Morning Instructions: Big Mind

Guy Armstrong · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Guy Armstrong · 42:45

This period will be a guided meditation on the theme of an expansive awareness. It's helpful in this meditation if you can be comfortable, relaxed, and relatively still. The stillness of body will really help to support the stillness of mind. But do it in a relaxed way. Don't struggle with your posture. Be comfortable, relaxed and quiet.

We'll begin by opening our attention to sound, letting the awareness become wide, expansive, taking in all the sounds that are coming and going. Could be sounds from inside the room, sounds of one another, sound in my voice. Could be sounds from outside. And because the hall's fairly quiet this morning, I'm going to ring a bell from time to time just to drop in a little sound. But the sitting will end when the big bell rings three times.

When the awareness is wide in this way, we can get the sense that it's like a big clear sky or like empty space in which all the sounds just appear and disappear. And when there are no sounds, you can let that big empty sky just reveal the silence, the reach of silence, allowing the sounds to arise and pass in this big empty space of awareness—not resisting any sound, not holding on to any sound. Letting them all appear and disappear in the open space of knowing.

This awareness is like the sky. It's clear and doesn't have any limit. To see if it's like that, look directly at the nature of your own awareness.

Now becoming aware of sensations throughout the body. Sensations arise as points of feeling, points of sensing. They rise and change, glimmering like stars in the sky at night. All within this big empty space of awareness. In our direct experience, there's no head, no shoulders and no back. There's no chest, no arms and no legs. There are only these points of feeling, points of sensing arising, glimmering and changing in this open space of knowing.

This awareness doesn't have an inside or an outside. There are no boundaries or separations. There are just sounds and sensations arising, changing, passing, all in this empty space of awareness. To see if it's like that, look directly at the nature of your own awareness. Let the mind be soft and open and still, not moving toward or away from any appearance.

Now becoming aware of thoughts and images. Thoughts and images are just like clouds drifting through the sky. They don't have any roots and they don't have any home. They're just arising, drifting and passing all in this empty space of mind. Look at the nature of this awareness. It's clear and invisible, like the sky, without any form or boundary.

This awareness is, but it doesn't quite exist. It contains all things, but it's not composed of them. This awareness is empty and doesn't have any foundation. It's insubstantial like the sky or space. To see if it's like that, look at the nature of your own awareness.

For the last minutes of the sitting, putting this all together. Sounds appear and disappear. Sensations arise and change, glimmering like stars in the night sky. Thoughts and images drift like clouds, rootless and homeless. All in this big empty space of awareness. To see if it's like that, look at the nature of your own awareness.

So we'll have a short break now and maybe see if you can walk in this big empty space. Maybe walking can happen in the empty space of awareness also.

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