

Week 2, March 8 KTS 241-52, KTS Ex. 56 (pp. 253-255)

Transition and Orientation

The chapter for Week One seems to me to contain some very important points; as I said in the phone call, the discussion at DTS 46 states in a powerful way why TSK inquiry and the TSK vision have great value. So I suggest you review the chapter at least once.

Let me turn to a few points from last week that we did not have time to cover in the phone call. First, since we will be talking about ‘the zeroless’ later in this session, let’s look at the way it’s introduced at DTS 42. Rinpoche writes that a point in flattened space would be “less than zero, or zeroless.” Why speak in this way? Because zero itself, even though it’s nothing at all, is a part of the temporal order, the field communiqué. There is actually a great mystery here: the zero-point is the foundation of our mathematics and reckoning. This is true even without regard for the arithmetic zero, for in geometry a point is understood to have zero dimensions. In other words, our way of building up the world starts from ‘nothing at all’. Flattened, zeroless space is ‘before’ or ‘beneath’ that zero, like (43) time before the beginning of time.

This relates to another issue raised in last week’s reading: how does the dimensionalized world ever arise, if it starts from zero? In a sense we can ‘blame’ the self (47): As its operations expand and enlarge, “dimensionality radiates outward—a claim of the self, establishing the closed world of solid identities.”

Now, this means that flattening space requires us to flatten the self (or make it zeroless). And this is in some ways much more challenging, because we are wholly committed to the self. That is why religious traditions constantly challenge the commitments of the self; in Buddhism, for instance, there is the practice of the four immeasurables: love, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Yet Rinpoche offers a quite different approach here. He even says that because the dynamic the self activates is “insubstantial,” it “can be easily reversed.” (47) We simply need to let appearance remain appearance, “true to the zeroless.”

Let this suggestion be the walkabout for the week: when you notice the self caught up in its concerns and its reactions, let the objects of concern return to the zeroless of ‘appearance as appearance’.

We are turning now to KTS. The language is naturally a little different from that in DTS. There is more talk of form and the exhibition of form, of the field and space projection. There is also a focus on the interplay of subject and object that takes us further than the brief discussion last week. Yet there is also a recognition of a point fundamental to our discussion last week: appearance itself is space.

The later part of the reading goes into the zero and the zeroless. Here the zero of the point could be understood more as a gateway to the zeroless. Note, however, that this is not quite accurate, since the term ‘zeroless’ is not used in KTS, or indeed in any of the TSK books other than DTS. Staying

sensitive to this difference in language may help clarify what is at stake when we return to the zeroless later in the session.