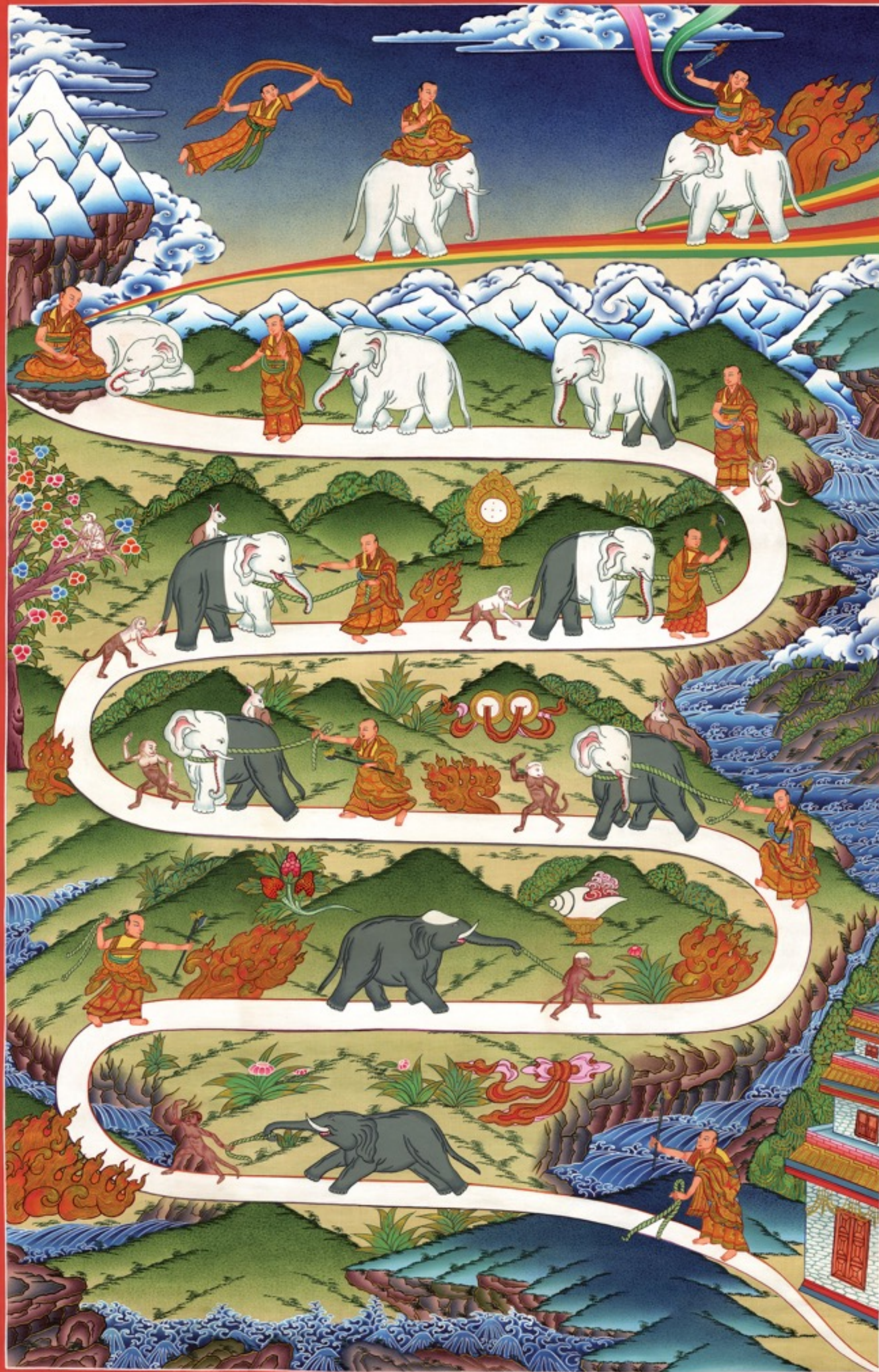


MEDITATION ESSENTIALS 07:

# Recognizing Obstacles





# Concentration / Serenity

## Distinguishing features:

1. vivid intensity, intense mental clarity
2. stability, one-pointedness

# Object of Concentration





## Stages of Tight Focus

1. **Settle the psyche.** Achieved through “hearing.”
2. **Settling continually.** Achieved through “reflection.”

# Faults That Prevent Serenity

1. Laziness
2. Forgetting the instructions
3. Not recognizing agitation and dullness
4. Not applying antidotes
5. Over-applying antidotes

# Laziness

Avoid practice. Caused by:

1. Defeatism
2. Attachment to harmful actions
3. Lack of will

**Antidote:** Cultivate faith: contemplate advantages of serenity, and disadvantages of distraction.

# Forgetting the Instruction

Distraction. Lose the object of concentration.

**Antidote:** mindfulness.

# Excitement / Agitation

Unquiet state of mind.

1. Attracted to pleasurable objects, memories, thoughts, feelings, sensations
2. Causes psyche to be scattered, seeking outward with a sense of craving
3. Result: impedes stabilization of psyche and development of concentration

**Antidote:** Introspection. Reflect on impermanence, and faults of distractions.



# Laxity / Dullness

Lack of clarity.

**Antidote:** Expand your awareness by recalling something that affects you like cold water on your face: visualize a bright light or sun, or reflect on something truly astonishing, such as a personal experience with divinity, the compassion of the great masters, etc.

# Exercises

1. Throughout the day, develop **self-observation**.
2. Each day, for at least 10-20 minutes, develop **meditative concentration** through visualization of the image.
3. Continue your spiritual diary.

