

## "MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL"

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First, a brief update on the journey to deliver the thousands of Buddhist teachings on tape that we have archived all these years. Troy Wehner, who volunteered to drive the tapes, made it to the monastery in New York and back home safely. I believe he had an interview with our teacher (of thirty years) Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche and the brief note I got from Troy said "All I can say is, "I get it! Driving back, the one word I found to describe what I perceived is – Radiance."

Thanks Troy!

Now, some notes. This is follow-up to a couple of recent blogs that invoked the analogy of the self as a mirror.

In this analogy the self is a mirror that reflects our own image, an image that we ourselves have formed and preened to our liking. When we look (or think of) our self, we get caught up with our own reflection, making looking through the back of the mirror (and beyond) difficult.

It is hard for us to get past the image of our self that we created. This is similar to the well-known myth of Narcissus, where he gets lost looking at his own reflection.

This getting entranced with our own self-image is a good reason why the self benefits (or, rather, we do) from being toned down a bit, thinned out until it becomes a little more transparent, at which time we begin to see through our own reflection (which has so captivated us) and can have actual glimpses at the nature of the mind itself. Seeing through the back of the mirror has ever been an enigma, almost a koan for lovers of the mystic, a mystery.

As mentioned, we can take steps to solve this mystery koan by making the self just a little more transparent and learning to look past (beyond) the mirror reflection (that good-looking self we love so much), out through the back of the mirror, and start becoming familiar with the actual nature of our mind beyond our "self." There is something beyond the reflective glare of the self.

How to thin out the self is the good question. You can do the best you can (what most folks do) or you can just learn some of the methods of Buddhist (or some other approach) mind training. After all, that is what meditation is all about, becoming aware of the true nature of the mind, nothing more. That's the whole of it.

As for myself, I tried to do it all by myself for many years, but found that I only had partial understanding, a sort of patchwork quilt of my own self's making. I tend not to like "formal" anything, including training; so, finally I held my nose and submitted to getting

some help with training the mind. And, as it turned out, I had the good luck to meet the great Tibetan Buddhist Lama Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who actually instructed me. As it turned out, I fell in love with the Buddhist methods because they actually worked.

Imagine that!

[Photo by Mihai Tamasila.]

