



ZURMANG KAGYU | BUDDHIST STUDIES SERIES
COURSE ONE | MEDITATION IN THE MAHAMUDRA TRADITION I

NOTES | CLASS THREE

An Explanation of the General Obstacles for Meditation and their Antidotes

Hindrance to Tranquility Meditation	Antidote
Mental Wandering	Contemplate impermanence or the disadvantages of distraction
Regret	Avoid ruminating on the past event
Hindrance to Insight Meditation	Antidote
Sluggishness	Imagine joyful things and events
Dullness	Motivate oneself
Doubt	Develop resoluteness
Hindrance to Both Types of Meditation	Antidote
Craving	Develop contentment by contemplating the problems of sensory pleasure
Malice	Develop loving kindness and compassion

Source: The hindrances are listed in the *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*, and the antidotes are suggested by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal. He also mentions that if you have the problem of sleepiness during meditation you should visualize something bright or open your eyes.

The Five Problems and Their Eight Antidotes

Correcting the five problems with the eight antidotes is a well-known method for achieving tranquillity meditation included in most traditional meditation manuals.

5 Problems	8 Antidotes
1. Laziness <i>kausīdya</i> ལེ་ལོ་	1. Faith <i>śraddhā</i> དད་པ་ 2. Aspiration <i>chanda</i> འདུན་པ་ 3. Striving <i>vīrya</i> བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ 4. Pliancy <i>prasabdhi</i> ཤིན་སྐྱུངས་
2. Forgetfulness <i>avavāda sammoṣa</i> གདམས་ངག་བརྗེད་པ་	5. Mindfulness <i>smṛti</i> རྟོག་པ་
3. Dullness & Mental Wandering <i>laya</i> ཕྱིང་བ་ & <i>auddhatya</i> རྐྱོད་པ་	6. Introspection <i>samprajanya</i> ཤེས་བཞིན་
4. Non-application <i>abhisamskāra</i> འདུ་མི་བྱེད་པ་	7. Application <i>adhisamskāra</i> འདུ་བྱེད་པ་
5. Over-application <i>abhisamskāra</i> འདུ་བྱེད་པ་	8. Equanimity <i>upekṣa</i> བཏང་སྣོན་པ་

Source: Maitreya's *Madhyāntavibhāga*. This is also found in Kamalāsīla's threefold *Bhāvanākrama*, and Atīśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa*.

The Two Biggest Meditation Problems: Dullness and Mental Wandering

When we are having trouble with **dullness**, then it is like our minds are sunken and we need to brighten and uplift the mind. This can be achieved by:

1. Visualizing a bright light
2. Contemplating the attributes of a Buddha
3. Taking dullness as an object of examination
4. Visualizing an expanding mental image
5. Meditating on joy to bring about an uplifting feeling

Source: the first two are suggested in the first *Bhāvanākrama*, the third in the *Prajñāpāramitāsamcayagāthā*, the fourth in the *Madhyamakahr̥daya*, and the fifth in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*.

When we are having trouble with **mental wandering**, then our minds are restless and we need to settle and relax our minds, bringing it down by:

1. Contemplating impermanence and death
2. Contemplating the problems of a distracted mind
3. Settling the mind in tranquility

Source: the first suggestion is found in the first *Bhāvanākrama*, the second in the *Madhyamakahr̥daya*, and the third in the *Prajñāpāramitāsamcayagāthā*.