

Transition and Orientation for Session 4, Week 2

Last week's TSK reading introduced the possibility that the content that appears in space *depends* on space, while space in turn is inseparable from its content. The two are co-constructed or mutually interdependent.

This is the fundamental insight of a field-oriented view of space, which the readings from KTS in the rest of this session explore. It is a striking departure from our usual understanding of subject and object as real, which carries with it a view of space as non-existent. That view, expressed in the reading in terms of 'bystander' and 'outsider' (In the first TSK book, 'outsiders' were referred to as 'outside-standers') is what we have learned to accept. Now we want to experiment with seeing things differently, with activating a new vision and varying what is taken for granted.

To prepare for this view, let's return to the discussion last week about developing a *vision* of ordinary space as related to the primary ground of existence (TSK 11). Rinpoche raises this possibility and even (TSK 10) invites us to reflect on it, but he postpones discussing it. Instead, he tells us that the best way to head in this direction is to start with our ordinary understanding of space. By engaging with space in new ways, we can eventually open 'qualitatively new spaces'. The 'space as field' view is one example of such a qualitatively different space—different because here subject and object, bystander and outsider will no longer appear or operate in the same way.

The 'field perspective' is in some ways fundamental to the possibility of entering new spaces, which derive from adopting different focal settings (TSK 12). It can be equated, at least roughly, to 'lower space' as that term is described at TSK 12, a 'structuring medium' 'responsible' for the character of what appears in it. The field of space governs our possibilities—the image in TSK is of a 'petty official' who manipulates our possibilities. For instance, within a given field of space, only certain kinds of knowing can emerge (TSK 41). But—and this seems central—if we *understand* the dynamics and mechanics of the field, we do not need to be bound by these restrictions.

The kind of 'understanding' at stake here is not just intellectual. In other words, it is not enough to know how space operates as a structuring field. Instead, we would like to experience the field as a field. When we do, obstacles lose their claim to being substantial, and problems become much less problematic. The suggestion at TSK 14 is important here: we can learn to look at problems as symbols of 'space openness' being blocked, or as a failure (TSK 43) to recognizing that everything we normally regard as solid (including problems and obstacles!) is better understood as an ongoing 'tendency toward consolidation' (a point discussed in WIR).

The basic way to make that transition that we will be exploring is to regard the world of conventional space "as the shifting exhibitions of a 'field'." As we set out in this direction, it is worth noting that the field operates in both the mental and the physical realms: interpretations and logic align with the possible movements of objects, laws of nature, etc. It is all given together. And this holds for 'conventional', physical space as well: it too is

given by the field. It follows that we are now dealing with at least two levels of space, one nested inside the other. Can we experiment with experiencing in this way; with activating such a variation? In investigating this question, look at the discussion of 'given together' at KTS 179.

Exercise: KTS Ex. 40 (in light of TSK Ex. 4)

Variation: Space and its contents as given together

Assignment: Look at the uses of the word 'field' in the Space section of the TSK book; you can find them at pp. 28, 30, 67, 74, 97, and 110. Do these uses seem consistent with the reading from KTS? Do they suggest any other possibilities?