

Week 5 Guidance

Our reading for this week is quite short. The previous week's reading completed the discussion of a stage-two appreciation for time; now we move on to (and 'complete' stage three.

Since we did not finish our discussion of the stage-two reading in the phone call, perhaps it would be a good idea to say something more now. Last week's reading suggested that at stage two, we could understand at a deeper level what is meant by the 'mutual interaction' of everything that appears. Whereas at stage one, this claim is said to amount to a kind of logical argument, in stage two, it becomes a lived reality. This possibility is related to something we did discuss in the phone call: not only things and events, but their characterizations, names, and meanings are all given together, all timed-out in a unitary way. Although it is not necessarily easy to make experiential sense of what is being said here, if you reflect on it, it may help in the practice of the exercises we discussed in the phone call, based on the two passages on page 144 and page 149. Both of these practices, as I mentioned, would be good to practice during the week.

The reading for this week builds on this basic idea, by moving toward what is called an uncontrived intimacy. The exact nature of this intimacy is something we can explore in the next phone call.

In turning now to describe Great Time and its relation to Great Space, Rinpoche moves into a poetic mode of expression. Probably this is because at this stage language becomes increasingly incapable of expressing what is possible. Fortunately, we have ways of exploring experientially. Notice that the shift being pointed to here is similar to the shift that forms the basis of Exercise 16. Instead of looking at experience in terms of 'self' and 'thing', we take a "Great Space/Great Time" view (160).

The suggestion in the reading that Space, Time, and Knowledge are an intimate and balanced family could be turned on its head by saying that our ordinary 'take' on the space-time-knowledge interplay is something like a dysfunctional family. Those of you used to this kind of vocabulary might want to play with it a bit, or explore it in the online discussion. A simpler way to look at it is in terms of appreciation (161); another useful image here is that of "never having strayed."

Finally, look at the discussion toward the very end of the chapter on 'going' as a fluid happening that can now be appreciated in a much more "open-ended" way. In the end, as the reading says, this means that there is no 'going' at all.