

Sustaining Mahāmudrā
Four
No Clinging Yet No Distraction

Suggested review reading: MB 333-35 and 336-38

Gampopa:

When training, first cultivate vibrant mental clarity. Next train in *nondistraction*. Then train in never being distracted from the essence of awareness. When you have become accustomed to that, confidence will arise within.

And:

Vibrant clarity is an experience. *Not being distracted* from that is *stillness*. Realization is when prajñā sees that no essence exists.¹⁰

Mingyur Rinpoche:

Cultivating the recognition of awareness definitely tends to result in a quieter mind. Yet our approach is to keep recognition of awareness as our target, and then to allow whatever happens to happen. This intention is of utmost importance.

And actually, what tends to happen—when we allow it to—is that our mind settles down. But we do not focus on becoming calm or pursuing a specific result. If we fixate on remaining calm, we cannot know this calmness in a lasting way.

But if we cultivate a sustained recognition of awareness, we comprehend that *awareness itself is inherently calm*. This is the nature of awareness, no matter how turbulent our mind becomes. The steadfast calm of awareness is always with us. This allows us to discover a sense of peace and stability that is not dependent on the presence or absence of pleasant or unpleasant feelings.

Once we get a taste of this, our mind naturally quiets down. In this way, even though being calm is not the target, nonetheless it is the result. With practice, we access the calm awareness within the turbulence of our mind. Once we shift our perspective and stabilize our intention, even painful thoughts and feelings can function as pathways to this recognition. This leads to a tremendous confidence in our ability to work with whatever arises. In the midst of internal or external turmoil, we trust in the flawless reliability of our own awareness.¹¹

¹⁰ MB, 330

¹¹ *Turing Confusion into Clarity*, 52

Saraha:

The naturally pure mind needs no contrivance.
Don't grasp at it, don't release it: leave it as it is.¹²

Maitrīpa says:

Other than settling within *without distraction*,
there are no physical or verbal contrivances and no meditation.
[Despite] saying, "I'm resting evenly," or, "I'm not resting,"
there's nothing to fix with a remedy and no meditation.¹³

Gampopa teaches:

Whatever can and does appear as the solidification of latent tendencies
is pure in its own spot, without being abandoned, when you are accustomed
to *not clinging*.
Whatever your mind holds onto is a seed for characteristics.
When you *don't grasp* at anything, *arising and liberating* are simultaneous.¹⁴

Mingyur Rinpoche:

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Don't judge yourself, or get angry, or think you are alone. Everyone's mind wanders. That's fine. When you get entangled with your thoughts, come back to your support—the breath or whatever you have selected. You wander away. You come back. This is how you learn. Coming back to the object—for example, the breath—provides the support you need to steady the mind so that you can recognize awareness. When you use meditation to become aware of the breath, the mind that pays attention to the breath automatically realizes awareness.

To put it another way: using an object as support allows awareness to realize itself. You do not have to push your mind away from the support. That will happen naturally, but you must allow for it by not fixating on the object and by maintaining the intention to recognize awareness.¹⁵



¹² MB, 296

¹³ MB, 328

¹⁴ MB, 475

¹⁵ *Turing Confusion into Clarity*, 51