

## Orientation for Week 6

No matter how far we go in our study and practice of TSK, there remains a fundamental challenge that we cannot easily answer. It can be stated like this: “No matter what insights you may have, you are still stuck in the position of being the one who knows, and this means your knowledge is fundamentally limited. TSK may tell us that knowledge does not belong to the self, but the moment you try to investigate that insight for yourself, you turn the results of your inquiry into one more possession of the self. The very fact that you express your insight in words means that it has entered the realm of ordinary knowledge, but if you remain silent, you just fall into a kind of dullness. You can protest as much as you like, but your protests only confirm that you will never escape the limits on knowledge.”

You may want to work out for yourself—and share on the discussion page—how you would answer this kind of challenge. Here is one possible response, but please do not just accept it and think that this answers the question. Instead, let yourself feel the weight of the challenge. Engage it, so that the dynamic of the vision unfolds within you.

With that warning, consider this response: TSK has no special knowledge or insight to offer. What it does offer is a careful exploration of the ways in which we limit our knowledge and limit our engagement with time and space. As we recognize these limitations for what they are, we naturally and inevitably free ourselves from their power. “Knowing our not knowing, we need not know more.” (DTS xli) This is what it means to “pound the ‘is’ of each ‘ism’ (SDTS xxvii). It may also be related to the suggestion that we “invite time and space to give the answers” (SDTS xxiv).

The reading for this week invites such an exploration, a journey into “our present presence and the dynamic of its unfolding.” (DTS xxix) The text describes such an inquiry as a mind to mind partnership (DTS xxx). Does that phrase have meaning for you? To see for yourself, be ready to treat the act of reading as itself an exploration. Who is reading? Who knows? What is the nature of the knowing that the reading evokes? How can knowledge unfold differently? To read with such questions in mind is to read in a ‘meditative’ way, using that term in its old-fashioned sense of “serious and sustained reflection or mental contemplation,” as the Oxford English Dictionary puts it.

Fortunately, the reading offers many suggestions as to how to conduct such an exploration, how to “train the mind to operate in a new way.” (DTS xxx) The key is to work toward an “inner conducting.” In one sense, this simply means letting the mind “settle down” (DTS xxx). But there is more going on here than relaxation. We are invited to see with knowledge eyes (xli), and to investigate “the pervasive patterns of the thinking mind.” (DTS xliii).

**Assignment:** Reflect (or ‘meditate on’) the “pervasive patterns of the thinking mind.” Is this reflection itself a pattern of thinking? How can you tell the difference?

**Walkabout Practice:** In light of the reading, see what it might be like to experience the world with ‘knowledge eyes.’ This is not the world as we (already) know it; it is the world in the act of being known.