

Sustaining the Flow of Stillness and Thought Movement

From *The Royal Seal of Mahamudra, Volume One:*

A Guidebook for the Realization of Coemergence

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Translated by Gerardo Abboud, pp. 52-55

When your mind does not wander in thoughts of the three times, but rests on the presence of the recognition of the unfabricated self-knowing awareness and stays without projecting elsewhere, that is stillness. When still, note that it stays still on the identity of stillness, and sustain this attentively. Simply not forgetting the natural flow of its identity, maintain that stillness through the determination to be mindful. Since the identity of stillness abides without being tangible or having form, color, or shape, let the mind naturally remain loose, as there are no luminous appearances such as lights nor anything else to be seen at all.

Do not care about the duration of such stillness. When it lasts briefly, sustain the identity of that duration while it lasts without forgetting it. It is difficult for beginners who are new to meditation to have stillness for a long time. So even though it does not last for more than a moment, you should preserve the identity of that moment without forgetting it. Actually, by giving importance to the duration, you create the hope that stillness will endure, as well as the fear that it may not stay still for long. Avoid hopes for stillness, fears of nonstillness, and so forth.

Whether it stays still for a long or a short time, sustain the identity of that stillness without forgetting it for as long as it lasts. Apart from not forgetting this identity, there is neither an observer nor an observed. So when the mind stays in the identity of stillness, and you are not having the sort of distraction of not noticing that it is right there, you feel that it is still, that it stays, and thus sustain it without forgetting.

Thought movement is when the mind does not stay still as explained. Although you have brought the mind to rest in itself without wandering, still there is no way it stays. Either it thinks about the past—"I have done this. I went to such-and-such a place. I stayed there"—or about the future—"I will have to do these things. " Even in the present moment, awareness automatically follows the forms seen by the eyes, the sounds heard by the ears, and so forth. In brief, you think of the past, present, and future. The mind goes everywhere far and near, and thinks of all kinds of things, good and bad. This thinking is not to be stopped in any way.

Thoughts are immaterial like a breeze;

If they move without clinging to them, it is enough.

As Lord Lhatsewa said in the above quotation, thought movement is intangible: the blowing wind cannot be held by grasping it. This is not like closing the door after you have placed men or cattle inside the house. So mind's thought movements should neither be stopped nor, deeming them bad, should they be rejected, thinking, "If only there wasn't thought movement."

Ultimately stillness is mind essence and thoughts are the natural radiance of mind. Like water and its waves or the sun and its rays, they are not two. When you consider the still mind as good and the moving mind as bad, although they are not two things, you are grasping at them as such. Then you make alterations, suppressing and pursuing, which means that you have not understood what is meant. Therefore, you should not proceed in this way. No matter what thoughts arise— subtle, gross, or coarse; positive, negative, or neutral—regarding what was done in the past or is happening in the present, recognize them through the shepherd of undistracted mindfulness. While recognizing them, do not make alterations but sustain the recognition of the identity of thought movement.

The mind may not stay still after thinking one thought, but instead after that thought comes a second and many more, and eventually you do not recognize any more thoughts, leading you to delusion and distraction. Following the same pattern as before, you should instead recognize whatever you think through undistracted mindfulness and rest on that recognition. By recognition we do not mean something that is seen with the eyes or a thing with graspable substance that is seen in the field of the mind. As explained before, when dealing with thoughts of past or future, or with going after forms the eyes see or sounds the ears hear in the present, through the determination to be mindful without distraction, identify the thinking about this or that, and while in this recognition do not make corrections such as stopping the proliferation of thoughts or restraining the mind. When a thought occurs, sustain the identity of that thinking without forgetting it. If you do that, it follows that no matter what you think, as long as you recognize it, that will be sufficient.

This recognition does not happen for long periods in beginners, so although just a few may recognize at the beginning, they then lose track of where they are wandering. Distracted and forgetful, they fail to recognize. This is not something that has just started happening; we have been accustomed to this wandering in delusion in all our lives throughout beginningless samsara. Even now, from the time we were born until this very moment we have incurred only delusion, distraction, and forgetfulness. Apart

from the brief periods when we now seem not to wander, we do not know what nondistractedness is.

Since we are very accustomed to deluded distraction and have little familiarity with undistracted mindfulness, how can we really have stable nondistractedness from the start? For sure we will continue to be distracted. If you do not recognize that distraction, you will neither nurture nor be careful about the flow of undistracted mindfulness, so distraction and forgetfulness will increase more and more. Stabilizing undistracted mindfulness prevents one from being carried away by these. Then, even though distraction and forgetfulness may occur, from that point onward think, "I have wandered," and recognize that distraction. Make the firm resolution that reflects the thought, "I must not wander nor forget again. " In this state it is very important that you sustain the recognition of stillness and thought movement as before.

From the beginning, apprehensive of becoming distracted, be very concerned and careful, thinking, "I must not wander even for a single moment." Later, when you have become distracted, you must not be carried away by it but restore your determination and maintain the flow of mindfulness. Understand that the stability of the prevalence of undistracted mindfulness is the root practice and the principal part of the meditation.

In the state of mindfulness, your mind should look at both its going and staying. Other than that there is nothing else to cultivate. It suffices if awareness recognizes the nature of everything that arises. Apart from this you do not need to search somewhere else for more quality or clarity. If you wonder, "Other than preserving the recognition of my mind nature, is there anything else outside that happens or is to be seen?" it would be as if you were abandoning the door of what is and wandering instead in the alleys of what is not, or walking toward the west while turning your back to your actual destination, the east. All your meditation will be pointless; all your hardships will be fruitless.

Therefore you should not proceed in that way. Instead sustain awareness, which is what you have. Don't put aside what you have and look elsewhere for what you don't have. Just watch the identity of awareness, no matter what it thinks or where it goes. Don't give importance to whether the awareness is clear or not. Avoid stopping thought movement and pursuing stillness. Whatever stillness there is and no matter what arises, just sustain their natural flow at their own pace, without tainting it with alterations. Without allowing yourself to forget undistracted mindfulness even for a moment, persevere in maintaining its prevalence.

Stages and Techniques of Mahamudra Shamatha
Wild Awakening: The Heart of Mahamudra & Dzogchen
By Dzogchen Ponlop, Excerpts from pp. 86-87 & 94-98

Three Stages of Resting

The state of resting is described as having three basic characteristics or levels: nondistraction, nonmeditation, and nonfabrication.

Nondistraction

Nondistraction, which is the definition of shamatha meditation, refers to the state of being totally free from all distractions, outer or inner. That is to say, we are not distracted by the outer world or outer appearances, and at the same time we are not distracted by the inner world or by our discursive thoughts. Ordinarily, we experience a variety of states of discursive thinking, such as gossiping, dreaming, fantasizing, and so forth, which may be either conscious or unconscious. We may experience a whole range of distractions without noticing that we are sliding into states of discursiveness. Becoming free from all this is called nondistraction.

Nonmeditation

It is said that when we prepare to practice meditation, we need the simple thought, "Right now, I am going to sit down and meditate." However, we do not need any more thoughts about meditation after that because then we are actually meditating. If after we have sat down and begun meditating, we are still having thoughts such as, "I have to meditate. I am meditating. I am doing great. I am practicing Mahamudra," then we are not meditating. At that point we are still at the level of preparation—we are thinking about meditation instead of doing it. Sitting meditation has to be totally free of any state of thought; even the thought of meditation has to be released. It should not haunt us.

Nonmeditation is letting go of the thought of meditation. In order to let go of the thought of meditation when sitting, we must know how to rest our body, our speech, and our mind. We must know the method of entering into the meditative state, not just physically but with mind and speech as well. In the stage of nonmeditation, there is a total sense of resting, and this resting requires a certain quality of relaxation. Our physical posture should not make us feel stiff, irritated, uncomfortable, or different in any way. It should be completely natural and relaxed and at the same time we should remain in a correct

posture, such as the Sevenfold Posture of Vairochana, which refers to the seven points of physical posture commonly assumed during meditation practice. The reason for the emphasis on posture is that the position of one's body has a direct and powerful effect on the state of one's mind. Assuming a correct and upright posture causes one's mind to come to rest naturally in a state of tranquillity, or peace.

Nonfabrication

Nonfabrication is a state of shamatha meditation that is free from any conceptual labeling. At this stage, there is no process of labeling our experience as one thing or another, such as thoughts of "resting" or "not resting" or "This is Mahamudra shamatha" or "This is not Mahamudra shamatha." We must be totally free from these fabrications. When we rest in that state of mind, there is a great sense of freedom. We are free not only from the states of discursiveness and distraction, as well as from the thought of meditation, but we are also unfettered by concepts and fabrications of any kind. We are not bound by the thought of sitting. There is no sense of pushing and no stress. There is a total sense of freedom.

General Techniques of Shamatha Meditation

In the Mahamudra tradition, the descriptions of the shamatha meditation practices are very detailed, and the actual practices become quite subtle. The three main classifications of shamatha being presented here are shamatha with focal support, shamatha without focal support, and shamatha of essence.

Shamatha with Focal Support

It is important to train in the method of shamatha with focal support so that we can work with sensory objects and sensory pleasures. Working with these objects takes us to a deeper level of shamatha experience and extends our awareness further into the world. This method is the very beginning of Mahamudra shamatha.

In this first type of shamatha meditation, "support" refers to an external basis for the development of shamatha. Supports are divided into two kinds: pure and impure. In either case, supports are external objects of visual perception that are used as a basis for bringing the mind to rest.

Impure supports refer to neutral objects such as a flower, a pebble, or a small piece of wood. We place one of these objects in our line of vision so that we are looking slightly downward, along our nose. Generally, the object would be placed on a table or other

surface in front of us. We then relax our breathing and direct our attention one-pointedly to our visual consciousness of the object. When our mind comes to rest, we mix our mind with our perception of the object. This technique brings about the experiences associated with shamatha meditation very quickly and in a very forceful manner.

This can be a very relaxing meditation. For example, you can go to a beautiful park and meditate on a flower, a tree, a lake, or simply on the clouds. You can pick any specific focal object and meditate on that. This can be a very helpful practice because you do not have to remain inside, sitting and watching your breath or a particular object, such as the form of a deity. You can be anywhere in the world and take any object as an object of meditation. This is one way to bring practice into your everyday life. For example, when you are sitting on a bench waiting for a bus or waiting for your date in a restaurant, you can simply focus on any object before you and rest your mind on it.

A pure support refers to an object that is not neutral but instead has a spiritual or positive significance, such as a statue of the Buddha or an image of one of the enlightened masters or bodhisattvas. These supports are considered pure because they usually bring us more vipashyana-more awareness of enlightenment-than do ordinary, "impure" objects. The act of looking at a mundane object such as a pen, pebble, or flower, usually gives rise to some quality of emotion because we are so caught up in dealing with these objects in everyday life.

Place the statue or image in your line of vision, just as you placed the pebble before. You can either direct your attention to a bare, visual perception of successive details of a statue or to the entire statue all at once. For example, direct your attention first to the lotus pedestal or seat, then to the body of the figure, then to the crown protuberance at the top of the head. Regardless of which approach you take in directing your attention, the use of a pure support in this manner also generates a very forceful and particular type of shamatha experience.

The practice of shamatha with a focal object sounds quite basic and not at all profound. However, when you actually engage in the practice, the experiences that arise through such meditation can be quite extraordinary. This method of practice is particularly useful because we live in a world of substantial materialism: There is a substantial material world surrounding us all the time. When we develop a certain level of understanding, insight, and meditative experience based on the shamatha techniques that use a substantial focal object, we have a greater chance of giving rise to a panoramic vipashyana experience of the outer and inner world.

Whether our meditation object is pure or impure, our mind should be totally free from

thoughts. We simply blend our mind with the breath and with the object of our perception. We become one with that space and that experience, and we rest in that space without conceptualizing. We do not analyze the object in front of us. For example, we do not say, "Well, this is a black stone from the Rocky Mountains" or "This is a white stone from Kathmandu." We do not analyze an image of Buddha by thinking about how good the artist was or how colorful the painting is or whether or not we like it. We must remember that the purpose of using the focal object is simply to rest our mind.

Shamatha without Focal Support

The second type of shamatha meditation is shamatha without focal support. Rather than relying on an external, physically present support as a basis for directing our mind, here we rely on the support of an imagined image or a visualization, which may be external or internal.

External Visualization

As with the earlier method of shamatha with focal support, there are two principal variations used in this method. In the first of these, we direct our mind to a particular aspect of an image; in the second, we direct our mind to the entire image. Developing a clear and stable visualization may take some time—an hour, days, or months.

In the first variation, we imagine the form of the Buddha in the space in front of us, progressively generating the full image from the ground upward, starting with the lotus seat. The first step is to establish the lotus clearly. Then go on to each part, focusing separately and clearly. Continue to visualize individual aspects until you can generate the whole image of the Buddha clearly. In the second variation, direct your attention to the entire image all at once; for example, the overall image of the form of the Buddha. However, this is difficult in the beginning, so start simply and focus on a single detail, such as his hand or his begging bowl. It is not necessary to visualize the whole body at once.

The most common visualization used is the form of the Buddha. However, in this technique, additional methods are used to train one's mind. These are applied once the basic visualization of the Buddha becomes stable. For example, we gradually reduce the size of the image until it becomes as small as a sesame seed. Once we have visualized this, we make sure that all the details of its appearance, such as the eyes and ears, are as clear as they were when it was larger. Then we make the image very large—as large as a mountain—while maintaining the whole image in our mind. These are methods for enhancing the clarity and stability of the visualized image.

Internal Visualization

In the preceding descriptions, you visualize a form external to yourself. For example, you may be seeing an image of the Buddha as if it were in front of you. Another variation of this method is to visualize an image inside your body, such as a sphere of light in various colors, or an emblem such as a vajra. You might also visualize your own body in an enlightened form. The image of the Buddha is often used for this practice. For Vajrayana Buddhists, it is especially important to meditate on an image of the Buddha because there is a tendency to become fascinated by colorful deities and gurus.

To practice this method, choose an image that makes you feel comfortable or that brings a sense of peace to your heart. Use an image that really generates some feelings. There are many beautiful images of Buddha in Indian art. Some of these images are livelier and more human than the Tibetan paintings. First, concentrate on looking at an actual image for some time, and then create the visualization in your mind, following the instructions for building the visualization from the ground upward and for reducing and enlarging the size of the image while maintaining the clarity of detail.

There are a number of other methods of visualization within the overall category of shamatha meditation without a focal support. However, what we are doing in all of these practices is training our mind to focus, to relax, and to experience the quality of space.

Shamatha of Essence

Shamatha of essence is simply resting in the basic continuity of mind. That resting is explained as the subsiding or dissolving of the waves of thought into the ocean of the all-basis, or the basic mind, which is neither virtuous nor unvirtuous. "Waves of thought" refers to the dualistic concepts of subject and object, or experiencer and experienced, that agitate our minds. The subsiding of thoughts of subject and object is significant here because at this level of shamatha there is no object of meditation.

Up to this point, we have been describing techniques in which there was an object toward which the mind was directed—that object being considered separate, to some extent. Here, the concept of a subjective cognition being directed to an object that is separate from it is relinquished. This act of relinquishment leaves the mind in a state similar to an ocean without waves. The ocean remains calm, and in that calmness there is an experience of profundity—one that is regarded as a bridge between shamatha and vipashyana meditation.

Shamatha and Vipashyana
From *Cloudless Sky: The Mahamudra Path*
Of the Tibetan Kagyu Buddhist School
By Jamgon Kongtrul III
German Trs. by Tina Drasczyk and Alex Drasczyk;
English Trs. by Richard Gravel, pp. 54-62

Shamatha

What should one know about shamatha, a form of meditation that involves letting the mind rest in itself? Mahamudra means being free from mental activities: mind rests in itself and one experiences ordinary mind. In order to do this, one first needs mental calmness. Why does one need mental calmness, if the idea is to experience ordinary mind? Since one is constantly distracted by external objects and sense perceptions, mind is unable to rest in its own nature even for an instant; this is why one must first overcome distraction. To avoid constant distraction, one practices mental calmness meditation and concentrates one-pointedly. Only when the mind is able to remain undistracted and calm can one rest in its nature.

There are many increasingly subtle techniques of shamatha meditation, that is, of letting mind rest in its own nature: meditation with a support, meditation without a support, and meditation on nature as such. The first form of shamatha meditation involves the use of a support. As long as one's awareness fixates on one object after another, mind is continually distracted. In order to take advantage of mind's tendency to fixate, one first practices shamatha meditation with a sense-object as support by placing an object in front of oneself either as a "general support" or as a "pure support." A general support might be a small stone or a piece of wood, whereas a pure support might be a likeness of the Buddha, such as a picture or a statue. Once one is familiar with this type of meditation, one can proceed with shamatha without a support.

Shamatha meditation without a support involves focusing on a mental representation, without resorting to an external or material object. This representation could be an image of the Buddha. First one should visualize certain details of appearance, such as the face, and then the entire figure. Once one is quite familiar with this method, then one can move on to shamatha meditation on nature as such.

The type of shamatha meditation that Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye is referring to in this song is meditation on nature as such, the highest form of resting the mind. It involves letting mind rest in its own nature, without any object of concentration; if thoughts arise,

one looks directly into their nature without suppressing or following them. In this way, thoughts disappear by themselves and one rests once again in the nature of mind.

This is expressed in the line of the Supplication to the Takpo Kagyüs that says: "The nature of thoughts is dharmakaya." Although thoughts arise from mind, their real nature is emptiness. Thoughts are the natural manifestation of mind; by looking at their nature, which is the nature of dharmakaya, or emptiness, one can see that they arise from mind and dissolve back into mind.

However, in our confusion, we regard our thoughts as real; we cling to our thoughts and follow them. But if instead of following our thoughts we look at their nature and see their emptiness, we are beholding the dharmakaya and thoughts melt back into the alaya-vijnana. The alaya-vijnana is like an ocean and the thoughts that arise in the mind are like waves. Ocean and waves are not separate from each other; waves are part of the ocean, they come out of it and return to it.

The purpose of this analogy is to explain how shamatha meditation is practiced in the mahamudra. One lets the mind rest in itself; if thoughts arise out of the ocean of the alaya-vijnana, one looks at their nature without either following or interrupting them. In this way thoughts dissolve back into mind like waves dissolving back into the ocean. If one practices in this manner, distractions or inner upheavals cannot arise. Resting in the nature of mind, that is, the nature of thoughts, is called shamatha meditation on nature as such, and is the highest form of meditation of mental calmness.

There are many ways to describe the states that one experiences in shamatha meditation. One way is to divide them into the so-called nine techniques of resting the mind, which one can read about in treatises on shamatha. Or they can also be described in accordance with the pith instructions, which present the experiences graphically. For instance, the first stage is compared with a roaring waterfall plunging down a cliff face; this stage corresponds to experiencing the upheavals of mind. At a later stage, mind is compared to a broad river, quieter and less turbulent. However, whether one follows the first or second explanation, the point is to achieve the actual fruition of shamatha meditation, which is physical and mental flexibility.

Because of negative karma and afflictive emotions, one often finds it difficult to do positive actions. One must therefore endeavor to cultivate positive thoughts and actions and avoid disturbing feelings. Flexibility in this context means overcoming not only the inability to act positively but also the struggle involved in doing so, until one achieves proper physical and mental conduct quite naturally and effortlessly. When one is free from afflictive emotions, proper behavior occurs spontaneously. Flexibility of mind and

body is the ultimate fruition of mental calmness, at which point the experiences of joy, clarity, and nonconceptualization appear.

The experience of complete joy refers both to bodily sensations and to mental attitude. Any sense of heaviness disappears and one's body feels light and pleasant. This is similar to holding wool in one's hands-it feels nice and light. Mentally, one is full of joy and free from any form of dullness or distraction.

Similarly, the experience of clarity also has a mental and physical component. It consists of a totally clear apprehension of sense perceptions, including the ability to distinguish the minutest details quite clearly.

The third experience, nonconceptualization is like experiencing space. Normally one thinks that things are the way one apprehends them. One hears sounds, sees forms, smells scents, and so on, and clings to these sense perceptions. One is caught up in the concept of the three times, the difference between male and female, and other dualities, and fixates on the characteristics that one attributes to phenomena. It is this particular form of fixation that nonconceptualization dissolves, giving one's experience the quality of space. One no longer fixates on the forms one sees, the sounds one hears, the concept of the three times, but instead one experiences space.

These three experiences of joy, clarity, and nonconceptualization occur mainly during meditation. During postmeditation one experiences everything as usual and fixates on the characteristics of phenomena. Only seldom do these three experiences occur outside of meditation.

Vipashyana

What does vipashyana, or seeing the unseeable, refer to? According to the teachings, vipashyana is "the wisdom which discriminates all phenomena," the insight that arises as the fruition of shamatha meditation. This does not mean, however, that vipashyana insight arises by itself out of the shamatha meditation of remaining in calmness.

In shamatha, one focuses the mind one-pointedly on something, whereas in vipashyana one experiences the actual nature of things. So vipashyana involves meditating on and investigating the nature of phenomena, or the fact that they have no real existence. Thus it can be said that shamatha is meditation by focusing, whereas vipashyana is meditation by analyzing. There are various ways of applying shamatha and vipashyana. For instance, one can first practice shamatha and then, once one has achieved mental calmness, proceed with vipashyana. Or else one can practice shamatha and vipashyana in

alteration: first one practices shamatha meditation for a while, then one concentrates on developing vipashyana insight, after which one goes back to shamatha and then again back to vipashyana, and so on. Combining shamatha and vipashyana, calm-abiding and investigation, is an extremely effective method of practice.

If, for instance, one is concentrating on the coming and going of the breath during shamatha meditation, mental calmness means focusing totally on the breathing without letting the mind wander. Practicing vipashyana would mean that after a while one not only focuses on the breath alone but also examines and achieves insight into the nature of the breath. After one has turned one's mind for a while to the nature of the breath, then one concentrates again one-pointedly on the breathing. This is one way of alternating between shamatha and vipashyana practice. Although we speak about shamatha and vipashyana as two distinct types of meditation that can be practiced either sequentially or in alternation, the actual point is to join the two. If one practices only shamatha or vipashyana, then the unity of shamatha-vipashyana meditation will never arise.

What does it mean to practice shamatha and vipashyana together? Shamatha involves letting the mind rest on an object in a state of concentration. Both mind and object lack ultimate reality. This true nature is present at all times, not only when one achieves insight into it through vipashyana meditation. Maintaining this awareness or insight in shamatha meditation—that is, not separating one-pointedness from awareness—is the unity of shamatha and vipashyana.

When a feeling or thought arises, what does it mean to unite "calmness, movement, and awareness" through shamatha and vipashyana? Let us take the arising of anger as an example. First one notices that anger has arisen and acknowledges it. This corresponds to shamatha or mental calmness, that is, mindfulness which allows one to notice that a feeling has arisen. Based on this, one examines the feeling or thought by means of vipashyana. Calmness, movement, and awareness are the three phases that one examines. Calmness corresponds to the question: "where does the feeling or thought dwell?," movement to the question: "where does the feeling or thought go to?," and awareness to the question: "what is present between the arising and the subsiding of the thought or feeling?" This form of investigation brings one to the realization that the feeling has no real existence.

There is a widespread belief that shamatha and vipashyana are only practiced at the beginning of the path, as a sort of preliminary training prior to actual meditation. This is totally false, since both shamatha and vipashyana are practiced throughout the entire Buddhist path with all its different aspects. Thus shamatha can be found in the

development of bodhichitta, the mind of enlightenment, as well as in the visualizations of the utpattikrama or development phase of vajrayana. These are nothing but a form of shamatha, even though different methods and concepts are being used. The same can be said for the six yogas of Naropa which involve, among other things, holding one's prana and meditating on the nadis and bindus. All these different forms of meditation are ways of practicing shamatha; they are based solely on mental calmness and cannot be practiced without it.

It is the same with vipashyana. On the shravaka path, vipashyana involves meditating on egolessness. On the bodhisattva path, it relates to meditating on emptiness and dependent origination as well as keeping in mind the fact that phenomena have no true existence. In the vajrayana, vipashyana is practiced in the sampannakrama or completion phase of meditation. There is no such thing as a Buddhist path that does not apply shamatha and vipashyana. This is why they are so important.

If one practices shamatha and vipashyana properly, then there is no confusion and no discursive thoughts to be given up. When one looks at the nature of concepts, they disappear and dissolve into themselves, being by their very nature devoid of actual existence. Thus the application of specific antidotes against confusion becomes irrelevant. By simply letting the mind rest in its own nature, confusion dissolves spontaneously into itself with no need to apply antidotes.

When one realizes the ultimate nature of mind, there are no longer any moments that fall outside the sphere of meditation. However, the only way to achieve this realization is through meditation. One is free from the struggle to give up afflictive emotions or to "attain" wisdom. At this point, meditation as such no longer exists, because there is no longer any separation between meditator, meditation, and an object of meditation.

For beginners who have not yet overcome mental fixation meditation is necessary. As long as concepts are still present it is essential to practice meditation, otherwise the experiences of joy, clarity, and nonconceptualization will never arise. These experiences are called the "adornment of insight" because it is meditation that allows the insight into the nature of all phenomena to gradually arise.

Shamatha meditation involves letting the mind dwell in its own nature; vipashyana is nondual insight into ultimate reality. By practicing the unity of shamatha and vipashyana one progressively achieves the four yogas.