

# Mt. Carmel Talk ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 The teachings of the Buddha are not meant to be used as a tool for self-discouragement.

00:00:07 They are meant to be used as a tool for self-improvement.

00:00:13 The teachings of the Buddha are not meant to be used as a tool for self-improvement.

00:00:21 Teachers can't avoid making bad karma.

00:00:24 Either we describe things that could happen and how to work with them,

00:00:29 which then will motivate you, give you a sense of what to look for,

00:00:33 and give you a sense of how to work with it, if it should occur.

00:00:38 Either we do that or we don't.

00:00:41 If we do that, we've done you a service and we've done you a disservice,

00:00:45 because those things may not occur, and it sets up all sorts of comparison mind,

00:00:51 and the medicine then becomes the poison.

00:00:56 There's lots of different ways you could define enlightenment.

00:01:02 One way that will help you perhaps be disabused of the comparison mind,

00:01:07 I'd like to tell this story, most of you have heard this story.

00:01:11 Many years ago, I and another American Buddhist monk and a Japanese Zen Roshi,

00:01:19 the three of us were interviewed for Japanese television.

00:01:23 The interviewer asked me the question,

00:01:28 サトリとは一体何ですか？

00:01:32 Now you might know the word Satori, that means enlightenment in Japanese, waking up.

00:01:37 When you get right down to it, what is enlightenment?

00:01:40 I turned to the other American monk who was more senior than myself,

00:01:46 and he sort of turned to the Roshi.

00:01:49 So that got passed on to the Roshi.

00:01:52 And then there's the Yomi Roshi, whose lineage is very prominent in North America.

00:01:57 Here you are, a Roshi.

00:02:00 Presumably you know what enlightenment is, but now it's for the record, for the camera.

00:02:07 For a half million people that are watching on television forever, you're on the spot.

00:02:15 サトリとは一体何ですか？

00:02:17 When you get right down to it, what is enlightenment?

00:02:21 He goes,

00:02:26 さあ、サトリとサトリでないとの区別がなくなることでしょう。

00:02:39 I guess you could say it's the disappearance of the distinction between enlightenment and not enlightenment.

00:02:50 意味を。

00:02:58 As soon as you start thinking, what am I going to get enlightened?

00:03:03 Why is this one more enlightened than me?

00:03:05 Why haven't I experienced this?

00:03:07 What am I doing wrong?

00:03:09 You are making a distinction between enlightenment and not enlightenment.

00:03:12 The quickest door to enlightenment right then and there, well, you know what it is.

00:03:19 Stop making that distinction.

00:03:21 If you keep that in mind, then people like me won't make so much bad karma by telling you all sorts of distinctions.

00:03:32 As you give nature half a chance to gradually nurture your concentration, clarity, and equanimity skills over the weeks, months, years, for the duration,

00:03:51 there is a good probability that at some point that triple skill set, my definition of mindfulness, will reach a sufficient critical mass.

00:04:02 So that if you chose to work with the theme of expansion and contraction in your senses,

00:04:09 if that was something you wanted to do, that would be available to you.

00:04:16 If you read the classic text on vipassana or mindfulness meditation, the Visuddhimagga,

00:04:26 it means the path of purification, it was written by Bhuttakosa,

00:04:32 I don't know, maybe in the 5th century AD in Sri Lanka, written in the Pali language.

00:04:40 There are some translations, it's not an easy read, that's for sure, even in translation.

00:04:48 In any event, you will see he describes a point in one's development,

00:04:56 not very, rather close to the experience of stream entry or initial insight, enlightenment, if you will.

00:05:09 There is a time when your awareness becomes dominated by the pattern of rising and passing.

00:05:19 That is to say, things well up and then things subside.

00:05:24 At a somewhat later stage, your attention becomes dominated by the pattern of

00:05:31 no sooner does it start to arise, but it's already passing.

00:05:36 As soon as the time-space volume that a sensory event would occupy is arising,

00:05:42 that time-space volume is simultaneously collapsing.

00:05:48 In other words, simultaneous expansion and contraction,

00:05:54 and then their neutralization into zero, is already explicitly described in the Pali literature.

00:06:08 I am quite sure Sasaki Roshi never read those passages.

00:06:12 He just experienced it in his own practice.

00:06:16 But instead of describing it as something over there, where things are dying as soon as they are passing,

00:06:27 which is sort of like linear or two-dimensional,

00:06:32 he sets it up in this three-dimensional paradigm,

00:06:35 where you're not observing the simultaneous birth and death of space.

00:06:47 You're not observing it. God would put you in some space over here, fixated.

00:06:53 You're not observing it fixated.

00:06:55 The observer is arising in the sphere itself.

00:06:59 That just means feel, image, talk, and touch, and the world.

00:07:05 Your body-mind and your sight-sound, if you want to cut it up that way,

00:07:11 body-mind-self and the sight-sound-world,

00:07:14 they are arising both inside that time-space volume that is molding them through expansion and contraction.

00:07:32 That means that as you bop around in the world, as you look here, you look there,

00:07:42 you are participating in the activity of impermanence.

00:07:48 You're participating in the source.

00:07:50 You're not observing the source. You're participating in the source.

00:07:56 Maybe that's one of the differences between Zen training and vipassana.

00:08:01 In vipassana, you sort of observe impermanence,

00:08:05 and then if you do that long enough, it starts to inform the way your body moves,

00:08:10 and you ride on impermanence.

00:08:13 In Zen, long before you ever actually see impermanence,

00:08:17 you're forced to, by the lifestyle and the koans and whatever,

00:08:21 you're forced to ride on impermanence, and then eventually you see impermanence.

00:08:26 But in the end, you want to come to both.

00:08:29 You want to be able to see impermanence and to manifest impermanence, to ride on impermanence.

00:08:35 And when that happens, if you wish to use this paradigm,

00:08:44 the source and the products of the source,

00:08:51 the source is the activity of zero that polarizes and neutralizes.

00:08:56 The products of the source are the moment-by-moment self and world

00:09:00 as it arises in sensory experience.

00:09:03 I don't know what the self and the world are in any other sense,

00:09:07 but feel-image-talk, subjective-system, and touch-sight-sound-objective,

00:09:14 they are arising moment-by-moment in between expansion and contraction.

00:09:21 Therefore, they are not fundamentally separate from the source.

00:09:26 The products of the source and the source are not fundamentally separate.

00:09:31 So, as you're going around having ordinary sensory experiences,

00:09:39 there is this sense that there's not a two-ness

00:09:50 between the source of creation and creation.