

Regard All dharmas as Dreams

You can experience that dreamlike quality by relating with sitting meditation practice. When you are reflecting on the breath, suddenly discursive thoughts begin to arise; you begin to see things, to hear things, and to feel things. But all those perceptions are none other than your own mental creation. In the same way, you can see that your hate for your enemy, your love for your friends, and your attitude toward money, food, and wealth are all part of discursive thought.

Regarding things as dreams does not mean that you have become fuzzy or woolly, that everything has an edge of sleepiness to it. You might actually have a good dream, vivid and graphic... For instance, if you have participated in group meditation practice, your memory of your meditation cushion and the person who sat in front of you is very vivid, as is your memory of your food and the sound of the gong and the bed you slept in. But none of those situations is regarded as completely invincible and solid and tough. Everything is shifty.

Things have a dreamlike quality. But at the same time, the production of your mind is quite vivid... what you perceive is a product of your mind, using your sense organs as channels for the sense perception.

From Training the Mind & Cultivating Loving-Kindness by Chogyam Trungpa

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More simply, regard everything as a dream. Life is a dream. Death is also a dream, for that matter; waking is a dream and sleeping is a dream. Another way to put this is: "Every situation is a passing memory".

It is said that with these slogans that are pointing to absolute truth - openness - one should not say "Oh, yes, I know," but that one should just allow a mental gap to open, and wonder, "Could it be? Am I dreaming this?" Pinch yourself. Dreams are just as convincing as waking reality. You could begin to contemplate the fact that things are not as solid or as reliable as they seem.

Have you ever been caught in the heavy-duty scenario of feeling defeated and hurt, and then somehow, for no particular reason, you just drop it? It just goes, and you wonder why you made "Much ado about nothing." What was that all about? It also happens when you fall in love with somebody; you're so completely into thinking about the person twenty-four hours a day. You are haunted and you want him or her so badly. Then a little while later, "I don't know where we went wrong, but the feeling's gone and I just can't get it back." We all know this feeling of how we make things a big deal and then realize that we're making a lot out of nothing.

Gentleness in our practice...is like remembering something. This compassion, this clarity, this openness are like something we've forgotten. Sitting here being gentle with ourselves, we're rediscovering something. It's like a mother reuniting with her child; having been lost to each other for a long, long time, they reunite. The way to reunite with Bodhicitta is to lighten up in your practice and in your whole life.

That's the essential meaning of the absolute Bodhicitta slogans - to connect with the open, spacious quality of your mind, so that you can see that there's no need to shut down and make such a big deal about everything.

From Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron

Regard All phenomena as Dreams

Actual phenomena-that is, the world and its inhabitants-are objects that we grasp at with our senses. These appearances are simply our mind's manifestations of confusion. In the end, they are not actually existent in any way whatsoever, but are like the appearances in a dream. By thinking along these lines, train yourself to have some feeling for looking at the world this way. Should you wonder if mind in itself is real,

From The Great Path of Awakening : An Easily Accessible Introduction for Ordinary People by Jamgon Kongtrul, translated by Ken McLeod

Consider the World as Dreamlike

What does "dream-like" mean here? If we understand it superficially to mean unreal or dreamy in a vague, unfocused sense, we miss the whole point. Other analogies may serve as well: the apprehended world is compared to a mirage, a magical illusion, an echo, or a reflection in a mirror. But a dream is especially apt.

Think back to an actual dream, a vivid one. While we dream, the events in the dream seem really to be happening: we find ourselves on another continent, a conversation takes place, we are punished or rewarded, perhaps even die. Anything can happen. All the appearances are there. But in spite of appearances, no such events are occurring. A woman dreams that she gives birth to a child, the child grows up, then is killed, and the woman grieves. She has experienced the whole process, but wakes up to recognize that there was no birth, no child, no death. In this sense phenomena are dreamlike; there is no substantial reality that accords with appearances. We observe phenomena as being far more concrete and tangible than in fact they are, and this is misleading. It occurs because of the mental process of reification.

Sechibuwa explains that there is no entity apart from the mind that is anything more than a deceptive appearance to the mind. Nothing exists independently of consciousness or mental designation. At first glance this looks like idealism, a denial of external reality: everything is just of the stuff of the mind.

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Even through Physics we could build a strong case that the world of absolute space and time as we experience it with our senses is an illusion.

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Phenomena exist as dependently related events, but they do not appear that way. When I look at the mountain across the valley, do I see that its existence depends on its attributes? Do I perceive that the existence of this mountain depends on the mental designation of it, and depends also on its own causes and conditions? I have to say no. The mountain appears to exist entirely in its own right, resting there, utterly self-sufficient. And that is an illusion. In that sense the mountain does not exist as it appears, and in that sense the mountain is . This is true of all the environment, and also of our bodies.

Excerpted from: The Seven-Point Mind Training(first published as A Passage from Solitude : Training the Mind in a Life Embracing the World), by B. Alan Wallace.

Consider all phenomena as a Dream

Dreams sometimes appear to be totally realistic, especially nightmares in which, for example, a fierce animal attacks us or some frightening apparition pursues us. When dreaming, everything seems to have physical reality and to be fully capable of causing benefit, suffering, or fear. In fact, a nightmare may be so vivid that we suddenly awaken, panting and drenched in perspiration. However, all that we feel and see in a dream is merely illusory and does not have any real or true existence.

In the same way, when we feel strong emotions arise, we are presented with a special opportunity to look within and clearly observe how the appearance of the ego-identity relating to our person is grasped by our ignorance. This ignorance itself is like a dream - an illusion deeply rooted within ourselves. It usually holds on to the idea of a self in relation to everything, but under special, emotionally charged circumstances it grasps at an independent identity more intensely than usual and can thus be observed more clearly. Under calmer conditions we cannot see how it operates because it is very subtle.

The initial step in the meditation on emptiness is to spend many months simply trying to recognize the object of ignorance and see how ignorance functions by grasping on to the self. Only after we have gained this understanding shall we be able to refute this object and not be swayed by the detrimental influence of grasping at it. Seeing the emptiness of the object of ignorance, then, is a way to approach an understanding of the true meaning of emptiness. To meditate without this initial understanding, not recognizing the object that is to be refuted, and to think that emptiness is like the empty space in a room, will never lead to complete realization, since this is not at all the meaning of ultimate truth.

If a thief mingled with a group of people in a house, first we would have to track him down before we could expel him and confidently assert that the house was empty of thieves. Similarly, in order to understand emptiness, which is the direct refutation of the self-grasping ignorance, first we must recognize the object of this ignorance and the manner in which such ignorance holds on to both our own personality and all outer phenomena as being self-existent. Merely to read, listen to, or study teachings on emptiness without regularly meditating on it will never lead to direct and intuitive realization. The first point of this meditation is to see how ignorance grasps at an ego-identity of our own being. Only after familiarizing ourselves with this can we turn our meditation toward examining the concept of how all outer phenomena seem to exist in the same way - that is, as independently existing selves or units. Thus, we should examine how we perceive all things through the five sensory bases (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body) in relation to the five

sensory objects (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and objects of touch). With increased awareness of how our ego and ignorance function, we shall come to see the fallacy of our present mode of perception.

The way in which all external objects appear to exist independently, by themselves, without any relationship to our perception or the mental labels we impute on them, is the view of ignorance. In truth, there is nothing whatsoever that exists in this way. We are convinced everything has true inherent independent self-existence because our mind is obscured by ignorance. Desire, greed, hatred, pride, and all other afflictions of the mind arise from this mistaken view.

Even though the images that appear in dreams seem to be very real, they are actually illusions of our mind. Likewise, viewing each phenomenon as existing by itself, completely independent of its surroundings, causes, conditions, and our mental labeling of it, is the same as regarding dreams as real. This view, although apparently based on reality, is completely mistaken and unf

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If we have enemies, we tend to think of them as permanently hostile.. Maybe this is what we think, but the reality is quite different. At present we might have every confidence in our parents who are so dear to us, but when they go from this life, who is to say that they will not be reborn among our enemies?

If we consider this carefully, we might picture a situation where many people are at work on some elaborate project. At one moment, they are all friends together, feeling close, trusting and doing each other good turns. But then something happens and they become enemies, perhaps hurting or even killing one another. Such things do happen, and changes like this can occur several times in the course of a single lifetime - for no other reason than that all composite things or situations are impermanent.

From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche