

## Embodied Mindfulness in QigongDharma Retreat

Integrating Satipaṭṭhāna and Ānāpānasati  
with the Cultivation of Embodied Practice

### Embodied Awareness & Wú Wéi

We begin our retreat by grounding ourselves in body, breath, mind, and awareness of experience (dharma). We do this with the gentle spirit of Wú Wéi—effortless presence and natural ease.

In this **QigongDharma** retreat, we draw on two classic Buddhist teachings – the **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (Four Applications of Mindfulness) and the **Ānāpānasati Sutta** (Mindfulness of Breathing) – and blend them with gentle Qigong practice. The emphasis is on **embodied awareness**: centering and grounding ourselves in the present moment through **body, breath, mind**, and the natural flow of experience (dharma). We invite a spirit of Wú Wéi, the Daoist principle of effortless action, which encourages a gentle, **non-striving** attitude.

“Force is not needed in our practice of QigongDharma.

Wú Wéi is not mere non-doing; it represents the freedom of effortless being,  
which is indistinguishable from non-doing.

In harmony with the Dao, nothing is done and nothing is left undone.”

Roshi Teja Fudo

In practice, this means not pushing or forcing anything to happen; instead, we **allow** experiences to unfold naturally, trusting that by simply being present, everything will take its course.

This is the QigongDharma holistic approach to stillness and movement, to stillness in motion. Remember that in our Qigong and Neigong practice, we are cultivating well-being, not just observing and noting the dimensions of sensations, breathing, feelings, thoughts, and relationships. We learn to skillfully integrate aspects of mindfulness and Wú Wéi into our practice, allowing each element to enhance and complement the others.

## Mindfulness of the Body

The physical body serves as our most tangible anchor to the present. The teachings encourage awareness of the body in both movement and stillness through activities and postures – whether sitting, walking, standing, or, of course, practicing our Qigong.

In this retreat, we honor the body through stillness and movement. The forms and flows of Qigong help us cultivate “presence awareness” in the body by aligning physically and energetically with a sense of well-being.

We cultivate a centered, grounded presence, feeling the earth beneath us, the sky surrounding us, and the aliveness within. The body becomes a home for mindfulness – a refuge of sensory awareness where we can settle like a sturdy tree, yet fluid like a river, flowing and relaxed.

In practicing mindfulness of the body, remember the attitude of **Wú Wéi**: there is no need to strain or force the body into any supposed ‘ideal state.’ Instead, we listen to the body’s feedback and allow it to find its natural alignment. We move and hold postures **gently**, respecting our limits and letting ease guide us. This non-striving approach allows the body to *open up*, enabling the energy (qi) to flow without obstruction, bringing a sense of balance and wholeness.

### Mindfulness of the Body (Grounding & Centering)

- Feel the ground beneath you—standing, sitting, or walking.
- Let the body find ease: upright yet relaxed posture.
- Scan the body slowly. Invite softening and curiosity.
- Move mindfully: let awareness guide each Qigong gesture.
- Be present with sensation—feel, don't force.
- Let the body be a refuge of presence.

## The Practices of Mindfulness of the Body

**At home in the Body:** Begin by feeling the support of the earth beneath you. When standing, feel your feet pressing into the ground – with energetic roots gently growing downward. When sitting, feel the weight of your body on the cushion or chair. **Allow the earth to fully support you** while allowing a gentle sense of lift upward. This balance of earth and sky instills a sense of stability, grounding, and centered alignment.

**The Posture of Ease:** Allow your spine to naturally lengthen upward, including the crown of your head suspended from above. Relax your shoulders and soften any rigidity in the knees and elbows. Find an upright posture that is **alert yet at ease** – balanced like a mountain but not stiff. *Allow the body to find its own alignment without force.* Gently move as necessary to adjust your position until you feel centered.

**Body Scanning & Presence:** Moving your attention through the body, feel the sensations in your **feet**, your **legs**, your **pelvis**, your **spine**, your **shoulders**, and your **face**. Notice areas of warmth or coolness, tightness or softness. Invite everything to soften by one° degree. Find your own balance between laxity and rigidity. For example, if you detect tension in your jaw, **allow it to relax** on an exhale. Feel the subtle movements in the body – natural abdominal breathing with the in-breath, the pulse in your hands, the slight sway as you balance. That is all you need to do in this practice.

**Awareness in Motion:** When practicing Qigong, begin by settling, aligning, and moving slowly with kind intention. **Experience each movement from the inside out.** For example, when you raise your arms, feel the opening and extension of your shoulder, elbow, and wrist joints. As you shift your weight, feel the interactions of bones and muscles and how they change the pressure in your foot. Pay attention to ordinary sensations. Relax your attention into those sensations rather than in thoughts. **Each gesture is an expression of mindfulness** – unhurried, smooth, and present.

**Sensory Grounding:** Use your senses to stay present. Feel the air on your skin and the contact of your clothing. You might notice the floor's texture under your feet or the subtle sound of your breath. Be present to the vividness of ordinary sensations.

“Being present with sensations helps us integrate direct experience with the present moment.” Roshi Teja Fudo

**Non-Striving Attitude:** Throughout your Qigong practice, remember that there is **no right or wrong way** for the body to feel. This is an essential application of mindfulness! You are not trying to attain a special experience – you are simply **connecting with whatever is present** in the body. Approach the body with curiosity and kindness, as you would when attending to a dear friend. If discomfort is present, acknowledge it and respond by adjusting posture or, if needed, by just placing a warm hand on that spot. If pleasant sensations are present, enjoy them fully *without grasping*. **Let the body be** as it is, moment to moment, and notice the sense of grounding and centeredness that grows from this acceptance. In our Qigong practice, there may be precision in movement – which develops over time, but there is no rigidity in the mind or body or the expression of form.

## Mindfulness of Breathing

The breath is the *heart* of mindfulness practice – a natural bridge between body and mind. The Ānāpānasati Sutta is entirely devoted to breathing, guiding practitioners to **immerse awareness in the breath**.

Thich Nhat Hanh wisely said, "Breath is the bridge which connects life to consciousness, which unites your body to your thoughts."

Whenever our thoughts become scattered, we can gently return to the living bridge of our breath to ground ourselves. In both Qigong and seated meditation, the breath anchors us to the present and **centers our awareness**. It also carries vital energy (qi); in Qigong, breath and movement are interconnected in cultivating vitality, while in meditation, a calm breath calms the mind.

Let's take a moment to distinguish our cultivation of the breath and the actual practice of the Ānāpānasati – Mindfulness of breathing. In cultivation, we focus on both allowing and enhancing the qualities of the breath.

In **QigongDharma**, we practice breath cultivation for:

- improving the essential biological/anatomical functions and benefits of breathing
- calming and settling the mind and the body
- Balancing the Yin~Yang energies of the body
- Harmonizing the Fire/Water (Li / Kan) energies of the body
- Positively Impacting the quality of Qigong practice
- bringing into natural attunement the heart/mind and emotional body
- improving meditation practice and then letting go into non-regulation of the breath called Ānāpānasati – mindfulness of breathing

These are the **Qualities of the Breath** that we cultivate:

- Natural
- Quiet
- Soft
- Fine
- Relatively deep – not forced
- Relatively equal – in/out breath
- Relatively slow; smooth
- Peaceful mind; peaceful breath
- The whole body breathes
- Settling Qi in the field of the Hara

**Cultivating the Breath** is distinct from the **Mindfulness of Breath** as described in Ānāpānasati. A common ground between these practices is our emphasis on a gentle, natural breath. In the spirit of Wú Wéi, we do not control or force our breathing; instead, we allow the breath to breathe itself. Just as our lungs know how to breathe without our conscious effort, we trust the body's wisdom. We lightly rest our attention on each inhale and exhale, like a leaf floating on a calm pond, rising and falling with the water. As our mindfulness settles on the breath, it often becomes slower and more subtle by itself. Tension unwinds, and the body and mind begin to harmonize with the breath rhythm.

Over time, mindful breathing nurtures both tranquility and insight. Physically, it strengthens and tones the nervous system; mentally, it sharpens focus and brings clarity. Emotionally, it can soothe anxiety and agitation. **Each breath represents a new beginning** and an opportunity to return to **center**. By staying with the breath, we begin to notice the impermanent nature of experience – each breath arises and passes away, teaching us to let go and begin anew in each moment.

These are key points in the practice of **Mindfulness of Breathing**.

- Observe the breath gently—no need to change it.
- Let the breath breathe itself (Jack Kornfield).
- Feel breath through the whole body—soft, smooth, natural.

These are key points in the practice of **Breath Cultivation**

- Be present to the qualities of the breath: Natural, Soft, Quiet, Fine
- Consciously calm and settle the body and mind with the breath.
- Feel the improvement of the biological/anatomical functions of breathing
- Breathe in presence, breathe out release.

## The Practices of Cultivation and Mindfulness of Breathing

**Finding the Breath:** Bring your attention to the *sensations of breathing*. Feel the movement of air in and out of your lungs and the expansion and contraction of the body while breathing. Find where the breath is most noticeable or comforting for you. Once you've found it, **settle your kind attention there**.

**Natural and Unforced:** As you begin observing the breath, make no attempt to change it. Simply let your body breathe **in its own natural rhythm**.

*"Let the breath breathe itself, in any rhythm – long or short, soft or deep"*  
as meditation master Jack Kornfield advises

In Mindfulness of Breathing practice – Ānāpānasati, there is nothing you have to **do** – just ride the waves of the breath with a relaxed awareness. If your breath is rapid or tight, that's okay; keep watching tenderly, and it may gently slow down. If it's shallow or deep, just let it be as it is. Everything changes; embrace the flow of change.



**Whole-Body Breathing:** In QigongDharma, this practice is experiencing the reality that your whole body and entire being are breathing. Feel the waves of breath flow from the macro to the micro dimensions of your being. Everything breathes: every atom and molecule, every cell, and every organ. Your physical breath is like an **ocean tide** that swells and recedes, washing through your body. Your body and breath are one cohesive experience.

**Anchoring and Centering:** Let your breath be an anchor, centering both your body and mind. When your attention drifts, gently bring it back to your next breath. Each time you return, view it as an act of starting fresh. There's no need to judge yourself for wandering; the mind naturally drifts. When this occurs, simply acknowledge "thinking" or "wandering" and patiently redirect your focus to your breath.

**Calming and Soothing:** Allow your breath to be soothing and feel its calming and settling qualities. String together one breath after another. Let your breathing become a lullaby for your nervous system – a steady, gentle rhythm that signals, "It's okay to relax now." Feel free to sigh if you need to release tension or take a deeper breath occasionally. In time, you will discover a naturally calm and steady cadence.

**Enjoying the Breath:** When we truly pay attention, there's a subtle joy in simply breathing. You may start to feel a gentle pleasure or comfort in your breath, perhaps a tingling or warmth spreading with each inhale. Allow yourself to enjoy every breath. As you breathe in, you nourish every cell, and as you breathe out, you release what is unnecessary. Recognize that with each breath, you are alive and embracing the world. This mindful awareness can inspire a gentle smile on your face.

**Breath in Movement:** During Qigong practice, naturally synchronize your breath with movement. Each unique Qigong routine may have its own rhythm for in-breath and out-breath. Generally, let your breath set the tempo of the movement – not too fast, not too slow. If at any moment the coordination feels forced, pause and return to natural breathing. Simply allow the breath and motion to harmonize effortlessly. In this way, breathing serves as the link between inner stillness and outer motion.



## Mindfulness of the Mind

Mindfulness of mind (in Pali, *citta*) involves becoming aware of our inner mental weather – the moods, thoughts, and emotions that flow through our awareness. From the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, we are encouraged to notice our state of mind: for instance, is it contracted or expanded? Is there anger present or not? Is the mind bright or dull? Here, we approach the mind with the same gentle curiosity we apply to the body and breath. We learn to observe the mind without judgment – to see thoughts simply as thoughts, emotions as emotions, and to recognize that we are not defined by them. Just as the sky can contain clouds but is not the clouds, our mind can hold sadness, joy, irritation, or peace, yet our deeper awareness remains spacious and free.

In a QigongDharma context, we often speak of heart–mind rather than mind alone, recognizing that thoughts and emotions are intimately connected. Embodied practices can help calm the mind; for instance, grounding through the body and breathing deeply can settle the mind. Likewise, cultivating a kind attitude can soothe difficult emotions. Embodied awareness thus includes the mind: we notice how mental states might manifest in the body (a worried mind may produce contracted muscles, while an uplifted mind might straighten the posture). We treat these observations not as problems to fix, but as information to be gently aware of.

Once again, from QigongDharma, the practice of Wú Wéi is central to mindfulness of the mind. There is no need to force the mind to be quiet, nor do we chase particular feelings. Instead, we allow the mind to be as it is, while maintaining a steady awareness of it. It's a bit like sitting by a riverside: we watch the water flow, sometimes fast, sometimes slow. We don't jump in and try to grab at the ripples; we simply observe. Over time, this compassionate observing tends to naturally calm the mind – much like muddy water settling to become clear when undisturbed. Even if the mind remains busy, we can still be at ease by not identifying with the mental chatter. We cultivate an inner observer, sometimes called the “witness” or simply awareness itself, which encompasses any passing thought or mood.

In practice, mindfulness of the mind may involve acknowledging the current state of oneself: “There is confusion,” “Ah, thinking is happening,” or “The mind feels calm now.” We practice not to suppress thoughts but to step back and relate to them skillfully. If an anxious thought arises – say, worry about the future – rather than spiraling into it, we acknowledge “worry” as a mental event. By naming it, we often find space around it. The thought may then dissolve on its own, or if it lingers, we observe its texture until it eventually fades. Likewise, when a pleasant or happy mood is present, we acknowledge “joy” or “gratitude,” appreciating it at the moment without clinging to it (since we know it too can be fleeting) change).

Mindfulness of the mind is often likened to recognizing its mood, similar to identifying the flavor of a cup of tea – is it bitter, sweet, or neutral? We simply perceive the current flavor. As a result, we become less reactive and more understanding of ourselves. We may notice when we are about to snap in irritation and, being mindful, gently acknowledge “irritation” instead of choosing a different response. Alternatively, we might recognize “fear is here” and, instead of contracting, we breathe and soften around it. This practice fosters self-compassion: we understand that whatever mental state is present is a human experience, not inherently “bad” or “good” but simply something to acknowledge. We learn to embrace the mind with kindness and acceptance.

- Check in: what's the state of the mind?
- Note it: calm, restless, joyful, tired—no judgment.
- Watch thoughts and moods like clouds in sky.
- Soften reactivity with kindness.
- Remember: awareness is bigger than any thought.
- Mindfulness is friendship with your own mind.

## Practices of Mindfulness of the Mind (Befriending Inner Experience)

**Checking In:** At the start of a meditation or Qigong session, take a moment to quietly check in with your mental state. Ask yourself internally, "What is my mind like right now?" Notice any predominant moods or emotions. You might find that your mind feels tired, sleepy, restless, or calm. You may observe feelings such as anxiety, excitement, contentment, or impatience. Whatever you find, acknowledge it gently. "Ah, there is nervousness," or "There is calm," you might note to yourself. Do this with an internal tone of voice that is friendly and understanding, as if you're checking in on a friend.

**Naming and Noting:** As you settle into practice, if a strong thought or emotion arises, practice mentally naming it in a simple word or two. For example, if you notice many planning thoughts about the future, quietly say to yourself, "Planning, planning," and then let the thoughts pass. If you notice an emotion like sadness, you might silently acknowledge "sadness" or even "heavy heart." The label is not meant to judge it but to recognize, "This is a temporary state, not me." After noting, gently bring your attention back to a neutral anchor (like the breath or body sensation) to stay grounded.

**Allowing the Mind to Be:** Give the mind permission to be as it is. This may sound strange, but we often approach meditation by trying to silence the mind or banish our thoughts. Instead, consider befriending your mind. You might even say to yourself, "It's okay for thoughts to be here. It's okay for emotions to be here. I will simply observe them." Paradoxically, when the mind doesn't feel resisted, it often settles down. So if you notice a flurry of thoughts, instead of thinking, "Oh no, I'm thinking," relax into the thinking, observe its movement, and you may find it slows down on its own.

**Heartfulness:** Include the heart in the mindfulness of mind. This means bringing kindness to whatever you become aware of. If you discover impatience in your mind, see if you can regard that impatience with patience! If you find fear, hold that fear in gentle awareness, perhaps placing a hand on your heart and breathing. Sometimes, a quiet phrase helps: you can try silently offering yourself a phrase like "May I be at ease with this" or "It's alright, this will pass." This adds a touch of compassion to mindfulness of mind, transforming bare attention into a warm, supportive presence.

**Mind–Body Connection:** Occasionally, pay attention to how your mental state impacts your body and breath. For example, if you feel anxious, check in with your body – is your stomach tense? Is your breathing quick? When your mind is calm and joyful, your body may feel light and your breath smooth. Recognizing these connections can enhance your understanding that mind and body are a single reality. If you sense tension in both your mind and body, you might deliberately relax your body (roll your shoulders, unclench your jaw) and observe if your mind also eases. This is an effective way to care for your mind through the body.

**Sky-Like Mind:** Visualize your awareness as vast as the sky, with thoughts and emotions represented as passing clouds. The sky remains untouched by these clouds; it simply allows them to drift by. Focus on identifying more with the sky-like awareness- stable, vast, and accepting- rather than any specific cloud. Even when dark storm clouds (strong emotions) gather, remember the sky of the mind is always there in the background, open and unaffected. This perspective can foster a sense of space and peace, especially during challenging mental states.

**“Minds think; lungs breathe!**

**We’re not trying to stop thoughts but to change our relationship to them.”**

Roshi Teja Fudo Myoo

## Mindfulness of Dharmas: Observing the Flow of Experience

The fourth application of mindfulness is often translated as *mindfulness of dharmas* (Pali: **dhammānupassanā**). Here, *dharma* (with a small “d”) refers to the **categories or patterns of experience** and the fundamental principles that govern them. In simpler terms, this aspect of practice invites us to observe **the nature of what’s happening** in our experience – to recognize patterns such as hindrances (things that typically obstruct peace) and factors of awakening (qualities that conduce to clarity and enlightenment). While this can sound abstract, in practical experience, it means **broadening our awareness** to notice *how* things unfold. We illuminate mindfulness not only on individual objects like the body or breath but also on the relationships between things and the ebb and flow of our inner world.

In our retreat context, mindfulness of dharmas is about **connecting personal experience to universal patterns**. We observe experiences as *events in nature* rather than as “mine” or “me.” For example, if a wave of anger arises, we can see it as *anger arising*, a conditioned phenomenon that visits the human mind sometimes – not as “I am an angry person.”

The Buddha identified **Five Hindrances** – desire, aversion (anger), dullness, restlessness, and doubt – as common mind-states that cloud our clarity. Instead of using these terms formally, we notice their presence in plain language: *wanting, disliking, sleepiness, anxiety, self-doubt*.

With mindfulness, we can say, “*Oh, the energy of wanting is here,*” or “*Ah, restlessness is in the body.*” We have already taken a step back from them by recognizing these when they occur. We see them as **dharmas** – impersonal phenomena – rather than getting lost **in** them.

On the flip side, the Buddha also spoke of wholesome states we can cultivate, like the **Seven Factors of Awakening** – mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. Mindfulness of dhammas includes noticing these *beneficial qualities* when they are present. For instance, you might suddenly feel a serene concentration in your meditation – recognizing “*concentration is present*” can strengthen your appreciation for it. Or you might realize that after a time, an initial restlessness has given way to *tranquility*. Acknowledge that: “*a calm has emerged.*”

This balances the practice, so we’re not only fixating on problems but also noticing growth and positive factors.

Another key aspect of this practice is observing **the Three Universal Characteristics** in our experience: impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness in clinging (dukkha), and not-self (anattā). Again, without using heavy terminology, we learn directly that **everything changes**, that trying to hold on to passing phenomena causes suffering, and that experiences are not a solid “self.” For example, if a pain arises in the leg during sitting, by observing it calmly one might witness that it’s not constant – it pulses or shifts (impermanence); by clinging to a desire for it to go away, one adds mental suffering to the physical sensation (dukkha); and one can see the pain as “a sensation in the body” rather than “*my* pain attacking *me*,” thus loosening the identification (not-self). Similarly, a pleasant feeling might fade, teaching us about change and not clinging.

In essence, **mindfulness of dhammas** zooms out to see the **big picture** of our practice. We see the **laws of nature** at play in our own heart-mind. We realize, *for example*, “This restless feeling is not permanent; it arose due to certain conditions and it will pass.” Or, “When I let go of fighting this sadness, I notice it softens – this is the dharma of letting go in action.” Over time, this leads to wisdom. We start to trust the process of **mindful awareness** deeply, seeing that it leads to insight and freedom. The practitioner becomes like a scientist of their own experience, or a mindful gardener: we learn to identify weeds (hindrances) and simply note them, uprooting our attachment to them; we learn to cultivate flowers (wholesome states) by giving them attention and care. And crucially, we practice all of this in the spirit of *Wú Wéi* – **effortless engagement**.

This means we don't force insights to happen; we don't *make* hindrances go away by brute force. Instead, we **observe, allow, and gently guide** where appropriate, letting wisdom unfold in its own timing.

It's often at this stage of practice that a profound **equanimity** develops – a balanced attitude of openness to whatever arises. As one Jack Kornfield puts it: *“No matter what you experience, be aware of it, let it come and go, and rest at ease in the midst of it all.”* This captures the essence of both mindfulness of dharmas *and* the Daoist non-striving approach. We learn to surf the waves of experience, riding both the highs and lows with a steady, relaxed awareness. In doing so, we discover an unshakeable peace within – the peace of **non-clinging** and accord with how things are.

- Notice patterns of experience—craving, aversion, restlessness.
- Recognize when hindrances are present, and when qualities of awakening arise (mindfulness, joy, calm, etc.).
- Everything changes—observe impermanence gently.
- Practice letting be. Let experience come and go.
- Witness everything with steady, kind awareness.



## Practices of Mindfulness of Dharmas (Witnessing the Flow)

**Open Monitoring:** Allow your awareness to broaden and take in whatever is most prominent in your current experience. This practice is sometimes referred to as open mindfulness. You are not concentrating on just one thing (like only the breath or a specific sensation) but rather observing the overall flow. Sit quietly and notice: What is happening now? Perhaps you feel an emotion swelling, a recurring train of thought, or a strong sensation in your body. Gently spotlight that phenomenon and acknowledge it: for example, “anger is present,” “planning is occurring,” or “heat in the body.”

**Recognizing Patterns:** As you observe various experiences, practice recognizing them as instances of common patterns. For example, if you notice your mind consistently thinking about a desire (like wanting a specific food or experience), quietly acknowledge, “This is the energy of craving/desire.” If you encounter resistance (“I don’t like this feeling”), acknowledge that as “aversion.” Should you feel sluggish or dull, that reflects the hindrance of “sloth/tiredness.” Naming these can help demystify them – you come to understand that you’re experiencing universal human conditions, not a personal failing. It’s like saying, “Ah, this is the classic restless mind,” accompanied by a knowing smile.

**Skillful Response (Letting Be):** For each experience that arises, especially the challenging ones, practice the art of letting things be. After acknowledging it, see if you can sit with it without immediately reacting. For instance, if impatience arises because you are waiting for the bell, acknowledge “impatience” and then explore it: what does impatience feel like in the body? Is it a tightening in the chest? A bounce in the leg? By investigating calmly, you are being with the hindrance without fueling it. If it feels too strong, you can take a few deep breaths or relax a part of your body, but continue to observe without suppression. You may find that when you give a hindrance kind attention, it often loses strength or passes on its own. This is Wú Wéi in action – rather than wrestling with the mind, you create conditions for it to relax naturally.

**Cultivating Wholesome States:** Also, notice and encourage positive states. If, at some point, you feel a sense of joy bubbling up (perhaps from the simple pleasure of being present), allow it to flow fully. Note "joy" and smile with it. When concentration comes into focus, and your mind feels grounded, acknowledge that stability – perhaps noting "focused" or simply enjoying the calm. You might inwardly say "good" when you notice a wholesome quality present, not as praise but as an acknowledgment that this is a beneficial state to nurture. Just by observing it, you strengthen it (what we acknowledge tends to grow). This is analogous to giving water to a healthy plant in your garden.

**Noticing Impermanence:** Make it an easy game to notice change. Take any experience – say, a feeling of discomfort in your knee – and observe it over time. Does it stay exactly the same, or does it pulsate, shift, or move? Perhaps you feel an itch – instead of immediately scratching, watch it: does it intensify and then suddenly fade on its own? Or, when a strong emotion like sadness arises, check how it feels a few minutes later: is it still as strong, or has it transformed into something else? By observing in this way, you learn experientially that all things arise and pass. This insight can provide you with great freedom. You realize you don't have to react to everything because, given some time and mindfulness, many things resolve on their own. In practice, you might use the slogan: "This too shall pass," not as a denial of what's happening but as a reminder of the natural law of impermanence.

**Non-Identification:** Practice viewing each experience as an impersonal phenomenon. For instance, instead of saying, "I am anxious," reframe it to "Anxiety is present" or even just "anxiety, anxiety." Notice how this small shift creates a significant difference – there is anxiety, and there is awareness of it. That awareness isn't anxiety; it's simply recognition. Try to rest in that sense of knowing. Likewise, if you have a thought like "I'm failing at this," recognize it as merely a thought, not a fact. Label it as a "self-judgment thought" and let it go. Observe the process of thinking or feeling instead of getting caught up in the content. You might literally sense the thought as a small cloud passing through your mind and watch it dissipate. This practice assists in not identifying any experience as "me" or "mine."

**Resting in Equanimity:** Expand your awareness to embrace everything that arises with balance. This is the cultivation of equanimity, the pinnacle of mindfulness practice. You become the witness – a kind, steady observer. Pleasant feelings arise, and you acknowledge and allow them. Unpleasant feelings arise, and you acknowledge and allow them. You begin to trust that you can handle whatever appears in your experience. In fact, you don't need to manage it at all – just recognize it and let it flow.

Recall Jack Kornfield's saying:

**“Be aware of it, let it come and go, and rest at ease in the midst of it all”**

These four applications of mindfulness—body, breath, mind, and dharmas—provide a comprehensive framework for practice. When woven with QigongDharma's embodied being and the spirit of Wú Wéi, this practice becomes a living, flowing meditation on the cushion and in every moment of daily life.

We learn to be fully present in our bodies, centered in the breath, aware of our mind's landscape, and awake to the deeper patterns of existence.

The journey is one of coming home to ourselves and to the reality of each moment with a gentle, open heart. As you engage with these practices in the retreat, remember to be patient and kind to yourself. Mindfulness is not a performance but an exploration – an intimate, caring exploration of life as it is. With grounded feet, a relaxed breath, a curious mind, and a spirit of non-striving, we step into the dance of mindfulness.

May you discover for yourself the freedom and authenticity that this practice can bring, and may it enrich your QigongDharma journey of centering, grounding, and awakening in harmony with the Dao.

### Gāthā

Breathing in, I arrive in my body. Breathing out, I rest in the Dao.  
This breath is home. This moment is peace.