

Session 5

Transition and Orientation

We are investigating how to access a knowledge that does not belong to the self. As the reading for last week showed, the right place to look is within the activity of knowing itself. If we take this seriously, we realize that (except in first-level terms, of course) knowledge is not the 'product' of one or more acts of knowing. In this sense, there is nothing for us to do: knowledge is already available, through and as the 'logos'.

Of course, this does not mean we can just be lazy about knowing or 'settle' for not-knowing. As KTS 421 says, the not-knowing at work here "must be earned through the power and vigor of inquiry itself. In such inquiry, "knowledge knows itself."

Such higher knowing shows up at points of breakdown (KTS 422), of "internal inconsistency and unresolved mysteries." The text of KTS gives several examples, but you might find it easier to think of unexplained contradictions in your own life. One that I find useful to consider is the fact that we cannot act as we would like to: we do not follow our own intentions, cannot focus our mind on what we choose to focus on, cannot treat others as we would like. That seems a fruitful place to look. So too is the intimacy of the subject-object relationship, which we looked at in the phone call. I'll say more about that below.

For this week, we look at the topic of knowingness: a pointer toward a knowing more expansive than the knowing available to the self. The starting point is to recognize how completely we accept that there is only one way to know, at least only one way relevant to our concerns. I don't think we should read "only one way" as excluding the kinds of knowledge we may cultivate in meditation or other practices meant to restore depth to experience. Such possibilities can still leave us firmly within the structures established by the 'logos' that governs our way of being.

The reading emphasizes that we do not need to leave ordinary knowledge behind; in fact, 'It is all just lower knowledge.' The point is to find a way of challenging the 'founded' status of whatever appears. (Ex. 29 could be seen as such a challenge.) When we do this, recognizing lower knowledge as such, we are already far removed from 'ordinary knowledge', which turns out to be only one aspect of lower knowledge. We will see next week how this insight serves to qualify (or perhaps clarify) the statement I have returned to again and again: knowledge is not what the knower knows. See the brief discussion at the last paragraph of 235).

The walkabout for this week is to explore the relationship of subject and object in a concrete way: when you are handling objects, performing actions, etc.

We will start the next session with a short practice of TSK Ex. 29, Awareness as a Reflective Surface.