

Orientation for Week 5: DTS 47-49
March 18, 2012

We are working our way through Chapter Six. Taking our time in this way has the great advantage that we can reflect in depth on what the text is saying. This seems valuable because the change in our understanding and our orientation to our own experience that is being suggested is profound, and we want to give it time to sink in.

The drawback to this approach is that we may forget points that have come in previous weeks. The chapter unfolds as a whole, and it would be a mistake not to make connections from one week's reading to the next. I have tried to do that in our discussions.

Here is one way to link together the various threads: flattening space leads to the realm of the zeroless, in which appearance loses its claim to substance, and borders and boundaries become just another aspect of what appears. The possibility for this to happen traces to the 'appearance of space' as the power to accommodate, a dynamic, active understanding of how space enters our lives. As we discover this aspect of dimensionless, zeroless space, we are led back to eknosis (Chapter 5): the inward-outward knowing that pervades all appearance and that becomes accessible once we stop focusing on substance and identity, including the substance and identity of space as distance and 'nothing at all'.

The reading for week 5 takes a step back from this unfolding exploration of space to look at the reasons we do not usually have access to this way of understanding. It does so by investigating the relationship between the subject/self, the dimensionalization of space, and the rule of interpretations. That is what we will be looking at in this coming week.

In the phone call for week 4, I asked you to work with DTS Ex. 5, Abiding in Thought. I suggested that—since Rinpoche gives a very expansive definition of what counts as 'thought' for purposes of this exercise, we might think of it as 'Abiding in Space'. Of course, this space-abiding is linked to the flattened, zeroless space we have been exploring. Two points need to be emphasized: first, such an abiding is dynamic, not static; and second, entering into this way of abiding does not interfere with or conflict in any way with ordinary experience. The Comment on the Exercise puts this in terms of time: when we abide in space, linear time continues to unfold.

Please work with Exercise 5 some more during the week. Since we will be looking at the operation of the self, please also experiment with Exercise 11, Telling Stories, found at pp. 289-90 of DTS. Again the exercise is presented in terms of time, but again, we can look in terms of space. The instructions for the exercise ask whether you can "touch the energy bound up" in the stories we tell. You could think of this question as another way of inviting you to connect with the knowing and stillness you discover when you can 'abide' in thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and space itself.