

00:43:58. 304 happy in our walking meditation practice, we feel joyful,

00:44:04. 712 everyone in the sangha is a wonderful brother and sister.

00:44:08. 525 And then, suddenly somebody says something,

00:44:11. 307 and then that deep ancestral seed is touched, we feel disrespected,

00:44:17. 697 we feel dehumanized, we feel condescended to,

00:44:22. 500 we feel violated. And then,

00:44:28. 271 the strong mental formation, anger, the bitterness.

00:44:34. 747 So the work of a mindfulness practitioner is to hold all of that.

00:44:39. 359 It doesn't mean we haven't been a good practitioner.

00:44:43. 720 Many people come on retreat and they feel like more suffering comes up.

00:44:48. 714 They say, 'What? I'm supposed to come on the retreat

00:44:51. 979 and just feel happiness and joy. '

00:44:54. 477 No, no. You misunderstood.

00:44:57. 408 it's because you want the deep spoon massage.

00:45:04. 269 That is why you come on a retreat.

00:45:06. 863 You're not satisfied only just to continue at the superficial level,

00:45:12. 126 and think, 'This body is me, these feelings are me,

00:45:15. 173 these perceptions are me' and all these kinds of thoughts,

00:45:18. 435 but you want to go beyond that.

00:45:20. 615 And you want to touch this vertical nature

00:45:26. 839 that is in every cell of our body, every action, every phenomenon.

00:45:45. 990 So the seventh tenet.

00:46:34. 368 'Not born' means nirvana.

00:46:43. 029 17. Not born means nirvāṇa]

00:46:57. 313 And it is awakening to the truth

00:47:05. 538 [and it is awakening to the truth]

00:47:18. 782 of the deathless,

00:47:22. 712 [of the deathless]

00:47:31. 968 the no-coming

00:47:42. 416 and no-going,

00:47:45. 178 [the no-coming and no-going, ]

00:47:50. 673 the not same

00:47:59. 920 and not different,

00:48:02. 518 [the not same and not different, ]

00:48:18. 199 the not-being

00:48:27. 802 and not nonbeing.

00:48:30. 711 [the not-being and not nonbeing. ]

00:48:53. 372 We have the song, # Arrived, arrived

00:48:59. 513 # at home, I am at home.

00:49:05. 012 # Dwelling in the here, # and dwelling in the now,

00:49:14. 268 # solid as a mountain, # free as a white cloud.

00:49:24. 859 # The door of no birth# and no death is open,

00:49:35. 713 # free and unshakable. #

00:49:44. 970 So the new sign, "Arrived, at home".

00:49:53. 079 That is,

00:49:56. 455 "at home, I am at home" means no coming, no going.

00:50:01. 485 There's nowhere to go, nothing to do.

00:50:04. 794 You're no longer in a hurry.

00:50:08. 244 So at the horizontal plane,

00:50:17. 037 of course, there is coming and going.

00:50:20. 967 At the dimension of space,

00:50:26. 960 things are moving from here. . .

00:50:32. 168 Or I should say,

00:50:38. 481 at the dimension of space, there's something here, something there.

00:50:43. 309 There's a here and a there.

00:50:47. 804 And over time, something can move in space

00:50:51. 466 from here to there.

00:50:55. 446 But the vertical

00:50:59. 325 does not change.

00:51:10. 646 In the Manifestation Only school of Buddhism,

00:51:15. 026 we are invited to look at all phenomena as manifestations

00:51:20. 136 of our actions of body, speech, and mind.

00:51:27. 146 And that is not for the sake of physics,

00:51:31. 158 or trying to describe reality, but rather it's very practical.

00:51:39. 483 As human beings we have a body, we have a mind,

00:51:44. 245 speech, we can speak.

00:51:47. 008 So by generating thought, generating speech, generating action of our body

00:51:56. 032 we have some determination of what kind of experience we will have

00:52:04. 521 both in the present moment and in the future.

00:52:08. 436 All of these streams of -

00:52:11. 899 or as we call them, seeds in the collective consciousness

00:52:18. 105 are there all combining into this one present moment always.

00:52:24. 455 And in this present moment we can decide how we want to think,

00:52:29. 263 how we want to speak, how we want to act.

00:52:32. 210 And those actions then bear fruit

00:52:35. 890 in the feelings, perceptions, mental formations, body and so forth

00:52:42. 714 that we experience going forward into the future.

00:52:50. 308 So it's very practical.

00:52:53. 076 This is a teaching which is based on being able to give us freedom

00:52:57. 957 to do things that bring us joy, bring us happiness in the present moment.

00:53:04. 359 It's not just for the sake of describing reality.

00:53:08. 590 Many people when they learn about karma,

00:53:11. 621 then they get caught in a kind of absolute notion of karma.

00:53:16. 539 And they say, 'Everything is karma.'

00:53:21. 254 The sun,

00:53:23. 958 a supernova, that is because of karma,

00:53:26. 667 because somebody thought something.

00:53:29. 118 That is getting caught in the description of reality

00:53:32. 298 rather than seeing the Dharma as a teaching which is to help

00:53:36. 107 human beings in the present moment.

00:53:38. 855 Someone with a human body,

00:53:41. 627 whose actions have real effects in the world,

00:53:45. 001 like this man who decided to take a gun and shoot

00:53:48. 916 women working in a massage parlor in Georgia.

00:53:57. 360 We, as a collective, we have provided conditions for that to happen.

00:54:02. 775 We provided the gun,

00:54:05. 900 we provided the racism, the hatred,

00:54:12. 864 we provided all the conditions that were necessary.

00:54:20. 342 But ultimately he also had to provide the last condition,

00:54:25. 020 which is to get in his car, drive there, and take out the gun and start shooting.

00:54:35. 210 So he has to experience the fruit of those violent actions.

00:54:42. 134 And the fruit of those actions, the worst part of it is not being in jail.

00:54:53. 376 That is a reality.

00:54:56. 172 And any of us who are practitioners knows

00:55:01. 366 that when we harm somebody, when we harm ourselves,

00:55:06. 879 it brings great suffering to ourselves and to others.

00:55:14. 188 And that suffering cannot be compared with

00:55:18. 700 what suffering can be imposed upon us by the world.

00:55:22. 902 Of course,

00:55:25. 750 there is justice in the world.

00:55:29. 678 There is going to prison, spending your life in jail,

00:55:37. 402 but to live with that pain

00:55:41. 826 is so difficult, so painful.

00:55:55. 118 Similarly, when someone is angry at us, when somebody is hateful towards us,

00:56:01. 027 we can learn not to engage in the hatred, not to engage in the anger,

00:56:07. 040 because then it's like, they say it takes two to tango, right?

00:56:12. 165 So every time someone blames us or judges us and we react,

00:56:16. 880 we say, 'No! It's not true! How can you say such a thing!'

00:56:20. 923 we are joining in, we are lured into the game

00:56:25. 470 of blaming and judging.

00:56:30. 438 That is why, when we can see that person with compassion

00:56:33. 879 and we can see this is a person who is suffering greatly,

00:56:37. 926 if I speak out, and I also blame, and I also judge,

00:56:43. 386 I also speak out of anger,

00:56:46. 083 I will only make myself suffer and make the other person suffer even more.

00:56:54. 157 What if I practice patience

00:56:59. 053 and stop my actions of speech, my actions of thinking,

00:57:04. 997 and just try to look with the eyes of the unconditioned at this person,

00:57:11. 322 at the suffering, try to understand,

00:57:14. 681 not just continue to feed into the perceptions we have about that person.

00:57:20. 100 It could be our loved one, it could be our brother, our sister.

00:57:24. 159 And we just continue to allow our -

00:57:28. 305 It could be a collective perception, we go into the room,

00:57:32. 168 we talk about that brother, we talk about that sister,

00:57:35. 727 and in doing so we create a prison for them.

00:57:41. 187 We don't allow them the chance to bloom like a flower,

00:57:44. 571 to show their unconditioned nature, to grow and to flourish.

00:57:58. 113 And it's very beautiful what can happen when we have that kind of non-fear.

00:58:06. 822 We're able to go into an uncomfortable place.

00:58:10. 613 Nobody wants to be there when someone is blaming them,

00:58:14. 397 yelling at them, judging them.

00:58:18. 288 Nobody wants to go into that situation.

00:58:22. 674 But as practitioners, if we learn when it arises,

00:58:27. 485 when somebody is blaming us,

00:58:29. 683 when they're judging, when they are full of hatred and anger,

00:58:33. 112 if we can just smile, be joyful.

00:58:36. 073 Genuinely.

00:58:38. 559 We don't allow that hatred and anger to penetrate our mind,

00:58:42. 104 but rather give rise to compassion.

00:58:44. 903 That is touching the vertical.

00:58:49. 130 That is a chance to allow the habitual conditioning

00:58:54. 305 to just fall away.

00:58:57. 920 I don't need to react, I don't need to judge like I have in the past.

00:59:06. 244 And you may be very surprised at how that person responds.

00:59:12. 838 It might not happen the first time, second time,

00:59:16. 085 but you continue in that path.

00:59:19. 578 This is something I practice with my family,

00:59:22. 421 I practice with my brothers and sisters, not perfectly.

00:59:26. 370 Sometimes I also tangle.

00:59:29. 137 But I've also seen the possibility of understanding, of compassion, of patience.

00:59:37. 795 And allowing space for that person to be

00:59:45. 538 free from the prison of perceptions,

00:59:49. 116 whether at the collective level, or at the individual level.

00:59:54. 005 This is the kind of thing which touching the unconditioned,

00:59:58. 202 going beyond what is known allows.

01:00:02. 776 It allows that space for growth to happen, for new possibility, for peace and joy.

01:00:19. 894 So these eight notions which Thay references here,

01:00:30. 081 no-birth, no-death, no-coming, no-going,

01:00:36. 595 not same, not different, not-being and not nonbeing,

01:00:42. 205 when we look deeply into our thinking,

01:00:46. 502 you may find that

01:00:50. 581 every thought has one of these or more as its foundation.

01:01:01. 034 We want to go, we want to come somewhere.

01:01:10. 925 We want to be born.

01:01:12. 638 At every moment we are being born and we are dying,

01:01:15. 883 At every moment, with every word, with every thought, we are becoming someone.

01:01:20. 680 And we're also leaving behind someone.

01:01:24. 596 It happens so quickly.

01:01:29. 287 In our very body cells are constantly being born and constantly dying,

01:01:34. 411 in every moment.

01:01:36. 733 So it's more proper to see this body

01:01:43. 391 as a vast community of living beings

01:01:48. 547 constantly being born and constantly dying.

01:01:54. 448 Not just, 'This is one body and this is me, '

01:01:58. 059 but it's a multitude.

01:02:01. 306 So in this constantly being born and constantly dying,

01:02:04. 803 is it possible to go beyond any concept of being born and dying?

01:02:11. 340 Can we see that in the very essence of being born

01:02:16. 367 there are all the conditions for death?

01:02:19. 283 That we cannot conceive of being born without dying?

01:02:24. 956 Being born has no meaning without dying.

01:02:30. 484 How could something be born if something cannot die?

01:02:33. 817 And how can something die if it has not been born?

01:02:38. 680 So going beyond this we touch the non-dual nature of reality.

01:02:47. 188 We talked about the cloud, a cloud never dies.

01:02:50. 717 The cloud becomes the rain, becomes the river, goes into the ocean,

01:02:57. 126 that evaporates again with the sun, and becomes another cloud.

01:03:01. 516 So we can mourn the cloud dying when it becomes the rain,

01:03:06. 112 but that would be not recognizing its nature of no birth and no death.

01:03:16. 086 They often quoted the French chemist Lavoisier saying,

01:03:22. 426 'Nothing can be created, nothing can be destroyed. '

01:03:29. 361 (Fr. ): 'Rien ne se crée, rien ne se perd.

01:03:55. 597 Tout se transforme. '

01:03:58. 360 [Rien ne se crée, rien ne se perd. Tout se transforme. ]

01:04:09. 637 Nothing is created, nothing is lost. Everything is transformed.

01:04:15. 602 Everything is transformation, everything is transformed.

01:04:20. 529 So even in chemistry, there's that insight.

01:04:28. 218 We learn with the theory of relativity

01:04:31. 964 that energy can be transformed into matter and matter can be transformed into energy.

01:04:38. 435 But there is no loss in either case, nothing is lost.

01:04:44. 017 So even in physics, in science, there is that notion of no birth and no death.

01:04:50. 355 So when we fear death, we're actually fearing

01:04:54. 838 something which is in the very nature of our living body.

01:04:59. 667 There's no way we could be born without there being death.

01:05:05. 558 Our body goes back to the earth

01:05:08. 921 and it provides sustenance for all kinds of other living beings.

01:05:14. 199 And eventually it can be transformed into a tree, or a flower.

01:05:23. 106 And that is of the nature of this body.

01:05:27. 963 So touching that nature of transformation

01:05:31. 496 is touching the nature of no birth and no death. So beautiful!

01:05:35. 560 Because of no birth and no death, these orchids are possible.

01:05:42. 620 Because of no birth, no death, this body is possible, living is possible,

01:05:48. 214 thinking, speaking, breathing is possible.

01:05:53. 279 So what we're doing is we're going beyond notions of birth and death.

01:05:57. 557 We're recognizing that our thinking, and our attachment to our thoughts

01:06:03. 068 are founded on our ideas about being born and dying,

01:06:08. 843 about coming and going,

01:06:12. 620 same and different.

01:06:14. 735 This person is the same like me. That person, they look strange,

01:06:20. 767 they look different.

01:06:24. 144 I don't like that,

01:06:27. 976 the way that person looks, the way that person talks.

01:06:32. 355 That is the foundation of fear, and violence and hatred.

01:06:38. 815 Ideas about who is the same to me and who is different.

01:06:47. 372 Not-being and non-being.

01:06:51. 003 And this notion of being and non-being is deeply rooted under all of the notions.

01:06:57. 755 When we come and go somewhere, it's because we want to be somewhere else.

01:07:06. 394 When we want to be born, it's because we're not satisfied with who we are.

01:07:11. 650 We want to become something else.

01:07:16. 614 Or when we dislike somebody, we dislike a situation, we want it to go away,

01:07:24. 125 that is wishing a kind of death wish.

01:07:27. 469 We want it to not be.

01:07:30. 984 So underneath all of these notions of birth and death, no coming, no going,

01:07:35. 709 same and different are ultimately ideas about being and non-being.

01:07:41. 872 You want to be this or you don't want to be that.

01:07:46. 813 This basic wanting, desiring, grasping, and aversion.

01:07:56. 025 Being and non-being.

01:07:59. 070 So if we train our mind with the wisdom of the seventh tenet to see

01:08:09. 992 it's not enough just to keep talking about nirvana.

01:08:14. 604 Nirvana is just a word like any other word.

01:08:19. 993 We need to be able to train our mind to touch the unconditioned

01:08:24. 537 in the present moment.

01:08:27. 974 So this teaching on these eight points, the unborn, and the undying,

01:08:39. 957 no-coming, no-going, not same and not different,

01:08:44. 622 not-being and nonbeing,

01:08:48. 402 it's a kind of dialectic.

01:08:51. 432 Using words and concepts to be able to move beyond and transcend

01:08:58. 759 all concepts, all notions. That is the teaching of the Dharma.

01:09:03. 901 Because it's there to free our minds.

01:09:08. 193 It's there to help us to see our attachments, what we continue to grasp at.

01:09:18. 252 So when a Zen master gets in our face and he says, 'Hey!'

01:09:27. 060 that's because he sees that even though we may think we're not grasping,

01:09:33. 072 there's still something we're holding on to.

01:09:36. 068 There's still some notion about ourselves, about the world.

01:09:40. 265 Even to be proud to be a Buddhist, I'm Buddhist, I'm non-violent,

01:09:46. 091 I'm peaceful, I'm calm, that is also an attachment.

01:09:51. 602 That can keep us bound to the world of coming and going,

01:09:55. 837 being and non-being and so forth.

01:09:58. 284 So even those things that we hold most dear in our heart,

01:10:01. 597 just like the raft, we have to leave it at the shore. We don't continue to carry it.

01:10:07. 541 Because we know that we are a practitioner, when we come to the next river,

01:10:12. 219 we rely on our own insight to be able to know how to cross the river.

01:10:17. 244 We don't need to carry the raft with us.

01:10:21. 926 Thay uses the metaphor of -

01:10:26. 638 Maybe we can finish with the story of the man who lost his cows.

01:10:32. 431 He is running after them,

01:10:35. 194 and he discovers the Buddha and his monks

01:10:37. 860 sitting very calmly in the middle of the forest.

01:10:40. 805 He's so worried, so anxious, he's so distraught,

01:10:44. 549 because his cows mean everything to him, all of his wealth.

01:10:48. 660 They didn't have a bank.

01:10:52. 077 Many people didn't have money. Their wealth was in cows,

01:10:56. 840 sheep, goats, and their family, the children and land.

01:11:05. 543 And this farmer had lost his cows.

01:11:08. 628 And he was so distraught, 'What will I do? How will I live without my cows?'

01:11:14. 282 And the Buddha said, 'I'm so sorry, we didn't see your cows.'

01:11:17. 716 You have to go search elsewhere. '

01:11:20. 115 And after the man left, he turned to the monks and said,

01:11:23. 293 'You are the luckiest people alive. You don't have any cows to lose. '

01:11:29. 354 And that is our practice as monastics and as practitioners,

01:11:35. 999 to recognize what cows we still have in our life,

01:11:40. 807 what cows are we still running after

01:11:44. 091 that are keeping us from seeing the wonder of dwelling happily in the present moment,

01:11:50. 550 and really arriving at home.

01:11:55. 111 Thank you for supporting the class.

01:12:00. 189 For those of you online, we'll continue every week,

01:12:04. 767 we'll try to find a way to let you know if we don't have the class for some reason

01:12:10. 674 in the coming weeks.

01:12:12. 854 But I think the next few weeks we should be able to have the class.

01:12:19. 470 Thank you.

01:12:38. 254 (Bell)

01:12:44. 163 (Bell)

01:13:05. 874 (Bell)

01:13:29. 515 (Bell)

01:13:46. 744 (Bell)

01:14:21. 078 (Bell)

01:14:29. 687 (Bell)

01:14:34. 978 (Bell)

01:14:38. 623 So beautiful!