Big Mind Meditation

Jack Kornfield · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Jack Kornfield · 38:19

This morning's meditation will be a guided practice, shifting from the focus on breath and body to begin with another doorway of mindfulness: attention to sound.

Let yourself sit, continue to sit as you are, settled and still. And for this time, bring your attention to the doorway of the ear and begin to notice the words as they arise and as they vanish. Notice as well the soft sounds in the room. Notice the sound of the bells that arise. And relax into hearing, allowing distant sounds to come and go.

Like the breath which arises out of emptiness, appears, and then vanishes, so too the sounds appear, experienced for a moment, and then pass away.

As you listen, relax and open. Let yourself sense or feel in any way you can that your mind is not limited to the size of your head. Feel, imagine, sense that your mind is vast like the sky, as big as this room and even bigger, open and spacious. And the sounds that you hear—these words appearing and disappearing, the distant sounds, the soft sounds in the room—all arise and pass like clouds or bubbles in the vast sky of mind. No inside, no outside. Just openness. Awareness itself, vast like the sky.

In the distance, sounds appear and move through one dimension of the sky. Bells arise. Relax into vastness, openness without any borders. Rest in the sky-like nature of your own mind. No inside or outside. Words appear and disappear. Sounds in the room arise and pass. Like clouds. Like bubbles. Leaving no trace.

To know the truth, look directly into the nature of mind itself. In its true state, mind is transparent, vast as the sky, timeless, containing all things, yet not limited by them. Wakefulness itself, pure, clear. Rest in the vast space and let each of the sounds appear like a cloud and dissolve, leaving the space open and empty. Silent.

As you rest in the vastness, let yourself also notice the play of thoughts. Just as sounds come and go, word thoughts and picture thoughts appear in the vast space of mind. A story is told, an image arises, and like clouds, they appear for a time and then disappear, leaving no trace. Sounds arise and vanish in the vastness. Thoughts and images appear like bubbles, like clouds, and then disappear. Rest in the vastness of awareness itself. Relax into it. Trust it. It is your home.

In its true state, say the texts, mind is naked, transparent, immaculate, vast as the sky, allowing for all things, yet not tainted by them. Rest in vast awareness, mind like space. Relax into it.

Notice these words and sounds. They appear and dissolve. Notice the thoughts like clouds arising for a time and vanishing, leaving no trace. You are the vastness. You are the one who knows, the timeless awareness, open like the sky. Rest in this true nature. Relax into it.

Notice too the sensations of the body. If you feel carefully, there is no solid body. There are areas of pressure and hardness, of warmth and cool, of tingling and vibration. All float and change slowly in the vast space of mind. No solid body—a field of changing sensations with space in and around each of them. Tingling, pressure, cool, warm. The field of body sensations floats and slowly changes in the vast space of mind.

Sounds appear and disappear. Thoughts and images arise like clouds, like bubbles in the vastness. They display themselves and vanish, leaving no trace. Sensations float and slowly change. The breath moves like a breeze. No inside or outside—just the soft presence of breath, like a pulsing movement in the vastness. Relax into stillness and openness. You are the vastness. You are the one who knows.

Sounds come and go. Words and images appear and disappear like clouds, like bubbles—empty, nothing solid. Sensations float and slowly change. The breath moves like a breeze, its soft sensations arising in the vastness. The mind is the sky itself—vast and transparent, timeless, knowing all things that arise yet not limited by them.

Emotions can arise like weather: sorrow or laughter, joy, confusion, sadness. They arise and color the flavor of space for a time. And they too vanish without leaving a trace. Relax. Rest in vastness. Trust it. Open into it. It is your home.

As you rest in the vastness that is your own true nature, sounds and sensations appear and float and vanish. Thoughts and emotions arise like clouds or weather, like bubbles. Trust the vastness. Let go into it. Rest in it. Be the one who knows the knowing.

And finally, let this vastness also be filled with a tender-hearted compassion for all those beings who forget who they really are and get caught up in fear and confusion, in hatred and grasping. So many beings who forget their own true nature. Let the tenderness fill the vastness—awareness and love for all that lives, compassion for the sorrows. You are loving awareness: timeless, open, wakeful. Rest in vastness and love. Trust it. Open into it. Loving awareness, wakefulness and love without boundaries, vast.

As you let your eyes open, sense the vastness with sights appearing within it. And let yourself also extend the field of love to all those around you.

You can even look around a little bit at the beings appearing in this vastness and field of love.

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