



June 26, 2025

Shamatha (*shinay*), commonly translated as “calm abiding,” is a state of inclusive, nonreactive, evenly abiding (resting attention) in sensations, feelings, and thoughts arise and subside. Shamatha’s qualities include stability, flexibility, clarity, and openness. Shamatha is the necessary foundation for clear seeing (*vipashyana*, *lhatong*) and other meditation practices.

HOMEWORK PART ONE: CULTIVATING SHAMATHA

Page numbers are from the booklet *Calm Abiding and Clear Seeing: An Introduction to Practice*.

- Before cultivating shamatha, reflect on one or more of the **four thoughts** (pages 2-3), and then recite the **refuge and immeasurables** verses (page 4).
- Settle into the breathing body (page 5).
- Cultivate shamatha using various objects (page 7). One day use **breath** as the primary object of attention. The next day use a **visual object**. Then try resting in attention with **no object**. Give each a try, exploring how the stability and clarity of your attention is affected.
- End every session with the **dedication** verses (page 12).

HOMEWORK PART TWO: Study the handout *Shamatha: Hindrances, Faults, and Supports*.

The arising of “hindrances” and “faults” is not a sign of failure, so don’t use them to criticize yourself or your abilities. For 2,500 years, they’ve been recognized in every Buddhist era and culture as what arises as we train ourselves in the cultivation of stable and clear attention. So we need to recognize them and learn to work with them.

- **Over time, explore how the various hindrances and faults arise in you.** Note how they affect the stability and clarity of your attention. Explore them with sensitivity and curiosity, in order to learn their nature.
- **First Turning: in one session, play with the suggested antidotes.** Applying antidotes is the basis of the First Turning of the Dharma Wheel. Does the antidote lessen the strength of the hindrance? Does the antidote work reliably? Does it depend on how and when it’s applied? Explore. Note that “*trying too hard*” is one of the faults -- so apply any antidote with a light touch, to see what happens.
- **Second Turning: in another session, don’t apply any antidotes.** As “hindrances” come and go, simply rest in the accommodating space of open awareness and goodwill. The basis of the Second Turning of the Wheel is recognizing that all experiences are empty (of permanence) and letting them come and go.
- **Six Supports:** Reflect whether these might be strengthened in your life.