

VESAK 2017  
BHIKSHUNI THICH NHU CHAN KHONG  
Plum Village International Community of Engaged Buddhists

Namo Shakyamunaye Buddhaya,  
Your Excellencies, Most High Venerables,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to speak to you about the teachings on Engaged Buddhism given by our teacher, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, which are expressed concisely and concretely in the 14 MINDFULNESS TRAININGS of the **Order of Interbeing**. These teachings were born during the war in Vietnam, and grew from his practice as a diligent, sincere young monk coping with the suffering of war.

These Fourteen Trainings embody the wisdom and deep practice of Buddhist Teachings. *Wisdom is like a tree. The tree must always continue to grow, or it will die.* It was the wish of our teacher to train a number of us to become pillars for a renewed Buddhism in Việt Nam. In the great discord and violence of the Vietnam war, Thich Nhat Hanh did not know how long the great teachers of Buddhism would survive. So, the Fourteen Trainings are a very practical response. He **put together the wisdom and practice of SILA and THE SUTRAS together in number of basic points**. In this way, when he dies, and other great teachers die, as they all must do, the teachings of the best sutras remain clearly preserved in the Fourteen Trainings, which can guide the younger generation. Looking deeply into these trainings, you can discover many profound teachings. The Trainings contain the essence of essential sutras, such as *The Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing* (Anapanasati Sutra), *The Sutra on Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone* (Bhaddekaratta Sutra), and *The Diamond Sutra* which speaks about the interbeing nature of people, animals, plants and minerals.

The word “*Training*” here means that we train ourselves. We keep trying to do our best to go in *the direction* of a true Buddha, full of light, peace, great understanding, and love. To train means we have to keep reminding **ourselves to renew our efforts every day**. The text of the training is like a mirror, and we recite this text regularly to help us reflect on our daily life. We ask ourselves, “Are we living as we would like to live?” If, for example, we have made a mistake, and got angry at someone, it is important to acknowledge our mistake. When reciting the Trainings we confess to the Buddha in ourselves **and we vow to repair the mistake and to do better next time**. Reciting the trainings regularly is very important, to help us nourish our aspiration and help us look more deeply into ourselves and put the teachings into practice. If during 3 months we do not the trainings, the transmission is nullified.

As celibate monastics we have a lot of freedom from worldly concerns, which allow us to follow the long Path, and to realize many good works and projects. There are also many talented married men and women who are also able to realize a lot of great work that monastics cannot do. So the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings are both for monastics and lay practitioners. And in the Fourteenth Training on celibacy and relationships, there is one part for monastics, and one part for lay practitioners.

**We practice the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings as a Sangha, not as an individual.** Our Teacher has shown us that collective insight is always deeper than individual insight. This is why he always emphasized that we must work together as a community (as a sangha) and not as individuals. Today, there are over four thousand five hundred Members of the Order of Interbeing practicing the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings all over the world. They are each a continuation of our teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh. Each core member helps to start a new small sangha around him or her, to help him or her grow in their own practice, and also for him or her to help others. These local sanghas of lay people may be far away from a monastic practice center. But they meet every week or two, to practice sitting meditation, walking meditation, and

mindful eating. They study the Dharma together and recite the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings. Together, they support each other in their daily practice of mindfulness, to bring the essence of the Trainings into their daily life and actions.

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**1/Openness,** We are determined not to be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology even Buddhist ones. We are committed to seeing the Buddhist teachings as guiding means that help us develop our understanding and compassion. They are not doctrine to fight, kill or die for. We understand that fanaticism in its many forms is the result of perceiving things in a dualistic and discriminative manner. We will train ourselves to look at everything with openness and the insight of INTERBEING in order to transform dogmatism and violence in ourselves and in the world.

**2/NON ATTACHMENT TO VIEWS** (Sutta origin of the conflicts (AN 2: iv, 6, abridged; I 66)

Aware of the suffering created **by attachment to views and wrong perceptions**, we are determined **to avoid** being **narrow-minded** and bound to present views. We are committed to learning and **practicing non attachment to views and being open to other experiences and insight in order to benefit from collective wisdom.** We are aware that the knowledge we presently possess is not changeless, not absolute truth. **Insight is revealed** through the practice of **compassionate listening, deep looking and letting go notions** rather than through the accumulations of intellectual knowledge. Truth is found in life, and we observe life within and around us in every moment, ready to learn throughout our lives.

*Suffering created by attachments to **our ONLY VIEWS** ! Determine to Non Attachment to views, Vow to be open to other experiences and insights*

*On collective wisdom. **INSIGHT** is reviewed through compassionate deep listening*

**3/FREEDOM OF THOUGHT**(Sutta origin of the conflicts (AN 2: iv, 6, abridged; I 66)

**Aware of suffering brought about when we impose our views**

on others. We are determined not to force others even our children, by any mean whatsoever such as authorities, threat, money, propaganda or indoctrination to adopt our views. We are committed to respecting the rights of other to be different, to choose what to believe and how to decide . We will however learn to help others to let go and transform fanaticism and narrowness through loving speech and compassionate dialogue

#### **4/ AWARENESS OF SUFFERING**

Aware that looking deeply at the nature of suffering can help us develop understanding and compassion, we are determined to come home to ourselves, to recognize, accept, embrace and listen to sufferings with the energy of mindfulness. We will do our best not to run away from our SUFFERINGS or cover it up through consumption, but practice conscious breathing and walking to look deeply into the roots of our suffering. We know we can realize the path leading to the transformation of suffering only when we understand deeply the roots of suffering. Once we have understood our own suffering, we will be able to understand the sufferings of others. WE are committed to finding ways, including personal contact and using telephone, electronic, audiovisual and other means, to be with those who suffer, so we can help them transform their suffering into compassion, peace and joy.

#### **Note of SCCK:**

*USA, EUROPE, CHINA , JAPAN, KOREA, ...everyone needs to come back to their OWN SUFFERINGS. Deep listening, deep look on their own people, their narrowness of mind, their own fear, smile to them letting go and try to come to countries and people full of fear with deep listening the phenoma of Trump is a sigh,*

#### **5/ COMPASSIONATE, HEALTHY LIVING**

**( sutra on the four Nutriments and Avatamsaka Sutra of the interbeing with our societies, families)**

Aware that true happiness is rooted in peace, solidity, freedom, and compassion, we are determined not to accumulate wealth while millions are hungry and dying nor to take as the aim of our life fame , power, wealth or sensual pleasure , which can bring much suffering and despair. We will practice looking deeply into **how we nourish our body and mind** with edible foods, sense impressions , volitions, and consciousness . We are committed not to gamble, or to use alcohol, drugs or any other products which bring toxins into our own and the collective body and consciousness such as certain websites, electronic games, music, TV program, films, magazines, books and conversations. WE will consume in a way that preserves compassion, well beings, and joy in our bodies and consciousness and in the collective body and consciousness of our families, our societies, and the Earth.

**6/TAKING CARE OF ANGER.** (*Anapana Satisutta, 16 ways of breathing and the Sutra given by Sariputta, FIVE ways to put of the anger*)

Aware that anger blocks communication and creates sufferings, we are committed to taking care of the energy of anger when it arises, and to recognising and transforming the seeds of anger that lied deep in our consciousness. **When anger manifests, we are determined not to do or say anything, but to practice mindful breathing or mindful walking** to acknowledge, embrace and look deeply into our anger. We know that the root of anger are not outside of ourselves but can be found in our **wrong perceptions** and **lack of understanding of** the suffering in our ourselves and **others**. By contemplating **impermanence** we will be able to look with the eyes of compassion at ourselves and at those we think are the cause of our anger, and to recognize the **preciousness of our relationship** . We will practice **right diligence** in order to nourish our capacity of understanding , love , joy and inclusiveness, gradually transforming our anger , violence and fear, and helping others do the same

**Note of SCCK**

NOT TALKING, ACTING and thinking. Just go back to our breathing till we can acquired some stillness, some peace and more clarity in our mind

## **7/ DWELLING HAPPILY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT**

**(Suttta, the better way to be alone)**

Aware that life is available only in the present moment , we are committed to training ourselves to live deeply each moment of daily life. We will try not to loose ourselves in dispersion, or be carried away by regrets about the past, worries about the future, or craving , anger, or jealousy in the present . We will practice mindful breathing to be aware of what is happening in the here and the now. We are determined to learn the art of mindful living by touching the wonderous, refreshing and healing element that are inside and around us, in all situations .In this way, we will be able to cultivate seeds of joy , peace , love , and understanding in ourselves, thus facilitating the work of transformation and healing in our consciousness. We are aware that real happiness depends primarily on our mental attitude and not on external conditions and that we can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that we already have more than enough conditions to be happy.

## **8/ True Community and communication**

Aware that lack of communications always bring separation and suffering, we are committed to training ourselves in the practice **of compassionate listening** and loving speech. Knowing that true community is rooted **in inclusiveness** and in the concrete practice of **the harmony of views**, thinking and speech, we will practice to share our understanding and experiences with members in our community in order to arrive at a **collective insight**. We are determined to learn to listen deeply without judging or reacting and refrain from uttering words that can create discord or cause the community to break. Whenever difficulties arise, we will remain in our sangha and practice looking deeply into ourselves and others to recognize all the causes and conditions including our own habit energies, that have brought about the difficulties. We will take responsibility for the ways we may have contributed to the conflict and keep communications open. We will not behave as a victim but be active in finding ways to reconcile and resolve all conflicts however small.

**Note from SuCo CK:**

*Building communities : deep listening, loving speech, inclusiveness, avoid dualistic judging.*

*Remember “This is because that is” ( Interbeing, in Agama)*

**9/ Truthful and Loving speech**

Aware that words can create happiness or sufferings, we are committed to learning to speak truthfully, lovingly and constructively. We will only use words that inspire joy, confidence and hope as well as promote reconciliation and peace in ourselves and among other people. We will speak and listen in a way that can help ourselves and others to transform sufferings and see the way out of difficult situations. We are determined not to say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people, nor utter words that may cause division or hatred. We will protect the happiness and harmony of our sangha by refraining from speaking about the faults of other persons in their absence and always ask ourselves whether our perceptions are correct, we will speak only with the intention to understand and help transform the situation. We will not spread rumors nor criticize or condemn things of which we are not sure. We will do our best to speak out about situation of injustice, even when doing so may make difficulties for us or threaten our safety.

**Note of SCCK**

*don't be so sure of our perceptions in judging saying that we only say the truth ? , saying everything in constructive way*

### **10/Protecting and Nourishing the Sangha.**

Aware that the essence and aim of a sangha is the realization of understanding and compassion, we are determined not to use the Buddhist community for personal power or profit , or transform our community into a political instrument. **As members of a spiritual community , we should nonetheless take a clear stand against oppression and injustices.** We should strive to change the situation , without taking sides in a conflict. We are committed to learning to look with the eyes of interbeing and to see ourselves and others as cells in one sangha body . As a true cell in the sangha body, generating mindfulness ,concentration and insights to nourish ourselves and the whole community, each of us is at the same time a cell in the Buddha body.We will actively build brotherhood and sisterhood,flow as a river and practice to develop the three real powers – understanding, love and cutting through afflictions- to realise collective awakening.

#### **Note of SCCK**

*But with collective awakening, seeing deeply the interbeing of everything. We must dare to speak out our position facing a collective injustice*

### **11- Right Livelihood**

#### **Note of SCCK**

*interbeing with mother earth,deeply linked with the ecosystem, we only have one planet to live.*

Aware that great violence and injustice have been done to our environment and society, we are committed not to live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. We will do our best to select livelihood that contributes to the well being of all species on Earth and help realize our ideal of understanding and compassion. Aware of economic, political and social realities around the world, as well as our interrelationship with the ecosystem, we are determined to behave responsibly as consumers and as citizens. We will not invest or purchase from companies that contribute to the depletion of natural resources, harm the Earth or deprive others of their chance to live

*We are committed not to live with a vocational that is harmful to humans and nature*



*respon*

### ***12/Reverence for life of animal, vegetal and mineral***

**Note of SCCK (*Diamond Sutra, no distinction among gods humans, earth species and lifespans, we are one with Mother Earth*)**

Aware that much sufferings is caused by war and conflict, we are determined to cultivate non violence , compassion, and the insight of interbeing in our daily lives and promote peace education, mindful meditation and reconciliation within families, communities, ethnic and religious groups , nations and in the world, we are committed not to kill and not to let others kill, we will not support any act of killing in the world , in our thinking, or in our way of life, we will diligently practice deep looking with our sangha to discover better ways to protect lives , prevent war and build peace.

### ***13/Generosity***

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice,stealing and oppression, we are committed to cultivate generosity in our way of thinking, speaking and acting .We will practice loving kindness by **working for the happiness** of people, animals, plants and minerals, **sharing** our time, energy and material ressources **with those who are in need**. WE are determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. We will respect theproperty of others **but will try to prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other beings**

### ***14/ True Love***

*for lay members :*

**Relations motivated by craving cannot dissipate the feeling of loneliness...but willcreate more suffering, frustration, and isolation, we are**

we are determined **not to engage in sexual relation without mutual understanding, love and a deep long-term commitment** made known to our families and friends. Seeing that body and mind are one, we are committed to learning appropriate ways to take care of our sexual energy and to cultivate loving kindness, compassion, joy and inclusiveness for our own happiness and the happiness of others. We must be aware of future suffering that may be caused by sexual relations. We know that to preserve the happiness of ourselves and others, **we must respect the right and commitments of ourselves and others**. We will do everything in our powers **to protect children**

**from sexual abuses and to protect couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.**

We will treat our body with compassion and respect. We are determined to look deeply into the 4 nutriments and learn ways to preserve and channel our vital energies such as (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realization of our bodhisattva ideal. We will be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world and will regularly meditate upon their future environment

*and for monastic members*

**Aware that the deep aspiration of a monk or a nun can only be realized when she or he wholly leaves behind the bonds of sensual love, we are committed to practicing chastity and to helping others protect themselves.** We are aware that loneliness and suffering cannot be alleviated through a sexual relationship but through practicing loving kindness, compassion, joy and inclusiveness. We know that a sexual relationship will destroy our monastic life, will prevent us from realizing our ideal of serving living beings, and will harm others, We will learn appropriate ways to take care of our sexual energy. We are determined not to suppress or mistreat our body or look upon our body as only an instrument, but will learn to handle our body with compassion and respect. We will look deeply into the Four Nutriments in order to preserve and channel our vital energies (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realization of our bodhisattva ideal

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**The Origin of Conflict**•The brahmin Ārāmaṇḍa approached the Venerable Mahākaccāna, 12 exchanged friendly greetings with him, and asked him: “Why is it, Master Kaccāna, that khattiyas fight with khattiyas, brahmins with brahmins, and householders with householders?”

- “It is, brahmin, because of attachment to sensual pleasures, adherence to sensual pleasures, fixation on sensual pleasures, addiction to sensual pleasures, obsession with sensual pleasures, holding firmly to sensual pleasures that khattiyas fight with khattiyas, brahmins with brahmins, and householders with householders.”
- “Why is it, Master Kaccāna, **that ascetics fight with ascetics?**” “It is, brahmin, because of **attachment to views**, adherence to views, fixation on views, addiction to views, obsession with views, holding firmly to views that ascetics fight with ascetics.”

(AN 2: iv, 6, abridged; I 66)

