



Every *.NOW.* is always open, lively and unique

These so-called *tilting pictures* are often explained by the term "optical illusion", as if our perception is being fooled. With this view, however, we miss the chance to find out more about, how our perception works. Our perception is a living and creative process, which in this case brings about the form of the vase or the forms of the faces. And we can experience this liveliness and creativity directly, when we look at the picture. The form of the vase and the forms of the two faces alternate quite surprisingly, and we seem to have little influence about those shifts. It is either the vase or the faces. But interestingly something else is happening at the same time. With each form the surrounding space shifts as well. Thus e.g. the form of the vase becomes the space between the two faces after the shifting. Form and space

always appear together. And then there is another interesting aspect to look at. Between the appearance of the vase and the appearance of the faces must be a phase, in which neither the vase nor the two faces are present. From this "*in-between*", the *neither – nor*, the form of the vase or the form of the faces suddenly appear out of nowhere.

In Buddhism our perception is sometimes explained by the image of a film projector. This machine projects single still images onto a screen in rapid succession. After each projected still image, the movie is jerkily moved to the next image. During this movement the projection is interrupted, which is achieved by placing a rotating black diaphragm into the beam of light. During this interruption neither the old nor the new image can be seen. In the process of looking at the tilting image this phase of *in-between* is there too, a phase of neither vase nor faces. How do we experience this? It happens suddenly, we are amazed, it's kind of magical. Like with a magician, when the rabbit suddenly jumps out of the hat, the vase suddenly emerges out of nowhere. In that moment of shifting we simply and directly experience the creativity and vitality of our perceiving process, the sudden appearance of a new *.now*. This experience includes the *in-between* and the new *.now*. as well. Both are essential aspects of living experience.

I indicated the *in-between* by putting dots before and after the *.now*. Each *.now* is followed by the next *.now* immediately. Therefore there is no single *.now* , but always a succession of *.now.now.now*. In the Buddhist teachings it is said, that this sequence happens very quickly, 360 times* in a finger snap. But we do not experience this in the form of single images, but as a continuous event, similar to watching a movie.

The example of the film projector is very helpful but it is only partly applicable. A significant difference to our perception process is, that every single picture is already present on the film, whereas in our perception process every single picture is made up new after each *in-between*. Therefore every *.now* is always totally new and fresh. Sakyong Mipham describes this fresh arising in his book **: "The big bang of our consciousness happens in this very instant!". Sakyong Mipham uses the term "big bang" to point out the special way of how each *.now* arises. This arising is not a process of unfolding, like unfolding a piece of paper, that was already there before. It is also not like a birth, where the baby is born, but was already there before birth. The term "big bang" is used here for a way of arising, where nothing (no manifestation) was there before. From that "not-manifested potential" space and forms arise. This kind of "big bang-like" arising is happening with every new *.now*. We can experience this in that moment, when the image shifts from vase to faces. This kind of appearing is a cyclical process, where manifestations of space and form arise from a not-manifested source and leap back into that source. In the Shambhala tradition this source is called "non-fabricated Basic Goodness". This ground of goodness and the arising and dissolving are the basic aspects of lively processes, which bring about our entire experience. It is a magical sequence of *.now.now.now* , it is awake, open, lively and unique experience. With every shift of the tilting picture, the beginning of a new sequence of *now.now.now*. can be experienced. At this moment we get a brief but profound glimpse into the magical process of our perception.

* Sakyong Mipham: RULING YOUR WORLD - Page 63

** Sakyong Mipham: THE SHAMBHALA PRINCIPLE - Page 144

Further information in my Video "That's logical, isn't it?" <http://lumido.eu/html/videos.html>