

## Spring 2012 Online TSK: Orientation for Week 6

At the end of the reading for last week, Rinpoche suggests three ways in which “we can invite space to appear once more within what arises.” These three are inquiry, speculation, and imagination.

It's certainly no surprise to see 'inquiry' in this list, and do one is likely to be upset by the suggestion that imagination has value in going beyond the conventional and presupposed. But what about speculation? Most often, speculation is tied to concepts, and from there it's easy to think of it as cut off from the immediacy of experience (as in the phrase “idle speculation.”) For a different view, consider this brief comment in *Visions of Knowledge*, found on p. 59:

When concepts open to imagination, the fruit is the special lightness of speculation. Speculation has its own dynamic, not confined by concern with what is and what is not. It can commence with not particular goal in mind and proceed without conforming to a process whose structure has been mapped out in advance. If it does not fall into the trap of ungrounded verbalizing and abstraction, in the end it can arrive 'somewhere' after all. Free to speculate, we do not need to specialize or specify. We can entertain the possibility of knowledge not based in existence; not even linked to what is true or false. The subtle space of speculation makes available to imagination the opportunity to discover light as the source of knowledge.

This invitation to explore the power of speculation is challenging for students of TSK, because we often imagine that all the speculating has been done for us in advance by Rinpoche. We can inquire into our own experience, we can imagine other possibilities. But can we speculate in entirely different ways, freely moving 'beyond' TSK?

As it happens, the rest of the chapter doesn't say that much more about speculation (though see the first sentence on p. 65!). Still, it's good to keep these possibilities open.

The reading suggests that inquiry frees us from substance “and the need to found an order.” This is the special power of thoughts, once they awaken “to the lightness of their arising.” Of course, most people interesting in exploring their own natures tend to dismiss the value of thoughts. But this may be because we associate thoughts with their content, rather than their arising. The exercise on the Playfulness of Thoughts, which I pointed toward last week, is an invitation to inquire into this limit, or to speculate on how thoughts freed from limits could unfold.

Seen in this light, the question to look at for this week is how the activity of thinking and the inquiry it supports relate to the “unthinkable energy” of multiple dimensionality. This is an inquiry to engage in the heart of experience, aware that thinking is not a 'thin veil' superimposed on experience, but in some ways the foundation of all that appears. As yourselves whether you can imagine yourself into a way of experience in which this possibility gives experience new depth, evoking the “whirling worlds of wonder” that Rinpoche invites us to experience.

Next week marks the end of this course (except for the Practice Day on June 10). I thank you