

TRANSCRIPT

CLASS 9: The Three Dharma Seals Are Impermanence, Non-Self and Nirvana

<https://www.youtube.com/live/o3myWgdiAll?si=VJ54VhR0tDt4UNGr>

00:04:02 the negative traits you have transmitted to me i vow to transform and heal you in me [Music] [Applause] [Music] oh [Music] [Music] [Music] foreign [Music] [Music] discuss on love he or she who wants to attain peace should practice being a bright humble capable of using loving speech he or she will know how to live simply and happily with senses come without being covetous and carried away [Music] by the emotions of the majority let him on her not do anything that will be disabled by the wise ones

00:07:19 [Music] and this is what he or she contemplates may everyone be happy and save and may all hearts be filled with joy may all beings live in security and in peace beings who are frail or strong tall or short big or small invisible or visible who are near far away already born or yet to be born of them dwell in perfect tranquility [Music] and no one do harm to anyone let no one put the life of anyone in danger let no one out of anger or real we wish anyone any harm just as a mother loves and protects

00:08:54 only child at the risk of her own life cultivate boundless love to author to all living beings in the entire cosmos let a boundless love pervade the whole universe above below and across our love will know no obstacles our heart will be absolutely free from hatred and entity whether standing or walking sitting or lying as long as we are awake we should maintain this mindfulness of love in our own heart this is the noblest way of life [Music] desire living in beauty and realizing perfect understanding

00:10:25 [Music] those who practice boundless love will certainly transcend birth and death [Music] a [Music] [Music] of the earth [Music] me i feel you so so [Music] so [Music] testing one two testing one two can you hear me good evening dear thai sangha today is the 19th of may in the year 2021 and we're continuing to study the 40 tenets of plum village teaching last week we talked about the three doors of liberation does anyone remember what's the first your mind is going completely empty i called the three doors of liberation

00:17:00 the heart of the buddha's teaching so there we can find everything we need to be free in sanskrit it's written the moksha bukha moksha is freedom and

muka is the entrance way like the gate so in english we say door and maybe doorway would be more it's the way in anyone emptiness that's the duck name and it's not just for the purpose of knowledge that we learn these three doors they are for the purpose of uh training our mind as a concentration so these are three kinds of deep concentration and in buddhism when we talk about

00:18:46 concentration we talk about it as a something that we apply and we maintain over time so when we practice to become aware of our breathing then we immediately learn to follow our breathing so we learn to be aware of the breath as it comes in through our nose goes down into our lungs and then we continue to maintain that awareness as the breath then is expelled from our lungs up through our trachea and coming out through our mouth or nose so already in the first few steps of mindful breathing we have a training on

00:19:31 concentration so concentration in terms of buddhist practice is not kind of wrinkling up your forehead and forcing yourself to focus on something it's a kind of focus but it's not something that makes us suffer it's something that we train in and we learn to maintain over time so in terms of entry way to freedom to liberation emptiness is only useful as a concentration not as a belief you could say oh i became a buddhist so i believe in emptiness and then that's it and what good is that what is helpful is that we learn to

00:20:25 look deeper into the nature of reality into all things and see that this body is empty this these feelings are empty these perceptions are empty these these mental formations are empty this consciousness is empty so that you free yourself from attachment to the body to feelings and perceptions and so forth you see that it's empty in what sense it's it's empty of a separate self so empty of the belief that there's some kind of essence outside of the the non-it elements so in the case of a flower we know like

00:21:17 we learned last week that a flower is made of only non-flower and elements like the sun and the earth and the rain the seed the the soil the temperature the air all those things are contributing to the manifestation of a flower and if you take any one of them out the flower cannot be there and so the same is true for us if you take away our mother or our father we cannot be here so we through the concentration on emptiness we don't see ourselves as just an individual we are a continuation of our ancestors our

00:22:02 mother and our father we are a continuation of the food that we eat we are a continuation of what we've learned from our parents from school from friends from teachers from the collective society from the news media and so with the practice in every moment of the concentration on emptiness then we take much more care in how we consume things because we know that we don't have the delusion that we are just some separate self that is pure and so if we watch that movie or we listen to that conversation

00:22:47 and that has that's full of hatred watering seeds of jealousy and fear we know that even we are a practitioner we can easily get carried away by that energy of jealousy and anger and fear and craving i think many of us we all have a five-year-old child within us that is looking out on the on the world with eyes of wonder and that child is so um so pure so free from from resentment or hatred or prejudice and uh if we're not careful we inside of ourselves we believe that we're still that pure um five-year-old child that is a

00:23:52 yeah that is not a racist that is not sexist that is not bringing suffering into the world and meanwhile we continue to say things and do things and consume things which bring about suffering that bring about the kind of views that divide that bring in this person with that skin color is more important than that person without skin color or that person who practices that religion is better than because that's my religion than someone else and we behave like that but inside we think no but i'm not really i'm not a

00:24:39 sexist person i'm not a racist person i'm not a religious bigot and yet other people experience a behavior like that and i deeply feel that is that is true of most people they don't believe themselves to be a bad person and yet they do things which make people suffer and we can all see in our own lives that behavior that has caused ourselves and others to suffer and we feel misunderstood it's because if we're not careful we're grasping onto this idea of a separate self inside of us and we separate that self from

00:25:26 everything that we do in the world and so the buddhist practice is to reunify those two things on the one hand we don't grasp on to the idea that there is an essential me that is separate from everything else and on the other hand we we see that with that insight that concentration and emptiness everything that we think that we say that we do has the possibility to bring happiness but also has a possibility to bring harm and suffering and so it is a

very practical way of looking at things we don't we don't posit some mystical

00:26:20 other thing that is out there separate from the lived experience of life and that is very helpful in reconciling and harmonizing our our five scandals so we learned about the five scandals of body feelings perceptions mental formations or emotions and consciousness these uh our ways these are five things that we tend to grasp onto we tend to think this body is me these i am this body these feelings are me i am these feelings these perceptions are me i am these perceptions these uh emotions or these mental

00:27:46 formations are me i am these mental formations this consciousness is me i am this consciousness and so then when there are pleasant feelings we are happy when there are other unpleasant feelings we are sad when the body is in good health it looks beautiful we are happy when it's getting old sick or we are injured or harmed we are not happy our perceptions when people love us and we love ourselves we are so happy when people hate us and they say we are horrible and we do cruel and unkind things we are sad you see so

00:28:37 our happiness and well-being are dependent on these things if we continue to grasp onto them so the training is to let go and so we hurt our body okay it's just a hurt body and we don't add or subtract anything we just see it as it is we are feeling painful feelings it's okay pain is normal we can see how painful feelings can be helpful if we didn't have pain as a child and we put our hand next to the flame of the oven we would not draw it away we would not know how to protect our body so pain is there to help us

00:29:24 but if we think oh i have painful feelings life is horrible and then we suffer so that is the teaching of the the the second arrow the buddha used the story of a man who is shot in a battle with with an arrow and [Music] uh when the arrow is pulled out if he is hit again in that same place then the pain is ten times as bad as the first arrow and so that second arrow is our thinking our our grasping onto these five things five scandals we we we are not things don't go our way so we have uh unpleasant

00:30:23 feelings based in our perceptions about reality so the practice of the concentration on emptiness is to let go and see that this body is empty it is born due to causes and conditions and when certain conditions are not sufficient it no longer manifests in the same way last week we looked at the eight negations from the teacher nagarjuna and tai uh also refers to another line in in that text it's a verse

18. in the 24th chapter of the mula majamaka karika so the treatise on the middle way dependent origination

00:32:44 we declare or we see to be emptiness uh it is conventional designation justice is the middle way in the discourse given to mahakatyana is the famous line the buddha taught about the of being caught in extreme views views of being and views of non-being so there are views that i want to be this or i am this and there are the views that say i am not this and both of those are extreme views so that is why updated shakespeare in hamlet and said to be or not to be that is not the question so we don't get caught in the idea of

00:35:30 being on the one hand and we don't get caught in the idea of non-being we don't get caught in the idea i am a happy person we don't get caught in the idea that i am a depressed person we don't get caught in the idea that i am a good person or the idea that i'm a bad person or the idea that i'm an intelligent person in a moment we may say something intelligent but then we get caught in this extreme that means i'm an intelligent person i can't ever do something dumb or unintelligent and the same is true for non-being we

00:36:22 say i'm not a bad person i am not a i'm not a slow runner i am not i'm not a loser i'm just using things that come to my mind things that we can tell ourselves day in and day out i'm a good person i'm a bad person i'm i'm i i i always succeed i'm i'm always failing these kind of things those are just extremes that kind of thinking it turns out is not helpful at all for understanding what is going on and no matter how hard we believe that we are something or that we are not something the reality will always be somewhere in

00:37:13 between and that is the insight of the middle way not getting caught in extreme views and being or non-being yeah so the insight of impermanence and non-self helps us to touch that middle way and those are all there in the concentration on emptiness becoming free from the idea of a separate self and the insight of nagarjuna is that dependent origination itself is emptiness so free from those extremes of being and non-being we see that things arise due to causes and conditions so when the sun is present in the right

00:38:07 quantity of rain and the seed in the soil and the air then the flower can manifest there are sufficient conditions the seed doesn't think oh i am not a flower i cannot possibly sprout if it were caught in the extreme view i am not a flower i'm just a seed

then transformation would not be possible it might happen but it would suffer say no even as it is growing to become a beautiful flower it still continues to believe i'm not a flower it's caught in the view of non-being and the same is true for being it says i

00:38:50 am a seed i will never change i am a seed forever and ever don't don't tell me that i will become a flower that used to love to take a seed of corn at the beginning of a five or six day retreat and he invited the children to plant the seed of corn and in those five or six days the seed would sprout and you start to see the leaves of the baby corn plant man growing up and so then he would at the end of the retreat he would hold up the the plant of corn and say my dear plant of corn do you believe that only a few days ago

00:39:38 you were just a seed of corn and the plant would say dear tayden sangha how can you say such a thing i am not a seed i am a plant it's caught in the if if the plant of corn is caught in the idea of non-being it cannot accept that it came from causes and conditions so that is that is the difficulty of extreme views like being and non-being so the middle way is to let go of all those questions of being in non-being and pierce directly the nature of reality which is dependent it means this is so that is this comes to be so that

00:40:30 comes to be when this comes to be that comes to be that is the simplest way to express it but the as a concentration it's something we need to observe through our awareness so a good athlete will know to recognize how if i train i run every day then i am more confident in my body to be able to run faster or farther i am more able to do it if i change my diet if i eat in a healthy way if i drink enough water then i have enough conditions to be able to run but if i don't drink water i don't eat the right foods and i don't train then

00:42:05 when i go out to run i feel so tired so weak and i have a lot of difficulty and though i believe myself that to be a good runner and yet reality is giving me a different message you see so that is recognizing the nature of causes and conditions when as we learn many times already when there is the sun and the ocean water and the right conditions in the air the water can evaporate and move up as humidity and become a cloud and that is happening in every moment and that is yeah because the water is not caught in

00:42:51 its belief that it is only ocean water it's able to let go of its view of course it doesn't have a view

but we are for the moment talking about the water having a view and it let goes of that it lets go of that view and it can evaporate up and become a cloud so that is dependent origination which is emptiness and that is the way we um through looking at things deeply to our thinking to our speech to our actions seeing that these are all empty of the separate self and so uh i take that that that's an invitation

00:43:42 for us to take so much care with every moment we have in this life it's so precious every step even when i'm walking down to offer this class i'm i really practice to be aware of my steps not to get too caught in the time oh am i gonna arrive late it's okay to be late but what's more important is this a legendary step am i it means am i bringing awareness to my stuff am i really aware right here i don't have to worry about coming to class just enjoy this step enjoy the air the flowers walking down seeing the beautiful valley

00:44:34 of deer park is already enough and it's already enough happiness so that is nourishing my happiness so with mindfulness happiness comes to be so mindfulness is a source of happiness so stopping being aware of our body as we're seated or if we're standing whatever the position of our body we just come back to the visceral sensation of the body and because we're practicing the concentration on emptiness we free ourselves from being attached to any part of the body we just see it that this body is just a

00:45:33 phenomena a phenomenon actually it's many phenomena manifesting millions and millions of cells breathing respiratory and in there we cannot find anything we can call me myself or mine and yet there's this awareness going on that is a wondrous existence oftentimes the concentration on emptiness is called the wondrous existence so nagarjuna i write down the name the teacher from the around the 3rd century a.d in india very important buddhist teacher who helped us to look deeply into some of the very kind of

00:47:01 stuck elements of the teaching in the tradition as it had developed for hundreds of years since the life of the buddha and he helped free us from some of the sticky points and also gave teachings on this master in 2002 2003 hopefully soon we will have a book in english there's a book in vietnamese but not yet in english with thai's teachings on nagarjuna maybe we can listen to the sound of the bell [Music] so the next part of the lion dependent origination we declare to be emptiness it is it's means it itself

00:48:41 emptiness itself is conventional designation so this line helps us to not make emptiness into some grand concept some higher like a god or something you know that is uh the ultimate emptiness is just the nature of things as they are it is uh in the conventional world we see all the time the the empty nature of things that is what allows transformation to take place allows the cloud to become the rain to become snow or to become rain or snow to become the river or snowpack and and so forth melting and going back

00:49:38 into the ocean that is just the way of things and um some areas of the buddhist tradition have made emptiness out and to be some high like a higher state of being or some something to be attained and is inviting us to bring it back to the here and the now to what we can actually do in our way of looking at things in the present moment and not try to put it as some kind of higher attainment out there it is just the the nature of manifestation actually the word it's not uh easy to translate the word for that here we put as

00:50:53 conventional designation is um it means that which is made to be known um so it is what we can perceive so it means directly in perception we can see emptiness we don't have to think oh the conventional things of the world are just worldly names form smell touch all these things but emptiness ah that is the holy of holies you see so that is the tendency to make emptiness into something other than what is there in the world and so nagarjuna brings us back it emptiness itself is in the very nature of

00:52:19 worldly things it is not somewhere else so when we chant the heart sutra and they say this body itself is emptiness emptiness itself is this body it is not to say this body is um something sacred as opposed to something profane making a kind of dualism because that is uh that was a tendency within buddhism to make emptiness into the sacred and to try to just brush away all the worldly things of the conventional world and thai had the beautiful poem or the beautiful saying no mud no lotus right so you cannot have a lotus flower

00:53:26 without the mud it is thanks to the all the muck the dirt the profane nature of our daily existence which due to that nourishment the flower can grow and actually there is no there is no sacred in profane but everything can be seen as sacred if we look deeply with the concentration of emptiness that is the beauty of it even the coyote poop on the path when we walk in the mountain is sacred and the

garbage is sacred even there's something we can learn from hatred anger violence fear there's something there to learn from we

00:54:22 don't ignore it or treat it as something it just needs to be pushed away if we just get rid of all the hatred and violence then we'll be happy there'll be unending happiness so we don't get caught in that dualistic view that is the concern of Nagarjuna he wants us to see that in the conventional world we find emptiness in this body there is emptiness emptiness itself is this body it is not something separate something other than this body and of course when we recite that in the heart sutra it is just a marker for all of the five

00:55:07 scandals so we don't say emptiness feelings themselves are emptiness emptiness itself are these feelings perceptions are emptiness emptiness perceptions themselves are these feelings but that all it means all the five scandals not only the body feelings perceptions mental formation and consciousness themselves are emptiness so don't go looking somewhere else for emptiness that is what the concentration of unemptiness is inviting us to do but see the non it elements in everything that we observe and then we allow

00:55:57 the the nature of dependent origination to flower forth so the seed can become the plant of corn and we know it is not the same as the plant of corn but it is not totally different either is it is a continuation of the seed the plant is a continuation of the seed of corn so that that insight is the middle way that is our practice that is the way we train our mind to become free from dualistic ways of looking like being a non-being same and different coming and going and and so forth okay and then

00:56:56 we learned about the second door of liberation i should have brought cookies to offer to anyone who can say what is the second door of liberation i don't have any cookies anyone signlessness so looking at conventional designation we don't get attached to the outward form and we also don't get attached to some idea about any essence either we can we know that the the the unconditioned nature as we've learned in all things in all points of time and space that transcends space and time but it has no

00:58:22 quality no form nothing that we can call that we can touch feel there's no there's nothing there that can be designated and so by practicing the concentration on signlessness we we keep the

awareness of the unconditioned always present that is mindfulness we by keeping awareness present not getting not grasping we allow the unconditioned nature to manifest in every moment and then amazing things happen wonderful things manifest just like the seed transforming itself into a plant of corn it doesn't have

00:59:13 ideas or concepts about becoming a seed of corn and yet when conditions are sufficient this beautiful blossom of the leaves of the plant of corn manifest and so the same is true for us in our practice as monastics we are aware that we think oh i'm just a young monk or nun and i i only just begun to study teaching and yeah and then we we actually discount that all the conditions for our teacher to manifest all the conditions for the buddha to manifest are there in every cell of our body the buddha was a human being thai is

01:00:07 also a human being and if we train our mind to be compassionate to be understanding then we also can manifest those qualities so it's just freeing ourselves from grasping our conventional way of looking at things and allowing transformation to take place allowing healing to take place and then we find ourselves joyful we are not always being [Music] up and down up and down caught on our emotions because our feelings are sometimes painful sometimes pleasant our body is sometimes healthy sometimes sick

01:01:00 the body may be sick healthy but we are still joyful we might have painful feelings pleasant feelings but our joyfulness is steady when we're in touch with the unconditioned nature that is a that is a fruit that's how we know because our our emotions become more steady and we're not so easily pulled away by desire for food that we like or you know sexual desire or images and so forth on the internet or whatever we're not so easily pulled in by advertising to buy this or that so it's so important i i feel that what

01:01:51 is that is what tai transmitted to all of us as his students was this deep confidence that in in each of us is the possibility to to flower like thai to flower like the buddha to be such a beautiful flower and he doesn't want to not even one of his students would he accept that they they leave the monastic life it's very difficult many people they felt i cannot continue to be a monk or none and they would go to thai and they give thai their sanghati in tight gives it back i remember one sister

01:02:36 telling me that she went to thai i cannot be a nun anymore entice she gave thai her formal

monastic road and die and then ty gave it back to her because he knows that in her is the capacity to be a buddha and he he will not accept that you just say no i know i have the capacity to be the buddha but i think i'm going to just be a human being i said no the buddha is a human being what do you think the buddha is if the buddha is not a human being how could he how could we hear him teach how could we

01:03:17 uh how could he have such a deep understanding of the nature of human beings the dharma the buddha is for human beings you can teach the dharma all you like to a squirrel but it will not understand what you're talking about but if you are kind to this world if you are friendly then the squirrel will be more at ease and just like the squirrels here at deer park in the coyotes and many of the animals they are more calm more peaceful because they feel like these human beings here they are somehow like

01:03:52 not so violent not so unfriendly but try as you like to try to teach them about the concentration on emptiness you won't get very far so the buddha is a human being he's teaching the dharma for human beings it's to help us in particular so how can you have the idea that i cannot get that understanding but it gave every um and every kind of um deep intention aspiration in his life in order to help us to learn the dharma but we are like like ty said like a a young man who a destitute man who has a jewel sewn into the

01:05:02 the fabric of our jacket and we don't know we are living in the street we don't have food to eat we're starving we feel totally forgotten by society but inside sewn into the fabric of our jacket there is a jewel and that jewel is priceless and if we only knew that we had that jewel we could sell it and be the richest man yet we keep wandering wandering around with that jewel sewn into the fabric of our jacket i don't know i might have a jewel like that in this jacket because sister dark name she sold this

01:05:47 jacket for me and i i don't know i could maybe have some jewel in there so this is our sacred our sacred inheritance as as human beings it is so fortunate to be born a human being and we have that jewel the buddha nature awakening in every cell of our body and we just need to realize it and practice the dharma and then it will manifest the dharma gives us the conditions sufficient conditions in order for us to to manifest as a buddha the dharma gives us sufficient conditions to manifest as a buddha that's an amazing statement

01:06:44 if you just realize that then you become the wealthiest person on earth and you actually can receive your sacred inheritance that is tai's poem inheritance very beautiful poem in the please call me by my true names stop wandering around like a destitute child come back and claim your heritage you can enjoy your happiness and offer it to everyone that is your sacred inheritance such a beautiful poem and so silence the concentration on signlessness helps us to to touch that sacred inheritance to no

01:07:31 longer just get caught in just oh i am this man born in this place to this mother and father and i have to go get a job and work and have a house and a car and a family and kids and and then hopefully i can squeeze a little bit of happiness out of that all those things that i get in the family and then i will die a happy man and that is that is it that is the story that we create for ourselves and yet in the course of trying to realize that story to make it be we suffer so much our children are not grateful

01:08:25 maybe they are get caught in addiction to drugs to sex maybe they um they yell at us complain maybe we cannot get along with our partner and we wish even we wish maybe that they they would die just to leave us alone so we could be free and yet still we cherish that story in us of of a happy life so that is a deep deep suffering we have to look at that story that we are telling ourselves and with the eyes of signlessness and and by doing it we let go and we learn how to dwell happily in the present moment we already have

01:09:19 enough conditions to be happy in the present moment and the beautiful thing about that is that if you master it if you learn how to be happy in the present moment wherever you are whenever then wherever you go whenever you can be happy in the future so if you get good at dwelling happily in the present moment because it's a kind of skill that we develop it's a training that's why with walking meditation with each step we touch happiness we don't think oh if i just practice walking meditation for 20 years

01:10:01 then one day i will be happy but with each step you arrive at home at home so that's a training if you can do that then you get a moment of happiness and then you have another moment of happiness and then you have another moment of happiness and then when difficult emotions come when difficult you you you hear someone say something about you you hear news that full of actions full of violence and hatred and you feel overwhelmed by anger or fear

you have a practice you remember that practice of coming

01:10:54 back to your step i remember when i did walking meditation in that moment i could touch happiness in the present moment what if i practice that right now and you stand up and you breathe in and you take one step breathe out and take another step and slowly if you continue your concentration on mindful walking you may notice that there are spaces in which your anger and your fear are no longer there and as a practitioner you learn how to grow those spaces that's something i like to do if i'm

01:11:40 ever overwhelmed with anger in a moment and i keep feeding that anger with my thinking about that person that did that horrible thing then i look carefully for spaces in between the feeling of anger manifesting when there's just a neutral feeling and i see rather than continuing to feed the anger with my thinking what if i can just grow those neutral spaces because it's so unpleasant to be angry it's very painful feeling to be angry and so when there's that painful feeling a neutral feeling seems very very

01:12:27 attractive i might wish to be like blissfully happy and have very very blissful pleasant feelings but just having a neutral feeling would be good enough when i'm very very angry because it's so painful so i learned as a young practitioner to look for those spaces where oh gosh a moment ago i just felt so much anger towards that person for that thing they did but in this moment in this one second i'm not feeling angry what if i see what created that what conditions in terms of dependent origination

01:13:08 causes and conditions what allowed that space to be there well i see ah in that moment i wasn't continuing to get caught in my thinking about what happened what she did to me what she said about me so what if i stop my thinking and put all my attention on my step in my breathing and then that neutral feeling grows wider and wider and if you do that with concentration you might find in a few minutes your anger has disappeared and that is not just by chance that is because you're practicing you're

01:13:48 putting into practice the concentration on signlessness you're not getting caught in your thinking about reality but you come back to the lived experience of reality you don't get caught in the the qualities or the the the smell the sounds anything the outward form but rather you leave an open space for new possibility to arise that is a concentration on signlessness and the third is uh you remember

aimlessness so you don't put something out there this is a very very joyful door of liberation

01:15:01 you see in what way you know we have this um from our ancestors a tendency to want to track down our prey like a hunter and happiness can be a kind of prey that we try to hunt down our whole life and we know that if we have the right weapons if we have the right a good team of hunters then we can track down happiness and shoot it to the ground with our bow or with our spear so we use that the ancestral tendency to to hunt whether as an individual or as a group and to try to attain a diploma to be

01:15:58 a wealthy person to be admired famous to have lots of sex lots of good food a beautiful house or even just happiness itself we just want to be happy but we are unable to touch happiness in the present moment to dwell happily in the present moment so we just have an idea about happiness and that idea grows in our head but it's not certain that that idea has very much to do with the reality of being happy in fact it may be the biggest obstacle to our happiness you think if you just had that car or if

01:16:47 everyone in your family would just be silent or be friendly to one another then that would be bliss but then that thing happens and yet you're still not happy you still feel depression you feel unsatisfied so if we are a practitioner and usually if we became a monastic we already had that insight whether it was in one of our relationships where we fell in love and we thought this is true love i can be with this person forever and yet somehow we find ourselves unhappy in that relationship and then at some point before we thought if

01:17:32 i could only be with that person that would be my whole life would be bliss blissfully happy but then we are with that person we have everything we wanted and yet suddenly that person looks like a monster to us and it seems like that person that we wanted so much in the past has become the source of all of our unhappiness and that is a lived reality for many people because they're caught in the sign of that person they think that they're in love with the image of their partner and not with the the

01:18:07 reality the the the slobbering smelly farting messy reality of a human body that complains when we don't do the things that correctly that we are supposed to do that judges and all these things so as practitioners as monastics we make that decision to come back to ourselves to come to the monastery to look deeply in our heart and understand the nature of this suffering rather than getting caught in an idea

about happiness that is the practice of aimlessness so aimlessness doesn't mean we don't have a path

01:19:01 it means we don't get caught in what is at the end of the path but every step is joy every step is freedom that is a concentration on aimlessness and then no matter where you go you can be happy because your happiness is not dependent on where you are so it's a kind of the three doors of liberation are so freeing because they're not dependent on a place they're not dependent on a time they're not dependent on any having some material object or some title or recognition so the buddha transmitted

01:19:52 like deeply this essential teaching to help us to become free from our suffering when we still find ourselves grasping after worldly attainments we always have that concentration on aimlessness and then we can be free so it's a wonderful very tasty concentration the concentration on aimlessness can i let go of what i'm aiming to do and just touch joy in the present moment touch freedom in every moment okay so that's just a little review of the three doors of liberation from last week going a little bit more deeply into it

01:20:51 so that brings us to the ninth tenant the three dharma seals the three domiciles are impermanence no self and nirvana if we want we can have four or five domiciles as long as they have nirvana as one of them so the it's not [Music] necessarily the buddha which put numbered lists of things in the teaching but over time the community has a way of remembering aspects of the dharma which helped them to practice began to make lists and one of those lists that came up was a list that could be called the signs of the dhamma

01:24:15 or the seal the seal in the sense like the emperor's seal he has a sign maybe carved in wood or another material and they put the hot wax on the envelope to be sealed and then they press it into the hot wax so that when the person receives it they know this is the sign of the emperor and so how can we tell that a teaching is the dharma we can tell by the seal by the quality the sign and one of those signs is impermanence any teaching that is a true dharma always has the teaching of impermanence

01:25:10 so if we continue to hold on to an idea of permanence then that is not the dharma that is still some kind of grasping at an extreme view so the view of permanence is a kind of extreme view like the permanence of being or the permanence of non-beings those are views of permanence that something lasts forever that can never change it goes against everything that we experience in life everything

changes even we know that the most stable particles in the universe like a proton eventually decays although it lasts for

01:25:59 billions and billions of years and yet it still is of the nature of to be impermanent how much more so our body our feelings our perceptions and most of us are not caught getting grasping at protons but we do get caught grasping at our body at our feelings and the other scandals so the buddhist teaching is very practical it's not saying you know don't get attached to protons but it's saying what are those things that we get we tend to get most attached to well it is a certain configuration of protons this body

01:26:41 or these feelings and so for practical purposes we learn to let go of them because we know they're impermanent and any attempt to grasp at them will always fail because the thing that we set out to grasp at by the time we try to grasp it it is already changed and as we continue to try to hold on to it it is changing in real time as well as our energy of grasping it is also changing and so everything the grasping and the grasper and the thing we grasped are empty and impermanent they are not a separate there's not a separate self

01:27:30 so that is one sign that we can tell this is the dharma if we see that it is a teaching that includes impermanence and then the second domicile no self so the concentration on emptiness helps us to touch to recognize that no self-nature of all things so the three doors of liberation can help us to see the dharma in things seeing the signless nature not getting caught in the qualities of things we touch the impermanence of things so these are the domiciles are related to the three doors of liberation

01:28:29 and so i think we understand this teaching already very deeply from the concentration on emptiness no self here means no separate self things are only made of non-it elements and and the third uh damasio nirvana so this is uh essential and this is a teaching upon village if we don't have if there were no unconditioned then what could all conditioned things go back to if there were no unconditioned as the buddha said there would be no freedom there would be no how could without the unconditioned

01:29:31 how could we touch the uncreate how could how could freedom be possible and so the insight of the buddha is that freedom is possible that touching the unconditioned is possible and that is a nature that is a sign that is a true dharma teaching

without that then it is a it can just be like a materialist materialistic way of looking at the world we just think we just see signs we have perceptions and that is it there's nothing more we don't see the nature of causes and conditions always transforming always

01:30:26 changing always free from a separate self and then freeing ourselves from attachment to all those things touching the unconditioned nature of nirvana that is one of the domiciles and we cannot remove that that is ty's insight there are other in different traditions we have other configurations of the three dharma seals when we look in for example in the tradition of the pali canon usually these three are include them do not include nirvana but have suffering because suffering is a noble truth and

01:31:18 and there's a discourse many discourses actually where the buddha said to his monks he said are things in the world permanent or impermanent and they said impermanent and then he asked them are impermanent things uh suffering or not suffering and they said they are suffering and his insight into that teaching is that it is not things themselves because they are impermanent that makes them suffering but it is our grasping at those things and believing them to be permanent that makes us suffer and so

01:32:10 a misunderstanding of the teaching is that is to think that all things because they are impermanent they are suffering but it is not because they are impermanent that we suffer is because we grasp at them and think believe them to be permanent that we suffer and so we need to have that understanding that deeper way of looking into the nature of things otherwise we think that all material things are causing us to suffer and we feel that this body itself is impermanent and it is suffering and we can get caught in a nihilistic

01:32:51 view of the world we can get caught in the view that i just want to destroy this body because it is impermanent it is it is just suffering i want to become free and there were monks in the time of the buddha who had that kind of wrong view and they thought by killing myself i will become free from the suffering nature of this body and that is a very wrong view and so this this teaching of the domiciles as impermanence no self and nirvana is a very skillful way we have to see the nature of nirvana in this very body

01:33:31 yes there is suffering but not only suffering there is the possibility of happiness and freedom there is an unconditioned nature and so ty's very insistent he says if we want we can have four or five

dharma seals if you want you can add suffering in there because suffering is a great teacher without the mud there's no lotus and we can learn from our suffering of course that is a deep and important teaching of the dhamma but we cannot have the three dominant seals without nirvana that is the insight of plum

01:34:17 village teaching and the contribution to the buddhist tradition and in the link in the the description of this video for the class today i put a link to the channa sutta sutra from the samyukta agama from early buddhist texts just as well as in the pali canon tradition and so tai in his last 10 or 15 years of teaching dedicated a lot of his energy to translating the early buddhist texts from the samyutta from the agamas in the chinese and this was one of the texts that in the chinese and this was one of the

01:35:13 texts that i added to our chanting book and the next time we update the chanting book i encourage you all to study it i encourage you all to study it and that i saw the the presence in a very early text of uh these three dharma seals of impermanence no self and nirvana has peace so i encourage you all to read that i put a link to the translation online thank you so much for your practice and an announcement for everyone joining us online so next week here at deer park we'll have a wake-up retreat

01:36:01 for young people online and so we'll be we'll be focusing on doing that retreat and then after that there'll be a break of a few weeks so uh please look for the next class of the 40 tenets sometime in the second half of june so we'll have a few weeks of break from class okay we can finish with three sounds of the bell [Music] [Music] [Music] so you