

From the teachings of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

In order to conquer the high ground of the uncreated nature of mind, we must go to the source and recognize the origin of our thoughts. Otherwise, one thought gives rise to a second thought, the second thought to a third, and so on forever. We are constantly assailed by memories of the past and carried away by expectations for the future, and lose all awareness of the present.

It is our mind that leads us astray into the cycle of existences. Blind to the mind's true nature, we hold fast to our thoughts, which are nothing but manifestations of that nature. This freezes awareness into solid concepts, such as "I" and "Other", "desirable" and "detestable", and plenty of others. This is how we create samsara.

But if, instead of letting our thoughts solidify, we recognize their emptiness, then each thought that arises and disappears in the mind renders the realization of emptiness even clearer.

In the heart of winter, the chill freezes lakes and rivers; water becomes so solid that it can bear men, beasts and carts. As Spring approaches, earth and water warm up and thaw. What then remains of the hardness of the ice? Water is soft and fluid, ice hard and sharp, so we cannot say that they are identical; but neither can we say that they are different, because ice is only solidified water and water is only melted ice.

The same applies to our perception of the world around us. To be attached to the reality of phenomena, to be tormented by attraction and repulsion, by pleasure and pain, gain and loss, fame and obscurity, praise and blame, creates a solidity in the mind. What we have to do, therefore, is to melt the ice of concepts into the living water of the freedom within.

All phenomena of samsara and nirvana arise like a rainbow, and like a rainbow they are devoid of any tangible existence. Once you have recognized the true nature of reality, which is empty and at the same time appears as the phenomenal world, your mind will cease to be under the power of delusion. If you know how to leave your thoughts free to dissolve by themselves as they arise, they will cross your mind as a bird crosses the sky – without leaving any trace.

Maintain that state of simplicity. If you encounter happiness, success, prosperity, or other favourable conditions, consider them as dreams and illusions, and do not get attached to any of them. If you are stricken by illness, calumny, deprivation, or other physical and mental trials, do not let yourself get discouraged, but rekindle your compassion and generate the wish that through your suffering all beings' sufferings may be exhausted. Whatever circumstances arise, do not plunge into either elation or misery, but stay free and comfortable, in unshaken serenity.