

EIGHT AWAKENINGS OF GREAT BEINGS

The third awakening is to enjoy serenity. This is to be away from noise and confusion, and stay alone in a quiet place. Thus, it is called “to enjoy serenity in seclusion.”

The Buddha said, “Monks, if you want to have the joy of serene nondoing, you should be away from the crowds and stay alone in a quiet place. A still place is what Indra and other devas revere. By leaving behind your relations as well as others’, and by living in a quiet place, you may contemplate the conditions of suffering. If you are attached to the crowds, you will receive suffering, just like a tree that attracts a great many birds and gets killed by them. If you are bound by worldly matters, you will drown in troubles, just like an old elephant who is stuck in a swamp and cannot get out. This is called ‘to enjoy serenity in seclusion.’”

The fourth awakening is diligent effort. It is to engage ceaselessly in wholesome practices. That is why it is called “diligent effort.” It is refinement without mixing in other activities. You keep going forward without turning back.

The Buddha said, “Monks, if you make diligent effort, nothing is too difficult. That is why you should do so. It is like a thread of water piercing through a rock by constantly dripping. If your mind continues to slacken, it is like taking a break from hitting stones before they spark; you can’t get fire that way. What I am speaking of is ‘diligent effort.’” illuminated with wisdom, even if you use your physical eyes, you will have clear insight. This is called ‘to cultivate wisdom.’”

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