Mindfulness of Breathing Online Course
Audio meditation transcription

Guided Meditation 4 – Contemplation of the Mind

We are aware of the body in the sitting posture, and we let the mind rest on the body, just as the body rests on the cushion.

And without losing this embodied presence of the mind, we will now proceed through preliminaries and first three tetrads of mindfulness of breathing.

And just as we found the secluded spot to meditate, we establish mental seclusion by letting go of all our worries and concerns. No need for them now.

And just as we found a stable foundation bodily-wise by sitting down, we establish a stable foundation in the mental realm by formulating our motivation.

And having formulated our motivation, we pass our attention through the spine, from bottom to top, relaxing, aligning.

And we point the mind straight at the present moment, checking in on the condition of the mind as it is right now. And establishing mindfulness. Allowing mindfulness to be predominant, to the fore, in front. And taking a moment just to be with that condition of the mind when mindfulness is predominant. Just savouring, flavouring the texture of the mind with mindfulness established.

And with the continuity of mindfulness established, we turn to the process of breathing, noting inhalations and exhalations. Then, if we wish, taking a deep breath. And closely scrutinizing to discern the length of the breath as it gradually, from having become long through intentional breathing, becomes shorter and softer.

And after having worked for a little while with this modality of a more focused attention, we proceed to making whole-body as our main object. Breath and body exchange position in the field of our attention. Whole-body in the sitting posture comes to the forefront; awareness of inhalation and exhalation moves to the background, held in peripheral awareness. And through
this larger object of attention, our form of practice also becomes less focused, more the modality of open monitoring.

And calming bodily activity. Allowing a deep sense of relaxation to occur throughout the whole body.

And out of this deep bodily calmness and relaxation, allowing joy to arise. Experiencing joy, all the while aware of inhalation and exhalation, held in peripheral awareness. The joy of the present moment as a culmination point of the practice we have been undertaking up to now. And the joy of walking in the footsteps of the Buddha.

And from joy to happiness. The happiness of contentment that is always possible. No matter how our practice may unfold, the happiness of contentment is always possible. Experiencing happiness, breathing in, breathing out.

And now shifting the pleasant feeling of being in the present moment also to peripheral awareness, to join the inhalations and exhalations - opening up the vista of our mental awareness to any activity in the mind. Experiencing mental activity without becoming active. Just watching. Just watching the game of the mind: thoughts, perceptions, as they come and go.

And as we keep watching mental activity without becoming active, without taking part, naturally mental activity becomes more quiet. Calming of mental activity. Letting any remainder of tension, agitation in the mind, just drop away, sink away into the ground, as it were. Calming mental activity. Allowing a deep relaxation to occur in the mind. Allowing the mind to naturally become more and more quiet, calm, relaxed, unruffled, unagitated.

And with the calming of mental activity it becomes possible to experience the mind as such. Just bare knowing quality. Like diving deep into the ocean, far beyond the ripples and waves on the surface of the water - diving deep into the mind. Experiencing the mind as such, in its bare, even naked, knowing quality. Very quiet. No activity discernible. Mental activity has calmed down, to reveal mind as such. All the while we are aware of breathing in breathing out, held in peripheral awareness. At times there can be a sense of awe on encountering the mind in this condition. So still.
And out of this encounter with the mind as such, naturally gladness arises. Experiencing gladness, the gladness of the quiet mind, the gladness that touches us much more deeply within compared to the joy and happiness experienced earlier. A profoundly quiet and still gladness. The gladness of the still mind. All the while we are aware of breathing in and breathing out.

And the still mind, the glad mind, naturally becomes collected, unified, concentrated. Concentrating the mind. A concentrating without a trace of effort or strain. Just a natural collecting, coming together, as if the whole of our experience is held in a gentle and loving embrace, so that all of its usual fragmentation vanishes. Unified, collected, composed. *Samādhi.*

And if the mind at this point wishes to go deep, deeper into *samādhi*, we let it go deeper, by liberating it from any sense of control or interfering on our side. Liberating it from any disturbance. Allowing the mind to go deep.

And when the mind has gone as deep as it wished, and comes up again, or even if it did not feel like wanting to go deeper into *samādhi*, anyway liberating the mind from the conceit ‘I am’, from the clinging as ‘mine’, from all sense of ownership and appropriation. Dropping the burden of the ego. Liberating the mind. Breathing without a breather.

Liberating the mind in emptiness is true liberation indeed.

And this dropping of the burden of ego, of that tendency to selfing, this is also what we carry with us from sitting to walking, activities. See if we can walk without a walker, do whatever we do without that sense, that conceit ‘I am’ and that clinging ‘mine’. Just dropping it. So liberating, so freeing. That heavy burden of ego, just dropping it off. No need to keep carrying that around.

Whether in deep meditation, or in daily activities, keep dropping that unnecessary burden.

And that perception of emptiness can also be a tool when any distraction comes up. Sooner or later mind is bound to wander. By now we know: no frustration, no negativity. Smilingly: “oh, look, mind has wandered.” And we can discern the empty nature of the distraction, the memory, the fantasy, the daydream. In one way or another, it will be related to some conceit ‘I am’, to some appropriating as ‘mine’. And if we can drop that, the whole thing collapses to the ground, loses its strength, loses its foundation.
So liberating is the perception of emptiness.

And after having dwelled for as long as it seemed appropriate in this step of liberating the mind, we decide what seems appropriate now: proceed through the entire progression, or pick up another tetrad, or even the present one, starting off from that encounter with the mind as such, by turning to the knowing quality. From the knowing, to that deep sense of gladness. And out of that gladness, to allow collectedness of the mind, unification of the mind to occur.

And based on that unification, again liberating the mind. Perhaps again liberating it by going deeper into concentration, but definitely, one way or the other, liberating it from the conceit ‘I am’, liberating it from the clinging as ‘mine’, liberating in emptiness.

Keep practicing like this.