

## Handout #5

# Meditation on the Mind Like the Sky

### About this meditation:

In our ordinary perceptions, our thoughts and feelings seem to be all there is to our mind – one thought, feeling, image, or idea after another. All these mental contents seem to fill up our minds completely, as if our minds are small, finite containers. But this is an illusion, a misperception on our parts. Our minds are vast and infinite, clear and spacious. Our minds have no boundaries, no limits. When we experience the vast clear spaciousness of our mind, the clarity of our awareness, we begin to see how our thoughts and feelings are like clouds in the sky, simply passing through this vast spacious awareness, not filling it up. Suddenly, we have some space from the endless attachments, aversions, and dissatisfactions of life.



### 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. Clarity, spaciousness, awareness.

Our minds are completely clear just as the sky is completely clear. The light of the sun shines down on us through the clear sky. Our awareness and wisdom shines through the clarity of our minds. Sometimes clouds fill the sky and obscure the sunshine, but the sky doesn't get upset, the sky doesn't identify with the clouds. The sky doesn't judge. The clouds just pass through the spaciousness of the sky. They come ... and they go. The clarity and spaciousness of the sky isn't compromised by the clouds. They just arise and pass.

Our minds are clear and aware, spacious like the sky. When a thought or an emotion, an idea or an image or a sensation arises in your mind, just observe it. Let it arise and let it pass. Each thought, each mental event ... just like a cloud. Your mind ... the sky. Concentrate on that experience of space and bliss.

Whenever we identify with and are carried away uncontrollably by a thought or 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 clouds; we've lost the sky. We lose that wonderful open spaciousness. When we can simply observe these thoughts and feelings arising without getting involved, when we can identify with the sky instead of with the clouds, 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.

Do this for ten minutes and then take a short break. Then do one more ten-minute spell and end your meditation session.

### **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.