

00:39.45 Thank you.

APPLAUSE

ANNE KLEIN

00:39.56 Thank you all for marvelous insights, marvelous narrative. And we have a little bit of time for questions. Certainly, a theme has been the interaction between conceptual and other kinds of knowing. This is a theme that's- and the impact on the body, the impact on state of subjectivity itself, the impact on interpersonal relationships.

00:40.29 As Joseph so eloquently discussed here. And as it happens, several of our questions also relate to this theme. There was- there's a question primarily addressed to Mark, but I will- regarding the matter of the self totally dissolving. And the question is - isn't there a need to distinguish between different types or ideas of the self in the context of this discussion of self-dissolution. And while you

take 30 seconds to think of your response, I'd like to open that question up a bit, also.

00:41.11

In the context of the theme of meditation, various forms of contemplation having the capacity to transform the subject that is meditating, of course, there are numerous traditions within Buddhism where you don't- it's not just a question of ending up with not finding the self or the self dissolving, but this itself has a profound impact on the subject. And this is part of what unfolds as one goes through the process of hearing, thinking and meditating. So, if our other panelists would like to address that aspect, I invite you to do so. We'll start with Mark.

MARK SIDERITS

00:41.47

Ok. Very, very useful and perceptive question. I think the quickest way to respond is to lay out one way of looking at the overarching Buddhist non-self project. One way of thinking about that is in terms of - ok, the question is what is the

referent of the word I, which is our favorite word, after all. What is that word the name of? And there are basically, logically, two possibilities.

00:42.14

One possibility, it is- is that it is the name of some one part from among all the parts that make up the psycho-physical complex. And that is the view that the word "I" is the name of a self. Because the idea of a self is the idea of some one part from among all the parts that is the essence of the whole.

00:42.33

The second possibility, logically speaking, is that the word "I" is a way of referring to the whole. Now, the Buddhist non-self project as such - at least on the philosophical side - involves first realizing that there is no one essential part and hence, no self. But, the project doesn't stop there. It goes on to point out that strictly speaking, wholes are unreal. And this is where

the reductionism that I referred to earlier comes in.

00:43.04

Wholes are unreal. Strictly speaking there are just the parts in interaction. It's just our interests and cognitive limitations that make us think of the whole as a real existing over and above the parts. Now, to say that and of course, when we speak of a whole in this context, we're speaking of what you can call the person. So, in other words, the Buddhist non-self project involves two claims.

00:43.29

One is that there is no such thing as a self - no one special part - but second, that persons, that is wholes, are not ultimately real, but conventionally real. That is, the person is a useful fiction. Ok. Now, once we think of non-self in those terms, I think we can, in fact, make sense of the notion of Buddhist practices as involving a kind of personal transformation.

00:43.59

That is, this system as the whole we have learned to think of as one thing - the me - for which the events in this system have meaning, but that involves taking this useful fiction too seriously. Coming to realize that involves a transformation in that system that is this useful fiction of the person me, comes to be understood as just a useful fixture. That's not to say that the person - me - gets utterly dissolved and eliminated. That is rather to say it comes to be seen for what Buddhists claim it really is, which is just a useful way of dealing with all these parts in their incredible complexity.

00:44.46

Ok. So, I think that there is, in fact, room in this vision for notions of meditational practice as forms of self-transformation. Once we understood how that word "self" is being used in that context, it's a way of referring to the system as a whole - the person - which is, after all, real in a way. It's what Indian Buddhists call a pragnya tisa (ph), something that is

conceptually constructed and thus not ultimately real, but does have a kind of being. It's a useful kind of being.

00:45.20

Not first tier ontology, but second tier ontology. Ok. I think that's the way of dealing with that question.

ANNE KLEIN

00:45.29

Thank you.

ROGER JACKSON

00:45.29

Can I just add- Just add a quick couple of footnotes to that. One thing that's interesting in this whole notion of dissolution of self - those of you who have read about or who are otherwise familiar with tantric practices know that the visualization practices involved in tantra involve an almost literal - though, perhaps not atomic, at least at the earlier levels - dissolution of the self. And the reconstruction of the self in an enlightened form.

00:45.57

So, I think this is one interesting sort of twist on this that one might mention. The other thing is that - and I think Anne Klein's work actually has spoken to this as well as anybody's - the whole question then of, meditatively speaking, what is involved when one does not find a self is an important one because it raises philosophical questions, epistemological questions. I don't know what sort of neurophysiological correlates there would be to the non-experience of self-

00:46.31

-but I suspect this is something that's coming down the pipe somewhere. Anyway, there are a lot of discussions within Buddhist tradition about whether one can even have, in effect, a perception of a negation. And I again cite Anne's work as an important source on this.

ANNE KLEIN

00:46.47

Thank you. (Off-mike) The question of the types of subjectivity that are invited to participate in meditation has also been percolating through our discussion here. And one question asks, why

we have talked here so much about meditation and, of course, we have seen that a great deal is included in that word, but we have not heard mention of the term "prayer." How about the value of chanting in Buddhist temples?

00:47.30

What- you're a philosopher? Well, I wonder if this is a- Ok. I'll say something to it.

THUBTEN JINPA

00:47.47

Actually, quite often- sometimes even prayer is actually understood as a form of meditation. There is one Tibetan theorist of meditation - he talks about different types of meditation and he includes prayer. He calls it aspiration. Meditation in the form of aspiration. So, you aspire for a certain state or certain qualities and then there is a sort of a-

00:48.17

Basically, meditation can be kind of, you know, broadly looked at as some kind of disciplined inner reflection. So, if you broadly define meditation in that sense, then prayer is a form

of meditation. And chanting can also be a form of meditation. In fact, there are specific texts, you know, refer to it as kirtan – which means chanting meditation.

00:48.44

So, I mean, I've, you know, I've spent most of my life as a monk. I was a monk for more than twenty-something years and chanting was a very important daily part of my practice. And it's very difficult to kind of, you know, verbally articulate the experience of what it feels like to be part of a chanting group, but there is something definitely deeply contemplative and meditative about the experience. That's all I can say.

ANNE KLEIN

00:49.14

I also personally really welcome your question. I spent a few months at Drepung in India many years ago and when I left, to my surprise, the thing that I missed almost viscerally was the absence of chanting throughout the day. And, I've actually thought about this a good bit. One of my

teachers - a very traditional Tibetan teacher - says that chanting, because often things are translated into English in prose, things that were poetry in Tibetan or Sanskrit, that chanting in his language, in traditional language, is a way for the blessings to enter more completely.

00:49.56

Which I understand in a variety of ways - understanding blessings in a more literal, the chinlab - waves of grace - a kind of energetic, dynamic, vibrational participation, which is certainly part of meditative practice. And one of the, it seems to me, potential dangers of Tibetan practice being collapsed into scientific paradigms, much as we are opening up these paradigms today - Alan's wonderful talk this morning was a great example of that.

00:50.32

You know, there are certain things that we are not talking about. We find ourselves, even here in this panel, talking primarily about ideas, about meditation as a form of knowledge. Where it

is clearly, as everyone in this panel and perhaps everyone in this room also knows very well, a form of transformation. And prayer itself is a kind of transformation. It's an opening up to a larger sense of self. Gregory Bateson has a wonderful article in "Towards an Ecology- New Ecology of Being," I think it's called.

00:51.08

He writes about the- He's actually talking about AA and how calling on a higher power epistemologically shifts one's sense of self. And prayer certainly does that. And meditation doesn't only call on a shift in cognitive understanding, though it profoundly challenges that. I think it's important to mention that terms like "aspiration," like "intention," like "open-hearted devotion," which are not cognitive states in the sense of intellectual ideation - these are crucially important.

00:51.42

They impact us, our entire being. They impact our bodies, our energies as well as our minds. And

meditation in its variety of forms, as a whole, addresses all of these parts of ourselves. So I personally appreciate the question because I think it's a reminder that we must stay very open about the qualities that we're looking at as we discuss meditation in this dialogue.

APPLAUSE

ANNE KLEIN

00:52.19

We have heard a great deal about the divide between neuroscience and spiritual traditions. Neuroscience largely sees consciousness - Am I reading this right? - as physical redef- I can't quite read this. Reductionism, thank you. Or as an emergent phenomenon with no independent spiritual traditions. Endorse independence. But what about the actual or hypothetical conditions for validating an independent consciousness or aspect of independent consciousness?

JOSEPH LOIZZO

00:53.05

I've been quiet here, so I guess I'm on the hot seat.

THUBTEN JINPA

00:53.09 Also, you're the only scientist.

JOSEPH LOIZZO

00:53.10 Ok. I think that, you know, if it has to be validated- I mean, I think that this comes out of a methodological question, ok. If you have to try and prove the existence of consciousness, given the methodological, you know, rules of Western- and presuppositions of Western physical science, you're gonna have a very hard time. It's just really- it's not in the program.

00:53.44 The program, essentially is one like the, you know, very much as Mark described the original Abhidharma tradition - the program of the Western scientists is to essentially critique and erode that sense of God and soul and, you know, its secular locus in mind. But we all walk around feeling very much like we have a self or self-consciousness and I don't think it really needs much proof.

00:54.15

I don't know- In other words, why can't we simply accept that there's that, you know, that there's a form of science which is devoted to- that, you know, we don't have to scientistically (sic) turn physical science into the exclusive description of reality for all purposes. It has a name and an interest. It's a good tool for a specific purpose. If we use it for other things, it won't work. So, if we use that to tell us what consciousness is, we're like, you know, trying to, you know, file our nails with a sledgehammer.

00:54.42

And I think that, on the other- if we just simply try and develop other methodologies that help us explore consciousness, how it works, that assume that it's a reality we're interested in describing for a particular purpose or exploring or transforming in a particular way, we won't have a problem. And we do have these traditions, as many people have pointed out, within the West and certainly we have them within the Buddhist tradition.

00:55.07

This is a challenge that I've grappled with in terms of my own research, because I'm part- I'm on this bandwagon of empirical research of meditation. But, I've tried very much to not go the way of simply trying to prove that meditation works by finding a biological correlate or a brain correlate because it really doesn't tell us anything. And it's not really- the reason why meditation was designed, the way it's defined and the way it works is not- does not include or need brain substrate in order to operate.

00:55.40

It's much more, as in psychotherapy where the system of the science is one of intersubjective experience and assuming that consciousness exists, but, you know, how do we explore it. And I've tried to develop a methodology for doing that and in my work with women with breast cancer, in particular - a recent study funded by the Avon Foundation - I significantly condense the several years of shamata training and giving

people a 20-week course, pretty much in Tibetan Buddhism, you know, including mindfulness and visualization and other things.

00:56.17

And have been looking at its effect on quality of life, which seems to be to be, you know, really where- sort of one way to look at what Buddhism wants to impact, what it's interested on impacting. And the way in which quality of life is measured - even though there are quantitative instruments - are by asking people questions and having questionnaires that ask the person to describe their own internal state. So, they use their own sort of natural self-observing capacity to make descriptions.

00:56.44

So, in that sense, I've tried to subordinate, you know, assuming that consciousness is a reality, we have lots of tools for measuring what it is in Western psychology and lots of tools in Buddhist psychology and then I think things like neurobiological correlates or, you know,

physiological correlates are interesting as an added piece of information. Yes, in fact, when people's quality of life improves, their stress hormones decrease or their cytokines change, or whatever. But that's not measuring the effect because, you know, if my target, you know, result in an intervention is to change a person's stress hormones, what about if they're still miserable, ok. That's not what I want.

00:57.28

Ok. So, I think that these techniques exist. It's really a question of the hegemony or the sort of the gold-standard sense, the attachment, the theological attachment we have to physical science and its quantitative measures as the only way to prove anything that's worth a damn. And I think we need to break that remnant of our own monotheism. You know, detach it from science and have a more pluralistic, open-minded understanding of how to use our minds.

ANNE KLEIN

00:58.01 Thank you, thank you. And that might also open us to question more deeply what exactly it is that we might want to be measuring. Not just brain activity. We have one more question and I'm going to try to get the most out of it by combining two questions that have been received.

00:58.22 One is directed specifically at Thubten Jinpa. How would you say the different, but complimentary uses of the will in Western tradition and meditation in an Eastern tradition function as methods for dealing with cognitive dissonance? And you're asked to reflect on the general outlook of science and personal psychology in the two civilizations. And while you think about condensing that into a one-minute response, there's a related question that I'll offer to see if the panel would like to respond to.

00:59.02 Could we hear more about Western contemplative approaches, including those which recognize all

theories as occurring in consciousness - again, the consciousness question - so that any epistemology of science would benefit from contemplation. Husserl, Steiner - in question marks. So, we'll start with you.

THUBTEN JINPA

00:59.26

Well, it's a very complicated question. I don't know whether I really understand the question clearly. Perhaps, one way of looking at this is the way in which meditation is applied and practiced in the Eastern, say for example in the Buddhist tradition, and the way in which psychoanalysis and some forms of therapy, which is in some sense - particularly the cognitive form of therapy - seems to be very similar to at least one form of Buddhist meditation known as the discursive meditation, or analytic meditation.

01:00.05

So, in that sense, there is definitely a kind of a- at least a similarity, some similarity and one thing that in at least in my kind of, you know,

rough understanding of the Western psychoanalytic and the therapeutic approaches is that there is much greater sensitivity and appreciation of the uniqueness of the individual, whether it is the family history or psychological, biological history or a lot of these factors are taken into account. So there is a much greater specificity to the Western kind of psychotherapeutic and analytic approaches.

01:00.49

And therefore, in some sense, when it comes to clinical applications, you know, they have a much, in some sense, the approach is much more streamlined and focused. Whereas the Buddhist meditation, in some sense, presupposes, you know, what in psychoanalytic language we would call a normality of your mind state. So, Buddhist meditation is really, you know, best seen as a way of getting beyond that normal state and trying to aspire for a more optimal state of mental health, if one can use the- loosely the kind of the term- the sort of health language.

01:01.29

So, you know, there is no reason why they can be seen as, you know, kind of conflicting each other. In fact, I would see them as complimentary. But, they perform quite different functions. So, I know that a lot of people have tried to adapt the Buddhist meditation in a clinical situation, but if it is an attempt to substitute or replace what is there in the Western tradition, I would personally say that would be a wrong approach.

ANNE KLEIN

01:02.01

Thank you. And in our closing minute would somebody, perhaps Roger, like to address this question?

ROGER JACKSON

01:02.08

Well, I don't know a great deal about Western contemplative traditions, beyond what I've read. Although, one of the first times I ever did zazen was in fact at a Trappist monastery when I was an undergraduate at Wesleyan. But I do think it's important to get the Western contemplative

traditions into this discussion at some point or
in some way.

01:02.30

And in fact, this may be going on in ways that
I'm not aware of, but it's quite clear from-

TAPE END

MIND & REALITY

DAY TWO - TAPE 5 of 7 - PANEL ON MEDITATION, PANEL ON ETHICS

TAPE START

THUBTEN JINPA

00:00.00 -in the Western tradition I would personally say
that would be a wrong approach.

ANNE KLEIN

00:00.05 Thank you. And in our closing minute would
somebody, perhaps Roger, like to address this
question?

ROGER JACKSON

00:00:12. Well, I don't know a great deal about Western
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was in fact at a Trappist monastery when I was an
undergraduate at Wesleyan. But I do think it's
important to get the Western contemplative
traditions into this discussion at some point or
in some way.

00:01.26 So, I don't know whether we're gonna, you know, get Trappist monks and put the electrode nets on their heads, as well, but I think, you know, given the cultural issues that are involved and as I tried to indicate, lurking in the background of a great deal of this, there's probably some promise in trying to get them to do just that.

ANNE KLEIN

00:01.47 Thank you. Joseph?

JOSEPH LOIZZO

00:01.48 Ok. I'll, actually, just make one reference to Thubten-la's point and then this larger work, because I see psychoanalysis and psychotherapy as not just a medical treatment - although that's its origins as an institution - but Freud actually was busy adapting- trying to adapt the Western Romantic tradition, which is really the preservation of our contemplative tradition-

00:02.16 -in a suppressed form, into a medical setting, basically to be able to make a living, I think. And also to make it palatable as a non-religious

sort of secular, materially-based tradition. So that's why I think the biggest impact of psychotherapy-

00:02.33

TAPE BREAK

00:02:59

NEW PANEL START

CHRIS KELLEY

00:03.12

If people could take their seats please. Once again, we're gonna have pink cards for you to write your questions on. So, if you need a blank card, just-

00:03.27

TAPE BREAK

CHRIS KELLEY

00:03.41

So, we're now in our final official panel, panel four- or panel five - Ethics. We will have a short panel after this, which will be sort of summary, reflections with a few of our participants.

00:03.59

And that will only be an hour. So, it won't be the full two hours that most panels are. Meditation appears to be able to provide analytic and therapeutic tools for individuals to