

Looking at the Nature of Mind Within Stillness:

Four Questions

Within a state of relatively tranquil meditation—resting in a calm, open, content state—inquire into the nature of the state (which is to say, the nature of mind) by asking yourself these questions. You may find this meditation exercise similar to meditations in which you look for the 'self'. It is not unconnected. But there is a difference: In this meditation, you are gradually discovering the nature of mind, which is selflessness, but not a mere selflessness. The intent of this exercise is to ask each question freshly every time you meditate, so that you are not ready with a preconceived answer. Your answers may change as you go forward, or you may increasingly come up with a 'non-answer' or with a subtler answer.

The *Four Questions* will suffice for one meditation session. Between questions, give yourself plenty of time to rest again in meditation. There can be as much as five minutes between questions. If you like, at this point, you can extend your meditation sessions to a half hour.

Additional support: It may be helpful to look under the Vipassana (or Insight) sections of these books: *The Mahamudra: Eliminating the Darkness of Ignorance* by the Ninth Karmapa and *Clarifying the Natural State* by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal. These books include some of the same inquiries but also others that you may want to experiment with.

1. Is the still mind neutral and dark, or is it sharp clarity that is nakedly aware?

2. Is the still mind (this very experience) something that can be grasped and identified? Or is it beyond identification and description? Is it expressible or inexpressible?

3. Is there a place where this still mind ends and something else begins? Is the mind containable within space?

4. Is there a difference between the state of stillness/resting and the mind that looks at this state?

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