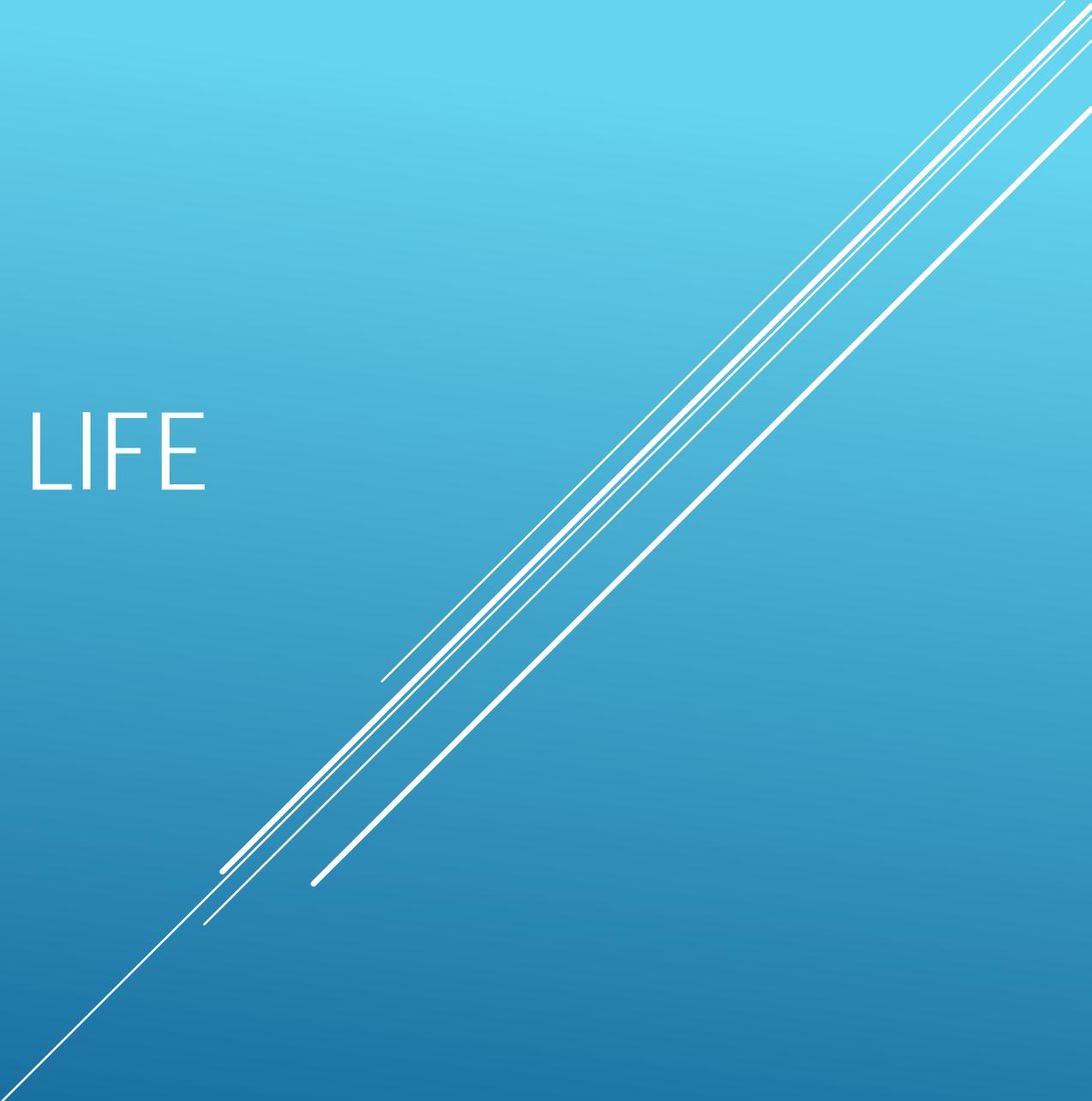


THE TREADMILL OF LIFE AND DEATH

Session 4: Online Course in Meditation

A series of several parallel white lines of varying thicknesses, slanted diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right, set against a blue gradient background.

Fault

- ▶ Laziness: disinclined to make an effort
- ▶ Types of laziness:
 - ▶ “I don’t see the need”—indolence
 - ▶ “I can’t do this”—feelings of inadequacy
 - ▶ “Tomorrow”—procrastination
 - ▶ “Up too late drinking beer”—attachment to non-virtuous behaviour

Antidotes

- ▶ Faith
 - ▶ Know that meditation is the way
- ▶ Aspiration
 - ▶ Be eager for the balanced mind meditation can bring
- ▶ Enthusiasm
 - ▶ Stir yourself up to make an effort
- ▶ Pliancy
 - ▶ As the mind calms it becomes more useful

DEAL WITH YOUR LAZINESS

- ▶ **Attention**
 - ▶ The ability to maintain awareness of an object
- ▶ **Meditation**
 - ▶ Sustained voluntary attention
- ▶ **Samādhi**
 - ▶ A concentrated state of mind—focusing on an object continually, one-pointedly and in the same mode
 - ▶ Quiescence developed through meditation
- ▶ **Mindfulness**
 - ▶ The ability to pay attention to the object of meditation
- ▶ **Introspection**
 - ▶ The ability to observe what is going on inside one's own mind

SOME DEFINITIONS

What mindfulness does

- ▶ Prevents forgetfulness of the object
 - ▶ Remembrance of the object, drawing the mind back
- ▶ Prevents the attention's being distracted to other objects
 - ▶ With mindfulness the object appears continuously to the mind

How to develop it

- ▶ Hold the object in the mind
- ▶ Exert the right amount of effort to focus the awareness on the object
- ▶ Maintain your attention on the object
- ▶ Settle on the object without paying attention to anything else

MINDFULNESS

What introspection does

- ▶ Observe the inner state of the mind
- ▶ Recognize quickly whether laxity or excitement has arisen in meditation
- ▶ Not just after they have arisen but before they arise
- ▶ Introspection will lead to powerful and continual mindfulness
- ▶ Your ability to sustain samādhi grows

How to develop it

- ▶ Generate continual mindfulness
- ▶ Then observe whether your attention has veered towards laxity or excitement
- ▶ Use it occasionally—neither too frequently nor too infrequently

INTROSPECTION



Holding a tea cup

1. The hand holds the cup
2. The hand uses a firm grip
3. The eye checks whether the cup is tilted to one side or the other

Meditation

1. Mindfulness holds the object in attention
2. Attention can be tightened
3. Introspection monitors whether laxity or excitement has arisen

PAYING ATTENTION IS LIKE HOLDING A TEA CUP

Laxity

- ▶ Dullness, slackness, stagnation, lethargy, stupor, torpor, vagueness, doziness, droopiness
- ▶ An internal distraction
 - ▶ The mind is drawn inward but is vague, unclear
 - ▶ The ability to pay attention is decreased
- ▶ Attention can be stable but the mind lacks clarity
 - ▶ Like darkness preventing your seeing the object
 - ▶ The mind can become gloomy, depressed
- ▶ Laxity obstructs mindfulness

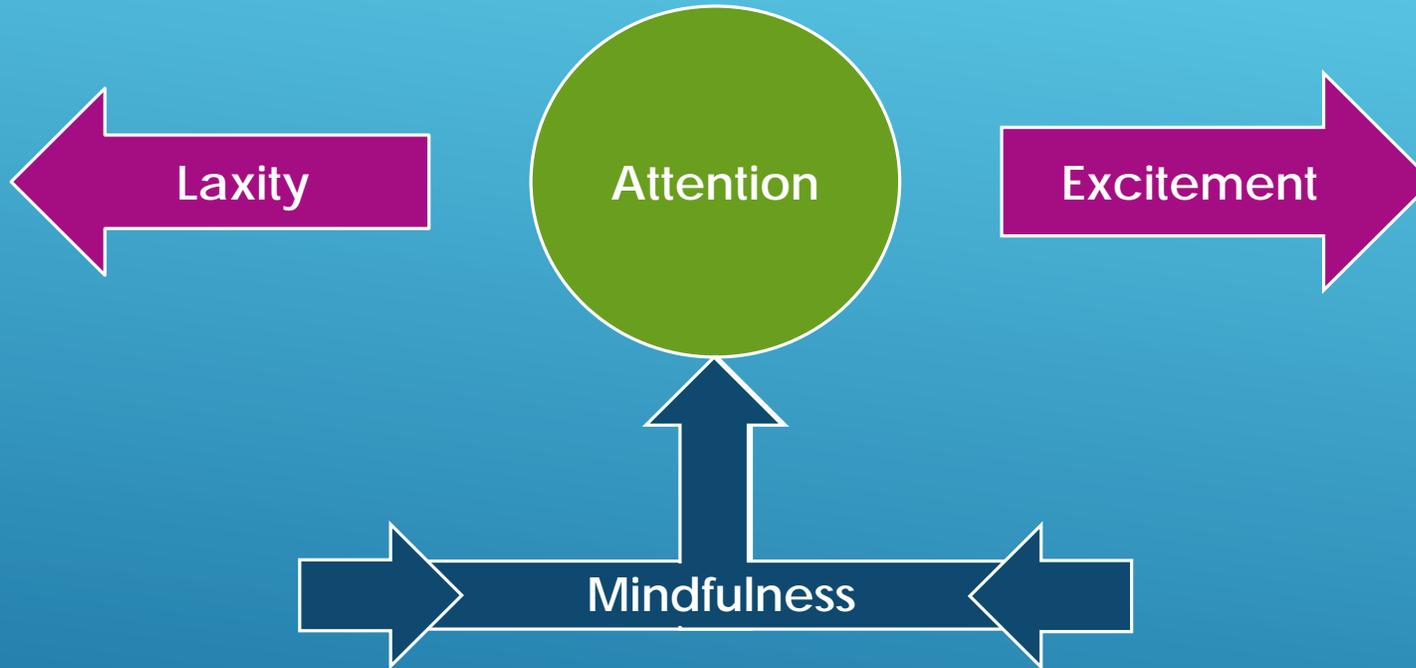
Excitement

- ▶ Aroused, too tense, being worked up, being restless
- ▶ The mind is distracted from the object of meditation
 - ▶ The attention is drawn to objects of desire
 - ▶ The mind is noisy
- ▶ Coarse excitement
 - ▶ The object of meditation can be forgotten altogether
- ▶ Subtle excitement
 - ▶ The mind can maintain peripheral noise
 - ▶ Waiting for a pleasant object to appear
 - ▶ Like water moving under frozen ice
- ▶ Excitement obstructs introspection

TWO KEY OBSTACLES TO MEDITATION



Introspection



PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR ATTENTION

When more is needed

- ▶ Mindfulness will increase and introspection will be able to detect even subtle laxity and excitement
- ▶ But we can be habituated to excitement
- ▶ We can also become complacent
 - ▶ Drowsy
 - ▶ Too relaxed
 - ▶ Not curious about insight
 - ▶ Letting the mind remain in darkness
 - ▶ Taking no pleasure in the object

Intervene with your will

- ▶ You need to do something when you fail to exercise mindfulness and introspection
 - ▶ Intervene by using the will to eliminate laxity or excitement
 - ▶ Like a magnet drawing the mind
- ▶ Failure to intervene inhibits further progress
- ▶ If you have to use your will, be sure to return to relaxed attention afterward

WILL

Causes

- Lethargy or drowsiness
- Slackening in how the object is apprehended—the anchor/object becomes vague
- The mind becomes scattered

Remedies

- Rub your face, wash your face, get up and take a walk, have a cup of tea etc.
- Inspire yourself with stimulating teachings or the benefits of enthusiasm
- Take delight in your meditation
- Allow the body to become filled with light or qi flow
- Let your body radiate outwards—the object of meditation will expand and become vast

Causes

- The mind attaches itself to an object and pursues it
 - The mind can be drawn to sense stimuli and pleasures
- The mind is distracted
 - It is not the objects of attachment in themselves that distract the mind but the ideas in our minds about those objects
 - Thinking (ideation) can be compulsive

Remedies

- Disillusion yourself about the distracting object—stop meditating long enough to reflect on the disadvantages
- Abandon conceptual thought
- Excessive force in fixing the attention will backfire—always be soft and gentle
- As the mind calms down it is less prone to distraction

EXCITEMENT



Training an Elephant

1. The elephant
2. The tree or post
3. The rope
4. The sharp training hook

Meditation

1. Your attention
2. Object of meditation
3. Mindfulness
4. Introspection

FINDING THE MID-POINT BETWEEN LAXITY
AND EXCITEMENT IS LIKE TRAINING AN
UNTAMED ELEPHANT

How to Use a Mantra

Do not think about the meaning of the words

- *Locate the mantra low in the body*
- *Let it say itself*

Use it to increase attention

- *Do not abuse the mantra by using it outside of meditation practice*

After several thousand repetitions it can become quite powerful

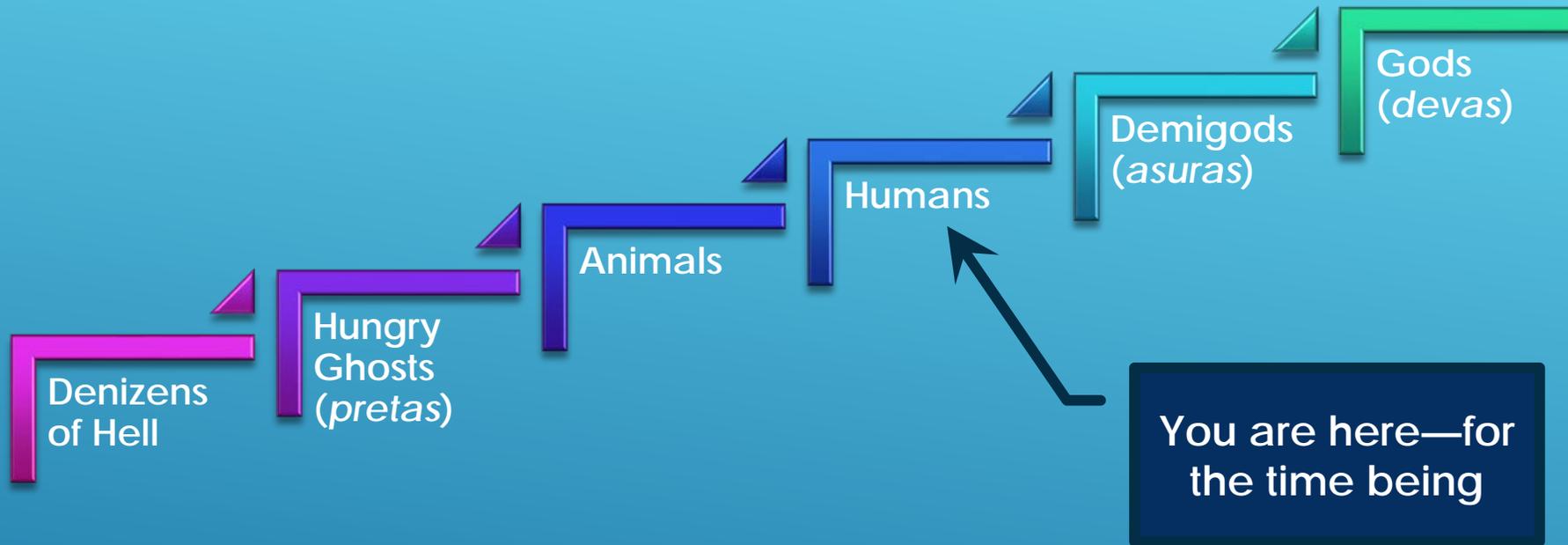
Try this mantra

*May all beings
be well and happy*

MEDITATION USING A MANTRA

KARMA AND REBIRTH

Concepts



SIX DESTINIES—REBIRTH IN SAMBARA

The goal is freedom from the bonds of karma and the universe it has created



Human existence affords the opportunity to practice



Gaining a human existence is precious. Don't waste yours.

EXISTENCE
AS A
HUMAN IS
PRECIOUS

- ▶ A ring is floating on the surface of the world's oceans
- ▶ A sea turtle is travelling the oceans and only raises its head above the surface to breath once every hundred years
- ▶ The likelihood the turtle will put its head through the ring the next time it surfaces is greater than the likelihood of your gaining a human existence—this time or next time

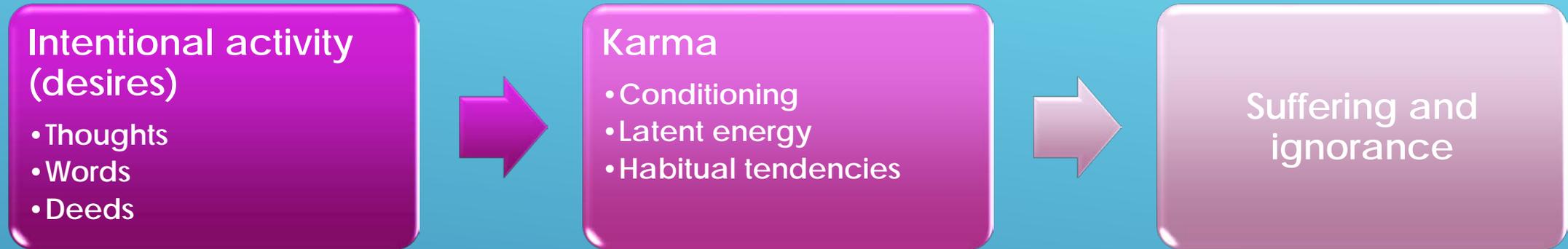
THE SEA TURTLE AND THE GOLDEN RING



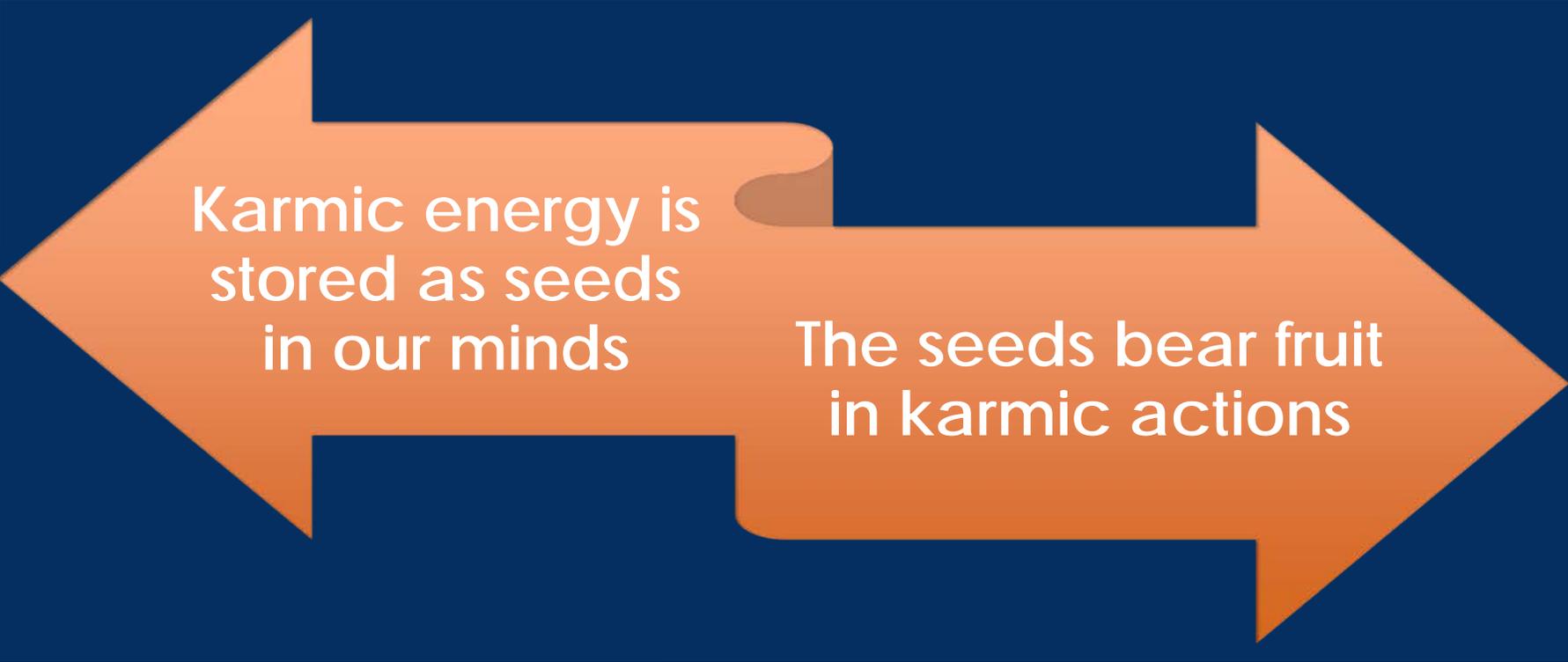
Karma
determines our
minds and bodies

Karma
determines our
destinies—the
realms we inhabit

KARMA: THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT



KARMA IS A PROCESS



Karmic energy is
stored as seeds
in our minds

The seeds bear fruit
in karmic actions

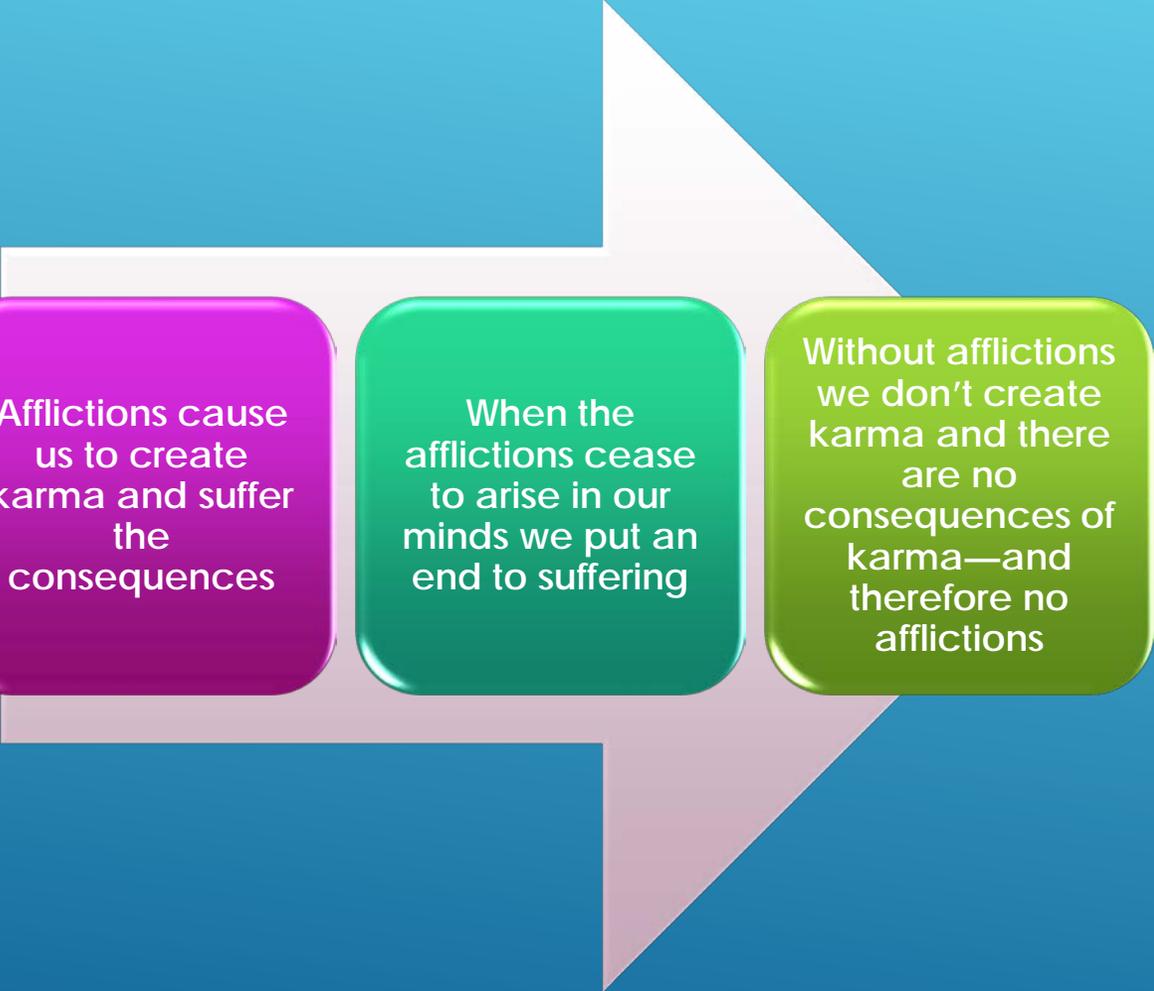
KARMA PROJECTS FROM THE STOREHOUSE
CONSCIOUSNESS OF OUR MINDS



The roots of negative karma are the *kleśa*, also known as:

- Afflictions
- Defilements
- Hindrances
- Emotional obstructions
- Evil passions
- Poisons

THE ROOTS OF NEGATIVE KARMA



Afflictions cause us to create karma and suffer the consequences

When the afflictions cease to arise in our minds we put an end to suffering

Without afflictions we don't create karma and there are no consequences of karma—and therefore no afflictions

BREAKING THE CYCLE

UNDO KARMA

- ▶ Take action to undo the harm of unwholesome karma and cultivate wholesome karma
- ▶ Suffering comes from holding onto the past
 - ▶ *You can be free of your history*
- ▶ Keep the mind focussed on what is happening right now
 - ▶ *The past is irrelevant*
 - ▶ *The future is yet to come and you don't need to worry about it*
 - ▶ *Good and bad, right and wrong are irrelevant*

Karma is real—you can experience it in meditation



To clear karma

Acknowledge
whatever
arises in
meditation

Do not resist
or repress it

Stay
detached—it
does not
involve you

Let go of
whatever
comes up

Maintain your
meditative
presence

HOW TO
CLEAR
KARMA IN
MEDITATION