

2019-05-22 Dharmette Clear Seeing

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SPEAKERS

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So, sometimes the word of Vipassana is translated as clear seeing that person apart means to see. And the V is kind of sometimes taken to be a, in this context of prefix of emphasis. So seeing in a special way or seeing with strength and in one of the most preferred ways that I know of that people like to use a speed is to say, it's clear, so clear seeing and to what does it mean to be clear in our seeing some people associate meditation with becoming calm. And many people go to meditation because they're stressed out or anxious or, you know, too agitated. And so they're looking for calm and so kind of leaning in that direction of calm, trying to make themselves calm, which is a fine thing. But calm by itself can make the mind dull. And, and whereas vipassana, the goal is to make the mind sharp or clear. But if you focus on emphasizing clarity and sharpness too much, then many people try too hard. And whereas they should get becoming calm first. So this balance between calm and clarity calm and, and sharpness is kind of the art of it all. But today I want to say a few words about the clarity part and what that might mean. As the mind becomes quieter, meaning that we're not swept away in our thoughts and our concepts and ideas. Then those don't create the filter or barrier for us to see what's happening here. And many people don't realize how much their thoughts shape how they view the world and how much they're actually living in a world of ideas and stories and memories. Imagine futures and when you're living in that world there can be can get a lot of clarity sometimes about oh, that's what happened yesterday, oh, I said x, and they said, Why and now I understand why z happened. I have clarity now. That's fine. But that's about the stories and about the events. It's kind of in the world of thoughts and ideas that we're moving around. And many people live in that world. That's all they know. The person is actually in a certain kind of way, stepping away from that, in order to see directly and immediately clearly what's actually here. And one of the ways you know you're having the Pastner clear seeing is, is you're seeing what's in the present moment. What's actually occurring now? If you have clarity, but what happened yesterday, that might be wisdom about that time, but it's not clear seeing, which has to do with here. If you are thinking about what you should do for dinner tomorrow, and you get clarity Oh, yeah. That's nice for you. But that's not clear seeing in the moment now. So, so, kind of the by definition with clear seeing into the past now has to do with the present moment. But then what does it mean to see clearly here in the present, and it's very easy to live in a world of lumping things together generalizing about things and to some degree or big degree. When we see ourselves in the present moment, many of us will see ourselves through the filter of a general generalized idea identity of who we are. And we have judgments about ourselves ideas of who we are. And so we I'm in touch with myself that people might say that what they're in touch with might be this very general idea. So if I say that, you know, I'm a Dharma teacher, there's some truth to that, especially I'm sitting up here giving your Dharma talk. And, but you know, so like, Oh, I'm in touch with myself. I'm a Dharma teacher. That's not clear seeing. That's, that lends itself to very generalized interpretation of what's happening here who I am. But it doesn't specify the details of what's happening. As I'm teaching, that I'm thinking about what to say I'm trying to be attentive to the audience. I'm trying to reflect on what the Dharma might

mean in certain situations. And there's actually all these details of what's happening here. That if I met on the rest on the idea of I'm a Dharma teacher gets lost doesn't get seen so clear seeing has a lot to do with seeing the details of phenomena

what's going on. And to give you the idea of a little bit more about how we don't see the details we have the either visibly clear glass it's the paper someone is giving me water on here so we have this clear glass so clear See, hang sees the clear glass. But you know, I've been given this glass many times before. So when I see this I see the person today the manager probably and maybe managers in the past and people who have cared for me and how nice it is that people think about me and bring me a glass of water and, and know this, this glass represents all this goodness and all the specialness here of generosity to me and people caring for each other and maybe it represents the goodness of all of this IMC in the community here and it represents so much I think about it, that I think I really need to Keep this glass close to me, this needs to be my souvenir for IMC. And I think I'll take it home, because it's really my glass. And I think is going to be my glass, my special place my special reminder. In fact, probably this kind of kind of glasses a good status symbol for, you know, being a really good Dharma teacher, etc. So what I'm doing here, the clear seeing sees the class. Then I have all these ideas, memories, associations, the meaning of it. And then it's all these ideas of myself. I'm taking and beginning to knit together. So together a complicated world. It's based on ideas and preferences and desires and all kinds of things. I'm tying them all together. And as you listen, you probably heard it got more and more complicated, that world so complicated, that at some point, I kind of lose touch with the actual clarity about the class that's right here. I'm in the world of what it means that connections with to do with it. So the mind, the Buddha talks about desire, as as being a sower that sowing together our construct our ideas of this world that we're in. And then we have these generalities, these abstractions that we start living in. And many of people's suffering has to do with the abstractions they're living in. What we're trying to do with clear seeing and be possible, is to start teasing apart or separating out the details of what's happening, that you can't see when we're in the world of abstraction. What's actually happening in the moment, what's the details of what's happening? So, the, there is a so what you find in the Buddhist teachings is a lot of emphasis on making distinctions or seeing distinctions between things. And so, one of the common practice This is associate with mindfulness is investigation. That's the English translation of the term Dharma v Chaya. But the literal meaning of the word means to distinguish, or discriminate between distinguish between differentiate between different phenomena. To see distinctions more clearly, to tease things apart. The word that appears usually translated as consciousness in English, literally means something like some people actually translate into English as discriminating consciousness, because it means the ability of the mind to be aware and see distinctions between things, otherwise wouldn't be able to find the door. Because you know that you have to see the distinction between the wall and the door, to be able to find the door. And so the mind is constantly making distinctions. That and that's a kind of key quality of human consciousness is be able distinguish distinguish the edge of this platform. Sitting on from what's not the edge, and then I can carefully step off, or just see the class if I want to drink as being distinct from the clock that's in front of me. Or from the book The bell, it's in front of me because you don't want to watch me pick up the bell. I'm trying to drink thinking that, you know, there's water in there. There's a class, we make distinctions and we don't think about these distinctions. Some of these are so natural, we kind of just make it doesn't occur to us, we're making it but actually something in our brain is making these distinctions all the time. Otherwise we wouldn't find our way wouldn't find the door. Clear seeing of the past in a practice is it's not investigating and doing but a relaxing of this movement of abstracting, conceiving, sewing things together. quieting the mind, so that the natural functioning of consciousness can operate to begin seeing distinctions begins teasing apart things. So with this silly example of the class,

if I kind of go down my little highway of what this class means and associations, and I want it my status and all because of this class, if I finally wake up from that, what's going on here, Gil, let's take a good look. Then I see Oh, look at this. There's a class, there's a signing a meaning. There's a bit of equal, you know, conceit operating here, confusing those apart. There's a little maybe it turns out that underneath that there's a little bit of insecurity, there's a little bit of over, you know, ambition or desire operating. And I started seeing all the little pieces of it that are going on. So we sit and meditate, for example, and we have a feeling of meditation not going well today. That's an obstruction. You can't really do much with an obstruction, except half a bad meditation. But what's really going on There's the mind that's thinking, their desire to come back to the breathing. And then thinking mind pulls me away. I come back to my, my breathing. They think mind pulls me away. And there's a feeling of discomfort around that. There's a feeling of discouragement, a feeling of disappointment. And it's a very particular these feelings and those feelings of disappointment or discouragement. They trigger feelings of aversion to those feelings something this interpretation, something is wrong. Something's not right here. Something needs to be fixed. And, and that has to do with me, I'm, I'm doing this wrong. And so by doing clear seeing, we see each of those steps very clearly. That's what's happening. That's what's happening. We start teasing apart or the mind begins. Get quiet enough. We see the Individual details are into individual pieces of the puzzle before they're sewn together. And that gives us a lot of freedom can give us freedom. At some point we learn just to leave it alone. We don't get involved we don't, we can actually actually have a kind of appreciation of it too, wow. It's just phenomena arising. There's this thought arising. And it in the moment in and of itself, before I make any stories about it, or assign meaning to those having that thought, I just use it's a thought of the moment it'll come and go. It's here for now. I don't have to do anything with it. So as the as the as the mind relaxes, and there's more clear seeing, we see better and better, the individual details of what's happening in the moment. very particular The example of this that little bit inspires me another example but it kind of represents this is some people have pointed out that in America, United States, when people make flower arrangements, sometimes they make bouquets with all these flowers kind of bursting forth, you know, definitely. Whereas if you go to Japan, in some traditional Japanese homes or tea rooms or something, they have a little alcove, little shelf and alcove in the wall. And, and, and in that alcove, it's, there's a single vase maybe, and one flower, and that one flower is carefully chosen, and carefully arranged. And when you go in there, you see the particularity of that flower. The uniqueness especially in their flowers stands out, it's highlighted. Whereas in the bouquet, it's all generally lives and we kind of step back and see the display of color which is nice. But every individual flower doesn't really stand out there's not highlighted. So, like the clear seeing of a person is, is more in that direction of beginning to appreciate the uniqueness of the unique moment expression right now. The temperature right now the kind of light that's in the room right now, if your eyes are open to spacious ceiling in that space around us, the sensations, the unique sensations of your body as you sit here, the different sensations, different parts of your body, the details particularity of it, the particular way that you feel emotionally right now, after having sat here maybe this morning, and you feeling particular and actually it turns out if you feel a particular of how you feel it you feel that particular emotional or mood in particular parts of your body

And then you notice that certain thoughts particular thoughts that arise and come, some of them in relationship to the mood or their sensations of the body or to the room or what's happening. And when there's clear seeing, when there's really when there's really clear seeing what you do, as you see, when each of the particularity each thought is feeling arises for the first time, the beginning of it. If you see it, you know, if you have a certain thought train, and you don't see it until five minutes into it, you've missed a lot. If you see it when it first arises, then you have a lot of choice. You say, Is this really what I want to get involved in? This is actually a temporary thought it just wasn't there a moment ago and now it's here. Do I want to get involved maybe I don't have to get involved. Same thing with emotion. To watch a little mood or emotion first appears fascinating. Because our relationship to is very different

than if it's been there for a day. And it's kind of like really kind of insisting that it's important that the first moment, it's like, Oh, look at that. I'm here with the ability to see. And the emotion is there, as opposed to being the emotion or becoming it because it's been there for so long and we've identified with it. So, seeing the particularity to tease apart is clear seeing brings us eventually will be passing the practice to a place we can see the first arising the beginning of phenomena. And we might also see the last is ending. It's no longer there. What happened to that thought? So you have a thought that says you're the worst person in the world. It's very convincing. And then but it doesn't, it's lo and behold, it's actually hard to sustain that thought. There's little gaps You know, you think about what's for lunch yesterday? And, you know, who are you? When you don't have a thought to tell you who you are? Who are you and there's no thoughts telling you who you are. Well, for one thing, you're not telling yourself that you're the worst person in the world. So who are you when you're not telling yourself that? That question points to freedom. So if you can see the ending of things when they're not there, there's something there about freedom, about not being caught and what was nice was so seeing the beginning and ending of things in in this clear seeing of the particularity is only really possible when we don't generalize. generalizations tend to be more permanent. So clear seeing is to be in the present moment. He is a part that is a unique individual things that are happening in our sense perception. And to see the uniqueness of his moment of birth when there's something first arises and when it also when it passes and kind of be amazed at the wonder of all this without being troubled by it. So, if what I'm saying makes no sense at all because, okay, that's a particular detail to not understanding so