

Week 7 - Guide

Spring 2010 - TSK Online Program – The Self in Question: part 3

The reading for this week starts with the last paragraph of chapter 9 of LOK, then goes on to include the whole of chapter 10.

The paragraph at the end of chapter 9 suggests that we can ‘embody’ a different way of knowing. I suggest work with this idea in a very concrete and immediate way.

Notice that the point here is not that we should first tune in to the body, and then on that basis discover a new way of knowing. That approach is certainly helpful, and it is related to what is being suggested. Still, the idea here is different. For inquiry to embody a more fundamental knowing, we must ask our questions ‘within’ what is happening, in the moment of its happening. When we do this, we ‘discover’ our own embodiment. This embodiment is not only a matter of physical sensations and feeling, though that is part of it. It involves the whole sense of our being present to our own experience, what we have referred to at various times as “inhabiting.” Still, the implied suggestion that we can inhabit our physical, embodied experience is important, because it help ‘protect’ us from the tendency to get lost in our thoughts.

The start of chapter 10 invites us to take note of “subtle shapes, flavors, and textures,” and reminds us that this kind of inquiry, this ‘inhabiting’ of embodying, can also be active when we are caught up in difficulties or negativities. We can even inquire in the midst of fantasy, provided we don’t lose ourselves completely in the content of the fantasy.

All this helps make clear that we can conduct inquiry anywhere and in any situation. Of course, this is one reason that it is difficult to describe exactly what TSK inquiry (or “creative inquiry”) consists of. There are no special exercises, no particular place to focus. Exercises and places to focus are helpful; we have seen that again and again. But in the end, inquiry has more to do with attitude and with what Rinpoche refers to at the end of chapter 8 (last week’s reading) as a commitment to knowledge. (He returns to this theme of commitment in this weeks reading as well). At that point, as the reading notes, we can observe differently, without relying on the subject-object structure, and we can also analyze differently, without taking a stand ‘outside’ the object of analysis.

Please do explore this kind of inquiry on your own, and be ready to share some of what you’ve noticed, either online or in our phone call, or perhaps in a journal.