

## **Opening Unknown Time, Summer 2013**

### **Orientation for Week Four**

In the phone call for July 14, I referred briefly to Rinpoche's suggestion that an awareness of impermanence can lead us into the inner dynamic of time (157). I want to say a little more about that possibility.

It's helpful to consider Rinpoche's observation here that our usual understanding of impermanence is "rough and undeveloped." It reminds me of a comment by Rinpoche many years ago, which I may have mentioned before: "People talk about "Be Here Now," but they don't understand 'be' and they don't understand 'here' and they don't understand 'now'."

The point about impermanence is similar; that's what he means by saying our understanding is rough and undeveloped. This has implications for practice. For instance, when a teacher tells us we can practice mindfulness by being aware of what is happening "in the present moment," he or she is making a whole series of assumptions about 'moments', about the relation of the present to the past and the future, and so on. All of these assumptions usually go unexamined, because we think we know what it means to say that each moment is new or impermanent. The result is that we miss the "interweaving intimacy" of past, present, and future that could lead us beyond the "specifying knowledge" made available by each particular logos.

Our problem here, as so often, is that we think we already know what is going on. Consider again the point that I referred to rather quickly at the end of the phone call: we make the mistake of turning knowledge into something more limited than not-knowing. We fail to allow for the wholeness of knowledge. That is exactly what TSK wants to call into question.

Turning to the reading for the coming week, we see that Rinpoche invites us to consider the notion of 'eknosis', introduced in the Space section of DTS (pp. 39-41 of the English). It's good to look back at that section, but don't think that a new point is being introduced. 'Eknosis' in this context is useful simply as another way of making the main point (159): instead of moving within the structures of linear time, we can have access to the conducting of those structures. This is something very special about the TSK vision: we don't need to escape the structures of the ordinary, because the ordinary is itself magical.

A final point: I mentioned in the phone call that since we are coming to the end of this course, I want to make sure we consider how to integrate what we have been investigating into daily life. So to close, I'll introduce an example of how we might do that.

The reading tells us that the world we know arises through interacting 'recordings' that have no substantial foundation; that everything could be different. Now, one of the recorded structures that we rely on is the distinction between close and distant (I am thinking here of psychological distance: this person is close to us; that one is not. So let's do a practice that borrows a theme from Buddhism: all beings want to be happy and want to avoid suffering. During the coming week, try encountering strangers (or even people in the news) with this thought in mind: "That person wants to be happy and wants to avoid suffering." Does applying that thought have any impact on the recorded and taken-for-granted structure of close and distant, near and far?