



.Yakuzza Lethecus: hey everyone

Zen Arado: Hi Heloise

Gaya Ethaniel: Hello Dao, Eliza, Yaku and Zen :)

Heloise Toussaint: Hello!

Zen Arado: Hi Dao

Gaya Ethaniel: Heloise is a RL friend and gave her some intro already :)

Dao Yheng: Hi Heloise!

Dao Yheng: Gaya, glad to see the bunny back!

Eliza Madrigal: Thank you for the TP Gaya... not sure why it was telling me the village hall was too close to TP here... odd

Heloise Toussaint: Hi

Eliza Madrigal: Nice to meet you Heloise!

Heloise Toussaint: Hi Timbo

Zen Arado: Hi Timbo

Timbo Quan: Hello everyone

Gaya Ethaniel: Yeah weekends probably Eliza.

Eliza Madrigal: Hi Tim, Gaya, Zen

Zen Arado: Hi Eliza :)

Eliza Madrigal: Hi Ya :)

Dao Yheng: Hi Timbo, Eliza

Timbo Quan: Hi ELiza & Dao

Gaya Ethaniel: Hello Tim :)

Eliza Madrigal: /me knows her son will be happy to see the bunny when he wakes :)

Gaya Ethaniel: Yes, I was sad to see Aidan not recognising me so :)

Eliza Madrigal: /me smiles

Eliza Madrigal: I just told him...he's giggling

Gaya Ethaniel: :D

Eliza Madrigal: Well today shall we focus on Tonglen first?

Gaya Ethaniel: Sure

Zen Arado: ok

Zen Arado: does it work?

Zen Arado: would love to hear practical experiences of it

Gaya Ethaniel: Hello Calvino :)

Zen Arado: Hi Cal:)

Eliza Madrigal: Dao has asked great questions I don't really have an answer to... perhaps why I don't practice it in the specific ways sometimes taught....

Eliza Madrigal: Hi Calvino, surprised and happy you made it today

Zen Arado: yes thought you wre going to Thailand?

Calvino Rabeni: Hello everyone :)

Eliza Madrigal: http://ways-of-knowing.wikis/3Reports/Dao_Yheng/Report_50

Zen Arado: there is unrest there I hear

Eliza Madrigal: (This is the link to Dao's homework report)

Calvino Rabeni: Yes, I'm leaving about 11 SLT

Gaya Ethaniel: Well ... I do hold my breath when someone sneezes ... ^^;;; I guess it works in terms of opening myself up, helping with not being so fearful in general.

Dao Yheng: :)

Eliza Madrigal: :)

Dao Yheng: I'm not sure my understanding of Tonglen is traditional either, but I do have perhaps traditional fears about it!

Gaya Ethaniel: Wonder what 'work' means here Zen. Could you clarify a bit?

Eliza Madrigal: Its a very generous practice... that's one thing I'm inspired by...

Zen Arado: just...does anything happen for you...since it is a practical technique surely?

Zen Arado: or to others you are doing it for?

Eliza Madrigal: I think its interesting to give away what one didnt know they had....

Zen Arado: does it help their suffering in any way?

Zen Arado: or maybe I am being too instrumental?

Calvino Rabeni: :) Eliza - yes

Dao Yheng: I find it helps others when I'm not causing unnecessary suffering down the line...

Eliza Madrigal: those are interesting questions zen, but perhaps part of what we may keep in mind is not looking for linear connections...?

Gaya Ethaniel: To begin with, I found it helpful to be able to connect more to mm ... what would be a good word here.

Eliza Madrigal: true, Dao :)

Calvino Rabeni: @zen - A lot comes with the package of instrumentality

Eliza Madrigal: (dao not 'you' in particular of course-haha)

Gaya Ethaniel: It is helpful in cultivating general capacity in that direction ... that seeps into many things one does off cushion.

Dao Yheng: it can help others also by just letting them feel a bit more understood -- by having someone meet them without turning away

Eliza Madrigal: 'staying' with someone is indeed very powerful

Zen Arado: so it changes our own attitude more maybe?

Dao Yheng: these would be very simple and direct ways that tonglen could help -- I feel like I'm pointing out the obvious, but sometimes I need that myself :)

Gaya Ethaniel: Hello MIitsu :)

Mitsu Ishii: hey

Zen Arado: Hi Mitsu:)

Eliza Madrigal: Hi Mitsu :)

Dao Yheng: Hi Mits!

Timbo Quan: Hi Mitsu

Gaya Ethaniel: I think cultivating oneself is a good starting point :) Things would naturally surely follow from there ...

Eliza Madrigal: /me nods

Eliza Madrigal: Yes, somehow this idea of just 'not holding back' seems important to me....

Calvino Rabeni: :)

Eliza Madrigal: just realizing the abundance and openness available and not with holding... appreciating it, in a sense... bringing someone into that

Eliza Madrigal: or rather not keeping them out

Eliza Madrigal: it can feel risky, surprsingly... like one may lose their own sense of abundance...

Gaya Ethaniel: If I grimace out of a unconscious reaction when seeing someone very ill, surely that would affect the interaction right from the beginning for example. I think being able to be relaxed in such a

situation would help with acknowledging someone rather than narrowing them down as 'sick person' for example.

Zen Arado: it increases our empathy and openness to others?

Dao Yheng: yes, the familiarization aspect of tonglen practice!

Gaya Ethaniel: :)

Gaya Ethaniel: I think familiarisation can be tricky though ...

Gaya Ethaniel: It can turn into 'going through the motion' instead.

Zen Arado: honesty is so important

Eliza Madrigal: which is why it can be difficult to share in times of difficulty... that one knows there is a distancing that comes from others.... unintended though it may be

Zen Arado: otherwis we are being false

Gaya Ethaniel: /me nods.

Zen Arado: think people can sense when we put on an act for them

Gaya Ethaniel: Eliza ... can you elaborate please?

Eliza Madrigal: Hm, maybe right as one is vulnerable and the full-on presence of others would be most helpful, there can be a sense of not wanting to burden... that it isn't a common skill to just 'be' with someone in need....

Calvino Rabeni: To share one's own difficulty - in a way that it becomes a gift -

Eliza Madrigal: /me nods @ Calvino

Calvino Rabeni: Is valuable as listening to other's suffering

Calvino Rabeni: But less familiar perhaps

Gaya Ethaniel: I think these situations have to be taken case by case ...

Calvino Rabeni: Because a lot of suffering is shared by all, anyway

Zen Arado: yes ..no general rules

Eliza Madrigal: Mindful company is really valuable for that reason... when one knows that they are leaning perhaps, on someone not resting in their own limited capacity..so not a burden in the same way?

Gaya Ethaniel: My rough gauge is to stay away from interactions that either cause impulse or hesitation on my part rather than being spontaneous, sort of unplanned.

Calvino Rabeni: If the impulse is to disengage then, one might choose to engage?

Gaya Ethaniel: But even those interactions can be help as in comparing notes Eliza? I think it's a very complicated question.

Eliza Madrigal: yes, quite tricky

Calvino Rabeni: Tricky

Gaya Ethaniel: That depends Calvino ... it's hard to generalise.

Eliza Madrigal: I agree though, that sometimes 'because' there is a hesitation, tonglen would be helpful

Calvino Rabeni: It's worth a look, in any case

Zen Arado: you learn a lot about this when you are in a wheelchair

Gaya Ethaniel: Yes, it could provide some grounds Eliza.

Eliza Madrigal: yes, a way to stay in a difficult spot... with others or with one's self..

Eliza Madrigal: though I'm not sure we talk about that as much, that tonglen is also something that can be personal?

Gaya Ethaniel: What's 'this' Zen?

Calvino Rabeni: Calvino Rabeni wonders at the frequency of references to tonglen in discussion of lojong

Zen Arado: about interacting with people who want to help

Eliza Madrigal: Ah, makes sense Zen

Gaya Ethaniel: Would you mind sharing some Zen?

Dao Yheng: :)

Zen Arado: would take a long time Gaya

Zen Arado: but everyone in a wheelchair is not the same

Zen Arado: an important point

Dao Yheng: There's an interesting segment on this issue in "Examined Life"

Mitsu Ishii: Calvino: typically, tonglen is taught along with lojong, they go together.

Calvino Rabeni: True, but it is not of essence

Dao Yheng: (Documentary on philosophers, but Judith Butler takes a walk with a friend who is in a wheelchair)

Zen Arado: I find the practice a bit mystical - that's why I wanted someone to tell me it helped in some situation

Calvino Rabeni: Calvino Rabeni confesses desire to focus on essences rather than conventions

Zen Arado: ty Dao

Calvino Rabeni: Do you mean tonglen practice, Zen (I think)

Zen Arado: yes

Mitsu Ishii: I'm not sure what you mean by "conventions" ?

Mitsu Ishii: In any event, we're talking about tonglen because that was part of the homework, as well.

Calvino Rabeni: The convention that lojong and tonglen "go together"

Zen Arado: I have tried the practice but haven't noticed anything I confess

Gaya Ethaniel: /adds it to her DVD rental queue :)

Calvino Rabeni: Causes people to consider them somehow "the same topic"

Zen Arado: maybe I have the wrong attitude to it

Eliza Madrigal: Well.... might we look longer at this one part of 'breathing in the suffering of self/other/world'... how does that 'feel' to others? expanding? constricting?

Mitsu Ishii: Well, everything is a convention, the lojong itself is also just a bunch of aphorisms which are conventionally "taught together". there's no essential aspect to any teaching, i.e., no canonical form.

Gaya Ethaniel: It took me a long time to customise ... to begin with it felt superficial.

Eliza Madrigal: yes, agree Gaya, but also hm, foundational in a sense...

Gaya Ethaniel: Yes :)

Calvino Rabeni: An essence is not a form

Calvino Rabeni: a canonical form is a convention

Zen Arado: guess I am still at the superficial stage :)

Eliza Madrigal: I don't think one 'can' breathe in the suffering of the world, without letting to to small sense of self....?

Eliza Madrigal: letting go rather

Calvino Rabeni: Zen might like the sense of lojong as heuristics

Zen Arado: but Dao is actually feeling something when she does this practice

Eliza Madrigal: one can't empathize without challenging/exposing the tendency to constrict perhaps (end thought)

Gaya Ethaniel: I can suggest that if you can bring up and connect to an emotion while doing tonglen.

Calvino Rabeni: That is, generalized instrumental tools

Gaya Ethaniel: That could be a good start ...

Eliza Madrigal: Well, one thing skipped over sometimes is 'raising the mind of compassion' which is really the foundation of the foundation?

Mitsu Ishii: are you saying, Calvino, that you prefer theory to practice?

Calvino Rabeni: Tonglen might be seen as a practice to transform emotional dispositions?

Calvino Rabeni: No Mitsu

Zen Arado: I am not critical or against the technique I would stress

Calvino Rabeni: Heuristics are about practice

Calvino Rabeni: The theory only points you in the right direction, can not be something "in itself"

Eliza Madrigal: and that is done (raising bodhicitta), reminding of interconnectedness... that one's suffering really is all's suffering... that we are all in the same boat (really end thought-hah)

Zen Arado: yes - so if you don't feel something?

Eliza Madrigal: you raise the intention

Mitsu Ishii: So Zen, when you do the practice, can you describe more how it goes?

Gaya Ethaniel: Having such a view is essential I think ... interconnectedness.

Eliza Madrigal: /me nods

Gaya Ethaniel: Otherwise tonglen becomes a very narrow project probably.

Zen Arado: I do it but not sure what I am supposed to feel

Eliza Madrigal: and it is still a 'pointer'... still a way to open up to a radical openness... (imo)

Dao Yheng: hmm, so what is it that you do feel?

Zen Arado: so if I do it with right intention it doesn't matter if I don't feel anything?

Mitsu Ishii: well, if you imagine literally taking on the suffering of others, that doesn't result in any reaction on your part, Zen?

Eliza Madrigal: /me thinks that's true, Zen... not about feelings perhaps in a conventional way

Zen Arado: maybe I don't think that really I am

Mitsu Ishii: Concretely, suppose there were someone dying of a painful disease right in front of you ---- and you imagined that you yourself were dying of that painful disease, for example.

Zen Arado: means more if I do it for someone I know well who is suffering

Mitsu Ishii: that you actually took on that pain

Zen Arado: it should increase the empathetic feeling though

Eliza Madrigal: as comes naturally... there is a natural compassion there isn't there....

Zen Arado: the one you have to start with

Dao Yheng: I found Pema Chodron's take on this issue very helpful --

Eliza Madrigal: even if it doesn't always feel the same

Mitsu Ishii: Some people react to it negatively at first, in other words

Zen Arado: it is basically about opening yourself?

Mitsu Ishii: it seems difficult to imagine really taking on the suffering of others, but you don't have that reaction, or much of any reaction to the exercise, Zen?

Zen Arado: taking down barriers?

Mitsu Ishii: I agree with Eliza's take --- it can lead to a radical openness

Dao Yheng: you find you don't want to take on that pain, maybe because you're afraid or weirded out or whatever -- so then your practice is for people (including yourself) who feel wierded out about taking on someone else's pain

Eliza Madrigal: that's how I approach it Zen...

Mitsu Ishii: rather than an emotional reaction per se

Calvino Rabeni: I would agree also

Gaya Ethaniel: To be honest, taking on other's pain never worked for me in the initial stages ...

Gaya Ethaniel: I'm sure you'll find a way to connect as you do more Zen.

Eliza Madrigal: /me smiles @ dao's comment

Calvino Rabeni: @dao, or practice for people who think they are not empathetic, or are numbed, disconnected, or other modern maladies

Mitsu Ishii: I think what is interesting about the exercise, however, is the concreteness of it, actually working with this idea of taking in suffering and giving away good things, positive things.

Gaya Ethaniel: Only after I was able to bring up and really connect to relevant 'emotions', I was able to breath in 'sufferings'.

Eliza Madrigal: and truly, the person who is examining their intentions, etc. seems the person whose life and relationships, etc would be actually opened by the practice...

Mitsu Ishii: it's different from simply the idea of doing that. to me, that's the value of the practice: the concreteness vs just the abstract idea

Calvino Rabeni: yes, have to actually "go there" :)

Zen Arado: maybe I am suspicious of the lack of practical action

Gaya Ethaniel: Recalling relevant past events/emotions helped me to start 'going there' I guess.

Calvino Rabeni: An action is something that changes things, either outside or inside

Zen Arado: like people who will 'pray for you' but not offer any practical help

Gaya Ethaniel: So I understand why you feel you find doing with people you know is easier Zen.

Dao Yheng: :)

Eliza Madrigal: but maybe more effective/useful practical action would result from greater empathy, feel of having something to give away...

Calvino Rabeni: YEs

Zen Arado: yes that too Eliza

Gaya Ethaniel: But another point of this tyle of exercise isn't targeting a particular person to help ...

Eliza Madrigal: an appropriate thing... really respect that concern btw, Zen

Zen Arado: sorry for my philosophers way fo examining all the angles

Eliza Madrigal: /me listens Gaya

Mitsu Ishii: the difference between praying and tonglen is that praying is meant as a stand in for action, whereas tonglen is meant as a way of helping you be more responsive to the world.

Gaya Ethaniel: As one becomes more open, less caught up with self presevation mindset, one would naturally be more compassionate/helpful in gernerall ...

Zen Arado: not expressing how I feel necessarily

Mitsu Ishii: it's not in itself a replacement for compassionate action.

Zen Arado: ok I am understanding it better now

Gaya Ethaniel: Why not do the practise with one'self?

Gaya Ethaniel: So many ways to do it ...

Eliza Madrigal: yes, though 'praying' can mean a million things too...

Gaya Ethaniel: /me nods.

Zen Arado: I find it hard to imagine breathing in my problems

Mitsu Ishii: yes, if praying is used in a more contemplative sense, it is different.

Zen Arado: from where to where?

Mitsu Ishii: but often praying is just a list of requests :)

Eliza Madrigal: /me nods

Gaya Ethaniel: :)

Zen Arado: yes Mitsu - I was a christian for a long time :)

Eliza Madrigal: that's a needy mindset perhaps.... whereas tonglen would be shining light on whats there....

Calvino Rabeni: So of the million ways of praying, many are assuredly worthwhile :)

Mitsu Ishii: there was a huge study that showed that praying for people suffering from illness (this was carried out by a Christian-affiliated organization) does nothing. Except for people who were told they were being prayed for...

Gaya Ethaniel: But you know even with praying, reaching out is helpful.

Gaya Ethaniel: praying with requests*

Mitsu Ishii: who actually did worse than the others.

Calvino Rabeni: Tonglen looks to be about reversing "neediness"

Dao Yheng: :)

Zen Arado: praying gives people comfort though

Dao Yheng: maybe it gives the people who are praying the comfort?

Mitsu Ishii: they theorized that they did worse because they were anxious about not letting down people praying for them.

Gaya Ethaniel: Trusting in something 'larger' so to speak ...

Zen Arado: so maybe I am thinking there is an element of faith needed for Tonglen

Eliza Madrigal: knowing that a friend remembered me when seeing the pope, and said a prayer, was greatly moving to me... though I didn't relate to their rituals so much. I appreciated their care

Zen Arado: ?

Mitsu Ishii: with tonglen I don't think you have to have an idea of anything supernatural, it can simply be seen as a personal exercise.

Calvino Rabeni: You might have to have some faith that you can do it

Zen Arado: but you need faith that it.....works...sorry for that word

Gaya Ethaniel: Or just give it a go kind of faith ...

Eliza Madrigal: faith in the sense of 'try and see'

Gaya Ethaniel: snap

Eliza Madrigal: :)))

Calvino Rabeni: Sure, but the faith would be to give it a chance - after that, if it "works" it demonstrates itself

Gaya Ethaniel: :)

Calvino Rabeni: :) in the same page with that :)

Zen Arado: nobody has told me of what it does for them yet

Gaya Ethaniel: I did ...

Zen Arado: perhaps Dao has

Zen Arado: a specific experience?

Eliza Madrigal: gives me something tangible to work with when faced with a difficult situation or a feeling of clarity blockage

Gaya Ethaniel: No, I can't say I did metta on someone particular and that person got happier.

Eliza Madrigal: whether dealing with myself or others... (or even when reading a book sometimes and feeling I'm not understanding)

Gaya Ethaniel: I can say at least I feel more, deeper in general perhaps being more authentic comes across to people I meet.

Gaya Ethaniel: Heloise, I'm not such a pain as first time we met right lol

Eliza Madrigal: tonglen in the moment you feel attacked is pretty powerful

Eliza Madrigal: /me laughs out loud at Gaya

Gaya Ethaniel: We've known each other ... about 15 years now?

Zen Arado: do you ever tell people you are doing Tonglen for them?

Eliza Madrigal: once I felt quite attacked by someone and did a version of tonglen and then visualized laying down and 'letting the tigers' devour me :) I felt totally liberated :)

Calvino Rabeni: Hmm, "good done in secret" seems the usual idea :)

Dao Yheng: Zen, I do feel you're pointing at something important here -- that ultimately we can't really take away someone else's pain

Zen Arado: wouldn't it be great if they said they felt that and felt better?

Dao Yheng: I mean, even the Buddha was not able to take samsara away from us -- we have to do that for ourselves

Mitsu Ishii: It can concretely help if you can stop the cycle of karma.

Eliza Madrigal: I felt in that instant that they were freed too, because I wasn't adding to the situation... keeping my pain out there

Gaya Ethaniel: /me nods.

Dao Yheng: but I think that sometimes, there's something worth doing, even if it doesn't "work"

Calvino Rabeni: We couldn't rely on the suffering people to give us credit - yet might be able to see it's true anyway

Eliza Madrigal: nods

Mitsu Ishii: Like that Zen story ... a general and a Zen master were looking across the river at a battle taking place. The general asks the master, "Can the fighting ever be stopped?"

Calvino Rabeni: not instrumental

Mitsu Ishii: The Zen master slapped the general hard in the face.

Eliza Madrigal: !?

Zen Arado: I think it is my jaundiced suspicions generated from my personal witnessing of questionable practices in Christianity that makes me question this so much

Mitsu Ishii: The general was at first furious... what insolence! How dare he! What was he thinking! Why did he slap me like that? That was uncalled for! But he is a Zen master... maybe he had a reason... there must have been some reason... yes...

Gaya Ethaniel: Like Eliza said, reducing one's mess is helpful for oneself and others ... if tonglen triggers such a pause, it's great. If it doesn't there are lots of other practices one can do ie devotional practices or ethics ... etc.

Zen Arado: listens to Mitsu..

Mitsu Ishii: The Zen master was observing the general carefully. When he saw the general's face relaxing, the Zen master says "You stopped it."

Zen Arado: good Mitsu :)

Eliza Madrigal: :)

Gaya Ethaniel: Stopping is a similar point :)

Eliza Madrigal: :) yes

Mitsu Ishii: What do we do for next week?

Dao Yheng: Ack, one minute drill! Next week, will Eliza and Gaya be able to attend?

Gaya Ethaniel: I can't for next 2 weeks.

Eliza Madrigal: /me will not be here next week... will be just arriving at SFO

Mitsu Ishii: well let's decide on something for the next meeting whenever it is

Eliza Madrigal: and prob not the following week but we'll see... will be home but lots to catchup on

Dao Yheng: So shall we still meet, or take a short break?

Eliza Madrigal: /me throws out 'koans'?

Gaya Ethaniel: lol
Eliza Madrigal: :)
Dao Yheng: (worst kind of koans -- decisions!)
Gaya Ethaniel: heheheh
Eliza Madrigal: :))
Mitsu Ishii: should we do a koan?
Gaya Ethaniel: I should be able to catch up by logs though.
Zen Arado: sure koans are great
Eliza Madrigal: nods
Gaya Ethaniel: Sure
Mitsu Ishii: which one?
Timbo Quan: I vote for the break (will be off sulking :)
Gaya Ethaniel: lol
Eliza Madrigal: hahhaha Tim
Mitsu Ishii: I like Nansen kills the cat
Gaya Ethaniel: awwww Tim
Zen Arado: sure ok
Eliza Madrigal: Oh, sounds intriguing Mitsu
Mitsu Ishii: we can do a break then come back with Nansen's cat?
Zen Arado: puts sandal on head :)
Gaya Ethaniel: What's Nansen's cat?
Heloise Toussaint: I vote for a break so I can catch up!
Dao Yheng: Mits, can you post a link to the koan on the wiki?
Mitsu Ishii: it's kind of advanced but I think it's pretty cool
Mitsu Ishii: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/glg/glg14.htm>
Heloise Toussaint: and learn about Nansen's cat
Eliza Madrigal: two weeks to work with the koan then, and coming back on April 30th....
Mitsu Ishii: I just googled that
Eliza Madrigal: Thanks Mitsu
Mitsu Ishii: "nansen cat" there are other translations
Heloise Toussaint: Thank you
Gaya Ethaniel: ok thanks for the link
Eliza Madrigal: I'll post the link on the front page
Zen Arado: thanks Mitsu
Gaya Ethaniel: Have fun everyone :)
Zen Arado: good idea Eliza
Timbo Quan: Bye all - see you soon - have good time in SFO Eliza
Mitsu Ishii: okay can someone post that we're skipping next week
Eliza Madrigal: or if there is another link, just send it and I'll put it up
Zen Arado: bye all
Eliza Madrigal: Thanks so much Tim, and everyone :))
Dao Yheng: Have a fun retreat Gaya and Eliza -- have a fun break everyone!
Timbo Quan: bye
Calvino Rabeni: Bye all
Mitsu Ishii: bye everyone thanks for coming

Zen Arado: yes have a good time Eliza :)

Eliza Madrigal: And Calvino, enjoy Thailand (as though its possible not to)

Heloise Toussaint: Bye, nice to meet you all

Eliza Madrigal: Nice to meet you to Heloise :)

Dao Yheng: bye H!

Eliza Madrigal: *too

Yakuzza Lethecus: take care everyone who's leaving

Mitsu Ishii: oh yes and be careful with all the protests in Thailand!

Mitsu Ishii: I have heard it is quite intense there now

Calvino Rabeni: I will beware

Dao Yheng: Oh, yes, be careful out there Calvino -- safe travels

Mitsu Ishii: from a friend who is there

Mitsu Ishii: bye

Calvino Rabeni: It's also the new year festivities

Yakuzza Lethecus: last time they blocked the airport for a week ?

Eliza Madrigal: Bye Mitsu

Yakuzza Lethecus: a year ago or tho ?

Eliza Madrigal: yes watchful Cal

Mitsu Ishii: this time there have been some deaths yesterday

Eliza Madrigal: ohh

Yakuzza Lethecus: yes

Mitsu Ishii: crazy. okay bye

Calvino Rabeni: Yes, a tourist can get stuck there

Calvino Rabeni: Bye!

Zen Arado: bye