

# Expansion and Contraction – Part 4: Heaven, Hell, Integration & 3 Tastes of Freedom ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Sometimes when we sit here and practice, especially if you sit for long periods of time, it may  
00:00:20 seem like you're being torn apart.  
00:00:22 It's hard not to be afraid of being torn apart.  
00:00:25 What will become of me?  
00:00:26 By the way, this being torn apart is called bhanga in Pali and Sanskrit.  
00:00:32 It means dissolution.  
00:00:33 You can look it up on the internet.  
00:00:35 It's an experience that some people go through, and some of you are going through, and others  
00:00:45 of you will go through.  
00:00:47 But not everyone goes through it.  
00:00:48 It has both a wonderful aspect to it, because there can be like champagne bubbles and blissful  
00:00:58 flows of energy and so forth.  
00:01:02 That's the wonderful side.  
00:01:04 But there can also be disturbing images of skeletons and death and animals eating you  
00:01:10 up.  
00:01:11 And if this sounds like some of the things that happen in shamanic culture, that's no  
00:01:15 coincidence.  
00:01:16 I'm sure that's no coincidence.  
00:01:18 This is a human thing.  
00:01:20 It transcends a particular spiritual path.  
00:01:27 Often in Africa, there's an illness associated with before a big spiritual breakthrough takes  
00:01:36 place.  
00:01:38 In other cultures, the shaman experiences animals eating them, etc., etc.  
00:01:48 So there can be a heavenly side and a hellish side.  
00:01:51 For some people, it's only heavenly.  
00:01:53 Everything just becomes an aerosol of the most blissful, gentle, effervescent flow.  
00:02:02 And that's the form that the dissolution takes.

00:02:06 For other people, the flow is more like being torn apart, like you're just being pounded

00:02:15 and squeezed and stretched and twisted, the whole fabric of consciousness.

00:02:23 And other people get these weird images and stuff like that, skeletons and rotting corpses

00:02:31 and things emblematic of death, which makes sense because you are, after all, surrendering

00:02:39 to the primordial forces of death, but also of life.

00:02:43 If it takes the form that it seems that you're being torn apart, don't be afraid.

00:02:49 All that's going to happen is you will be torn apart, but you will become life and death.

00:02:57 God and the devil won't have anything in between them to prevent them from uniting into that

00:03:05 which transcends contrast.

00:03:08 All ordinary tastes disappear.

00:03:11 And there is only the vimoksa rasa, the taste of liberation.

00:03:16 But according to the way my teacher likes to talk, there's really three tastes in there,

00:03:23 the taste of life, the taste of death, and the taste of zero, that which is neither life

00:03:32 nor death, but their completion.

00:03:36 The integrated body, mind, and world arise never completely separate from the source.

00:03:50 Even as you're going about daily life, looking here, looking there, it seems like zero opens

00:04:00 up, expands, it contracts, and molds what you're looking at.

00:04:06 But it never really separates from zero.

00:04:08 So you, what you're looking at, the forces that are molding you and what you're looking

00:04:14 at, and the cessation of those forces are never completely separate.

00:04:23 That then sets the stage for a lifetime of integration.

00:04:30 And since you experience the self and the world as coming out of and returning to the

00:04:44 same place through the peristalsis of this formless womb, in Greek, you know what the

00:04:56 word for brother or sister is?

00:04:58 It's a unisex word, actually, means sibling, brother or sister.

00:05:04 I'll give you a hint.

00:05:05 There's a city that's called the city of brotherly slash sisterly love.

00:05:11 Well, the love part is the philia.

00:05:17 The adelphos is the brother-sister part.

00:05:21 Adelphos, although you would never guess by its sound, is cognate to the Sanskrit word

00:05:29 garbha, G-A-R-B-H-A.

00:05:33 Have you ever heard of the Tathagata garbha?

00:05:40 Garbha means womb.

00:05:41 Tathagata garbha is the womb of the Buddhas, the mother of the Buddhas, the source, the

00:05:48 nature of nature.

00:05:50 Adelphos means womb.

00:05:52 And so adelphos means one who shares the womb.

00:05:56 Adelphos, a brother or sister, is someone who shares the womb, literally.

00:06:02 And in Sanskrit, the word is sagarbha.

00:06:06 So adelphos, they don't sound that similar, but they're cognate, sagarbha, one who has

00:06:11 shared the womb.

00:06:12 Adelphos, one who has shared the womb.

00:06:15 So your physical brother or sister is the one who has shared the physical womb.

00:06:28 But the formless womb of the source, everyone shares.

00:06:38 And to the extent that you have a sense of sharing that source, to that extent you cannot

00:06:51 avoid the direct perception, moment by moment, that everyone you look at is your relative,

00:07:00 literally.

00:07:01 And not just every human, right, every animal or plant, everything.

00:07:09 The keno-centric view leads to a cosmos-centric view.

00:07:13 If zero is at the center of your being, then the whole cosmos is the center of your concern

00:07:23 in the sense of a call to service.