

Week 6 February 15
DTS 35-41; DTS Ex. 4

Transition and Orientation

A reminder to start with that we have had to shift the retreat to July 26-30. So far that seems to fit everyone's schedule. We'll have to confirm those dates with Ratna Ling soon, so anyone who plans to attend but has a problem with those dates, please let us know.

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Having investigated how we turn appearance into evidence for substance, with all the restrictions on space-freedom that this move imposes, we are now asking how we can restore space to appearance. To do so, we need to move to a different kind of knowledge, because space itself is not available to ordinary knowledge. This conforms to people's comments in the phone call: we can open appearance through space, and also through knowledge.

The previous chapter showed that we can discover space *within* appearance. Of course, we cannot find space in the 'substance' of appearance: neither in the assigned 'identity' of the thing nor in the 'thingness' of the thing. As Western philosophy sometimes puts it, we have to go deeper than questions about either 'what it is' or 'that it is.'

For conventional knowledge, space is (31) both essentially unknowable and essential to the knowable." It is the mystery at the heart of appearance. During the phone call, we worked with one way to investigate the mystery of appearance. For the walkabout please continue to work with any of the questions from the third paragraph on p. 31, the one we read together during the phone call. As we briefly discussed, the challenge with these questions is not to arrive at answers, but to awaken to the *significance* of the question. This kind of walkabout may not work so well while you are actually walking about (though I don't want to pre-judge that), but it can work very well whenever you find yourself waiting somewhere, or with a free moment.

The mystery at the heart of appearance is exactly the place to discover appearance. 'Space unknowness' (which can also be explored through the very different questions laid out at the bottom of p. 32) suggests that space is available everywhere (33), and in fact that each appearance "fills the whole of space." On the face of it, this statement may seem mysterious (which should not be surprising), but we can get a better handle on it if we reflect back on the field communiqué. What appears, in all its manifold forms, remains simply "the echoes of the field communiqué." (23, and see also the bottom of 33) In reflecting on this relationship, consider both 'the field', with its evocation of the whole, and the 'communiqué' which brings knowledge into play.

All this is by way of preparation: the reading for last week ended by reminding us that (33) "we are not yet ready to explore this way of seeing in depth." But, (34) we can "see our task before us: to bring space forward, to allow it to appear" And so we turn to the next chapter.

Chapter 5 starts by emphasizing the importance of appreciation for what is possible. (DTS Ex. 4 could be understood as a way of expressing that appreciation through the questions we ask of experience as it arises.) It equates this to space without occupancy. It also revisits themes from previous chapters, this time in terms of the claim that objects make to occupy space after all. This interplay leads to a very interesting discussion of the Body of Space. You might ask how this formulation relates to the field communiqué.

As a 'transitional move' away from our usual understanding (notice how we seem to always be preparing to begin!), the chapter calls our attention to the phenomenon of projection, and this in turn leads to introducing the

notion of 'eknosis'. We'll explore in that direction next week.

I mentioned in the phone call that I would say something about how we are working with practices in the phone calls. First, let me say that I am pleased with how active the discussion of the practices we do has been, and also with how that active discussion has begun to inform the rest of our weekly phone calls. It seems to me we are on very positive trajectory.

At the same time, I am aware that the way I use practice is not quite what people asked me to do when I got some feedback last summer. First, I think people had in mind that we would do a practice to relax (for instance, a Kum Nye practice) at the beginning of the phone call. It makes sense to start with relaxing, which helps us let go of our rigid presuppositions about the way things are. But as a practical matter, I don't think we could do that effectively in a 50 minute online class.

I did try to do a practice at the beginning of the phone call for a while, and I see the benefit of that. But in the end, I decided it was more important to do the practice after we had worked with the reading, because working closely with the text is itself a form of practice and preparation. Instead of loosen presuppositions through relaxation, a discussion of where we are headed aims to stimulate inquiry. If that is successful, the practice becomes an *active* inquiry. To use the language mentioned above, we can more readily understand the *significance* of the questions we are asking. So that's the approach I'm taking.

Finally, for those of you in the teacher-training program, here's an assignment for the short break we'll have before we start Session 10. At WIR 122, we find the following:

It seems fair to say that this program aims in part at allowing space to reappear as a focus for concern. Has it had that effect for you? How do you know? What evidence can you offer? Can you identify specific differences in your actions? In your outlook or perceptions?

Please write a short response to these questions, and send it in in the usual way.