

Surface - nothing to find

Extract taken from 'The Happy Twins: Dzogchen and Mahamudra'¹

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This is extracted from James commenting on the Tilopa Mahamudra text.

A block of gold it is very heavy and dense. You know it has a lot of value but you don't really see the value. You could give the block of gold to someone who knows how to make gold leaf and they could prepare it, thin it out and use it. Gold leaf is very shiny and can be used on a statue or the frame of a painting. Gold leaf is the purity of surface; there is no depth to it.

When we look around this room we see people, we see objects, we see surface. There is no depth; the depth of the surface is emptiness. We should thin everything out like beaten gold. When you start to condense objects and people and compress them with some internal essence and ingredient they then become more precious to you. You love them, you believe in them, and they become full of the weight of your projection. So, release the projection; it is only surface.

'Surface' means nothing to grasp, but something to be with. So it is really about how we relate to people. You can never catch a person. You cannot have a person because there is nothing to have, but you can open, and your energy responds and plays and moves. It is pure surface.

This is really how mahamudra is. It is showing again and again the great diversity and richness of possibilities, but always as the luminous surface of the world. Whenever we find a substantial essence and we think we have found a deeper meaning in something then that is a sure sign that we have put it there.

There is nothing to find, but there is everything to receive. So the instruction is always, "Don't look – see!"

1. Two texts were studied on this retreat. The Mirror of Luminous Revelation (from Nuden Dorje Drophan Lingpa) and The Mahamudra Middle Way of the Ganges (from Tilopa)