

Expansion and Contraction – Part 3: Surrendering to Life & Death, Nirvana ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 The idea of manifesting was described by some of the Neoplatonists as
00:00:29 from the good to the good, never leaving the good.
00:00:35 And there's a metaphor of a fountain that gushes out, gathers back at the
same time.
00:00:45 If you look at your central nervous system, the functional anatomy,
00:00:51 there's something right in the center of your brain called the corona
radiata.
00:00:56 And it looks like a fountain.
00:01:00 And the sensory fibers go up and the motor fibers come down, roughly
speaking.
00:01:08 I suspect that this is not a coincidence.
00:01:12 So from the good back to the good, never leaving the good.
00:01:18 You expand and contract simultaneously, but the entire thing is surrounded by
zero.
00:01:28 So although there is contrast, there is no birth.
00:01:34 Ironically, by utterly giving yourself to life and death,
00:01:39 you abide in a transcendence of life and death.
00:01:46 You are literally born into the unborn.
00:01:51 And just like someone who's born into life doesn't know the rules,
00:01:57 doesn't know the lay of the land, it takes many years for the no-self,
00:02:04 the unborn, to learn how to carry on all of the functions of the self-self.
00:02:14 There's some pictures called the Zen ox-herding pictures
00:02:18 that portray that on the metaphor of training an ox.
00:02:22 Time and space arise by the arising of what inhabits time and space,
00:02:26 which is our subjective world of field image talk
00:02:29 and our so-called objective world of touch-site sound.
00:02:33 Now by utterly giving yourself to whatever wants to say yes
00:02:39 and whatever wants to say no,
00:02:42 by utterly giving yourself to whatever pushes out and whatever pulls in,
00:02:48 however uncomfortable that may be for a while,
00:02:53 we get a little bit of the cosmic affirmation
00:03:00 and a little bit of the cosmic negation,
00:03:03 just a tiny little fraction of it.
00:03:05 This is the way Sasaki Roshi teaches.

00:03:08 So we give that tiny fraction back to the rest of the universe,
00:03:14 the totality of expansion and the totality of contraction,
00:03:18 and then our tiny little bit merges with the totality
00:03:24 and there's no somethingness to prevent expansion and contraction
00:03:31 from re-merging, coming back together into the one zero.
00:03:38 And to experience this cycle over and over again,
00:03:42 as you look to the right, look to the left, talk to this person,
00:03:45 think about this, do that, plan dinner, eat dinner, make love, make
arguments,
00:03:55 to not lose track that this is happening
00:04:01 would be tantamount to what might be called living nirvana.
00:04:05 I spoke about how flow can integrate the mind and the body.
00:04:11 I spoke about how flow can integrate inside and outside.
00:04:17 But mind and body, inside and outside, can be integrated in the sense of
00:04:27 never disconnected from the source, the zero, the balance point, the one
nothing,
00:04:34 the fulfilling vacuity.
00:04:41 It's this word nirvana, we can't translate it into English.
00:04:46 It means both cessation and complete fulfillment, because it's quenching.
00:04:54 The fire is quenched, the fire of suffering is quenched,
00:04:58 but your thirst is quenched, meaning that you have fulfillment,
00:05:07 and not just a little bit of fulfillment, but a kind of utter fulfillment
00:05:13 for no reason whatsoever, happiness independent of conditions.
00:05:17 Sukhihoto, may you be happy, is the traditional greeting in Theravada
Buddhism,
00:05:23 in the Pali language, happy in the sense of good things happen to you,
00:05:28 and happy in the sense that your happiness is not dependent on good things
happening to you.
00:05:34 Both of these connotations are present when people say sukhihoto.
00:05:39 Ironically, by being able to, in a sense, abstract, in a sense, see that all
change
00:05:54 can be in some way looked upon as an interplay of oppositely directed
doings,
00:06:03 and then by seeing that they all boil down to yang and yin, yes and no, life
and death,
00:06:13 expansion and contraction, moving forward, moving backward, etc., etc.,
00:06:22 you surrender to life and death, and you're torn apart.
00:06:28 But don't worry, all that happens is you become life and death.
00:06:33 I didn't make this phraseology up, this is verbatim Sasaki Roshi's taisho.
00:06:39 He says, I know it's scary to think of completely surrendering to expansion
and contraction.
00:06:48 It's scary to consider allowing yourself to literally be torn apart by the

forces of nature.

00:06:59 But don't be scared. All that's going to happen is when you surrender to life and death,

00:07:06 you will become life and death. They will no longer be an object for you,

00:07:12 and therefore you will become free from life and death.

00:07:15 You will become that which is beyond life and death,

00:07:18 because life and death will rebalance, will reunite into the still point of the turning world,

00:07:26 neither life nor death, neither movement from nor towards.

00:07:29 This could also be described as absolute present, future and past uniting

00:07:36 in an absolute presence that has no duration whatsoever.

00:07:43 Spatially paper-thin, temporally instantaneous.