When a thought arises in the mind, do you believe it immediately? If so, you have been cheated by your mind many times. Moreover, if you believe firmly in your thoughts, you are further strengthening the distorted perception of "permanency" and "self". If we rarely question the authenticity of arising thoughts, there is no need to talk about putting them down or letting go of them right way.

If that thought is an unwholesome one, our mind is tormented and full of unhappiness—greed, hatred, arrogance, jealousy, anxiety, fear, etc. may follow closely in succession. In such a case, isn't the unhappiness created by ourselves?

Once we believe in that thought, we commit physical and verbal actions immediately in accordance with the deviation of our hearts (our prejudice). For example, when our interests are harmed, we firmly believe that it's because of "someone's action", resulting in resentment towards that person. Believing that our resentment is real, an ordinary person's habitual reaction is to seek revenge impulsively. We are deceived by our mind and we think revenge can bring catharsis of hatred. Little do we know that believing in such thoughts is the original culprit of our suffering.

Few investigate and question whether a thought is real or not, because the instinctual reaction of taking the thought as "I" or "mine" causes us to lose the ability to question and investigate the reality. Persistently grasping thoughts as "I" or "mine" further strengthens the authenticity and stability of the thoughts.

Without mindfulness and wisdom, we will be deceived by our own thoughts, haunted by them, one after another. In fact, the mind is reacting to the illusions created by itself. At the beginning, however, these thoughts are induced by certain causes and conditions. If we can constantly investigate our own responses, it's not difficult to discover that most of the responses are built on self-centeredness and self-protection. We tend to feed the "self" to make ourselves strong and secure.

Life is like our own self-directed, self-performed drama. We are immersed in our own roles, following the plot, becoming happy when the story is happy, becoming sad when the story is sad. However, we never think that the whole story is in fact a projection of our own thoughts.

Have we ever doubted the actuality of our thoughts?

For every thought that arises in the mind, if we can simply be aware, without reaction based on our biased perception toward like and dislike, the thought would appear as if it were a wisp of cloud drifting across the sky; it does not stay even for a moment. When the thought passes away instantaneously, it loses the ability to control our impulsive reaction. Seeing repeatedly the empty nature of thought, our minds will let go of wrong grasping and identification of thoughts as "I" and "mine".

If we constantly contemplate all thoughts, especially emotional fluctuations, as illusory and self-created, we can be free from them and live at ease. Have we ever doubted the actuality of our thoughts?