

How Shinzen Dealt with Travel Dramas ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 So, apropos of sharing my stories and my practice, so you sort of got the impression that I was

00:00:23 fairly majorly bummed out by my travel fiasco. So, how did I deal with it, practice wise?

00:00:40 Well, one thing is the obvious, when things would come up, I did use the focus him technique.

00:00:48 I tend to use that when I'm upset for the obvious reasons. Inevitably, the self returns,

00:00:57 right? So, there's two freedoms from the self. Well, there's a lot of freedoms from the self.

00:01:05 Many faceted, many, many ways actually. But the two that I like to mostly think about

00:01:12 is, well, there's the experience of, quote, all rest, the non-arising of seeing, hearing,

00:01:21 feeling. That actually happens much more frequently than people realize. One of the reasons that

00:01:27 I give you these categories is so that you can start to notice that in fact you already

00:01:35 are enlightened, at least microscopically. Because if you really pay close attention

00:01:42 to the inner activation system, you'll see that there are all rest moments. And that's

00:01:48 a relative no-self experience. It may not be clear and intense enough to cause a stream

00:01:55 entry or permanent change, but that is a relative moment of no-self. Now, if you happen to catch

00:02:05 an intense arising of all three at the very beginning, and you completely quantumize it,

00:02:14 and you catch the moment when all three vanish, and subjective space itself collapses to God,

00:02:21 then actually you will have a stream entry experience. That's why Sasaki Roshi seems

00:02:27 like he's very mean, because he describes how the self arises and passes, and then he

00:02:35 makes damn sure that that's going to happen for you by saying things about you in public.

00:02:46 Oh yeah. There's no censoring and there's no mercy in that regard. Because he's just

00:03:03 playing a numbers game, hoping that he's got enough students here in America and makes

00:03:11 people intensely self-conscious in front of all their friends enough times. Someone's

00:03:18 going to have what it takes to actually keep the practice going while that's happening,

00:03:26 rather than get into the he said, she said, F you. One form of freedom is, well, it doesn't

00:03:43 arise, and you actually notice that. This also is part of the koan system that uses.

00:03:53 So first it's like, okay, when you see the flower, how do you become free from yourself?

00:03:59 He wants sea out without any sea in here. And he wants the sea out, it's even itself

00:04:07 to be flown. But then the next question is going to be, or not the next, but another

00:04:14 one somewhere down the line is, okay, good. It's wonderful. You achieve oneness with flower.

00:04:23 Now how do you separate from flower? Some of you are smiling because you actually have

00:04:30 this koan. How do you separate from flower? What does that mean? Does it mean make an

00:04:39 object out of the flower? Well, not in the normal sense because the goal is to not need

00:04:45 to do that. But what it means is that the judging self does arise. However, it arises

00:04:57 as an unfixed flow. It is completely equanimized. So that even though it is a self as an arising,

00:05:11 it is not a self as a thing. And so you've returned to yourself, but it's not really

00:05:20 the self. So my languaging for this is, so, well, I'll tell you another story. I was privileged

00:05:35 many years ago to live in the same Vihara, the same Theravada Buddhist monastery as Ananda

00:05:42 Maitreya. Ananda Maitreya was sort of the Sasaki Roshi of Theravada Buddhism in some

00:05:48 ways. He was the grand old man, he was in his 90s, from Sri Lanka. And I remember seeing

00:05:59 him as a much younger person in a BBC documentary called The Longest Journey. It's a documentary

00:06:06 where they went around the world and interviewed spiritual leaders. And they interviewed him.

00:06:14 And they said, well, could you summarize in a few sentences Buddhism? And he said, well,

00:06:22 I can actually summarize it in a few words. No self, no problem. You might have heard

00:06:27 of that. As far as I know, he's the person that originated that. However, I have my little

00:06:36 codicil, my version of that. So, no self, no problem. The non-arising of the self. No

00:06:46 self, no problem. But also, no self, no problem. Flow self, no problem. You follow? The self

00:07:01 realizes, perhaps with the mentions, perhaps firing on all three syllables. See, and hear,

00:07:08 and see. But it's a flow self. It is a self. And flow and fill the room with its doing.

00:07:20 It's a room-sized personality, which is the diametric opposite of a room-sized ego. So,

00:07:34 yeah, I sort of used focus in. Yeah, a little bit to sort of process. But I also did something

00:07:43 else, which was more in the line of nurture positive cognition. Entertaining a certain

00:07:56 thought pattern. I think in psychology this is sometimes referred to as an explanatory

00:08:07 mechanism. It's like, okay, doo-doo happened. Now, how do you think about it? You think

00:08:15 about this like, okay, this doo-doo always happens to me, or the world is, you know,

00:08:23 a pit of doo-doo. Or, why am I attracting this doo-doo to myself? Or, well, doo-doo

00:08:33 happens and I accept it. Okay, am I right? In psychology, I think someone's saying yes,

00:08:42 that there's a term explanatory style or explanatory mechanism. It's like, how do you use talk

00:08:48 space to deal with stuff? So, what I use is Pratītyasamutpāda. But it's actually, it's

00:09:03 only very minorly in talk space, actually. Not surprisingly, it's in image space. And

00:09:11 I've noticed over the years that this sort of image-based cognitive reframing is coming

00:09:22 easier and easier and easier, more and more naturally. And I think it has something to

00:09:27 do with the whole sensitizing within the visual field that I described to you that is such

00:09:33 a major element in my practice. So, what I think is, I'm putting it into words, but as

00:09:42 I say, I'm more see it than think it in words. It's like, okay, well, yeah, it's in words

00:09:49 too, though, it's true, now that I'm saying it. It's like, okay, I've been doing this

00:09:56 stuff for 40 years, and I always made retreats on time, because I'd leave the day early.

00:10:04 And if there was a problem, you know, then they'd get me there at least by the next day.

00:10:11 And then I'm thinking, okay, well, there's really been a deterioration in the whole travel

00:10:20 experience. There's the tension in the airport around the security, and are you going to

00:10:29 make your flight, and then a lot of the flights get cancelled, and so, what's behind this?

00:10:42 Why has there been this deterioration? Well, there's probably many factors, and I'm not

00:10:48 exactly an economist or very savvy in the political field, but what comes up to my mind

00:10:54 is, well, this is at least partially a consequence of 9-11. And then I ask myself, what was behind

00:11:07 9-11? Well, lots of stuff. Part of it is US policies in the Middle East. And what's behind

00:11:21 that? Now, you all know I love Israel, okay, I go there whenever, but, I don't talk about

00:11:35 this stuff, okay, because it's not my area of expertise. I know what it means to know

00:11:41 a subject really well. And one of the great things about knowing a subject really well,

00:11:50 and by the way, the subject is sensory reality, okay, one of the great things, most people

00:11:57 don't have something that they know really well, right, as well as anyone in the world,

00:12:04 but I'll tell you one of the great things about that is it leads to a huge sense of

00:12:08 humility, because you know what it means to know something really well. And when I think

00:12:16 about all the other things that I would like to pontificate on, like relative to knowing

00:12:22 something really well, like what do I know about politics and economics and national

00:12:27 policies and how stuff should be run by governments, you know, I know, I can imagine what it would

00:12:37 be like to really know that well, but like forget about it, I mean, not even remotely,

00:12:42 so that could lead to a certain refreshing humility to realize that sort of militates

00:12:51 against the tendency to just want to pontificate on every topic that comes up, like I see people

00:13:00 in my health club doing, arguing about politics, oh my god, after the election, it was bloody.

00:13:12 Because if you were rooting for the other guy, you were hurting, and there aren't many

00:13:16 people in Vermont that were rooting for the other guy. So I really felt sorry for the

00:13:27 ones that were, I mean really. So anyway, so let's not go there as far as, but the fact

00:13:37 is that, and what's behind that? Well, the Holocaust, and what's behind that? Well, the

00:13:48 way Germany was treated after World War I, which was very abusive, I mean if you look

00:13:55 at the history of, oh my god, senior moment. What was the, right after World War I, Versailles,

00:14:16 yeah, if you look at what happened at Versailles, if you look at the memoirs of some of those

00:14:20 people, they knew that they had sown the seeds for another war. They just knew it, but they

00:14:27 couldn't help doing it. They just couldn't stop it, because they just wanted to beat

00:14:37 up Germany, get even. So, and what's behind that? Well, all the shit in the 19th century,

00:14:48 okay, in Europe, okay. You know, what the French did when they invaded Germany, okay,

00:14:59 wasn't pretty, etc., etc., etc. And you get this sense that there's no one to blame and

00:15:07 everyone's to blame. It just, it just put the behind, behind, the behind, and that means

00:15:19 that the world sucks. That's not how I perceive it. Remember I said that N means this causality,

00:15:34 but it also means connection. So the inconvenience that I go through when I have to travel now,

00:15:46 that's my direct, direct touching of all of the above. And it's part of the vastness of

00:16:04 my true being. And that's that.