Chapter 6 śamatha as part of the path (action eyes)

- cushion card — what to do in one session (post-śamatha template)
  - **1) stabilise:** settle on the object until bright and steady
  - **2) analyse briefly (2–5 min):** mundane calm/coarse or supramundane topic
  - **3) return:** take the conclusion as the object; rest in stable placement
  - **rule:** train first; review after (no mid-sit audit)
- **part 1** — the fork after śamatha (two paths, and no others)
  - readiness marker (analysis can swim)
  - why śamatha is not enough
    - **śamatha is a power tool** (serviceable mind), not liberation by itself
    - afflictions are not uprooted by calm alone; wisdom/insight is required
  - two paths
    - **mundane path:** suppress afflictions (temporary; latent seeds remain)
    - **supramundane path:** uproot afflictions (liberating insight)
  - key clarification (avoid a common mistake)
    - not simply ‘śamatha suppresses, vipaśyanā uproots’
    - mundane suppression requires discernment + stabilisation working together
    - analysis without stabilisation scatters; stabilisation without discernment doesn’t subdue
  - take conclusion as object
  - readiness marker for insight practice
    - analysis can ‘swim’ without disturbing calm (fish in water)
    - if analysis makes the mind ragged, strengthen stabilisation first
- **part 2 mundane path** (calmness and coarseness) the six attentions (+ result)
  - mundane track detail
    - overview
      - these are analytical meditative states (mundane insight)
      - they work by calm/coarse comparison: desire realm vs form realm
      - the ‘seventh’ is the result: actual first absorption
  - the six attentions (action flow)
    - 1) **discernment of characteristics** (learn the features)
      - study the qualities of desire realm vs first form realm
      - **preparatory:** afflictions not yet subdued; not yet ‘actual insight’
    - 2) **arising of belief** (analysis becomes conviction)
      - discernment deepens until it becomes integrated belief
      - take the conclusion as the stabilisation object
    - 3) **isolation** (direct antidote to gross desire-realm afflictions)
      - freedom from gross mental afflictions (suppression begins)
    - 4) **delight / withdrawal** (middle-level afflictions)
      - joy in withdrawal supports practice
      - **warning:** too much joy can tip into distraction; keep withdrawal steady
    - 5) **analysis as testing** (avoid premature certainty)
      - gross afflictions quiet → subtle ones can hide
      - test with former triggers to reveal what remains and prevent arrogance
    - 6) **final application** (subtle remnants)
      - remove the smallest desire-realm afflictions
      - immediate cause of freedom from desire realm and first absorption
  - mundane success (what it is, and what it is not)
    - afflictions are ‘asleep, not dead’ (latent tendencies remain)
    - useful and protective, but not liberation
- diagnostics + pitfalls + pocket reminder
  - diagnostics
    - if analysis disrupts calm, shorten analysis; strengthen stabilisation first
    - if you feel ‘done it’ because gross faults are quiet, use ‘analysis as testing’ to check subtle remnants
  - pitfalls
    - treating śamatha as liberation (it is not)
    - believing calm alone suppresses afflictions (discernment is required)
    - overconfidence from temporary quiet (subtle afflictions can hide)
  - pocket reminder
    - śamatha is the instrument; vipaśyanā is the liberating work
    - mundane path can put afflictions to sleep; insight into selflessness uproots them
    - use the classic maps; don’t chase novelty
- śamatha–vipaśyanā bridge (the hand-off to wisdom work)
  - **śamatha:** stability + clarity + pliancy → serviceable mind (instrument)
  - **mundane vipaśyanā:** calm/coarse discernment → temporary suppression
  - **uncommon vipaśyanā:** insight into selflessness/emptiness → uprooting (liberation)
  - **emptiness-of-self emphasis:** excitement and craving ride on ‘i need…’; insight cuts the engine
- subtle remnants / false confidence
  - calm ≠ emptiness
  - warnings (the chapter’s safety rails)
    - don’t confuse concentration with wisdom
      - non-discursive calm is not automatically emptiness or liberation
      - avoid mistaking refined states for the goal
    - avoid ‘secret instruction hunting’
      - classic scriptures and maps are the special instructions
      - without study you can’t distinguish buddhist from non-buddhist concentration
      - risk: confidently training wrong habits
  - who proceeds mundanely (diagnostic, not judgement)
    - those with non-buddhist views of a permanent self; no interest in selflessness
    - buddhists with dull faculties (emptiness is difficult)
    - sharp people whose virtue has not matured enough for realisation in this life
    - bodhisattvas prioritising merit now, aiming for enlightenment later