

**Metta Dharma Foundation**  
**Jhana Practice and Study Group**  
**Notes for Sessions 2 and 3**  
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**www.mettadharm.org**

### **Samadhi in the Visuddhimagga**

A treatise written around the fifth century C.E. by Buddhaghosa.

Expresses the commentarial understanding of the Pali teachings.

VM structure is based on the Relay Chariots Discourse ([Rathavinita Sutta, MN24](#)). In it, the spiritual path is likened to someone using a series of seven chariots to reach a destination.

With the first chariot one reaches the second, with the second one reaches the third, on so on until one reaches the final destination.

The Pali suttas can sometimes be vague or not have much explanatory detail.

The VM is very detailed and specific.

### **1. Tranquility and Insight: Two Paths of Meditation Practice**

The VM divides meditation into two distinct, separate paths: Tranquility or calm (Pali: samatha) and insight (Pali: vipassana)

Samatha is a path that strives to develop jhana and then turn to insight meditation as a separate practice.

Vipassana does not attain jhana, but goes directly to insight practice.

#### **Samatha meditation:**

Attention is focused on an unmoving object called a kasina, or on some other meditation subject, such as the breath.

40 meditation subjects are given.

Goal is to attain jhana with fixed concentration, concentration so intense that the mind is fixed on the object without wavering. No other experience can arise, so the mind is “one-pointed”, fixed on one point.

Awareness of changing experience is lost as the mind absorbs into its meditation object, so you cannot practice insight meditation.

**Vipassana meditation:**

Insight meditation may be practiced either after attaining at least the first jhana, or directly without ever practicing towards jhana.

A person who practices samatha, insight based on attainment of at least one of the jhanas, is called “one who takes calm as his vehicle”.

One who practices insight without developing jhana is called a “bare insight worker” or “one whose vehicle is insight”.

In either case, *momentary* concentration is employed.

In the VM, insight cannot occur while in jhana because the mind is absorbed into fixed concentration.

If one has attained jhana, they must come out of jhana into a lower level of samadhi in order to experience changing phenomena and practice insight meditation.

Attainment of insight without jhana is called “dry insight” because it is said to be “unmoistened” by the moisture of jhana.

For momentary concentration, concentration is strengthened up to access concentration, where the experience of change is retained.

Then attention is directed with clear, steady mindfulness to the ever-changing flow of mental and physical experiences to reveal their changing and selfless nature.

**NOTE: The Pali Suttas do not explicitly divide meditation into two distinct paths, as the Visuddhimagga does. We'll explore this point of controversy later.**

## 2. Three Levels of Concentration

Preparatory Concentration (*parikamma samadhi*): Ordinary level of concentration when beginning meditation practice.

Access or Neighborhood Concentration (*upacara samadhi*): The meditator is close to accessing jhana, is neighboring jhana. Hindrances are suppressed.

Access concentration is reached with the appearance of the counterpart sign.

Fixed Concentration (*appana samadhi*): The level of concentration in jhana.

The Bare Insight meditator takes up practices of insight into the arising and passing away of the five aggregates, other phenomena attaining *khanika samadhi*, momentary concentration.

**NOTE:** This *Visuddhimagga* path of bare, or dry, insight, is the insight meditation of the American vipassana movement.

Momentary concentration of the dry insight path is said to be at the level of access concentration, but it is not technically access concentration since there is no *nimitta*.

**NOTE:** The terms **Preparatory, Access and Fixed Concentration** are not found in the **Pali Suttas**.

## 3. Three Signs of Concentration

*Nimitta* means sign, basis, or theme of something.

In the VM, *nimitta* is a specific sign that arises in meditation.

Preliminary Sign (*parikamma nimitta*): This is the meditation object experienced at the initial stages of meditation.

Learning Sign or Acquired Image (*uggaha nimitta*): A mental image of the meditation object that arises. Can be seen even with eyes closed.

Counterpart Sign (*patibhaga nimitta*): Steady mental image that is flawless, clear and steady.

**NOTE:** These three terms, Preliminary Sign, Learning Sign, and Counterpart Sign, are not found in the **Pali Suttas**.

## 4. Developing Samadhi

As in the suttas, begins with virtue.

Next step is to create the supportive conditions.

1. Sever the ten impediments.
2. Find the Good Friend, a qualified teacher to learn meditation from.
3. Choose a proper dwelling. The VM is specific on which type of dwelling suits various temperaments.
4. Finally, select an appropriate meditation subject.

Forty meditation subjects are given:

10 kasinas: earth, water, fire, air, the four colors blue, yellow, red, white, light, and limited space.

10 kinds of body decay, also called ten kinds of foulness: bloated corpse, livid corpse, festering corpse, etc.

10 recollections: Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, virtue, generosity, deities, mindfulness of death, mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of breathing, and peace.

4 Divine Abidings: lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity

4 immaterial states: the base of boundless space, the base of boundless consciousness, the base of nothingness and the base of neither perception nor non-perception.

1 perception: repulsiveness in nutriment

1 defining: of the four elements

Under the guidance of an experienced teacher, one of these meditation subjects will be selected according to the student's temperament, aptitude and needs.

## 5. Meditation Subjects Suitable for Various Temperaments

| Temperament       | Recommended Meditation Subject   |
|-------------------|--|
| Greedy            | Any color kasina, beginning with blue, whose color is not pure; 10 kinds of foulness; mindfulness of the body.                             |
| Aversive, hateful | Any color kasina, beginning with blue, whose color is quite pure; Divine Abidings.   |
| Deluded           | Any large size kasina; mindfulness of breathing.<br>Measureless kasinas.   |
| Faithful          | Any color kasina, beginning with blue, whose color is quite pure; Divine Abidings; any of the ten recollections, especially the first six. |
| Intelligent       | Any meditation subject; mindfulness of death, recollection of peace, 4 elements, repulsiveness of nutriment.                               |
| Speculative       | A small kasina; any color, beginning with blue, whose color is not pure; mindfulness of breathing.<br>Limited kasinas.                     |
| All               | Any kasina; any of the four immaterial states  |

## Samadhi in the Pali Suttas

The Pali Suttas do not separate meditation into two paths. In the suttas, tranquility and insight are aspects of one practice.

The two paths, three levels, the signs of Samadhi, are only in the Visuddhimagga, not the suttas.

The nimittas of the VM do not appear in the suttas.

The word ‘nimitta’ does appear in reference to Right Concentration, but it just means theme or basis of concentration, and is equated with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (we’ll discuss this in detail later).

Kasina practiced is never explained in detail.

## Jhana in the Pali Suttas

“Jhana is called the pleasure of renunciation, the pleasure of seclusion, the pleasure of peace, the pleasure of enlightenment. I say of this kind of pleasure that it should be pursued, that it should be developed, that it should be cultivated, that it should not be feared”

The Buddha  
Latukikopama Sutta

“Just as the river Ganges slants, slopes, and inclines towards the east, so too one who develops and cultivates the four jhanas slants, slopes, and inclines towards Nibbana.”

The Buddha  
Jhanasamyutta (SN53.1)

*Jhana* means to meditate.

In a few places jhana refers to wrong types of meditation.

Jhana is almost always used to refer to the four jhanas.

### Jhana Definition:

“Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters and abides in the first jhana [which is characterized by] rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, and accompanied by thought and examination.

With the stilling of thought and examination, he enters and abides in the second jhana [which is characterized by] rapture and pleasure born of concentration, and accompanied by inner composure and singleness of mind, without thought and examination.

With the fading away of rapture, he abides in equanimity, mindful and clearly aware, feeling pleasure with the body, he enters and abides in the third jhana, of which the noble ones declare: ‘Equanimous and mindful he abides in pleasure.’

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters and abides in the fourth jhana, [which has] neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness and equanimity.”

The Mahavedalla Sutta specifies certain elements from the definition as *jhana factors*:

“How many factors does the first jhana have? The first jhana has five factors . . . there occur thought, examination, rapture, pleasure, and unification of mind. That is how the first jhana has five factors.” MN43.19

This is regarded as the standard list for the five jhana factors.

The first four, thought, examination, rapture and pleasure (Pali: vitakka, vicara, piti, and sukha), are found in the jhana formula.

The fifth factor, unification of mind (Pali: cittass’ ekaggata), does not occur in the standard formula, but another similar term, singleness of mind (Pali: ekodi-bhava), appears in the definition of the second jhana.

Eleven other qualities are present each jhana:

These are sense contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind, intention, determination, energy, mindfulness, equanimity and attention. From the Anupada Sutta, MN111.4

We can see that jhana is a very dynamic state with many associated mental factors.

These additional factors will be important later in helping us understand the nature of jhana, and in comparing with the VM.

There is body awareness in sutta jhana. Sense contact.

### **Progress through the jhanas:**

“Five factors are abandoned and five are present in the first jhana. Sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and doubt are abandoned (these are the five hindrances); thought, examination, rapture, pleasure, and unification of mind are present (the five jhana factors). That is how five factors are abandoned and five are present in the first jhana.” MN43.20

As we proceed through the formula, in addition to the jhana factors themselves, which fade away in succession as we progress through the levels, the definition introduces additional elements, adding further to the description and the overall distinct quality of each successive stage.

In the second jhana, two factors are eliminated, thought and examination, leaving three remaining factors of rapture, pleasure and unification of mind, and adding the new element of inner composure.

The third jhana abandons the factor of rapture, leaving pleasure and unification of mind, while naming for the first time the qualities equanimity, mindfulness and clear awareness (also called clear comprehension).

In the fourth jhana, pleasure is abandoned, leaving neither-pain-nor-pleasure and unification of mind, and adding purity of mindfulness and equanimity.

Each jhana is defined in terms of its associated factors, all of which must be present for the meditative state to be considered jhana.

### **The First Jhana:**

Similies are given in a number of suttas, that expand on the definition and help explain the way to attain the jhana.

#### **Definition with simile:**

“Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters and abides in the first jhana [which is characterized by] rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, and accompanied by thought and examination. 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 heaps bath powder in a metal basin and, sprinkling it gradually with water, kneads it till the moisture wets his ball of bath powder, soaks it and pervades it inside and out, yet the ball itself does not ooze; so too, a bhikkhu 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.”

Suffusing the jhana factors throughout the body is both a characteristic of and the way to progress through the higher stages of jhana.

Once the first jhana is attained, in order to deepen it and proceed to the second, the meditator suffuses the body with rapture and pleasure, solidifying the first jhana and strengthening the factors leading into the second.

### **Jhana Definition in Detail:**

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters and abides in the first jhana [which is characterized by] rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, and accompanied by thought and examination.

Secluded from sensual pleasures:

“Quite secluded from sensual pleasures” refers both to external and internal seclusion, as we have discussed.

## **Five Jhana Factors:**

### **1&2) Vitakka-vicara**

Together, Vitakka-vicara are variously translated as 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, and directed thought and evaluation.

Although the term vitakka is sometimes used alone in the suttas, the term vicara rarely is. These terms, when used together as in the jhana definition, should be taken as one expression.

Two distinct meanings are suggested from these various renderings:

One indicating mental activities such as thinking, reflecting, etc.

The other referring to the mental activity of connecting and sustaining the attention on a meditation subject.

Vitakka-vicara as jhana factors refers to qualities present upon having entered the first jhana, rather than the qualities of mind and practices required for its realization.

We should make a distinction between connecting and sustaining the attention in order to attain jhana, and the qualities vitakka-vicara once jhana has been attained.

### **3&4) Piti-Sukha:**

Rapture and pleasure, the third and fourth jhana factors, are said to be born of seclusion because they are a natural outcome of a mind that is secluded from the hindrances.

Piti is translated as rapture, bliss, joy, delight, zest, and exuberance.

Sukha is translated as pleasure, happiness, joy, agreeable, pleasure and bliss.

From these various meanings, we can see that piti and sukha are understood as being similar, though not identical.

Piti is quite strong energetically, often experienced as intense bliss, energy, light, or manifesting in various other ways.

Sukha, which is by no means weak, is milder, more even and more settled than piti.

Piti could be a mental or physical quality; the suttas nowhere make this distinction, and some later practice traditions insist that piti is a physical phenomenon.

The happiness or pleasant experience of sukha can also be either mental or physical.

Sukha is defined in the third jhana as purely a physical experience.

Sukha has been translated as ‘pleasure’ in the jhana definition in order to emphasize its connection with the body, especially in the jhana similes where rapture and pleasure are suffused throughout the body.

Piti and sukha are jhana factors present in the first two jhanas, but are also important qualities leading up to jhana.

Sukha is translated as ‘happiness’ in those contexts, highlighting its function as a supportive condition leading to concentration:

“Concentration has a proximate cause . . . happiness. Happiness has a proximate cause . . . tranquility. Tranquility has proximate cause . . . rapture. Rapture has a proximate cause . . . gladness.” SN12.23

### 5) Ekaggata

Cittass’ ekaggata, the fifth jhana factor, is translated as one-pointedness, singleness and unification of mind.

Some traditions maintain that ekaggata means being aware of only one point; others, that it indicates maintaining a single center in a larger range of awareness.

The term *one-pointedness* suggests a stable focus on a single object, in which no other awareness arises besides the meditation subject. One-pointedness is single-minded concentration, the ability of the mind to remain, without distraction, unwavering and steady on the fixed object of its attention.

Ekaggata translated as *unification of mind* includes this meaning, but can also suggest another connotation. Rather than a mind fixed on one object, in which the experience of changing phenomena is lost, in this state the mind itself is unmoving, not the objects of experience.

Sustained undistractedness is what most determines whether or not a particular meditative state is jhana. All of the jhana factors are present to varying degrees of intensity throughout a wide range of levels of samadhi.

An undistracted mind, in concert with the other factors, is a characteristic distinguishing jhana from the lower levels of samadhi. While in jhana the mind is not subject to wandering.

*Ekaggata* is used in several places in the suttas to describe all levels of jhana. (for example MN44 and MN117).

The term does not appear in the jhana definition itself, though.

*Cetaso ekodibhavam* is a similar term, also used to describe the focused application and undistracted nature of the mind in jhana, which is explicitly mentioned at only one place, in the definition of the second jh[er]na.

*One-pointedness* will be used specifically to refer to states of single-pointed awareness fixed on a single object in the VM.



## The Second Jhana

“With the stilling of thought and examination, he enters and abides in the second jhana [which is characterized by] rapture and pleasure born of concentration, and accompanied by inner composure and singleness of mind, without thought and examination.”

Progress through the stages of jhana is not accomplished by adding new factors, but by abandoning some of the factors already there.

The second jhana is attained upon the elimination or fading away of two factors, thought and examination, leaving three remaining factors of rapture, pleasure and unification of mind.

Inner composure, a new element introduced for the second jhana, is not a jhana factor, but is highlighted in the formula as a prominent feature in this state.

The meditator attains the second jhana and, again, pervades the body, this time with rapture and pleasure born of concentration: “He makes the rapture and pleasure born of concentration 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 concentration. Just as though there were a lake whose waters welled up from below and it had no inflow from 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 would make the cool water drench, steep, fill, and pervade the lake, so that there would be no part of the whole lake unpervaded by cool water; so too, a bhikkhu makes the rapture and pleasure born of concentration 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 concentration.”

The seclusion of the second jhana is much more stable than that of the first, and the image of cool water gives the impression of a well established tranquility and settledness.

The rapture and pleasure of the first jhana are said to be born of seclusion.

The second jhana is characterized by rapture and pleasure born of concentration.

Upon attaining the second jhana, one gains inner composure and singleness of mind.

The Pali term used here for inner composure, *sampasadana*, also means tranquility, and is translated variously as self-confidence, internal assurance, and serene purity (from *pasadana*, which means a happy state or purity).

In the standard formula for the first jhana, concentration is not mentioned at all.

Concentration appears twice in the formula for second jhana, once directly and a second time indirectly as singleness of mind.

## **An Alternate Scheme for the First Two Jhanas**

A three-fold classification of *saa]dhi* introducing an intermediate stage between the first and second jhana, which appears to be an alternative arrangement for the first two jhanas, is briefly mentioned in a few places. MN128.31, SN43.3, AN8.63, DN33.3.10(50)

This three-fold system does not appear in the jhana formula, or anywhere else other than in these suttas.

Only briefly mentioned without providing any explanatory detail.

There is concentration with thought and examination (as in the first jhana), concentration without thought but with examination only, and concentration without thought and examination (as in the second jhana).

Concentration with thought but without examination does fit into the standard jhana scheme.

The term *samadhi*, not *jhana*, is used here, so this formula might not necessarily be referring to an alternative jhana system.

## **The Third Jhana**

“With the fading away of rapture, he abides in equanimity, mindful and clearly aware, feeling pleasure with the body, he enters and abides in the third jhana, of which the noble ones declare: ‘Equanimous and mindful he abides in pleasure.’”

Upon entering the third jhana, the simile continues: “He makes the pleasure divested of rapture drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body unpervaded by the pleasure divested of rapture. Just as in a pond of blue or red or white lotuses, some lotuses that are born and grow in the water thrive immersed in the water without rising out of it, and cool water drenches, steeps, fills, and pervades them to their tips and their roots, so that there is no part of all those lotuses unpervaded by cool water; so too, a bhikkhu makes the pleasure divested of rapture drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body unpervaded by the pleasure divested of rapture.”

The coolness and calmness has become so deeply established that there is no sense of ‘suffusing’ or ‘upwelling’, but the body is completely suffused.

With attainment of the third jhana, rapture has faded away, leaving two remaining jhana factors, pleasure and unification of mind.

With the subsiding of rapture, pleasure comes to prominence, being mentioned twice here in the formula.

Three new elements, not considered jhana factors, are introduced in the formula: equanimity, mindfulness and clear awareness, also known as clear comprehension or alertness.

Equanimity strengthens and becomes noticeable in the third jhana, as the mind becomes contented and serene.

The term equanimity has a range of meanings. It can refer to neutral feelings, which are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. More important here, it denotes non-reactivity.

It should not be mistaken for lack of sensation, or a disassociated state, especially given that the formula mentions physical pleasure as a component of the third jhana.

Mindfulness, keeping in mind the meditation subject, is present in all four jhanas, but this is the first time it is mentioned in the standard definition, emphasizing that it comes to prominence in the third jhana with the subsiding of rapture.

The Anupada Sutta states that mindfulness is one of eleven qualities, in addition to the jhana factors and other attributes listed in the definition, associated with all the jhanas.

## **The Fourth Jhana**

“With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters and abides in the fourth jhana, [which has] neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness and equanimity.”

Finally, upon attaining the fourth jhana, “He sits pervading this body with a pure bright mind, so that there is no part of his whole body unpervaded by the pure bright mind. Just as though a man were sitting 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 bhikkhu sits pervading this body with a pure bright mind, so that there is no part of his whole body unpervaded by the pure bright mind.”

In the similes for the first three jhanas the body is pervaded by various jhana factors.

Now the style of the simile has shifted and there is no sense of making effort or doing anything.

The pure bright mind covers everything, indicating the powerful lucidity, clear nature of mindfulness and clear awareness accompanying this jhana.

In the discussion of the third jhana we saw that equanimity can refer either to neutral feelings, which are neither pleasant nor unpleasant, or to a non-reactive mind.

The formula for the fourth jhana introduces two new elements, neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness and equanimity, which together serve to underscore the presence of both aspects of equanimity.

Neither-painful-nor-pleasant, also called equanimous feeling, is the neutral bodily feeling remaining after pleasure, pain, joy and grief are all eliminated.

At this stage, with strong equanimity firmly established, mindfulness is said to be purified.

The mind is detached, in the sense of not being pulled into or away from experiences, but is not disconnected or disassociated.

Because the mind is not reactive, it is naturally clear and awake, able to be more present and mindful, unmoving and unperturbed by any experience.

The first four jhana factors have been eliminated in the fourth jhana, leaving only unification of mind.

### **Three Divergent Paths in Suttas After Jhana**

Upon mastery of the four jhanas, three further paths of training and development are possible. These three divergent paths each have distinct goals and associated practices.

First, beyond the four jhanas already discussed, four additional *higher immaterial* or *formless* attainments are described.

In the suttas, these formless states are called *aruppas* (*aruppa* means ‘without form’).

In the later commentaries, the four jhanas are called *rupa* jhanas, and the aruppas retain this designation, but are sometimes referred to as *arupa jhanas*.

The first of the aruppas is called ‘the base of the boundlessness of space’, in which awareness of the body falls away, leaving only the experience of limitless space.

The next aruppas are the base of the boundlessness of consciousness, the base of nothingness, and, finally, a state so subtle that it can only be called the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

The aruppas are purely mental states, achieved by transcending any perceptions of form and sensory awareness.

These are extremely subtle meditative states, not defined in terms of the factors associated with the four jhanas.

The four jhanas were attained in order, by systematically eliminating the grosser jhana factors.

Moving from the fourth jhana to the aruppas does not involve the abandoning of further jhana factors, but a shift in the object of concentration.

The second training accessible upon attainment of the four jhanas is development of the Supernormal Powers or Higher Knowledge (*abhinnas* in Pali).

Three higher knowledges are listed in some suttas: recollection of past lives, knowledge of death and rebirth of beings, and the knowledge of the destruction of the corruptions.

Other suttas expand this list into six *abhinnas*: 1) the various psychic powers, known as *iddhis*, 2) the divine ear, 3) the ability to read minds, 4) the ability to remember past lives, 5) the divine eye (which is the same as knowledge of death and rebirth of beings), and 6) the knowledge of the destruction of the corruptions.

The sixth higher power is the destruction of the corruptions, which leads directly to enlightenment.

Three corruptions are most often listed in the suttas, sense desire, craving for existence, and ignorance. A fourth corruption, corruption of views, is sometimes added.

The aruppas and the first five supernormal powers, developed through refined concentration, are not prerequisites for achieving the end of suffering.

Even these extraordinary attainments are limited in that they are impermanent and, thus, inherently unsatisfactory.

The sixth supernormal power, the knowledge of the destruction of the corruptions, is attainable not through concentration alone, but through insight, and, thus, is linked with the third path beyond jhana.

The third path of training and development is *insight*, the path leading to Nibbana, which is the ultimate goal of the Buddha's teachings.

Through the application of mindfulness, and supported by the steadiness and concentration of jhana, the meditator's awareness is able to penetrate beneath the ordinary, everyday way in which we view all experience to clearly perceive the three characteristics of existence, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness.

It is through this direct seeing/knowing/understanding into the true nature of reality that the subtler levels of hatred, greed and delusion are overcome, leading directly to liberation through non-clinging.

## **Jhana in the Visuddhimagga**

The four jhanas of the Pali suttas have been renamed *rupa jhanas* (fine-material or formal jhanas) in the Visuddhimagga.

The sutta's four *aruppas* (immaterial or formless attainments of boundless space, boundless consciousness, nothingness and neither perception nor non-perception) also are usually called *aruppas* here, and are grouped with the four rupa jhanas to form the *eight attainments* (Pali: *attha samapatti*).

Suttas do not do this.

In a few instances the aruppas are called *arupa* (formless) *jhanas* (the term 'arupa jhana' is more typical of the Pali subcommentaries than the commentaries).

Some meditation teachers designate the four aruppas as 'jhanas 5 – 8', a nomenclature that does not seem to appear in the commentarial texts, so the term may have originated among modern meditation teachers.

All of the forty meditation subjects in the VM can lead to access concentration, but only thirty lead to the first jhana or beyond.

The ten that lead no further than access concentration can be used for cultivating each practice's wholesome mental qualities for their own sake.

## Attainments Possible Through the Various Practices

| Meditation Subject   | Degree of Samadhi Which May Be Attained  |
|--|--|
| 8 of the 10 recollections (not including Mindfulness of Breath and Body), perception of repulsiveness in nutriment, and defining of the four elements. | Access Concentration Only  |
| 10 kinds of foulness and Mindfulness of the Body.  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jhana Only   |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> three Divine Abidings (lovingkindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy).   | Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> jhana  |
| Mindfulness of Breathing, 10 kasinas.  | The first four jhanas  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Divine Abiding (equanimity)  | 4 <sup>th</sup> jhana only (first three jhanas must have been previously attained through one of the 1 <sup>st</sup> three divine abiding meditations. |
| The Four Immaterial States   | The four aruppas (access concentration and lower jhanas must have been previously attained through any of the kasinas, except limited space).          |

### Jhana Definition (repeated here for convenience):

“Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk enters and abides in the first jhana [which is characterized by] rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, and accompanied by applied and sustained thought.

With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, he enters and abides in the second jhana [which is characterized by] rapture and pleasure born of concentration, and accompanied by inner composure and singleness of mind, without thought and examination.

With the fading away of rapture, he abides in equanimity, mindful and clearly aware, feeling pleasure with the body, he enters and abides in the third jhana, of which the noble ones declare: ‘Equanimous and mindful he abides in pleasure.’

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters and abides in the fourth jhana, [which has] neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness and equanimity.”

**NOTE:** In VM jhana, body awareness is lost as the mind absorbs into the nimitta.

### The Jhana Factors in Detail

**Vitakka-vicara:** Specifically mean connecting and sustaining the attention on the meditation object.

**Piti (rapture):** Five types of rapture are listed.

**Sukha:** Pleasure or happiness.



**Ekaggata:** One-pointedness. Fixed concentration on a single object.

### **The Eight Attainments**

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Jhana
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Jhana
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Jhana
4. 4<sup>th</sup> Jhana
5. The Base of Boundless Space
6. The Base of Boundless Consciousness
7. The Base of Nothingness
8. The Base of Neither-Perception-Nor-Nonperception