



Exploring Samadhi and Jhana in Buddhist Meditation (1 of 2)

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So let me just give you a basic overview of what we're going to do here together. So I'm assuming, given just the size of the group, that we're all coming from just diverse backgrounds, experiences, we may be practicing in a range of, if you're in the Buddhist world, a range of Buddhist traditions. And some of you may not even be associated in the Buddhist world, other traditions or however you practice or have been taught.

And so we're going to be talking about this term-- and don't worry, we'll define everything-- Samādhi, which is the term generally translated as concentration. It's a terrible translation for Samādhi. I'm gonna explain it, but that may be, actually that's a controversial statement. I'm gonna be making a lot, I'm not trying to be controversial, but there'll be things and I'll point out some things that other people have different views and you may have different views too, which is fine. Actually, it might make it more quite interesting.

So, but I'll explain why I think, but we're stuck with it because everybody uses the term, but the problem is there are so many connotations in English of what we mean, so we wanna get clear about this term, concentration, how it relates to meditation practice. And in particular, in the tradition, I'll explain if you don't know of Theravada Buddhism, where if you hang around traditions like, it's a Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, Spirit Rock Meditation Center on the West Coast, this will be called the insight meditation scene. And I'll explain all that.

So, you know, there's a lot of confusion, I think, and controversy about, it's not as bad as it used to be. But, you know, back in the day, it was, you know, you had to do this thing called, you wanted to get something called insight. We'll talk about what do we mean by insight. And if you're doing concentration, which we haven't defined yet, we will in a few moments, you're not doing insight. And so how do these two fit together and what do we mean? Why can't you do one or the other? And it was not clear.

So what I'm hoping we'll do here is two parts. I wanna step back and go back to the old source texts. And you can see if you've looked at all, even glanced through these notes, we're gonna spend some time going through to see what do they really say? And try to just really tease it out.

So, and then we can come back into modern times and see how does that apply to the range of ways people teach, and because it's not one way. And so we want to bring it very alive to actually our practice. And the idea, for my idea, is not that you have to remember all the details. That's up to you if you want to. but that it will inform your practice so that you'll have the basic feel of it and it'll help actually not be confusing as we go through a lot of detail, but actually be clarifying about inner meditation practice.



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So that's the basic idea. And the way we'll do this is we're going to start with, I'll just give you the basic overview and it follows your notes again. Now, what is Samādhi? How is it understood? And what are a few different ways it can manifest? This is important. And then we'll actually go look, and I'm gonna explain what I mean by the Pali language in Theravada Buddhism in just a few moments, but we're gonna go through these old Pali source texts and see how is Samādhi discussed and talked about in relationship, and especially if you're familiar with any of the Buddhist lists, like the Four Noble Truths, seven factors of enlightenment, some of the, some of this called for foundations of mindfulness and other very important meditation texts and lists.

How is it viewed in there? And then we'll talk about, some of you know the word jhāna and some of you may have heard it, but don't know what it is. We're gonna spend a lot of time. So by the time we're done, you'll really have a lot about jhāna and different ways it manifests. And then finally, and this is getting, we're getting more into next week, then we'll go into some of the, we'll bring it into more modern context, some of the controversies, disagreements, and try to look at different perspectives people have and how does that relate back. And hopefully we bring it very alive into our own practice.

So that's the overview. And you can see it, what I just said, follows the notes. And I'll pause for questions in just a moment before we get going. But one last thing. This is very, very important. There's not a right or wrong. This is actually good news.

And we'll spend a lot-- we'll be saying this over and over again. You'll probably get sick of hearing me say it. But it's literally true. I've been around a long time in this scene, more than 50 years. And from what I can see, people have attained just amazing, tremendous levels of-- pick your favorite word-- liberation, enlightenment, realization, awakening. I don't want to get too much of these different terms. That would be a whole discussion. To me, those terms aren't all the same thing, but that's a different, we can talk about that actually if you want.

Practicing in every different way you've heard of. And so we don't have to make people right or wrong or think we've got the right way. It turns out there's actually not a right way, and this is good news. So rather than get confused, we want to inform what's our own doorway in? What's our pathway? It's not going to be the same for all of us because even if we gave the same meditation instruction and practice to all of us whatever practice we gave would not work well for everyone. What works well for someone just isn't the best practice for someone else and how the meditation unfolds how Samādhi and Jhāna Unfold it's not the same for everyone.

So this is good news we want to take what we what we're exploring here and then and then see what are the different flavors we're talking about, how do they relate for your own practice? That's what's important. So, okay, well, let's start in then. To begin, I actually, one piece I didn't mention, I just need to take, this is probably less than five minutes, I just need to give a little history to set the context for all of this. Some of you will know this, but it might be new for some of you.

So according to tradition, after the Buddha died, we don't know his exact dates actually, that's a whole other thing, it's controversial, not controversial, it's just we don't really know the exact dates, but sometimes we'll say 2,500 years ago, I think it may not be that accurate anymore if they've revised the dates. After the Buddha died, the tradition tells us that within a couple of months, a council, a great council was held, and it said 500 of the monks, you know, there were these tremendous, wonderful, enlightened women, but I guess they left the women out in the meeting. It seems to be the way it can go sometimes. And came together, they said 500. Whenever in the old text you hear the word 500, it just means a lot.



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And came together to recount and review the teachings so they could come to an agreement about what they were. None of this stuff was written down at the time of the Buddha, no one was taking notes. And so the tradition tells us that Ananda was the Buddha's younger cousin and had been the Buddha's attendant for the last 25 years of the Buddha's life. Ananda had been around for all the dharmic talks, So he recounted all these teachings and they all came to some agreement about, yes, this is really the authentic teaching.

And so when you go back into the Pali texts, many of them begin with the phrase, "Thus have I heard." Well, that's Ananda speaking to you. Actually, I find that kind of thrilling when I would read them, because I feel like he's really talking to me, recounting. So, and what happened was the teachings, as they were recounted and agreed upon, evolved into what today are a body of work, these texts called the, in Pali it's the suttas. Sometimes you'll hear in Sanskrit sutras, Pali, it's suttas. And it's actually means thread.

It's related to the English word suture. like if you're doing surgery, a suture, like thread. And it got preserved in this body of work called the, called the Pali, in the language Pali. It's also preserved in Sanskrit, suttas. That's the compilation of the texts we have today. There are some other texts in there, but we're mainly focused on these suttas. And then what happened is over the centuries, it was still preserved as an oral tradition. These things weren't written down for, let's just say, 300, 400, 500 years, something like that. We don't know exactly. But several number of centuries.

Now, they chanted it together in groups. And it was probably actually more reliably preserved because writing is prone to error, and they would chant according to tradition, chant in groups, they could self-correct each other. That's how it was preserved. So it kept changing and evolving until it was finally written down and got fixed in the form we have today. That's the Pali texts.

One other thing, back in the, really starting immediately after the Buddha died, people split off into different groups, you could call them sects. People had different understandings since they sincerely held, you know, understandings of what the teachings actually were. And you ended up with a number of different Buddhist schools and the traditional number is 18. All of those early schools died out except for one, which is still alive today as a living tradition, and that's called Theravada.

The Theras are the elders, and that's the style of Buddhism today that's alive in Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, maybe Cambodia and Laos in those countries. The evolution of the Mahayana, which is like Chan and Zen and a lot of those, those were later developments. They kind of went off in different directions. And so we're not gonna talk about that. So we're dealing with this living tradition out of Theravada Buddhism and their text preserved in Pali.

So one more thing to add in. Along with the suttas, the source text, there was a whole body of commentarial literature that developed. And it culminated in a work-- this is a long tongue twister Pali name, although by the time we're done here, this is going to be rolling off your tongue as naturally-- you're going to be an expert. but I'll say it's with a V, Visuddhimagga. And the Visuddhimagga means path of purification. And this is important because, and it's the last bit of the history and then we'll move into the material.

The Visuddhimagga is not a commentary, it's a treatise written by Buddhaghosa. We don't know exactly when, but we'll say at least 500 or more years, 600, I don't know, after the Buddha, and it brought together the commentarial understanding of what was meant in the suttas. And so the reason I bring this up is now today in Theravada Buddhism, this is a gross



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generalization, but you can divide everything into two kind of camps, if you will. There are people who say, if you wanna understand what's in the Pali suttas, you've got to look at it through the lens of what the Visuddhimagga says about it.

And there are other people who will say, "No, no, no, the Visuddhimagga got it wrong." You just go straight to the, so this is as if there was no Visuddhimagga. And this is one of the things we're gonna explore because they're both very, very important views or different schools of thought within Theravada Buddhism. And it really is, you're going to see, heavily influences how we view all these topics, the view of what jhāna is, what samādhi is, what is insight meditation, how does it work with concentration?

It actually turns out these are two different models. This is what I'm saying here is actually controversial too. I think you'll have to make your own decision, but they really are different. So this is where we are now, and I think that's enough of a background. we're actually gonna be looking at Samādhi and Jhāna in the suttas as if there were no V Visuddhimagga. And then we're gonna look at Samādhi and Jhāna in the Visuddhimagga as if there were no suttas, see what they say on their own terms.

And then, this is over the two weekends, and then we're going to come back and look at some of the controversies and see if the different sides, so that's kind of the map. All right. Okay. All right. Well, let's just move on then. I'm going to go in your handout here. If you look on the first page where I just said goals for the class, and if you don't have the notes, it's fine. I'm sure Rob, you can contact me, I can get it to you.

It was really kind of a little sales pit. Back when I did this, it was still back when people were, it's not like this anymore, fortunately, but people were kind of denigrating the Samādhi side of the practice. And so I put a few quotes here from the Buddha to say, well, wait a minute, here, here's the Buddha, I'll just say this. This is out of one of the suttas. The Buddha said, "I considered Kajhāna," which we'll get to, "be the path to enlightenment. In came the realization. That is the path to enlightenment. That's a pretty strong statement, right?

So how it, and then one more, the Buddhist quoted here as saying there are five detrimental things that lead to the decay and disappearance of the true Dharma, Dhamma, Dhamma in Pali, Dharma in Sanskrit, and he goes through them. One of them is you dwell without deference and reverence towards Samādhi. So how can they get away with saying Samādhi and Jhāna's not important? How do they do that? So that's a question. We'll get into that. They have a way to do it.

All right, so I'm going to go, if you want to follow along, I'm not going to just read right out of the suttas. I'm just going to talk here. But if you go to the second page, I have a title there, Samādhi and the Pali Suttas. So let's just start with this word samādhi. That's both Pali and Sanskrit. And it's generally translated as concentration. It actually, if you go to the etymology of the word, it means undistracted, right?

So concentration is, we actually got that term because the early Pali translators, more than a century ago from the Pali Text Society to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude, but they didn't know so much back then. And so they picked the word concentration. It's stuck and now everyone uses it. And then we all apply our own connotation to the word, but it means undistracted. So if there's a controversy about how much concentration you have, nobody has a controversy. There's no controversy about being undistracted.

So we're going to use the word concentration, but I want to just offer that, suggest that every time you use it in your mind, you think of the word undistracted. You know, nobody, no teacher



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says be distracted, right? So this is, now I want to point something out, and this is a real, if you don't remember any, from time to time I'm going to mention something that I think is a real key point. And this is one of the real key points and it will help clarify a lot.

There are a number of ways in which an undistracted mind can manifest. Let me name a couple of ways. The first one... The first I'll come to that chat question. It's a good question or comment in a moment. One way that the mind can become undistracted and I'll use an analogy here. I know sometimes in the morning. I'm reading the news or something I can get or I'm reading a book and I can get absorbed into the book and someone may come in and say, "Hey, Richard, Richard," and if I'm really absorbed into the book, I may not hear them for a moment.

Then I'm like, "Oh, sorry, what, what?" That's an example of where you can get so... One of the words they use is one-pointed, which is kind of a funny word, but we get so kind of narrowly focused on where our attention is that we start, to some degree, losing awareness of other experiences around us. Right, so you get the idea about that.

And if you were to, say you were to meditate, and let's just say you were, there's many ways to meditate. Say you were doing mindfulness of breathing and you were putting your attention on your breath. You could get so good at, or skilled at, staying concentrated just on the breath, you could get very narrowly focused. This is where they use the word one-pointed, it's not literally a point, but it can just be on the one thing. And your concentration can be so strong that you literally lose awareness of everything else.

You can get to the point where you won't feel your body anymore. You won't notice it. Thoughts will be gone. Everything, there's just you. And as we'll see when somebody gets stronger, some of you will know this from your own experience, you can have all these experiences. Don't worry, we'll get into all this. Bliss, light, all this stuff can happen. If you really take it far enough, maybe there's only bliss and light, right?

And so the way they talk about this is, they call it one-pointedness because you're on the one thing. And sometimes it's also called exclusive concentration because you're exclusively on one thing and your awareness excludes everything else. That's one way it can go. He took it far enough.

There's another way it can go, this is very important, and to distinguish, I take this word, we'll get into the Pali later, that they translate as one-pointedness, and I call it unification of mind. It's still got the uni, which is one, and in this way, oh wait, so, sorry, one more thing. If you got into exclusive one-pointedness, for you, the experience of changing phenomena have stopped. They call it fixed concentration also. You just won't notice all the stuff going on. It'll just be in this, right, this one samādhi.

If you get in the second way it can manifest, which is just as deep, but it's just qualitatively different. Rather than the flow of experience stopping, the mind, well, sorry, just a moment. I'm gonna use the term mind, and I'm not going for a laugh here or anything. I just wanna say, I don't know what the mind is. We use the term, and I'm sorry, I wanna just acknowledge I'm using the word mind loosely, sloppily, but hopefully we can at least kind of convey some ideas here.

Rather than the flow of experience stopping, the mind comes to steadiness and stops, but you haven't shut off the flow of changing experience. This is an undistracted mind, but rather than being undistracted and it's wholly focused in a narrow way, it can be actually quite broad and



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spacious and open, but it's so clear and present and undistracted that everything is seen and known as it arises and passes away within this undistracted presence, if you will.

It's a different kind of undistractedness. Inclusive Samādhi. Sorry, I think I hung there for a moment. And this kind of open, spacious, undistracted mind that doesn't exclude everything, it's inclusive. It includes everything. It actually opens to the changing flow of experience. Yeah, it's a different sense there. If you haven't experienced these, it's hard to, but hopefully you just get the conceptual about that.

And there's a quote from the great Thai master, Ajahn Chah. He's no longer alive, but there's a quote, some of you know this is very famous, called the Still Forest Pool. This is pretty close to the quote, exactly says, "Make your mind like a still forest pool. "All kinds of rare and wonderful animals will come to drink at the pool. You will see many things come and go, but you will be still." And he goes on. That's the idea. Now, neither of these-- one's not better than the other. They're just different.

And you can meditate-- we'll get into this next week-- you can meditate in a way to cultivate purposely one of the others of these styles, inclusive, narrow, or inclusive wide, or exclusive narrow or on your own it will naturally head in one direction or another. And you can steer it in the other direction. I don't know if I'll be able to get into that much here. I could talk to you offline about that if you needed to.

But you can see, and this gets into someone sent me a chat here, which I thought was good. It says there are few traditions that fall into bare awareness practices which say no Samatha. Now he used the word Samatha, which is different than Samādhi. We'll talk about that later too. Samatha means tranquility. A lot of people will equate Samādhi and Samatha, I think they're different.

There are other traditions which say without Samatha practice, you're wasting your time. What are your thoughts? Well, this comes back to what we're talking about here. I think for all practices, we want to have some degree of, even if it's a little bit, just steadying to be present. So we're not just, our minds just not scattered all over the place. We're not just lost and spaced out all the time. We can have some ability to be present, even if it's for a few moments. That's a little bit of settling.

So some degree of presence, I think we all think, is important to cultivate. And then other people will say, you don't need to go much deeper, just enough to just get here and then just notice changing phenomena. That's the kind of practices they'll talk about, insight practices. Others will say, no, no, no, you have to really go deeper, deeper in the Samādhi to get even more undistracted. So let that sit for now. We're actually going to go in a lot of detail to get that exact question answered more later.

So I want to pause here for a moment, just on this one thing, and see if anybody has a comment or a question. I'm sorry. Okay. That distinction before we move on is, if we really can get clear about that, and I don't hear people talking about that distinction that much. I can't be the, I'm sure I'm not the only one, but so many confusions and controversies just clear up because we see it's not one way again.

There's different ways an undistracted mind can manifest. You might look into your own practice and see to whatever level you've, whatever level your samādhi, your undistractedness has developed, which way is it going for you? It's not right or wrong, but we want to pay attention to how is it unfolding for each of us. Okay. All right, and I'll come back to some of those, You keep sending the chat things. I see them, but I'll come back to those.



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Okay, well, we're gonna continue then. I'm staying on your notes if you wanna use the notes. And there's something in the middle on page two. It says, "Write Samādhi." Well, in the Pali tradition, there's what's called the Four Noble Truths. I know many of you know this, but to make sure we all do, and it's really foundational teaching.

Just real quick, First Noble Truth, which is the truth of suffering. It's actually another bad translation. Doesn't say life is suffering. It uses a term dukkha. It has a lot of different translations, but dukkha basically, if you go to the Pali, Back in the days when it was a print version, the Pali Text Society Pali-English Dictionary was this big, thick book. It was 11 by 14 with really small 10-point font.

And to define dukkha, it took three pages. I've got the book. I could show you. So it's basically the etymology of the word dukkha means it's the axle of a wheel of a cart is out of round. So dukkha means what happens if your wheel's out of balance? You get a bumpy ride. That's dukkha, bumpy ride. So the first thing is that there is this dukkha and it becomes suffering when we're clinging. If you're not clinging, you're okay having a bumpy ride, you're not suffering.

But we can say suffering, this is fine. but we want to understand. Second one, what's the cause of it is craving, tanha. It doesn't mean desire, by the way. There's plenty of desire. It's where it gets so strong that you can't let go. I'm saying this, I know it's super quick. The third is that there's an ending of dukkha, which is called nirodha. You can come to an end of it.

And then the fourth noble truth is called the Eightfold Path. And it's this whole path of different elements. And we use the word right. It's not right or wrong, but it means right. It's actually the word that's like, there's right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood. I know I'm saying this super quick. Right effort, right mindfulness, and the crown of it is right samādhi.

So samādhi is a big deal in there. The word right in Pali is samma, S-A-M-M-A, And it actually means to be connected in one with. So it's not right or wrong. Right's okay, wise is a good one, wise and skillful. It just means if I wanted to gain a certain result, what would be the right thing to do to do that? If you do something else, it wouldn't be the right thing for that because it'd give you a different result.

That's samma. Right samādhi is explicitly defined as the four jhānas. It's all throughout the text. There's no ambiguity about it. We're going to come back and look at that in detail later. But we don't even know what Jhāna is yet. Some of you do. So this is a big deal.

So first of all, it's going to get back to, wait a minute, how do people who sort of de-emphasize-- I shouldn't say denigrate. Oh, some people do. But de-emphasize Samādhi. Again, how do they do that? Because it's really clear, right samādhi is jhāna. I do want to say one thing that's very, very important also. When you hear that, you may think, oh great, if I don't have jhāna, I got wrong samādhi.

But I want to offer, and many teachers I've heard say this too, I call, it's true the suttas say jhāna is right samādhi. I say that right samādhi culminates in jhāna, but any degree of samādhi you have is right samādhi, as long as it's influenced by the other elements of the eightfold path. Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right? That's right samādhi.



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Whatever you have is what you have, and that's what we work with. But it may interest us to think, Well, maybe it would be good to know that some jhāna could be something, if you're interested, you don't have to. People seem to get their enlightenment in styles of practice that don't include samādhi. We're gonna name all those styles later.

By the way, what's the difference of the definition of right samādhi based on the sutta versus the Visuddhimagga? That's the basis of our whole time together, so we're gonna answer that question. Okay, so this is important because it informs a lot about what else we'll do. Let me pause here for a moment because we're gonna move on again. See if anybody's, I'm sorry, just please be aware since there's so many of us, you know, the gallery view, there's about five different pages so I wanna look through and, okay. Yeah.

I would, by the way, just as an aside, this is a little off the topic, but, well, maybe it's on the topic. I would say there's no right or wrong anything. This is just my own. There's only what's happening in the present moment and how do we work with it? What's happening and how do we work with it most skillfully?

You know, sometimes people will talk in terms of good and bad meditation, and we know what they mean. But we all know that. But actually, I would say there's no such thing as a good or a bad meditation. There's only what's happening and then how do we meet it and how is it worked with. And even if it feels like it's all falling apart when we hold it with right attitude and do the best we can to work with it, then that's good, good stuff.

All right. So I hope the pace is going okay. I feel like I'm trying to keep moving along, but I'm trying not to talk too fast, which I can do when I'm trying to get through a lot of material. Okay, thank you for, I see a couple of thumbs ups. I guess it's okay. And you can let me know if I need to speed up or slow down. I see, okay. I'm gonna keep going like this.

All right, so now we're still, before we're getting into jhāna and all of that, which we're gonna spend most of our time on, I wanna back up because the path of actual, when you go to the Pali suttas, there are many teachings, but they're not actually the nuts and bolts meditation, or I'll say dharma practice, which to me is more than just the meditation.

And they tend to get, they're scattered throughout the suttas in many different ways, but there's a few really main, very foundational important texts or lists that I want to take a look at and see, well, how do they talk about samādhi in these lists? One of the reasons for lists, as Buddhism's called a religion of lists, but as part of the oral tradition on how things were preserved and memorized, right?

So we're gonna take a look at some of these. And I'm at the bottom of page two, and I'm actually gonna go into page three on your notes. One of the most important lists is called the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. It's a lot of emphasis. In fact, I have a, I don't think I put this quote into your notes, but I'm gonna give you a quote. Right, let me just give you a quote that's not in your notes.

This occurs, I think, three or four times in the Pali Suttas, and I could give you the reference if I could have to go look it up offline. The Buddha is quoted as saying, This is a paraphrasing. Everyone who's attained the final goal of this practice, you can call it nirvana in Sanskrit, nirvana. You could say enlightenment, liberation. Anybody who's ever done it in the past, who is doing it now, or whoever will do it in the future, this is how they did it.

They were to set aside the hindrances, which we're not really gonna talk about too much here, but hindrances are just, there's a list. It's just certain qualities that come up in our minds and



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bodies that can be hard, like if we're too sleepy or we're too restless or we're caught in aversion or there's a whole doubt, there's a whole list of hindrances.

You've been able to bring the hindrances down enough so that secondly, you can practice what's called the four foundations of mindfulness, which we're gonna discuss in a moment. And then through doing that, you bring to perfection the seven factors of enlightenment.

So if we're using the Pali as a model or a system, that is really the core of the whole thing. We've gotta be able to bring this hindrance, you don't have to totally get rid of hindrances ever, but enough so you can practice. And we do these practices called the four foundation of mindfulness.

Now I'm going to suggest in a moment that the seven factors of enlightenment is actually talking about Jhāna. And if that's true, you could think of the four foundations of mindfulness, which I'll explain also in a few moments, as actually being a path to develop jhāna. Well, that's kind of controversial because most people think it's what we call a dry insight path, which doesn't include jhāna. So hang on, we're gonna get to that.

So I don't wanna, let me just name what the factors are real quick, and I'm gonna leave it to you to look through the notes on page three and up at the top of page four. But really what I'm doing there, I just don't have time to really pause there, but I pull, if you're interested, I'm just trying to show my own argument of why when you look at it and look at these different terms, it really seems like Samādhi is getting a lot of emphasis.

What are the seven factors of enlightenment? They're in your list, so you don't have, but I'll just say the first one is called sati, which is mindfulness. The second one is called dhamma vicaya, which is invest, whoops, did I, think I may have hung up, there. First one is, first element is sati, mindfulness. Second, dhamma vicaya, which is investigation, like an inquiry, that's the kind of insight part. The third one is called viriya, which is energy. It's related to the English word virile.

So you have an energetic approach. The fourth is this word piti, which I said rapture, but we're gonna get into that term when we talk about jhāna and more. The fifth is tranquility, which here is the word passaddhi, which just means tranquility. And the sixth is samādhi. And the seventh is, so concentration, the seventh is upekkhā, which is equanimity. So notice it culminates in equanimity.

Since Samādhi is defined as the four noble truths as the right Samādhi, as Jhānas, I think here, it doesn't say that, but if you, actually, sorry, let me back up. The way I approach the Pali suttas, which may or may not be historically accurate, is to try and see them all as a cogent, coherent whole. So different parts are all informing each other to make a, what would you say, a cohesive, coherent message.

That may not be historically accurate by the way they evolve, but I think it just makes for just a better way to try to work through this rather than seeing all these subtle or not so subtle differences that we can't make sense of any of it. So I'm doing that right here because I'm using what the Four Noble Truths have told us, that concentration is right concentration, which is jhāna.

So I think maybe that's enough on that particular list for now, unless someone, I'm gonna pause on Seven Factors of Enlightenment, see if anybody. Oh, Leon. Can you -- Thank you. Yes. Hi. Hey, Leon, please go. Sure. I was just wondering, should these seven factors be developed one after the other? Are they sequential, or are they kind of all developed together? Yes, thank you.



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And actually, I'm sorry I meant to say this, and so I appreciate you bringing that up. factors be developed one after the other? Are they sequential or are they kind of all developed together? Ah, yes, thank you. And actually, I'm sorry I meant to say this. And so I appreciate you bringing that up. So it's actually experienced. It's actually practice and experience in different ways. Sometimes it is meant as a sequential list.

So you start with mindfulness and then you bring the what you call the, You know start to put your attention on whatever phenomenon That's the insight inquiry side and through continuing to do that you arouse more energy You get into the pīti, you get in room where the Samādhi experiences of the pīti which will just have it described You get more tranquility you get into the Samādhi So it's it's it's a sequential development and you can approach it that way if you want Sometimes it's just a bare list of qualities.

And it's not, oh, one other thing, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment can be prescriptive or descriptive. Prescriptive is prescribing how to practice one by one. Descriptive means it's just describing what's there really in, I would say, in states of deep Samādhi and Jhāna. So all the different ways that you can think of and approach it, people teach and practice, and have, I can just say experientially, have tremendous benefit.

Okay, Leon, yeah? Okay, I hope that answered that. So thank you for bringing that up, I meant to say that. Just one moment, I wanna come back. Is inclusive understanding of Samādhi the same as open awareness? It is, but there are different kinds of open awareness. Some can have more Samādhi than others. We'll get to that later.

How do we meditate in the way to get to the stool force pool? Well, so that's, we're not gonna be able to get into actually how to do that, because we're not actually a how-to practice in this session but what I would say to you, Hopefully you have, I mean you can read, I have a book, I'm not pushing a book, but there's lots of good books out there. My second book is called The Art and Skill of Buddhist Meditation. You can go look at that. It's actually, it talks about, specifically about that. You're welcome to contact me or if you have other teachers offline and we can talk more practice-oriented.

One more, even before the seven factors of enlightenment or develop, shouldn't we first focus on developing our SILA, moral precepts? Yes, yes, absolutely yes. I just am not focused on that in our discussion, but thank you for that. That's very important. And actually in the Eightfold Path, if you look at it more sequentially, you have to start with your right view and your right intention. You have to work through your SILA and then you get into the actual practices. So thank you for that. I don't, you say, well, whether you focus more on deepening sīla and then later go to developing your meditation, or you just bring sīla in from the beginning as you're meditating, but it should, I hope, bringing in the morality. And that takes many forms. It's all the qualities of the heart, empathy, kindness, love. I mean, there's so much in addition to sīla.

So thank you for that, very important. - Right. Okay, let me just check one more time. Okay. By the way, as we go through these lists, it's important to look for yourself. Do you think in terms, I think it is important to have reflected on these teachings and these lists. But then you'll see for yourself how much keeping those lists in mind as a particular system or structure works for you, or how much you don't think about the list. Maybe you just, whatever you practice, is you just do mindfulness of breathing, and you're not thinking in terms of them so much. So you'll find your own relationship with these lists. That's very important.

All right. So there's more there if you want to spend more time, but I want to move now. So let me just back up. So I'm looking at the time. We've been going for just under an hour. We're



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gonna go about half an hour more and take a 10 minute break. My intention for what I'd like to do for the rest of our time here is go through two more lists real quick. Satipatthana Sutta for Foundation of Mindfulness and Anapanasati Sutta, very important. Then I want to talk about Jhāna, and particularly we're going to look at Jhāna in the Pali Suttas in detail. Next time, next week, we'll look at Jhāna in the Visuddhimagga, and then we'll bring it all together, looking at all the controversies and everything like that. That's kind of an overview.

Okay, well then, let's move on. I'm aware, like I know all this stuff well, and it feels like a lot of information to me coming out today. So just take a moment. I hope it's not like frying your brain or anything. There's a lot of stuff. It can be that way. But we're kind of, you know, just having this format, I think we can do a lot in our six hours, but it's just gonna be a lot of info. So I hope you let what needs to stick, stick the rest. You can always come back to it and slow it down.

Okay. Okay, I'm gonna keep talking then because I don't see any more people waving their hands. All right. So many of you will be aware, know about one of the suttas that gets a lot of attention in the insight meditation tradition, which is called, they translate it as the four foundations of mindfulness. It's actually, it's another tongue twister Pali name, which is sati, there's that word sati, mindfulness, satipatthana. It doesn't really mean four, it just means foundation. They actually don't know how to translate it.

The scholars have disagreements on it. But if you ever read Ajahn Ṭhānissaro's book, Wings to Awakening, he's translating the Satipatthana as wings, supports, but its foundations. It's foundations of mindfulness, Satipatthana. There are four of them. There's a lot in those suttas, And so let me just give you a little warning that I'm gonna try to just quickly name what the four are just so you've heard it. Don't worry, it's too much. It's not gonna stick. One thing that happens at some point, it's just all there over time.

If you're interested in studying this stuff, you don't have to. And then when you need it, it's just there. And it's all, you see how it fits together. But sometimes if you're new to it, Man, it's just a lot of a lot. So this suit does kind of like that. Yes, Jeff, please unmute. Yeah, go ahead, please. - I just wanna say you're doing a great job. You are clarifying a lot of really minute questions that have come up for me as I have studied and practiced this so you're doing a fine job of answering these little sort of nitpicky questions. But, okay, it's great. Yeah, great, thank you. - Well, thank you, Jeff. I'm very happy to hear that, much better than if I was being a confusion generator. So, thank you for the feedback. And all feedback is welcome because, look, we're in a group of 100 people, no matter who's the teacher and no matter what you do,

It's not gonna be a perfect match in the style what we're doing for everyone. So I'm sure hopefully we make it as useful as possible for the most number of people. So thank you. Okay, so I'll try not to talk too quickly on this. The four foundation of mindfulness and then we want to see where does Samādhi fit into that?

So this is a practice, a how-to how to meditation practice texts. And basically what it does is it's telling you, giving you instructions on how to use your mindful, let me back up, what do we mean by the word mindfulness, sati? I think we should stay there for a moment. I'm gonna give you my take on it. If you listen to Some people will call it paying attention in a conscious way to something. That's the practice of mindfulness. What's the mental state of mindfulness? My definition is not being spaced out on automatic pilot, knowing what's happening.

So sometimes people will say, as we go through our day, you just get caught up in things. And people will say, oh, you went unconscious. You lost your mindfulness. We know what they mean. You didn't really go unconscious. But you just are just lost in it. And I call that being on automatic pilot. And then something can happen where we sort of wake up out of that and we



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just know consciously, purposely what's going on. We have mindfulness in the moment. So that's my own definition, just not being on automatic pilot.

One of the big, some of you will know this, the big benefits that comes from meditation practice is without even trying, we're on automatic pilot less and less and less. Doesn't mean you never space out, and when you do, you're less deeply lost in it and everything, so that's a great benefit, many benefits, but that's a good one.

Differences in mindfulness versus awareness. I don't know. I don't know. I'm sorry. I don't mean to be glib or dismissive, whatever, for Bob. It's a good question. I think we'd have to spend a lot of time kind of teasing that out. I don't know.

So the practice of mindfulness is that when you go to meditate, you're doing some method, technique, practice. So you're doing something. You're putting your attention in a certain way. You're bringing your mindfulness to apply it in a certain way. The first foundation of mindfulness out of the four called mindfulness of the body.

And it's divided, you don't have to remember all this stuff but I think it's there in your texts. But you can look, there's so many places to look up if you want to go deeper into this online. It's divided into six sections. The first of the six is mindfulness of breathing. And it's even divided into four little sections on how you breathe.

Be mindful of breathing in, of breathing out. It gives you a little detail of how to do it. because the breath is an experience in the body. So mindfulness of breathing. The second mindfulness of the body practice is called the, there's the four postures. Whether you're sitting, standing, walking or lying down, right?

You can, there is, so you can meditate according to this in any of these postures. So it's talking about that. There's just lots of different ways to be aware of the body. I'm not gonna go through all the six of them. One of them is you break the body down into constituent parts, and there's actually a part of seeing the bodies composed of, like there's a list of 31 or 32, depending on the list, bones, fat, muscle, and it goes through.

So you can, there's a lot of different ways. There's four elements practices. There's some, there's even a practice of, don't do it here in the West so much, about a body, a dead body in various stages of decay. If you live in a country where there's charnel grounds where they're waiting to burn the bodies and the bodies will stay out, people will go meditate on it. There's all these different things of ways to be mindful of your body.

But most people probably take this as mindfulness of the breath and just being able to bring mindfulness in many different ways to know what's going on in your body. For now, that's enough, just an idea. The second foundation of mindfulness is a word with a V, vedana. If they say Pali with a Burmese accent, they do it with a W. Burmese accent is vedana. but the most international standard Pali is V, Vedanas, just so you don't get confused on when they pronounce it. Vedana sometimes pronounced as feeling tone, but be careful, it doesn't mean feelings like moods or emotions.

It just means accompanying every experience. There's the quality of it being pleasant or unpleasant. Sometimes also they'll call it neutral. I don't really like this. It's neither pleasant nor unpleasant. So all that's the second you'll notice the actual pleasantness of the experience the unpleasantness or that is coming in between



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So we've got mindfulness of the body Vedana will call it feeling tone The third one is called Citta. It's consciousnesses and it's a very specific list. It's not just pure awareness It's talking about states that can arise in the mind And I forgot the exact list, but like, is greed, hatred, and delusion present or not present? Is your mind concentrated or not concentrated?

There's more lists, but it's just noting the quality of your mind. I don't want to go through the whole list necessarily. You can look it up. And then the fourth foundation is complicated because it's a whole list of other lists. You may not have known this. There are lists of lists. It just goes on and on, it doesn't quit. So there's lists of lists. And the fourth foundation of mindfulness goes through some of these important lists and tells you how to practice.

There's what's called the six sense doors. I'll just name them, meaning, They call it sense bases or sense doors. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting. They call it touch, which is just body sensations. And then what's going on in the mind is one. They call it a mind door because you can have experience in the mind. How do you work with those? It talks about it. There's some others lists that I don't wanna go through the whole thing. Hindrances, I'll just mention, anyways.

So anyway, five aggregates, if you don't know what that is. Let me ask me or you can look that up easily. Four Noble Truths is in that, the fourth foundation of mindfulness. So how are we supposed to practice with the four foundations of mindfulness? People are all over the map of how they teach it and how you practice it and how you can experience it. And believe it or not, Buddhists, we're supposed to be so loving and kind and accepting. There are, I mean, there are Dharma wars out there. And actually, I can show you an ancient text that says if you don't interpret, I won't get into the details, this particular text and practice in this particular way, you're going to hell.

What's up with these Buddhists? But they didn't know any better. They really thought this is the right way and I've got it and everybody else is wrong. And to this day, I'm not gonna name any names, but I can, there are plenty of people out there teaching a great path, wonderful paths of practice. But they're saying we've got the best, the right, the only way, this is the way the Buddha really taught.

Well, guess what? The Buddha didn't teach in just one way. He did in all of the above, because what's needed for each person is individual. Some people better be doing jhāna practice, that's what they need, people should not go anywhere near jhāna practice because that's not what they need. They need a bare insight practice. And they all get to the same place. Very, very important. So how do we practice and teach with a satipatthana?

I'll just name a couple of ways, but you could take it again as prescriptive or descriptive. Prescriptive is saying pick, work your way through, pick just one foundation or start with one and work through them all, however you want to do it, and pick it as a practice and do that. That's prescribing what to do. Another way, which has been more the way it's been my own practice, is it's descriptive. It's describing what happens if you just, if you just start with the first, my whole practice for 53 years, 53 years has been mindfulness of breathing meditation.

I still keep up my practice to this day. I don't know what happened if I stopped. I haven't done the experiment. But I've been pleased with the results, I'll say this. That doesn't mean it has to be your practice, but my practice has been mindfulness of breathing. What I found is through doing that, and you get the samādhi and it opens to an inclusive samādhi is the way mine, I know exclusive also, which is, you know, that's kind of fun too, but you get into an inclusive samādhi, deep, everything else is there. It opens up. If something else is, so let me ask you a question.



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For those of you who meditate, some of you won't relate to this, but some of you either in daily life or on retreats, either way is good. Isn't it true that when you start to settle your mind more, you don't have to go looking. If something's going on in the body, you know it more clearly than ever because you're undistracted with an inclusive Samādhi. If there's something going on in your mind, I mean, we can get lost and caught up in it, sure. But if there's something going on in the mind, you know it. If something's unpleasant, you know it.

So I'm not saying this is better, it's just one way you can think of it as a descriptive, that all you have to do is settle the mind and everything else comes there. And so that's, as we get, this is sort of a little preview as we get into next week, one way to think about Samādhi practice is that it includes mindfulness, insight, the heart qualities, jhāna, it all comes into one thing. Other people, that's just not what they're drawn to and they'll pick different specific aspects and just focus on it like that. So it's not one way.

Now, in the fourth foundation of this, oh, one more thing, the Satipatthana Sutta appears in two places in the Pali texts in what's called the middle-length discourses, the Majjhima Nikāya, if you want to know in Pali. It's got, I think, 152 suttas in it, and they're middle-length because they're all like, they're not super short or super long. three or four, 10 pages. Satipatthana Sutta appears in the middle-length suttas. It appears again in the long discourses, the Dīgha Nikāya, because they're a bunch of longer ones, called the Maha, the great Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta.

And it's identical to the other Satipatthana Sutta, except in the very end, when it talks about the Four Noble Truths, it expands out the Eightfold Path in a lot of detail. And that's when it gets into jhāna. It actually goes for the whole thing of bringing jhāna in a lot of detail into the definition. Again, it's just another emphasis on right samādhi of the Eightfold Path being jhāna. Well, if you take that, then what the Satipatthana Sutta is saying there, it's not saying you have to practice it in one way or another, but put in together with everything else, I think it's aiming towards, and that's been my experience.

You just start with the breath and get more concentrated, concentrated. The heart opens in love, which is really nice when that happens. Isn't it better when the heart's in love? It is, it just feels better. Kindness, empathy, you get all the good, kind of blissful feelings, it's nice. Your mind's clear, present. You know what's happening in the body. You know the Vedana. You know the states of your mind. You get all of that. However, people get to the, and by the way, it culminates in equanimity again, but people get the same level of equanimity if they never do jhāna. That may be some of you.

Just by doing the insight part. That's a practice question. They've been feeling tones are about as far as I can get when in concentration. Those three feeling tones open up a lot of grasping. That's more of, it's a comment, I weren't asking, but this is where you look to see what's actually happening in your practice and then how do I work with it? So that's a how-to question. So anyway, the bottom line is in the Satipatthana Sutta, it doesn't explicitly say jhāna, but samādhi is in there. And probably, again, undistracted, I think the Satipatthana Sutta's kind of interested in getting as undistracted as you can, without stressing out about it.

Please don't create a lot of suffering in this path and intending to come to an end of suffering. Don't stress out about getting undistracted, just be relaxed and easeful, but aim yourself in that way. I think that's what Satipatthana's talking about. Before we break, I'm gonna say something about the Anapanasati Sutta, which is also very important. Well, it'll be shorter. Okay, I was just reading it. How long does it take to get to Jhānas? I understand it varies, but do you have some average times? No, highly individual.



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We'll say more about that next week. highly individual. There are people who can get into Jhāna through daily life practice, never have to do retreats. Probably most people probably do it more in the retreat context, but I know and work with a number of people who can get into those states in their daily life practice. So other people say, "No, no, you can't do that," but it's not true. So that'll be, oh. Buddhists from other countries, this are getting off topic, but it's a good topic. Buddhists from other countries have suggested American Buddhism is not real Buddhism.

And as a member of American society, I can see that they are likely noticing the way our culture blindly appropriates other spiritual traditions. Where is the development of humility in American Buddhists in this regard? So I appreciate that question, that comment. And what I would say about that is throughout the history of Buddhism, it has always, as it's spread and moved into other countries and cultures. It's brought in with it from whatever the source culture that it came in from, and then it always melded with the local cultures and traditions, this is always what's happened, and become a new thing, its own.

So when you think of as Buddhism moved, say, out of India, this is more the Mahayana versions later, and moved into China in the form, say, Chan Buddhism, It took the Chinese a number of centuries actually to realize it, but what had happened was it became a new thing. It's not less than or worse than. It's its own, one person, by the way, there's a book out there titled "The Buddhist Religions," plural, by Ajahn Ṭhānissaro, and it argues that we shouldn't think of Buddhism as a religion, but as a family of religions that trace themselves back to a single origin. It's an interesting book, The Buddhist Religions.

You don't have to read it, I just sort of gave you the bottom line, but that's if you're interested. So when it moved into, it brought a particular flavor, remember I said of the early Buddhism, a lot of the early schools have died out, more Mahayana flavors that were evolving. Those are the versions, particular school called the Sarvastivada School moved into Tibet, moved into China, And so, Tibetan Buddhism feels real Tibetan. Chan Buddhism feels real Chinese. That Chan is what, then, by the way, the word Chan, the word jhāna, by the way, the word jhāna, when we get to it, it just means to meditate.

But it means something special, but the word just means meditation. When it went into Chinese, Jhāna in Sanskrit is dhyana, in Chinese is Chan. Chan Buddhism is the Jhāna school of Buddhism. In Japanese, Soto Zen, Zen is the Japanese of it. So Zen is the Jhāna school of Buddhism. So just in case you're interested in that. So it's always changing. Japanese Zen feels really Japanese and it took what came from India through China into Japan, and now it took the Chinese and then it melded with Japanese culture.

So the same thing is happening here. And this is, maybe it's controversial and other people may have different takes. I'm just giving you my take. That doesn't mean it's right. Or if you disagree, it's fine. I'm just offering my own for whatever it's worth. You could argue, and people do, that something's being lost in the way we're changing the Dharma as it's coming to the West. Totally argue that. You can also argue that something's gained as it's becoming sort of more culturally, and we're not just one culture in this country, so I wanna be really careful, but just as a way of speaking, you know, we brought a lot of the psychological aspects there, there's a lot of things that make it so, you could argue that really something's gained and for our time and our culture, or that something's been lost.

And I don't wanna get more off into that. But those are fun. I've had a lot of those discussions. It's kind of fun to do that. One more thing. There's another sutta called the Anapanasati. There's that word sati, sutta. And it's a real important sutta also. It's kind of equal to the Satipatthana of mindfulness sutta in importance in this tradition. Ana pana, ana means in



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breathing, pana means out breathing. In breathing and out breathing, mindfulness of breathing sutta is how it's translated. It's a very interesting sutta, just as an aside, it begins, excuse me, it begins with the Buddha is there, thus have I heard, this is Ananda speaking,

The Buddha's there with all the practitioners. I think he's with the monks. The women were there, but it was a different culture and time, so I'm sorry, it was the guys. And they were all hanging out. And if the Buddha were here today, we don't know how he'd be about all that stuff, but I suspect he'd be a little more modern in his views. But anyway, so he's there with the guys. And he goes around and he looks at all these different groups and he says, "Here's some people practicing," and he's doing meta-meta, I don't remember the whole list, meta-practice, foundation of mindfulness practice, the seven factor of enlightenment, he lists all these different ways they're practicing and he says, he's approving of all of them, he says, "Because they're each practicing "according to their own," I forgot how he said it, "temperaments, "what works best for them," and he says, "It's all good."

So right there, we've got the Buddha himself saying it's not one way. If anybody ever tells you they've got the true right way, yeah, if you feel like it, you might just gently say, well, you know, there's this sutta you might wanna go look at because, I don't think that's what the Buddha was saying. But anyway. And then he says, now let me tell you my way of practicing. Or another way, well actually, every time I can think of that the Buddha is referred to talking about his own practice, when he said this is what I do, he said mindfulness of breathing.

That's not holding it up as better than anything else, that's just kind of his thing, right? But just an aside, so he starts to talk about mindfulness of breathing. And what this sutta basically does, it's another complicated sutta, it divides meditation practice into 16 steps. steps. I'm not going to go through the 16 steps, we don't have the time to do that, but it's Anapanasati Sutta. If you have, some of you have my book, it's in there. There's lots of resources you can find. I didn't list out all the, it's just too much in the notes here, but it's easy to find this, you know, Mindfulness of Breathing Sutta, Anapanasati. You can get to all of them, and there's many commentaries and many different approaches of how it's taught.

It's not one way. What it does is it divides the 16 steps into four groups, four tetrads. The first group is the exact four steps from the mindfulness of satipatthana, the mindfulness of breathing, the very first one I said it was four steps on how to do your breath. It repeats them here. Breathing in, breathing out, it's a a list of four.

The second group really gets into more vedana, mind states and so on. It's basically goes on to say that if you practice the anapanasati, each tetrad fulfills each of the four mindfulness of, foundation of mindfulness. It says that and I'm skipping over a lot of detail, but at the end it says that, it goes, Here's the steps.

By doing them, you fulfill each of the four foundations of mindfulness. By fulfilling the four foundations of mindfulness, you complete and fulfill the seven factors of enlightenment. And by completing the seven factors of enlightenment, you come to your liberation practice. That's the text. So that's kind of cool that it brings it all together kind of in one thing.

Here are a few different ways that the Satipatthana Sutta, it's a big world. Here's a couple of ways to think about it. It can be prescriptive or descriptive. And it can be a Samādhi practice or it can be a pure insight deemphasizing Samādhi. Take your pick, it's all good. As prescriptive, it's saying, again, you start with step one.

People will practice this way. If you want to use this sutta as a -- I've never used this sutta as a structure. I just know about it. But for me, I've just started with step one, put my attention on



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my breathing, where I feel it in my body and all that. All the other steps just kind of fell out as you go deeper. It was more of a description of what happens.

Other people, don't do it that way. They start, okay, I put my attention wherever. I point to my nose, that's kind of where, in the nasal passages is my spot. Anywhere in your body is fine, doesn't matter. Breathing in long, I know, so they start to notice. I'm mindful, I'm breathing in long. Breathing in short, you know that. They work through the steps.

Again, this is an Anapanasati class, so I'm not gonna go through all the steps. Look 'em up for yourself. I'm gonna put in the chat on the break how you can contact me if you, I'm not looking to try to get you to contact me, but I do wanna make, I'll be as available, if 91 people do, we'll have to kind of do the best I can. But I do wanna support you the best I can if that's helpful.

So I can point you to some of that stuff. You work through the steps systematically. That's prescriptive, descriptive. You can do all those steps not thinking about jhāna or samādhi, just a light level of undistractedness. And people get tremendous benefit out of that. For others, it's been more, I've been more of a samādhi guy, so the samādhi just comes in and is in there, That's been my own personal experience.

But one of the great benefits that you find, for those of you, if you either are in a teacher role or if you ever end up in a teacher role, just one of the great gifts is that you really see, not just as a nice idea, but how, yes, we're all the same, but how different we all are.

And I gotta tell you, this is a little true confession. I don't tell this out there because it's a little embarrassing, but when I was the newest and the youngest, when I knew the least, I was the most opinionated about what was right and wrong. I had no idea what I was talking about. I wouldn't say that out loud because you just come off being kind of a jerk, right? You can't do that. But I thought it. How are you supposed to meditate? What's right? I was the worst.

Over time, thankfully, I got to see, not just as a good idea, not just being politically correct, It's really true. It's just such a diverse world out there and that's the good news because again, you can't mess it up. You want to listen, sorry I'm going off on a little Dharma talk, you've got to want to listen to your own inner teacher and your inner guidance. Follow that.

Sometimes we can't distinguish between our own delusion or our greed, hatred, and delusion and we think it's our inner wisdom. Okay, fine, but we get better at it. we get to distinguish more. Follow your teaching, listen to others, let them, and then try it on and see, and the way will reveal itself. And I bet you if we went around, and we don't have time to do it, it'd be kind of fun, I guarantee you in this group, there's 92 of us here, we are all over the place, but everybody here I know, you wouldn't be here, is bringing a sincere intention. That's what's gonna serve you, take you through, just stay in touch with our good intention, right?

However, it's good to get clear, and when we come back from the break, we're gonna go into, so anyway, that was, sorry, that was necessarily way too little on the anapanasati sutta. That could be a lifetime, any one of these lists could be a lifetime of exploration and inquiry, and it would be worth it if that's what you went into. It's no end to how far you can take it. For today, we're just naming a few things.

I have to be honest, all of that when I wrote my book, and that was just a sales pitch to say, you see, Samādhi and Jhāna are a big deal. And all you insight people out there who kind of don't emphasize it, it's like, you're wrong. I might have a little bit of that in my mind. So anyway, of course, they're not wrong. It's just different. All right, let's do this. It's 1030 now. I'm gonna break for 10 minutes and of course, come.



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All right, so welcome back. And I assume others will come in and join as they're ready. Just before we go, a couple of things here. Has somebody sent a chat? Do you recommend a way of judging this breath as long and that breath as short? So I don't recommend the way. So since I don't know you, I'd have to talk to you one-on-one in your practice, but please don't overthink it. The idea, and this may not be what you meant, so I hope, but just in case. It's not that you have to get it right like if it's a long or short and to figure it out in your mind. Just experience your breath as you're experiencing it.

I think when it says, most people will say, if it's long or if it's short, you don't have to make it long and short. It's just staying with the breath and experiencing. It's just to keep with the breath. That's the way to do it. Certainly, you know, these texts were preserved in this formalized language, in this formalized structure. But I've never heard anybody, and I don't either think you have to know if it's a long or a short breath. It's just fine, if you use mindfulness of breathing, and again, that's a powerful practice, lots of people do it. It may be the single most common practice, but if mindfulness of breathing, by the way, is not a good practice for you, there's nothing wrong.

There's a lot of reasons why breath's not good for, I knew someone who had a choking incident as a child, and so every time they put their attention to the breath, it actually brought up some trauma, or they would get constricted kind of a thing. So many other practices, just like in this four foundations of mindfulness, and many, many practices that are equal as powerful and everything. There's other reasons, but just connect with your breathing, where you feel it in your body. Don't overthink it, however you experience it.

This is more of a practice question, but anyway. Let me just say this. I think everybody, I sent it to, it says, meeting group chat. I guess that went to everyone, but I put something in the chat. Hopefully, if you're interested, you can see it. I said you may or may not be interested, but if you are, I gave you an email. You can, that's our organization. If you want to get our email list, you're welcome. If you don't receive an email for a long time, don't worry. We don't send them out very often, one or two or three times a year. You can get our email list to find out about retreats that we teach, there are genre retreats, or if you want to contact me, that's an email also that will work. So hopefully those who wanted to see it can see that.

And let me just check if there's any more questions here. Hands up. Okay, I'm gonna continue then. Now we're gonna start in on a particular flavor of Samādhi called Jhāna, J-H-A-N-A. So first of all, I said before the word jhāna in the texts, we should just mention, it's just the word just translated means meditation. There are a couple of places in the suttas where actually there's a wrong jhāna. There's one where the Buddha is telling a story when before he switched over the kind of practice that he ended up doing, he was doing all these yogic practices.

And one of them, he would hold his breath. It was like doing these ascetic practices. He would hold his breath for these really long periods of time, I'm not sure what the purpose was. And that was described as what you call a wrong jhāna. So, but almost every place where the word jhāna is used in the text, it's specifically referring to what we are gonna talk about as jhāna. And in the Pali texts, the definition is given of, there's a definition given in the texts. And by definition, any meditative state that, jhāna is whatever matches these words. That's what jhāna is, what these words say is what it is.

So what I wanna do is, on page six of your notes, I've actually printed out an English translation of the Janna definition. I should say that, just to clarify in case there's ever any confusion, this is my own translation. It's a good translation, but everybody makes certain



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choices. And so just to say if you were to read some other translation, sometimes there'll be a little difference, just so you know. And one of the reasons is that there are some places, like if you look at the wisdom publications, say, where Bhikkhu Bodhi, who's a great, you know, I'm not, I'm okay, was an okay translator in my day, but he, I'm not like him, a great scholar. He did some different things, but he made some stylistic choices. I'm sure he had, I've spoken with him about this.

He had good reasons. I try to stick to more literal meanings. That was just my own choices. So what I'm going to do is we're going to go through this and try to really, because we have to tease it out. Sometimes if we're in person, just to get some extra voices in here, we'll ask other people to read some of this, but I'm just going to do it because there's so many of us. And so you can read along. I'm just going to read on page six, it says, "jhāna definition."

So this is it. And I'm just going to read the first sentence and then we're going to pause. It says, you can just read along or listen, "Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters and abides in the first jhāna, which is characterized by rapture and pleasure born of seclusion and accompanied by thought and examination." Clear? No, it's not clear at all. What the heck does that mean?

One of the, we're gonna go through it, and you'll look at the other three, where we'll go through them one by one also. One of the reasons that there's so much, we're talking about Dharma Wars when it comes to Jhāna, There are so many people teaching, this is the real Janna, the right Janna, that's okay if that teacher wants to teach that. Every one of these different teachers can legitimately be claiming to teach an authentic Janna because there are many different states that match the verbal description here, right? Because it's very subjective.

So before we go through this, we're gonna back up just for a sec. Oh, wait a minute. If you also look on page seven, so if you, sorry, if you look on page six, there's four sentences.

One, so there's four jhānas, first, second, third, and fourth, and each one has a sentence here that defines it. We'll read them all together and go through them. About half the places in the suttas where the definition appears, it's just this.

About the other half, it gives the exact definition, but they include a simile with it, which are very beautiful. And we're gonna go and read it with the similes in a moment, but in a few minutes. Just so you know also, when I said the definitions, my own translation, the simile is not my translation, that's Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation.

So, before we go through this, I wanna back up. And, well, first let's just notice, sorry. I'm getting a little scattered here. Let me settle down here a little bit. In this first definition, let's just look at the beginning. It says quite secluded from sensual pleasures. All that means is, I'm sure many of you know this for your own practice, in order to meditate, you need to kind of set aside external distractions, just enough to kind of be able to, that's why some people go on retreats, or it can serve people.

Say you're at home practice, if you can have kind of not so much commotion going all around you, You sort of set aside a place where it can be a little more conducive to the meditation. That's all it's talking about. Doesn't have to be perfect. But if someone's doing a construction project right out, and you've got a jackhammer going right outside your window, might be harder.

Actually, when you get to a certain place in Samādhi, you'll find out it doesn't matter if the jackhammer is going, there's no distraction. It can be like that. But we want to set up



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supportive conditions. That's all that means. So you're secluded from sense pleasures and then secluded from unwholesome states.

This is going back to that thing that said, everybody who's ever become enlightened or ever will, remember there were three steps. You set aside the hindrances and then you practice the four foundation of mindfulness so you could fulfill the seven factors of enlightenment. That first step, bringing down the hindrances, that's what it means, secluded from unwholesome states.

You need to be able to settle down enough. You can have stuff going on, it's all right. Many of you know this. Doesn't have to be perfect. But we've got to bring the storm clouds of the mind down enough, even if it's just for a few minutes, to be able to settle. It's all it's talking about.

And then it says you enter in the first jhāna. It doesn't tell you how to do it. But some of these other texts, we're telling you about mindfulness of breathing and things. But, and then here's what's characterized. Now we're gonna get into these terms. What do they mean?

It says rapture and pleasure. So we'll look and say, what do they really mean by that? And it says born of the seclusion. So because she secluded yourself, meaning just temporarily, I went in the other room. Someone's got the TV on in here. I'm gonna go in the other room. You seclude, that's all it is.

And then as you've done that, you've gotten in this first jhāna. It's got some qualities there, rapture and pleasure, and it's accompanied by something that I've translated as thought and examination. So there's some state that you enter that is pointing towards.

So what's the nature of this jhāna that we're talking about? Well, in other places, not in the definition, but in other places in the sutta, and I listed something called the Mahavedalla Sutta, which is down towards the bottom of page six in your notes.

It says that the Mahavedalla Sutta specifies certain elements from the definition and they call them jhāna factors. So you will hear people talk about the jhāna factors a lot, depending on the teacher. I don't use that term myself when I'm teaching much, but most people probably do. And I list at the bottom of page six and the top of page seven, I list the factors.

What I call rapture and pleasure, and what I call thought and examination, they're all there, we're getting ready to get into it. And the top of page seven, I talk about what's called unification of mind. So let's go through those factors because this is the quality of Jhāna that we're gonna be talking about. What is it to be in the state of Jhāna? Again, we're not right now getting in how do you get there. That's a more practice question, a big question.

So if you go to the top of page seven, there's this term, Ekaggata, which, sorry, that's, where did I list it? I didn't actually spell that out on your notes there. The eka means one. So this jhāna factor, Ekaggata, so in the second jhāna, they do use the term, these eka, but they call it ekodi-bhava, which means the being in a state of this oneness, this eka. But Ekaggata, which I should put it in the note there, which is the jhāna factor, This goes back to what we said at the very beginning today.

When we, eka means one, so it's translated as one-pointedness. Singleness, that's singleness of mind, or unification, uni, one, that we talked about earlier. So again, this Ekaggata is, there's more than one way. This is gonna get, when we get into the controversies later about what's jhāna, there's more than one flavor of ekaggata, the exclusive one-pointedness, ekaggata, or the unification of mind, which is just as deep, it's not less deep, but where we haven't shut off



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the flow of changing experience, the mind itself has stopped, not the flow of changing experience, right?

That's the other kind of, so there's two, Already we got two kind of flavors that can be jhāna. And you can experience both of these flavors from a practice point of view. Here's the way I think about it. This is a very clumsy analogy, but it's probably a little inaccurate, but I'm just not being as articulate as I wish I could be. So hopefully it will work for you.

If you've got water and it's a wintry day and it's outdoors, and things are getting colder and colder, and maybe the water's starting to freeze, and I don't know if it really works this way, but you'll get the idea, and then it hasn't turned to ice, but it's maybe starting to get a little slushy, it's settling more and more, and it's getting more slushy, And so when we're concentrating, the mind can get more and more settled. We can, it can still wobble, we can still go off, but not as much. We're getting more and more concentrated.

You're getting deep in it, but it can still move a little. But at some point that water turns to ice and it's fixed. It's not moving. I don't know if it clunks into ice. The mind doesn't really go clunk, but it kind of be settling, settling, and all of a sudden, and the mind stops. That's the level of ekaggata, whether one-pointed, exclusive on the object, or the mind and unification of the mind, unmoving. That's the clear force pool, and it's a powerful place to be in.

The level of insight and mindfulness and awareness has just gotten magnified tremendously because of the clarity and the undistractedness of the mind is so powerful. That's the level we're talking about of ekaggata in Jhāna that we're talking about. But along with that, there's other things happening. So we're gonna talk about what I call rapture and pleasure. Sometimes you'll hear people talk about what's called, did I put it in Pali? I did.

So the Pali is P-I-T-I, pronounced with a long I, piti, like P-E-E-T-E-E. That's the pronunciation, piti. When you look up the, I looked up, I did a whole list of all, maybe I'll put it in here. I didn't go through it all here. Of all the different ways I could look up where people have translated piti, people call it bliss, rapture, pleasure. What's that, bliss, rapture, pleasure? I'm forgetting a few. But it's like your bliss out kind of a thing, okay? That's the pīti. I want to come back to that in a minute.

Then there's one called sukha, which is normally translated as happiness or sometimes pleasure. Oh, and pīti can be happiness too. They mix them all up. So what does that mean? You're having some kind of pleasant experience here. Well, it turns out that even in the deepest jhāna, it's highly individual how Piti is experienced because we're all different.

And in fact, this is important point. The Pali suttas never, ever, ever explain what Piti is. They just use the term. Not one place in the suttas does it actually tell you what they're talking about. So people are gonna say pīti this or it's that. Well, suttas never said that. They must have had some shared understanding back there.

When we get to the Visuddhimagga next week, they go into a lot of detail very specifically about what pīti is, not the Pali suttas. So let me just, for some people, this rapture, this pleasure, this bliss can be very intense. It can be like a powerful, like this energy of bliss moving in your body or it can be more mental. And sometimes pīti can actually be too much and it can feel like if you've ever gotten an electric shock or something, it's too much. It can be raggedy and jangly even. There's ways we can bring it down and practice and smooth it out. It can all easily be worked with.



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But so it can be too much. That's part of the skill if you're working with a teacher of how you manage that. Or it can be very light and sweet, and never that strong of a blissful feeling ever. In fact, as you're gonna see when we get in the deeper jhānas, pīti drops away completely because things settle out. All that pīti feels a little too coarse. But you're having some kind of pleasant experience. Again, it can be very light, and everybody's going, "Where's my bliss?" That's not how pīti is for you.

The Ekaggata, the unification of mind, or the one point is, is just as deep, but it's more smoothed out even from the beginning. So the important thing is not looking at some teacher, some book or some whatever is telling you this is how it is. Question is, how is it for you? That is correct pīti, because that's what you're getting. Sukha is generally talked about as being, it's a little lighter stage. It's more instead of bliss, it's more of a happiness, more of a pleasure. It's kind of a little more smoothed out of a pleasantness. These can be felt both in the body or they can be kind of mental, piti and sukha.

Now, some teachers... Yeah, so, sorry, ekodi-bhava meant being or becoming, right, about jewels, that's right, becoming or being unified or one-pointedness, so that's exactly right. About a ekodi-bhava, I thought bhava meant being or becoming, not mind. Yes, I may have misspoken, I don't remember what I said, but that's exactly right. So some people think Piti and Sukha are these two separate things, and that's fine. There's this Piti, and when the Piti kind of settles out, then the Sukha's more subtle. I don't view them that way.

To me, they're just a part of a continuum of things get settled out and get less strong, and it kind of gets subtler and sweeter and a little lighter and I call that the sukha, but that's me. So other people will say that's different. So you'll just hear different people talking about these. It doesn't really matter. There's different manifestations of this pleasantness.

Let me name a few other things that are important here. Backing away from the pīti and sukha. For those of you who have done much meditation, You know that as the mind settles, this is the concentration deepening, how is it you'll know, I'll come back to the definition in a minute, but let's step out for a moment. How is it you know that you're settling in deeper in the meditation? You're having some experience, right, that's telling you that. You're meditating, you're new, you're going, "Is something gonna happen? "When's anything gonna happen?" Or whatever, and then all of a sudden, someday you notice, "Oh, I feel myself being a little deeper in." You're not asking yourself, it's palpable, there's no question. It's experientially just you're deeper in.

What's the feeling of being deeper in? Well, it's hard to describe, but I'll just say a few adjectives. You'll put in your own, I can't cover everything. You'll just feel your mind is just, there's a steadiness there, a calmness there, more of a stillness, even a little bit. Your mind's not wandering as much, you're just more of a sense of presence can be. That's one thing. Some of the pleasant experiences can start to come. Whether you call it the pīti or sukha, maybe it's a little pleasant in the mind or just the feeling in the body or the mind. It just feels good. It does feel good when your mind settles.

Listen, let me back up for a second. This stuff feels great. I'm not supposed to talk like this, but they recording me? That's all right, I'm gonna just tell you. It's great. One of the things people will say, oh, don't try to develop jhāna because you're gonna get attached. You're gonna crave after it. A lot of people do. It's good. They don't say, hold back on the method of loving kindness. Don't really go for it as far as you can because you're gonna get attached. Don't hold back on the mindfulness. Don't hold back on the insight, all these wholesome mind states.



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But for some reason, the Samādhi piece, That one you're gonna get, gotta hold back because you're gonna get attached. Guess what? You are gonna crave after it and you are gonna get attached to it. It's no big deal. We'll pull you out, don't worry. And you're gonna suffer when you don't get it and you're gonna learn to let go. And you're gonna learn that it's not about any particular state. The states are important, that's what we're talking about here. It's really about the liberation of your heart and mind. that's not dependent on any state, and it's the non-clinging with whatever actually is happening, that's the path.

And so the best way to get Jhāna, I'll just give you a little quick story. I was on this long, I've done a bunch of retreats. I did this one-year long retreat. Now, that's a long retreat. And I was like in the middle, and I had gotten into Jhāna over the years and a bunch of stuff, and so I had it all planned out. All right, this is gonna be great. I'm gonna go on retreat. I'll be there about a month, I'm gonna get into Jhāna, and then it's gonna just deepen and all this after that. Well, guess what, I'm four or five months in, no Jhāna. I'm freaking out.

So I go to the teacher I was working with, Joseph Goldstein was the guy I was working with, you know who he is. I'm crying. And he said, "Well, you know, the real depth "of the practice isn't attaining any particular state, "it's the non-clinging with whatever's happening." And I said to him, you think I'd know better. I said, "Yes, Joseph, of course that's true. "But in order for me to realize that deeply, "I gotta get whatever."

And then I proceeded to suffer for a while until I finally got it. And then in the deeper letting go, everything eventually gets where it needs to get. Jhāna, attaining jhāna is not by doing, it's actually deep states of letting go. Just one second, Alex, I'll come. Is that okay, can you hang on for a second? Yeah. So, I forgot what I was talking about, sorry. I'll get it back.

So we have all these experiences that come. If you start, some people start to see visual images or light. It can be very distinct spots or diffuse, not everybody, most people don't. Some people hear sounds. You can feel very expansive. I've had experiences where I'm sitting in meditation and it felt literally like my body was the size of the room. And I'm sitting there saying, I know my body hasn't actually, but now I'm gonna peek and open my eyes. It's like, no, it's not, close my eyes. It feels like I filled the room.

You can have these experience expansiveness. So many experiences come when we start getting into samādhi. So the pīti and sukha are part of these experiences. Maybe there's a light associated with it or a blissful feeling or just the pleasantness, just a kind of a nice feeling. It can be very subtle. This is the pīti and the sukha, okay? It's gonna come in some form.

I'm gonna go on to the next, but I wanna stop. Alex, why don't you go ahead if you have a comment or a question, please. - I just want to, hi, I just want the clarification. So you said you went on one year retreat, right? Four or five months, no Jhāna. Which jhāna are we talking about? The light jhāna, the samādhi jhāna, or visuddhimagga, the heart jhāna? The first jhāna, what's the first jhāna you're referring to? - It's just, the image works for any jhāna. - No, no, no, for you, for four or five years that you were not through. I mean, I don't know if you realize, like this is very discouraging, right? Like how many of us have one year to, you know, to dedicate on retreat, right? And then like, you know, four or five months, no jhāna, then like forget about jhāna. - One of the things I've, if I had to pick, well, then I shouldn't have brought that in and that was a mistake. - That's okay, no, no, no, that's a problem. You know, it's fine, you know. - Let me tell you something. I used to be super gigantic big on retreats. I still, I teach them, I think they're great. If this, what I'm about to say, I honestly, sincerely mean this. If I had to make a distinction between only daily life practice or retreat? Absolutely slam dunk daily life practice, no question about it.



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I happened to be drawn because I wanted, I was always big on retreats and did a few each year, and I've done them for several months, and retreats are shorter and longer. I wanted to know what happens if you take the time pressure off to see? All I really learned was one thing on the whole retreat. This is the only thing of value.

Whenever you're clinging, you're suffering. When the mind learns to let go, you're at peace. That's it. That's the whole thing. - So does it need to be-- - All the rest is, I was just trying to make a point about clinging. I do have some experience in the various versions of jhāna. I was more, I tend naturally towards the unification of mind style. So that's kind of what I was talking about. Anyway, is that a good enough for now? - So this distinction between the daily life or retreat, can there be like, I'm trying actually to do hybrid, kind of like ending a three week retreat, but I'm also working and having normal life. So some type of hybrid is better or not? - It's, let me just tell you, this is literally true, not just trying to be, I am trying to be encouraging, but this is true. Using what you have the best you can with your life circumstances is enough to get and look you can have it all we're not supposed to talk like this.

And by the way, The Buddha didn't say don't get attached and everything. There's a lot of quotes. I'm paraphrasing. He didn't use this language. He said go for it. He didn't say hold back. He said go for it.

So, how do you go for it without suffering? You incline yourself and practice in a way that has something you want to attain. But you don't make it an object of clinging and craving. The way you get ahead is you may have to fake it. But just is to not try to get anywhere, just to be here. But to use what's here well without trying that thing and that's what moves you have the best.

So you use what you have in life? There's no have to about this. I want to tell you there are people who get deep in Samādhi and everything and they have jobs and families. And because you get in the teacher role these people, I guess because of my books, people come to me. And I talk with them. It's all over the place. It's not one way.

Don't get discouraged my friend. You've got to trust me on this. I'm a Buddhist. I can't lie. All right. Others have taught sandwich retreat someone said I think thank you for bringing that up where they'll take maybe we should do one online. I've done it before there's two weekends where you do all day you're at home.

Or maybe you'll show up in person somewhere doesn't have to be a zoom these days. And they're during the week you have your and each evening. They'll meet and meditate and do some talks together. So really so we can see anyway, so yeah.

All right, so PT and Sukha again, they weren't defined anywhere, so you can see it's a big range because people experience them differently. The ekaggata is similar through all jhānas, but even there there's at least two different, different kinds of ekaggata I've been talking about, of one-pointedness or unification.

So there's a lot of flavors here. There are two more jhāna factors that are even more problematic. And here they're called vitarka-vicāra. Again, if you hear the Burmese accent for Pali, it'll be we talk, oh, vitarka-vicāra, if you hear that, but that's what they're talking about.

And so if you go to page, actually, sorry about this, if you go to page seven and eight, I've forgotten the notes here, let me stop here for a second. If you go to page eight, you can see up at the top, I did give the different definitions there of translations of Piti, rapture, bliss, joy, delight, zest, exuberance. And sukha, pleasure, happiness, joy, agreeable bliss. So you can see it's a big range on how people translate.



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And I do talk there about Ekaggata and the two different ways of which one pointedness of unification of mind on page eight. Let's go to the bottom of page seven and then we'll move back up to the definition of simile. The bottom of page seven, the bottom of page seven is this term, vitarka-vicāra. Now I had a conversation once with Peter Skilling, who used to be the president of the Pali Text Society. And he's a, what was, is, I don't know if he's still around, it's been years since I've spoken to him, well-known Pali and Sanskrit, but Pali scholar.

And he said of all these terms we're talking about, even more than Piti and Sukha, vitarka and vicāra are the most problematic and most difficult to get at the meaning unknown of what they really meant. So at the bottom, just look at these two different, several definitions at the bottom of page seven in your notes, or if you don't have the notes, just listen. Vitarka-vicāra, by the way, vitarka-vicāra also, according to Peter Skilling and the way that they show up in the text, should always be taken as a pair, not individually. That's what he said, and that's what it seems like.

There is one place where vicāra is one spot. It gets separated out in suttas, but that's a specialized thing that we don't care about here. Vitarka-vicāra, here's some different translations. reflection and investigation, thinking and pondering, thought and examination, applied and sustained thought, thought, conception and discursive thinking, connecting and sustaining, initial and sustained mental application, directed thought and evaluation.

These meanings are all over the place, okay? But you can roughly put all of these definitions into two main categories, and this is an important point to remember. One category is some level of thinking things through, reflecting on things, thinking, pondering, kind of thought and examination, that kind of mental activity. And the other group of, a class of definitions isn't about thinking things through, it's how we apply the attention, connecting and sustaining.

That's a mental activity, but it's your just connect, that's when you put your attention on your breath, for example, you connect with the breath and you sustain it there. That's different than thinking things through and pondering, right? Different, totally different feeling. And this gives rise to different views, again, of what's happening in jhāna.

So we've got piti and sukha, and this vitarka and vicāra, however we use it. The way in my definition, I called-- if you go back up on page 6 there, when I defined it, I said, rapture and pleasure-- no, I said, accompanied by thought and examination. I'm not taking sides on the definition as opposed to connecting and sustaining. I think it's more to the literal, sort of the etymology of the words and the literal meaning. So that's the only reason I picked that in my own. I just, but I'm not taking sides on what it means.

So basically when you're in the first jhāna, you've got, so when we look ahead next week to the Visuddhimagga, they're very specific. Vitarka-vicāra means connecting your attention and sustaining it on the object. The Visuddhimagga's clear. Pali suttas are never clear. So pick your style, whether there's just some thinking things through or whatever, some kind of thought process happening or connecting and sustaining. Experientially, I will tell you that even with, in the first jhāna, when you come to that stillness of mind, both versions of vitarka-vicāra are happening.

In later jhānas, the discursive drops away, but in the first jhāna, it's a funny thing. It's like there's two minds, and anybody who's experienced this knows what I'm talking about. The one part of the mind is unmoving. And then on top of that, there can still be some part of the mind that's kind of like, huh, what's this? Or, well, that's interesting. A little bit of thinking about it



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going on. How can it be unmoving in another part, different parts of the brain. Two functions of the mind. I don't know, it's very interesting.

I don't recommend following Pali suttas or Visuddhimagga to the person who asked that question. That's why we're trying to educate ourselves and see, then you'll be drawn to certain teachings or teachers or practices. What I recommend is find your way. One's not right or wrong. These are two different systems. You can't criticize one from outside of the system. You have to look at them from within the system. We wanna honor and respect it all so that you have more choices to find your way and it may take some experimentation.

Try something, you stick with it for a while, it's like, I don't know about this, hey, this other teacher, I like that, but you have to find your way. The Visuddhimagga is very clear on vitarka and vicāra and on Piti it defines it, it's like different kinds of bliss, it can feel like a waterfall showering bliss and sparkly, I don't know how they, A list there, I forgot the details. We'll get into that next time. For here, it's kind of an open thing.

So people, right? The main thing is the ekaggata, the steadiness of the mind. And then we look to see what else we have. All right. But let's bring in another piece here. I'm just checking the time. We're doing fine. We're gonna end on time and we get into the second, third, and fourth jhāna, we'll move a little faster. and we'll get to also talk about all the kind of cool psychic power part, that's all in there too.

Being able to fly through the air and walk through walls, that stuff's in here too. I'm still waiting to see if I can actually do it, but that stuff's in there. Look on the middle of page seven. Again, I will read it. I know you're getting a lot of my voice, I hope. It can't be helped.

I'm going to read, and you can follow or just listen. The first jhāna definition with the simile now. So first sentence is going to repeat the definition, and then there's an image that's given. "Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters and abides in the first jhāna, which is characterized by rapture and pleasure, piti and sukha, born of seclusion and accompanied by the talk of each hour. I said thought examination.

And then listen to this. He makes the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion drench, steep, fill and pervade this body so that there is no part of his whole body unpervaded by the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. Just as a skilled bath man or a bath man's apprentice keeps bath powder in a metal basin and sprinkling it gradually with water, kneads it until the moisture wets his ball of bath powder, soaks it and pervades it inside and out, yet the ball itself does not ooze.

So to a bhikkhu, a monk, makes the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, so the piti and the sukha drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body "that there is no part of his whole body unpervaded "by the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion." As you're gonna see, there's a lot of water imagery in the similes.

Now, I love these similes. I think they're quite beautiful and they're actually quite accurate. So what is going on here? What's happening? He's making soap. So he's taking bath powder and mixing with water and with effort, he's working, needing, working, doing something, till it becomes this one thing. We no longer have power in our water. I mean, we're not looking under a microscope, of course, but you've got this new merged thing blended into one experiential thing called soap. This is telling us both the nature of the first Jhāna and the way to get in the first Jhāna.



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So whether it happens on its, so here's another important point. When you're, let's just say mindfulness of breathing again, I'm not giving that any, it's not better than any other practice, but I'll just pick that one. You're with your breath, you're staying with it, you're getting more and more concentrated, the jhāna factors start to grow. You're getting some pleasantness, pīti and sukha. You're applying and sustaining your attention, right?

One of two things is gonna happen. Either on its own, the pleasantness is going to, when you're experiencing your breath, just whether it's a cool air at the nose or you're feeling your torso or whatever, that experience, the blissful, the pīti and the sukha is gonna be in your consciousness too and it's gonna start to feel like they're both there in their consciousness and it sort of feels like that's coming, this is experiential, and to kind of this one thing, it's sort of the breath suffused with, I call it the Samādhi breath.

So don't worry, don't overthink this, but they start to come together experientially. This is what they're talking about. And then at some point, or you can make it happen, what this is more of a practice issue, how you can mentally, I don't want to get into it now, with your mind suffuse it into the breath. Then either on its own it's gonna continue and go out through the whole body and you're gonna end up with a body of light and bliss, which is kinda nice when that happens.

It's beautiful, it's healing in the body, a lot of benefits. Or you can consciously turn your attention and bring it into the body that's suffusing. And so the nature of the way it's describing, this is different than the Visuddhimagga, it's different. With the Visuddhimagga, you won't be able to feel your body anymore, but we'll get to that.

And how it fits with this will explain how do they say you can't feel your body when you're suffusing it in your body? That's next week. For now in the suttas you have this ekaggata whatever flavor you want some kind of mental activity We talk of each hour, and you've got pīti and sukha suffused through the body.

So you might experience your body is sort of just having blissful feelings in it a body of light. Maybe no pain you can just sit for long times. Body of bliss whatever it is for you. That's the first job. If this happens, if the jhāna happens, if you're doing it.

If you're doing an inclusive kind of Jhāna. Where you haven't shut off experiences of your body and mind coming from this deep place. You're so like your awareness so immersed in the body and The mind that you get all the insight part because everything's there you don't have to go looking anymore.

There is a place for going looking from an insight practice. That's got its place for sure. But in this kind of state, it's just there. Everything's known. It's arising and passing away on its own and the nature of it as this penetrative quality is revealed. That's where it's Jhāna.

This is getting into next week on the controversy. So I'm about to say here's controversial but Jhāna Samādhi insight mindfulness and the heart qualities are synthesized and unified. That's kind of the state.

Okay. Maybe that's enough. So now everything else is more practice. So you can go back and read these and get to know them, but get an idea of what people are talking about when they say jhāna.

And you can see how we don't have to have a Dharma war. It's not like somebody's right or wrong. They can all have their system and practice in that way, and we know people are getting benefit from it because they report getting benefits.



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All right, that's the first jhāna. Now we have, oh, by the way, as we talk about the first, second, and third jhāna, What I'm about to say here, I'm an outlier. So some people, most teachers think they're actually discrete states.

It's like, if you know anything, I don't know much about quantum mechanics or anything, but you know, the electron, you know, can only be in certain states orbiting around the -- it's not -- so they think these are discrete states, first, second, third jhāna. I don't view them that way. I think it's a continuum, and these are markers along the way.

So that's my take. All right, second jhāna. I'm going to page eight, second jhāna, and I'm gonna read the definition. With the stilling of thought and examination, in other words, whatever vitarka and vicāra were, whether it's connecting and sustaining or it's verbal, it's dropped away. It's a wordless, nonverbal state of being.

With the stilling of thought and examination, you enter and abide in the second jhāna, which is characterized by rapture and pleasure. The Piti and Sukha are still there, born of concentration, born out of the concentration of the first jhāna, and accompanied by inner composure and singleness of mind without thought and examination. So in the second jhāna, vitarka-vicāra is dropped away.

You don't have to apply and sustain your attention because you just are in it. It's doing you. By the way, that's another, this is not in the text, I'm just, just my own take. There's no sense of doing. It's just doing you when you're in there. I mean, you still can turn your mind and apply your, it's a funny thing and do, they're kind of both. Anyway, that's confusing, sorry.

But look at what's happening here. We vitarka-vicāra, dropped away. Piti and sukha, rapture and pleasure, however you experience it are still there. And now it's adding two more things have come in, inner composure and singleness of mind. So it's just highlighting that the singleness of mind, that's the ekaggata again, you could say unification, one point is, I think I picked up, why, I don't remember why I stuck with that singleness there.

I can't remember, but it's the same term. So it's talking about, it's emphasizing now importance of how this singleness has come in, ekaggata, and inner composure. It's just highlighting, it's really there in the first jhāna but with the vitarka and vicāra settling out you're just more settled. That's the inner composure. So it's just a little bit subtler, mainly the verbal has dropped away.

Now listen to this. I love these similes. And then it says, this is the simile. You attain the second jhāna and then you pervade the body, this time with the rapture and pleasure born of concentration. So it's the same pīti and sukha. So you're pervading the body, but The image, it's just a different image. You make the Piti and Sukha, drench, steep, fulfill, and pervade the body.

It's repeating from the first simile, from the first jhāna. So there's no part of your body unpervaded. And then it says this, just as though there were a lake whose waters welled up from below and it had no inflow from the east, west, north, or south, and would not be replenished from time to time by showers of rain.

Then the cool fount of water welling up in the lake, it's like coming from deep below, like an inner spring or something, would make that fount of water welling up within the lake, makes the cool water drench steep and fulfill the lake. And it goes on to say, similarly, you drench steep



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and fulfill the body. It's still a pervading, but you notice it's got a little bit of a more deeper settle.

Like in the bath, man, I've never made soap, but I picture someone like a baker or the bath man, man, they got the big muscular arms from working and making soap and they're putting effort in. Here there's a pervading, but it's coming from something very profound and deep. So it's got a more cooled out feel to the simile.

One question, does that mean thinking has stopped? Yes, there's no verbal going on in here, but you can still, I'll say it in words, but it's not words, even in the deeper jhānas, you can kind of incline the mind. It's not verbal, but the feeling of it's kind of like, hmm, what's that? Or check this out, or incline the mind. You can still incline your mind around, but yes, the verbal.

Okay, that's the second jhāna, right? Well, there's much more to say on this.

Just things are settling out more.

Okay. I'm not gonna read all of the similes here, but let me just say a few things. In the third jhāna, I'll just read the sentence now. You go on to the third jhāna. By the way, let me stop. How do you move through the jhānas?

That's not really the focus here. Either, I just wanna name it, it's a practice question. Either on its own, it starts, it just, you just keep practicing, and you're in, and it just, over time, short time or long time, it just, you just deepen and it happens. Or you can do something.

And by doing something, you can consciously incline your mind towards the subtler, or you can incline your mind to letting go of the coarser. That's enough for now, I can't get into more. But there's just different approaches.

It's not one way to move through Jhāna because we're all different. Third Jhāna, with the fading away of rapture, Piti, Piti's dropped away. You abide in equanimity, mindful and clearly aware, feeling pleasure, that's the sukha still there with the body, you enter and abide in the third jhāna of which the noble ones declare, equanimous and mindful, he abides in pleasure.

So the vitarka-vicāra, the mental activities really still now. It's a really, but you still have the sukha, it's lighter and it even says, feeling pleasure with the body. So there's still, it's a lot, it's very light when you're in here, there's still a light sense of a pleasure in the body. And it's highlighting mindfulness and clear awareness.

So now you're very, very clearly aware of what's happening, just by nature of the state. And then just to emphasize it, it says, "The noble ones declare are quantum and mindful, "you abide in pleasure." Equanimity, and that's gonna come, you'll see in the fourth, The endpoint of the seven factors of enlightenment is equanimity.

The endpoint of the four foundations of mindfulness is equanimity. The endpoint of some other lists are at equanimity, and the endpoint of the Jhānas is equanimity. Everything's heading to equanimity. It's the nonreactive balanced mind that actually doesn't have to be connected with any state.

At some point you go past Jhāna and you're just gonna empty it out, right? Okay. The simile you can read for yourself, but basically what it is that in the first jhāna, the bath man's working. In the second jhāna, there's still some activity. The fount of cool water, it's smoother, but it is coming up.



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There's a movement. In the third jhāna, you can read for yourself, there's no movement. It's saying just as lotuses can lotuses can be born and live their whole lives, I guess it works this way, submerged under the water. They don't do anything, they just are submerged.

Right, so there's no moving, it's just talking about how deeply immersed you are using the lotuses. They're born and grow within the water, and from their tips to their roots, so there's no part of them that's unpervaded by that cool water.

Things are smoothing out now. It's not like more is happening, it's things are dropping away, it's getting more simplified in the third jhāna. And then finally to the fourth jhāna, listen to this, very interesting.

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, you enter and abide in the fourth jhāna, which has neither pain nor pleasure and purity of mindfulness and equanimity, that's it. You still have the Ekaggatas, haven't gone away.

Basically, joy and grief is more mental. Pleasure and pain, you think of, I think it's meant to be more in the body. You're so smoothed out that you don't, when you're in the fourth jhāna, there's no pain in the body. You know, the body might feel, the experience of the body, if not talking about Visuddhimagga next week, but here in the suttas, which is embodied, it's a very thinned out and subtle connection with the body, right? But you're not having mental anguish or pain, everything's because you're so, purity of mindfulness and equanimity.

So what is characterized is just by this pure awareness, and listen to the simile. You sit pervading your body with a pure, bright mind, so there's no part of your whole body unpervaded by the pure, bright mind. Just as though a man were covered from head to foot with a white cloth, so that there would be no part of his whole body not covered by the white cloth, so too a bikkhu sits pervading the body with a pure, bright mind, so there's no part of your whole body unpervaded by a pure, bright mind.

Well, there's the jhānas. Sutta jhānas. Does moving through the jhānas coincide with moving through the 16 steps of anapanasati? Just depends on how you work with anapanasati sutta. We talked about that earlier, so it's not-- Yeah, yes, no, yeah.

Can these three jhānas arise spontaneously when one is not actually meditating? Rarely it just spontaneously comes. Thoughts have decided there is clarity and lightness. I guess I would ask you to look, it would be, I would change it to you, and I would say, do the three jhānas arise spontaneously when you're not actually meditating?

Does it spontaneously come? So you could, I don't know. You know, it's everything. People can go off in all kinds of states, so I don't really know how to answer. I don't remember the, I can get this if you wanted, I'd have to go back and look, the term for pure bright mind, I just don't remember.

It's been a long time since I've done this translation. I hope I'm not missing, just one second, Jeff. I see your hand there. Hold on a second. So we've got 20 minutes, and what we're gonna do is, Jeff, I'm gonna answer a few more of these questions, Jeff.

And then, by the way, just as a teaser, we're gonna look at three divergent paths after jhāna, which is all these psychic powers, and flying through the air and all that kind of stuff. So you gotta stick around for 20 more minutes to get all that.



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Someone said something about their body leaning and slouching, that's a practice question. I'd have to talk to you. I hope I didn't miss anything on the comments.

And so, Jeff, would you please go ahead and if you have a question or a comment.

How easy it to overestimate jhāna experiences. Everybody's doing that all the time. A lot of people think they're in jhāna. They're not. It's okay. Really, it's fine. And who's to judge, right? If they're getting benefit.

So the main thing is if we don't put a story on it and just work at what's going on here, what level of understanding do I need to help me? How do I just work experientially in the most skillful way? And we don't have to make it something, oh, I'm in this or I'm in that.

That's okay if you wanna do it, but it's not necessary to make it a label or whatever. Well, so what's the point of getting to Jhāna? Besides that, I mean, it's healing in the body, it is nourishing, it's nurturing, it's faith-producing.

Does all sense contact such as hearing stop in a genre? This is controversial. Can you hear in genre or not? I don't know the answer because I've never done the experiment to be around noise. I don't know.

Some teachers will say one and some will say the other. So there's lots of opinions out there. Maybe they're in different meditative states that we don't even call Jhāna. I don't know. I just, sorry, I can't be more. Okay, well, we're getting close to the end.

So let's just add this in. The suttas give three...

One moment. Right, so we're gonna talk about this next week. Some traditions talk about when to move from concentration to insight. Some it's not clear. Well, this is a whole thing. It's like, are we doing, we'll talk about this next week. Are we doing concentration and insight as separate practices? Or are they kind of all together? And if you're doing them as separate practices, should you, and if so, when should you move from one to the other? Or are they actually never really separated out?

We're gonna do that next week to answer Rayo. So if you look at the bottom of page nine and the top of page 10, the suttas give three divergent paths that you can practice after jhāna. And we're coming to the end here, so I'll just say it real quickly. I don't know that saying should do the one or the other, all of them, but one of them is there are four immaterial states, which are called formless attainments.

In the Visuddhimagga next week, you'll see they're called the formless jhānas. Some people call them, like there's jhāna one, two, three, four, I think someone like Leigh Brasington calls them jhānas five, six, seven, eight. None of the texts call them, it doesn't matter, but just FYI, the suttas of Visuddhimagga never number them as five, six, seven, eight. Maybe that's a more modern innovation, I don't know, it's okay.

But in the suttas, they're not called higher jhānas. Next week, the Sutta Manga does, but they're called formless attainments, and the word is arupas. Rupa is form. You put an A in the beginning, it's a negation. Arupa is formless. So you can go into these form, we'll call them formless jhānas, just as a way of speaking.



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In my experience, here's a chat, insight arises from concentration practice. Everybody I know who's done concentration practices sees the value of how powerfully the insight arises from being in there. But other people practice in a different way also where they aren't emphasizing the concentration.

They settle a little bit and they have strong insights too. Just individual. Okay, so you can go off in these higher immaterial or formless states and there are ways to practice it. Well, that's a practice question, not from here. I can talk to you a little bit about that. I have some experience. I'm not personally that interested, but it can happen. It's kind of cool.

The second is what's called the Abhinnas. I put it in your notes, but there's no tildes over the ends, Abhinnas. I should have put tildes in there. And there's all these psychic powers, iddhis, and I forgot the whole list, but I can give them to you where you can walk through walls, have all these psychic powers, fly through the air, reach up and touch the sun and the moon and split your, have two copies of your body so like I could be sitting here doing this and then my other one could be sitting in the other room enjoying a cup of tea or something.

I don't know what you do when you split your body up, but these are listed in there. It doesn't say why you would want to do that or what the value is. It's just listing it as something that can happen and you can aim for it. And so it's just for completeness to say, these are some of the things that can happen. You can believe this stuff or not, it doesn't matter.

I'm just telling you that stuff's in there so you can just be aware it's talked about. There are not many people who've reported some of these, few of these things. Take it however you want. Formless attainments, opinions, by part of the abhinnas are called iddhis, which are powers. It is or opinions

And then the third path is the develop of insight Leading to nibbana, which is the ultimate goal of the Buddhist teachings So the whole thing is how does Jhāna lead to? If you're if you're interested in nibbana, I don't know how many of you are you have a different view about it That's that'll be a discussion for next week.

By the way, someone said, "If meditation were not pleasant or beneficial, "no one would do it. Jhāna is equal to goodness. That's an interesting thing because the pleasure that can come, actually this is getting more practice oriented, but has a, in the Buddhist quoted of saying you should try to cultivate the pleasure. It has, it's not only part of just what happens, but has an important point to bring us in, get us closer, immersed, and again, has a lot of healing kind of qualities for us, just in the ordinary, everyday sense too, about traumas in the body can disentangle all kinds of benefits.

Oh, and one last thing, someone talked about access concentration. We'll talk about that. There's no access concentration of the suttas. It's only of the Visuddhimagga stage. We'll talk about that next week. So if you're practicing that system, you would use that term.

One more thing, when I hang around sincere Dharma practitioners, it just, I feel a lot of appreciation. If you find it supportive, not just being hanging out with me, but seeing all the other people, and perhaps the fellow who were creating a song, or really, if you find that helpful, you can maybe bring some gratitude, appreciation. And if you do that, remember, you're part of creating the community for everyone else. They're all looking at your square pictures and feeling the gratitude to you. So we're all supporting each other.