Transforming The Wandering Mind, by Ven. Master Miao Tsan

Meditation is the reversal of the process that establishes our habitual tendencies. Consequently, the establishment of habitual tendencies is due to the repetition of similar thoughts. If we are able to refrain from following these thoughts, thus stopping the process of creating and building them up, the reversal of the formation process begins to free us from the habit. The mind will then return to its original, pure ground. Because delusion arises from the mind, the original purity of the mind can be recovered by removing the delusion. Apply the ways of the enemy against the enemy. Meditation is a very effective method of dissolving habitual tendencies. Through focused meditation, the practitioner continually disengages from wandering thought. These thoughts, when ignored, will gradually be deprived of their strength.Â

Practitioners are occasionally surprised to notice wandering thoughts, and will ask, "Why do I have so many wandering thoughts during meditation?" The fact is that meditation does not create more wandering thoughts. However, due to the lack of gross phenomena for the mind to grasp, the outward-driven phenomena-seeking tendency, which is still active, will be manifested in the form of chaotic, wandering thoughts.Â [...]

During meditation, the mind cannot grasp external phenomena, so it becomes more aware of previously unknown activities in the deeper level of the I-consciousness. This is the reason that the sustained practice of meditation will cultivate and deepen awareness, and gradually reduce wandering thoughts. For example, when we want to distance ourselves from certain friends or relationships, we simply reduce the occasions and time we spend with them until eventually they disappear from our lives. We should handle wandering thoughts in much the same way. By gradually withdrawing the habit of following up on wandering thoughts, they will eventually disappear due to a lack of attention.Â [...]

To transform thoughts is to focus on the method while remaining undisturbed by wandering thoughts. The energy that is normally given to unconscious thinking is redirected to the conscious application of the method. The foundation of any spiritual practice is the application of a method in order to transform the scattered, wandering thoughts into a focused "single-pointed placement of the mind."

Published at www.awakin.org on Apr 28, 2014