

# Clarifying Terms of Awareness

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**Shamatha (shinay):** Evenly or calmly abiding in what arises. Stable, nonreactive, flexible awareness with the qualities of stability, clarity, and openness. The stability (abiding) can be reached through placing (vitarka) and one-pointedness (ekaggata), or through natural settling (rang-babs).

**Samadhi (Tib. ting nge 'dzin):** "To bring together" -- to unite subject (awareness) and object (experience). Often translated as "concentration," but "collectedness" or "unified attention" are better. Samadhi is related to shamatha, sometimes considered to be the fully completed stability of shamatha.

**Ekaggata (Tib. rtse gcig ~ tsechik):** One-pointedness. Unified attention or "concentration."

**Jhana (Skt dhyana; Tib. samten):** One of eight levels concentration or absorption.

**Vitarka (Tib. rtok-pa) and Vicara (Tib. dpyod-pa):** Directing attention to an object, and then investigating in a sustained way, as if to pick up an object and then rub or feel it to discern its qualities. The placing is shamatha; the investigating is vipassana.

**Sati (drenpa):** Mindfulness. Sati is not just bare attention; according to the Theravada Abhidhamma, sati includes: (1) remembering one's chosen object of attention; Sati (Tib. drenpa) = literally, remembering, or recollecting; (2) sampajañña (Tib. sheshin): being alert and clearly comprehending; continuity, clear comprehension, clear knowing, constant thorough understanding of impermanence, fully alert, full awareness, attention,

consideration, discrimination, comprehension, circumspection, or introspection; and (3) yoniso manasikara (Tib. yi-je): knowing what is appropriate; appropriate attention, wise reflection.

**Samprajanya (Tib. sheshin):** Alertness, clear comprehension, introspection. Knowing what is arising (eg dullness or busyness). Part of mindfulness.

**Vipashyana (Tib. lhatong):** Clearer or superior seeing: directly knowing the actual nature of an object or experience. In the Theravada, knowing every phenomena has the three marks (impermanent, not self, unsatisfying).

**Prajna (Tib. sherab):** Discriminating wisdom that knows the causes and actual nature of phenomena. The ability to discern correctly. Includes worldly as well as higher knowledge. Lower prajna sees phenomena having three marks; higher prajna sees emptiness--the way things are.

**Jnana (Tib. yeshe):** Pristine or timeless awareness; direct intuition, non-dual in nature. Knowing in itself, not knowledge of. The primordial nondual knowing nature of mind.