

## Dharmette: New Vision (2) Opening the Dharma Eye

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Hello and welcome to the second talk of a series called New Vision, having a new vision through Buddhist practice. And so the practices of *samādhi*, the practice of insight, prepare the ground for being able to see in a new way. And mostly what that means is to see with clarity, the clarity that comes when we don't have filters of projections, judgments, commentary, past associations, hurts, desires, that goes in the very act of seeing. And it's interesting to go about daily life and notice the times we lock our physical eyes to stare at something, to be searching for something, to be studying something because we're afraid of it. And to notice, contrast that with times that the physical eyes are at ease, floating in their sockets, gazing upon something in the present moment, allowing the present moment objects just be what they are as they're seen, independent of our associations, meaning-making, projections into the future, independent of what it means for me, myself, and I, independent of preferences. Independent of our impatience and our to-do list.

Just taking a Sabbath for a few minutes to just be present and observe the experiences of here and now. And in the Dharma, there comes a time when the mind is concentrated, stable in the present moment. The mind is soft and pliable and workable, workable in the sense that, yes, if we want to be in the present moment, we can stay there. And deeply at ease, deeply with a sense of well-being. So there's no hurry, nothing to do, nothing to get, nothing to be, and just to be here. And at some point, there's a dramatic moment that, a very significant moment that's called opening the Dharma eye.

And this is now seeing, in a way, seeing with tremendous clarity, where in a sense we see for ourselves the Dharma. And yesterday I emphasized the tremendous value of seeing non-clinging and to know kind of the ever-present quality or aspect of non-clinging that can be a reference point for practicing and for going about our life. However, one of the things we

know is not just what we see, seeing non-clinging, but also what we know. That liberation in Buddhism is described as, sometimes as knowing and seeing. And what we know is what we see as a result of this opening of the Dharma eye. And I want to read to you a frequent passage, kind of formulaic passage in the suttas, that describes how someone becomes a stream-enterer, the first stage of maturity in freedom.

So the Buddha was talking to a layperson named Upāli, and this is how the text goes. Then the Buddha gave the layperson Upāli progressive instruction, that is, talk on giving, on generosity, talk on virtue, talk on the heavens. And the Buddha explained to him the danger of sensual pleasures and the blessings of renunciation. When he knew that the householder Upāli's mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated and confident, he provided to him the teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed, all spots removed, would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder Upāli sat there, the spotless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in him. And he exclaimed, "All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation."

Then the householder Upāli saw the Dharma, attained the Dharma, understood the Dharma, fathomed the Dharma. He crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, became fearless, and became independent of others in the Buddha's teachings. So it's a remarkable description of this process of someone having this moment of initial freedom, seeing clearly for, in this case, himself. And what he sees, he sees that suffering, the emotional pain, is something that comes and goes, arises and passes. Rather than seeing as a big, knotted up fist or tightened up fist, it doesn't move, that suffering actually for really still and quiet, really listening, and may be elated, may be happy, may be settled in, happy to be in the present moment, not impatient, not trying to make something happen, really settled here. Then something begins opening up in our sight.

And one of those things is we see that the sense of solidity of suffering has a lot to do with our reactivity to it, our involvement with it, our incessant thinking and relating to it as something. If we allow it, leave it radically alone. Don't try to fix it. Don't try to judge it. No past and future. At some point, when the mind has these wonderful qualities, ready, receptive, free from the hindrances, elated and confident, that's not an easy mind to have. You can't just sit down and expect to have it the first time you meditate. Right? But to have done the homework of developed a real steadiness, stability, *samādhi*, to have done the initial preparation of learning to really know how to see clearly, enough to start having insight into the three insights that I've talked about today. There comes a time when the mind really lets go in a deep enough way of its projections, its associations, its engagement, its reactivity, that

we see something remarkable.

And it might be very hard to appreciate unless you really can have this experience. That we see that the suffering is like a fist that opens and closes, opens and closes, is there, and then releases. And in that movement, in the release of it, the fist, the hand can finally relax. In the coming and going of our suffering, in the going of it, when it's not there for a moment in our direct experience, that we see that there is a deep rest. And now we know, someone who has opened the Dharma eye knows how freeing it is to see the changing nature of present moment experience. To see that things come and go, that things are impermanent, in flux, inconstant, coming and going.

And of course, if we lose touch of that and we lock in again, this is how things are, then we enter back into the world of suffering. But there's something about settling back and having the Dharma eye that can see and understand the changing nature of phenomena that can know, even though that this is the way forward, this is where freedom can be found. It's not found every time, it's not so easy, but to keep coming back to and being inspired and know this is where real freedom is found. If I want *darśana*, if I want to really be in the presence of what is sacred in the Buddhist language, we're present for something which cannot seem so exciting, not seem so ultimate, not seem so dramatic, because we're not being somehow zapped by something, or there's not a power coming from outside of us. Rather, we see in such a way that the mind begins to release. The fist relaxes. And what do we see? We see the inconstant changing nature of experience.

So in this particular passage, the translator calls it the spotless, immaculate vision of the Dharma arose in him. This is called, also at other places, it's called the opening of the Dharma eye. And the eye that can see the Dharma. So, and this gives us a new vision. And the new vision is that how invaluable it is to really abide in, to rest in, to know, stay close to the inconstant changing nature of present moment experience. I'm fairly confident that for many of you listening to this, it doesn't seem like such a big deal.

It seems like maybe kind of maybe simplistic given how complicated the life is. But you might over the next 24 hours, just provisionally or with some degree of willingness, stay close to noticing how much things are always changing. Light, temperature, people, activities, feelings, sensations in the body, thoughts. Just notice, oh, it's changed. It's changed again. It's changed again. Don't expect to see ongoing change. It might be a little bit harder. But at least, no, look, it's changed again. Look at that. It's changed. It's changed. And what happens to you when you notice that there's been change over and over again? Does that free you in some way? So the Dharma eye. So thank you. We'll continue tomorrow.