

## Self in Question - Spring 2010 Session

### Week 8 Reading

Love of Knowledge, pp. 84-86 (beginning slightly modified).

The prevailing model for knowledge supports the role of the self as central to knowing, and thus puts forward as fundamental to the knowing activity the concerns of the self. The regard for comfort or pleasure, for security or recognition sustains old styles of knowing, allowing knowledge few means to go beyond itself.

As long as such concerns remain foremost, the prospect for transformation suggested by the rapid change characteristic of today's world will go unrealized, and the basic model of knowledge will continue in effect. The alternative is clear: We can take responsibility for knowledge. Once this happens, the concerns of the self no longer dominate. The potential range for change itself changes, transforming not only the contents and the positions that knowledge supports, but also the way in which knowledge functions. We can investigate how knowledge arises and penetrate more deeply the nature of human knowing.

#### Wealth of Knowledge Through Inquiry

Inquiry lets us step away from the stream of patterns and structures that are the manifestation of a particular knowledge in operation, so that a deeper knowledge can come forth. Whatever appears or has appeared in the past is available as an expression of knowledge. We can see how knowledge has developed and what it has produced; we can bear witness to the power of knowledge in operation. Our capacity to know is strengthened, reinforcing a way of being in which our commitment to knowledge becomes unshakable. The wealth of knowledge available to inquiry, which in itself goes far beyond the conventional range of understanding, makes it possible to acknowledge knowledge as the birth-right of human beings. Inquiry reveals that human beings are in partnership with knowledge. It discloses a natural abundance of knowing as an ever present opportunity. Without commitments to particular ways of knowing, knowledge itself becomes newly available—not as the outcome of a structured activity to which a particular model can be applied, but as an uncontrived, natural capacity within being. Space and time themselves are transformed through the infusion of knowledge into all

appearance. All presentations are understood as dynamic and alive—friends to human being.

The prevailing tendency in modern knowledge has moved away from the possibility that appearance could be the friend of human being. Space is understood as a chilling void and time as a relentlessly unfolding force. Human aspirations confront the emptiness of space and the power of time with a wary apprehension. Individuals struggle to use what appears for their own purposes, knowing at a deep level that at any moment appearance might present obstacles to their goals and desires. At bottom space and time are understood as indifferent, almost hostile. Is this hostility intrinsic to the relationship between space, time, and human being, or does it reflect a specific pattern of knowing that assigns characteristics and establishes obstacles?

Asking such questions honestly and openly offers a tool for refining and reshaping our knowledge. Space and time appear in a different light; obstacles and frustrations lose their fixed quality. New prospects come to light: the first manifestations of a remarkable vision.