

## Why 'Nothing' Matters Orientation for Week 5

We have seen that the field communiqué determines what is so. But the communiqué itself is not determined; it cannot name or determine itself. Instead, it enjoys an 'indeterminate aliveness' (24). That indeterminacy is the focus of the reading for this week.

In the phone conversation for Week 4 we looked at the claim of 'realness' and how it arises. The real, as we all know, is what goes deeper than appearance. On the surface things seem to be a certain way, but underneath, something else is going on, something more fundamental.

All this seems almost self-evident. It is at the base of our scientific knowledge; for instance, with respect to physics, which tells us that beneath the surface appearance of solid substances, all is in flux and indeterminate. But the approach we are exploring right now challenges this very basic claim. It suggests that we take experience at 'face value.'

There is something deeply refreshing about this. After all, the more standard understanding amounts to saying that we are constantly being tricked; that we have to penetrate our usual naïve understanding to get at the truth. TSK says instead that the truth is already available.

We may be used to the idea that experience, just as it is, can be the source of a deeper understanding. Isn't that what is taught as the esoteric truth of various spiritual traditions? For instance, some aspects of Buddhism teach that we are already enlightened, and that the realm we live in is a pure Buddha field. Is that what is being said here?

Yes and no. The metaphor of depth, and the idea that truth lies in the depths of experience (the still depth of the ocean instead of the chaotic waves at the surface) is common to many traditions, and what is being said here is different from that. We saw this in the first part of the chapter, when Rinpoche says that 1) choosing a path that takes us into the depth of experience, stripping away the superficial distinctions put in place by words and concepts, may simply be too difficult, and 2) a different approach is possible.

On the other hand, staying on the surface does not mean that the 'face value' we accept is the same as the 'face value' put in place by names and concepts as carriers on the field communiqué. But what is the difference? It is here that we start looking at the indeterminate aliveness of the communiqué/

I suggested in the phone call that you explore 'reality as just another appearance, in keeping with the claim that (23) "the interior proclaimed [by the communiqué] remains a surface phenomenon." I also pointed to Exercise 4E (261): knowing with a knowing that does not rely on words, that 'conducts' without content. You might want to ask how these two exercises are related to one another.