

## Winter 2004: Repeating Blissful Experiences

*QUESTION: A few years ago I discovered a book called **Mind Development**, by Ven. Phra Tepvisuddhikavi. I began to study and practice its teachings on anapanasatibhavana, mindfulness based on breathing. With my first effort I was able to achieve one-pointedness and the resulting ecstasy (piti) to an intense degree. However, I did not maintain a regular practice habit and usually limited my practice to thirty minutes per session. I now find it more difficult to develop one-pointedness and often fall asleep. What is it that I am doing, or not doing, that I can no longer develop meditation as I had in the beginning? I've tried meditation with my eyes open but feel somewhat distracted. I am more interested in the shamatha aspects of the practice. Can you please help me find that one-pointedness that I found so easy at the beginning?*

**Narayan Liebenson Grady:** If you are looking for deep levels of samadhi, a half-hour a day is probably not going to do it, unless you have extremely unusual karma.

However, to put your question into a larger context, you might bring your attention to the Second Noble Truth, which is, of course, that attachment is suffering. Because you had such a delightful experience on your first try, the tendency of the mind is to cling to it and direct your efforts toward getting that experience back. However, the law of impermanence reveals that this is not possible. This is a great opportunity to see impermanence clearly and to practice letting go.

Freedom lies in letting go of all experiences, even positive meditative states. Our practice can be focused on the attempt to get high or it can be directed towards that which is lasting and indestructible. I encourage the latter approach. Be aware of trying to repeat an experience. Be aware of disappointment and discouragement, and of trying to attain a particular state of mind. You will be well on your way.