



Stages of Meditation

Awakening the Mind

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Chapter 5

How to Meditate on Shamatha

Calm-Abiding Meditation

Ultimate Bodhicitta

- Beyond all constructs
- Total clarity
- Accessible only with ultimate truth
- Undefined

Ultimate Bodhicitta

To accomplish the **realization** of ultimate bodhicitta, we need to:

- Meditate and gain familiarity with **shamatha** and **vipassana**
- All **samadhi** practices are *stable state of meditative concentration*

How to practice Shamatha?

- A place conducive to practice
- Have few desires
- Not too overwhelmed with work and activities

How to practice Shamatha?

A place imbued with five qualities

1. Optimal location
2. Good location
3. Good companions
4. Not too many people around during daytime
5. Not a lot of noise during night time

How to practice Shamatha?

1. Give rise to the highest motivation
 - All sentient beings' enlightenment
 - Imbue mind with compassion for suffering
2. Offer prostrations with five branches
(5-points - head, 2-arms, 2-legs)
3. Make offerings
4. Confess negative actions
5. Rejoice in the merit of all beings

Seven-point posture of Vairochana

1. Crossed legs
2. Hands on lap or knees
3. Straight back
4. Shoulders spread and pulled back
5. Chin lowered
6. Tip of tongue on palate
7. Eyes gaze downward

Seven-point posture of Vairochana



How to practice Shamatha?

Shamatha (zhi gNas) is peaceful abiding, not convoluted by busy network of thoughts and concepts

- I. Meditation with reference point
(a focal object)
- II. Meditation beyond reference point

How to practice Shamatha?

I. Meditation with focal object

1. Meditation with visual object
2. Meditation without visual object

1. Meditation with visual object

1. Some object, not too light colored
 2. Gaze penetratingly at object
 3. Rest your mind as long as you can in that very vivid clarity-emptiness
- *If thought arises, **instantly recognize** the thought*
 - *Immediately **cut-thru** the thought and **go back** to object of focus*

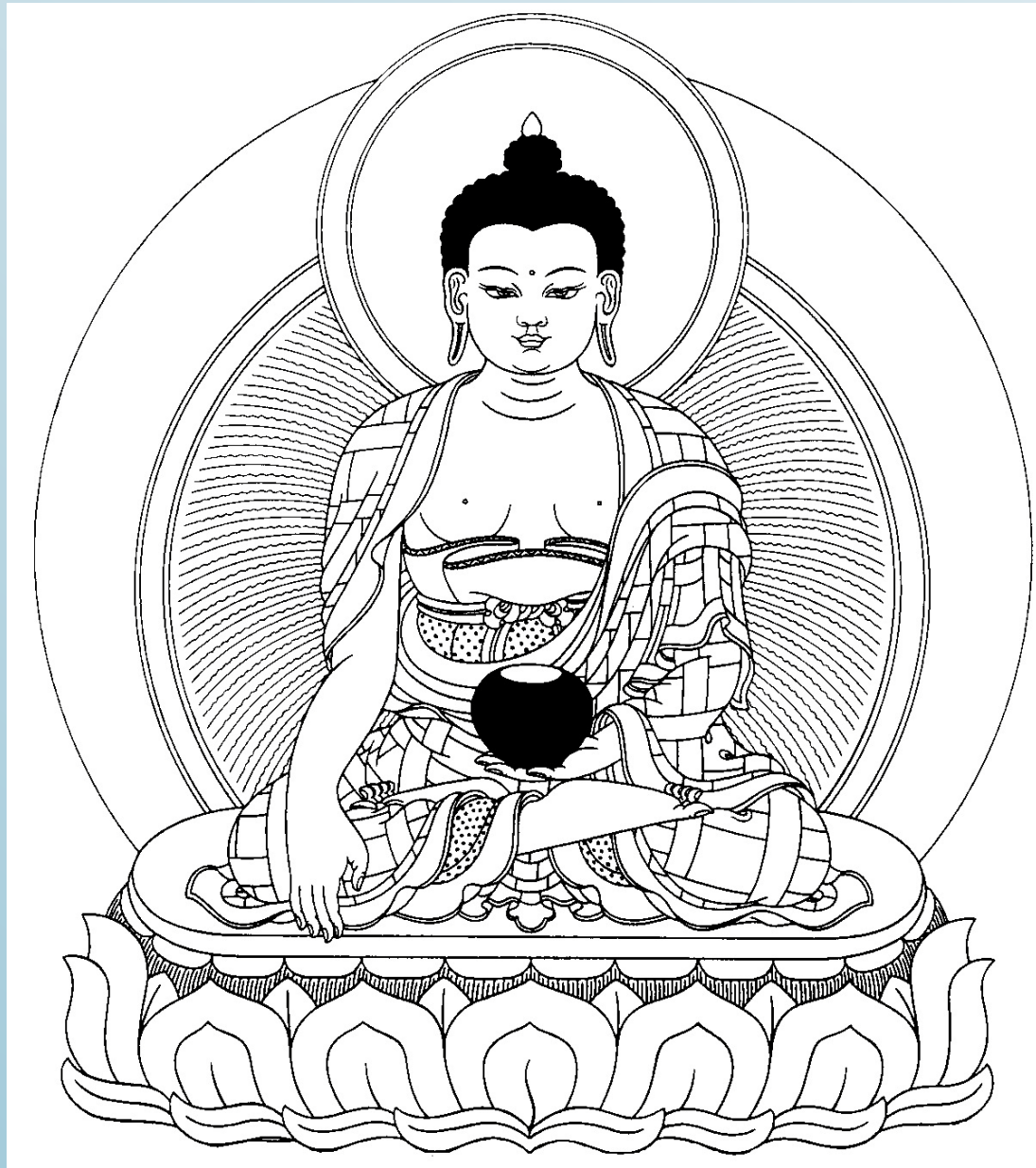
1. Meditation with visual object

Let your mind be in its **natural state**
without convoluted thoughts such as:

“the focal object is taken inside by my mind”

“my mind is taken outside by the focal object”

“mind and the focal object are one or separate” and so forth



Buddha Shakyamuni

How to practice Shamatha?

I. Meditation with focal object

1. Meditation with visual object
2. Meditation without visual object

**2. Focal object but not a
tangible visual object**
(Without Focal Object)

- a. **With focus on the breath**
- b. **Without focus on the breath**

a. Shamatha with focus on the breath

- Keep one's attention on in-breath and out-breath...and moments in-between (holding the breath)
- Use the breath as point of reference to anchor your awareness and rest it there as long as possible
- **“Watching the breath”**

a. Shamatha with focus on the breath

- The **very definition of meditation** is resting mind just as it is, in its natural state, without being convoluted by concepts and projections of confusion
- The **purpose of meditation** is to vanquish the conceptual tendency of mind to grasp at realness.

b. Shamatha without focus on the breath

Resting the mind

- without placing attention on an object (*such as watching the breath*)
- abiding in awareness just as it is.

b. Shamatha without focus on the breath

Whatever arises, just rest in empty nature, not getting caught up in fixating on emptiness or fixating on clarity.

When a thought arises, cut through it immediately by resting in empty nature

How to practice Shamatha?

Shamatha (zhi gNas) is peaceful abiding, not convoluted by busy network of thoughts and concepts

I. Meditation with reference point
(focal object)

II. Meditation beyond reference point

II. Meditation beyond reference (focal) point

- 1. Focused concentration**
- 2. Relaxation**

1. Focused concentration

- a. Sit with straight posture
- b. Expel stale breath
- c. Sharpen your awareness
- d. Resolve not to follow thoughts of three times (past, present, future)
- e. Rest in state of clarity and emptiness
- f. Cut-thru all movement of thoughts

2. Relaxation

When meditating focused concentration, and you get restless or grow weary, or when mind gets over stimulated...

**Relax your body and mind and
let yourself rest naturally**

- Within this state, if concepts or emotional poisons arise, immediately cut-through them

II. Meditation beyond reference (focal) point

- If subtle background movement of mind occurs, do not try to repress this
- Just let it settle into its own state
- **The trick for beginners is to do many sessions of short duration.**
- These are the traditional oral instructions.

II. Meditation beyond reference (focal) point

- If you **concentrate too long**, there is a danger of - *causing agitation and overstimulation.*
- If you **relax too long**, there is a danger of - *falling into laxity, dullness and lethargy*
- Practice should be tailored to suit individual nature and constitution

II. Meditation beyond reference (focal) point

For example:

A person with predominately **earth-
element constitution** will tend
toward lethargy and dullness and
thus may have trouble with clarity
of awareness

*He or she should **focus more
on concentration***

II. Meditation beyond reference (focal) point

For example:

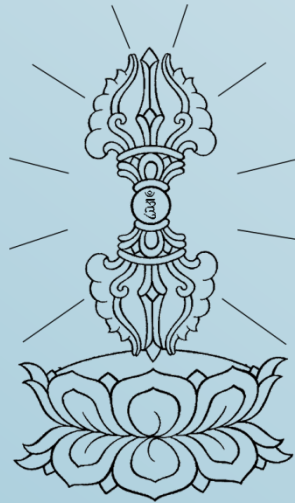
A person with predominately **wind-
element constitution** will tend
toward monkey-mind and
excitation and overstimulation

*He or she should **focus more
on relaxation.***

II. Meditation beyond reference (focal) point

If we do not understand the key point of **balancing the extremes** of *lethargy* and *overstimulation*, we run the risk of meditating incorrectly.

Thank you very much!





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