

Anicca of Mind and Body

Uncontrived Online Weekend Retreat

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So we know that the body changes. Actually this kind of wisdom can be found even by non-practitioners. We know we may know people who are elderly and very wise, never meditated day in their life, but they really understand the changing nature of the material world at least. But the mind, this is actually the area where we really cling the most deeply, even though it's much more changeable than the body. I noted that in a Suta, he said, "If you're going to cling to something, it would take anything as your central self. Probably it should be the body, because that doesn't change quite as much as the mind." But the mind, my goodness. So there are many things going on in the mind, many, many mental phenomena. If you call them mind states, Dhammas, sometimes they're just called Dhammas phenomena. And thoughts are perhaps the most prominent one, but also emotions have a mental component as well as something in the body usually. And then there are also things like intentions and views, you know, shades of other things that go on in the mind. An important part of insight practice is to observe how the mind works, how all of those things flow among each other. Munindraji, a lovely Indian teacher of the 20th century, who was one of Joseph Goldstein's teachers and a number of other insight teachers said quite straightforwardly, "If you want to know how your mind works, sit down and observe it." And that's kind of what we do in meditation. So in this sitting, we'll be looking at mind states, but in a particular way, mostly as energetic phenomena. So what we did with the body in terms of the kind of flows and changes and different ways of experiencing it, and without conceptualizing that into knee and arm and intestine and other things, we can do the same thing in the mind. Actually, we can experience the comings and goings of thoughts and feelings and intentions and ideas as kind of like waves, energy pulses, energy surges, things like that. And it's the way to do this is to just turn away from the content of the thoughts, which is what we're usually engrossed with. What the thought is about the topic of the thought tomorrow's lunch or that argument I need to have with somebody or at memory about my childhood. Instead of thinking about that topic, can we see the process of what's going on? The mind is producing something in the present moment, and it's a, you know, some kind of an arising phenomenon. In whatever degree of steadiness we have in the mind is what supports that. It's a foundation for being able to see clearly how the mind is working. Without

a foundation in steadiness, we will be sucked into the content which we're easily. So let's sit together, bringing the body into the meditation posture and closing the eyes, that's okay for you and just feeling into the body sitting. It's nice even when we're looking more at the mind to start with the body, to stay with the body as a foundation. So remembering that sense of uprightness and also relaxation, softening. And then moving into the breathing and body. And then in whatever degree of somebody is available, steadiness, the calmness, the surrender. And then we'll start with the body. And then we'll start with the body. There's any degree of simple pleasure in the mind from just resting with the body. It's fine to bring that into awareness. Maybe there's some kind of contentment. It's just being here, nothing to do, where to go.