

## Discrimination and Unification - Part 2 of 4 ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 What are the facets of the experience of flow?

00:00:10 So there are many, many facets to the experience of flow.

00:00:15 I use the word flow for any kind of change,

00:00:21 other than the abrupt vanishings.

00:00:24 I have you work with the experience of something vanishing

00:00:29 as a special case of change that has a special significance

00:00:33 because each time you notice something vanish,

00:00:37 for just a fraction of a second, your attention is adverted,

00:00:41 turned towards a place that's outside of place and outside of time.

00:00:47 That instant of vanishing turns you just instantaneously

00:00:52 towards the unborn source.

00:00:54 The place where A disappears to is exactly the place

00:00:58 that gives birth to B in the next instant of experience.

00:01:04 So when I have you work with the theme of change or impermanence,

00:01:09 you note vanishings, and then all other kinds of change, anything.

00:01:16 I just use the word flow just to have a nice name for it.

00:01:21 So how can things flow?

00:01:24 Well, it's nothing mystical.

00:01:28 Something can get more intense or it can get less intense.

00:01:33 If you've ever noticed something get more intense or less intense,

00:01:36 you've experienced flow, as I've described.

00:01:39 A sensation could spread or it could collapse.

00:01:43 Something could speed up your thoughts,

00:01:46 or a certain sensation someplace, its frequency could speed up

00:01:52 or it could slow down.

00:01:54 There could be inward pressures, outward pressures.

00:01:58 Even the scattering of your awareness, which is usually looked upon as a problem,

00:02:04 it's like I'm all over the place,

00:02:06 that could simply be looked upon as a kind of expansive flow.

00:02:11 And the gripping and holding, the obsessing,

00:02:14 the not being able to let go of something

00:02:17 or something holding you so you can't get free from it,

00:02:22 that certainly could be interpreted as a problem,

00:02:25 or it could be interpreted as simply a form of contractive flow.

00:02:32 And in that sense, not a problem.

00:02:36 So as you're paying attention to the kinds of ordinary experiences

00:02:42 that I just mentioned, things get more intense, less intense,

00:02:45 speed up, slow down, spread, collapse,  
00:02:48 there's inward pressure force, outward pressure force,  
00:02:52 scattering, gripping.  
00:02:55 As you're paying attention to that,  
00:02:59 you could notice that all of the things that I've mentioned  
00:03:06 involve an interplay of contrasts.  
00:03:11 There's like, okay, it can push out, it can push in.  
00:03:14 It can get more intense, it can get less intense.  
00:03:17 So if we were to abstract from this situation,  
00:03:21 we could say that there's two basic principles underlying flow.  
00:03:28 A principle of increase, a principle of decrease.  
00:03:32 And there's many, many flavors and dimensions  
00:03:35 within which the increase and decrease can express itself.  
00:03:40 And so we can give a general term to the principle of increase.  
00:03:46 We can call it expansion if you wish.  
00:03:48 And then we can give a general term to the principle of decrease.  
00:03:51 We can call it contraction.  
00:03:54 In between increase and decrease is a balance point  
00:03:59 that we could call zero if we were using an additive metaphor.  
00:04:04 With regards to all of the different flavors that I mentioned,  
00:04:10 as you're paying attention to things speeding up, slowing down,  
00:04:14 getting more intense, less intense,  
00:04:16 pushing out, pulling in, scattering, gripping,  
00:04:19 you might get a sense that accompanying  
00:04:24 each one of these flavors of expansion and contraction  
00:04:30 is a sense that space itself is expanding.  
00:04:35 The space of the experience is expanding or contracting.  
00:04:43 If, as you're practicing, that theme should come up,  
00:04:48 you pay attention to expansion and contraction,  
00:04:51 it has many, many guises, some of them not all that pleasant,  
00:04:56 but you might notice that there's always an increase in space.  
00:05:02 Actually, it's an increase in time-space.  
00:05:06 Time-space gets inflated when things tend to get inflated,  
00:05:11 when things intensify, when they speed up,  
00:05:14 when there's outward pressure, etc., etc.  
00:05:17 Then space or time-space tends to collapse.  
00:05:21 So you could tune into the spaceness  
00:05:27 associated with the flow of expansive and contractive flavors.  
00:05:34 And to the extent that you would tune into the spaceness,  
00:05:37 you are tuning into the spacious nature of consciousness.  
00:05:42 This is a phrase that's used very much in the Dzogchen tradition  
00:05:47 of Tibetan practice. They talk about spaciousness.

00:05:51 Spaciousness is maybe not the best English word  
00:05:55 because it implies a pre-existing, solidified stage called space  
00:06:04 that somehow you're supposed to get in contact with.  
00:06:07 But I'm sure that that's not what that tradition is aiming at  
00:06:11 when they say spaciousness,  
00:06:13 because that's just a solidified perception.  
00:06:16 Spaciousness is the space nature of experience.  
00:06:25 When you have a complete experience,  
00:06:28 it's utterly rich but utterly transparent,  
00:06:33 and so presents itself as space itself.  
00:06:40 Sasaki Roshi says you must reach the point in your practice  
00:06:46 where when you laugh, space is laughing,  
00:06:51 and when you cry, space is crying.  
00:06:54 And it's very enigmatic.  
00:06:56 You can't guess what he's talking about.  
00:06:59 But then in a few months or a few years or a few decades,  
00:07:04 you have this experience.  
00:07:06 Oh, yeah, of course, that would be the way to describe this.  
00:07:11 So if you can fight long enough against spaciness,  
00:07:20 the reward you get is, quote, spaciousness,  
00:07:24 which is really spaceness.  
00:07:27 It may seem bleak, but it incorporates the richness  
00:07:32 of everything within it.