

mental distractions, and times where there are no mental distractions at all in one's meditation. Overall it is said that in the second mental abiding there are periods when the mental distractions take a rest, and this is the difference from the first mental abiding.

Of the six forces, the second mental abiding is mainly achieved through the force of thinking. This is because one's ability to prolong the length of one's mental abiding is said to be mainly because of one's efforts in trying to familiarise the mind with the object, by contemplating it over and over again.

The Four Types of Mental Attention

There are four types of mental attentions, which also distinguish the nine mental abidings. For the first two mental abidings, the type of mental attention applied is called forceful attention. Even though, in the first two mental abidings, the level of abiding is interrupted by obstacles, mental sinking or excitement, it is said that we mainly apply forceful attention rather than interrupted attention. This is because the obstacles (mainly mental sinking or excitement) are so great that forceful attention is necessary.

422.331.213.3 Patch-like Placement

The third mental abiding is called Patch-like Placement, as it is like putting a patch over a hole in a piece of cloth. Compared with the second mental abiding, when you reach the third level the duration of the abiding is longer, and the duration of the mental distractions is shorter. This is because as soon as any mental distraction arises, the meditator can recognise this. Not only that, but the meditator can also immediately apply an antidote to remove it. The result is that the duration of mental abiding is longer.

During the third mental abiding a strong force of mindfulness is generated. If any distractions arise during the meditation, the meditator is able to overcome that distraction and place the mind back onto the object. This is because the meditator has achieved a strong force of mindfulness.

422.331.213.4 Close Placement

Through further increasing the force of mindfulness it is said that one will reach the fourth mental abiding which is close placement. As the force of mindfulness reaches its peak level, it is very obvious during the fourth mental abiding that the length of concentration is even further extended in comparison to the first three mental abidings. At the fourth mental abiding, since one has fully developed the force of mindfulness, it is impossible for the meditator to lose the object.

At this fourth level the meditator still has to apply the antidotes to mental sinking and excitement, as both of these can still be present. In fact to understand each level of mental abiding properly it is essential to have a good understanding of the five faults and the eight antidotes that we have we previously discussed. To be better able to understand this level of abiding we have to know that there are both subtle and gross forms of mental sinking and excitement.

The third and fourth mental abidings are mainly achieved through the force of mindfulness. The reason is that during the third mental abiding, even though the meditator still experiences mental distractions, he or she

is able to remove them immediately they occur, and so progress to this level of mental abiding. This is because as soon as the object is lost the meditator is able to bring it back, through the force of mindfulness, likewise in the fourth mental abiding. The difference between the third and the fourth mental abiding is that at the fourth level the meditator never loses the object of the meditation. Why? Because of the full development of the force of mindfulness.

It is important to try to combine your study of the current topic with revision of earlier ones, because they are linked to each other. The earlier ones are therefore very important and a good understanding of them is essential. Revision of all the previous topics not only improves your understanding of them, but it makes the current topic clearer, so there is no point in skimming over them.

Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.

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Note on authentication

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