



Attachment is Habitual Thinking, by Miao Tsan

We all judge our experiences through the filter of habitual thinking. In other words, we are unconsciously driven by how we think, and how we think determines the feelings and opinions we develop toward people, objects and situations. But such opinions and perceptions only distort reality, and unfortunately, we cannot help but interpret reality through self-centered thinking. For example, when we find ourselves in an unsatisfactory situation, we feel angry. We cannot help it. We characterize the experience as bad. But each thought we have also presents an opportunity for change, since every thought is independent and rootless, being empty in nature.

Each thought arises and dissolves simultaneously. Regardless of what the prior thought might have been, the potential for the next thought is unlimited: It can turn toward an infinite number of possible directions and destinations, because a free mind does not have to hold onto a particular trajectory in its thought-movement, nor do thoughts have to follow one another in a fixed pattern. Only due to the habitual mental tendency does our mind functioning become set on a certain predetermined path. The so-called habitual tendency (or unconscious mode of mind functioning) refers to the fact that the mind becomes preoccupied by certain thoughts. When one of those thoughts appears, it necessarily triggers a set of corresponding reactions. We experience these reactions with strong inertia. Our habitual mental tendency is the direction our thoughts take when we do not consciously overcome this inertia to free them from the path of least resistance.

Uncontrollable reactions – especially anger, sadness or sensual indulgences – often become stubborn, nearly unstoppable attachments.

It is as if we are an old phonograph record that keeps skipping at the same spot. Attachment is habitual thinking or an idea that occupies and disrupts our inner peace. When the mind becomes dependent on certain people and situations and repeats the same thoughts, it is attachment. When certain people, objects and situations continually bring out the same reactions and emotions in us, this is attachment. When we feel the urge to seek approval from a certain individual or take possession of certain objects, this too is attachment.

Various forms of attachment compel us to repeat thoughts and emotional responses that solidify the mental doors through which we perceive and judge the world. A life driven by attachment will be characterized by the repeated manifestation and deterioration of similar issues and problems.

--Ãçâ,¬â€¹MiaoÂ Tsan, from "Just Use This Mind"
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