

**Session 8, Week 5      WIR 110-113; KTS 105-111; Ex. DTS 19**

**Transition and Orientation**

There is a power in the readings now, if we let the words speak to us (“let sound hear,” as Rinpoche writes in the reading for last week). Once this power is active, we don’t need to say all that much. To quote from the chapter for last week that we did not discuss, presentations “‘explode’ into magical expressions.”

If we don’t need to say very much, why does Rinpoche dedicate so many words to expressing the TSK Vision? To make this question more concrete, consider the whole of the phrase I just referenced above: “Simply allowing sound to hear or seeing to watch [there is] an intelligence of intimacy.” Does this phrasing add anything to the practice of TSK Ex. 24, ‘Marriage of Sound and Breath’? If not, why repeat it here? If it does add something, what can we say about that ‘something’?

Looking in terms of the power of the aesthetic dimension may suggest an answer. Reading the materials we are working with now is like the challenge of reading certain kinds of poetry. The poem is not meant to be instantly accessible; it is not a re-description of what is already there. Let me give an example, more or less at random: the first lines of a well-known poem by T.S. Eliot:

*Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table . . .*

The point here is not simply to understand the image. It is to let it enter us, become a part of us, until we are changed in turn. And this requires careful, thoughtful, and engaged reflection.

For the last two weeks of this session, in which we complete the Time section of KTS, our focus is on Invariable Time. At the start of the reading, ‘the event’ is identified as the fundamental unit of first-level time. Quite naturally, this leads us to wonder about possible ‘fundamental units’ of invariable time.

The reading, however, does not make that move, and it might well be a mistake to do so. Instead, it considers ‘events’ from the perspective of second-level time. Despite what I said above, the language here is more accessible than in the previous reading. We might have expected an intensification of what has already been presented. Instead, we have what might be thought of as a first-level presentation of what time might be like if it were invariable. Perhaps we are being encouraged to go back into our ‘comfort zone’, but then shake up our most basic assumptions.

As I mentioned in the phone call, I have some recommended reading for this week. It’s a (fairly long) short story by a writer named Ted Chiang, called ‘Story of your Life’. You can find it in a collection available on Kindle, called *Story of your Life and Others*. You can also download it here: [http://www.negrophonic.com/pdfs/ted\\_chiang\\_-\\_story\\_of\\_your\\_life.pdf](http://www.negrophonic.com/pdfs/ted_chiang_-_story_of_your_life.pdf). We probably won’t discuss it in the next phone call, but it offers a very interesting take on time and the structures of language, and it’s also a beautifully crafted story, in which story and ideas support one another.