

Turning the Light Around, Dropping Off Body and Mind

Meditative Inquiry Instructions by Kokyo Henkel

Questions to ask with total sincerity, to answer in present direct experience, without referring to preconceived ideas or intellectual knowledge; then just sit with confidence in this verification (the simple and obvious answers that naturally occur to the questioner are in parentheses)

Calming the Mind Without a Meditation Object (Shamatha)

1. Is awareness present? / Is there knowing? / Am I experiencing? (Yes, of course, always)
2. How do I know this? / What is it that knows awareness? (Only awareness knows awareness)
Now awareness can simply be aware of itself, rest in itself. If attention strays onto objects, its usual mode, let it return to awareness. Objects may still appear in background, but awareness is the foreground. This is being awareness, and knowing it is one's true nature. Do not make awareness into an object by subtly attributing graspable characteristics to it. It is ungraspable.

Inquiry Leading to Insight (Vipashyana)

3. Has there ever been an experience of awareness arising or beginning, ceasing or ending, or changing? (No, this is impossible. Awareness is timeless, unborn, deathless, and cannot be lost)
4. Does this awareness have any location, edges, or center? (No, it is boundless like space)
5. If awareness/experiencing has no boundaries or edges, can it touch or meet any object/experience – such as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, thoughts, emotions, sense of individual self? How far away from awareness are these objects? (If a meeting place could be found, that would be a boundary of awareness; objects have no distance from awareness)
6. If awareness is boundless and does not meet objects, are objects outside/apart from it? (No)
7. Is it possible to know anything other than awareness? (No, all “things” are within it, or *are it*)
This is realization of the nonduality of awareness and objects of experience. All experiences of body, mind, personal self, and the “world” of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, etc. are not actually objects, but manifestations/expressions/display of awareness, within awareness, pervaded by it, made of it. There are no experiences in addition to the knowing/awareness of them. Dualistic consciousness (the illusory appearance of someone aware of something) is also a manifestation of nondual awareness. Awareness is empty of anything other than itself, awareness is empty of subject-object duality. It is impossible to know anything apart from all-inclusive awareness. All experiences are like reflections on the mirror of awareness, like clouds in the sky made of sky.
8. Can any experiences benefit or harm awareness? Can awareness lack anything? (No, nothing touches it, changes it, or is apart from it. It is always content and fulfilled, lacking nothing)
Being awareness is freedom from hope and fear, it is fearlessness of death and all experiences.
9. If nothing can harm awareness, is it possible for awareness to suffer in any way? (No)
This is realization of the cessation of discontent. Body and thoughts may continue to suffer, but awareness never can. Taking refuge in awareness, being awareness, is liberation and peace.
10. Is there any boundary or edge between what seems to be “my” awareness and the awareness of “others,” all sentient beings? (No, this has already been confirmed by questions 4,5,6,7)
This is realization of nonseparation of self and other, the source of true love and compassion.