

Stim Morane: I'm experiencing a lot of system lag ... I'll be back!

Pema Pera: Hi Stim and everybody!

TH Ordinary: hi

Bleu Oleander: hi

Wester Kiranov: hi pema

Celleon Aboma: Hello everyone

Wester Kiranov: I do hope stim WILL be back this time...

Scathach Rhiadra: Hello everyone

Pluton Karas: Hello Scathach.

Pema Pera: he is back online, Wester :)

Pluton Karas: "Things are not as they appear", huh?

Pema Pera: he got a brand new computer :)

Wol Euler: hello everyone

Pluton Karas: Hello Wo.

Pema Pera: While we are waiting for Stim, let me remind you that these sessions will be recorded

Pema Pera: and published on our web site

Scathach Rhiadra: Hello Wol

Pema Pera: <http://www.kira.org/>

Pema Pera: wb Stim!

Wol Euler: hello stim

Fefonz Quan: Hey Stim\

Stim Morane: Hi everyone! Sorry about the delay.

arabella Ella: hiya

Stim Morane: This is the second time in a couple days that I've had to leave and return to deal with system lag

Pila Mulligan is Online

Stim Morane: Welcome to Kira,Âs Thursday workshop in the CafV©. Sorry about my dramatic departure two weeks ago ,Ä I was just about to start when my computer died the great death.

Stim Morane: It was fairly comical ...

Stim Morane: Is there a point in doing more personal introductions, or should we just start?

Fefonz Quan: b)

genesis Zhangsun: lets start!

Pema Pera: We may as well start, yes

Stim Morane: OK ... Anyway, at this point, I decided to just move on rather than trying to resurrect the little dialogue project Pema and I attempted. Perhaps we can get back to that another time.

Stim Morane: Overall topic here is something like Contemplation in the Modern World (including the ordinary world of us laypeople, and the scientifically-informed world).

Stim Morane: So today,Âs topic is contemplative practice, then and now.

Stim Morane: There is a reason to take stock. We are part of a long movement, whether we know it or not. If we see the larger pattern, it might matter to us. We might make different choices, or might instead appreciate our present situation in a new way.

Stim Morane: That, at least, is my hope.

Stim Morane: What was meditative/contemplative practice originally, how did it change, what is it now?

Stim Morane: If we were to take Buddhism as an example, you could say its practice:

Stim Morane: 1. is being simplified, both by sticking with easier bits and by stretching out the training. It used to be based on technical forms of samadhi, very difficult, requiring of protracted periods of retreat training, immersion. Time to achieve what is accepted as competence level is now far shorter. The very notion of competence has been redefined.

Stim Morane: Also ... it's 2. is more oriented towards lay-people. It used to involve primarily monastics and hermits.

Stim Morane: And 3. it is more world-oriented. It used to emphasize more of a transcendence orientation, whereas now it often emphasizes relevance to daily life. This claim can't be pushed too far, since it was always related to very concrete features of life as a human being. But ultimate thrust was still more transcendence-oriented than now.

Stim Morane: Moreover ... 4. is more personal than before and in new way. Used to be centered around either "action for others" or deconstruction of self etc., now more friendly to self and applied for reasons supplied by same.

Stim Morane: I could go on in this vein ... a lot has changed.

Stim Morane: But here's another type of change:

Stim Morane: The tradition of contemplation is disappearing. Considering how many people profess an interest now, this might sound untrue, but consider: no countries remain that are really guided by it, monasteries mostly gone or trivialized, fewer hermits (although there are still some), less popular even in the West than it was a short time ago.

Stim Morane: This trend is undeniable, but not usually discussed.

Stim Morane: Before I go on, perhaps we should pause and do a check ... do you have comments so far?

Storm Nordwind: Your example of Buddhism. Is it still Buddhism? Would Buddha still recognise it as such?

Stim Morane: A good question. What do you think?

Fefonz Quan: (would he recognize vajrayana?)

Pluton Karas: Hmmm....

Stim Morane: another good question.

Fefonz Quan: but maybe similar answer

Storm Nordwind: Fit for purpose in today's world I would say. The function is unchanged I believe

Stim Morane: I suppose the latter is more controversial

Pluton Karas: Is there an implication that there may be some 'invalidity' to practice if the buddha were unable to recognize it?

Pluton Karas: I don't think that's what you're implying, by the way.

Pluton Karas: Just asking.

Stim Morane: Yes, perhaps the function is the same.

Stim Morane: But I'll leave that open for now.

Storm Nordwind: My other question is, what have lost - if anything - by lacking the degree of contemplatives?

Stim Morane: No, I'm not implying much at all about what we can infer re the Buddha's own view

TH Ordinary: is there an expectation in meditation?

Stim Morane: Yes, Storm, that's where I'm heading with this. I don't pretend to have an answer, but want to provoke discussion re that.

Storm Nordwind: Sure

Stim Morane: Expectation is tricky ... one could say many things.

Stim Morane: I'll take Storm's answer for now.

Wester Kiranov: lost - personally or as a society, or as a culture?

Stim Morane: OK ... well let's move on a bit as a way of addressing your q Wester.

Stim Morane: Common denominator of all periods, ancient, intermediate, and the present: diligent or even unwavering inspection, intense concentration or focus, and appreciative discrimination. But note that while inspection or mindfulness always figure prominently, regardless of time, the present form is very different: it's conducted more inside the perspective of the self and pertains more to the motives of the self, rather than opening up past that.

Celleon Aboma: Is expectatation the same as intention?

Stim Morane: The Buddha's own formative practice was framed around very difficult training, as I said.

Stim Morane: Oh, re expectation, that's why I ducked the issue. It could mean a lot of thinngs.

Stim Morane: Intentionality is not ruled out, but needn't involve temporal reference

Stim Morane: Anyway, I think I can say that early movements were not so concerned with society, ordinary life, the world, etc.

Fefonz Quan: aren't the four noble truths relevant today as much as before?

Stim Morane: Later movements were simpler, shorter, more people-oriented, world-oriented, etc

Stim Morane: Yes, the four noble truths are a constant.

Stim Morane: But what is considered to address them has changed dramatically

Stim Morane: the ancients would have emphasized very intensive types sof mind-training, strict cutting away of certain factors.

Stim Morane: this changed over time

Stim Morane: also, lay movements became more common, priorities changed

Pema Pera tiptoeing out 'cause he has a RL meeting

Stim Morane: OK, bye Pema. If we look at other traditions, like Taoism and

Stim Morane: Confucianism, we see the same trend.

Stim Morane: What began in one mode, shifted, opened up, became more accessible

Stim Morane: Sometimes things simply ceased altogether. Taoism and Confucianism are basically gone now.

Samuel Okelly: Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim all have at their core a belief in ,Äúsomething else,Äù, something other than a simple SUBJECT vs OBJECT form of dualistic reductionism

Stim Morane: Yes, I see.

Stim Morane: That's certainly a possibility for all traditions, but I'm not certain.

Storm Nordwind: Stim, do you think this has been a deliberate thing, this common shift? If so, what do think think were the motives?

Stim Morane: In any case, I'm interested in your own takes on what has changed, and what it implies re what we've got now.

Stim Morane: Storm, one motive is simply that more people wanted to get involved.

Stim Morane: THis is quite clear.

Celleon Aboma: Is there something to be said about non-duality in this context?

Stim Morane: But this also meant shifting the training and emphasis towards more application-oriented emphases.

Storm Nordwind nods

Stim Morane: And that's one of the main motives.

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Flight Band: All Go

Stim Morane: Non-duality could be understood on many levels.

Stim Morane: What level are you thinking of, Celleon?

Wester Kiranov: Application-based: so not just more people, but more people who were not as willing to give up things?

Stim Morane: I'll keep typing while we wait for your reply: yes, Wester, I think that's true

Stim Morane: This has had big consequences.

Stim Morane: Consumerism, etc are part of it.

Pluton Karas: Perhaps the time dedicated to contemplation does not seem to be as grand as in past traditions.

Pluton Karas: I live in a westernized nation, in a busy city.

Lia Rikugun: (away for soem time for a meeting)

Stim Morane: Anyway, my point is not to draw a negative picture, but to say that disappearance could mean change as well as absense.

Fefonz Quan: the goals of life are much more materialistic, individualistic and target oriented

Celleon Aboma: There is so much conditioning aout the meaning of the four noble truths. How do we aware in a new way?

Stim Morane: Yes, time and other "form factors" have been big considerations

Pluton Karas: brb

Stim Morane: OK

Samuel Okelly: there is a common reference to an objective transcendental reality of form a la „Plato,“ but what has changed is the dominant viewpoint which has shifted to the subjective

Stim Morane: Overall, across traditions, I want to say that things have disappeared in the sense of ceasing altogether, and in the sense of changing or mutating. And when changing, they have developed in certain identifiable ways toward application orientations, simplification, trivialization (which is very different thing from simplification), shorter or more direct approaches, and finally esoterism.

Stim Morane: These are the notable changes or shifts.

Fefonz Quan: (rl calls)

Stim Morane: Bye Fefonz

Stim Morane: They apply in many different traditions.

Scathach Rhiadra: has the western interest in Buddhism played a big part in the changes, or would they have happened anyway?

Stim Morane: To take the particular case of moving toward applications and a lay orientation or "this world" orientation, they have also gone on to new discoveries or emphases that are equally profound but in different directions. So initial high standards in one area become summarized or simplified, even trivialized, applied, etc. on their way to something unguessable --- a new dimension or direction.

Stim Morane: I see the same thing happening now. The trends toward simplification application and even trivialization are all part of a larger movement on another level which is difficult to see... so I see this is just the latest instance of a pattern which is already visible many times in many cultures in history. For example, monastic excellence and training in transcendence and then moving toward tantrism, which is in part concerned with moving toward the profundity of the human being and everything that arises in our world. This latter was something that was not emphasize so much in earlier periods.

Storm Nordwind: Is this breaking new ground or just changing emphasis, Stim?

Stim Morane: *emphasized

Stim Morane: I don't know that there's one answer. I think it's both

Stim Morane: And you, Storm?

Storm Nordwind: Hmm... I would need direct experience of both times for a good comparison!

Stim Morane: Yes, true. Same for us all, I guess. But to wing it ... it is not just that things are deteriorating or disappearing, but that they are undergoing change on their way to other kinds of insights and discoveries, et cetera. And this is all within the backdrop of an even higher notion of reality which provides the context for all of these explorations and emphases. Even if one is not appreciating that latter reality in a complete way, one is still serving it by exploring. And acknowledging its expanse.

Stim Morane: Freeman Dyson wrote a book called infinite in All Directions.

Wester Kiranov: it's on by tbr list ;)

Stim Morane: I think the same image applies here sometimes ... many ways to go, and not all represent a loss ...

Wester Kiranov: *my

Stim Morane: *represent

Stim Morane: Anyway, we could say a great deal about the details of specific changes in specific traditions, but my main purpose is to invite reflection about where we ourselves stand. What has contributed to our own situation? Where do we want to go next?

Gaya Ethaniel: Sorry for being late, I couldn't tp

Stim Morane: I'd be happy to take comments and questions for the rest ... I can get back to details another time.

Pluton Karas: I'm back.

Stim Morane: Hi Gaya

Pluton Karas: But, I must get going.

Stim Morane: Bye Pluton

Pluton Karas: Everyone, enjoy the rest of your day.

Scathach Rhiadra: bye Pluton

Storm Nordwind: I suspect my own personal overall purpose and motivation (in Buddhist practice) is no different from others in the past. I suspect that some things have changed in the techniques I use, but

Stim Morane: As I indicated, Storm, some of the earlier movements were much more transcendence-oriented than some of the later ones. Where do you stand re that?

Storm Nordwind: I have a practical turn of mind, in keeping with the 21st century I guess

Stim Morane: :)

Stim Morane: amen

Storm Nordwind: I can take an equivalent example from Play as Being practice...

Storm Nordwind: The YSBS experiement was transcendent...

Storm Nordwind: But the ESBS one was practical

Stim Morane: or consider the point about applications ... traditional practice in Buddhism, Taoism and others was much less applied than what remains now.

Stim Morane: Yes, good idea ... take some cues from PaB

Stim Morane: The question about applications is whether they preserve the original vision and emphasis. Some things that do could still be very practical. But some "practical" things represent big departures.

Stim Morane: Both Confucianism and Taoism are largely gone now. What remains is negligible and not very reflective of what they were. Chi-gong (a term that came into use with the Communist Revolution in China) is not Taoism. Neither are Taichi, fengshui, Chinese Medicine, etc.

Pila Mulligan: Sam aslo earlier mentioned an increase in subjectivity, and in relation to Stim's topic of the modern evolution of contemplative practice, I agree with that there has been an increase in subjectivity ... while at the same time science has been radcially redefining objectivity

Stim Morane: Yes, I agree.

Storm Nordwind: People will go for what they want. If they want the end of suffering, they will find a way. So Buddhism survives. If they want a societal model, they will find a way. But they don't want one in the way of CONFUCIANISM it seems!

Stim Morane: Yes.

Stim Morane: Again, I'm basically saying that this change is probably part of the "infinite in all directions" model

Stim Morane: There are many dimensions of exploration, and even trivializations may be, in some cases, part of larger movements that are profound in new ways.

idanthology Sandalwood: can i ask u guys, on meditations, is it true that there are men who can use meditation to significantly increase their body temperature i.e. using the mind to change the physical in a way that science picks up on?

Stim Morane: This is certainly possible.

Stim Morane: It's actually quite easy.

idanthology Sandalwood: really?

Stim Morane: My own body temperature is several degrees lower than "normal"

Storm Nordwind nods

Stim Morane: This is a result of a simple training

Storm Nordwind: My own pulse rate is much lower than 'normal'

Stim Morane: yes, mine too

Stim Morane: This is a Taoist thing, at least in my own background.

Stim Morane: Does that answer the question, or did you want a more general response?

Stim Morane: Or a detailed one?

idanthology Sandalwood: no, that is good...more detail would be better ;)

Stim Morane: Of course, there are limits ... one has to respect the human form and nature. But respect implies seeing, and seeing shows options

Stim Morane: even unusual things can be "natural"

Stim Morane: It's just a matter of seeing more of how nature works

Stim Morane: OK, perhaps we should consider winding up.

Stim Morane: Next time I want to talk specifically about how views grounding practice have changed over time

Stim Morane: It's not very meaningful to discuss practice in isolation, since view is hugely important

Stim Morane: Are there other things anyone wants to discuss before we stop?

idanthology Sandalwood: one more question

Stim Morane: ?

idanthology Sandalwood: have u ever come across levitation or is that just stories?

Stim Morane: Hmmm ... any have an answer?

Stim Morane: *anyone

Gaya Ethaniel: yeah... someone said something about beans

Gaya Ethaniel: ooops sorry bad joke

Wol Euler: :)

idanthology Sandalwood: lol...just a thought

Storm Nordwind remembers the ferryman tale

Stim Morane: my own answer is "no, I haven't seen it". My own teachers doubted it was possible, but they way they answered was "it may not be possible ANY MORE"

Stim Morane: *the way they

Wol Euler: a lost art?

Stim Morane: Their point was that what is possible can actually be a function of time.

Stim Morane: And time itself can change re this dimension

Storm Nordwind: My teachers have said that it is not worth much!

Stim Morane: I don't pretend to have an opinion re this

Stim Morane: Yes, that too, Storm!

Stim Morane: We have options now that would be preferable.

Stim Morane: The Buddha himself actually commented on this sort of thing.

Stim Morane: He said "we have boats"

Mickorod Renard: do you have any views on time and the possible ability to transcend it?

Stim Morane: Yes, it's definitely possible to awaken to different types of time, and let go of time

Stim Morane: This is important

Stim Morane: But this needn't imply "time travel" in the ordinary sense

Stim Morane: By the way, the very questions that are coming up today illustrate some of what I was mentioning in my little presentation

Mickorod Renard: i missed that,,sorry

Stim Morane: Well ... the questions have largely been about what sort of powers are possible.

Mickorod Renard: what about vision..as in of future events?

Stim Morane: Yes, that is possible too, but maybe not very "spiritually" relevant.

Stim Morane: I would rather know what is really present Now.

Mickorod Renard: I am more interested in the phenomena than in the lotto numbers

Stim Morane: To put this a different way, if you take the ordinary mind and senses, and sense of "self" and try to make all of that able to know the future, it won't work.

Stim Morane: But there is another way ...

Stim Morane: So knowing the future is possible but not very important, because the "self" and its concerns wouldn't be served.

Mickorod Renard: yes,,but like in say,,dreams,,some may be profound and show unusual events that happen later

Stim Morane: Yes, that can certainly happen. It is most likely with respect to your mom!

arabella Ella: but Stim .. u just said ... there is another way ... is it ... could it be via sensing?

Stim Morane: I'm not making a joke ... this is actually the most common case.

Gaya Ethaniel: Lucky Mickorod, Stim is telling you these for free huh

Gaya Ethaniel smiles

Stim Morane: Let go of the ordinary mind and its embedded position, then it's possible for things that are tied to you karmically on another level to be apprehended.

Mickorod Renard: grin

Stim Morane: :)

arabella Ella smiles ... thanks ...

Stim Morane: What I'm saying is that "you" can't do it, but what you are, in the more complete sense, may.

Mickorod Renard: yes,,i think I understand

Stim Morane: Anyway ... wrapping up? Questions?

Mickorod Renard: thankyou

Storm Nordwind nods

genesis Zhangsun: thankyou Stim

Pila Mulligan: thanks Stim

Wol Euler: thank you, Stim!

Scathach Rhiadra: thank you Stim

Gaya Ethaniel: Thank you Stim. gen could you tell me where logs will be posted?

Wester Kiranov: RL calling. bye & thank you!!

Stim Morane: I hope to make this little series reflect on the modern situation in many respects, including "practical" ones. We'll see ...

TH Ordinary: thanks!

arabella Ella: thanks Stim very interesting and intruiging too

Samuel Okelly: thank you stim! tc every1 :)

Stim Morane: Thanks. Bye everyone!

Gaya Ethaniel: Bye everyone

genesis Zhangsun: yes Gaya <http://www.kira.org/index.php?option...122&Itemid=153>

Bleu Oleander: thanks and bye

Storm Nordwind is fascinated with the differing views of what practical is!

Gaya Ethaniel: Thanks gen :)

genesis Zhangsun: yw :)

Stim Morane: Yes, let's concentrate on the "practical", Storm! That would be fun!

genesis Zhangsun: same time next week

Stim Morane: Bye, everyone!

Wol Euler: bye

Storm Nordwind: Bye Stim

arabella Ella: bye

genesis Zhangsun: bye everyone!

Mickorod Renard: bye stim

Myna Maven: Bye.

genesis Zhangsun: bye Stim