

FINDING OURSELVES IN THE RIVER OF LIFE

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There are some buddhist principles that can help us to be more at ease in our own lives. All of us live in patterns of continuity. We have the outer forms of continuity, which are the continuities of duty and responsibility, the regular activities of going to work or school or looking after families, in which there is always something to be done. There is always a reason to be busy. There are things to be attended to otherwise our lives start to become more difficult. Hence we experience the continuity of demand. We demand things from the world in order to feel okay, and in return the world demands things from us. Due to the complexity of our existence this can lead us to be endlessly busy doing many, many things but never reaching the point where we can truly relax.

In his first teachings the Buddha suggested that, under those circumstances, an attitude of renunciation can help us to separate from unnecessary demands. This means creating a life apart from the usual bustle of engagement in the world. With the view of renunciation it can appear that the busyness of existence is itself a persecution: "If only my life was simpler I would be happier. Therefore if I simplify the number of objects or situations I am involved in then I should be happier." However, renunciation is not easy to achieve given that our lives are woven together with the patterns of other people. Wherever we go and whatever we do we will be in relation with others. Monasteries have politics, hermits need sponsors – to live is to be connected and connection means some degree of turbulence.

Generally speaking, we think ourselves into existence. That is to say, the flow of our lives is built up by a succession of moments joined through narrative. Of course we are present prior to thought, but in terms of our ordinary lives this is meaningless because it is inexpressible. We seem to

have a drive or a need to make meaning, to generate value, to feel that our life has a purpose, and so we engage in the construction of stories which obscure life prior to thought.

Because they are created by ourselves with the tools available to us from our culture, these narratives can lead towards limitation or freedom. Limitation occurs because every time we find something meaningful it involves an investment of our energy and potential into a fusion with that object or situation. In this way situation after situation comes to feel meaningful to us. The meaning that we experience in the situation is one that we ourselves have put into the situation. When we forget about this we start to feel that the value we experience is inherent in the object and therefore we come to rely on the object as the source of value and meaning in our life. But of course the relations that we build up between what we take to be ourselves and what we experience as the environment in which we live, are unstable and easily changed by myriad factors. Consequentially, suffering easily arises.

As the Buddha said on many occasions the root of suffering is attachment. It is not that we attach ourselves to things because of the quality of the thing itself, since we can never truly establish the qualities of the thing itself. The qualities that we identify in the object are the projections of our own conditioning, our own frames of reference. What we take to be the objective world is actually more like a mirror in which we see the play of the complexity of our own subjectivity. Things which seem to be existing out there in themselves are actually our projections, our interpretations. To not recognise our part in the creation of our world is called ignorance in the buddhist teachings. Due to this ignorance we perceive the world in terms of entities that we take to be self-existing. In fact what we experience is a flow of movements of the interplay of the projection of our fantasies and the reception of other people's fantasies.

Once we start to see how our experience is generated the path to freedom starts to be available. We start to recognise that our world and ourselves are like a dream. Appearances are devoid of substance and yet they are repeatedly affirmed as something real by our own investment and attachment. By attending moment-by-moment to the quality of how we are ourselves, we start to shift from feeling that 'I am somebody experiencing many familiar objects' to the sense that 'what is arising is itself a reflection of myself'. In order to directly see the non-duality of self and context we have to look at the felt sense of 'I', 'me', 'myself'. For as long as I experience myself as something quite small and limited, like a pot, there is only so much that I can contain. This is our experience when we are situated as a construct described in 'the story of myself'. For example, each one of us can say: "I like this and I don't like that, and the things I don't like I want them to be away from me."

Yet the very experience of rejecting something is a form of involvement with the thing which is being rejected. Its seeming existence is clearly impactful on us and important to us. All the moves of acceptance and rejection that we make to maintain the felt sense of the familiar continuity of ourselves, 'I', 'me', 'myself', are themselves simply eddies or waverings in the flow of non-dual experience.

When you are in the bath and lie back and relax, your legs stick out in front of you. You can say that the water on the right-hand side is Germany and the water on the left-hand side is France. You can flick water from Germany to France and back again – there are so many things to do in the bath. You say that this is Germany and that this is France but underneath the water is the same. It is the same for all the parts of Europe, Germany, France, Poland and so on. The names are written on water as the ownership of territory has changed so much over the years. We know this from studying history and geography at school. However, when we are inside the story of our national identity, the boundaries of our country become very important. We may know that they are purely circumstantial and conventional, a temporary social construction, yet they determine many things about our life, and can even be something we are prepared to die for. When we examine our own identity it is something very similar.

When you look around you see many different people, yet actually there are no self-existing people. We say 'people'. We say 'this is a man', 'this is a women', 'this person is young', 'this person is old'. These are stories we tell about the situation. These stories make sense to us because we operate inside the same language game. We use the same linguistic signs and on the basis of that we imagine that other people attach the same significance to them. We believe that we all make sense of 'the world' in the same way yet we have no direct access to others experience. We impute their experience from the signs they use. This sense of a shared world blinds us to our actual situation which is both marvellous and terrifying. It is marvellous because it is always fresh, changing, vivid, and alive. It is terrifying because it eludes capture within our habitual categories of interpretation. This latter aspect can seem overwhelming and so we seek affirmation from others that our usual stories about the world and ourselves are the truth. However, when we look around what we are actually seeing are shapes and colours. These raw materials, in their extreme rawness, have no name at all. There is no red and no blue, for in order to compare and contrast one has first of all to have the sense of entities, of objects existing in and of themselves. So we see 'things', or at least we think we do, for we cannot see things without thinking.

One of the basic functions of meditation practice is to become aware of thinking. Thinking is the mediation of the immediacy of the world; it is experiencing direct phenomenological presence through the lens of our habitual thoughts and associations. We take the world of objects to be simple but it is actually a complex bringing together of different aspects. When we start to meditate and sit quietly and open to the direct flow of experience, we start to see how thoughts, feelings, sensations and perceptions arise and vanish by themselves if they are allowed to be in their own place. But if they are taken when we are taken by them, they operate for us as the medium through which everyday experience is created and not as an add-on that you can be consciously aware of.

For example, as you get older you may find like me, that you have to wear glasses for reading. When you first put the glasses on you become quite aware of the pressure on your nose and the shape of the rim; you know that you are wearing glasses. But then you get caught up in reading and you just forget about the glasses. The reading is being mediated through the glasses. Without the glasses the reading wouldn't be easy. But the role of the glasses in the reading becomes forgotten as they become normalised as part of the process. In the same way we have accumulated many patterns of thoughts, many core beliefs, and these patterns of conditioning create lenses for us which have become so completely normal for us that the continuity of our individual existence is actually the continuity of the patterns of our conditioning.

This is one of the reasons why awakening from the dream of samsara is difficult. Dreaming has become normal for us. We take dreaming to be how life is. When we start to meditate we begin to see the ceaseless flow of the sequences of arisings. Each of these arisings does not last for long. Moreover none of them can be caught as they only appear as this illusion in our mind. We start to see, "Oh! What I take to be my existence, who 'I' am, and who 'you' are, is based on uncatchable transient phenomena." This is not a very stable basis for existence. This is why in order to maintain our sense of self we have to be busy all the time with our mental activity. When we go to the cinema the rapidity of the sequence of the edited frames creates the illusory world into which we enter. Similarly we have our thoughts, feelings, and sensations edited into a coherent story-line by the meta-narratives which are our habitual organising tendencies. This flow must be maintained in order to keep our sense of being 'ok' and safe within the unsettling unpredictability of the seeming givenness of life as it appears to be.

Some of you may have experienced what is called depression. Depression is when the projector of our existence starts to slow down; there is not enough power coming into it. Everything goes very slow and you cannot get back into the rhythm of life. These experiences, painful as they

are, can be very helpful for the meditator since they illustrate that what we call normality is in fact a construct. It requires a great deal of effort and good luck to be able to maintain this construct in a way which is pleasing to ourselves and which seems reasonable to other people.

In tantra the sense of continuity is quite different, being based in the . The basis of this is the understanding that the true nature of everything is emptiness. The term 'emptiness' indicates that there is no essence or inherent defining substance present in any phenomena, including ourselves. Each thing that we see is always part of a context; it is not there in its own. For example, here I hold a cup in my hand. You see the cup and when you see the cup you see the hand. If I remove the cup from the hand it will fall and I will get wet. When my hand gets tired I put the cup back on the table. That is to say, the cup is always somewhere. We are always somewhere; you cannot put yourself nowhere. Every manifestation is in a context. You might think, "Ok, well the cup is still the cup wherever it is placed." But the cup exists as a factor influencing its environment and being influenced by its environment. The cup looks different in different contexts, with different lighting, background colours and so on. The seeming continuity of the cup as just one thing rests on the abstract notion of 'cup', on the concept that there are cups which exist as discrete entities. When we see the cup placed on the object in front of me, the way that this object is bearing the cup supports in us the idea that it is a table. The table is supporting the cup but the cup is also supporting the table. That is to say every concept we have only exists because it is in relation to other concepts. There are no self-existing concepts, just as there are no self-existing objects. If you want to know what a word means you ask someone. You use words to ask someone else and they give you words about a word. Then you can say, "Oh, now I know what that word means."

DEPENDENT CO-ORINATION

This is the heart of what in buddhism is called dependent co-origination. There are no self-existing phenomena, yet moment-by-moment we live in a world of seemingly reliable, predictable experience. In the buddhist tradition it is said that everything is unborn and unceasing. Each phenomena, including ourselves, is unborn because we have never come into a concrete, separate existence. Everything emerges in the matrix, the mother field of emptiness. You can check this out yourself with whatever you see as being 'some-thing', like a motorcar or a house. Clearly each object has a historical line of construction, of how it came into being. More importantly it is immediately constructed by our participation in its being experienced. For example, each person who sees 'the cup' sees it according to their own particular repertoire and intensity of lenses. Moreover moment-by-moment different aspects of their repertoire and of their range of intensities are constellated by

factors emerging in the environment and within the 'individual'. Although we may agree, as it were, objectively, that James is holding a cup, what you actually 'get' when you look at the thing in my hand is what you get. Each person gets what they get. We will never know what each of us gets because what we get we can only share through language. When we speak we use abstractions or constructions which give the sense that there are concrete entities being referred to. These abstractions confirm the idea that there is a truly existing cup that things can happen to. But in the moment of looking at the cup what you experience is your own unique patterning in this moment. Maybe a meteor will fall from the sky and kill us all. This is it. This is the first and the last moment we experience. This is the question: who are you now when you are looking at this shape in my hand? You are a participant in the matrix of manifestation. That is to say we are not living inside the little bone box of our head, looking out of these water-bubble eyes at a world of big, hard, different things. Rather we are involved moment-by-moment, second-by-second, in the ceaseless development of co-emergent phenomena non-dual with their empty source.

This speaks directly to our relation with time. If we see the cup as a fixed thing, it is as if it exists traversing time. This cup on Monday is the same as on Sunday. It is always just what it is – the cup. This is our common way of thinking about objects. What is vital to see is that it is a construct, a conceptual elaboration, a story. This cup comes into 'existence' in the moment that we perceive it within duality. The cup is revealed through our participation which can be dualistic or non-dual. In the realm of duality we are traversing along with time. We and our world are not dead or fixed objects being moved around like pieces on a chess board, but we are an unbroken flow of interactive subject and object moments in which we are both object and subject. These seeming polarities are just shifts of modality within the ceaseless flow like the peaks and troughs of a wave. Our continuity is that of the indefinable radiance or potentiality of emptiness. *The practice of tantra dissolves the dissolution of separate identity and so frees us from hopes and fears.*

TANTRA

The key method of tantra involves the visualisation of deities. The deity arises out of emptiness, translucent and clear, ungraspable and yet present. We, trapped in our seemingly solid body of the five elements, full of our burden of thoughts, memories, guilt, regret, and so on, pray saying: "Big shiny one make me shiny too. I want to be like you." And the god says: "Easy peasy ... you have always been like me." From the very beginning we are made of light. Life is not so serious. Everything that happens: people dying, people getting sick, is like a dream. If you think that life shouldn't happen in this way, that this is not the story you wrote for yourself, then this is the basis

for suffering. If you stay present with what is happening you notice that events simply arise and pass. If it seems good you can't catch it and put it in your pocket, and if it seems bad you can't push it away any faster than it is likely to go. When we take events to be very serious this is because we take ourselves too seriously.

We imagine that we are powerful beings in control of the world. The American army is very big and well resourced. They are fighting tribesmen in Afghanistan who don't have very good weapons but they are still able to kill Americans. Nobody is the king of the world. Nobody wins all of the time. All that money, all that power, and they can't control a few people wandering around in the desert. This is very important, for if the big boys can't control everything how can we expect to do that? Belief in the power of the subject over the object or over other subjects is the high road to suffering. Subjects and objects increase and decrease in their manifest power and function all the time. This world and all the beings in it are in a state of flux, fluctuation, movement and change. The heart is pumping all the time; it is full of blood and then empty of blood, full and then empty. The lungs fill with air and then they empty. We feel big and confident and then we feel a bit small and shy. This is life – nobody is big all of the time.

It is a terrible punishment to have to pretend to know what you are doing. Think of Mr Obama sitting in a big room in the White House. People expect him to know what to do. But situations are complicated, awash with contradictory forces. So we need to see the delusional nature of our own fantasies of power and control and safety. The ego's dream, the fantasy of always being able to dominate situations and control them is never realised. Nobody in the whole of history has ever been able to do this. From this point of view the ego is the mental function of misreading situations. The ego's self-obsession disguises the fact that we exist as a flow of energy participative in a field of energy. We influence and are influenced by events, and neither we nor the events have any substantial reality.

In the practice of tantra we pray to the deities asking them to send rays of light into us. Our bodies fill with light, loosening up the basis for the accumulation of compacted stories about our identity. *This solidity of our sense of self is an illusion – that is why it can be dissolved with light. In fact this seeming solidity is itself a form of light. When you see a mirage it looks like water but it is light misinterpreted. Similarly the ego is energy misinterpreted and so the energy of light can reveal its absence of inherent existence.* We then offer light back to the deities who amplify it and spread it to fill the entire universe. This light reveals the actual nature of all phenomena to be appearance and emptiness. Everything is light, light manifesting as the five elements from which every 'thing' arises.

Clearly, if we take something like this solid object (a glass) I have here and hit ourselves on the head, we will feel something. But this doesn't mean that this object has a true self-existence. Rather, simply there is an interplay of energetic forms giving rise to a new form, a bruise on my head.

None of the five elements, earth, water, fire, wind and space, has substantial essence. They are modes of the display of the potential of the ground. They are aspects of the ground appearing according to how our experience arises for us. *If we are locked in the dissolution of duality then as the light of appearance is mediated through that dark crystal the light appears in the reified mode of substantial elements composing substantial entities. Having no defining essence of their own they are revealed* situationally and can be appropriated conceptually, and so we are able to seemingly establish them as entities. However these energies are always in motion and they meet and interact and change very easily. The fact that some phenomena seem to be stable and enduring simply demonstrates that they have not yet encountered destabilising factors. When such factors start to operate then the seeming stability is shown to be merely contextual, contingent rather than intrinsic.

Moreover it is the fixity of our habitual use of concepts to identify what is occurring that allows us to ignore the actual changes in phenomena as they present. We hold on to our fixed ideas in the face of the fact of contingency and change. External phenomena, my body, my thoughts, feelings, sensations and so on are all arising and passing. There is only the ceaseless flow of experience. Experience is constituted out of a subject experiencing a world of objects. This veils the actuality of integrated or non-dual display in which subject and object are not unborn yet are ever-shifting in their interactive play. No one is playing: playing is playing.

Opening to life this way, our experience becomes lighter and more connected, less held in and less fearful as we allow ourselves to be part of the movement of the unfolding field. The experiencer and the experienced show their emptiness and this allows the delusion of the ego-self to dissolve. Rather than the world being a kind of restaurant where we try to find the menu and order what we want, asserting our individuality by the kind of choices we make, we can relax our self-fixation and find ourselves present with whatever is occurring. Opening in that way, the 'will to power' is dissolved, revealing the space of wisdom and compassion. Wisdom is direct presence in and as the emptiness of all phenomena and compassion is the unlimited participation of wisdom. The ground or the source or the basis of everything we experience, whether we take it to be external or internal, is completely open. There is no real experiencer nor a real experience. When we try to find something we find that what seems to be there has actually vanished, like a mirage. At the centre of our sense of self there is nothing at all, and yet, because there is nothing at all there is no

limit to the free-flow of appearance. Compassion is to be available in non-duality, free of both merging and holding oneself apart.

Manifestation does not become chaotic when the habit of imposing control is released. The open empty ground effortlessly reveals itself as patterns devoid of essence but displaying qualities. For example, in this cup there is some water. Because there is water in the cup there are some things it would not make sense to add to the cup. We could add some fruit juice but if you were to add petrol what would be the point? Petrol and water are not friends. If we put the petrol in the cup we can't then put this mix into a motorcar. When you have some-'thing', when you are some-'thing', there is a specificity, a formation of the potential as it shows itself in this particular form. When we open and relax we start to see the temporary, contingent nature of the structures we encounter, including ourselves, and that gives us the freedom of not taking things so seriously. 'Things' are only what we take them to be due to the interplay of fluctuating factors, both external and internal. When we are not trapped by our interpretations we can collaborate with the many possibilities which arise and enjoy our freedom to move. This is the quality of wisdom.

From this wisdom flows compassion which is our generous and easy participation in the flow of becoming. Being open, there is no basis for the limiting, self-obsessed patterns of hatred, greed, exploitation and so on. Then our gestures embody the balance of benefit for self and benefit for others. Generally speaking our actions tend to be for ourselves *or* for the other. Sometimes we are very altruistic, and we really try to help other people, then after a while we have had enough of that and we want a little holiday from all these horrible sentient beings who deplete us. Then we recite the central samsaric mantra, "What about me?" After a while we feel a little guilty and start to think, "What about them?" In that way we tend to move between these two positions.

The texts of tantra describe the three modes or aspects or bodies of a buddha. The dharmakaya, the aspect of openness, is the infinite spaciousness of a buddha's mind. This is the basis or potential of the many different manifestations which become apparent according to causes and conditions. The richness of this potential is called the sambogakaya, the aspect of enjoyment and pleasure. This is the enjoyment of the richness of the field of appearances free of selectivity and division into good and bad, liked and not liked and so on. Within this radiant field appears the nirmanakaya or expressive aspect. The expressive aspect is both the non-duality of appearance and the ground of appearance, and the non-duality of all appearances. It is both the direct expression of the openness and richness of the enlightening source and compassionate responsive, its impactful participation in the flow of becoming. How it manifests cannot be predicted by any template for it is

direct and immediate. We can set up an image of how we think an enlightened person would act. We can imagine them being nice and kind according to our own version of what this would be. But now we have put the Buddha in a box, framing her in terms of our own concepts.

The function of the nirmanakaya is to awaken others, to help them find and be themselves as a non-self. There is no recipe for this, for although all beings have the same basic nature there is a unique specificity to the patterning of how each manifests. It is this energetic configuration that the expressive aspect is working with. It can manifest as an event that generates a shock to disrupt an individual's fantasies. It can manifest as a welcoming inclusion that allows a relaxing of defensiveness for one who has become a lonely outsider.

It is not rule generated or knowledge based but is open and responsive to what is. It actively disrupts our search for conceptual control, our desire to know what to do in advance of a situation. This tendency to prediction, judgement, definition is the opposite of awakening, which is the capacity to open to the vibrant living quality of our potential which is only revealed through our free participation.

It is a painful paradox that our knowledge can often be a form of ignorance, a means of ignoring what is actually occurring. Knowledge is often stale for it has been acquired before this new situation to which it is being applied. Each situation arises like a dream, an illusion, within the open and empty field of becoming. We cannot know what will happen for the actuality of the occurrence is always complex, a rich evanescent tableau generated by multiple factors, factors beyond computation. This basic fact is hidden from us by our addiction to naive narratives which gloss the complexity in simple statements. What occurs is not an objective fact; it is a unique moment of our presence which is not shared by anyone else. The immediacy of occurrence is inconceivable and incommunicable. When we are present this is enough, for it is complete in itself. However, when we are not present, when we are trapped in the web of signifiers, our conceptual attempts to make sense of what is going on will block our free participation. We will remain with our mediated stories. The nirmanakaya expressive mode directly intervenes to return us to the fresh ungraspable moment.

This is very beautiful. If one can live it, free of doubt in the spontaneity of energy as it arises from the unborn ground, then the flow of the integrity of the ground is uninterrupted. This does not require conceptual reflection. Awareness is intrinsic and our belonging is unchanging. The flow of our presence is both across the 'horizontal' plane of past to present to future, and across a 'vertical' plane linking openness, richness and precise expression. The flow of appearances is ceaseless and yet it goes nowhere and is not for anything. Awareness is unchanging. A lot is going on but its non-

duality with awareness never changes. However, if you grasp at these transient phenomena, and instead of *being* time you enter *into* time, then you find yourself chasing one thing after another. This is the difference between samsara and nirvana.

The view of dzogchen indicates that from the very beginning everything has been completely pure and perfect. That is to say, nothing needs to be changed. Clearly, when we look at our own lives and the world around us there are many things we think we might need to change: we might be concerned about climate change, if we have children we might be wondering what sort of world they are going to inherit and so on. With this heart-felt concern anxiety arises, and with that the sense that something must be done. “What shall we do? Does anybody know? At least let’s do something!” This is part of the problem.

Human beings can become buddhas; the true nature of all human beings is buddha. But the buddha is not a human being. Buddhism is not a humanistic philosophy. It doesn’t say that human beings are the best of the bunch; it doesn’t say man is the measure of all things. It says that to be a human being is a manifestation of a particular kind of ignorance, a mixture of desire and attachment that leads us to strongly perceive the world in terms of ‘things’. If we want to awaken from the limitation of taking human worldly concerns to be the basic purpose of our life we have to become curious about what is actually occurring rather than being intoxicated by the cultural stories that both surround and constitute us. As human beings we have a marvellous capacity for imagination. This capacity is so good that we take our creations to be real. Some people imagine how to be a good footballer, some people imagine how to make a lot of money, some people imagine how to be a very effective torturer. The function of dzogchen practice is to rest in the presence of the awareness which reveals the movements of our imagination so that creativity can be seen to be the display of the ceaseless potential of the mind. Then it is present as a potential to be activated if situationally required rather than an ego-confirming skill making real things happen.

For example, the dzogchen view states that everything is pure and perfect from the very beginning, and yet there is now a terrible ecological crisis. If we don’t recognise the natural purity of all phenomena it will be very difficult to solve the ecological crisis because of our tendency to blame each other for what is happening and to deny the aspects we don’t like. This is what human beings do. Human beings are very good at fighting and very good at destroying. We do that, according to the buddhist teachings, because due to encapsulation in our current karmic vision we don’t know any better. The Buddha said that if you stop believing the fantasies in your head and you start to actually

look at yourself and what you do you will be able to work with circumstances as they show themselves. When we are not clear and yet feel a need to do a lot, that is a sign that we are lost.

One of the particular difficulties of living in times of crisis, which is our usual state, is that our attention become focussed on how to manage our participation in order to deal with specific problems. Each action draws us into further action so that we become busy, preoccupied and likely to act according to our habitual patterns. The practice of dzogchen suggests that we relax into the natural open state in which subject and object interact as the display of the energy of the mind. Presenting this way we awaken to being part of the world and so can collaborate with circumstances with minimal conflict with others.

There is no end to thinking. There is no end to the situations arising out of thought. However the thoughts that create these solidified situations are themselves empty. The denial of the emptiness of the object and the emptiness of the subject leads to the illusion of both as reified substantial entities. These both provide screens onto which we project our emotions and hopes and fears. The function of meditation in dzogchen is to open to seeing how one becomes tied in knots and how these knots will untie themselves if left alone. If we take a piece of string and we tie it in a knot, we think, "Now, here there is a knot in this string." Before we tied the knot, the string was going from one end of the string along to the other end of the string. The string was showing uninterrupted string-ness. Now we tie the knot in the string and what has happened to the string-ness of the string? From one end to the other it is still string. The knot is not intrinsic, not inherent, not fundamentally damaging to the nature of the string.

We can spend a lot of time in our lives trying to unknot ourselves but the continuity of awareness is unbroken through all the efforts that we make to do that untying. In the dzogchen tradition this continuity is described as *kadag* or primordial purity. Whatever has happened, whatever conditioning, or patterns, or turning in on ourselves, these are like reflections in a mirror. On the level of the reflection, of the manifest image, something dreadful seems to have happened, "Oh why did I do that!" But the reflection is inseparable from the mirror. It has no life outside the mirror. The mirror is empty and it is the emptiness of the mirror that allows this reflection to arise.

In the practice of dzogchen we are concerned with the nature of the mirror, for if we open to it directly and view from there we will see the nature of all reflections without having to examine them one by one. When you experience yourself in the state of the mirror then all the knots and limitations which have been accumulated in many, many lifetimes are freed in an instant. The patterns are still there but you are no longer inhabiting the pattern as if it was definitive of who you

are. And so life continues with some 'good things' happening and some 'bad things' happening. But rather than being a cork tossed about on the movement of the waves, we are present in the non-duality of the empty spaciousness of the mirror with the richness of the potential of all possible appearances and the precision of how we manifest moment-by-moment, a manifestation which is unique to that particular moment and will never be repeated. How fresh and refreshing!