

Orientation for Week 2, DTS 148-155

First, we will have our usual phone call this Sunday. I had considered postponing it due to the July 4 weekend, but we need to keep to our original schedule in order to finish the program before the August intensive.

The reading for this week is rather long in comparison to what we have typically read. This seems okay, since we have come a long way with the material, and I think we are able to absorb more readily concepts, images, and insights that would have slowed us down quite a bit a few months ago. I hope you agree. Now, on to the Week 2 reading:

The section on 'nuclear time' that starts this week's reading needs to be understood in the context of the previous week's reading. Rinpoche is not offering a new model for what time is 'really' like. Rather, as he writes, he is telling a different story, a story meant to allow for different ways of knowing. The story "is simply its telling" (147); it is not 'about' some underlying reality, since "appearing is simply appearing." In the telling, time is 'differently dimensioned'; it becomes the universal unique: the unique of the universe whose presence it proclaims.

Here (the end of the Week One reading) is where Rinpoche shifts the metaphor of 'conducting' in a way we have referred to before: "Instead of conducting like a maestro in the concert hall, we can conduct as a wire conducts electricity."

It is helpful to think of the term 'finitude' in this context. The universal unique allows for a 'finitude' of appearances: not an 'infinity', because a conducting is already in operation, shutting down certain possibilities in favor of others, but also unlimited, because nothing has been established or is ever established.

The discussion of nuclear time can also be seen as a response to the question I raised in the phone call: when we conduct time, is the conducting separate from time, or is time simply the conducting of time. As you might expect, the answer is yes and no. All conducting emerges 'from' nuclear time, giving rise to the universal unique, out of which appears the established (narrated) story, the (field communiqué). This way of conducting, writes Rinpoche, is more in tune with the dance than the narrative. Narrative names, and history builds, but nuclear time improvises.

Here we reach the edge of contradiction. Our improvising is flawed but also flawless, because we all conduct the whole of the universal unique. Here "words strain" (155), but knowledge is newly available.