

Śamatha Architecture Master Map Chapters 1-3

1. Why The Necessity of Śamatha and Vipāśyanā (Chapter 1)

- Lamrim Placement
 - Śamatha and vipāśyanā complete the Six Perfections
 - All qualities arise from calm and insight together
- Two Truths Framework
 - Conventional truth: dependent functioning
 - Ultimate truth: emptiness of intrinsic existence
 - Dependent arising bridges the two
- Śamatha – Calm Abiding
 - Single-pointed stability free from laxity and excitement
 - Produces pliancy and mental serviceability
 - Suppresses but does not eradicate afflictions
 - Needed for Vipāśyanā
- Vipāśyanā – Special Insight
 - Penetrative wisdom realising emptiness
 - Directly opposes ignorance and self-grasping
 - Requires śamatha-supported stability
 - Essential for enlightenment
- Core Insight
 - Ignorance grasps at a real self
 - Wisdom cuts the root
 - Calm stabilises the mind for cutting

2. What Assembling the Causes (Chapter 2)

- Śamatha is Causal
 - Calmness without a defined object and sustained mindfulness is not śamatha.
 - Mind is dependently arisen – including meditation
 - Śamatha arises only when causes are complete
 - Śamatha fails if causes are incomplete or object is poorly chosen
- Six Preconditions – Preparing the Ground
 - Dwelling in an appropriate place
 - Having little desire
 - Being content
 - Giving up many activities
 - Pure ethical discipline
 - Abandoning thoughts of fame, gain, status
- Selecting the Object
 - Object must appear clearly to the mind
 - Object must be stable and repeatable
 - Object must not provoke strong afflictions
 - Buddha as supreme stabilising object
 - Constructed mental image – stability before detail
- Object Discipline
 - Wrong object encourages laxity or excitement
 - Switching objects fragments attention **Don't switch**
 - Chasing clarity produces agitation

3. How Training the Mind Flawlessly (Chapter 3)

- Definition of Śamatha
 - Stable, vivid attention held as long as desired
 - Free from coarse and subtle laxity
 - Free from coarse and subtle excitement
- Mindfulness and Introspection
 - Mindfulness holds the object
 - Introspection monitors quality
 - Balanced effort – neither too tight nor too loose
- Working with the Object
 - Begin with very simple features eg colour
 - Do not analyse or embellish
 - If object changes – stop and reset
 - Only add features after hour long stability achieved
- Two Principal Obstacles
 - Laxity – clarity declines
 - Excitement – stability declines
- Session Discipline
 - Multiple short sessions
 - End while practice is going well
 - Quality over duration

- Chapter 1 – Why calm and insight are necessary
- Chapter 2 – What conditions and object make stability possible
- Chapter 3 – How stability is actually trained
- Śamatha is dependently arisen – not accidental

Architectural Summary

WHY defines necessity
WHAT assembles causes
HOW executes training
FAULTS reveal imbalance

When śamatha is not progressing — where is the structural imbalance?
Is the problem View, Causes, or Method?

A. View Imbalance (Chapter 1 Issue)

- Symptoms:**
- Meditation feels mechanical or dry
 - Calm is pursued for comfort alone
 - Insight feels abstract or intellectual
 - No connection to emptiness of self
 - Strong subtle belief in a solid meditator

- Check:**
- Two truths understood correctly?
 - Is calm being used to stabilise self-grasping rather than examine it?
 - Is vipāśyanā remembered as the goal?

- Correction:**
Return to:
- Ignorance as root
 - Calm supports cutting
 - Dependent arising applies to meditation itself

B. Causal Imbalance (Chapter 2 Issue)

- Symptoms before or during practice:**
- Mind constantly planning
 - Emotional residue from daily life
 - Desire for recognition or success intruding
 - Frequent urge to change object
 - Object unclear or unstable
 - Subtle dissatisfaction during sessions

- Check:**
- Environment overstimulating?
 - Too many activities?
 - Ethical friction present?
 - Object suitable and repeatable?

- Correction:**
Rebuild:
- Six Preconditions
 - Simplify object
 - Commit to one object

C. Method Imbalance (Chapter 3 Issue)

- Symptoms during session:**
- Dullness, heaviness, fading clarity
 - Tightness, tension, mental agitation
 - Alternating dullness and excitement
 - Over-effort or under-effort

- Check:**
- Is mindfulness holding clearly?
 - Is introspection monitoring gently?
 - Is effort balanced?

- Correction:**
- Brighten object (for laxity)
 - Relax intensity (for excitement)
 - Reset if object shifts

Because all three chapters ultimately aim at: Weakening the reified meditator.
If practice increases subtle pride, performance anxiety, or identity: You are reinforcing self-grasping.

- After session, ask:
- Is the mind more workable?
 - Is reactivity slightly reduced?
 - Is self-reference slightly softer?
- If not:
Return to structure — not to intensity.

Stability supports insight

Suppression = eradication

Stability requires causes

Detail follows stability

Wrong object → specific fault

Object must be holdable

Stability without wisdom stagnates.
Wisdom without stability scatters.
Causes without discipline fail.