



### Teachings

#### **“The Illusory Nature of Life” — Excerpts From *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

In the Great Perfection (Dzogchen) teachings, the issue is always whether or not we recognize our true nature and understand that the reflections of that nature manifest as experience. The dream is a reflection of our own mind. This is easy to believe after we wake up, just as the Buddhas know – after they are enlightened – that the entities and objects of samsara are illusory. And just as it takes practice to recognize the illusory nature of dream while asleep we must practice to realize the illusory nature of waking life. With some understanding of how dreams arise, it may be easier to understand what is meant by “illusory” and “lacking inherent existence,” and also, importantly, easier to apply this understanding to our experience. The process by which experience arises is the same whether we are dreaming or awake. The world is a dream, the teacher and the teaching are a dream, the result of our practice is a dream; there is no place where the dream breaks until we are liberated into pure rigpa. Until then, we continue to dream ourselves and our lives in both the dream and the physical dimension.

Not knowing how to work with thought means one is controlled by thoughts. Knowing how to work with thought means that thought is brought into awareness and used either for positive purposes and virtuous action or is liberated into its empty essence. This is how thought is utilized in the path. In the same way, we can bring delusion, suffering, and any experience whatsoever into the path. But to do so we must understand that the essence of all that arises is empty. When we do, then every moment of life is free and all experience is spiritual practice: all sound is mantra, all form is pure emptiness, and all suffering is a teaching. This is what is meant by “transforming into the path.”

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In our conventional lives, we make choices and can change things; that is why we study the teachings, why we practice. As we understand more and become more skilled in our lives, we become more flexible. We begin to really understand the things that we are taught: what lucidity is, what is illusory about our experiences, how suffering comes about, what our true nature is. Once we start to see how what we do is a cause of more suffering, we can then choose to do something different. We grow weary of constricted identities and the repetitive inclinations that lead to so much unnecessary suffering. We let go of negative emotional states, train ourselves to overcome distraction, and abide in pure presence.

Excerpts from *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. [Available from Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore and Tibet Shop &gt;](#)

There will be a Fall Retreat at Serenity Ridge on "Sleep of Clear Light: The Practice of Sleep

Yoga" with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, on Oct. 6-10, 2010. [Find out more &gt;](#)