

Faults of Meditative Stabilization and Their Antidotes

Five Faults

laziness

forgetting the instruction

[non-identification of] laxity and excitement

non-application

[over]application

Eight Antidotes

faith

aspiration

exertion

pliancy

mindfulness

introspection

application

equanimity

(Adapted from Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*)

The Four Mental Engagements

The cultivation of calm abiding can also be seen in terms of four mental engagements (*yid la byed pa, manaskāra*). The first is called forcible engagement (*sgrim ste 'jug pa, balavāhana*)—that is, forcibly fixing the mind on its object of observation. The second is called interrupted engagement (*bar du chad cing 'jug pa, sacchidravāhana*)—interruptedly fixing the mind on its object of observation. The third is called uninterrupted engagement (*chad pa med par 'jug pa, niśchidravāhana*)—uninterruptedly fixing the mind on its object of observation. The fourth is called spontaneous engagement (*lhun grub tu 'jug pa, anābhogavāhana*)—spontaneously fixing the mind on its object of observation.

The Nine Mental Abidings

During the cultivation of calm abiding, a meditator passes through nine mental abidings (*sems gnas dgu, navākārā cittasthiti*)—nine states of mind. The first is called setting the mind (*sems 'jog pa, cittasthāpana*). The second is called continuous setting (*rgyun du 'jog pa, samsthāpana*). The third is called resetting (*slan te 'jog pa, avasthāpana*). The fourth is called close setting (*nye bar 'jog pa, upasthāpana*). The fifth is called disciplining (*dul bar byed pa, damana*). The sixth is called pacifying (*zhi bar byed pa, śamana*). The seventh is called thorough pacifying (*nye bar zhi bar byed pa, vyupaśamana*). The eighth is called making one-pointed (*rtse gcig tu byed pa, ekotikarāṇa*). The ninth is called setting in equipoise (*mnyam par 'jog pa, samādhāna*). (See

States and Factors in Achieving Calm Abiding

Read from bottom to top

Six Powers

familiarity

effort

introspection

mindfulness

thinking

hearing

Nine Mental Abidings

9. setting in equipoise

8. making one-pointed

7. thorough pacifying

6. pacifying

5. disciplining

4. close setting

3. resetting

2. continuous setting

1. setting the mind

Four Mental Engagements

spontaneous engagement

uninterrupted engagement

interrupted engagement

forcible engagement

(Adapted from Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*)

BEGINNING TO MEDITATE

Laziness

To achieve the first of the nine mental abidings, setting the mind, we must set the mind on the object of observation. To do so, we need aspiration, the wish to set it there; we must want to cultivate meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhī*). Without that wish, there is laziness; even if we cultivated meditative stabilization a little, we would not want to cultivate it continually.

If such laziness arises before we have really begun to cultivate meditative stabilization, what should we do? The actual antidote to laziness is pliancy. This is a physical and mental serviceability that comes only later. Thus, it cannot help when we are just beginning to cultivate meditative stabilization. The initial technique for overcoming laziness is to cultivate faith. We have to contemplate the advantages of meditative stabilization; to do so, we first have to contemplate the faults of distraction (*rnam par g.yeng ba, vikṣepa*).

"From beginningless time until now," we think, "I have been lost in distraction. I have already undergone a limitless amount of suffering. If I still fall under the power of distraction, then I will have to undergo even more suffering." If distraction occurs, that is the first way of reflecting on its faults. The second is, "Even if I engage in repetition of mantra or meditate on a deity or cultivate a path, if I attempt to do these practices while distracted, I cannot achieve any fruit." Śāntideva himself said that.²

Then we contemplate the advantages of meditative stabilization. We