Chapter 1 **Śamatha and Vipaśyanā**

- 1. Place of Chapter 1 in the Lamrim
  - Transition from first four perfections to meditative stability and wisdom
  - Śamatha and vipaśyanā complete the bodhisattva path
  - Doctrinal orientation before technical instructions
- 2. Central Thesis
  - All mundane and supramundane qualities arise from śamatha and vipaśyanā together
  - Neither calm nor insight alone is sufficient
  - Ignorance is the root of afflictions; wisdom uproots it
  - Stable concentration is required for wisdom to penetrate
- 3. Śamatha – Calm Abiding
  - Definition
    - Mind remains on its object as long as one wishes
    - Free from laxity and excitement
    - Accompanied by mental and physical pliancy
  - Functions
    - Stabilises attention for analysis
    - Temporarily suppresses manifest afflictions
    - Produces a serviceable, obedient mind
  - Clarification
    - Non-Buddhists can attain śamatha
    - Śamatha alone does not liberate
- 4. Vipaśyanā – Special Insight
  - Definition
    - Penetrating analytic wisdom discerning reality
    - Culminates in direct non-conceptual realization of emptiness
  - Functions
    - Cuts the seeds of afflictions
    - Directly opposes ignorance and self-grasping
  - Clarification
    - Conceptual understanding is not yet vipaśyanā
    - True vipaśyanā requires śamatha-supported pliancy
- 5. Why Śamatha Must Come First
  - Śamatha precedes direct realization of emptiness
  - Analysis without stability scatters
  - Pliancy enables sustained analytic power
  - Union of calm and insight defines the supramundane path
  - Analogy
    - Śamatha as windscreen
    - Vipaśyanā as lamp illuminating emptiness
  - Method realises this principle
    - Chapter 3: Flawless Method - Object discipline
- 6. Two Truths and Dependent Arising
  - **Conventional truth:** functional appearances governed by causality
  - **Ultimate truth:** emptiness of intrinsic existence
  - Dependent arising bridges the two truths
  - Because things arise dependently, they are empty
  - Emptiness enables function
- 7. Emptiness of Self as the Core Target
  - All afflictions arise from belief in a real 'I' and 'mine'
  - Vipaśyanā primarily investigates the self of the person
  - Śamatha provides the stability to sustain this inquiry
- 8. Broader Doctrinal Frame
  - Three realms: desire, form, formless
  - Nine afflictions in each realm
  - Eighty-one afflictions in total through subdivisions
  - Only the supramundane path eradicates afflictions at the root
- 9. Practice Orientation
  - Cultivate śamatha first to stabilise the mind
  - Introduce analytic reasoning gradually
  - Unite calm and insight within single sessions (not separate practices)
  - Avoid mistaking tranquility for liberation
- 10. Diagnostics and Pitfalls
  - Mistaking calm for awakening
  - Over-intellectualising emptiness
  - Neglecting ethics as the foundation
  - Attempting insight without stability
  - Forcing analysis before stability matures
- 11. Contemplative Progression
  - Conceptual understanding
  - Inferential insight
  - Śamatha-supported analysis
  - Union of calm and insight
  - Direct realization of emptiness
  - Elimination of afflictions
  - Buddhahood
- 12. Pocket Reminder
  - Stabilise the mind, sharpen the wisdom, join them inseparably
  - When calm abides with insight, the root of suffering is cut

Suppression

Eradication

Ultimate Criterion
Liberation occurs only when ignorance is directly undermined, not merely suppressed.

Is calm supporting insight, and is insight cutting self-grasping?

Diagnostic Overlay Śamatha & Vipaśyanā

- A. Diagnosing Imbalance Between Calm and Insight
  - Mind feels calm, spacious, pleasant, but no inquiry occurs → Indicates: Śamatha without vipaśyanā → Risk: Subtle complacency → Adjustment: Introduce gentle analysis after stability is established
  - Insight feels sharp, clever, or exciting, but unstable → Indicates: Vipaśyanā attempted without śamatha → Risk: Mental agitation, conceptual proliferation → Adjustment: Return to stabilisation first
  - Understanding emptiness feels intellectual but not transformative → Indicates: Conceptual understanding only → Risk: Over-intellectualising → Adjustment: Strengthen śamatha, shorten analysis, repeat frequently
- B. Diagnosing Mistaken Attainments
  - “I’m not thinking, so this must be meditation” → Error: Absence of thought ≠ śamatha → Correction: Check clarity and holding
  - “This feels peaceful, so ignorance must be weakening” → Error: Peace ≠ wisdom → Correction: Ask: Is self-grasping actually challenged?
  - “I understand emptiness, but reactions persist unchanged” → Error: Insight not yet integrated → Correction: Return to union of calm and analysis
- C. Diagnosing the Object of Insight
  - Analysis feels abstract or disconnected from experience → Indicates: Object not clearly targeted → Correction: Return to emptiness of self, not emptiness in general
  - Emptiness feels like nothingness or blankness → Indicates: Drift toward nihilism → Correction: Re-anchor in dependent arising
  - Emptiness feels like a hidden essence → Indicates: Subtle eternalism → Correction: Re-examine lack of intrinsic existence
- D. Progress Markers (Very Important) Help prevent discouragement.
  - Good signs (don’t cling):
    - Greater mental pliancy
    - Less reactivity
    - Faster recovery from afflictions
    - Insight feels quieter, not dramatic
  - Not required at this stage:
    - Bliss
    - Visions
    - Emotional fireworks
    - Permanent calm