Morning Instruction - Expansive Awareness

Guy Armstrong · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Guy Armstrong · 43:45

This morning there will be a guided meditation through the sitting period on the theme of expansive awareness, along the lines of the talk last night about this shift that can be helpful for some people—placing the attention less on the sense objects of experience and more on the knowing or the consciousness of them.

In this meditation, the term awareness will be used to refer to the field in which the consciousness or knowing is taking place. Please have a comfortable posture and one that you can be relatively still in for the period of the meditation. In this meditation especially, the stillness of the body will really help support the stillness of the mind.

Begin by bringing your attention to sounds. Any sounds from inside the room, sounds of one another, sounds of the building, the systems, the sound of my voice, and any sounds from outside. When no sounds are arising, just become aware of the vastness of the silence.

In opening your attention to sounds now, let the awareness become expansive and wide, able to take in all the sounds that come and go. The awareness is like a big clear sky or like empty space. All the sounds just appear and disappear in this vast empty space of mind. Awareness is like the sky—it's clear and empty. All the sounds simply come and go within this big empty space.

Not holding on to any sound and not resisting any sound. Just allowing all sounds to appear and disappear in this openness of awareness. This awareness is like the sky—it's clear and limitless. To see if it's like that, look directly at the nature of your own awareness.

Now become aware of sensations throughout the body. Sensations are just points of feeling, points of sensing. They arise and change, glimmering like the stars in the sky at night, all in this open space of awareness.

In the direct fact of our experience, there's no head, no shoulders, no back, no chest, no arms, no legs. Just points of sensation arising and changing, all in this open space of awareness. In this awareness, there's no inside and no outside. There are no boundaries, no separations—just sounds and sensations arising, passing, all in this open vastness of awareness.

Let the mind be soft, open, and still, not moving toward or away from any appearance. There's no inside and no outside. Just sounds and sensations arising, changing, passing in this vast open space of awareness. To see if it's like that, look directly at the nature of your own awareness.

Now become aware of thoughts and images. Thoughts and images are just like clouds passing through the sky. They don't have any roots, they don't have any home. They just arise and drift and pass in this vast open sky of awareness.

Look at the nature of this mind. It's clear and invisible like vast space without any form or boundary. It exists, but it doesn't quite exist. It contains all things, but it's not composed of them. This mind is empty without any foundation. It's insubstantial like the sky. To see if it's like that, look directly at the nature of your own mind.

For the last few minutes of the sitting, put it all together. Sounds appear and disappear. Sensations arise as just points of feeling, points of sensing arising and glimmering like stars in the night sky. Thoughts and images drift like clouds, rootless and homeless, all within the vast empty space of awareness. To see if it's like that, look directly at the nature of your own awareness.

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