

Practical Jhānas: Right Concentration and the Suttas

Secular Buddhism Conference
Barre Center for Buddhist Studies
26 March, 2013

Leigh Brasington

<http://leighb.com/sbc2013.pdf>
Set your PDF viewer to "Page Level"
(use Ctrl+L in Adobe Reader)

The Four Noble Truths

- 1) Dukkha Happens
- 2) Dukkha Happens Dependent on Craving
- 3) Dukkha Ceases when Craving Ceases
- 4) The Path of Practice Leading to the End of Dukkha

The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path

- 1) Dukkha Happens
- 2) Dukkha Happens Dependent on Craving
- 3) Dukkha Ceases when Craving Ceases
- 4) The Path of Practice Leading to the End of Dukkha
 - Right View
 - Right Intention
 - Right Speech
 - Right Action
 - Right Livelihood
 - Right Effort
 - Right Mindfulness
 - Right Concentration

The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path

- 1) Dukkha Happens
- 2) Dukkha Happens Dependent on Craving
- 3) Dukkha Ceases when Craving Ceases
- 4) The Path of Practice Leading to the End of Dukkha
 - Right View
 - Right Intention
 - Right Speech
 - Right Action
 - Right Livelihood
 - Right Effort
 - Right Mindfulness
 - Right Concentration**

Right Concentration

"Perhaps no aspect of the the Buddha's teaching has been both more misunderstood and neglected than Right Concentration (*Samma Samādhī*)."

Leigh Brasington, **Practical Jhānas**, (forthcoming)

Right Concentration

What is Samma Samādhī?

Right Concentration

What is Samma Samādhi? Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the **first Jhāna**, which is accompanied by vitakka and vicara and filled with piti and sukha born of seclusion.

Right Concentration

What is Samma Samādhi? Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the **first Jhāna**, which is accompanied by vitakka and vicara and filled with piti and sukha born of seclusion. Further, with the subsiding of vitakka and vicara, one enters and dwells in the **second Jhāna**, which is accompanied by inner tranquility and unification of mind and is without vitakka and vicara and is filled with piti and sukha, born of concentration.

Right Concentration

What is Samma Samādhī? Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the **first Jhāna**, which is accompanied by vitakka and vicāra and filled with pīti and sukha born of seclusion. Further, with the subsiding of vitakka and vicāra, one enters and dwells in the **second Jhāna**, which is accompanied by inner tranquility and unification of mind and is without vitakka and vicāra and is filled with pīti and sukha, born of concentration. Further, with the fading away of pīti, one dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body. Thus one enters and dwells in the **third jhāna**, of which the noble ones declare: 'One dwells happily with equanimity and mindfulness.'

Right Concentration

What is Samma Samādhi? Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the **first Jhāna**, which is accompanied by vitakka and vicāra and filled with piti and sukha born of seclusion. Further, with the subsiding of vitakka and vicāra, one enters and dwells in the **second Jhāna**, which is accompanied by inner tranquility and unification of mind and is without vitakka and vicāra and is filled with piti and sukha, born of concentration. Further, with the fading away of piti, one dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body. Thus one enters and dwells in the **third jhāna**, of which the noble ones declare: 'One dwells happily with equanimity and mindfulness.' Further, with the abandoning of sukhasa and dukkhasa, and with the previous passing away of somanassa-domanassanam, one enters and dwells in the **fourth jhāna**, which is adukkham-asukham and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

Right Concentration

What is Samma Samādhī? Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the **first Jhāna**, which is accompanied by vitakka and vicāra and filled with pīti and sukha born of seclusion. Further, with the subsiding of vitakka and vicāra, one enters and dwells in the **second Jhāna**, which is accompanied by inner tranquility and unification of mind and is without vitakka and vicāra and is filled with pīti and sukha, born of concentration. Further, with the fading away of pīti, one dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body. Thus one enters and dwells in the **third jhāna**, of which the noble ones declare: 'One dwells happily with equanimity and mindfulness.' Further, with the abandoning of sukha and dukkha, and with the previous passing away of somanassa-domanassanā, one enters and dwells in the **fourth jhāna**, which is adukkham-asukham and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. This is Samma Samādhī.

DN 22, verse 21; MN 141, verse 31; SN 45.8

What Is A Jhāna?

Jhāna = ?

What Is A Jhāna?

Jhāna = A specific altered state of consciousness generated via concentration and yielding even more concentration.

How Many Jhānas Are There?

- a 4
- b 8
- c 9
- d 12
- e 16
- f 20
- g 24
- h 33

How Many Jhānas Are There?

- a 4 4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
- b 8
- c 9
- d 12
- e 16
- f 20
- g 24
- h 33

How Many Jhānas Are There?

- a 4 4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
- b 8 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma and Vsm
- c 9
- d 12
- e 16
- f 20
- g 24
- h 33

How Many Jhānas Are There?

- a 4 4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
- b 8 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma and Vsm
- c 9 5 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma
- d 12
- e 16
- f 20
- g 24
- h 33

How Many Jhānas Are There?

- a 4 4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
- b 8 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma and Vsm
- c 9 5 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma
- d 12 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 path moments – Abhidhamma and Vsm
- e 16
- f 20
- g 24
- h 33

How Many Jhānas Are There?

- a 4 4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
- b 8 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma and Vsm
- c 9 5 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma
- d 12 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 path moments – Abhidhamma and Vsm
- e 16 4 Jhānas + 4 Immaterials + 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Suttas + Vsm¹
- f 20
- g 24
- h 33

1. Thanissaro, Bucknell, Shankman, Brasington

How Many Jhānas Are There?

a	4	4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
b	8	4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma and Vsm
c	9	5 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma
d	12	4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 path moments – Abhidhamma and Vsm
e	16	4 Jhānas + 4 Immaterials + 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Suttas + Vsm ¹
f	20	4 Jhānas + 4 Immaterials + 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 paths
g	24	
h	33	

1. Thanissaro, Bucknell, Shankman, Brasington

How Many Jhānas Are There?

a	4	4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
b	8	4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma and Vsm
c	9	5 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma
d	12	4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 path moments – Abhidhamma and Vsm
e	16	4 Jhānas + 4 Immaterials + 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Suttas + Vsm ¹
f	20	4 Jhānas + 4 Immaterials + 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 paths
g	24	4 Js + 4 Is + 4 rupa js + 4 arupa js + 4 paths + 4 Vipassana jhānas
h	33	

1. Thanissaro, Bucknell, Shankman, Brasington

How Many Jhānas Are There?

a	4	4 Jhānas (+ 4 Immaterial states) – Suttas
b	8	4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma and Vsm
c	9	5 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Abhidhamma
d	12	4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 path moments – Abhidhamma and Vsm
e	16	4 Jhānas + 4 Immaterials + 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas – Suttas + Vsm ¹
f	20	4 Jhānas + 4 Immaterials + 4 rupa jhānas + 4 arupa jhānas + 4 paths
g	24	4 Js + 4 Is + 4 rupa js + 4 arupa js + 4 paths + 4 Vipassana jhānas
h	33	4 Js + 4 Is + 5 Abhi rupa jhānas + 4 Abhi arupa jhānas + 4 Vsm rupa jhānas + 4 Vsm arupa jhānas + 4 paths + 4 Vipassana jhānas

1. Thanissaro, Bucknell, Shankman, Brasington

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka,
vicāra,
piti,
sukha,
ekaggatā.

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka = initial attention,
vicāra = sustained attention,
piti = glee,
sukha = joy/happiness,
ekaggatā = one-pointedness.

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka,
vicāra,
piti,
sukha,
ekaggatā.

Quite secluded from (*vivicc'eva*) sense pleasures, secluded from (*vivicca*) unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka** and **vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. (DN 2.77)

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka,
vicāra,
piti,
sukha,
ekaggatā.

Quite secluded from (*vivicc'eva*) sense pleasures, secluded from (*vivicca*) unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka** and **vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. (DN 2.77)

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka,
vicāra,
piti,
sukha,
ekaggatā.

Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka** and **vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. One drenches, steep, saturates, and suffuses ones body with this piti and sukha born of seclusion, so that there is no part of ones entire body which is not suffused by this piti and sukha. (DN 2.77)

The phrase "drenches, steep, saturates, and suffuses" is an example of *synonymous parallelism*, a rhetorical device, which occurs very frequently in the suttas.

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka,
vicāra,
piti,
sukha,
ekaggatā.

Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka and vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. One drenches, steepes, saturates, and suffuses ones body with this piti and sukha born of seclusion, so that there is no part of ones entire body which is not suffused by this piti and sukha. (DN 2.77)

The phrase "vitakka and vicāra" is yet another example of *synonymous parallelism*, a rhetorical device, which occurs very frequently in the suttas.

There is a very interesting note under the definition of vitakka in the Pali Text Society's dictionary:

Looking at the combination vitakka+vicāra in earlier and later works one comes to the conclusion that they were once used to denote **one & the same thing: just thought, thinking, only in an emphatic way** (as they are also semantically synonymous), and that one has to take them as one expression, ... without being able to state their difference. With the advance in the Sangha of intensive study of terminology they became distinguished mutually. Vitakka became the inception of mind, or attending, and was no longer applied, as in the Suttas, to thinking in general.

Footnote 611 in Maurice Walshe's translation of the Dīgha Nikāya reads:

611 Vitakka-vicāra. I have used the rendering mentioned at n.80 ['thinking and pondering'], instead of the more usual 'initial and sustained application'. In a private communication, L.S. Cousins writes: 'The words simply do not mean this...Suttanta does not distinguish between access and absorption – hence the terms used do not have their momentary Abhidhamma sense. In the case of vicāra this is not even the Abhidhamma sense, since the Dhammasaṅgaṇī clearly explains vicāra as "investigating".'

Vitakka is a much more commonly occurring word in the suttas than vicāra – in fact, in the PTS

Pali-English Dictionary by T. W. Rhys Davids under vicāra we find

Hardly ever by itself (as at Th 1, 1117 manovicāra), usually in close connection or direct combination with vitakka.

Footnote 436 in Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of the Numerical Discourses mentions that "vicāra originally meant '**traveling around.**'"¹ This certainly gives much more of a sense of "examining" or "pondering" or "turning over in the mind" and really seems to be the opposite of "sustained attention."

1. Bodhi (2012) note 436. on page 1649

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka and vicāra,
piti,
sukha.

Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka and vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. One drenches, steepes, saturates, and suffuses ones body with this piti and sukha born of seclusion, so that there is no part of ones entire body which is not suffused by this piti and sukha. (DN 2.77)

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka and vicāra,
piti,
sukha,

Quite **secluded** from sense pleasures, **secluded** from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka and vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. One drenches, steepes, saturates, and suffuses ones body with this piti and sukha born of seclusion, so that there is no part of ones entire body which is not suffused by this piti and sukha. (DN 2.77)

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vivicca = seclusion,
vitakka and vicāra = thinking,
piti = glee,
sukha = joy/happiness.

Quite **secluded** from sense pleasures, **secluded** from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka and vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. One drenches, steepes, saturates, and suffuses ones body with this piti and sukha born of seclusion, so that there is no part of ones entire body which is not suffused by this piti and sukha. (DN 2.77)

1st Jhāna

How many factors qualities are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vivicca = seclusion,
vitakka and vicāra = thinking,
piti = glee,
sukha = joy/happiness

Quite **secluded** from sense pleasures, **secluded** from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka and vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. One drenches, steepes, saturates, and suffuses ones body with this piti and sukha born of seclusion, so that there is no part of ones entire body which is not suffused by this piti and sukha. (DN 2.77)

1st Jhāna

How many factors are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vitakka = initial attention (incorrect translation),
 vicāra = sustained attention (very incorrect translation),
 piti = glee,
 sukha = joy/happiness,
 ekaggatā = one-pointedness (not even mentioned).

How many qualities are there for the 1st Jhāna?

vivicca = seclusion,
 vitakka and vicāra = thinking
 piti = glee
 sukha = joy/happiness

Quite **secluded** from sense pleasures, **secluded** from unwholesome states, one enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by **vitakka** and **vicāra** and filled with **piti** and **sukha** born of seclusion. One drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses ones body with this piti and sukha born of seclusion, so that there is no part of ones entire body which is not suffused by this piti and sukha. (DN 2.77)

2nd Jhāna

The traditional factors of the second jhāna:

piti,
sukha,
ekaggatā.

*Further, with the subsiding of vitakka and vicāra, one enters and dwells in the second jhāna, which is accompanied by **inner tranquility** and **unification of mind** and is without vitakka and vicāra and is filled with **piti** and **sukha**, born of concentration.*

A listing of the qualities of the second jhāna would be

ajjhattam sampasadanam,
ekodi-bhavam,
piti,
sukha.

3rd Jhāna

The traditional factors of the third jhāna:

sukha,
ekaggatā.

*Further, with the fading away of piti, one dwells in **equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending**, and experiences **happiness with the body**. Thus one enters and dwells in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare: 'One dwells happily with equanimity and mindfulness.' One drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses ones body with **sukha** free from piti, so that there is no part of ones entire body that is not suffused by this sukha.*

A complete listing of the qualities of the third jhāna would be

(ajjhataṃ sampasādanam),
(ekodi-bhavam),
upekkhā,
sati,
sāmpajāna,
sukhañca kāyena,
sukha.

4th Jhāna

The traditional factors of the fourth jhāna:

upekkha,
ekaggatā.

*Further, with the abandoning of sukhasa and dukkhasa, and with the previous passing away of somanassa-domanassanā, one enters and dwells in the fourth jhāna, which is **adukkham-asukham** and contains **mindfulness** fully purified by **equanimity**. One sits suffusing one's body with a **pure bright mind**, so that there is no part of one's entire body not suffused by a pure bright mind.*

A complete listing of the qualities of the fourth jhāna would be

(ajjhātam sampasādanam),
(ekodi-bhavam),
(sāmpajāna),
adukkham-asukham,
upekkhā,
sati,
parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena.

How Much Concentration Is Required For Jhāna?

One drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses ones **body** with

piti and sukha

piti and sukha

sukha free from piti

One sits suffusing ones **body** with

a pure bright mind.

body = *kaya* → There is body awareness in all of the 4 Jhānas.

How Much Concentration Is Required For Jhāna?

One drenches, steepes, saturates, and suffuses ones **body** with

piti and sukha

piti and sukha

sukha free from piti

One sits suffusing ones **body** with

a pure bright mind.

body = *kaya* → There is body awareness in all of the 4 Jhānas.

Further, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and grief, one enters and dwells in the **fourth jhāna**, which is neither pleasant nor painful and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. One sits suffusing ones **body** with a **pure bright mind**. Suppose a man were to be sitting covered from the head down by a **white cloth** so there would be no part of his entire **body** not suffused by the **white cloth**.

How Much Concentration Is Required For Jhāna?

One drenches, steepes, saturates, and suffuses ones **body** with

piti and sukha

piti and sukha

sukha free from piti

One sits suffusing ones **body** with

a pure bright mind.

body = *kaya* → There is body awareness in all of the 4 Jhānas.

Further, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and grief, one enters and dwells in the fourth jhāna, which is neither pleasant nor painful and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. One sits suffusing ones **body** with a **pure bright mind**. Suppose a man were to be sitting covered from the head down by a **white cloth** so there would be no part of his entire **body** not suffused by the **white cloth**.

Answer: Enough concentration so that by the fourth jhāna that you generate a **bright white visual field**, yet **don't lose body awareness**.

The Jhāna Summary

When one sees that these five hindrances have been abandoned within oneself, gladness arises. From gladness, rapture arises. When ones mind is filled with rapture, ones body becomes tranquil; tranquil in body, one experiences happiness; being happy, ones mind becomes concentrated.

The Jhāna Summary

*When one sees that these five **hindrances** have been **abandoned** within oneself, gladness arises. From gladness, rapture arises. When ones mind is filled with rapture, ones body becomes tranquil; tranquil in body, one experiences happiness; being happy, ones mind becomes concentrated.*

Abandoning the Hindrances = Access Concentration* = Quieting the Default Mode Network

*The phrase "Access Concentration" does not occur in the suttas – nonetheless it is a useful phrase for describing the state of "being fully with the object of meditation and, if there are thoughts, they are in the background and do not lead to distraction."

The Jhāna Summary

*When one sees that these five hindrances have been abandoned within oneself, gladness arises. **From gladness, rapture arises.** When ones mind is filled with rapture, ones body becomes tranquil; tranquil in body, one experiences happiness; being happy, ones mind becomes concentrated.*

Abandoning the Hindrances = Access Concentration = Quieting the Default Mode Network

From gladness, rapture arises = From focusing on a pleasant sensation, a positive feedback loop of pleasure is generated which spirals out of control and evolves into the experience of rapture, glee, *piti*.

The Jhāna Summary

*When one sees that these five hindrances have been abandoned within oneself, gladness arises. From gladness, rapture arises. **When ones mind is filled with rapture, ones body becomes tranquil; tranquil in body, one experiences happiness; being happy, ones mind becomes concentrated.***

Abandoning the Hindrances = Access Concentration = Quieting the Default Mode Network

From gladness, rapture arises = From focusing on a pleasant sensation, a positive feedback loop of pleasure is generated which spirals out of control and evolves into the experience of rapture, glee, *piti*.

When ones mind is filled with rapture, ones body becomes tranquil; tranquil in body, one experiences happiness; being happy, ones mind becomes concentrated = J1 → J2 → J3 → J4

The Jhāna Summary

*When one sees that these five hindrances have been abandoned within oneself, gladness arises. From gladness, rapture arises. **When ones mind is filled with rapture, ones body becomes tranquil; tranquil in body, one experiences happiness; being happy, ones mind becomes concentrated.***

Abandoning the Hindrances = Access Concentration = Quieting the Default Mode Network

From gladness, rapture arises = From focusing on a pleasant sensation, a positive feedback loop of pleasure is generated which spirals out of control and evolves into the experience of rapture, glee, *piti*.

When ones mind is filled with rapture, ones body becomes tranquil; tranquil in body, one experiences happiness; being happy, ones mind becomes concentrated = J1 → J2 → J3 → J4

Hypothesis

J1 = norepinephrine overload, opioids elevated

J2 = calm the system with a decrease in norepinephrine, opioids still elevated

J3 = norepinephrine level returns to normal, opioids still elevated

J4 = opioid level returns to normal

Overall Effect = Significantly more concentrated mind.

The Path to Enlightenment

The Buddha-to-be's teachers taught that what we refer to as the seventh and eight jhānas were the goal of the spiritual path. Master Gotama understood that neither the seventh nor eight jhāna answered his questions or lead to the end of dukkha, so he left each of his teachers. He then tried austerities practices, but "by this racking practice of austerities I have not attained any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. Could there be another path to enlightenment?"¹

He then remember an incident from his childhood where he had spontaneously entered the first jhāna when seated in the cool shade of a rose apple tree while his father was working. He wondered "**Could that be the path to enlightenment?**" Upon more reflection he decided "**That is indeed the path to enlightenment.**"² In other words, he realized that the jhānas were part of the path, not the goal. He then used them as a preliminary practice³ before gaining the insight that led to his awakening and becoming the Buddha.

1. MN 36.30
2. MN 36.31
3. MN 36.34

The Purpose of the Jhānas

When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to

...

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to **knowing and seeing**. One understands thus, this is my **body**, having material form, composed of the four primary elements, originating from mother and father, built up out of rice and gruel, impermanent, subject to rubbing and pressing, to disillusion and dispersion and this is my **consciousness**, supported by it and bound up with it.*

body = *kaya*

consciousness = *viññāṇa*

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to **knowing and seeing**. One understands thus, this is my **body**, having material form, composed of the four primary elements, originating from mother and father, built up out of rice and gruel, impermanent, subject to rubbing and pressing, to disillusion and dispersion and this is my **consciousness**, supported by it and bound up with it.*

- o Insight into the nature of your body: dependently originated, impermanent, subject to dukkha
- o Insight into the nature of your mind, including your mind's dependence on your body

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to wielding the various kinds of **psychic powers**.*

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to wielding the various kinds of **psychic powers**:*

- o The Mind Made Body

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to wielding the various kinds of **psychic powers**:*

o The Mind Made Body

When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to creating from this body another body having form, mind-made, with all its limbs, lacking no faculty.

Just as though a man were to pull out a reed from its sheath and think thus: ‘This is the sheath, this is the reed; the sheath is one, the reed is another; it is from the sheath that the reed has been pulled out’; or just as though a man were to pull out a sword from its scabbard and think thus: ‘This is the sword, this is the scabbard; the sword is one, the scabbard another; it is from the scabbard that the sword has been pulled out’; or just as though a man were to pull a snake out of its slough and think thus: ‘This is the snake, this is the slough; the snake is one, the slough another; it is from the slough that the snake has been pulled out.’

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to wielding the various kinds of **psychic powers**:*

- o The Mind Made Body
- o being one, one becomes many;
having been many, they become one;
one appears and vanishes;
one goes unhindered through walls, through enclosures, through mountains, as though through space;
one dives in and out of the earth as though it were water; one walks on water without sinking as though it were earth;
seated cross-legged, one travels in space like birds;
with ones hands one touches and strokes the moon and sun so powerful and mighty;
one wield bodily mastery even as far as the Brahma-world.

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to wielding the various kinds of **psychic powers**:*

- o The Mind Made Body = WILD = Wake Induced Lucid Dreaming
- o being one, one becomes many;
having been many, they become one;
one appears and vanishes;
one goes unhindered through walls, through enclosures, through mountains, as though through space;
one dives in and out of the earth as though it were water; one walks on water without sinking as though it were earth;
seated cross-legged, one travels in space like birds;
with ones hands one touches and strokes the moon and sun so powerful and mighty;
one wield bodily mastery even as far as the Brahma-world.

Anguttara 3.60: "only the one who performs this wonder experiences it and it occurs only to him."

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to wielding the various kinds of **psychic powers**:*

- o The Mind Made Body
- o Various Kinds of Supernormal Power
- o Divine Ear
- o Understanding the Minds of Others

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to wielding the various kinds of **psychic powers**:*

- o The Mind Made Body
- o Various Kinds of Supernormal Power
- o Divine Ear
- o Understanding the Minds of Others
- o Recollecting Manifold Past Lives
- o Divine Eye

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the **destruction of the āsavas**.*

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the **destruction of the āsavas**.*

- o intoxicated with sense pleasures,
- o intoxicated with becoming,
- o (intoxicated with views),
- o intoxicated by ignorance.

Āsava – technical term for certain specified ideas which **intoxicate** the mind (**bemuddle** it, **befoozle** it, so that it cannot rise to higher things). (PTS's PED)

The Purpose of the Jhānas

*When ones mind is thus concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the **destruction of the āsavas**.*

- o intoxicated with sense pleasures,
- o intoxicated with becoming,
- o (intoxicated with views),
- o intoxicated by ignorance.

"Saṃsāra is not a wheel – it's a drunken party in a casino. Our job is to sober up, find the exit, and get out!" Eric Kolvig

What we are drunk on is the āsavas.

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,

The findings support the idea that, after extensive FA [Focused Attention] meditation training, minimal effort is necessary to sustain attentional focus. Expert meditators also showed less activation than novices in the amygdala during FA meditation in response to emotional sounds. Activation in this affective region correlated negatively with hours of practice in life. This finding may support the idea that advanced levels of concentration are associated with a significant decrease in emotionally reactive behaviors that are incompatible with stability of concentration. Collectively, these findings support the view that attention is a trainable skill that can be enhanced through the mental practice of FA meditation.

Richard J. Davidson and Antoine Lutz, Buddha's Brain: Neuroplasticity and Meditation, IEEE Signal Processing Magazine September 2007, pp173-6

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,

The amygdala appears to be the brain structure which is at the very center of most of the brain events associated with fear. Just an 8-week mindfulness meditation program appeared to make measurable changes in brain regions associated with memory, sense of self, empathy and stress. The study associated with this 8-week program found decreased grey-matter density in the amygdala.

Massachusetts General Hospital. "Mindfulness meditation training changes brain structure in eight weeks." ScienceDaily, 21 Jan. 2011.

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,

In his book **Destructive Emotions**, Daniel Goleman discusses research that shows that negative emotional states are correlated with increased activity in the right prefrontal cortex and positive emotional states are correlated with increased activity in the left prefrontal cortex. He also states that the baseline activity of the prefrontal cortex provides an "emotional set point." Furthermore simply by spending increased amounts of time in positive emotional states and less time in negative emotional states, your emotional set point can be altered towards increased left prefrontal cortex activity – in other words, you can intentionally create a more positive emotional state as your default state.

Daniel Goleman, "Destructive Emotions" 2003, chpt 8, esp. p 194 and chpt 14, esp. 334-346. See also Daniel Goleman, "Finding Happiness: Cajole Your Brain to Lean to the Left", New York Times, February 04, 2003, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/04/health/behavior-finding-happiness-cajole-your-brain-to-lean-to-the-left.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,
- o **provide pleasure more desirable than worldly pleasures,**

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,
- o provide pleasure more desirable than worldly pleasures,

In the Cūḷadukkhakkhandha Sutta (MN 14), the Buddha's cousin Mahānāma the Sakyan says he understands, "‘Greed, hate, delusion [are] imperfections that defiles the mind.’ Yet while I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One thus, at times states of greed, hate, and delusion invade my mind and remain. I have wondered, venerable sir, what state is still unabandoned by me internally, owing to which at times these states of greed, hate, and delusion invade my mind and remain."

The Buddha replies "when a noble disciple has seen clearly as it actually is with proper wisdom that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more, and he attains to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, then he is no longer attracted to sensual pleasures." In other words, understanding the drawbacks of greed, hate and delusion is not enough; the experience of rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states are needed as well. This higher pleasure is available in the first and second jhānas, and the higher jhānas provide "something more peaceful than that." Thus the jhānas serve as an antidote to getting lost in the pursuit of worldly pleasures.

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,
- o provide pleasure more desirable than worldly pleasures,
- o provide a pleasant abiding here and now.

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,
- o provide pleasure more desirable than worldly pleasures,
- o provide a pleasant abiding here and now.

...the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now. (MN 6.9)

Other Benefits of Jhāna Practice

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,
- o provide pleasure more desirable than worldly pleasures,
- o provide a pleasant abiding here and now.

Benefits of Jhāna Practice

Long Term

- o reduce effort necessary to sustain attentional focus,
- o decrease emotionally reactive behaviors,
- o reduce your automatic fear response,
- o move your emotional set point in the positive direction,

Short Term

- o provide pleasure more desirable than worldly pleasures,
- o provide a pleasant abiding here and now.
- o mind is concentrated, pure and bright, unblemished, free from defects, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability,
 - o **you can more powerfully direct and incline your mind to knowing and seeing what's actually happening**
- o WILD mind – directly induce lucid dreams where you can fly, walk on water, etc.

Ultimate Benefit

- o helpful for gaining the insights necessary to end the āsavas = Liberation

Third Jhāna - Epilogue

Further, with the fading away of piti, one dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body. **Thus one enters and dwells in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare: "One dwells happily with equanimity and mindfulness."**

Since the noble ones are the awakened ones, does this mean that the third Jhāna feels something like full awakening?

Is the equanimity the balanced state of mind between the extremes of dopamine activity and amygdala activity?

Does the mindfulness replace the default mode network activity?

Can we rewrite the description of the third jhāna as the following?

With the fading of norepinephrine generated by the breakdown of the dopamine coming from the reward center, remaining equanimous, mindful & clearly aware – with continued opioid-based liking system activation, one experiences happiness throughout ones being. One enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the Noble Ones declare, "With a balanced state of mind between the extremes of dopamine activity & amygdala activity and with mindfulness replacing default mode network activation, one has a pleasurable abiding."

Does this mean awakening is rewiring the mind so it is balanced between the extremes of dopamine activity & amygdala activity and with unrelenting automatic mindfulness replacing default mode network activation?

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Suttas

Dīgha Nikāya, translated by Maurice Walshe, Wisdom Publications, (1995), ISBN: 0861711033

The Discourse on the Fruits of Recluship, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Buddhist Publications Society, 1989

Majjhima Nikāya, translated by Bhikkhu Ñanamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, (1995), ISBN: 0-86171-072-X

Saṃyutta Nikāya, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, (2003), ISBN: 0861713311

Aṅguttara Nikāya, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, (2012), ISBN: 1614290407

Sutta Nipata - The Rhinoceros Horn - And Other Early Buddhist Poems, translated by K. R. Norman; The Pali Text Society, Oxford, (1996), ISBN: 0860131548

The Sutta-Nipata, translated by Hammalawa Saddhatissa; Routledge, (1995), ISBN-10: 0700701818

Udana and the Itivuttaka, translated by John D. Ireland, Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka, (1998), ISBN-13: 978-9552401640

The Life of the Buddha, Bhikkhu Ñanamoli, Pariyatti Publishing, (2003), ISBN-13: 978-1928706120

Abhidhamma

Dhammasaṅgaṇī - Buddhist Psychological Ethics, translated from the Pali by C.A.F. Rhys Davids; Oxford: Pali Text Society, (1900)

Vibhaṅga - The Book of Analysis, translated from the Pali by Ven. U Thittila; Oxford: Pali Text

Society, (1969).

Puggalapaññatti - A Designation of Human Types, translated from the Pali by B.C. Law; Oxford: Pali Text Society, (1922).

Kathāvatthu - Points of Controversy, translated from the Pali by S.Z. Aung and C.A.F. Rhys Davids; Oxford: Pali Text Society, (1915).

Commentaries

Patisambhidamagga - The Path of Discrimination, translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli; 2nd Ed. The Pali Text Society, Oxford (1997).

Vimuttimagga - The Path of Freedom, by the Arahant Upatissa, translated from the Chinese by Rev. N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera, & Kheminda Thera; Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka (1995).

Visuddhimagga - The Path of Purification, by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa, translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli; 5th Ed. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka (1991). Available for free download from <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nanamoli/PathofPurification2011.pdf>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Anālayo, Ven. ~ **A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya**; Dharma Drum Publishing Corp., (2011)

Blackmore, Susan ~ "Near-Death Experiences: In or out of the body?", **Skeptical Inquirer**, (1991), pp 16, 34-45.

Blackmore, Susan J., and T. S. Troscianko. (1989). "The Physiology of the Tunnel," **Journal of Near-Death Studies**, 8:15-28.

Brahmavamso, Ajahn Mahathera ~ **Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond: A Meditator's Handbook**; Wisdom Publications, (2006), ISBN-13: 978-0861712755

Bucknell, Roderick S. ~ "Reinterpreting the Jhānas," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Volume 16 • Number 2 • Winter 1993

"The Importance of Pali/Chinese Comparisons in studies of Early Buddhist Doctrine,"

paper presented at the IXth annual conference of the Australian Association for the Study of Religions, Canberra, August 1984

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu ~ **Mindfulness with Breathing - A Manual for Serious Beginners**; Wisdom Publications, (1996)

Catherine, Shaila ~ **Focused and Fearless: A Meditator's Guide to States of Deep Joy, Calm and Clarity**; Wisdom Publications, (2008), ISBN-13: 978-0-86171-560-2

Davids, T.W. Rhys and W. Stede, editors ~ **Pali-English Dictionary**, London (PTS) 1926 + (1959)

Walshe, Maurice (2005-06-10). The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya (Kindle Location 8894). Perseus Books Group. Kindle Edition.

Gethin, Rupert ~ "On the Practice of Buddhist Meditation According to the Pali Nikāyas and Exegetical Sources," University of Bristol, Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Hamburg) 10 (2004); pp. 17-37.

Goleman, Daniel ~ **Destructive Emotions**, Bantam, (2004), ISBN-13: 978-0553381054

Gunaratana, Mahathera Henepola ~ **Beyond Mindfulness in Plain English - An Introductory Guide to Deeper States of Meditation**, Wisdom Books, (2009)

The Jhānas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation, Buddhist Publication Society

Hagerty, Michael R., Julian Isaacs, Leigh Brasington, Larry Shupe, Eberhard E. Fetz ~ **EEG Power and Coherence Analysis of an Expert Meditator in the Eight Jhānas**, Working Paper presented at the 2008 Mind and Life Conference; available as a Word DOC file from <http://leighb.com/eegjhanas.htm>

Khema, Ayya ~ **Who Is My Self? : A Guide to Buddhist Meditation**, Wisdom Publications, (1997)

When the Iron Eagle Flies, Arkana (a division Penguin Books), (1991)

Visible Here and Now, Shambhala Publications, (2001), ISBN: 1-57062-492-5

Being Nobody Going Nowhere: Meditations on the Buddhist Path; Wisdom Publications, (1988), ISBN: 0861710525

I Give You My Life : The Autobiography of a Western Buddhist Nun, Shambhala Publications, (1998), ISBN: 1-57062-415-1

- Matara Sri Ñanarama Mahathera, **The Seven Stages of Purification and the Insight Knowledges**, Buddhist Publication Society, (1983), ISBN: 955-24-0059-7
- Nyanatiloka Mahathera, **Buddhist Dictionary - Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines**, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, (1980), ISBN: 955-24-0019-8
- Pa-Auk Sayadaw ~ **Knowing and Seeing: Talks and Questions-and-Answers at a Meditation Retreat in Taiwan**, 2nd ed., Tullera, Australia: Buddha Dharma Education Association, Inc., (2000)
- Shankman, Richard ~ **The Experience of Samādhi: An In-depth Exploration of Buddhist Meditation**, Shambala Press, Boston, (2008)
- Snyder, Stephen and Tina Rasmussen ~ **Practicing the Jhānas: Traditional Concentration Meditation as Presented by the Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw**, Shambhala, (2009), ISBN-13: 978-1590307335
- Sole-Leris, Amadeo ~ **Tranquility and Insight**, Shambala Publications
- Stuart-Fox, Martin ~ "Jhāna and Buddhist Scholasticism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Volume 12 • Number 2 • Winter 1989
- Sumedho, Ajahn ~ **The Way It Is**, Amaravati Publications, (1991), ISBN-13: 978-1870205115
The Sound of Silence: The Selected Teachings of Ajahn Sumedho, Wisdom Publications, (2007), ISBN-13: 978-0861715152
- Vajiranana, Mahathera ~ **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, Buddhist Missionary Society