

11 June 2010
European Institute of Applied Buddhism
mp3 file [1:48:50]
Engl. Transl. from VN: Sr. Annabel

[1:10] Dear Sangha, today is the 11 June in the year 2010. We are in the European Institute for Applied Buddhism and the Great Compassion Temple, the Institute is also called the No Worry Institute. And today we are going to hear a teaching for the retreat which is for the Order of Interbeing members. Yesterday Thay finished translating the last sentence of the Dhammapada which comes from the Chinese version. Here many people have read the Dhammapada translated from Pali, very few people among us have read the Dhammapada translated from Chinese. The Dhammapada in the Chinese Canon, it is richer than the Dhammapada in the Pali version. There is more said about...it is more than the thirteen chapters that we have in Pali. And the first chapter is about impermanence. The final sentence in the Chinese Canon of the Dhammapada is like this: "On my head that begins to have white hair, my youth has been stolen...has been taken away. It seems like they have come to tell me that. And I should become a monk or a nun as soon as possible." This is the last sentence. Do you think that's a good sentence? Whoever has begun to have grey or white hair, please put up your hand. If you haven't become a monk or nun, you'd better start thinking about it quickly. Once you become a monk or a nun, ask yourself "have you really [emph.] become a monk or a nun?"

We are born as a human being on this planet Earth. It is a great fortune to be born like that. We have been lucky enough to be able to take our time to stroll around on this Earth. And if we do not know how to enjoy our stroll on this Earth, that is such a waste of us having been born a human being. There is a sentence which we write in calligraphy which comes from a poem in Chinese. When we translate it into Vietnamese it goes like this, Thay translated it like this:

Not knowing how to stroll around in this beautiful Pure Land
Even if you were for thousands of lifetimes a human being
It would not have any meaning...any benefit.

One of the reasons why we have been born on this beautiful planet Earth is to be able to stroll, to enjoy our walking. And the musician...the songwriter Trinh Cong Son also saw that. To be able to stroll at leisure on the Earth is the best thing. At the beginning of the Autumn, we hear the birds, we have to go out for a walk. We only need to open our eyes...open our ears, we can be in touch with the wonders of life. [6:49] The birds singing, the pines singing, the flowers opening, and this pink [?] Pure Land Earth of ours is there. But we have allowed someone to steal our youth. We have our hair to grow grey and we have wasted our years. So we now have to wake up. We have to learn how to live the days that are left to us very deeply. If not, it's such a waste, not knowing how to stroll in enjoyment on the Earth. If we're even born a human for 10,000 lifetimes, we might just as well not have been born. This is how it begins, the Dhammapada. The Dhammapada begins by saying, "Waking up, you should smile." We have the gatha:

Waking up, I smile.
I have twenty-four brand new hours.
I vow to live them deeply,
using my eyes of love to look at life.

I think Phap Huyen [Uyen?] Thay's translation of the Dhammapada as an offering to the Sangha that practices. And the Net of Sensual Love is also taken from the Dhammapada. When the World Honored Lord was eighty years old, he spent all his time in strolling in enjoyment on the Earth. He went south, he went north, he went everywhere in the small kingdoms of that part of India. And wherever he went, he benefitted...he enjoyed the beautiful geography, the beautiful scenery. He was teaching, but he was also enjoying himself. Enjoying himself and teaching, they were the same thing. He did not waste his time. He knew that his time left to him was very little. So he saw as very precious the life that was left to him. And the last years of the Buddha's life are the time when he strolled in enjoyment on the Earth more than any other time. The king Prasenajit also was born in the same year as the Buddha. And they were both eighty years old at the same time. And he saw the Buddha enjoying himself so much when he walked around, he wanted to walk around in enjoyment also. And Prasenajit followed along as the Buddha walked with his monks in his kingdom. These two were very close friends. One was a Dharma king, the other was a worldly king. And the Buddha went with monks, and the king went with his guards, his attendants. And they used to meet each other sometimes. And there was a time when these two good friends met each other for the last time. And the sutra records this meeting. In the sutra called the Adorning the Dharma Sutra, the king Prasenajit praised the Buddha in this sutra and Ananda was there and heard it. [11:35]

Walking meditation is one of the most important practices of Plum Village. It means to take each step with peace, with joy, and freedom. It is a practice of enjoying your stroll. We often walk as if there's something chasing us...somebody chasing us. We walk and we talk at the same time. We don't really profit from every step we take. So we learn walking meditation in order to learn how to enjoy every step. When you drink a cup of tea, you can appreciate the cup of tea, hold up the cup of tea, and sip every drop of tea with all the happiness you have. Those of you who don't know how to drink tea, who gulp it down like it's Coca Cola...there is somebody who knows how to drink tea, just takes a little sip at a time, but tastes every drop of tea and swallows something very tasty. And sometimes we just have a little cup of tea, but it's full of brotherhood and sisterhood, freedom, awakening, it wakes us up, brings us happiness. So in our tradition, we have the practice of tea meditation, because tea meditation is to learn to drink tea like that. One cup of tea can bring a lot of happiness, a lot of brotherhood and sisterhood. And for one hour you can enjoy a cup of tea. Don't gulp it down. Because if you do, it's like a buffalo drinking...an ox drinking. [14:25] When we drink tea like that, we eat like that, we enjoy every mouthful of food we eat, with lightness, happiness, every herb, every piece of tofu...to have happiness at every moment, to have freedom at every moment. The way we eat is very different from the way that the animals eat. We appreciate every herb, every vegetable, every leaf, every piece of tofu. We eat each mouthful to have peace and joy, to have freedom, to have ease, to have brotherhood and sisterhood; twice or three times a day we have an opportunity to practice like that. To sit and eat with each other is a practice. We take our time, we're not wanting to finish quickly. We see that a meal is an opportunity to practice, and we eat to be happy. And that is also a stroll. When we have an ice-cream in a glass, we have to eat in such a way that every spoonful of ice-cream is something we enjoy, something that brings peace and joy. In France, sometimes they advertise yoghurt in this way: This yoghurt tastes very good, you eat it slowly so that it lasts for a long time. Mange-la doucement...eat it slowly so that it can last a long time. And our life is like that too, our lifetime, we have to live it, appreciating it. We have to enjoy every moment, we have to taste every moment. Every moment that we are given to live, we have to appreciate, hold

precious, and live deeply. We have to live it as free people. [17:35] And if you want to do that, you have to train how to do it, relying on the Sangha, you have to learn it bit by bit. If not, you will waste your life. Has anyone stolen your life, your youth? It's you who have wasted your youth, yourself, because you don't know how to live, you don't know how to appreciate, and now your hair is grey. Old age has come to us, and our grey hair is a bell of mindfulness to us. And if we can practice like.... Our life goes very quickly, so we have to wake up. We have to live in such a way that in the future we don't regret. We have to live so that every moment of our daily life becomes a legend for our descendents. Our ancestors lived like that, and now it's our turn to live like that.

In the retreat for German people we just had, all who came were very happy. They really appreciated walking meditation. And when they saw Thay with a child in each hand...holding the hand of a child on the beautiful green grass with the purple and white flowers, they saw that here is the paradise, we don't need to go anywhere anymore. Each step is an enjoyment, a happiness. We value each step, just as we value each sip of tea or each spoon of ice-cream. Why do we have to be in a hurry. We have to walk in such a way that every step is happiness, is peace. So in Plum Village we never speak when we walk. If we speak and walk at the same time, it's like eating and talking at the same time. You don't enjoy your food anymore, you don't enjoy your step anymore once you start talking. [20:45] In the Sangha there are people who can walk without talking, who can enjoy every step. Those people are not wasting their paradise, not wasting their life. And when Thay sees a student walking like that he's very happy. He thinks this person is my continuation, this person is a continuation of the Buddha. Walking like that, we continue the career of the Buddha, we continue the career of our ancestral teachers, we continue the career of Thay. [21:38] [bell] [22:00]

We have the habit energy of losing ourselves. We just heard a direction on walking meditation, on walking mindfully, and we go out and we just walk and talk at the same time, loudly, and we lose all our mindfulness of our steps. The monks and nuns who were there in the German retreat, we were more than 140. The monks and the nuns put all their heart into organizing the retreat. And when they saw the German people practicing and being happy with the practice, transforming because of the practice, the monks and the nuns were so happy. [23:23] The happiness we wish for other people had become real. We also wish ourselves to be happy, but when we see others happy, it makes us very happy. The amount we give is more than the amount we receive. [The amount we receive is more than the amount we give. (?)] The monks and nuns and the lay practitioners who were helping worked with so much love. And because of what they saw, what they gave was less than they received. They received so much from the happiness of the retreatants. And they did all kinds of things, like cooking, cleaning, working so hard. But they saw that they were so well repaid by the happiness that people had. A retreat that has many people who practice well in the retreat, that retreat is successful. That is a resource. The new people who come, they see all around them those who are walking mindfully. To left and to right there is someone walking mindfully. In front there is someone walking mindfully, with freedom and peace. Behind there is somebody taking free and peaceful steps. So in that environment, all we can do is make progress and do the same. When we take part in a retreat, we have to contribute our own part to the retreat by our own practice. We have to profit from each moment of the retreat. We have to know how to profit from each breath, from each step, from each smile, and that is our offering for ourself and for all others in the retreat. [26:20]

Thay Phap An told me the story of the priest who came here. He came here and was very impressed, because he saw so many Buddhist practitioners very silent, very concentrated. When

they listen to teaching, they listen with their whole heart. And Dharma discussion is the same, they do it with their whole heart. And that priest really wished that his own congregation could do the same. That doesn't mean to say that we're doing very well as Buddhist practitioners. We could do much better. We could do walking meditation better. We could practice the method of mindful breathing better. We could use loving speech more. We could practice noble silence better. And we have to accept that the German practitioners who came to our retreat practiced wholeheartedly. On the one hand because they were supported by the monks, nuns, and the lay practitioners here. And from another point of view, because they really valued each moment they had to practice here during those five days. Every member of the Order of Interbeing, the core community, has to be a pillar, has to be an inspiration. The brown color, the brown jacket symbolizes humility. When we put on our brown jacket, we have to see that we are showing that we are a humble person. Because the brown color in Vietnam is the color of the peasant farmer, the color of humility. The brown color is also the color of the force, of great power, of great spiritual force, of the force of peace--very silent, but very powerful. And when we wear the brown robe of a monk or a nun, we have to manifest that spirit, the virtue of humility. We do not say we are worth more than someone else, better than someone else, we have more authority than someone else, more power. We have a spiritual strength, and that spiritual strength is very silent, it makes no sound. [30:35] It is the silence of the brown color. And the laypeople, when they put on the brown jacket, they also put it on in this spirit, the spirit of humility, the spirit of the power of silence.

In English we say the Order of Interbeing. But the word *tiệp hien* in Vietnamese [is] the word *tiệp* has many meanings. The first meaning is to accept, to receive. We receive something--what do we receive and from whom do we receive it? First of all, we say we receive from our ancestors the beautiful and good things, the understanding, the insight of our ancestors, the virtue of our ancestors. We receive from our spiritual ancestors the wonderful Dharma, the seed of insight; this is our resource which we receive. [32:30] Therefore, the first thing that an Order member needs to do is to receive what the ancestors have transmitted. And sometimes they transmit, but we do not have the capacity to receive the transmission. For example, Thay invites the bell. Sometimes Thay will sit and invite the bell. We can learn from the way Thay invites the bell. But sometimes two or three years later, we still cannot invite the bell properly, it's still very astringent, it's still very obstructed. After [Compared to the way?] Thay invites the bell, it's like it's muted. But Thay invites the bell in such a way that it flies up into the sky. And other people can invite the bell, it's either muted, it's obstructed or it's astringent, it's sharp. We haven't been there to receive the transmission. Somebody who is skillfully practicing, only needs to look at Thay or an elder brother or sister, and after that will know how to invite the bell. A monk or a nun should do that, a layperson should do that. When we are really there, when we are close to Thay and those elder brothers and sisters in the practice, we can learn a great deal from them, we can receive very quickly from them. [34:35]

The way that Thay walks, stands, is in contact--this is Thay's way of transmitting. You just need to look, and you can receive. You just need to observe, and you can receive from the Buddha and the ancestors, from those who have gone before. And sometimes people come after us, and they have received before we do, or sometimes we have to learn from those who are younger than us, we have to receive from those younger than us. And what we receive is our heritage, we have to receive our heritage. This heritage is not land, is not money, is not jewellery, it is a heritage of the true Dharma. And we have to ask ourselves, how much have I received? The ancestors really want to transmit, they really want to give. But because we don't receive--we

don't want to receive or we don't have the capacity to receive--just like...give a lot but we receive very little--and then we let down the person who gives if we don't receive what they give. We are not kind to the person who gives when we don't receive the gift. So learning is a matter of receiving. We have to be there to receive, to learn. And when we have received, we can continue the ancestral line. Therefore the first meaning of tiep is receive. Once we have received, we practice, we use it, we nourish it. And once we have received it, we can continue. Who do we continue? We continue the Buddha, we continue the ancestral teachers. We continue Thay. We continue spiritual ancestors. [37:32]

A child who is loyal to his parents or grandparents is someone who can receive the direction from the parents. The student who has loyalty to his teacher is one who can continue his teacher. And we have to receive the aspiration and the practice of the Buddha, of the ancestral teachers, and our own teacher of this lifetime. [38:17]

The third meaning of tiep is to be in touch with. The first meaning is to receive, the second is to continue, and the third is to be in touch with, to be in contact. What do we have to be in touch with? First of all, we have to be in touch with the wonderful present moment, wonderful life that is present in us and around us. To be in touch with life, we have to be there. The birds sing, the wind sounds [?] in the leaves of the pine. Otherwise, if we're not in touch our life is wasted. When we're in touch like that, we're nourished, we are transformed, we grow, we mature. And being in touch, here means being in touch with our suffering...or the suffering. The suffering in our own body and our own person, and the suffering in our environment, in our family, in our society. To be in touch like that, is to understand that suffering, our own suffering and the suffering of our society. And then we will know what we need to do and what we should not do in order to be able to transform this suffering. [40:39] On the one hand, we need to be in touch with what is wonderful, because that will nourish us. And on the other hand, we have to be in touch with our suffering, so that we can understand, love, and transform. That is what is meant by the word tiep. [41:00] [bell] [41:29] To be in touch [VN tiep xuc?], to continue [VN tiep tuc?], to receive [VN tiep nhan?], this is the meaning of these three words, they all come from tiep. [42:00]

And the word hien, the second word, first of all it means a thing that is present, that is there, the present moment. What is present? What is present is life. What is present is the paradise. What is present is our person. And being in touch is to be in touch with what is happening, now. Hien means what we can contact with our senses, drsti...drsta. Drsta is sometimes translated as the perceived--sometimes translated as kien [?] which means perceived, and sometimes as hien which means what is happening now. Kien phap [?] means the things we can perceive now in the present moment. What are you seeing now? The Sangha, the pine trees, the drops of rain, these are things you have to be in touch with. The suffering now in our life, things that we are in touch with, perceiving now, we have to be in touch with them. We cannot stay in our ivory tower of our dreams, of our intellectual proliferation [?], of our systems of thought. We have to be in touch with the truth, the wonder of the truth. [44:25] And thanks to being able to be in touch with whatever is really happening, we can practice that thing which is called drstadharmasukhaviharin. This is the Dharma door of Plum Village, living peacefully, happily in the present moment. The word hien means now, reality now. The word hien also means to realize, to put into practice, to make something a reality, make something concrete, make something really there. For instance, our realizing the practice, that is also what is meant by hien...tuc [?] hien. Realization means realizing the practice. Our dream...our ideal to have real freedom, we do not want to live a life of bondage, a life of slavery. We want to be free. Only

when we are free, can we be really happy. Therefore we want to break the nets and the prisons which keep us from being free. And that is our passion, our infatuation, our hatred, our jealousy. We do not want to be caught in that kind of net that tangles us up. We want to be free from that. [47:20] Just like the deer who gets out of the trap and is able to run freely. So the monk or nun is like a deer who's not caught in any of the traps, who's able to avoid all the traps, and jump and run in any direction. And this is the sutra that tells us about the monks living in the forest. They're very happy. They have Dharma discussion, they have practice of meditation, and they are living in the forest for three months of the retreat. And then there are a number of people in the forest who live nearby and they see that the monks after three months have gone away, and so they cry. And others ask, "Why are you crying?" And they said, "Because for the last three months there were monks staying here and practicing here. They did sitting meditation, Dharma discussion, eating in silence, it was wonderful, it was so happy, and now they've all left. Where have they gone?" And the other person said, "They've gone to Koshala, they've gone to Rajagraha, they've gone to Vaishali. They are free persons. They are like deer who've overcome all the traps and they can go freely in all four directions. And they have that kind of freedom. That sutra is a very short sutra. And there are two sentences like: just like the deer which overcome all the traps, they are free to go where they like. [49:35]

And *tuc* [?] *hien* means to realize. It does not mean to realize a building, an institution, even though it may be the EIAB. That is not the most important realization. This realization is the realization of the practice. And that is the aim, the direction that a monk or a nun or a layperson has to go in. As a monk or a nun, as a layperson, we are all disciples of the Buddha. We do not want to live a life of bondage. We want to be free. [50:41] So we need to practice. And our daily practice is the value of a practitioner...which liberates the practitioner. We are not caught in fame, we are not caught in profit, we are not caught in something...a position...we are not looking for a position in society, some authority, some power. What we are looking for is liberation and freedom. And that is realization. So *hien* means realize. There's another English word, "materialization," it makes it something concrete, something material. But the word material is not the best connotation. [51:39] Manifestation is also a meaning of *hien*, the third meaning, to manifest. [long pause] [52:34] And we can add another meaning for the word *hien*. It means we make it appropriate, appropriate to the time, suitable for our society here and now. It means updating, it means to make appropriate to the time and the place. In English we call it "actualization." And the two words *tiép hien*, with all this meaning, how can we possibly translate it into English as one or two words. So we have to just learn about it in Vietnamese, and then when we translate into English we just say Order of Interbeing. [54:00] If you don't speak Vietnamese, you have to find a way to understand what these two words mean which have their root in Chinese. And we know the meaning of these two words, then we know what is the basis of the Order of Interbeing and we know the direction of practice of the Order of Interbeing. (Can *Thay* erase it?) [54:58]

So, with this kind of meaning, we can understand what is meant by Buddhism...engaged Buddhism, Buddhism that enters the world. The word "enters the world" [VN *giúp thế?*] is written like this. Going into life. It is not the Buddhism of the monastery. A monastery is not a reality which is cut off from life. A monastery has to be looked on as a nursery garden where we can put our seedlings. And when those seedlings have grown strong enough, we have to bring them out and plant them in society. And Buddhism is there because of life. Life is not there because of Buddhism; Buddhism is there because of life. If there was no life, no world, there wouldn't need Buddhism. The reason why we have Buddhism is because the world needs

Buddhism. Therefore the monastery, our practice center has to be looked at as a nursery garden in which there are the right causes and conditions for us to raise to maturity the small seedlings. And once they have been made strong enough, they have to be brought out and planted in the world, in society. To serve society, that is what is meant by engaged Buddhism. [57:37] So while we are still in the monastery, we still have the intention to go into the world. We are preparing to take things into the world. So, our training and our practice in the monastery is preparation to go into the world. [58:00]

In China, they don't have this word [VN nhu the?], entering the world. They have the expression [VN: hung nhang Phat nham], "Buddhism in society"; it means the same as engaged Buddhism. And from the year 1930 onwards, that is eighty years ago, there was a movement in Buddhism called bringing Buddhism into the world, engaged Buddhism. And people in Vietnam started to talk about bringing Buddhism into the world. That's quite early, 1930 or before that. And when Thay was growing up, he was influenced by this kind of Buddhism. When he was ten years old, he was already influenced by this kind of Buddhism. He went to school, he read the newspaper. He knew that in the past, Buddhism had played a very important part in bringing back peace and solidifying the country, making the country strong. [1:00:24] He learned about the Ly dynasty, the Tran dynasty and saw that Buddhism prospered then, and that all the kings practiced Buddhism. And that was the spiritual life, the spiritual force, the Dharma body of a whole people, the practice of a whole people. Not only the kings of the Ly dynasty practiced very well, but the king of the Tran dynasty also practiced very well. The first king, Tran Thai Tong, although he was a king, a politician, he had so many things he had to resolve, his practice of meditation, of beginning anew, every day six times he practiced beginning anew, here we just have one recitation of the sutra a day, if we're lucky we have two. The king Tran Thai Tong when he was only twenty years old, already had a deep aspiration and path of practice. He'd suffered, he suffered greatly. He was able to overcome his suffering. [1:01:52] And then he practiced to success, and he practiced very well, and he wrote books about Buddhism which are still available today. He practiced koan practice, dhyana [meditation]. And the work which is called Six Times of Beginning Anew proves that in the palace, although he was a king ruling the country, he was able to practice every day offering incense, touching the earth, sitting meditation six times. Twenty minutes every time, he practiced and he continued to rule the country. Now, I don't know if President Obama can do the same. I don't know if here we can do the same. Because our spiritual life nourishes us and makes us strong and makes someone strong as a ruler or a politician. We should not say "Oh, I'm too busy, I don't have time for sitting meditation, walking meditation." If a king can do it, we cannot make the excuse we have too much work, we don't have time to practice. [1:03:43] What we talk about as engaged Buddhism is not easy to practice. And it's been there for a very long time. It's not just from 1930, it's been in our tradition for hundreds of years, millenia. We are the continuation, we are not a new movement. We are only a continuation. And we have works like...books like Buddhism Today, Updating Buddhism, Bringing Buddhism into the World. And we will understand the meaning of these books of Thay which are in Vietnamese, when we understand what is meant by tiep hien. And our process is very easy from engaged Buddhism we go to applied Buddhism. [1:05:05]

Now we have another word, not only engaged Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism leads to something very close to it that is called applied Buddhism. The word "applied" is used in secular context, we talk about applied science or applied mathematics. And this word is used a great deal. And when we say we talk about the Three Jewels, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, when we give a Dharma talk about the Three Jewels, what do we mean by Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,

why do we call [them] the Three Jewels? We have to show people how they can apply [emph] the teaching of the Three Jewels. In the retreat for the German people, we had a teaching about the way of applying the teachings of the Three Jewels. How can we practice taking refuge in the Three Jewels? Because when we recite: I take refuge in the Buddha, Buddhā saranam gacchāmi, that is not taking refuge. That is just proclaiming, just announcing that you are taking refuge. But you have to produce the energy of concentration, mindfulness, and insight. And when that energy protects you, then you are protected by the energy of the Three Jewels. And when we practice "I come back to the island of myself to take refuge in myself" we have to practice breathing in such a way that we produce the energy of mindfulness, concentration, and insight. "Right mindfulness is the Buddha, shining light far and near. Breathing is the Dharma, protecting our body and mind. The five skandhas are the Sangha working, together diligently." And when we practice like that, we produce the energy of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. And then we really are protected by the Three Jewels. That is the most secure situation to be in. [1:08:00] When we are at our wit's end, we don't know what to do, those are the moments when we need to take refuge. We have to take refuge in the energy of the Three Jewels. And as a member of the Order of Interbeing, we have to have a practice that is solid, so that whenever we have difficulties, whenever we are at our wit's end, whenever we are in a hurry, we know what we have to do in order to get back our equanimity, our balance, our freedom, our solidity. And one of the methods to realize this is taking refuge in the Three Jewels. Taking refuge in the Three Jewels is a practice. It is not an announcement. It is about our faith or our belief, not a confession of our faith.[?] When we take refuge in the energy of the Three Jewels, we become solid again, we become clear again, and we know what we should do, and especially we know what we shouldn't do. And we put ourselves in the state of security, of safety, and that is applied Buddhism. You talk a lot about Buddhism, but you can't apply it. That is just theory. [1:10:00] The universities in the West now who have the degrees and the doctorates in Buddhism, this kind of Buddhist studies is not applied Buddhist studies. We can be fluent in Pali, Sanskrit, and in Tibetan and all the different teachings of the two canons. And yet that is not applied Buddhism. Because people who have a degree in Buddhist studies, a Ph.D. in Buddhist studies, they get difficulty, they don't know what to do, and their Buddhism doesn't help them. The kind of Buddhism we want to study here is the Buddhism that will help us when we need it. When we teach the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Five Powers, the Five Faculties, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, all these teachings have to be applied in our daily life. They should not be theory. We can teach the Lotus Sutra very well, the Avatamsaka Sutra very interesting, we can analyze the Vajracchedika very well, but maybe this is just words, just words to satisfy our intellect. We have to ask ourselves how can we apply the Lotus Sutra to resolve our difficulties, our despair, our suffering? How can we apply the Vajracchedika Sutra to resolve our difficulties? That is what we mean by applied Buddhism. [1:12:00]

The idea of applied Buddhism is to help the idea of engaged Buddhism. In the universities, it's very theoretical, it's very abstract. It is not the kind of training that the Buddha used, depended on. We have to learn the applied Buddhism. We study and we put it into practice at the same time. If you are a Dharma teacher as a monk or a nun, you have to offer applied Buddhism. And your life has to be an example of the teachings. If you just teach, you only teach what you yourself practice. If you are a lay Dharma teacher or a lay apprentice Dharma teacher, you are the same. We do not learn in order to boast our knowledge of Buddhism. When we lead a Dharma discussion, when we give a Dharma talk, it is not to show off our knowledge about Buddhism. We just speak about, we just teach those things which we are really practicing. If we

teach walking meditation, we have to practice it successfully, at least to some extent. If not, then we should never...we should not yet teach it. That is called teaching by your life, teaching by your person. There are people who don't need to give Dharma talks, they don't like to give Dharma talks. But those people can be very good Dharma teachers, because when they walk, stand, sit, lie down, are in touch with the Sangha. They're always in harmony, peaceful, joyful, open. That is a living Dharma talk. And these people are precious jewels in the Sangha. And those people are not just monks and nuns. There are also laypeople practicing very well, very silently. [1:14:48]

In the history of Buddhism in Vietnam we have laypeople like that. They are laypeople, but the monks and nuns have a lot of respect for them. Like the layperson [sounds like Fiu Chu] who has composed the Sino-Vietnamese dictionary, or [sounds like Cu Shi Tam]. They practice very solidly...they have practiced in the past very solidly. They're dead now. They have come on to the Dharma throne in order to teach the monks and nuns, but always with so much humility. When [sounds like Le Lien Tam] came to give a Dharma talk, he would put on his grey robe, and then he would touch the earth before the monks and nuns, and then he would give a talk. And the monks and nuns respected him a lot. In the north, south, and center of Vietnam, there are laypeople like that. And the truth is that the monks and nuns really respect those laypeople. Not because they are rich, because they have power, but because their practice is so solid, and their knowledge about Buddhism is also very strong. And they do what they teach. In principle, there is no obstacle, no reason why we should say that we should not have the monks, nuns, and laypeople practicing together, doing the same practice together. [bell] [1:17:00]

Because we have our destiny to bring Buddhism into life, to make Buddhism appropriate, applied, to be able to be used in every situation, we really need Dharma teachers. Therefore, the Order of Interbeing is a hand, an arm, that stretches out very far into the world. Monks and nuns also go out into the world. But the number of monks and nuns is not enough to help with as much as is needed. Every country in Europe needs a retreat, at least one a year. If we were to satisfy the needs of all the countries in Europe, Plum Village would not have anyone staying there to practice. We need to have a strength in our own home ground, we need a strong Sangha in our own home ground, in Plum Village. We can send a number of people out to teach, but we need to have our root at home. And the same is true with the EIAB. It needs the strength of the fourfold Sangha, always here all year round to be the resource for organizing retreats and courses in other places, sending out a number of people. So the number of Order of Interbeing monks and nuns is not enough. [1:19:05] We need Order of Interbeing laypeople also. And the lay Order members are the long hand of the fourfold Sangha that stretches out to society. We need thousands of lay Order members to do that work, in order to teach, bring the teachings into the world. And of course we are not like university professors. We do the work, we organize the practice, and we have to be the model of the practice, we have to master the applied Buddhist Dharma doors. We have to learn, we have to be happy when we are doing sitting, happy when we are doing walking meditation, happy when we are practicing noble silence. We have to have the capacity to organize a local Sangha where brothers and sisters live together happily. [1:20:30] For example, in Munich we have a Sangha, in Dortmund we have a Sangha. How can the Sangha in Munich have brotherhood? How can it be a source of confidence for people around? As a member of the Order of Interbeing in Munich, we have to do that. It's not a matter of having authority or not having authority, not a matter of being a Dharma teacher or not a Dharma teacher. It's a matter that in Munich we have a Sangha that practices happily with brotherhood and sisterhood, which perfumes the whole country. Dortmund is the same. Who is

the person in Dortmund who can build a Sangha, and when [so that?] people hear about the Dortmund Sangha everyone feels moved, because there people live there like brothers and sisters of the same family. Nobody takes the authority to be greater than the others, everyone uses loving speech, and everyone who hears about the Dortmund Sangha wants to go there to take part in their sitting meditation, their walking meditation. We need a Sangha like in Frankfurt, in Brussels, in Liege, we need that in Amsterdam and Paris. And who is going to do that? The lay Order members. The monks and the nuns will support. Sometimes they will come and join you. But it's really the laypeople that have to do this. And with our brown jacket which represents our humility, which represents the power of our silence, we have to build a Sangha where we are, where there is no competing for authority or for power, where there is brotherhood and sisterhood, where we look at each other with loving kindness. This is something we can do. This is something that the Sangha of monks and nuns is doing. And maybe they [who?] can do it better. [1:23:20] But the Sangha body of the laypeople...something they can do better. [?] And if we're in harmony with each other, if we have brotherhood and sisterhood, we can do that. And the fragrance of our Sangha will go far, and They will be perfumed by that fragrance. And that is our [emph] work. And when the lay Order Sangha is happy, and can work with the monastic Sangha in harmony, then they will work very harmoniously, easily with the monastic Sangha. And those who have the capacity, who have the skill, who have the virtue will be recognized by the Sangha, and they will be asked to do the work which the Sangha needs them to do. There are Dharma teachers, there are apprentice Dharma teachers among the laypeople who are doing very well. I don't want to say their names, but they are quite silent. They open retreat, they lead Days of Mindfulness, they teach very well, they do not bring about conflict and dispute, and they are able to help many people. [1:25:05] And I hope that in the future we will be able to organize retreats, long retreats for Order members, so that Order members can strengthen their practice, strengthen their aspiration, strengthen their happiness, and fulfill the obligation which the Buddha has transmitted to them. We have to receive it and we have to realize it. That is what is meant by *tiép hien*, make it a reality. If our Sangha in the West is not yet a place where people can love each other, then we are not yet successful. Who takes responsibility to make the Sangha a beautiful Sangha with brotherhood and sisterhood, worthy to be given the name of "Sangha"? That is us, only us, as members of the Order of Interbeing in our local Sangha who can do that. We should not say because that person is like that, I can't do it, because of that person. We have to say, "because of me [emph], my practice is not very good, because I don't have enough humility, because I don't have enough of the strength of the power of silence, that is why we can't do it. It's the same in Belgium, it's the same in England, it's the same in Italy, it's the same in Holland. Our destiny is to continue to receive, to be in touch, to the best of our ability, and realize the transmission for the Buddha. [1:27:10]

The Order of Interbeing have many other things to do also. The Order of Interbeing needs to realize the practice, needs to mature the practice. The Charter of the Order of Interbeing, the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings of the Order of Interbeing need to be revised. All the beautiful things about the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings have also gone into the Five Mindfulness Trainings. But the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings have not absorbed all the good things from the five. The five now are very wonderful. Two years it took us to revise the Five Mindfulness Trainings. And the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings can be better. They're already good, but they can be better. For example, the Fourth Mindfulness Training, it's about suffering and being able to face suffering. Being in touch with suffering, that is what the...being in touch.... [1:29:00] There are many things we have to do. And this work of revising the Fourteen Mindfulness

Trainings is also a part of our practice. We need to have a committee of research to do this work, to revise the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings. We praise the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings, but they can be better. "Aware that looking deeply and being in touch with suffering can help us develop our compassion and find ways out of suffering, we are determined not to avoid or close our eyes before suffering." The Vietnamese is much richer: "We are committed to find ways including personal contact in order to be able to help people, images and sounds to be with those who suffer. So we want to always be waking ourselves up, and people around us, about the truth of suffering all over the world. I know that the Fourth Noble Truth is the way out of suffering. And I know it comes from the First Noble Truth, and I vow always to use suffering and to turn it into peace and joy." [1:30:50] So it talks about the Four Noble Truths. It says that if we don't understand suffering, the root of suffering, then we have not been able to see the path that leads us out of suffering and putting an end to suffering. This is the teaching of the Four Noble Truths which has been brought into this precept, the fourth precept. The weakness of this precept...or this mindfulness training, is when you recite it you should see that. The shortcoming of this mindfulness training is the place where it says: "To be in touch with suffering," it does not talk about the suffering of ourselves, it's more talking about the suffering of other people. That is something missing in this precept. The truth is that when we understand our own suffering, our own pain, only then can we really understand the suffering of others. Here we say that by means such as sounds and being in contact, we have to wake people up to suffering. In the world there are a lot of people waking each other up to suffering already. [1:32:11] Recognizing suffering in ourselves [emph] and finding out why those sufferings are there, that is the work of looking deeply. And this is not mentioned in this mindfulness training. We understand the...one of the weaknesses of our present-day people is we want to run away from our own suffering. We have suffering in us but we are not brave enough to come back to ourselves, to look deeply at them. We try and cover them up by consuming, by using music, newspapers, novels, amusements to cover up our suffering. And now we have the Internet to help us well cover up. We don't use the Internet because we really need to, we use the Internet because we don't want to touch our own suffering. We don't want to be in touch, we don't want to "tiep" our own suffering. We want to be in touch with the wonders of life. But we have to be in touch also with the substance of suffering, the basis of suffering, the root of suffering in ourselves. And when we have understood the root of suffering in ourselves, only then can we find a way to put an end to it. And once we understand our own suffering, we won't make others suffer anymore. That is something that's missing from this mindfulness training and needs to be revised. Just like love. If we cannot love ourselves, look after ourselves, how can we love and look after others? We have to understand ourselves first before we can understand others. We have love ourselves before we can love others. [1:34:25] Without that love, we will destroy both of us, we will bring us both into depths of suffering, or three people, or four people. [1:34:45]

Thay has asked a number of people to study and give suggestions to the Order of Interbeing--Sr. Trung Nghiem [?], Tung [Tong?] Nghiem, Sr. Dinh Nghiem, Thai Phap Luu, etc.--these people are looking at the revision of the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings. And if you have time, please discuss this together. There are mindfulness [which] could be put together, two could be put together to give place for a new mindfulness training. [1:35:23] And the mindfulness trainings like the First Mindfulness Training, and the Second Mindfulness Training, the Third, the Fifth, the Fourteenth, the Eleventh, the Thirteenth, can all be revised, be better. Just like the First Mindfulness Training. It's talking about the fanaticism and the intolerance which bring about war, suffering. We remind ourselves about the insight of [about?] the dualistic

way of looking. Because of dualism, because we cannot look with the nondualistic eyes, we have discrimination. And not only in the society, but also in ethics, in philosophy, in science, this matter of dualism is a great obstacle.[1:36:55] The speciality...the dualism between matter and spirit, between mind and body, the discrimination between subject and object, not only in politics, in society, in psychology these things are an obstacle, but also in science they're an obstacle. So in the First Mindfulness Training we have to bring in the insight of nonduality, nondualism. The insight of nondualism can put an end to discrimination, to prejudice. And in the Five Mindfulness Trainings we've brought this in already. So when we revise the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings, we have to study the Five Mindfulness Trainings, because the Five Mindfulness Trainings are very good now. There are things now in the Five Mindfulness Trainings which are not yet in the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings, and we have to bring them back in to the Fourteen. [1:38:18] When we revised the Five Mindfulness Trainings, all the good things about the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings were brought into the Five Mindfulness Trainings. The Five Mindfulness Trainings have become rather like bodhisattva precepts now. You only need to practice the Five Mindfulness Trainings and you have a lot of happiness; you can be a bodhisattva. [1:38:50] Therefore the Order of Interbeing mindfulness trainings were in the beginning conceived of as bodhisattva precepts; if you have these precepts, you don't need to have...if you have the mindfulness trainings of the Order of Interbeing, you don't need the bodhisattva precepts. They are not dated bodhisattva precepts. And in Vietnam the monks and nuns have to receive the bodhisattva precepts of the tradition. But here instead of that we have the mindfulness trainings of the Order of Interbeing and they are looked on as our bodhisattva precepts. They are very good mindfulness trainings. With our practice, with our research, the Five Mindfulness Trainings are now very complete, revised. So when we revise the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings, we have to look again at the Five Mindfulness Trainings as they are now. [1:40:10] And for forty-five years, when the Buddha was teaching and practicing, he changed his ways of teaching greatly during that time. And we have to be the same. Every day the wheel of the Dharma has to turn. [1:40:35]

After thirty years of Plum Village, it has shown that we are always progressing, always going forward, we are always developing new Dharma doors, new ways of teaching that are more beneficial, which are more effective. Therefore we should not be satisfied with the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings as they are now. We have to have a council of the Order of Interbeing, an assembly of the Order of Interbeing, to revise the mindfulness trainings. And to help with that we have a committee that's already revising this. But once it's been revised, we have to have an assembly of the Order in order to accept the revision. And the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings have to be just as good as the new revised Five Mindfulness Trainings, and we hope they'll be better. This is the work we have to do. [1:42:05]

As far as science is concerned, every year they have new computers, new software. As far as...it's the same, there are always new discoveries in science every year. In Buddhism it's the same. We have to have...take steps forward every year. And Buddhism can lead the way. And the Order of Interbeing should know that we are standing in the vanguard. We have to go forward. And the Buddhas and the ancestral teachers are expecting this of us, waiting for us to do it. [1:43:29]

The first six members of the Order of Interbeing, received the mindfulness trainings in the Phap An [Phap Van?] Temple in the year 1966. And how many years ago is that? How many times have they been revised? They've been revised several times already. And now they need to be revised again. We have many Buddha works that need to be done. And we have to do this

work in the spirit of practice, looking at this work as the object of our practice, and not as work. We should be happy when we're doing it. We should have energy. We would have the life of the Dharma in it. [1:44:50] Now Thay is already old, but he still has a lot of energy, he still continues to translate, and Thay thinks that his translation is getting better, it's easier to understand. And Thay has a lot of happiness. When he's translating sutras, when he's teaching, when he's practicing, when he's walking, when he's teaching people how to practice. It's a matter of energy. When we feel we've no more energy left, it's because we don't have that energy, we lack that thing called aspiration, the energy called aspiration. We need the power of...energy of...aspiration. We want to do that. We want to do something for our country, for our ancestors, for our nation, for our society. We have to have an ideal. We have to have the power of aspiration. [1:46:15] We have to have the faith, the confidence. Monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen who do not feel enough energy in their...do not feel comfortable enough in their practice...they don't practice, they don't want to study, they don't want to practice, they don't have that power of aspiration, they don't have that fire in their heart, each member of the Order has to have a fire in our heart which offers the warmth, which pushes us forward. And when we go forward like that, we are happy, whether we are sweeping the floor for the Sangha, cooking for the Sangha, watering the garden for the Sangha, cleaning the toilet for the Sanga, we are happy because we have the energy, we have the aim. The aim is not fame, profit, position. The aim is the great love, wanting to be the continuation, wanting to be a worthy continuation of the Buddha, of our teacher, and our ancestral teachers. [1:47:35]

Now we're going to do walking meditation together, to be happy as we walk. [1:47:49]
[bell x3] [1:48:51] [end of talk]