

# THE PLAY OF THOUGHT

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Since all experiences of suffering and happiness come from our actions, and the positive or negative nature of such actions depends on our motivation, it is therefore essential to master our mind. Yet the subjugation of our mind cannot be accomplished by physical force. We must control our mind so as to be able to abandon an action as soon as we recognise it is harmful. We must realize that the harm we do to others is in fact done to ourselves – even if that does not seem to be the case in the short term.

When a thought arises, it brings another with it, and then another, in an endless sequence. We must break the chain of thoughts by letting them dissolve by themselves. It is this chain which has deceived us from beginningless time, and if we do not break it, it will continue to deceive us in future.

The mind is the base from which thoughts rise up. It is impossible to stop them. We must remain at ease, the body quite relaxed, silent, paying attention not to follow thoughts, whether good or bad. In that state of ease, the mind keeps watch over the mind.

If we remain in that state of tranquillity, making no effort whatsoever to restrain our thoughts of the past or the future, we experience a tranquil clarity which is similar to an ocean without waves. “The mind resting in the mind” is known as nepa: “abiding”.

Leave the mind in that state, like a clear lake. On its motionless surface a change then appears, like a soft breeze rippling the surface of the water. This is called “movement”; and if we allow ourselves to be carried away by it, we shall go astray, as previously explained.

If we do not recognise stillness, it will be impossible for us to recognise movement. In the depths of the mind, something exists which is able to recognise stillness and movement at the same time. That is called Rigpa, or Awareness. During meditation, we must neither reject nor follow movement. Having recognised stillness, we can let the mind return there each time. By remaining at

ease whenever the change takes place, the movement will dissolve by itself, like the wave which forms on the surface of the ocean and which subsides into it again.

Trying to stop a movement when it occurs only makes the thought more powerful. So we must never resist the movement, but return to the previous experience of tranquillity, thanks to Awareness. Just as stirring the limpid water of a lake only disturbs the water; likewise there is no possibility of clarity if the thoughts are constantly agitated.

The meditation called shine, or mental calm, is the base of all meditations. Thanks to this practice, the onslaught of thoughts will calm down. This does not mean that the thoughts will cease to arise, but they will no longer affect us, nor destroy our serenity.

At present, the thoughts which assail us are so present, so persistent that we feel obliged to follow them. The practice of mental calm wears away the aggressivity of thoughts, so that it is progressively easier for us not to depart from serenity. By getting used to that, we shall be so relaxed in meditation that the desire to move will disappear. A great sense of well-being will invade us, and we shall desire never to leave that state. Even when practised in the dark, this practice brings an experience of total clarity, similar to a nascent dawn.

If we practice meditation these three experiences: bliss, clarity and the state of mind without thoughts will not fail to arise, at some point. If that does not occur, it means that either we are not practising correctly, or that we have not trained enough. It could be that we experience a sombre, heavy feeling during this practice, as if our head were covered by a hood. This resembles a state of boredom, in which there are no thoughts. If this state emerges, we should shake ourselves, sit up, imbue our heart with greater intensity, and look up rather than down.

The best method for eliminating obstacles during meditation is that of devotion to the Lama. Thanks to this, our mind becomes “one” with the mind of the Lama. It is not a matter of mixing one thing with another, but rather of pouring water into water. Just as the space enclosed by the hands becomes identical to the external space once the hands are parted, so also there is no difference between our mind and that of the Lama. His is not better, ours is not impure. Such differences do not exist. This is really the secret of meditation.