

## Handout #6

# Meditation on the Mind Like the Ocean

### **Calming the mind:**

Find a quiet place and ensure that you will not be disturbed. Sit on a comfortable seat or cushion with your back straight. Focus your attention on your breathing. Breathe naturally. Use one of the breathing meditations you have learned (counting the breaths, nine-round breathing) to settle the mind and bring it to a state of deeper focus and concentration, ready to engage in meditation.

### **Motivation:**

Create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to become a wiser and kinder person, able to be of benefit to all beings.

### **The main body of the meditation:**

Start by practicing Bare Attention. When you gain a deeper level of concentration and focus, loosen your concentration slightly; emphasize the element of mindfulness in your meditation a little more strongly. Allow your mind to be attentive and observant of whatever comes to notice – regardless of what it is. Don't identify with the mental elements arising. Simply observe them, like a tourist. Allow them to arise as you observe them, and pass away, without getting involved. Just be aware.

Just allow your mindful attention to expand, to encompass your entire sphere of experience, of consciousness. Forget that there is “an observer” and “something being observed.” Simply imagine your experience, your consciousness as being just like the sky. Completely clear, vast, spacious, without end. Concentrate on this experience. Identify with this experience. Calm clear spacious awareness.

The mind can be likened to an ocean, and the thoughts and other mental events to fish swimming through that clear spacious medium.

We are ordinarily unaware of the nature of the mind and instead observe only the fish-like thoughts. It is as though we are observing an aquarium through a large glass wall and at first only notice the fish. If someone were to tell us to observe the clear water in which the fish were swimming, we might at first have difficulty noticing it because of its transparency. But by simply realizing that the fish could not be swimming unless there was some substance to swim in, we can take our attention away from observing the fish and focus instead on the clear water.

In a similar fashion, we let go of paying attention to our fish-like thoughts; instead, we step back and recognize the clear light nature of our mind within which all our thoughts and other mental events occur. We identify with our minds like an ocean, with that clear spaciousness.

In our ordinary state of mind, as we go about our business every day, having conversations, planning, thinking, worrying, making lists, and so on, it is as if we are living on the surface of that ocean. All those thoughts and feelings and ideas seem to fill our minds, making lots of waves, lots of turbulence and agitation. But as we identify more and more with our ocean-like mind and let go of the wave-like emotions and fish-like thoughts, it is as if we start to descend to the quiet depths of that ocean-like mind. We reach a state of mind that is more peaceful, still, free of agitation and disturbance.

In the case of the aquarium, we will continue to see the fish swimming in front of us as we focus on the water. However, when we focus our attention on the clear light nature of the mind, our thoughts will begin to diminish in intensity and frequency, thereby quieting the mind and enhancing our ability to concentrate.

Whenever we identify with and are carried away uncontrollably by a thought, a feeling, we lose any awareness of the spacious clarity of our mind, of the vast clear and knowing nature of the mind within which each thought or feeling occurs. Our perspective becomes small and constricted. It is as if all there is are the waves; we've lost the ocean. We lose that open and quiet spaciousness. When we can simply observe these thoughts and feelings arising without getting involved, when we can identify with the ocean instead of the fish and the waves, then we can reside in that spacious purity of our basic clarity of mind. Calm, clear, peaceful, open spaciousness. Without agitation, without delusions, without anxiety and distress. Without dissatisfaction and attachments and aversions.

### **Dedication**

Dedicate all the positive energy you have created through the practice of mindful meditation to becoming a better and better person who is more at peace in life and who can bring more peace and well-being to others in every moment of every day.

*Colophon:*

Composed by Ven. Connie Miller.